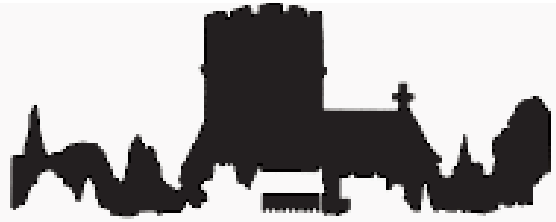


Ring Round Devon



THE GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

Newsletter 103 , September 2016

GRAND GARDEN FETE

The grand garden fete held at the Combe Hill Estate, Combe Raleigh, by kind permission of the Lazarus family on the 21st August was, despite the rain, a resounding success. Well over 200 people flocked to this stunningly beautiful location to enjoy an afternoon full of traditional fun and games.

The event was held in aid of the St Nicholas' church bell fund so, of course, bells were well in evidence. As well as the Frank Mack mini-ring, where we were invited to try our hand at full circle ringing, the Dunkswell hand bell ringers treated us to some fine music on their hand bells.

There were pony rides and a steam traction engine also giving rides, and for the train enthusiasts a model railway to admire. Traditional games included garden chess, hoopla, a coconut shy, hook-a-boat, shove ha'penny, ping pong Pringles, the doughnut challenge, wet sponge shy and Daisy the cow (the winner 'milked' over three quarters of a litre in 30 seconds!)

For the more energetic, and after the girls had shown how Maypole dancing should be done, there was an opportunity to join in. There was also a bouncy castle, football shoot-out and a tennis challenge – play the pro, who'd flown in from America that day especially for the event.

After all that exhausting exercise cream teas and cake were available on the terrace, while thought was given to how much to bid in the silent auction. Among the lots to bid for were tickets to see Arsenal play at the Emirates Stadium, including lunch, a bespoke hat for that special occasion created by a London milliner, a commissioned portrait, a long weekend in a luxury cottage sleeping ten in Combe Raleigh, a roof top tour of Exeter Cathedral, a tour of Sharpham vineyard with a wine and cheese tasting and an opportunity to go kayaking on the River Dart. There was in fact something for everyone.



At the end of the day over £5,000 had been contributed. The ringers would like to thank everyone who came along and supported this event in any way, our sponsors, supporters, stall holders and especially the Lazarus family whose whole-hearted support ensured a fantastic day out for everyone.

Trevor Hitchcock

GUILD EVENTS

GUILD STRIKING COMPETITIONS

The annual Guild striking competitions are to be held this year in the Exeter Branch on Saturday 15 October. The six-bell competition is open to all Guild towers to compete against each other. The novice competition must contain at least one first-time novice, while the eight-bell competition is between the different branches. Details are below – further information and the full rules are available from the web site.

Morning: (10am-1pm)

Please book your slots by email to secretary@devonringers.org.uk.

6 Bell - Stoke Canon

Judge: Nigel Birt

240-300 changes of any Doubles or Minor method

Inter-tower competition for the J P Fidler Cup

6 Bell Novice - Exeter St Mark

Judges: Sarah Chadburn and Charlotte Boyce

180 changes of Plain Hunt Doubles or Minor

Inter-tower novice competition for the John Longridge Plate

Afternoon: (2pm draw)

Please inform secretary@devonringers.org.uk if your branch is entering a team

8 Bell - Exeter St Mark

Judge: Mark Regan

224 changes of Yorkshire S Major (plain course) or Little Bob Major (touch below)

Inter-branch competition for the Andrews Trophy

224 Little Bob Major

W	M	H	23456
-	-		42635
-	-		64523
-	-	-	35426
-			23456

This year is the 30th anniversary of the first eight-bell competition and we are delighted that Mark Regan (Ringing Master at Worcester Cathedral) who judged the first competition will be returning to judge this year.

Although the striking competitions are still a couple of months off I would like to encourage you all to start planning now; I'm aware that the North East branch have already scheduled some practices to prepare for the 8-bell competition.

I will follow up with you all in mid-September to invite your time slot bookings for the competitions but in the meantime please ask if you have any questions.

John Martin (Guild Secretary)

RADIO INTERVIEW WITH LYNNE HUGHES

BBC Radio Devon interviewed our Guild Publicity Officer, Lynne Hughes, which was broadcast on Sunday 4th September. The interview was requested by the BBC to coincide with the publication of a survey on bellringing and Lynne was asked about the challenges of recruiting new ringers. Lynne writes that 'hopefully there are lots of positive points, and a sense of hope for the future of ringing.'

FROM THE INTERNET

Here is a new 40 minute 'sound piece' on change ringing, by artist Lin Li. It gives an overview of the music and traditions of change ringing, featuring various interviews with ringers as well as clips of ringing. It's professionally produced and worth a listen: <http://linli-art.com/audio-work>

Philip Earis

CRAG – THE CENTRAL COUNCIL REVIEW ACTION GROUP

Twelve members (including the two overseas members by Skype) met for the first time on Saturday 13th August in central Birmingham for an all day session. They were joined by CCCBR members Ruth Marshall and John Harrison who acted as facilitators.

The group discussed the strengths of the current structure, the opportunities to develop the Exercise and the creation of a modern structure to promote ringing, foster new initiatives and enrich people's ringing. The group developed a programme of action and will meet regularly face to face and electronically over the coming months.

A number of sub-groups were established to focus on key activities, including creating a vision for the future and developing a strategy for consulting widely and obtaining input from all stakeholders including grass roots ringers, new ringers and non-ringers.

A report of the first meeting is available from <http://cccbr.org.uk/crag/report-01-09-16/>

Phillip Barnes & Alison Everett

AYLESBEARE BRANCH

GRANDSIRE DAY AT PINHOE



On Saturday 6th August, members of the Aylesbeare Branch gathered at Pinhoe church for a Grandsire Triples training morning. With four learners and twelve competent ringers and helpers, we began with plain courses to give each of the learners a chance to find their feet and get used to the bells. When all were confident with this, we stopped for some well-earned tea and cake and Janet explained the work at a bob or a single during the break. An interesting discussion followed with various different ideas and techniques explained. We then returned to the tower for the second half of the morning, ringing various lengths of Grandsire with bobs and singles added in, and once persuaded not to panic, the learners all coped admirably! It was an enjoyable morning for all and our thanks go to Rob Franklin for his help and use of the bells.



Matt Pym

GUILD DEMO BELL AT WOODBURY FLOWER FESTIVAL



Thomas trying out the demo bell

Photo: Oliver Coldrick

EAST DEVON BRANCH

EAST DEVON BRANCH STRIKING COMPETITION

The East Devon Branch striking competition was held on 9th July at St Mary the Virgin, Payhembury with ten teams entering. Payhembury only joined the Guild last year so this was their first important event and they rang well.

With funds needed for necessary maintenance on the bells, the event coincided with a fete helping to raise the required amount. We were blessed with glorious sunshine, (one or two suffered sunburn), while much of the county was covered in gloomy cloud. The competition got off to a good start with Talaton, another relative newcomer to the Guild, ringing first. Unfortunately, soon after, one of the teams had the misfortune to break a stay. This meant that the next team due to ring were faced with the prospect of a novice having to ring without a stay and wisely decided to withdraw. All the remaining teams took up the challenge and those ringers affected by this misfortune are to be congratulated on the way they coped with a difficult situation.

The competition was judged by Stephen and Tracey Coley from Hertfordshire and after due consideration declared Sidmouth A to be the winners of the Edward Summers Memorial Trophy, with



The photographs show the judge's father, Richard Coley, presenting the trophies to Anne Bailey of Sidmouth and to John Horrocks of Payhembury



Sidmouth B the runners-up. In the open competition, the winners were declared, appropriately, as Friends of Payhembury, with the Jurassic Coast Ladies as the runners-up. Under difficult and unusual circumstances the standard of ringing was remarkably good, a tribute to the hard work being put into trying to improve standards throughout the branch.

As well as a delightful afternoon's ringing, the fete, complete with cream teas, was also a huge success with over £1000 being raised to help the Payhembury bell fund and two new recruits expressing a wish to learn the art. Thanks for all their efforts go to Lin and John Horrocks of Payhembury, those involved in the organisation of the event and our visiting judges.



Some of the items for sale at the Payhembury fete

Trevor Hitchcock, (East Devon Branch Publicity Officer)

EXETER BRANCH

JOHN CLIFTON 1934 – 2016



John on his 80th birthday

We were saddened to learn of the death of John Clifton, a ringer at Holy Cross, Criddon for over 50 years.

