

# Ring Round Devon



THE GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

Newsletter 107, September 2017

## Exeter Ringers get Spliced

We were very privileged to be invited to the wedding of Heavitree ringers David Maynard and Helen Herriott on 29th July. The proceedings were held in Romsey Abbey. Helen's parents are ringers and both David and Helen have a large number of ringing friends so the wedding was an excuse for a number of peals and quarter peals, and they even had Bristol Maximus rung on handbells during the signing of the register.

The bells of Romsey Abbey were rung by the local band before the service, and then by three shifts of ringers afterwards. The Exeter Colleges Guild took third place.

Having rung we could then go down into the Abbey where cold champagne and ice creams were being served because



unfortunately the driving rain kept us all inside.

Following a dash in the rain to the hotel reception we had more champagne and then even more for the toasts for the speeches. The formal dinner was followed by a ceilidh which was enjoyed by all – except for one ringer who shall remain nameless who fell up the stairs at the hotel on his way to bed and was rescued by hotel staff who saw him on CCTV in the early

hours of the next morning! He had no idea what had happened and had to be plastered up in A&E.

We send David and Helen our very best wishes for a happy married life.



ECG members ringing after the service



The ice creams were served inside the Abbey

*Ian Campbell*



# Guild Events

## Guild AGM and Festival – Braunton

17th June 2017



Braunton church with its distinctive steeple

On a very sunny and pleasant day we travelled to the northern outposts of the Guild in the North/North West Branch. Braunton was the headquarters for the day. Several towers were open and in the morning a seminar was held comprised of two discussions lasting almost two hours. The reports of these two discussions are intentionally brief:

### Part 1: Running a practice and being a Tower Captain

The seminar was facilitated by Sheila Scofield and Leslie Boyce. Leslie used a Powerpoint presentation from the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) to discuss best practice in running ringing. Some of the suggestions:

- **Running a practice**
  - Have a plan
  - Each ringer to have at least one 'prime ring' tailored to their needs and with best possible support
  - Review afterwards – what went well, what could have gone better, what is the new plan
  - Keep focussed – use the time fully. Keep most of the socialising for afterwards in the pub!
- **Tower Captain**
  - Needs a variety of skills
  - Foster team spirit
  - Cultivate good relations with the parish (priest, PCC, congregation)
  - Be aware of safeguarding requirements (see part 2)
  - Be able to delegate
  - Be able to run the ringing but could delegate some tasks e. g. conducting

### Part 2: Safeguarding and changes to C of E policy and practice

This was an additional subject discussed on the request of Robert Brown, the Guild Safeguarding Officer.

Following much publicised safeguarding problems the Church of England has made its safeguarding process much broader. The

thrust is that this is everyone's responsibility and it is a moral responsibility to look after and protect everyone from abuse of any sort.

The responsibility initially lies with each ringer to contact their parish safeguarding officer (often via the captain) to undergo the basic training course (C0). This can be either done on line or in a group situation but everyone will have to register individually, usually via email. The online training takes approximately one hour but the recommendation is to split into two half-hour sessions as some of the material can be upsetting to some people and is not easy to take in at one sitting.

Tower captains and others who take charge of ringing once a month or more frequently, will need to complete a more detailed training (C1) taking a full day. This has to be booked but all places are taken for the foreseeable future.

This policy is not just aimed at ringers but all involved in group activities within the church.

*Martin Mansley*

## Guild AGM Business Meeting

The agenda and papers for the meeting are available on the Guild website (<http://devonringers.org.uk/guild/agms>).

**Officers' Reports:** The reports as published in the annual report were received and approved.

**Accounts:** The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016 were adopted. It was agreed that £2000 would be transferred to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund(DCBRF), and that the Instruction and Education Fund would be topped up to £500.

**Subscription:** The Treasurer's proposal that the subscription should remain at its current level (£6) was agreed.

**Election of Officers:** Sue Sawyer was elected as Master for 2017/18, and Sheila Scofield as Master Elect for 2018/19. Charlotte Boyce was elected as Treasurer (succeeding Sue Sawyer, who was thanked for her work in this role, which she has fulfilled for the past twenty years.) Martin Mansley was elected as a Vice-President. Most of the current Guild officers agreed to stand, and were re-elected.



The new master, Sue Sawyer is congratulated by the outgoing master, Nigel Birt

**DenMisch Simulated Ring:** Terms of reference for a Management Committee were adopted.

**Central Committee Meeting in Edinburgh:** A short oral report was made, which focussed mainly on the changes to the format of the meeting, the work required to take forward the changes to the rules, and the timescales involved.

**Quarter Peal Festival:** The dates were confirmed (20th October to 5th November 2017). It was mentioned that a BellBoard event

had already been set up for this (See <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=6453>)

**Arrangements for 6 and 8 bell striking competitions:** These will take place on Saturday 21st October. The towers will be: Stoodleigh (6-bell), Bampton (Novice 6-bell), Silverton (8-bell), with the 6-bell competitions taking place in the morning, and the 8-bell in the afternoon. London Bob Triples was proposed as a method for the competition, with Grandsire Triples as an alternative.

**Novice 8-bell competition:** Rules for a Novice 8-bell competition were agreed and are available on the Guild website at <http://devonringers.org.uk/guild/useful-docs>.

It is intended that this competition will be introduced in 2018.

**2018 Festival and AGM: 16th June 2018.** This will be hosted by the Mid-Devon Branch.

**Saturday 11 November 2017:** Martin Mansley suggested that ringing for Remembrance Day could reflect the fact that this year is the 75th anniversary of the second battle of El Alamein, when ringing, which had been banned during the war, was allowed for the first time, thus precipitating the lifting of the ban the following Easter.

**Roll of Honour:** David Willis reported that the number of Devon ringers now identified for inclusion in the Roll of Honour has doubled (from 33 to 66) and advised that the Guild website now includes a link to scanned copies of a selection of the Guild annual reports (1910-1920 and 1936-1950), which include the First and Second World War years (see 'Library online resources' - <http://devonringers.org.uk/guild/library>).

Guild members were urged to check for ringers from their towers who were killed in action.

**History of the Guild:** It was noted that recent articles in The Ringing World had been focussing on the history of ringing in Devon and that several more were expected to appear.



The president (Ali Waterson), secretary (John Martin) and treasurer (Sue Sawyer) enjoying a lighter moment

*Janet Ritterman  
General Committee Member, Mid-Devon branch*

## Central Council Update

### 'Ring out the old, ring in the new'

#### A message from the President

It may be that some future commentator will reflect on the CCCBR proceedings in Edinburgh over the May bank holiday weekend, and refer to them as 'a seminal moment' in ringing history. In the meantime there will no doubt be lots of commentary and analysis in The Ringing World and other for media, discussing the events and their ramifications for ringing.

At its meeting in Portsmouth in 2016, the Central Council voted to establish an arms-length review of its structure and activities, and to report back to the 2017 meeting with recommendations. Members of the Council Review and Action Group (CRAG) have

been diligent and conscientious in their task, bringing to the meeting a straight-talking analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, along with a proposed timetable for reform.

Some have expressed concern that CRAG's consultation was not sufficiently broad, and stakeholders have not had sufficient time to respond or deliberate. The counter argument is that CRAG has used all possible communication channels throughout the consultation, and has stuck to the timelines agreed in Portsmouth.

Around 170 members of Council were present at the AGM in Edinburgh, and the motions to adopt CRAG's proposals were passed by a large majority, followed by spontaneous applause (a somewhat rare event at Council meetings!). The assembled change ringers became change agents, and the appetite for reform and renewal has never been stronger.

Into this milieu I have been elected as President and, although it's not surprising to feel somewhat apprehensive about the task ahead, I feel privileged to be in a position to help carry forward this agenda. All stakeholders, through their representatives on Council, have given us a clear and bold mandate. The work cannot be done entirely by the Officers, and the CRAG recommendations encourage much wider participation in Council's activities than in the past. I trust that those with the relevant skills, experience and enthusiasm will step up to the challenge!

I would like to give tribute to those who stepped down from office at the Council meeting. Chris Mew has worked tirelessly as President on behalf of all ringers, and we owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for all he has done (and continues to do) to support ringing. Kate Flavell, as former President and more recently as Public Relations Officer, has similarly been an unstinting advocate for ringing and ringers, leading the PR team (which she will continue to do) to raise our positive public profile. Andrew Taylor steps down as Treasurer, having kept a steady hand on Council's finances over these past three years.

Ringing faces many challenges – recruitment and retention, leadership, clergy relations, potential church closures, communications, compliance, financial viability and more. We come away from Edinburgh energised and ready to take on these challenges, embarking on a journey with our fellow ringers everywhere, to revitalise our wonderful art, and leave a positive legacy for those who follow.

*Christopher O'Mahony  
President, Central Council of Church Bell Ringers*

## Striking Competitions

### Saturday 21st October 2017

**Morning:** Please book your slot (in 20 minute intervals between 10am and 1pm) by email to [secretary@devonringers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@devonringers.org.uk)

6-bell Competition for the J P Fidler Cup at Stoodleigh, this being open to every Guild tower.

6-bell Novice Competition for the John Longridge Plate at Bampton, with tea/coffee and biscuits available at the back of the church.

**Afternoon:** 8-bell inter-branch Competition for the Andrews Trophy at Silverton.

Results of the morning competitions and draw for the afternoon 2.00pm in church

Refreshments and toilets in church hall from 2.30pm until meeting for results in Church Hall after ringing.

Full rules are available from <http://devonringers.org.uk/guild/useful-docs>.

Further details including parking arrangements are available online at:

<http://devonringers.org.uk/home/striking-competitions-2017>.

**Touches to be used for 8-bell contest:**

The touches this year have been provided by Robert Brown; our thanks to him for these suggestions.

Each touch comprises two parts and each one features several 'nearmiss' changes.



## 224 London Bob Triples

<u>1234567</u>	<u>1324567</u>
s1 1642753	s1 1643752
-2 1256374	-2 1356274
1274635	1374625
1235467	1325467
-1 1562743	-1 1563742
1543276	1542376
-3 1375624	-3 1275634
1324567	1234567

Alternative notation for the above touch: SBPPBPBP (repeat)

## 224 Grandsire Triples

<u>1234567</u>	<u>1243567</u>
-1 1752634	-1 1752643
1765423	1765324
s3 1437265	s3 1347265
1423576	1324576
-5 1654723	-5 1653724
1675342	1675432
-7 1236475	-7 1246375
1243567	1234567

Alternative notation for the above touch: BPSPBPBP (repeat)

*John Martin*

## Guild Quarter Peal Festival

The annual festival this year runs from Friday 20th October until Sunday 5th November.

The object of the festival is to raise money for the Bell Restoration Fund. The amount raised has reduced over the last few years and it would be good to turn this around. Please try and arrange quarter peals for the Festival. If you need help in doing this the Branch and Guild officers would be glad to help.

A reminder, the suggested donation is £1 per ringer per quarter. All monies will be credited, through the Guild, to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. Donations should be collected by the conductor of each quarter and forwarded to me (as Guild quarter peal secretary). Please ensure that you include sufficient details that I can determine which quarter peal(s) the donation relates to. Individual ringers can gift aid to assist the restoration fund still further, the relevant forms can be found on the Guild website. If you have already signed a perpetual gift aid there is no need to sign another.

Please note that my address has changed, as of 1st September, and is not as printed in the Annual Report. My new address is 1 The Villa, Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HY

*James Kirkcaldy*

## Guild Library Update Researching Ringing History

The Ringing World has recently been publishing a series of articles by John Eisel, former Librarian of the Central Council, about 'Early scientific change ringing in Devon'. It is planned that the series should comprise 11 parts; eight have appeared since 12 May 2017 so far. As well as being a fascinating introduction to the origins of 'scientific' ringing in the county, leading up to the formation of the Guild, the articles draw heavily on local newspapers as sources of information and illustrate what a valuable resource these can be for local history from the mid-nineteenth century.

In RRD 101 (March 2016) I drew attention to the fact that the Exeter Flying Post newspaper, a valuable source for Devon local history in the 18th and 19th centuries, was available in the 19th Century British Newspapers database. The database was at that time available for free access to members of Devon Libraries, but sadly has now been withdrawn.