John was born and grew up in Rushden, Northants. Owing to the poor condition of the bells at the time they were only ever chimed. So, with friends, John learned to ring at nearby Higham Ferrers. He rang his only full peal - of Plain Bob Major - at

Felmersham, Beds to celebrate the birth of his daughter Lynda.

Moving to Criddon in 1964 he joined the local call change band ringing on the old 8 and was subsequently very involved in the project to install the new ring of bells.

John twice rang on bells away from the mainland: once on Lundy on a joint trip with the Whitestone ringers and once at Calgary, Canada while visiting friends for their daughter's wedding.

He was dedicated to Crediton church, serving as Church Warden and as master mind of the creation of the Boniface Centre, amongst many other roles.

A recent fall at home brought an untimely end to John's ringing career, but he still maintained a lively interest in the bells and the local band. On July 9th he and his wife Enid joined us on our tower outing and evening meal and he was on fine form throughout. This was probably the last occasion that many of us saw him.

A private cremation on August 18th was followed the next day by a thanksgiving service at Holy Cross and interment of ashes in the churchyard. A full church experienced an uplifting and at times amusing service led by former Rector of Crediton, Revd. Anthony Geering. John had been part of the committee that had appointed Anthony. The bells rang before and after the service, the full twelve and also, at John's specific request, April Day on the "Pretty six" – bells 3,4,5,8,10,12. This last was enjoyed by many of the ringers present. The service was immediately preceded by diminishing rounds on the twelve. The organist kindly observed silence during the last fifteen minutes of ringing.

We will always remember John with a smile on his face and a chuckle in his voice.



John (far left) at the tower outing in July this year

Quarter peals in thanksgiving for the life of John Clifton were rung at Rushden and at Crediton.

Geoffrey Sparling

NEWS FROM EXETER CATHEDRAL

Having sorted out Health and Safety, fire training and the provision of trained first aiders the Cathedral authorities are now insisting that members of the band undergo training in their policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults – a two hour session! This is in addition to DBS checks on the officers. The reasons for this were outlined by Canon John Searle during the practice on 4th September. Although some wonder if this is really necessary the consensus is that anything that helps to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking part or being ignored is well worth a little effort now.

Ian Campbell

National 12 bell Contest 2016

The Exeter Cathedral band were still enjoying the euphoria of coming 4th in the final of the national 12 bell contest at Norwich in June 2015 when emails popped up in our inboxes from Matt Hilling. "Would you like to be part of the Exeter 12 bell competition team for 2016?" This was followed by a long list of suggested dates for practices. The final was to be held at Aston, Birmingham on the 25th June and there would be three eliminator competitions held in March at Amersham, High Wycombe and Reading in order to whittle down the twenty four entrants to a manageable nine for the final.

The method for the competition was Cambridge, yet again, so we faced the prospect of many more half courses of Cambridge accompanied by exhortations from our revered conductor to "keep our handstrokes closer" and "lift our backstrokes" and followed by detailed analysis of our ringing.

And so to the eliminator round. We were drawn to ring at Amersham and were delighted that our hard work paid off and made it to the final by a comfortable margin. The downside was more travelling and practising until the final at Aston!



And so to the dreaded day of the final. Some stayed within easy reach of Aston for the weekend whilst others travelled there and back in the day, but we were all there in good time to enjoy bacon and sausage batches and then go into the church for the draw.

In both the eliminator and the final, the Exeter band was drawn to ring 7th which meant a long, nervous wait until it was our turn to ring and posed the question of how to pass the time?

Do you listen to every band ringing their test piece? Not good for the nerves.

Do you patronize the bar? Not good for the co-ordination or concentration and definitely frowned upon by the boss.

Or do you explore the surrounding area and forget about the ringing? This last option was provided for at Aston by guided tours of Aston Villa football ground and by reduced price admission to Aston Hall.

The weather at Aston was generally good and we were able to spend much of the time in the churchyard chatting with old friends. At one point a short, sharp shower sent us looking for cover. There was a convenient bus stop just outside the churchyard which some of us retreated to and which prompted the comment "Anyone know the time of the next bus to Exeter?"



The acoustics in the ringing chamber at Aston are not brilliant due to a gallery above the ringers of the back bells but, when it came to our turn, we were reasonably pleased with our ringing and even more pleased that we could at last relax and sample the excellent choice of beers being served by the local ringers.

And finally to the results. Birmingham managed to regain the trophy, with Bristol taking second place and pushing the College Youths into third. The results showed the bands in fourths to sevenths place to be very close and we were happy with our placing of sixth but it gives us something to work on for next year!

On Saturday 22nd June 2019, we will be hosting the final of the 12-bell competition at Exeter Cathedral. The final is always a wonderful social occasion attended by ringers and friends from all over the country. This is not just for the ringers taking part but also their friends and supporters and many people both local and from further afield who come for a good day out with plenty of excellent beer and the opportunity to listen to some top class ringing. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Sue Sparling

MID-DEVON BRANCH

ITEMS FROM MID-DEVON TOWER TALK

Branch mini-outing

This year we ventured to East Devon where Rodney Horder (branch chairman) had planned five towers. The first tower was Musbury and what a delight it was to find twenty ringers ready, willing and able. Musbury are a pleasant six and we managed a good mix of methods from call changes to London Surprise Minor. Five towers in an afternoon take a bit of fitting in so it was straight on to our next tower – the heavy eight at Colyton.



Ringling at Colyton

The entry to the tower here is quite interesting and some of the taller ringers had to 'duck or grouse'! Despite their weight (25cwt) the bells go quite well and several ringers conquered the tenor. Methods included call changes and Stedman Triples. Seaton, another eight, were next and these are a more manageable weight so our repertoire grew to include Yorkshire Surprise. A slightly longer break gave us time to traverse the Axe valley to Axminster. The central tower contains a fairly heavy ring of ten. Several of the band were ringing on ten for the first time so there was a lot of concentration on rounds and call changes. We did try some Plain Bob Caters as well.

A short drive brought us to our last tower at Kilminster – these are a pleasant ring of six with a 10cwt tenor. The treble here caused some amusement as the rope falls so close to the wall that several ringers decided to ring with their backs to the rest of the band. We added Grandsire and Little Bob to our repertoire here.

So that was the end of the ringing but for many the highlight was yet to come! Rodney had booked a meal at the Old Inn and we were soon seated round a long table and awaiting the food. We were not disappointed and a fine meal was soon in front of us. Much conversation and good humour were enjoyed until it was time to return home. Rodney must be congratulated on superb organisation – including, of course, the weather. The bells were very varied but all well worth a visit so that our less experienced ringers were able to gain vital practice on bells away from their home towers. Thank you Rodney for a great day and to all who came along. Please come again.



Stokeinteignhead Flower Festival

Stokeinteignhead in late July – lovely weather and a warm welcome. This was the scene for a superb flower festival on the theme of water. The church was filled with flowers arranged by villagers. Your correspondent had the temerity to suggest he would not know where to start with flower arranging and was clearly told that it "is just as easy as learning to ring – if I can learn to ring – you could learn to arrange flowers!". Point taken! The festival lasted from Friday to Sunday and ringing was included on each day. It was noticeable how the confidence of the less experienced ringers grew over those three days. One of the highlights was a superbly struck (and very competently conducted!) 240 of Grandsire Doubles on the Saturday afternoon – the sort of ringing that lasts long in the memory. Thank you to all at Stoke for such a warm welcome – if you didn't make it this year try and get there next time – you will not be disappointed.

Kingskerswell Outing

Outings seem to be a bit like buses – all come together, so the weekend after the branch outing several members joined the Kingskerswell/Coffinswell ringers for their tower outing. This time the venue was Somerset by coach with a fairly relaxed day of four towers – Ash (6), East Pennard (5), Pilton (8) and Shapwick (6). For many the highlight was East Pennard which are the heaviest ring of five in the world with a tenor of almost 25cwt.



Ringling at Shapwick

Buckfast Abbey Ringers

A band of very enthusiastic learners is being taught at Buckfastleigh in the hope that they will be able to ring at the Abbey by Christmas. At the end of July a number of them got the opportunity to ring with more experienced ringers and they managed extremely well, making it seem that their target should be achieved with time to spare. It is so good to see the prospect of regular ringing by a local band at the Abbey. This is something that has not been done for very many years. Many congratulations go to all at Buckfast(leigh).