Keen researchers might like to investigate a new alternative – The British Newspaper Archive, a joint service from the British

Library and Findmypast. This will have a wider range of titles as more pages are digitised, being based on the holdings of the B. L. Newspaper Library. References can be searched out for free, but access to the full text of articles, however, is only given to subscribers. Various subscription options are available and start from £6.67 per month. Go to <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> for details.

## New Purchases for the Library

On this Day by Bill Butler (Central Council, 2017; 978-1-9112190-00-9; £15) is a day-by-day listing of historical facts about bells, bellringing and ringers over selected years ranging from the 1600s to the present. It is an eclectic compilation of facts about every aspect of the art and is an irresistible book for browsing in an idle moment.

The Central Council Towers and Belfries Committee has produced a Manual of Belfry Maintenance (Central Council, 2017; 978-1-911210-01-6; £12). This is a definitive guide for steeple keepers, tower captains and bell advisers with 21 chapters covering: Faculties and Listed Building consent, Health and Safety, Tools and Equipment, Towers, Bell Frames, Headstocks, Wheels, Stays and Sliders, Clappers, Bearings, Pulleys, Ropes, Clock Hammers and Fault Finding.

I would suggest that there should be a reference copy in every branch as well as in the Guild Library.

*Les Boyce, Librarian*

## East Devon Branch

### Latest news from Combe Raleigh Combe Raleigh Bell Project Saga

The end may be in sight, for on August 24th we had the first try-out of the new six bell installation. The previous couple of days had seen frantic activity as adjustments were made, stays and sliders fitted and, at last, ropes attached.

It was an exciting moment when Andrew Nicholson said 'it's over to you' and our local Combe Raleigh ringers took the ropes for the first time. Very appropriately, Lisa Clarke who has been the main driving force behind the project took the treble. Ruth Hitchcock as a member of the PCC and one of the instigators of the idea took the second. David Hird who donated the third bell was on the third. Trevor Hitchcock who was one of the original four took the fourth. Janet Reynolds took the fifth and Laurence Clarke our newest recruit took the tenor. An historic moment and a nervous one, as well as being exciting, we set off to ring rounds for the first time. We could not have been happier; we have a nice, light, easy going six. Despite the strange mix of bells, (the three new trebles being sourced from the Keltek Trust), dating from the early



Andrew Nicholson making the last checks before handing over to the local ringers



fifteenth century to the twentieth century, including a redundant Trinity House buoy bell, the sound exceeded our expectations. After a change around to allow the rest of our ringers to experience the new ring, our visitors demonstrated what we might achieve.

If you go to <https://youtu.be/mAUhGm5c4p4> you will find a short video of some well struck Cambridge Surprise Minor on the new bells. The ringers were 1. Andrew Nicholson, our bell-hanger, 2. Nigel Taylor, who tuned the bells while at Whitechapel, 3. Janet Deem, 4. Neil Deem, who helped with the removal and rehang of the bells, 5. Oliver Bates, whose first try-out this was, and 6. David Hird, (yet another amateur bell-hanger), who has given us so much support.

I must mention the editor, Ian Campbell, who, with Neil, David and Rob Franklin, worked tirelessly on the removal of the old bells and the installation of the new. His and their assistance was invaluable. Our local team of Laurence Clarke, Mark Moran, Stan Thompson and Alex Groombridge, with his most useful tractor, have laboured long and hard on our behalf. In fact I must thank everyone who supported us and gave valuable advice and assistance throughout the entire project: without you we might still be only dreaming about it.

We won't consider that we have reached completion until the bells have been rededicated by the Bishop of Exeter, which is scheduled for 29th October at 3pm. Initially we may have to restrict ringing as there is still work to do, but there will be an opportunity to try them out when the East Devon Branch holds its autumn meeting here in October.

*Trevor Hitchcock*

### Three Plus Three, Chapter three

'How much longer are we going to have to put up with all that banging?' grumbled Buoy. 'First it was the hammering of nails into wood and what they are doing now I can't imagine, it feels as if they're knocking the tower down'.

'Stop grumbling', said Tenor, 'you know there was work to be done on the tower. First they had to make the clock chamber floor safe and now they're building the ringing gallery.'

'Building it? It's more like demolishing it! I thought we were going to be ringing, not just being deafened.'

'I did hear somebody say that they were breaking into the turret', commented Philippa, 'and the walls are very thick.'

'Very much so and it saves them having to build new stairs up to the gallery,' said Little Me.

'You're keeping very quiet Treble, don't you have any comment to make?' asked Poole, not that he had had anything to say so far.

'I've been thinking.' 'Oh,' said Buoy, 'that would account for the strained look on your face.'

'Stop your clever comments, I'm being serious. For nigh on six hundred years I've been Treble and now as I look around it seems as if I'm to be four in future.'

'Yes,' said Little Me, 'and I'm to be five.'

'Buoy is to be two and Poole three which means that I am the new treble,' said Philippa.

'So that's all settled then,' said Buoy, 'we just need somebody to pull on the ropes.'

'There's more to it than that,' said Treble, 'in your previous place you just rang at random, now you have to ring in a special order.'

'A special order, in that case mine's a pint with a whisky chaser,' snapped back Buoy. 'I thought you sea-faring types only drank rum,' muttered Poole.

Again Little Me had to bring them back to their senses. 'No, what we are saying is that we will have a constant change of order.'

'Make up your mind,' said Buoy, 'is it constant or is it changing?'

'Let me explain,' said Little Me, 'I've been around for almost six hundred years and seem to have seen it all. The simplest thing is to ring what they call rounds, where we all stay in the same order from start to finish.'

'Sounds boring to me,' said Buoy.

'Well it can be after a time, but most often the order changes to make it more tuneful.'

'Before you get too worried,' interjected Tenor, 'we don't decide the order, the fellow at the other end of the rope decides that.'

They all fell silent, they had plenty to ponder.

'Look out,' whispered Philippa, 'there's somebody coming up the stairs.'

It was not just one man but three or four, though one man seemed to be giving all the orders. For the next day or two there was little time to talk amongst themselves as humans are not supposed to know that bells can talk to each other.

After various and varying indignities the bells were left, ropes attached. Soon they felt the pull of the ropes and began to swing, gently at first and then with ever more urgency and the bells sounded out.

At first the order was constant each following the other as commanded. Then after a pause and some conversation far below them that they couldn't quite hear, the bells again answered the command of the ropes. This time the order changed in a regular pattern and the bells created sweet music in answer to the ropes. Buoy was giddy with joy, 'so that's what we sound like!'

Little Me was equally ecstatic, 'in all my six hundred years I've never been part of anything so lovely. Let us hope that things continue this way. At least we now know what we can do. My message has always been the same, cast in Latin – the people rejoice when they hear the sound of Little Me.'

### Historical Notes

The 1553 inventory of church property lists Combe Raleigh as having three bells. Now in August 2017 the bells are:

(Philippa) 2 cwt 0 qtr 21 lbs cast 1911 by John Taylor of Loughborough

(Buoy) 2cwt 2 qtrs 16 lbs cast 1960 by Mears of London

(Poole) 2 cwt 3 qtrs 16 lbs cast 1932 by John Taylor of Loughborough

(Treble) 3 cwt 1 qtr 18 lbs recast 1758 by Thomas Bilbie II of Cullompton

(Little Me) 4 cwt 3 qtrs 0 lb cast c. 1430 by Robert Norton of Exeter

(Tenor) 5 cwt 2 qtrs 19 lbs recast 1867 by John Warner & Sons of London

*Trevor Hitchcock*

### GUESS THE WEIGHT OF THE TENOR - Result

Dove's Guide gave the weight of the Combe Raleigh tenor as 7 cwt. The photograph below shows the bell after tuning when, as is obvious, some material was removed both from inside and outside of the bell.

In a last effort to raise funds for the project we gave you a chance to have some fun by entering our competition to guess the weight of the re-tuned tenor in cwt, qtrs and lbs. We would like to thank everyone who entered the competition and thereby helped to add to our bell fund. The winner was the person whose answer was nearest to the correct weight which is 5 cwt 2 qtrs 19 lbs. Entries closed on 31st July 2017 and all were more than 6 cwt with the wildest guess being 14 cwt ! The nearest guess came from our non-ringing Church Warden Rosemary Maplestone who wins the voucher. What were the ringers all thinking of?



## John Martin of Sidmouth



John Martin died recently at the age of 97 and a service was held at Sidmouth parish church on 15th August to remember him and celebrate his life.

John was a true Devonian and loved his county, his family (5 children, 16 grand children and 11 great grandchildren), his friends, his work as a farmer and his hobbies which, of course, included bell ringing with Widecombe, Sidbury and Sidmouth and choir singing with the Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir.

John farmed a Duchy farm near Widecombe-in-the-moor and life must have been hard but John thrived on it until retirement when one of his children took over. John and wife Margaret then moved to Sidmouth. Dartmoor's loss was Sidmouth's gain and John began ringing at Sidmouth, Sidbury and other towers in the area. Amazingly he kept ringing into his mid 90s having started as a teenager. After the service Sidmouth's ten bells were rung half muffled by ringers from Sidmouth, Sidbury and Widecombe in his honour.

John was a very unassuming man, passionate about his work and hobbies and loving of his family; a truly gentle man and a Gentleman. We were blessed to have known him and the world is the poorer for his passing.

*Ray Appleby*

## East Devon Branch Striking Competition

This competition was held on 8th July at St Michael's, Shute. A total of eight teams entered. In an effort to increase the number of participants, as well as the tower band competition for the Edward Summers memorial trophy an Open Class had been introduced, allowing bands of any composition to take part. As it turned out we had four teams in each class.

The competition was judged by Stephen and Tracey Coley from Hertfordshire and after due consideration declared Combe Raleigh to be the winners of the tower band competition and the Edward Summers memorial trophy, with Farway the runners-up. In the Open Competition for the Alan Tucker memorial bell, the winners

were the Jurassic Coast Ladies A team with the Jurassic Coast Ladies B team the runners-up. We dare not comment on how the men's team fared!

It was a delightful afternoon's ringing, the winners of the Open Class ringing superbly, well justifying their win and it was a pleasure to listen to them.

The whole organisation of the event by Shute, winners in 1997, was excellent. If you weren't ringing, it was worth coming for the food alone. The judges widened their brief a little and declared the Scotch Eggs to be best, though the quiche must have been a close second.

We would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the event, together with our visiting judges and, of course, all the teams that entered, it was a superb effort.



The victorious Combe Raleigh team (Trevor Hitchcock, Lisa Clarke, Pam Bailey, Charles Boyce, Paddy Priscott and Laurence Clarke) with the Edward Summers Memorial Trophy



Anne Bailey receiving the Open Class Alan Tucker Memorial Bell, on behalf of the Jurassic Coast Ladies A team, from Stephen Coley (judge) and Laurie Palmer (Branch Chairman).

*Trevor Hitchcock (East Devon Branch Publicity Officer)*

## Sidmouth Ringers embrace BBC Music Day

On Thursday 15th June just before 7pm an excited band of Sidmouth ringers, friends and visitors assembled in the ringing chamber to join other churches around the UK and further afield in ringing at the appointed time of 7pm for BBC Music Day.

The event had been publicised in the church and a handful of interested people waited to hear the bells. As a special 'extra' Sidford WI handbell team arrived and set up in the main body of the church. They rang Rounds, Queens and Whittingtons as well as well known tunes.





The team who rang the ten tower bells



The Sidford WI team under Marion Baker and some of the audience

*Anne Bailey*

## Exeter Branch

### News from Exeter Cathedral

#### Exeter Pupils' Ringing Taster Day



Trying to chime Exeter Cathedral Tenor

The summer term, school activity days, and what could be more interesting and a little off the usual page than a ringing taster day?

23rd June saw a group of intrigued year 9 pupils from Exeter School gathering together to find out more. The day started in a classroom where chemistry teacher and ringer Adrian Rowland explained about the mechanics of full circle ringing with the aid

of Youtube clips. Pupils were encouraged to work out maximum numbers of possible changes on various numbers of bells, and were given a demonstration of handbell ringing by Ian Campbell, Tim Bayton and Lynne Hughes. We were joined by two more school staff for the day, one of whom was also a ringer.

A twenty-minute walk into central Exeter brought us to the Cathedral, where the pupils had access to areas of the building not normally available to the public - the roof space and ringing chamber - spotting such oddities as the winch which lowers the chandelier for cleaning. Everyone had a go at swinging the tenor, though no-one could make this exceptionally heavy bell sound!