Joint 10 bell practice with South West Branch –

St Marychurch

A few years ago our branch committee was trying to address the fact that the August practices were often badly attended because of holidays and other summer commitments. A conversation with members of the South West Branch found that they had the same problem. An obvious answer was a joint practice. This has now become a popular fixture. This year it was the turn of our branch to be hosts.

We were delighted to welcome 24 ringers with a wide range of experience levels. Several were ringing on ten for the first time. So, the emphasis was very much on call changes and Plain Hunt but we also rang a touch of Stedman Caters, Erin Triples and Little Bob Royal. We are sure that the popularity of this practice will keep it on our calendars for the foreseeable future.

The bells of Stoke Fleming ring again (from Anne Bailey)

After six months silence the bells of St Peter's, Stoke Fleming rang out again for the first time on Monday 15th August. The corroded bell-frame has been replaced and the six bells (12-1-6), dating from 1777 have been re-tuned, overhauled and rehung with refurbished fittings. At the same time they have been augmented to eight with two new trebles, weighing 4-1-19 and 4-3-2 respectively. The test ring, under the watchful eye of our bellhanger from Whitechapel Bell Foundry, was well attended. About twenty ringers were there; the local Stoke Fleming band was joined by a number of supportive ringers by special invitation. The general consensus was that the bells go very well and sound good after the work. After the practice the ringers repaired to the Green Dragon, opposite the church, to celebrate a very successful project. Rededication will take place on Sunday 9th October at 3.30pm. The service will be taken by Bishop Nick of Plymouth. Visitors are welcome at Thursday practice nights, but please contact Tower Captain John Dietz (01803 770515, john.a.dietz@btopenworld.com) first. Space in the ringing chamber with eight ropes is limited. Stoke Fleming is a Devon Association affiliated tower.

Thanks to Anne and Peter Bailey who have kept us regularly updated about this exciting project and many congratulations to all – we look forward to trying out this new ring of 8.

Upton Outing

The border between Somerset and Dorset was the area visited this year. The morning was spent in Somerset starting at Seavington St Mary (6) followed by Odcombe (6), East Coker (8) and the fine 5 at Closworth. Lunch was taken just over the border in Dorset before ringing at Leigh (pronounced Lie). This fine six were voted best bells of the day – well worth another visit. At the last minute Yetminster were not available so the five at Lillington were substituted. This proved to be a very interesting church in a tiny hamlet of about four houses. Its claim to fame is that Walter Raleigh's son (also Walter) was christened there. The ringing floor is on quite a slope which has been tackled by giving each ringer a level platform to ring on – unique in our experience. Thornford (6) were next followed by Bradford Abbas (6). It was a shame that these bells came last as they were certainly the most challenging with a very low ceiling which tended to cause the ropes to fly about somewhat alarmingly! At the end of a busy day they were particularly hard work but they sounded well once the handling had been mastered. Thanks go to Don Roberts for his meticulous organisation and some fascinating towers.

Martin Mansley

TRAINING MORNING – RAISING AND LOWERING



This was a new venture for the Mid Devon Branch, but one which proved very popular. Perhaps as method ringers we see raising the bells as a means to an end before we get on with the real stuff so it can be a bit neglected. This was a chance to redress the balance. We started promptly at 9.30am with a short discussion and demonstrations highlighting a few common faults such as trying to follow a bell when it is at a different height. East Ogwell bells had been chosen for the practical session as they are relatively light and go extremely well. It meant that we did not wear out our

helpers quite so quickly but on the other hand several of our students who were used to heavier bells realised they needed to be a little more restrained on light bells.

By 11.00 am when it was time for a break all eight trainees had raised and lowered a bell at least once. Janet Ritterman had kindly provided bacon rolls and tea and coffee and this proved very popular. During the break there was a chance to peruse a selection of relevant books from the branch library and take the obligatory group photo. Soon it was time to get back up the tower. The main thrust of the second session was Plain hunt and Plain Bob Doubles to give some of our trainees their first chance to try method ringing. We did manage to get a bit more raising and lowering practice as well.

A lasting impression of the morning was of an enthusiastic group eager to learn and share knowledge. It was very pleasing to have ringers with us experiencing a branch event for the first time and several whose first contact had been our 'Meet the Branch' day back in March. To all we say thank you for all the hard work and particularly to Sharon and Janet from East Ogwell/Wolborough who made us so welcome. It may have been our first course on this subject but it will surely not be the last.

Martin Mansley

NORTH EAST BRANCH

RED AND FLO ACHIEVE LEVEL 1

Red and Flo started ringing in the after school bell club in September 2015. With only limited time during weekly term time practices their progress has been steady. The targets for the level one certificate include setting the bell ten times at handstroke and ten times at backstroke. With only one practice a week and lots of other commitments these final targets took a while. However their bell control is good and they are confidently ringing and calling call changes, ring Kaleidoscope exercises and ring for Sunday services. They have already achieved some of the level two targets.



Red and Flo being presented with their certificates by Les Boyce (after school bell club teacher) during the NE Branch young ringers' outing in August

Sheila Scofield

A TRIP INTO THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

Midst the features of this Guild's North East branch, amongst its enthusiasm, joy for life and relentless encouragement to one showing a desire to practise the skill of church bell ringing, is the way a programme of events can so very easily become a way of life. At every corner there is a practice full of humour, camaraderie and good fellowship.

So with the summer barbecue at Cruwys Morchard. Through the novel lynch gate and into an interestingly different English church where soon strident voices searched the high note followed by lower tones of the vicar leading through the service. Organ music played classical in a wonderfully country hand followed with enthusiastic applause. Service over, a chance to join the sea of smiling faces - all welcoming, happy, inclusive – yes, you really were made feel at home here amongst new found ringing friends.

The church of the Holy Cross is quite extraordinary and thereby hangs a tale. A story of destruction, fire by lightning on thatch, bells melting and metal trickling down the tower stairs. Of costs and pleas and the thoughtful power of the diocesan Bishop of

Exeter - "bring me the list of landowners and I'll see who has contributed what to the restoration fund". It worked and within the century the fabric was restored to its current hue. The name Cruwys Morchard (wood of the family Cruwys) describes an ecclesiastical parish so not a place name as such, where in a way time has stood still, where one family has the Baronetcy, 'tis said, since time immemorial (1189 in legal parlance but at least since King John in 1199, in Norman gift) forming a continuum believed actually to pre date this Norman Conquest of medieval Anglo Saxon England right through to the present untroubled by continental revolution or fortune's mischance. It is a truly English part of this most verdant County of Devon.

Ringin' followed. What a glorious setting and how privileged one felt to be a welcomed part of this most ancient tradition in such an enchanting setting where all comers were instant friends willing to give of their knowledge of the history and practice.

Thence to part two - the barbecue. No, it just couldn't be in some nearby garden, oh no, this as with the rest of the day, was to find us travelling well beyond the realm of expectation - bouncing along at a rate of knots in Chairman Mike's truly fine jalopy through country lanes to Way Village a distant hard to find spot which under Mike's fine skills and those of our 'directeur' sitting on the rear seat, we came to the house whose side led to the few more habitations tucked away off the 'main road' comprising this hamlet. And then the real test of stamina as we sped through ever closing hedges along another winding single track seemingly miles further on to reach the field in which the cars were housed by kind permission of Bryan and Elaine and thence on foot via field and track, a fence to a farm building in disguise - nay house in the country, a shady nook on a truly heavenly turf. Past two sleepy-eyed dogs we trod taking care not to wake them as if on a Harry Potter set, and suddenly thereby thrust for our nasals savour, the glorious hue of barbecue which joined with such tranquillity the heavenly fragrance of this countryside setting. Cheerful voices then abounding, we were amongst friends - a happy throng all intent to ensure that each visitor felt welcomed and cared for.

The barn, now an architect-designed house built entirely to its lady owner's strong views on how such things must be, was simply enchanting - an abode where every nuance had been garnered by some small request to capture a thought, a wish thereby facilitating a freestanding lifestyle to suit the owner; something which one imagines is without precedence in the rest of Devon or beyond. The whole is just simply magical, and to be allowed to intrude upon all this alone well justifies one's membership of this throng of happy folk.