Rounds and Queens on handbells in the Cathedral Ringing Room

The group split up, half having a handbell session in the ringing chamber, consisting of Rounds and Queens, 'lapping' Plain Hunt, and a go at Plain Hunt rung properly with two bells. The other half went over to Exeter Cathedral School next door, for tuition in full circle ringing on the set of simulated bells housed there. The groups then swapped over so everyone had a go.

Packed lunches followed, eaten on the Cathedral Green in the sunshine, or elsewhere in the city.



The helpers having a much-needed rest on Cathedral Green

The afternoon started with a walk to Heavitree church, where again the group split in two, half starting with handbells. The other group explored Heavitree tower under careful supervision, winding the huge clock mechanism, looking in at the bells, and discovering the view from the roof, followed by individual tuition on a full-sized bell. As before, the groups swapped over and activities were repeated.

I asked two or three of the young people what they had thought of the day. The consensus was that it was nothing like they had imagined, but was better!

*Lynne Hughes - Publicity Officer*



### Michael Portillo comes ringing

Many of you may have seen Michael Portillo presenting Great British Railway Journeys on the television. Apparently, his latest journey, which is to be aired in the new year, is from South Wales to Cornwall, taking in the Edwardian period. As part of this he stopped off in Exeter to film the cathedral bells; the steel frame was installed in 1902 and the tenor (Grandison) and Fox (now the 7th) were recast, with Fox having an Edwardian penny incorporated as part of the inscription.

Two half days were spent filming (one without Michael) where we talked among the bells, examined the model in the ringing chamber, and then Michael tried chiming Grandison (with a little help!) and rang some backstrokes on Fox. I learnt some history – apparently the work on rehanging the bells was completed just in time for Edward VII's coronation. The ringers were just about to pull off following the coronation when they heard that it had been postponed due to illness so the people of Exeter had to wait to hear their newly refurbished bells.



Michael Portillo signing the visitors' book at Exeter Cathedral  
*Ian Campbell*

### ECG 50th Anniversary Peal

September 9th will see a special peal rung to mark the 50th anniversary of the Exeter Colleges Guild, when the Cathedral's twelve bells will ring out to the sound of Stedman Cinques for about four hours.

The Exeter Colleges Guild now numbers over 250 members - all bellringers who have studied in the Exeter area. It was formed in 1967 by John Longridge as a student here; he later went on to become a ringer at the Cathedral during the 1970's and 1980's.

A peal was rung at the Cathedral ten years ago to mark the 40th anniversary of the ECG, and also in 1987 for the 20th anniversary; remarkably, eight of the band ringing this year rang ten years ago, and five of those also rang in 1987.

During 2017, celebrations have included a 50th anniversary dinner, when over one hundred people dined at the Rougemont Hotel, and in October members past and present will venture over to Lundy Island for a week of ringing, walking and socialising.

Our own Cathedral ringing master, Matt Hilling, is secretary for the ECG, and we wish them all the best for a successful anniversary peal.

*Clare Griffiths, Cathedral Bellringers Secretary*

### From the Cathedral Newsletter

The National 12 Bell Striking Contest was held on 24th June, when the Exeter Cathedral ringers travelled to Southwark Cathedral to compete for the Taylor Trophy. They were joined by nine other teams – the Ancient Society of College Youths (ASCY), the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths (SRCY) plus Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, High Wycombe, Melbourne, St Paul's Cathedral, and a team from Southwark. Chief Judge this year was Tom Hinks, maintaining the Exeter links as a former Cathedral band member whilst at University here.

Exeter were very pleased to be placed 5th (out of ten teams), with a judges' score of 65%. Congratulations go to Birmingham upon retaining the trophy, with a score of 75%.

Back home, the Cathedral bells were rung for a quarter peal specially arranged to mark Dean Jonathan's farewell service on Sunday 2nd July. Dean Jonathan was always closely involved with the ringers, and so we wanted to take this opportunity to thank him for his support, and send both him and his wife Maggie every good wish in their retirement. We shall miss them.

Our ringing chamber is full of treasures. We were recently gifted a piece of Exeter Cathedral stone, with a depiction of the Cathedral bells painted upon it; the artist was an iconographer from Dorset, who actually painted the icons in the Cathedral many years ago, and acquired the stone from our masons only recently.

*Clare Griffiths, Cathedral Bellringers' Secretary*

### Exeter St Mark's Cycle Outing



Graham Tucker (the organiser) consulting his map outside  
West Camel church

Saturday 3rd June saw a group of intrepid cyclists and their supporters touring Somerset and Dorset. Ringing was at West Camel, Weston Bamfylde, Sutton Montis, South Cadbury and Sandford Orcas which brought us back to West Camel where we had left some of the cars. We were then invited by Matthew and Rosie Hilling to their house in Whimble for a barbecue.



*Ian Campbell*



## Exeter Branch Tennis and Picnic

Fortunately, the rain stopped as we started our picnic on Sunday 23rd July. The tennis was not taken seriously but those that played had a good time. We continued until all the balls were lost in the undergrowth around the court! It was the first ringing outing for Joseph Neal (three months old) who behaved himself impeccably. Thank you David for letting us use your facility.



David Hird on a rather unusual seat (just don't ask!)



Plenty of time for gossiping while the tennis was in progress  
*Ian Campbell*

## Ringing for BBC Music Day

Ringers in the UK and around the world were encouraged to take part in the third annual BBC Music Day on Thursday 15th June, with the theme this year being 'the power of music'. The BBC wanted to build on last year's success by inviting tower and handbell ringers from the UK and around the world to showcase this kind of performing arts by ringing at 7pm their local time.

What more prompting did we need for a quarter peal before the usual Thursday evening practice at Heavitree? A good quarter was rung and the statutory photo taken.



The band in order, clockwise, starting front right

Exeter, Devon, St Michael and All Angels, Heavitree  
Thursday, 15 June 2017 in 51m  
1250 Lincolnshire Surprise Major

1 Susan Illing	5 Rob Neal
2 Helen Herriott	6 Robert Franklin
3 Wendy Campbell	7 Tim King
4 Ian Campbell	8 David Hird (C)

Rung for BBC Music Day

I had a look on BellBoard and found 90 performances for BBC Music Day but the only other Devon tower I could see was Sidmouth. Their report is elsewhere in this issue.

*Ian Campbell*

## Mid-Devon Branch

### Election of a new Vice-President for the Guild

For the Mid-Devon Branch Saturday 17th June was a real 'red letter' day. At this year's Guild AGM, held at Braunton in North Devon, our Mid-Devon Ringing Master, Martin Mansley, was elected as a Vice-President of the Guild, his nomination having been proposed by Nigel Birt (Guild Master for 2016/17) and seconded by Michael Mears (the Guild's Peal Secretary).

In expressing his thanks for this honour, and echoing a comment about friendship among the ringing fraternity made by the Associate Priest who took the Guild Service preceding the AGM, Martin recalled the warmth of the welcome that he had received when he, along with another ringer new to the area (now Mary Mears), had first attended a practice at St Mark's in Exeter in 1979.

From his comments, it became clear that for Martin, AGMs held at Braunton were already memorable. He recollected with wry amusement that in 1989 it was while he was out of the hall dealing with the needs of his then two-year old daughter, that he had been elected Guild Education Officer. Reflecting that this toddler has since become an accomplished ringer, who has now overtaken him in the number and complexity of peals rung, Martin expressed the hope that wherever possible teachers of ringing encourage their learners not simply to emulate them, but to strive to overtake them. Where this happens, the future of ringing, he maintained, will be rather less bleak than is sometimes painted.

*Janet Ritterman*

### Branch Mini Outing – West Devon



For our mini-outing this year Rodney Horder took as his theme the Devon Bellringing song which mentions several churches in West Devon. In the event some of those towers were not available for various reasons so Rodney substituted others in the area and a very enjoyable afternoon was had.

First up was Broadwoodwidge where early arrivals could sit at the top of the village green to take in the spectacular views of the surrounding countryside which included Brentor church in the distance. This had been one of the towers on a mini outing a few years ago. Soon it was time to ring the bells and look round this fascinating church. So enthusiastic was Rodney to start the ringing that he managed to jam the spider in its pulley. After various attempts and much advice from the other ringers our intrepid



Deputy Ringing Master scaled a ladder and saved the day!

Next tower was Stowford, our second ground floor ring and another village with superb views of the surrounding countryside. These bells were a little challenging but we managed some respectable ringing. Bratton Clovelly presented two challenges – how to ring bells with very short ropes and how to keep the ringers in the tower when there were cups of tea and mouth-watering cakes on offer in the church hall! The church was holding a flower festival so they were glad to have the bells rung. Fortunately, there was plenty of time so we were all able to enjoy the very welcome refreshments.

Our final ring was at Cheriton Bishop which were probably the best bells of the day and our only upstairs ringing room. Wells and Norwich Surprise were included in our repertoire here. Our numbers had swelled a little after work and wedding commitments so it was ideal to have our group photo before moving on to the Old Thatch for a very enjoyable supper.

Very many thanks are due to Rodney for superb organisation yet again and to all the local ringers and church wardens who made us so welcome.

### Quarter Peal at St Marychurch

When you only have six ringers at a practice it is worth using the time usefully and at St Marychurch we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor.

Many congratulations to Jeanette Thompson who rang really well to score her first 'inside'.

Torquay, Devon, St Mary the Virgin, St Marychurch

Tuesday, 6 June 2017 in 43 mins

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1 Wendy Rennie

4 Jeanette Thompson

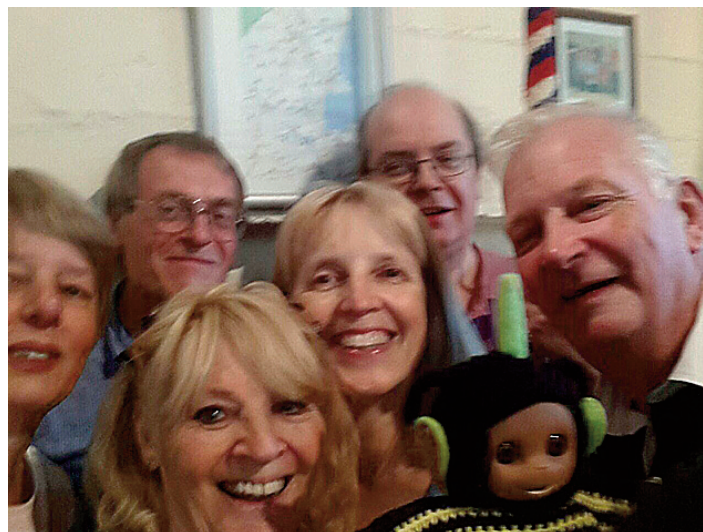
2 Rowena Mansley

5 Tim King

3 Michael Tompsett

6 Martin Mansley (C)

First inside 4



This is a slightly fuzzy picture of the band in ringing order clockwise from the front including Dipsy (our mascot) in her/his new costume of a bee!

### First Quarter Peal at Dawlish

First quarter peals seem to be coming thick and fast at Dawlish! Last time we mentioned Maria Hiscoe's first quarter. This time Josh Meredith has scored one too.

Lynne Hughes tells us that he was due to ring the tenor on St George's Day but his ringing has come on so well that he was able to ring the treble to Bob Doubles. He also rang down well in peal afterwards. Many congratulations to him and the Dawlish band – ringers like Josh are the future of our exercise. We look forward to following the progress of both these ringers over the coming months.

Dawlish, Devon, St Gregory

Sunday, 23 April 2017 in 42 mins

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Josh Meredith

4 Fiona Rock-Evans

2 Mo Hawkins

5 Lynne Hughes (C)

3 Phil Hughes

6 Derek Hawkins

For evensong on St George's Day. 1st quarter peal:1



The quarter peal band sat outside Dawlish Church

### Quarter Peal

Janet Ritterman kindly arranged the following quarter peal:



Stokeinteignhead, Devon, St Andrew

Wednesday, 19 July 2017 in 47m

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

1 Wena Mansley

4 Martin Mansley

2 Fiona Rock-Evans

5 Rodney Horder

3 Philip Stevens

6 Michael Tompsett (C)

By a Mid-Devon Branch band to congratulate Martin Mansley on his election as a Vice-President of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers.

and was so determined that it should go without a hitch that she invited seven ringers in case anyone dropped out. In the event no one did so she did not ring.