Alas, the above is no more than a sketch of the whole - more wonderful food than one could possibly devour, more happy people than seen in many a previous soirée, seemingly too many to meet but all of whom came with a smile and "hello", a vegetable garden to die for, a view worth a King's ransom and, to cap it all, said lady produced a suitcase with numbered woolly sock-like things which encasement when once removed revealed the most beautifully sounding set of hand bells. Then rung with panache (needing just a tad more practice one fears) by those courageous enough to withstand the cultured gaze of the gathered throng - all this, dear reader, at a summer barbecue - what a find - what an experience! Yes, a magical occasion, hopefully not a once in a lifetime event! One where the present meets the past, and the past is brought (planners notwithstanding) screaming with delight into the future. Where people having fun gain so very much for so little cost, but more importantly than this, where the future of the Branch is cemented into the minds of the present thereby ensuring its place within our community to the future benefit of all comers.

Many thanks to all those who helped bring the above to fruition, to branch members for their time and encouragement so freely given at every turn which continued during the outing, to all who though their 'behind the scenes' efforts have helped bring this event to our attention and to those kind members at Cruwys Morchard who worked so very hard to make the above such an unforgettable occasion - those who gave their time, their enthusiasm and who through their hard work made an event which will remain in the minds all those who had the good fortune to attend that day. Lastly, and most importantly, to Nellie whose hard work and generosity in allowing us a place at her table and very enchanting private world simply put the cherry on the cake - thank you.

John Skinner (NE Branch Press Officer)

YOUNG RINGERS GO OUT AND ABOUT

A few weeks ago, I went with four other young ringers and a few adults to two practice days organised by Sheila Scofield. The aim was improve our ringing skills and learn new techniques. On the first day we went to All Saints, Huntsham for a morning session. As most of us were on different levels we rang separately with the adults. I think most of us rang well. On my turn I covered to Plain Hunt



On the second day we started off at St. Paul's, Tiverton, where we rang call changes and Plain Hunt. We were taught the correct way to find our places in Plain Bob Doubles, which we all grasped pretty easily. Next we had lunch together at Heathcoat's Community Centre and after that we all went to St Peter's, Tiverton where we did some more ringing. Most young ringers hadn't rung here before and thought there were far too many steps in the tower.



We also had the opportunity to go all the way up to the top of the tower. From here we could see all of Tiverton and Knightshayes too. As well as this we got to see the bell chamber and the clock room - I thought that the clock room was the best because I got to see the clock mechanism but some people preferred the bell chamber.

We all had a great time, I know I did. So thank you everyone, especially Sheila for organising these two days.

George Doe

NE BRANCH OUTING



The early bird catches the worm, or in our case, the early ringer catches the sally! Our branch outing on Saturday 25th June was another well-executed ringing tour with an opportunity to ring at six towers, interspersed with fine dining at lunchtime and a feast for dinner concluding the day. It was an early start, hence my opening line: we were all on the road for 08:30 and had an hour's drive ahead of us before arriving at the first tower: Kingsteignton. This tower is certainly a jewel in the crown of the Association, we were all bedazzled with the shining silver ware: trophies and shields - certainly a sight to behold. The bells were great too! No pressure then as we attempted to ring call changes with closed handstrokes! We did ourselves proud as method ringers but can naturally only ever dream of reaching their dizzy heights of expertise. After an hour's ringing we then set off to Bovey Tracey for the second ring.

The remaining towers took us through the Teign Valley where the sun shone brightly, making the day an even more enjoyable experience. We had a pit-stop at the Cridford Inn at Trusham, a splendid venue with food and drink to match, abating the hunger pangs from earlier and making us all feel sleepy.....nothing to do with the wine and beer that we drank [honest]. With a further four towers to raise the bells, ring and lower once more, we paced ourselves as best we could before collapsing in a heap at the Artichoke Inn at Christow to enjoy a well earned dinner with yet more drink - for medicinal purposes I must add.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day with thanks going to Brian Samuels who once again pulled out all the stops for us, this being his second [at least] such organised event for the branch. Ironically, due to other commitments, Brian then couldn't join us...

..I do hope he can next year and also hope another branch member grasps the nettle and organises a trip, affording Brian a well deserved rest from his planning escapades. Again Brian, on behalf of the NE Branch, a heartfelt thank you.

Mark Heritage

WHERE RINGERS WARILY TREAD, OUR GUILD WILLINGLY INSPIRES

A wedding ringing practice at my village church which just happened to be graced by a Guild teacher, found this novice desperate to devour the opportunity of learning the rudiments of this baffling trade, having readily proven quite succinctly on that occasion his wide ranging ineptitude.

Then, as if by chance, an opportunity opened, a gift of time and education together with some practice friends to Bampton each Monday for an hour's instruction on how things really should be done.

So began a love affair, a contest of wills twixt me and ropes, bells and the clock where clangers morphed from iron to rude placement, sweat poured as hands failed in their clutch enabling wobbles in rope to overtake the ponderous form of one attempting to toll in time.

From then, week in week out Troyte ringing centre teachers gave of their time and encouragement with humour, sympathy, sweets and tea in a practiced gradual harnessing the will of our wayward brains to conform to the skill of ringing church bells - gradually to the rhythms of ringing rounds whose glorious sound had graced our ears at that first ever parking next the church afore our first lesson, when school children having the session before ours, were heard ringing with such panache that we had found ourselves held in amazement of their achievement and disbelief that we'd ever make their grade.

Yet, with constant care of those in charge, gradually our own performance garnered skill. Each weekend had something to look forward to in the Monday next - and there, midst the angst, the stress and faltering in and out of partial failure, the analysis and praise always pulling us forward topped with that 'well done' followed by further analysis. Tentative steps bringing improvement - such tantalizing progress yet a leaping ahead - so much accomplished yet so very much more always to do.

Today finds us experimenting with call change routines whilst tinkering with additional Guild instructional exercises as in Kaleidoscope and Tim's basic course of bell control in raising and lowering, Plus the ringing of each bell in turn - no let outs and all the time gaining in confidence and enjoyment thereby too. All part of the vibrancy to be had from the Guild in our environs.

And so much yet to do. So much music beyond our current grasp yet still our friends and teachers persist in their unpaid works - where else could one find such dedication to our cause?

All this help, this detailed analysis this friendship recipe ingredients for a lasting way of life found almost by chance within the North East Branch of the Devon Guild of Ringers deserving a massive thank you to all - members who through their innate friendliness and help have given this novice and his two friends such encouragement without even noticing, to those members of our new band at Bampton who have persisted in joining Monday practice without complaint of our falterings and to those esteemed members of the committee who with little time to spare have so very generously attended, encouraged and instructed without the merest hint of complaint at our obvious ineptitude - a big thank you. For without the persistence shown by you all there is little doubt but that we poor souls would be still found wondering what it was that made a ringer.

My personal experience this last year has seen me fail consistently yet never be made to feel other than one to be encouraged and now whilst with much still to achieve, I am pleased to relate that I am mostly safe to ring, gaining skills in rounds, understanding of the process in call changes and looking to improve technique towards a start with method. Wow, what a journey what progress!

All this dear reader a result of that chance meeting - thank you Lord.

Poor sinner (John Skinner)

TRAINING

YOUNG RINGERS' DAY IN EXETER

All young ringers (school age) of any standard of ringing (learning to handle a bell upwards) are invited to a day of ringing and celebration at the Denmisch ring (Exeter Cathedral School) on Saturday 8th October.

The event will include the presentation of the Sarah Beacham ART award which will be attended by officers from the Association of Ringing Teachers.

Lunch will be provided.

Please contact Oliver Coldrick at yrcoordinator@devonringers.org.uk for further information and to book a place.

Oliver Coldrick

ART TRAINING COURSE - MODULE 2C

Module 2C of the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) teacher-training course was held at St Michael and All Angels in Pinhoe, Exeter on Saturday 3rd September.

Led by Les Boyce and ably assisted by Sheila Scofield, we four students were taken through our paces covering a myriad of topics

and methods in teaching ringers to Plain Hunt with easy steps into Bob Doubles. There was lots of information in-between with discussions on running a good practice and the mechanics of a successful tower.

The theory side of the course was interspersed with practical demonstrations and hands-on within the tower, with open dialogue sharing best practice amongst the group. Ringing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' by way of aiding effective bell control and rope sight with new ringers through to ringing long and short places, dodges, Churchyard Bob, Bastow Little Bob Doubles to name but a few of the elements rung. A review of the '39 Steps to Bob Doubles' at lunchtime showed the incremental elements required to ring the method effectively starting from the bell handling stage.

A thoroughly enjoyable day was had with a fantastic lunch at the Pinhoe Hoard providing us all with much needed brain food, gearing us up nicely for the afternoon session.

Without doubt, the course provides essential information, arming the ringing teacher with a wealth of knowledge enabling them to expand and inject interest into teaching ringers moving into method ringing, whilst maintaining the interests of the supporting band.

I would highly recommend this course to all ringers who are or would like to help and teach others; without our input, giving back what has been afforded us, we have only ourselves to blame for any demise within the ringing community.

Our sincere gratitude goes to Les & Sheila once more for a most enjoyable, rewarding and fulfilling course.



Mark Heritage

ART TRAINING SCHEME Day Course

Module 1: Teaching Bell Handling – Sat 12 Nov
East/Mid Devon venue, 9.15 – 5.15

For new teachers and those wanting to update and get extra tips & hints.

Theory sessions cover:

Becoming a good teacher; Teaching a skilled activity; Solving common handling problems

Practical sessions cover:

The basic components; Joining both strokes; Teaching ringing up & down.

Course Fee: £20 (Guild will pay for its members)
Observers welcome (Fee: £10). Local costs extra.

Bookings to: <https://smartringer.org/public/daycourses/>
Enquiries to: Les Boyce, 01884 256819 or
lesboyce@gmail.com

WORDS OF WISDOM

It's Not The Same Any More!
They've brought you up to date, Lord,
down at St Cecilia's.
They've pensioned off the organ,
and they're praising with guitars.
They've done it for the young ones;
we want to draw them in,
but I do wish they could worship
without making such a din.

For I'm growing rather deaf, Lord,
and when there's all that noise,
it gets so very hard, Lord,
to hear your loving voice.
They've written brand-new hymns, Lord,
with tunes that I don't know,
so I hardly ever sing now
though I did love singing so.

My mind's not quite so agile
as it was some years ago
and I miss the age-old beauty
of the words I used to know.
It's very clear to me, Lord,
I've overstayed my time;
I don't take to change so kindly
as I did when in my prime.

But it can't be very long now
before I'm called above,
and I know I'll find you there, Lord,
and glory in your love.
So till then I'll stick it out here,
though it's not the same for me,
but while others call You "You", Lord
do you mind if I say "Thee"?



Seen in a tower

NOTABLE PEALS

Martin Mansley's 65th birthday Peal

Thorverton, Devon

St Thomas of Canterbury

Monday, 27 June 2016 in 2h58

5040 Mansley Combe Surprise Royal

Composed by D F Morrison (No 1467)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Philip Stevens | 6 John R Martin (C) |
| 2 Susan D Sparling | 7 Martin G Mansley |
| 3 Ian V J Smith | 8 James Kirkcaldy |
| 4 Charlotte A Boyce | 9 Michael E C Mears |
| 5 Ian W Avery | 10 David Hird |

First peal in the method.

Mansley Combe Surprise Royal

x30x14x50x16x70x38x14x1450x3678x90, lh 12(b)

Rung as a 65th birthday compliment to the ringer of the 7th.

First Peal for Oliver

Oliver writes:

For my first peal we went to East Budleigh and rang Yorkshire Surprise Major, where I rung the 2nd and it went really well. The first bit went very well, as the striking was good, I didn't make too many mistakes and it was very enjoyable. However, towards the end it became harder work to keep concentrating so I made a few more mistakes, I started getting blisters and had no idea what the time was and when it was going to end. But we eventually got through it and went to the pub afterwards to recover (with my hands covered in blisters)! Thank you to everyone who was ringing with me and helped get me through it, and I'll hopefully get to do more in the future.

East Budleigh, Devon

All Saints

Thursday, 18 August 2016 in 2hr 49m

5024 Yorkshire Surprise Major

Composed by P J Flavell

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Ian L C Campbell | 5 P Wendy Campbell |
| 2 Oliver C Bates | 6 Graham P Tucker |
| 3 Lesley A Tucker | 7 Oliver Coldrick |
| 4 Sarah Chadburn | 8 David Hird (C) |

1st peal - 2.



The band in order anti-clockwise, starting from front left

A trip to Lundy Island

Lundy Island, Devon

St Helen

Tuesday, 9 August 2016 in 2h54

5040 Yorkshire Surprise Royal

Composed by D F Morrison (No 6603)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Peter L Bill | 6 James Kirkcaldy |
| 2 Alison C Waterson | 7 Katharine A Hill |
| 3 Charlotte A Boyce | 8 Richard Harrison |
| 4 Jennifer R Sparling | 9 John R Martin (C) |
| 5 Rebecca J Harrison | 10 Thomas J Waterson |



John Foster's Peal Week

John has been arranging a peal week in August for as long as I can remember. This year he organised 16 peals in the Oxford area, of which 15 were scored. The week culminated with the peal of Maximus at Christchurch, Oxford where it was good to ring with our old friends Colin and Nicola Turner:

Oxford, Oxfordshire

Cathedral Church of Christ

Sunday, 28 August 2016 in 3h24

5042 Cambridge Surprise Maximus

Composed by M P A Wilby (No 4)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Colin M Turner | 7 Ian L C Campbell |
| 2 Nicola J Turner | 8 Ian V J Smith |
| 3 Susan D Sparling | 9 Pauline McKenzie |
| 4 P Wendy Campbell | 10 John A Foster |
| 5 Charlotte A Boyce | 11 John R Martin |
| 6 Lester J Yeo | 12 Michael E C Mears (C) |



In Tom quad after the peal : (l to r) John Martin, Sue Sparling, Ian Smith, Mike Mears, Charlotte Boyce, Wendy Campbell, Nicola Turner, Colin Turner, Lester Yeo, John Foster, Ian Campbell, Pauline McKenzie

Ian Campbell

First Peal of Bristol for Rebecca

Okehampton, Devon

All Saints

Thursday, 8 September 2016 in 2hrs 56m

5056 Bristol Surprise Major

Composed by A J Cox

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Alison C Waterson | 5 Ian V J Smith |
| 2 David G Wilford | 6 James Kirkcaldy |
| 3 Rebecca J Harrison | 7 Richard Harrison |
| 4 Timothy M Bayton | 8 Michael E C Mears (C) |

First peal of Bristol: 3

Mike Mears

Celebrating 60 years

We were very pleased to be invited to ring a peal to commemorate the 85th birthdays of Norman and Mariella Mallett and their diamond wedding anniversary. Norman has been a vice-president of the Guild for many years and a leading light in ringing circles in the county. Following the peal we opened the mystery envelope which we had been given in advance and used the contents in the local pub to drink to their health. Congratulations go to you both.

Plympton St Maurice, Devon
St Maurice

Wednesday, 7 September 2016 in 3hrs 3m (16-0-2)
5088 Bristol Surprise Major
Composed by D F Morrison (No4 reversed)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Ian L C Campbell | 5 Robert D S Brown |
| 2 Lester J Yeo | 6 Peter L Bill |
| 3 P Wendy Campbell | 7 Michael E C Mears (C) |
| 4 Ian V J Smith | 8 David Hird |

With best wishes to Norman and Mariella Mallett, celebrating their 85th birthdays and their Diamond wedding anniversary.



The band in order clockwise, starting from front right

Ian Campbell

A NEW PEAL OF BELLS IN DEVON



The bells installed in the barn

The newest ring of bells in the county were pealed and quartered for the first time recently. The Bowerdon Peal is owned by Paul Hext, and housed in one of his barns, amidst all the wood shavings and straw. They are a delightful little Higby six, in a portable frame, so Paul plans to take them out and make them available in other venues. The first quarter peal was rung on 17th August, after an unsuccessful peal attempt, and the Guild Master was pleased to be able to say afterwards that he is now the only person to have rung a quarter peal at all the sixes in Devon. Inevitably a second attempt was arranged immediately, and this also failed to score. But the spiders in the barn gave their traditional advice, and the third try, albeit with a slightly different band, rang a creditable peal of Doubles in just over two hours. Paul, who rang the tenor to what was his first peal, was amazed that peal ringers are able to ring for so long ‘day in day out’!

Buckfastleigh, Devon
The Bowerdon Peal

Wednesday, 17 August 2016 in 29 mins (16lbs)
1260 Doubles (7m,1p)

60 Stedman, 120 each Grandsire, Winchendon Place, St. Nicholas, Rev. Canterbury, 240 each St. Martins, St. Simons, Plain Bob.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Robert Brown | 4 David Hird |
| 2 Nigel Birt | 5 Michael Mears (C) |
| 3 Lester Yeo | 6 Paul Hext |

1st quarter on the bells.