After the ringing we found Janet with glasses and bubbly ready to celebrate our success. Thankyou to Janet and to all the ringers who took part. The refreshments were such a surprise that we forgot to take the group photo until after Philip had left to get to Kingskerswell practice. Janet has therefore done a little editing to include him in the group! Thanks again, Janet.

### St Marychurch Fete – Tower Open Day

The ringers were asked to open the tower to visitors during the church fete. Having one of the tallest towers in Devon sited on top of a hill means that the views from the top are excellent so having the tower open is a popular attraction. Our ringers rose manfully to the occasion and with help from some non-ringers kept a steady flow of visitors moving safely up and down our 190 steps. Although one or two of the visitors were noticeably flagging as they neared the top they all stated it was worth the climb when they saw the view.



Over £100 was raised for church funds. Very many thanks to the small band who made innumerable journeys up and down. There were several aching calves the next day! Although we did not have the bells ringing on this occasion we had one bell tied and several people showed an interest so we hope we may attract more recruits.

### Kingskerswell Outing



Kingskerswell had their annual outing on 15th July. A dull day with outbreaks of rain after the spell of hot weather did not spoil our trip which we all very much enjoyed. We rang at Holsworthy, Shebbear, Langtree, Beaford and Dolton. We had a tea break at RHS Rosemoor Gardens and a refreshment stop at North Tawton on the way home. Philip Stevens, the tower captain, learned to ring at Shebbear 60 years and this was his first visit back there since he left school, which brought back many memories.

*Philip Stevens*

### Loughborough Foundry Open Day

'How about a few days in Derbyshire at the end of July?' I said. After Wena had agreed that it was a good idea I slipped in 'by the way it is the Bellfoundry open day that weekend!'. So, after three days exploring the southern Peak District we set off to Loughborough. Finding parking in the back streets was the first problem and it was soon apparent that ringers had turned out in force.

Producing bells and their fittings requires a very wide range of skills and equipment and at first it can seem like organised chaos! Walking in at the main doors to the works you are met by a large number of bells of all shapes and sizes packed tightly together, either awaiting work or a new home. If a full re-hang or a new ring is being undertaken the complete set-up is assembled in the works and two of these were on display. The frame for the 10 bells at Berkley (Glos) was partially assembled and the bells for Ypres were almost complete and the centre-piece of the day. The different departments include the wood-shop where wheels and pulleys



are the main product. They also make a variety of miscellaneous bits and pieces, now including wooden shafts for clappers. The tuning shop has a variety of vertical lathes where the bells are carefully turned to tune them. Next was the clapper department where a very enthusiastic young man was explaining how important clapping is to both the sound of the bell and the ease of ringing. He had a wide variety of clappers on display. Before going across the road to the casting hall there was time for a trip up to the foundry's own ring of bells. A large crowd had assembled so it was quite a hard job for the ringing master to make sure that the people getting hold of the ropes actually were ringers – 'It looks so easy!!'. They are a light (6cwt) ring of 12 but now go easily and the ringing area has been doubled to allow plenty of room for spectators.

Probably the most popular part of the day was the chance to watch a casting but one look at the packed gallery encouraged us to visit the museum instead! Here a vast array of bell-related history is on display and you can sample a wide variety of different bells.

We both agreed it was worth the trip and to get a glimpse of all that goes into a ring of bells before it gets anywhere near the tower was quite an eye-opener. Later, on the steam hauled Great Central Railway it was very evident how many ringers are also railway enthusiasts!

### Joint 10 and 12 bell practice Buckfast Abbey

Having a joint practice with our neighbours in the South West Branch in August has now become a tradition that solves the problem of low numbers during the holiday season for both of us. This year we decided to ask for permission to ring at Buckfast Abbey which is geographically right on the border between our two branches. It was, perhaps, a gamble as Buckfast have 14 bells with a tenor weighing just over 2 tons. However, with some careful band placing and several ringers pushing their limits a little, we achieved some very acceptable ringing. Method ringing was confined to a course of Bob Triples on the 'middle' 8. The back 10 (unfortunately, even with 14 bells there is no 'front' 10!) and all 12 were rung to rounds and call changes, allowing all who wanted to sample this glorious ring. Perhaps, for many, the absolute highlight came at the end when we 'rang' the 15th bell – the mighty 7 ton 'Hosanna' bourdon bell. Most ringers took the chance to view the spectacle from the viewing platform above the bells and many were visibly moved by the experience.

As if the ringing were not enough our visit was greatly enhanced by the warm welcome we received from the Abbey authorities, in particular, the steward who let us in. She could not have been more welcoming and when we left told us of the visitors who had spent the afternoon sitting on the grass outside listening (and commenting favourably!).

A visit to the Abbey is not complete without one (or even two!) visits to the Grange where welcome refreshments are available. I am told the treacle tart with clotted cream is particularly good but, of course, I wouldn't know!!

A tremendous 'thankyou' to all who made the visit possible and to all those who came to support us. We look forward to another joint practice next year.



## Miami Visit



The Brett family was very fortunate to ring with the Trinity Cathedral ringers at Miami on Sunday 30th July for Sunday service. The Cathedral Episcopal church has eight lovely bells, with a meaty tenor of 17cwt. Maddy rung up the tenor, which was no mean feat, as sadly the band is not always able to get all 8 bells going and so the tenor had not been rung up much over the summer. So, we felt particularly happy that our attendance allowed the band to get all the bells up and ringing.

The whole of the Brett family was given the warmest of welcomes by the band, whose enthusiasm and warmth appears boundless. We all felt privileged to ring, with Verity on the treble and Maddy, who kept the band under control from the tenor, and myself flitting around various bells in between. My sister, Barbara Hall, took photos and my husband, John, enjoyed his eldest daughter's able conducting! We all came away very well satisfied with a nice selection of call changes!

All of us were touched by the dedication of the Miami band. They put as much time and energy into their ringing as most of our branch towers, possibly more, but they are trying to progress without the support and expertise that we all take for granted! The family Brett felt thankful for the tuition, advice and varied ringing. Miami band has very little access to such support which limits their progress. But, still they are determined to march onwards and upwards. They are a truly inspirational band to ring with! Therefore, they would warmly welcome other visitors and any offers of help or suggestions of resources would be welcome too! Message me through the Guild facebook page or contact me on [johnorjulia@gmail.com](mailto:johnorjulia@gmail.com). I would like to get together a little box of goodies and info to send them to show them our appreciation for what they do.

*Julia Brett*

## Raising and Lowering Training Morning

Raising and lowering of bells in peal is not easy and the take-up for this training shows how many people feel they need more practice and guidance. East Ogwell bells are ideal for this sort of training – particularly from the helpers' point of view – we lost count of the number of raises and lowers we did. We leave most of this report to Julia Brett. Julia started the morning by taking notes so she was cajoled into making them public:

Many thanks to Rodney, Martin, Janet and Sharon for organising the Raising and Lowering in Peal morning. Not only was it an enjoyable and fun atmosphere but it was a most useful learning experience. For those who sadly missed it I have endeavoured to record some of the most memorable pearls of wisdom (POW).

When endeavouring to raise your bell Rodney reminded us all of a little rhyme he was taught:

Treble starts the Race,  
Tenor sets the Pace,  
Second sets the Space.



Although this ditty made perfect sense to our instructors, a practical translation was required for the rest of us. It turns out that we need to start with the bells close as they will naturally spread out, with spaces quickly appearing, particularly between the bigger bells at the back. Therefore the memorable pearl of wisdom for raising is to aim to fire the bells, particularly the front ones. Us developers can be relied upon to miss! But that's good! As long as you pull high and firmly on the sally for the first 2-3 pulls it should all get off to a positive start, and ...keep pulling, as you don't want to hang around too much. Get the job done.

So, it turns out that raising a bell is the only occasion when a misfire is a positive outcome!

Lowering can have a tendency to be a more protracted affair. Apparently, experts have been known to get particularly close to the bells in front of them in order to encourage them to proceed downwards. This subtle nudging is still on the future wish list for most of us developers! But we did appreciate the memorable POW; when taking a coil, let some rope out again! That way you are more likely not to take in too much and go off piste. If you do start to wander out of place, the memorable POW was to WAIT! Do not take in any more rope. In time the rest of the band will come down to your level. Overall, the lowering game motto is do not pinch more than your required inch.

When the end is in sight and the time comes to chime, there is still plenty of opportunity for it all to end badly. But, there's good advice chiming too. Bob says 'let go of the rope completely and catch as high as you can'. Now, if that isn't a memorable pearl then I don't know what is?

None of this could have happened without the willing, humorous and enthusiastic participation of all the helpers and the very obvious hunger to learn from our 'trainees'. Many thanks to all.

*Julia Brett*

## New Library Book

The branch library has recently acquired a new Central Council book and the librarians suggested a review would be useful.

The Manual of Belfry Maintenance is a beautifully produced ring bound A5 book running to over 120 pages with many, mostly coloured, illustrations. It is extremely comprehensive, covering a wide range of topics including faculties and listed building requirements, bell frames of a variety of constructions, wheels, stays and sliders. There is much practical information and advice in the 24 chapters.

The fitting of 'Hastings' stays has long caused confusion and a few scratched heads! In this book you can find clear instructions about how to make and fit these stays successfully. If you are wondering about painting a metal frame, there is advice about types of paint to use – and those not to use! In answer to the question 'how often should you apply grease to the greasing points on roller bearings?' the answer is a resounding 'NEVER'.

These are just a few of the many subjects covered by this superb publication. If you are in any way involved in tower maintenance have a look at the library copy then rush to the Central Council Publications website and order your copy – fantastic value for £12.

*Martin Mansley*



## North East Branch Teacher of the Year award 2017



Mandy presenting Sheila with her certificate during a lull in the practice night at St Peter's

The Teacher of the Year Award is a Mid-Devon Community award scheme organised and hosted by the Tiverton Gazette. This year's event was held at the Tiverton Hotel on Thursday 22nd June and celebrated all those who have worked their wonders in communities across towns including Tiverton, Crediton, Culm Valley, Bampton and Dulverton.

Sheila Scofield, our very own ringing teacher and Education Officer within NE Branch, was nominated by Mandy Burnett, for her work with the Young Ringers and the Bell Club she orchestrated, actively teaching a whole host of children to ring. All are progressing extremely well, but coupled with this of course is the sterling work Sheila also does with the teaching and training of adults too.

Due to their annual pilgrimage to Canada, both Sheila and Les were absent from the evenings celebration. Mandy therefore stepped up to the plate along with her octogenarian parents who enjoyed the champagne drinks reception, swiftly followed by a three-course dinner. Entertainment was provided by the award-winning Latin and world-fusion guitarist Mark Barnwell and a renowned magician Dan Brazier who worked around the tables with his deck of cards: trust me, this isn't a euphemism!

Mandy's parents provided some in-house entertainment too with their discussions on menu choices and their likes and dislikes whilst at the table. It's true, you are never too old to learn and Mandy's dad discovered he had the taste for both couscous and risotto, much to the dismay of his wife who I now anticipate will be spending more time in the 'foreign food' aisles in Morrisons in a bid to expand her menu repertoire: quite a revelation after many, many years of marital bliss balanced with 'safe standard food fare'.

As we have established, the octogenarians have a taste for change, quite literally, and so perhaps we can now entice them to take up bell ringing too: watch this space.

Sadly, Sheila came runner up on the night but is nonetheless a winner in all our hearts and it gave us much pleasure in being able to present her with a certificate during the 'parish notices' at the St Peter's tower practice night. Normally, it's the other way around with Sheila presenting Learning the Ropes Awards! How the tables have turned. Mandy also kindly provided a clutch of other material appertaining to the night, including the table menus, bagged sweets, The Tiverton Gazette with the full-blown write up and the framed certificate itself, after which I'm sure Sheila felt like she had attended the night herself.

We aren't the only ones to recognise Sheila's outstanding contribution to all things ringing, as the Guild voted unanimously for her to become the next Guild Ringing Master at the June AGM, an accolade befitting such a remarkable individual.

Our heartfelt thanks for everything you do at all levels, Sheila: you are truly inspirational.

And last but certainly by no means least, a special thanks to Mandy, for her nomination acknowledging Sheila's invaluable work, energy and zeal which has and continues to benefit us all in the ringing world; for catapulting bell ringing into the wider public domain through the nomination and the kind and generous manner in the way she put the presentation together for Sheila. It was just the job, or should that be 'Proper Job'?

*Mark Heritage*

## First time success for Jess

Jess began ringing in January 2015 with the Bampton after school bell club. Using the Learning the Ropes Scheme from ART she achieved Level 1 in September of that year and Level 2 by March 2016. In September 2016 she transferred to the High School in Tiverton and started to ring at Bampton for the early part of their practice when school work allowed.

She now rings with the wedding band at Huntsham and joins the NE Branch young ringers and Saturday monthly practices when possible. Jess also rings for some services at Tiverton St Peter when she is 'in town'.

During 2017 she has become a reliable treble ringer for Doubles methods at Bampton and, when asked if she would like to attempt a quarter peal, she jumped at the opportunity. So, with haste before she set off to Cornwall for the last week of the summer holiday, a very willing band was assembled at Huntsham on Friday 25th August. An excellent, well-struck quarter of Bob Doubles ensued. Well done Jess on succeeding at your first attempt. A well-rung treble, of which you should be proud.

**Huntsham, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles, 43mins**  
25th August 2017

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Jess Sully    | 4. Sheila Scofield (C) |
| 2. Mandy Burnett | 5. Les Boyce           |
| 3. Jenny Jones   | 6. Mike Heard          |



The happy band following the quarter peal

*Sheila Scofield (very proud ART Teacher)*  
*Photo: Mandy Burnett*



## Celebrations at St Paul's Tiverton



Phil Smart learnt to ring as a youth before WW2, but came back to ringing after spending most of his working life abroad. He had been a very regular ringer at St Paul's for over 20 years, but due to failing health had to give up at the end of 2016. It was a lovely surprise when he unexpectedly arrived to ring for the morning service last Sunday. He wanted to celebrate his 96th birthday by seeing if he could still ring, which he did, with some well struck call changes on his usual bell, the 3rd. It is a double celebration as he and his wife, Mabel were born just one day apart. A gift and some cards from all the ringers at St Paul's and St Peter's, were delivered later in the day.

*Lynda Smith*

## Replacing the Tenor Clapper at Bampton – August 2017

On 16th July the tenor clapper broke whilst the bells were being rung down after service ringing. There was a tremendous thump as it hit and broke a board of the bell-chamber floor. Investigation the following day showed that it had broken a few inches from the pivot where, judging from the discolouration, there had been a long standing crack in the shaft.

Nicholson Engineering was commissioned to repair the clapper. The break was too near the pivot for the two parts of the stem to be welded together and, as Nicholson's didn't have a suitable replacement, a new clapper had to be cast. Nicholson's were ready to replace the clapper on 22nd August. A new Tufnol bush mounted in neoprene rubber has been fitted together with a stainless steel hinge pin.

The top of the broken clapper



The new clapper ready for installation

The bell hanger lifted the clapper feeding the staple through the crown of the bell and Mike replaced the nut to hold it in place. The nut was then tightened and the clappering checked. The bell hanger started to swing the bell by pulling on the wheel. Note that the bell rope has been removed to prevent it becoming entangled round the headstock as the bell swings to and fro



Fitting the clapper



Refitting the nut on the clapper

The bell hanger continued to pull on the wheel raising the bell higher and higher until it was striking in both directions. Then the bell was allowed to come down and the bell was checked for even striking on hand and back stroke by ensuring that both strokes stopped sounding at the same time. Ear defenders were a must! It was nearly right the first time and only needed a small





Raising the bell on the wheel

adjustment which was made by pushing the clapper staple over in the hole through the crown whilst Mike held the moving part against the bell to ensure that it didn't turn. And finally, the lock nut was put on and the rope replaced.

And at the practice on 24th August all the ringers agreed that now we have a really nice sounding tenor.

*Jack Ward*

### NE Branch Young Ringers

Three young ringers' events were scheduled for the 2017 summer holiday. The highlight was an invitation from Nellie to ring at Cruwys Morchard followed by a picnic lunch at Woody Combe. Well, no one was going to turn down that offer. Six young ringers with six helpers (NE 'grown-ups') had a good ring at Cruwys Morchard on tower and handbells. Plain Hunt was the main focus for the morning, with some venturing into Plain Bob Doubles and lots of fun with 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'.

Off we went to Nellie's place in convoy through the narrow lanes to meet the dogs, cats, chickens and Bess the horse - oh, and plenty of mud. Nellie had recently had a pond dug in the lower field and an inspection could not be resisted. The photo shows the young ringers trying out the gig that Nellie uses with Bess, with George encouraged to take the lead.



Back l: Flo, Alanna and Jess, Front l: George, Red and Fergus



The Pond – and the mud!

*Sheila Scofield*

## South West Branch Joint Practice at Buckfast Abbey



The South West branch had a rare opportunity for a joint practice with the Mid Devon Branch on Saturday 12th August at Buckfast Abbey. This was for ringers of all abilities to ring at the Abbey. Some of us arrived early to enjoy a really nice lunch in the Abbey restaurant and a walk in the gardens. We had plenty of time to look around inside the Abbey before climbing the many steps, with a photo opportunity from the gallery, looking down into the Abbey.

We had a really enjoyable practice, expertly led by Martin Mansley from St Marychurch. With such a variety of abilities he managed to give us all plenty of rope time. Some of us were a little 'rope hungry' (me. . . ) and managed to take hold of several of the bells, from the four right up to the tenor, which was a joy to ring.

Everyone agreed it had been a very enjoyable afternoon and there was a unanimous vote to do it all again next year.

*Billy Moore*

### My First Tower Outing

On a very sunny 2nd September I joined the South West Branch on an outing to five towers in Southeast Cornwall. I've not been ringing for long, just under two months, so this was an exciting and helpful opportunity for me to learn more about bell ringing and to get to know everyone a bit more.

We set off early to meet everyone at our first stop: St Sampson, Golant. It was a quaint little place with views over the river Fowey. The church itself dates back to the 6th century and has a ring of five bells that were much lighter than I was used to in Plymouth, and they were rung from the ground floor. I started off very timidly, but soon found myself getting used to the different feeling. Our 45 minutes sped by and soon we were off to our next destination, the six bells of St Andrew's, Tywardreath, which were



again rung from the ground floor, but this time with an open door to let the sunshine and light breeze in from the churchyard. What a treat!

Lunch was next at the New Inn in Tywardreath, where we enjoyed a great selection of food in a wonderfully light and airy corner of the restaurant. With good food and good conversation, we were thoroughly recharged for the next three stops.

The afternoon began with Fowey parish church's eight bells. After two ground floor rings and a big lunch it was a slight surprise to have to climb what seemed like an endless spiral stairway to the ringing room! The bells were lovely and I am sure the crowd outside enjoyed our efforts as much as we did.

Next it was over to St Wyllow, Lanteglos-by-Fowey which involved an exciting trip over the river by ferry. It also involved getting slightly lost and trying out three different satnav apps before finding the way. The six bells had very long ropes and needed us to take coils which was an unusual feeling for me but a great experience to get to know the different situations that you can come across.

Via convoy to St Winnow, Lostwithiel we came across a sea of grouse running in the road. It was all quite dramatic as Claire and Fergus almost got one, but luckily no birds were harmed during the outing! We arrived at the lovely new ten bells at St Winnow, with their rainbow coloured sallies and a screen to show the live CCTV images of the bells. They were incredibly light and high pitched, sounding more like wind chimes than bells, and they took great skill to ring so I left it mainly to the experts!

My first tower outing ended up being a really exciting and interesting day. As the least experienced member of the group I felt very well looked after and supported to get as much out of the different towers as I could. I am really grateful to the South West Branch for allowing me to come along, and particularly to Josephine for making all the arrangements.

Elena Brake

Plymouth Youths' Annual Outing



PY's outside Yorktown - Back: Owen, Matthew  
Middle: James, Sarah, Harry, Jess  
Front: Josephine, Hellen, Isaac, Sarah, Sam

This year's outing was organised by Jess and took place in and around the Camberley area. We stayed in 1st Owlsmoor scout hut during the weekend; staying indoors on a PY's outing being a luxury most of us were unaccustomed to, as was having access to their well-equipped kitchen facilities and outdoor fire pit. We arrived late on the Friday, some of us having already eaten, with the exception of Harry, who I recall had a curry ready meal which

he thoroughly enjoyed. The evening continued as we played Cranium with great hilarity, especially when trying to act out charades.

Our first tower the next morning was Farnborough: eight bells, six cwt. Here we were joined by the rest of the PY's, giving us ten ringers able to ring simple methods comfortably. This was a wooden tower and was an interesting start to the day. The front bells were quite flighty and the third was in set in the circle which made rope sight difficult.

Next we went to Hawley: eight bells, ten cwt. These were a very pleasant ring where we rang amongst other things, a very well struck course of Cambridge, and to the local ringer's bewilderment some Devon call changes. Now it was time for lunch which was a short trip down the road to the local pub where we enjoyed enormous servings, making us all slightly tired before leaving for our next tower. Yorktown: eight bells, 13 cwt, a complete Warner ring which was surprisingly good. We were greeted by some of the local ringers, this also being Jess's home tower. Here we rang Stedman and Cambridge.

The penultimate tower was Eversley: six bells, five cwt. The ringing chamber here had been converted into a creche, complete with cupboards filled with toys, which amused our younger member and even some of the older members. These bells were very nice to ring and with the aid of a local, we managed to ring London and a touch of Original.

Every ringing trip has a bogey tower at some point, our final tower was just that. Sandhurst: six bells, seven cwt. An open ground floor ring with an interesting set of bells. Handling was difficult and made harder by everyone being exhausted after a long day. The fifth was especially bad as we believe it was loose on the headstock. Despite all this, we did manage a course of London, but we were all glad to ring down at the end and enjoy the sunshine, which had finally decided to show itself.

That evening we walked from the scout hut to Jess's house, where her parents provided us with a fantastic barbecue and some entertainment. Here we played the traditional game of Kubbs, made slightly more interesting with the use of bed sheets to protect the flower beds from flying wooden batters. As the light faded we said our goodbyes to those who were returning to Plymouth and walked back to the scout hut. There we made use of their fire pit and had a bonfire, the idea being that we might play games, but we were all too tired so decided to call it a day.

The next morning after packing up our sleeping gear, we went to ring at Yorktown for their morning service. After some of us returned to Plymouth, while others went to Virginia Water and enjoyed a day on the lakes before returning home. All in all, this year's weekend away was fantastic and went very smoothly thanks to Jess's organisation, and we are all looking forward to next year's outing.



Ringing at Hawley

Matthew Thewsey



## Big Zip activity precedes Branch Practice

The South West Branch ten Bell Practice was held at St Eustachius, Tavistock on Saturday 22nd July. With a 7pm start there was plenty of time before the practice for a few of the more crazy ringers to try out the Big Zip Activity at Gulworthy. I am sure many of you wish you had been able to make it to try out the zip wire . . . or maybe not? Happy just to ring? Yep, far more sensible, if you ask me.



*Billy Moore*

## Other News

### Ring for Children in Need



We're all familiar with Children in Need and Pudsey Bear, but this year the Central Council have teamed up with the BBC for a proper link with ringing.

You may like to do a bit of gentle fundraising for Children in Need with sponsored ringing in the 6 weeks between 5th Oct and 17th Nov, (though I'm not suggesting we detract from Guild Quarter Peal fortnight, fundraising for bell restoration, which is during that).

Further information is at:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/2017/08/16/a-peal-for-pudsey-children-in-need-needs-you/>

*Lynne Hughes*

## Tercentenary of United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE)

The UGLE is the overriding body of English Freemasonry and this year marked the 300th anniversary of its formation. In order to celebrate this various events were held up and down the country. Freemasonry, like bellringing, has local groups; in the case of Freemasonry these are called Provinces and (generally) align to county boundaries. Devon is represented by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Devonshire. The Province had planned a celebratory service at the Cathedral. When this was publicised, a number of ringing Masons within Devon wondered whether it would be possible to ring for this. The lot fell to me to try and organise this. I was considerably helped in this by Colin Adam, of Exminster, who has wide ranging connections within the Devon Association. After many e-mails and telephone calls we were able to gather sufficient numbers to ring the Thomas eight for an hour before the service.