Completes all available Devon 6’s to quarters, the 1st person to do so - 2



The quarter peal band (L to R) Paul, Nigel, Lester, David, Mike, Rob

TROYTE RINGING CENTRE
Huntsham & Bampton

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Sat 24 Sept. Introduction to Plain Bob Minimus & Doubles. A short theory session on how to learn a method and practical workshops on moving the bell accurately, using the treble as a signpost, course bells and other ways to “stay right”. Must already be able to plain hunt as a minimum.

Sat 29 Oct. Call Change Workshop. Develop your skills in Devon Call Change ringing – ringing with rhythm, making “clean” changes, listening and leading. Opportunities to judge striking and call changes as well.

Sat 26 Nov. Moving into Minor – Plain Hunt & Plain Bob. Aimed at those wanting to move on from Doubles and take first steps in Minor methods.

All workshops at Huntsham, 10:00 – 13:00. Fee: £6 inc lunch. Bookings (essential) to Les Boyce at lesboyce@gmail.com.

Buckfastleigh, Devon
The Bowerdon Peal

Thursday, 8 September 2016 in 2hrs 6m (16lb 4oz)
5040 Doubles (8m/p)
2 extents Stedman; 4 extents each Grandsire, Winchendon
Place, St Nicholas, Reverse Canterbury; 8 extents each St
Martin's, St Simon's, Plain Bob
1 Robert D S Brown 4 Donald B Carter
2 Peter L Bill 5 Michael E C Mears (C)
3 Lester J Yeo 6 Paul Hext
First peal on the bells.



The peal band (L to R) Paul, Peter, Lester, Donald, Mike, Rob

Lester Yeo

A DAY OUT IN TROWBRIDGE

If you visit Trowbridge on a hot summer's day, you will be pleased to note the central location of the local Wetherspoons which is aptly named "Sir Isaac Pitman" after Trowbridge's most famous son. Pitman is also celebrated in one of the peals rung at Trowbridge. Appropriately the peal board is marked up in shorthand.

It was at the Wetherspoons that a group of Devon ringers adjourned after ringing a peal of Yorkshire Surprise Maximus at St James this July. The peal was organised to mark 50 years since Richard Johnston (another notable of Trowbridge) rang his first peal in 1965.

Richard learnt to ring at Trowbridge as a grammar school lad. His first peal was on the treble to Grandsire Caters at the age of 17 and he went on to ring a further three peals during his youth in that tower.

In 1967 Richard went up to Oxford on a scholarship to study mathematics. Whilst at university he was an active member of the Oxford University Society. He also developed his taste for real ale and an interest in cars. He purchased his Austin A30 as a student which he still runs to this day.

At Oxford Richard rang a number of peals including 12 spliced Surprise Major at St Ebbe's which is still recorded as the fastest peal by the Society on the bells. Postgraduate studies continued at Manchester where ringing took more of a back seat. Upon completion of his PhD, Richard worked as a scientist at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, moving to Yateley in Hampshire where he joined the local band.

Since moving to Devon in 2009, Richard has become a regular member of a number of peal bands and his peal total stands near 700.

THE SALISBURY DIOCESAN GUILD.			
TROWBRIDGE, Wiltshire.—At the Church of St. James.			
On Sat., Feb. 12, 1966, in 3 Hours and 10 Minutes,			
A PEAL OF 5057 GRANDSIRE CATERS			
*Richard H. Johnston .. Treble	†David A. Burt	6	
Mrs. F. A. Penn	Charles P. Quartley .. .	7	
Nigel P. Spencer	Robert D. Quartley .. .	8	
Gilbert H. Harding .. .	Frank A. Penn	9	
*Richard J. Gardiner .. .	Ronald H. Lucas	Tenor	
Composed by Edgar C. Shepherd. Conducted by Robert D. Quartley.			
* First peal. † First of Caters. First of Caters as conductor.			
Rung in memoriam Samuel J. Hector. Tenor 24 cwt. 2 qr. 18 lb. in D.			

Richard's first peal as recorded in The Ringing World



Trowbridge, Wiltshire
St James
Saturday, 9 July 2016 in 3h09
5040 Yorkshire Surprise Maximus
Composed by J Clatworthy
1 Alison C Waterson 7 Peter G Brown
2 Charlotte A Boyce 8 Timothy M Payne
3 Lester J Yeo 9 Oliver Coldrick
4 Peter L Bill 10 Robert D S Brown
5 Richard H Johnston 11 David Hird
6 John R Martin (C) 12 Michael E C Mears
Rung as a compliment to the ringer of the 5th in the 50th anniversary year of his first peal, which was rung in this tower.

Charlotte Boyce

HOW TO MAKE AN OLD MAN HAPPY

In his youth Peter Bill lived near The Lye at Stourbridge which has an unusual ring of eight Belgian bells with a tenor of only three hundredweight. The original installation had unsuitable clappers which struck the bells intermittently, and rarely at the correct time, although they were slightly better if the bells were rung up with the clapper on the wrong side. One or two bells were also prone to the rope slipping off the wheel unexpectedly. Peter was thrilled when the bells were recently refurbished by Matthew Higby and were now a delight to ring. A peal attempt was planned and then lost, and he was unable to ring in a second attempt so a band of friends was assembled and a good peal was rung at last.

The Lye, Worcestershire
Christ Church
Saturday, 10 September 2016 in 2hr41
5056 Lye Delight Major
Composed by D W Beard, arr. B V Mountjoy
1 Christopher J Pickford 5 Peter L Bill
2 James Kirkcaldy 6 Lester J Yeo
3 P Wendy Campbell 7 Ian L C Campbell
4 Charlotte A Boyce 8 Brian V Mountjoy (C)
The ringer of the 5th is now a happy old man!



The band relaxing after the peal

Ian Campbell

A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

From: Brother Daniel Smyth

Date: 3 August 2016 at 11:25:57 BST

To: Peter Bill

Subject: Thank you for dedicating Monday's quarter peal
Dear Peter.

Thank you for dedicating Monday's Quarter Peal to my Mother, Mary Philomena Smyth, before her Requiem Mass at 2pm and burial. My family also would like to express their thanks; as the bells were ringing I thought how appropriate that our bells should be ringing before the funeral. It meant a lot to me and my brothers, nieces, nephews and cousins.

Thank you also for sending me the link to the quarter peal which I will be able to send to Mum's family in America, Canada, Ireland and England.

The Peal on Saturday sounded splendid and I hope it was brought round to completion.

With kindest regards.

Daniel.

Buckfast, Devon

Abbey Church of St Mary

Monday, 1 August 2016 in 59 min (41–1–3)

1320 Grandsire Cinques

1 Chris Sawyer	7 Martin Mansley
2 Wendy Campbell	8 Philip Stevens
3 Peter Bill	9 Graham Tucker
4 Ann Smith	10 Ian Campbell
5 Ian Smith (C)	11 David Hird
6 Richard Johnston	12 Peter Sawyer

First of Cinques: 1.

Rung prior to the Requiem Mass for Mary Philomena Smyth, mother of Brother Daniel Smyth OSB, a member of this Community.

Peter Bill

YOUNGEST TO TURN IN CATHEDRAL TENOR

With the peal on 10th September Tom Waterson became the youngest to ring it single handed to Maximus – he is 25 years and 3 months old.

Exeter, Devon

Cathedral Church of St Peter

Saturday, 10 September 2016 in 4h 24 (72–2–2)

5042 Cambridge Surprise Maximus

Composed by R W Pipe

1 Alison C Waterson	7 Gabrielle L Cowcill
2 Ian R Fielding (C)	8 John R Martin
3 Jennifer R Sparling	9 Richard Harrison
4 Katharine A Hill	10 Matthew J Hilling
5 Alan G Reading	11 Michael E C Mears
6 Ian V J Smith	12 Thomas J Waterson

WORK BY NICHOLSON ENGINEERING

We have recently completed restoration work at Lynmouth parish church. This has included the complete restoration of the chime of ten tubular bells hanging in the tower to which we have fitted a set of our electrically operated chiming hammers. The sound of Grandsire and Stedman Caters may now be heard wafting across the Lyn valley. We have also rehung the two turret bells which had been taken down for safety many years ago. The two bells are hung with full wheels for swing chiming (NOT full circle ringing - please note!)