The attached photo show those who rang on the occasion, although jackets and aprons were only worn in the ringing chamber for the photographs! Is this the best dressed band ever to be seen in the Cathedral ringing chamber? The observant will note that one of the band is not a mason but the wife of a mason.



Back Row - L to R: Colin Adams, Tom Archer, Charlie Hard, Spencer Keys

Front Row - L to R: James Kirkcaldy, Anne Bailey, John Langabeer, Colin Heath, Jeff Bailey

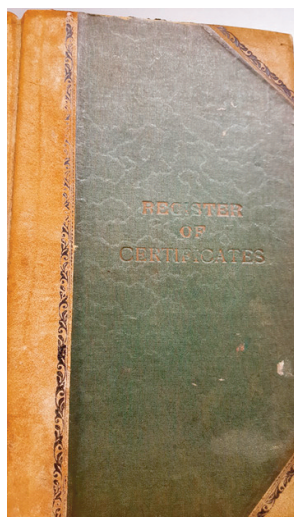
*James Kirkcaldy*

## When the ladies joined in...

John Martin, Secretary of the Guild, aroused considerable interest among members of the Mid-Devon Branch when, at the Branch AGM last November, he produced the Guild Register of Certificates - a finely bound large foolscap sized volume - and encouraged those present to leaf through its pages. This was done with quite some interest, with a number of those present first scanning the numbered entries, trying to recall the year in which their own names must have appeared, as well as those of other members of the Branch.

But it was soon much earlier entries that attracted attention, not least the very first entries in the Register, which date from 1874, the year when the Guild of Devonshire Ringers was established, pride of place (with Certificate no. 1) being accorded to the Reverend Henry Ellacombe, who was instrumental in founding the Guild, along with C. A. W. Troyte and William Banister, whose names also appear among those first receiving Guild certificates. The opening pages of the Register also bear witness to the rapid increase in membership of the Guild: in the first three months of the Guild's existence over a hundred certificates were awarded to Performing Members. Within twelve months, there were 169 entries, from various different areas of Devon and parts of Cornwall as well.





The record of certificates awarded by the Guild

However it was not long before several of those looking through the Register at the AGM commented on the absence of female names among the early ringers listed. Curiosity aroused, we began studying the entries line by line, to try to discover when the first female Performing Member received her Certificate, aware that the Guild rules included the requirement that the Certificate as a Performing Member was awarded only to those able to ring a changing bell in a touch of 120 changes (a rule formalised in 1900/01). Scattered among the entries we noted references to unnamed Honorary members and Associate members (the latter generally described as 'unqualified'), some of whom we presumed would have been women. That this was the case has been confirmed by research undertaken since by Leslie Boyce, mainly from Guild Reports, which indicated that by 1900/01 there were eight 'Lady Associates'. Five of these had qualified under a newly-introduced rule, 'having proved their ability to ring a changing bell through a six-score on handbells'.

We scanned the first thousand entries: not a single woman's name appeared. And then, at Entry No. 1073, we stumbled on what we had been looking for – though this was not one female member, but a whole group - eight female ringers in Tiverton, all of whom received their certificates as Performing Members of the Guild on June 1st, 1903.

Previous entries in the Register suggested that in the years since the foundation of the Guild, ringing at Tiverton and in the surrounding areas had flourished. In the first twenty-five years of the Guild's existence, over fifty male ringers from Tiverton, drawn from a wide range of occupations, had received Certificates as Performing Members – among them were masons, carpenters, articled clerks, schoolmasters, carpenters, builders, butchers, alongside men of the cloth, and one or two listed simply as

NUMBER	DATE OF AWARD	SURNAMES	FULL CHRISTIAN NAMES	ADDRESS	DATE OF EXPIRATION	RE-ENTRY NO.
1073	July 22	Scott	Miss E.	Tiverton	1903	30
1074	"	Hennell	Miss K.	"	"	"
1075	"	Hennell	Miss L.	"	"	"
1076	"	Kennaway	Miss L.	"	"	"
1077	"	Todd	Miss M.	"	"	"
1078	"	Todd	Miss L.	"	"	"
1079	"	Haydon	Miss A.	"	"	"
1080	"	Mooyart	Miss	"	"	"
1081, 1082	Nov. 1895	Thomas	Thomas	Washfield, Tiverton	June 1	"
1083	Aug. 19	Anscott	William, jun.	Washfield, Tiverton	June 1	"
1084	"	Associate not qualified		Washfield, Tiverton	June 1	"
1085	1907 Feb. 5	Bowden	Henry	Washfield, Tiverton	June 1	"
1086	"	Associate not qualified		"	"	"
1087	1907 Feb. 5	Hellier	William	"	"	"
1088	1912 Aug. 19	Luxon	"	"	"	"

The first entries for ladies

gentlemen. So who were these eight women? These must have been the members of the 'class of ladies' mentioned in the Tiverton entry in the Guild report of 1902/03 who, according to the writer, had 'got on well'. While the Guild Report gives no indication of the reason for the establishment of the 'class of ladies', a short item in the Lincolnshire Chronicle (October 2, 1903) provides an answer, reporting that these ladies 'were trained to ring in honour of the King's Coronation, and have continued to ring since.' (The Coronation took place on 9 August 1902.)

How were they selected? None appear to have been related to any of the Tiverton ringers already listed in the Register, and they are not among the Lady Associates named in the Guild Report of 1902/03. Instead the links between the families appear to be based on their parents' social standing and educational background - the church, University education, the City, Colonial service in India. By comparison with Tiverton's male ringers, they appear to have been relatively young. Details from census records show that the majority of the eight were aged between 17 and 21, with two in their mid and late twenties. One, Christine Scott, was the 19 year old daughter of the Rector of St Peter's Tiverton; another, Miss Mooyart was one of the two daughters of the Rector of Uplowman. Kathleen and Lucy Hennell were daughters of a well-to-do Army family, as were Mary and Louise Todd (their father a retired Army Colonel who had served in India). Avia Haydon, the youngest of the eight, at 17, living with her widowed mother in Tiverton, was the daughter of a recently deceased physician and surgeon, while the eldest of the group, Lucy Kennaway, who had been born in New Zealand, had come to England at the age of 16 (in 1891) and by the time that her name appeared in the Register she was living with her father (a well-to-do landowner) in Tiverton.

Newspapers articles from the time suggest that the arrival on the scene of female ringers was regarded as noteworthy. In September 1902 their advent was reported in several local newspapers, both in the West Country and as far afield as Lincolnshire and Nottingham. While the Taunton Courier and Western Gazette (25 September 1902), observed laconically, in a section headed 'News in Brief', that 'Tiverton ladies are going in for bellringing. Mere man is nowhere', others commented favourably on the proficiency that the ladies were already showing.

If opposition there was – and Steve Coleman, in his recent publication, The Ringing in History Companion (2013) illustrates this at some length - it did not surface in the pages of the West Country press. A fortnight later, the Taunton Courier published a letter from a local lady who, on reading of developments in Tiverton, observed that she:

*should really like to hear that some ladies in Taunton and neighbourhood had followed suit, for it is, undoubtedly, a good exercise – developing muscle, and keeping them in good health, as well as form. Such exercise is by far better than so much bicycle riding. Well done, ye ladies of Tiverton.*

In The Ringing in History Companion, Steve Coleman mentions that by 1902 although some women were ringing, and there were

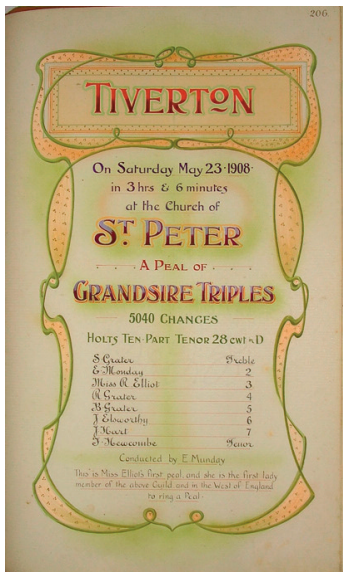
NUMBER	DATE OF AWARD	SURNAMES	FULL CHRISTIAN NAMES	ADDRESS	DATE OF EXPIRATION	RE-ENTRY NO.
1		Ellacombe	Henry Thomas (Rev.)			
2		Telford	John Leonard (Rev.)			
3		Telford	John Leonard (Rev.)			
4		Telford	John Leonard (Rev.)			
5		Telford	John Leonard (Rev.)			
6-7		Barlow	William Barlow			
8		Barlow	William Barlow			
9		Barlow	William Barlow			
10		Barlow	William Barlow			
11		Barlow	William Barlow			
12		Barlow	William Barlow			
13		Barlow	William Barlow			
14-20		Barlow	William Barlow			
21		Barlow	William Barlow			
22		Barlow	William Barlow			
23		Barlow	William Barlow			
24		Barlow	William Barlow			
25		Barlow	William Barlow			
26		Barlow	William Barlow			
27		Barlow	William Barlow			
28		Barlow	William Barlow			
29		Barlow	William Barlow			
30		Barlow	William Barlow			
31		Barlow	William Barlow			
32		Barlow	William Barlow			
33		Barlow	William Barlow			
34		Barlow	William Barlow			
35		Barlow	William Barlow			
36		Barlow	William Barlow			
37		Barlow	William Barlow			

The first records in the book



ladies' bands 'throughout the country', the ladies were ringing separately – they did not appear as members of the local band (conjecturing that this was 'probably because they came from a higher social class') and they were not elected to the local Association ('probably because they didn't progress far enough'). While the eight Tiverton ladies did come from families that would have been regarded as 'local gentry', in all other respects their experience was rather different from that in the bands to which Steve Coleman refers.

Although the wording of the Guild Reports suggests that initially the Tiverton lady ringers were not invited to ring alongside the male members of the tower, this began to change quite quickly. By the time that the Tiverton entry for the Guild Report of 1902/03 was compiled, its author could report that members of the ladies' class 'rang the treble in some touches of Grandsire Triples with our President . . . a great many 504's of both Stedman and Grandsire have been rung, in which some of the Ladies of our Band have taken part.... . Some of our members have visited Calverleigh and Washfield on several occasions, and some very good Minor, Stedman and Grandsire Doubles have been rung, including the Ladies also who have taken part.' By October that same year, the Lincolnshire Chronicle was reporting that one of the Tiverton lady ringers (Kathleen Hennell) had 'earned distinction' by taking part in a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples, described in the news item as 'the largest number of changes on tower bells in which a lady ringer has taken part in the West of England.' By 1908/09, the Tiverton section of the Guild Report was proudly announcing that a female member had rung the 3rd in a peal of Grandsire Triples (Holt's Ten-Part), alongside experienced local peal ringers, thus having 'the honour of being the first Lady Member who has scored a peal in the Devon Guild, and also in the West of England.' This was Rachel Elliott - not one of the original eight – who gained her Guild Certificate as a Performing Member in May 1907.



The first lady to ring a peal

But Tiverton's early success in attracting female ringers seems to have been short-lived. The research undertaken by Leslie Boyce shows that by that year (1908/09) the number of lady ringers in Tiverton had halved; by 1910/11 there were no longer any female ringers listed as Performing Members in the Guild Reports for Tiverton. What happened to them? Where – and why - had they gone? Perhaps given their ages and backgrounds, it was inevitable that some of them would move away. At least two of the eight trained as nurses in London and served with distinction in World War I. One (Louise Todd) became a Librarian and English Tutor at St Hilda's Oxford; others married and moved to other parts of the country. But their example and influence clearly made an impact in the West Country and further afield. In April 1903, The Western Times noted that a 'Guild of Lady Bellringers' had been established in Combe-in-Teignhead, the members of which (as in Tiverton)

were 'the daughters of resident clergy and other ladies of established position', and warmly welcomed 'such feminine effort' in the light of what it described as 'the masculine exodus from the country village' (an issue that had also been acknowledged earlier in Tiverton). By January 1907, the Taunton Courier was able to report that a ladies band had also been established in Clyst Hydon. Sheila Schofield, one of the members of the present band at St Peter's Tiverton, when on a recent ringing outing, noticed a peal board in the tower of Topsham Parish Church, which celebrated the fact that on Easter Day 1918, the six bells were rung by a ladies band for the first time. There must be more such 'firsts' in other Devon towers, but what is clear is that within the Guild of Devonshire Ringers, Tiverton led the way.

My thanks to Leslie Boyce, Alison Palmer and Michael Mears for their assistance in the research for this article.

Janet Ritterman

## Training

### Handbells at Dawlish



What could be better than to mix up a warm, sunny (mostly) afternoon, with cake, an unlimited supply of tea and excellent company? Well, you could throw in -not literally- a few sets of hand bells and some people who can ring them. Then you would have the recipe for an enjoyable annual Guild hand bell day. Kindly hosted by Lynne, and scheduled and directed in his inimitable style by Tim, three groups rang Plain Bob Minor, Major and even some Little Bob. Several quarter peals were accomplished, to the astonishment of at least two of the novice ringers involved in them! Towards the end of the afternoon, we were treated to an expert course of Kent Treble Bob Royal, the first time that all ten of Nellie's set of bells had been out of their knitted jackets together! Thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to such an enjoyable event.



Some young (and not so young) ringers at Denmisch in June  
Lynne Hughes



## Fame

### Another Short Story from St Swarfega's

Little Odford usually hit the headlines of the local press in August. Every few years it would feature on national television as an example of the Merrie England image beloved of those whose business it is to promote tourism among our American cousins.

The reason for this intermittent fame was the annual celebration of St Swarfega's Day. Unusually for a saint's day, St Swarfega's was a moveable feast, being celebrated on the Saturday following the first Sunday after Pontefract. This ensured that it did not interrupt the working week and that it took place in August during the school holidays when the weather was reasonably reliable.

Nobody was absolutely sure who St Swarfega was, but the most widely accepted view held that she had been an Anglo-Saxon princess who had left the court and established an order of nuns based at Little Odford Abbey (long demolished) and who devoted their lives to prayer and to improving the lot of the wives of the local peasantry by making soap which they distributed freely to all in the area.

By the time the villagers of Little Odford built the present parish church in the 14th century the cult of St Swarfega was so well established that the church was dedicated to her and before long the celebration of St Swarfega's Day had become a major annual event in the village.

Of course the celebration centred on the church and always began at 6am with a quarter peal of Swarfega Doubles, a method rung nowhere else and on no other occasion. The local ringers were sworn to secrecy about the method and such were its intricacies that the efforts of all who had sought to decipher it over the years had come to nought.

At 9.30 am the Vicar conducted the St Swarfega service during which specially made tablets of soap were distributed to the ten oldest housewives in the parish. After the service the congregation moved to the site of the Abbey for the Swarfega Dancing. The Soapies, a self-appointed and self-perpetuating group made up of members of certain families who were the guardians of the tradition, dressed themselves up in distinctive red and green robes and performed a complex dance routine accompanied by pipe and tabor. Folk dance experts had, over the years, tried very hard to establish the significance of the dance sequence but no clear consensus had been achieved. The routine had been never been written down but was passed on from generation to generation – and as far as the Soapies were concerned that was the way it should be.

Lunch for most of the village was taken at The Ring of Bells where landlord's wife Betty Hidon and her team of helpers had been working hard all morning to produce the enormous Swarfega Pie – a speciality whose recipe was another village secret.

In the afternoon attention moved to the green where a free fete took place with all the usual sideshows and games but at which no money changed hands. It was understood that people had effectively paid for this event by being especially generous at the Church fete earlier in the year.

The day was rounded off by more bell-ringing followed by a dance at the village hall.

For some of the villagers St Swarfega's was a very busy day indeed. George Broadworthy, the Tower Captain, and his younger brother Fred were both members of the Soapies and always had to decide whether to ring in their robes or to do a surreptitious costume change in the ringing chamber after the quarter peal. Mary Prosser, postmistress, ringer and secretary of the PCC, could also expect a busy day. It fell to her not only to take part in the dawn ringing but also to select the ten old ladies, to ensure that they were able to make it to the service, to arrange a stand-in in case of the sudden demise of one of the recipients and to arrange for the supply of the special St Swarfega soap.

The Rev. Ken Thornthwaite, vicar of Little Odford, had found himself the inheritor of the St Swarfega celebrations when he was appointed to the parish. His initial reaction after arriving from industrial Doncaster had been very sceptical indeed but he had

no option but to go through with the celebrations in his first year and the magic had enslaved him. In fact it was his enthusiasm for the festival that led to all the trouble.

From time to time the national television networks rediscovered Little Odford and descended on the village to film the August shenanigans. Sometimes it was merely for their news programme and sometimes it was the basis of a documentary feature for 'Bizarre Britain', 'Holy Heritage', 'Quaint Customs' or some such title. There had not been any national coverage for several years and the Rev Ken, ever eager to be seen promoting the church's involvement in village life (especially by the Bishop), telephoned the BBC suggesting that it would be a good idea if they were to come to Little Odford for this year's festival. Receiving a positive reply to his request he did not think it necessary to tell anybody else about the plan assuming that the programme makers would simply come along with their cameras and get on with things in a discreet fly-on-the-wall manner.

Tower captain George Broadworthy was concerned about the tower finances as he could foresee the need for some work on the bell-frame and was looking for ways to raise funds. An afternoon's weeding of his onion bed gave him a thinking opportunity and, sure enough, an idea presented itself. He put his idea to brother Fred in the bar of The Ring of Bells that evening.

'I been thinkin', he said. 'We'mgoin' to need a few quid to get that frame seen to an' it struck me we 'aven't 'ad the TV people 'ere for St Swarfega's Day for a few years. Why don't we get in touch an' ask 'em to come and film the ringin'? They commercial people usually pays to film an' we could charge 'em a hefty fee.'

'Good idea,' replied Fred. 'I spec' the Soapies could get a fee for the dancin' as well an' we could give that to the tower too. Want me to ring 'em up an' ask?'

'OK,' said George. 'I'll leave it to you. But make sure they'm goin' to pay.'

At about 3am on the morning of the great day George was roused by his alarm clock, got up, dressed and crept out of Woodbine Cottage to let the film crew into the tower. Exactly on schedule at 3.30am the large Country TV Outside Broadcast truck rolled into the church car park and within ten minutes the cables were draped all the way up the tower staircase and lights and cameras were being installed in the ringing chamber and the belfry. George watched all this activity with growing alarm as more and more equipment appeared. Would there be enough room for the ringers to get up the steps, let alone to ring the bells? Had it really been a good idea to invite the programme makers? Would the ringers, provided there was room for them to ring, be so put off by the cameras that they would make a mess of the Swarfega Doubles? And then he thought about the fee and the problems seemed to melt away. The lights were not too bright. The cameras were really quite small and there was more room than he had thought on the stairs.

Half past four came and with it the Rev Ken.

'Mornin' Vicar! Bit early aren't you? We're not ringing for another hour and a half.'

'What on earth's going on?' asked Ken. 'They said they wouldn't be here before five.'

'They bin 'ere since half past three, just like they said they would,' said George. 'Not surprisin' they came so early with all this stuff to get inside. When we 'ad the BBC a few years ago they didn't need so long to get ready.'

'What d'you mean, 'When we had the BBC?'' cried Ken. 'This IS the BBC.'

'No it's not. It's Country TV. Fred fixed it up with 'em and they'm payin us four 'undred quid to film the ringin'.

'But nobody told me,' spluttered Ken. 'And I arranged for the...'

As he spoke a large Outside Broadcast truck bearing the BBC logo rolled into the car park.

'O glory!' exclaimed George. 'What've you gone an' done now, Vicar? There ain't room in the tower for both of 'em. Now, I'd better get back upstairs and see if my lot's all right,' he continued, edging towards the church. 'I spec' you'll be able to manage down 'ere.'



And he scuttled up the stairs leaving Ken to deal with the crisis. 'Morning gentlemen,' he called out cheerily as the two BBC men descended from their vehicle. 'Pleased to meet you. I'm Ken Thornthwaite, Vicar. It's good to have the media along.'

'What's that lot doin'?' demanded the first engineer, pointing at the CTV van. 'You didn't tell us there'd be anyone else 'ere – and we passed one of they Galaxy TV trucks changing a wheel just down the road. Looks like they're heading this way too.'

'I'm sorry about the misunderstanding,' replied Ken. 'The bellringers invited CTV without telling me. You might be able to get coverage if you outbid them. I think they offered about £500.'

'Give us a minute while we phone the office – there should be someone there who can decide.'

The engineers retired to the truck and Ken dashed up the tower to put George in the picture.

'I'm trying to persuade the BBC to pay more than CTV,' he said. 'We could do well out of this mess after all.'

When he got back to ground level he found the BBC men engaged in a heated exchange with the Galaxy TV crew who had completed their wheel-change and arrived at the church to find themselves up-staged by two other crews. Before Ken had time to speak he was pounced on by the Galaxy men.

'Your letter said we'd have an exclusive. Look!' And he waved a paper in front of Ken's nose. It was letter from the PCC of St Swarfega's (Vicar Rev K Thornthwaite, B.Sc(Econ) Dip. RE) offering Galaxy exclusive coverage of the St Swarfega's Day festivities from the dawn ringing to the last waltz. It was signed by Mary Prosser, (Miss), Hon. Sec. PCC. pp. Rev K Thornthwaite.

'But this wasn't authorised by the PCC. I just mentioned casually to Mary that I was thinking of getting TV coverage and she must have had one of her fits of super-efficiency and sent the letter.'

'The boss says we can pay £600,' announced the BBC engineer. 'Is that OK? It won't take long to fix up the lights and things.'

'But we've already offered £800,' interjected the Galaxy man.

Poor Ken was in a real fix. Here he was at 5am on the day of the village's most important festival with three TV crews each expecting to get exclusive coverage, one already occupying the tower and the other two glaring at each other in the car park.

At that moment George emerged from the tower and took the vicar to one side.

'I bin thinkin', Vicar,' he began. 'If we was to accept, say, £300 from each of 'em, let CTV stay in the tower, let the BBC do the service an' the dancin' and the others do the Pie and the Fete we'd end up with £900 (which is more than the best offer we got), they'd all pay less than they expected, we wouldn't have to unstitch the tower, we'd get coverage of everything and everybody'd be happy.'

'You're a genius, George,' said Ken. 'Let's go to it!'

By 6am the negotiations had been completed to everyone's satisfaction.

A relieved Ken, a sheepish Mary Prosser and the green-robed Fred, Darren and Sharon all fully illuminated by the TV lights looked across the ringing chamber to a triumphant George Broadworthy.

'Look to. Treble's goin'. She's gone.'

Then, after a couple of minutes of rounds, 'Go - Swarfega's Doubles.'

Peter Walter



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## Notable Ringing Events

### First of Bristol Royal in Hand for the Guild.

**Exmouth, Devon**, 7A Salterton Road  
Sunday, 9 July 2017 in 2h46 (15 in C)  
5120 Bristol Surprise Royal  
Composed by J M Jelley (No 114)  
1–2 Andrew P Digby                      7–8 Matthew J Hilling  
3–4 Susan D Sparling                    9–10 Oliver Coldrick  
5–6 David G Maynard (C)  
First peal of Bristol in hand: 9-10  
First peal of Bristol Royal in hand: 1-2, 3-4 and for the Guild

### First Peal of Bristol For Ollie Bates

**Pinhoe, Devon**, St Michael and All Angels  
Monday, 21 August 2017 in 2h47  
5056 Bristol Surprise Major  
Composed by A J Cox  
1 Susan D Sparling                      5 Ian V J Smith  
2 Timothy M Bayton                    6 David Hird  
3 Oliver C Bates                        7 John R Martin (C)  
4 Charlotte A Boyce                    8 Michael E C Mears  
First in method – 3

### First of Spliced Surprise Royal for Rebecca Harrison

**Thorverton, Devon**, St Thomas of Canterbury  
Thursday, 24 August 2017 in 2hrs 56m  
5040 Spliced Surprise Royal (3m) (1680 each Cambridge, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire; 42 changes of method; all the work)  
Composed by M Maughan  
1 Ian W Avery                            6 Ian V J Smith  
2 Pauline McKenzie                   7 Roger King  
3 Rebecca J Harrison                   8 Michael C Hansford  
4 Jill M Hansford                        9 Richard Harrison  
5 James Kirkcaldy                       10 Michael E C Mears (C)  
First Spliced S Royal: 3

Congratulations go to all concerned.