Another project recently completed is the refurbishment of the single large bell in the Roman Catholic church in South Street, Exeter. The bell is by Murphy of Dublin and weighs about a ton. Originally hung for swing chiming from an enormous counterbalanced headstock, the bell had been fitted with an Ellacombe hammer which had failed. We have fitted an electrically operated hammer and the bell may now be heard sounding out the Angelus twice a day as well as being used at the Consecration during Mass and as a calling bell prior to services.

We are currently in the latter stages of a major refurbishment of the fine light six at Welcombe. The work centres around the replacement of the whole of the steel grillage to the bellframe which although of no great age had corroded so badly that ringing had to cease. While the bells and their fittings are here we have taken the opportunity to undertake a full overhaul which includes making a new headstock for the fifth. Installation is scheduled to begin in late September.

Andrew Nicholson

PROTEST – A SHORT STORY

It was the casting vote that really hurt. George Broadworthy, tower captain of St Swarfega's, Little Odford, knew that no important committee decision should ever be taken on the Chairman's casting vote.

"Calls 'isself a chairman?", said George, loudly, in the bar of the Ring of Bells, on the day the decision was announced. "E's got as much idea about bein' a chairman as 'e 'as about ringin' Stedman."

The chairman in question was Charlie Farmer, Branch Ringing Master and recently elected County Councillor. It was well known in ringing circles that there was no love lost between George Broadworthy and Charlie Farmer and this had been amply demonstrated in the matter of the Little Odford ringers' outing row the previous summer.

Following the County Council elections Charlie had been appointed a member, and almost immediately chairman, of the Fire Brigades Committee, a committee which was fighting a fierce battle to stay within its budget. And this fight was what had led up to the casting vote incident.

Little Odford had established its own local fire brigade way back in 1897 as a very practical way of celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Voluntary contributions had enabled a horse-drawn fire engine to be purchased and a brigade of local part-time firemen had been established.

The first commander of the Little Odford Fire Brigade had been the Tower Captain and the tradition had soon developed that the two jobs went together. Naturally the fireman's job had to be relinquished at a younger age than that of Tower Captain but by judicious management of the succession the link continued.

From the earliest days the bells had been used to call out the firemen. The easily recognised signal was the ringing of the treble and the fifth – an unmelodious combination audible across the parish. The disadvantage of this signal was that it was soon learnt by the fire engine horse who promptly took steps to hide himself in the furthest corner of his field which sometimes meant that the brigade's arrival at the scene of the fire was later than planned!

With the arrival of the motorised fire engine the horse quickly learnt to ignore the signal and enjoyed an untroubled retirement, but the bell ringing connection was maintained. George Broadworthy had been the Station Officer until he was 65 when his vice-captain and younger brother Fred took on the job.

The County Council's financial problems began to be aired soon after the elections and one of its first targets for cuts was the Fire Service. It was suggested that the maintenance of local volunteer stations was an unnecessary expense on the modern world where vehicles can travel faster and contacts be made more quickly with mobile 'phones and the like. A formal proposal was therefore put to the committee to do away with the four remaining local stations in the county, of which Little Odford was the oldest established.

The publication of the proposal was greeted with dismay which quickly erupted into fury in Little Odford. Ringing practices were punctuated by outbursts of anger,

"Been 'ere over a hundred years an' now they wants to close it down. Stupid!"

"Mobile 'phones? Bells is better. You can't switch they off."

"Catch 'old for Grandsire."

"Never mind the Grandsire. What are we goin' to do about the Fire Station?"

"Might've known somethin' like this would 'appen when they put Charlie Farmer in charge."

"It's all right for 'im. 'E lives in town."

It was not only the ringers who were activated. The Reverend Ken Thornthwaite was still trying hard to complete the bridge-building between himself and the village which the bishop had spoken of at his last meeting, and he saw the Fire Station issue as a wonderful opportunity to secure a few more planks. A lead from

the church could do nothing but good all round and the close link between the Tower and the Fire Station was well recognised in the community.

He arranged a protest meeting in the church hall which attracted so many villagers that it had to decamp to the church itself. A "Save the Fire Station" committee was set up with Ken and George (now, happily on the same side) as Chairman and Vice-chairman. Mary Prosser, postmistress and secretary of the PCC, with her usual keenness offered to be secretary but, with uncharacteristic tactfulness, Ken persuaded her that she had enough to do with the PCC, the Post Office and the WI and that young Jim Broadworthy, Fred's son, and heir presumptive to the Tower and the Fire Station could do the job very well.

The ensuing campaign was very high profile – a rash of posters, letters to the press, public meetings, protests at County Hall, television interviews and nightly half-muffled quarter peals in the week leading up to the critical committee meeting.

The Branch Quarterly Meeting which was held a couple of weeks before Decision Day was a very frosty affair. Unusually every single ringer from St Swarfega's attended, but maintained a dignified silence in the presence of Charlie Farmer. It was no coincidence that at least one St Swarfega ringer was in each of the bands that fired up touches conducted by the Ringing Master. It was also no coincidence that the band for the Service Touch, selected by the Ringing Master, included no ringer from St Swarfega's.

Decision Day was marked by a major demonstration at County Hall which included not only the folk from Little Odford but also protestors from the other three threatened villages.

The committee spent little time in discussion; all that needed saying had already been very publicly said at the various meetings and demonstrations in the villages. The motion was put and votes called for. Six in favour. Six against. A casting vote was needed and Charlie Farmer voted for the cuts.

The "Save the Fire Station" committee members and their supporters gathered in the bar of The Ring of Bells to drown their sorrows.

"Poor old Queen Victoria must be turnin' in 'er grave," said Fred, now the heir apparent only to the Tower. "Fancy 'er bein' let down so. And by a ringer, too."

"You don't call Charlie Farmer a ringer, do you?" replied George. Ringin' Master 'e may be – but a ringer?? We'll give 'im somethin' to think about over this business, you'll see. We may 'ave to close down the Station but we'll do it in style."

The village had two months to plan and execute the farewell ceremonies and the committee worked with a will. The results were spectacular.

On the Monday before the closure of the Station the tenor bell, half-muffled, tolled from 6-7pm. On Tuesday it tolled from 5.30 to 7.30pm (George was in charge of a relay of ringers.)

On Wednesday black bunting was hung along the High Street between the Fire Station and the church and the bell tolled from 5 – 8pm. (Refreshment for the ringers was provided free of charge by The Ring of Bells)

On Thursday two muffled quarters were rung, one in the morning and one in the afternoon and the tenor tolled from 4.30 to 8.30pm (Refreshment both during and after these events was again provided free by The Ring of Bells)

Friday, the final day for the Station, saw the climax of the obsequies. The High Street retained its black bunting, the curtains of all the houses were drawn, garden gates were draped with black ribbon and the Union Flag hung at half mast on the church tower – ironically on the flagpole presented in happier times by the County Fire Brigade.

At 5.30, when the Station officially closed, its nameplate was carefully removed from the wall, placed in Fred Pope's magnificent horse-drawn hearse (with black-plumed horses) specially spruced up for the occasion, and carried in solemn procession to the church. The ringers sounded the traditional alarm call of treble and fifth as the procession moved slowly along the High Street. The Reverend Ken conducted a short but moving service to mark the demise of the Station and the nameplate was deposited for safe keeping in the church.

After the service the flag was slowly lowered and a muffled peal was rung.

It will come as no surprise to learn that the Branch Ringing master was unable to attend the next Quarterly meeting which was held, as scheduled, at St Swarfega's.