Mike Mears

## Solution to last month's puzzle – Confusing Instructions

I have seen your list of numbers nearer home than Australia - Leek Wootton in Warwickshire, to be precise. See number 5 in the middle.

The numbers are how to 'play' Shepherd's Hey on your bells.



Mike Chester, Coventry



Tower Warning

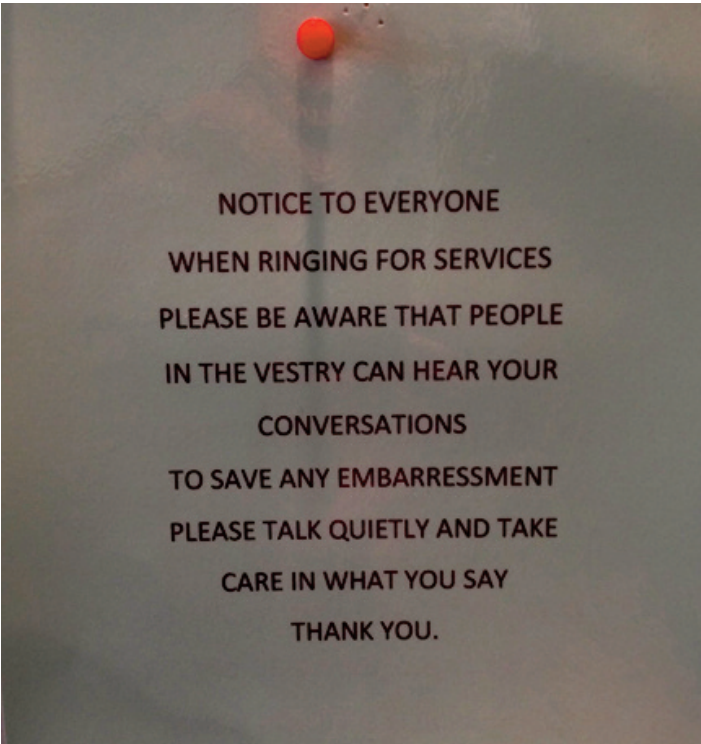
Not the sort of warning to be found by an English tower! We kept a close look through the open door to the outside while ringing a quarter peal.



Ian Campbell

Watch what you say...

Seen recently in a tower...



Ian Campbell

Seen in a Cornish Tower

Spotted at Gorran was this rather finely framed poem from 1811:



Hark how the chirping Treble sings most clear,  
And covering Tom comes rolling in the rear:  
Now throw them up on end that all may see  
What laws are best to keep sobriety:  
We ring the quick to church the dead to grave  
Good is our use such usage let us have:  
To swear or curse or in a choleric mood  
To strike or quarrel 'tho he draws no blood  
To wear a hat or spur or overturn a bell  
Who by unskilful handling mars a peal,  
Such shall pay sixpence for each single crime  
To make him cautious against another time:  
And we the whole society do agree  
To spend our fines in peace and unity.

Ian Campbell

Young Ringers' Practices 2017

All young ringers and their parents/chaperones are invited to come along on Sunday afternoons to these ringing practices, to meet other young ringers and have some fun. The Denmisch simulated campanile uses a computer to make the sounds as you ring!



**Where?** Exeter Cathedral School, Palace Gate,  
Exeter EX1 1HX  
**Day?** 17th September, 17th December  
**Time?** 12.30 – 2.30pm



# Calendar

You are advised to contact the local branch secretary before attending any event to confirm that it is still running and at the specified location.

## September

Sat 16	10:00	Development Programme A - Call Changes Huntsham	North East
Sat 16	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St. Mary	East
Sun 17	12:30	Young Ringers' Practice DenMisch Simulated Campanile	Guild
Sun 17	12:30	Young Ringers Practice, Denmisch	South West
Sun 17	14:30	Development Programme B - Plain Single Hunt Doubles, Huntsham	North East
Mon 18	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 20		Mid-Week Outing, Details later	North East
Wed 27	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 30		ART Module M1: Teaching Bell Handling	Guild

## October

Mon 2	19:30	Triples - Stedman and Grandsire, Ottery St. Mary	East
Wed 4	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Wed 4	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Sat 7		All Day Outing, Bristol or Bath TBC	Mid Devon
Sat 7	14:00	N-E Branch Annual General Meeting	North East
Sun 8		Branch Striking Competition Practice, TBC	South West
Wed 11	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 12	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Fri 13		Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Fri 13	19:30	Branch Practice, Exmouth, Withycombe Raleigh	Aylesbeare
Sat 14	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Cheriton Fitzpaine	North East
Sat 14	15:00	Autumn Meeting, Combe Raleigh	East
Sat 14	TBC	Branch AGM, Lympstone	Aylesbeare
Sun 15		Branch Striking Competition Practice, TBC	South West
Sun 15	14:30	Minor Methods Practice, Huntsham	North East
Mon 16	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Thu 19	19:00	8 Bell Practice, Newton Abbot Clock Tower	Mid Devon
Fri 20		Guild Quarter Peal Festival, Throughout County and beyond	Guild
Sat 21	10:00	Development Programme A - Call Changes Huntsham	North East
Sat 21	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St. Mary	East
Sat 21	10:00	Striking Competitions, North East Branch	Guild
Wed 25	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 28	10:00	Learn & ring a new method in 3 hours (TRC Event), Huntsham	North East

## November

Wed 1	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Wed 1	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Sat 4	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Bampton	North East
Sat 4	19:00	Branch bonfire & fireworks party, Newton St Cyres	Exeter
Sun 5		Quarter Peal Festival ends	Guild
Mon 6	19:30	Triples - Stedman and Grandsire, Ottery St. Mary	East
Wed 8	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Wed 8	19:30	Branch Practice, Lympstone	Aylesbeare
Thu 9	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Fri 10	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Sat 11		Branch 96th Anniversary Service & Dinner Moorland Garden Hotel	South West
Sat 11	10:00	Raising & Lowering in Peal (TRC Event), Huntsham	North East
Thu 16	19:30	8 Bell Practice, Babbacombe	Mid Devon
Sat 18	10:00	Development Programme A - Call Changes, Huntsham	North East
Sat 18	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St. Mary	East
Sat 18	pm	Branch AGM, TBC	Exeter
Mon 20	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 22	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 25		Mid Devon Branch AGM, Wolborough	Mid Devon
Sat 25	10:00	Plain Bob Doubles (TRC Event), Huntsham	North East
Sat 25	16:00	Minor Methods Practice, Huntsham	North East
Wed 29	19:00	Branch Committee Meeting Heathcott Centre, Tiverton	North East

## December

Sat 2	10:00	6 Bell Practice, Halberton	North East
Sat 2	14:00	Plain Hunt (TRC Event), Huntsham	North East
Mon 4	19:30	Triples - Stedman and Grandsire, Ottery St. Mary	East
Wed 6	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Wed 6	19:30	10 bell advanced practice, Exeter St Mark	Exeter
Fri 8	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Buckerell	East
Sat 9	16:00	Devon Ringers' Carol Service, Exeter Cathedral	Guild
Mon 11	19:30	Branch Practice, Exmouth, Littleham	Aylesbeare
Wed 13	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 14	19:30	Plain Hunt Practice, Sidbury	East
Sat 16	10:00	Development Programme A - Call Changes, Huntsham	North East
Sat 16	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Ottery St. Mary	East
Mon 18	19:30	Stedman and Doubles Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 20	16:00	Minor Methods Practice, Huntsham	North East

# Editorial

This issue feels like a take-over by the East Devon Branch! All congratulations go to them (and to Lisa Clarke in particular) for their foresight and initiative and their hard work fundraising to upgrade their three into an easy going six.

The little puzzle last time ('Confusing Instructions') had many heads scratching. One of our Guild officers suggested 'Could it be a list of who the ringer of the 6th has to follow through a method, excluding when leading, and with a new box every time it gets to the front/back?' I have to confess that I realised that the list of numbers was seen at Manuka in Canberra and not Sydney – someone even contacted the Australian ringers to try to find out what they were and we tried picking out a tune on handbells at the Cathedral using the numbers but didn't recognise any tune! I am grateful to Mike Chester from Coventry who explains the figures – see the article earlier. With the publication of RRD on the web the readership is now rather more than you might think – including a number of ex-Devon ringers who like to keep in touch. If you are one of those I would love to hear from you.

And the 'Mystery Devices' at Gorran are actually used to locate into slots in the floor so that the trap can be lifted.

I was rather flattered to receive a message from Alan Glover, the Central Council Librarian, who wrote: *'Congratulations on the latest 'Ringing Round Devon'. As an excellent example of a Guild/Association Newsletter, I would like to acquire a run of these and have them bound for the Central Council Library.* 'I found I had a spare continuous run of 14 from issue 93 (March 2014) to the current one which I have sent off. He will also be getting a copy of each new issue as it is produced. So keep those articles coming in – they will soon become history! He replied *'Thank you very much for the batch of Newsletters which arrived safely this morning. I see from the 100th edition that the first Editor was Don Lawson. I rang with Don back in the day when he lived in Shrewsbury. Looking forward to many more interesting editions to browse.'*

In addition, the Guild Librarian had a number of the early issues missing. These have been copied for him so that the Guild library is now completely up to date.

The Guild striking competitions take place in October. Every guild tower is entitled to put in a band for the six-bell competition ringing any method they choose, including repeated plain courses (but not plain hunt). Each tower can also enter the novice competition provided that at least one member of the team is a less experienced junior member or an adult ringer who has not yet rung a quarter peal inside to a method. Plain hunting is all that is required, and all ringers do not have to come from the same tower. Please support these competitions and get as many teams to enter as possible.

And talking about guild events, please put the carol service in your diaries for 9th December in Exeter Cathedral. There should be no shortage of space this year (!) so please do come if you possibly can and help swell the ranks.

*Ian Campbell*



## The Great Dorset Steam Fair

The GDSF is the largest show of its kind in the world, it now covers nearly 700 acres and next year celebrates its 50th anniversary. They often have themed events for example 150 years since the founding of Charles Burrell & Sons in 2003 when Burrell traction engines visited from countries as far as New Zealand and South Africa, a few years ago there was the greatest number of steam rollers working in one place which made the Guinness Book of Records. In 2014, the theme was the centenary of World War 1 and a number of traction engines that had a connection with the war were painted in War Department grey for the event. There were lorries too and other vehicles that had WW1 connections all exhibited in WD livery. To complement this a series of trenches were dug along with a WW1 camp and a field hospital. This display was so popular that it was decided to keep it and develop it until next year to celebrate the centenary of the end of hostilities.

While this was going on a peal of 8 bells with a tenor of 6cwt 1qtr 11lbs was cast by Taylors and these were exhibited at this year's show mounted on two WW1 army lorries – a Thornycroft built in 1915 and a Dennis also of 1915.



I wonder how they cast red poppies on the bell?

In the heart of the strategically important medieval town of Ypres stands St George's Memorial Church. This Anglican church was built between 1927-1929 to serve the British community that settled in Ypres after the Great War as well as a place of remembrance for the fallen and for those who served and returned home. It was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield who also designed the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial and the Cross of Sacrifice which stands in many Commonwealth War Grace Cemeteries across the world. By the time you read this the bells will have been transported to Ypres where they will become the first change ringing peal of bells in Belgium and if all goes well will be blessed at a special service on October 22nd. The bells left the GDSF showground on the two vintage lorries on 30th August and the lorries and bells were transported to Ypres. On 31st August the bells were loaded back onto the WW1 lorries and then driven from the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial to St George's Memorial Church. Each bell has a row of poppies cast into the shoulder along with eight individual inscriptions which follow the same pattern of individual and group commemorations as is found throughout St George's church.

July this year marked the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Passchendaele, officially known as the Third Battle of Ypres and it was very humbling and poignant to see these bells exhibited amongst the WW1 exhibits.

I have attended this show for very many years and this year I spent much of the time driving a Fowler steam ploughing engine which was built in 1870 and is the oldest working steam ploughing engine in the world. As I concentrated on winching a vintage cultivator over a 400 yard distance along with another steam ploughing engine at the far end of the field, my thoughts kept returning to the bells and what they stood for and imagining the sound when they will ring out 'over some corner of a foreign field'.



Loaded up on WW1 army lorries



Michael ploughing with Margaret

*Michael Cannon*