Peter Walter

Calendar for September to December 2016

September

Sat 24	10:00	TRC: Introduction to Plain Bob Minimus & Doubles, Huntsham	North East
Wed 28	10:00	Reverse Canterbury Doubles above the Treble Group, Huntsham	North East
Wed 28	19:30	Major/Surprise Method Practice, Huntsham	North East

October

Sat 1	15:00	Branch AGM & Dinner, Tiverton, St Peter's	North East
Wed 5	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Sat 8		Branch AGM, Exmouth, Littleham	Aylesbeare
Sat 8		Young Ringers' Event,	Young Ringers
Sat 8	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Kentisbeare	North East
Sat 8	15:00	Autumn Meeting, Dunkswell	East
Sun 9	19:30	Triples Practice, Huntsham	North East
Wed 12	10:00	Reverse Canterbury Doubles above the Treble Group, Huntsham	North East
Wed 12	19:30	Triples Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 13	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Fri 14	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Fri 14	19:30	Branch Practice, Withycombe Raleigh	Aylesbeare
Sat 15		Striking Competitions, Exeter Branch	Guild
Mon 17	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Sat 22	09:30	Kaleidoscope, Withycombe Raleigh	Guild
Sat 22	14:00	Branch AGM, Pinhoe	Exeter
Wed 26	10:00	Reverse Canterbury Doubles above the Treble Group, Huntsham	North East
Wed 26	19:30	Major/Surprise Method Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 29	10:00	TRC: Call Change Workshop, Huntsham	North East

November

Wed 2	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Sat 5	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Bampton	North East
Sat 5	14.30	Branch AGM, Combe Martin	N/NWest
Mon 7	19:30	Triples - Stedman and Grandsire, Ottery St. Mary	East
Wed 9	10:00	Reverse Canterbury Doubles above the Treble Group, Huntsham	North East
Wed 9	19:30	Branch Practice, Lymptone	Aylesbeare
Thu 10	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Fri 11	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Sat 12		ART Module 1 (Teaching Bell Handling), East Devon	Guild
Sat 12	TBA	Branch 95th Anniversary Service and Dinner, Moorland Garden Hotel	South West
Fri 18	19:30	Branch practice (sharing with local band), Broadclyst	Exeter
Sat 19	10:00	East Devon Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St Mary	North East
Sat 19	18:00	Fred Edwards Shield Striking Competition, Uffculme	North East
Mon 21	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 23	10:00	Reverse Canterbury Doubles above the Treble Group, Huntsham	North East
Wed 23	19:30	Major/Surprise Method Practice, Silverton	North East
Sat 26	10:00	TRC: Plain Hunt Minor & Plain Bob Minor above the Treble, Huntsham	North East

December

Sat 3	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Tiverton, St Paul's	North East
Mon 5	19:30	Triples - Stedman and Grandsire, Ottery St. Mary	East
Wed 7	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Thu 8	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Fri 9	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Sat 10	15:00	Devon Bellringers' Carol Service, Buckfast Abbey	Guild
Mon 12	19:30	Branch Practice, Littleham	Aylesbeare
Wed 14	19:30	Triples Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 17	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St. Mary	East
Mon 19	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East

EDITORIAL

Despite the best work of a number of members, distribution of the previous issue was a little delayed in some areas. It did mean that it could include details of the Guild AGM. I hope that you all got a copy in the end.

We were sorry to hear of the death of John Clifton who rang at Crediton, and also of Jan Earle who rang at St David's. Exeter. Both towers will be the worse for their passing.

The Guild striking competitions are coming up shortly. Please don't think that your tower isn't good enough to ring in a competition. There are rarely very many towers that enter and a few extra ones would be good. And the novice competition is usually poorly subscribed. If you have someone in your band that can just about plain hunt (or better!) then do put in a team (but see the web site for full details).

I would bring to your attention the Young Ringers' Day on 8th October. This is a really good opportunity for young people to ring together with those with a similar interest. We are hoping to find a suitable regular time, perhaps once a month, when a similar session can be organised. Please let Oliver Coldrick know if you are interested even if you can't come on October 8th.

By the time you read this the Heritage Open Day Weekend will be over. We know of at least twelve Devon towers who signed up and there are expected to be about 500 churches nationally which will be specially opened to the public. Many of these will be demonstrating their bells. I hope that you all get a good response and will report on it in the next edition.

I hope that you were observant enough to notice the sub-heading in the picture from the last edition – "Please Maintain SILENCE When Ringing" – This does not apply to the Tower Captain who has to take orders for eggs & lettuce". I could just see this sign out of the corner of my eye while ringing a quarter peal and spent most of the time trying to work out what it said – and what it means! And I rather liked this quote from the late Pam Copson which I spotted on the wall in another tower:

Learning to ring Church Bells can be a lifetime's hobby. You are setting out on a 'journey' with no single correct route, and no precise ending point. The speed and distance you travel depends upon who you are, where you are, who is showing you the way and who is travelling with you.

Pam Copson

Ian Campbell

The Devonshire Association

The Art of Devon Call Change Ringing

Saturday 24th September 2016

2.30-5.00 pm

St. Mary's Church, Ottery St. Mary

- A talk on the history and tradition of Devon call change ringing
 - A demonstration peal by members of the Devon Association of Ringers
 - A selection of bellringing songs
 - An opportunity to have a go and pull a rope
 - Followed by a Devon cream tea*
- Admission by donation; *Cream tea £3.50

For more information and numbers for cream teas please contact

Alan Rosevear 01392 277271; or email: rosevear1@aol.com

**IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEVON
ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS**

CLEAN-UP AT THORVERTON

As is probably well know, the tower at Thorverton is heavily used, with 31 peals and quarter peals having been rung so far this year. In the past the bells have been maintained by Bill Ford but since he moved to Wiltshire to live near his daughter it seemed only fair that members of the Guild should help with looking after the bells.

So on Tuesday 6th September Ian Smith arranged a working party (including three lads!) to sort out a number of problems and general clearing up. He assigned duties to people as follows:

Jane Flaxington: clean up ringing room, including fans

It can get very hot and sticky in the ringing room so the three fans are an essential part of peal ringing in the summer. As a result they were clogged with dirt – we were surprised to find that the blades on one of the fans were actually white!

Ian Campbell and Peter Sawyer: sorting out clock chimes

The tower clock chimes the hour on the tenor, and also a 'ting-tang' on the third and fifth every quarter of an hour. The chiming hammer on the third had been broken in an accident a year or so ago when the bell had been rung without disconnecting the clock hammers. At the same time the safety device which stops the bell being rung until the hammers are pulled off had also broken. Although the hammer had been welded and straightened out previous attempts to fix it had been abandoned when it appeared that the hammer on the fifth was also not being disconnected properly when the bells are rung..



The repaired hammer was installed

The hammer was installed and connected to the mechanism, and the simple but effective safety device refitted over the third bell. This sits against the stay when the bell is down, preventing movement, but pivots up when the clock chimes are pulled off. We then had to follow all the wires, pulleys and bits of string to find where the bit that is supposed to pull-off the fifth was missing and could be replaced. After a couple of false alarms (when a critical clip unclipped) a satisfactory solution was found.

Ian Smith: produce full report of the state of the bells

Ian generally supervised and made good use of his tape measure to provide information for his full tower report. This includes measurement of the wear on the bells and the state of the installation.



Showing the safety device over the third bell in its two positions

Just as we thought we had finished Jane asked us if we could look at the carillon. This is a drum which plays a simple tune on the back six at midday. It is driven by a long wait (sorry – weight!) attached to a rope which coils up onto a double wooden drum. The ropes had got tangled up and the device could not be used. After a bit of lateral thinking this was eventually untangled, the chafed end of the rope removed and the hook for the weight was re-spliced onto the rope. It was after midday before this was completed so I still don't know if it worked – or perhaps rang at midnight!

Rob Franklin: tightening up everything he could find. The bells are housed in a wooden frame (with some new steel parts holding the two trebles). With the drier weather it was a good opportunity to tighten the bolts securing the frame and those holding the bells onto the headstocks, together with checking the wheels and clappers at the same time. Several were found to be significantly loose, while the treble clapper was only just held in with one nut, the lock nut being about to fall completely off. The clappers were lubricated at the same time.

Ian Avery: sound control. This is the largest (and most skilled) part of the operation. In order to enable the large amount of ringing without disturbing the local population Bill Ford had installed adjustable sound control on three sides of the tower but one of these had broken and could not be securely closed. This sound proofing was based on a wooden framework with infilling of, apparently, anything he could get his hands on. This was mostly old bits of carpet (much foam backed which had now disintegrated) and bags of old clothes – I wonder if they were left over from a jumble sale! These bags had mostly disintegrated. All of this was from one out of the three louvres was carried to the roof of the tower where gravity was used to get it down to the churchyard. Many bags split on arrival

(if not before) and the churchyard started looking as though a group of travellers had been living there! The old rubbish then had to be transported in the back of the car to the tip at Pinhoe. And then the inside of the car had to be cleaned up!



Some of the first load of rubbish in the churchyard after its journey from the top of the tower

Ian Avery has made a temporary fix to the sound control using some wood that was in the belfry and is making plans and obtaining material to make a solid structure from Plywood and sound-insulating fibre which has a part of it which can be opened or closed with a rope from the ringing chamber. I guess that we then need to tackle the other three louvres...



Ian Avery and Rob Franklin ready to start work

The work is not yet complete. Ian Smith needs more information about some of the bells, and Ian Avery has a long way to go before the sound control is complete.

Ian Campbell



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