

Ringling Round Devon



Newsletter 111
September 2018

Guild Events

Guild AGM held in Newton Abbot

The day started with assembling the Frank Mack ring at St Paul's, Newton Abbot where there are no bells. Once that was up, the kitchen helpers were busy preparing lunch. Out in the branch the bells at Wolborough only had eight ringers but East Ogwell were more popular. Back at head-quarters there was a handbell workshop and Robert Brown gave a Q & A session on safeguarding – a subject which involves us all. Lunch followed, and the ploughman's lunch put together by Sharon and her team was much enjoyed. The Revd Patrick Parkes joined us at this point, meeting the ringers and making us all welcome to his church. He even had a go on the mini-ring. The Baking competition had three entrants. The judging was made easier as they all won their category but Charlotte Boyce got an extra commendation for presentation.

Next up was the service, preceded by handbell ringing for the service touch. Ringers proved that they can't just ring but sing as well. Revd Parkes was so impressed he asked if we could come back the following day!

Much to the relief of all, the AGM itself was quorate and a long agenda efficiently dealt with. It was a great pleasure that Janet Ritterman was elected as Guild Ringing Master elect for 2018-19. It has become the custom to give the Ringing Master one year's notice so that they can prepare themselves for a busy year. Congratulations, Janet. Following the meeting this year's Guild Master, Sheila Scofield, led the final ringing of the day at Newton Abbot Clock Tower. Thanks go to all who worked so hard to make the meeting a success.



Members getting ready for the afternoon session



A winning entry in the cake competition



Sue Sawyer handing over to Sheila Scofield, the new Master

Martin Mansley

Ringling on Remembrance Sunday

Clarification of Armistice Ringing from the Central Council

The ringing community may be understandably confused regarding alternative requests for ringing on 11th November this year. I hope that the following provides some clarification.

'Ringing Remembers' is the campaign officially endorsed and sponsored by HM Government for (a) recruiting new ringers and (b) ringing open at 12:30pm on Sunday 11th November, aligning with the published agenda for processions and marches in celebration of peace. CCCBR (the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers) has been working hard with government officials to finalise and announce plans for ringing on the centenary of the Armistice, but we were under strict embargo until Friday 13th July, which is when the media release was published.

'Battle's Over' is the private initiative of Bruno Peek, MBE. Bruno has demonstrated energy, drive and passion to put together a compelling programme of events on the evening of 11th November, inviting ringing at 7:05pm. Although his initiative gained early support from various military organisations and CCCBR, it is not backed by central government or Buckingham Palace.

Over the past year CCCBR representatives have been trying to align the varying requests for ringing on 11th November (we have also had approaches from the British Legion and other bodies), but this has not proved possible. Nevertheless, knowing the national mood to acknowledge this centenary, CCCBR encourages all ringers to respond as they see fit, taking into account the wide variety of local circumstances. Ringing open at or around 12:30pm is the ideal and recommended option, but any time that afternoon/evening is also supported. General ringing, quarter peals, peals - let's do it!

To quote Tennyson:

'Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.'

Vicki Chapman & Christopher O'Mahony
CCCBR Ringing Remembers Project Co-ordinator & CCCBR
President

Buckfast Abbey Millennium Ringing Festival

Buckfast Abbey gained legal status in 1018 when its foundation charter was awarded by King Cnut and has been a working Benedictine monastery ever since then. As part of their millennium celebrations the authorities organised a ringing festival at the Abbey during the week running up to Saturday August 11th.

To those of us closely associated with this festival it had been long anticipated and in the end it was all, or more, than we could have hoped for. The small team involved was given a little taster at our final meeting prior to the exhibition but the Abbey staff kept the final details under wraps. It was, therefore, quite exciting to arrive on the first day to see the final shape of the exhibition. Much time and thought had gone into it and all were delighted with the final result.

A last-minute change of plan proved to be inspirational as Paul Hext had erected his Bowerdon Peal mini-ring in the main marquee (with only millimetres to spare!!) and this proved the centrepiece to the exhibition. The Abbey has a vast collection of archive material including many photographs which were displayed to great effect. Other innovations included a large chart with comparative weights of the bells on it. As an example -

Hosanna (bourdon bell) weighing in at seven and a half tons was equivalent to an elephant plus a rhino plus a bear plus a lion! All these were imaginatively illustrated. There was also a life-size cut-out of Hosanna so that 'bellfies' could be taken next to the great bell.

The exhibition ran daily from 10am until 4pm for the week before the main festival and a rota of ringers acted as stewards; what a great job they all did! From explaining how a bell works through teaching people to ring the mini ring to answering endless questions they presented a really positive image of ringing and ringers. We thank them all for a wonderful job. By the Friday the exhibition was really in full swing and creating a real buzz. That afternoon a band turned up, led by Robert Brown who proceeded to ring a full peal of Cambridge Minor on the Bowerdon peal. This created much interest among the visitors and towards the end was filmed by the BBC Spotlight team who then ascended the tower where a group of volunteers manned the bells for more filming. The resultant short item that evening, including an interview with Father Christopher, gave the festival wonderful publicity. It was unfortunate that, on attempting to ring Hosanna for the BBC, it was discovered that the clapper had seized up in the centre of the bell and it would make no noise so it could not be rung over the weekend.

A rainy Saturday (the only wet Saturday in August!) was not what we had hoped for, but it did not seem to dampen spirits too much. By then the exhibition had been augmented by the Frank Mack ring (in its own small marquee) and several gazebos containing various trade stalls. Another marquee contained activities with a bell theme aimed at children. A programme of ringing had been put together with groups booking half-hour slots throughout the day. These got underway promptly at 10.00 when a member of the Harvey family gave the signal to start the ringing. Sir Robert Harvey was the original donor of the bells. Quite a party of celebrities had climbed the tower including the Abbot. He had been very enthusiastic about the festival and visited the exhibition several times.

There were stands selling bell related merchandise, peal boards and more, as well as stands from ART and Taylor's representatives. Bell-themed craft activities took place all afternoon in the children's entertainment tent.

It was felt that it was not feasible for the public to visit the tower so more stewards were on duty at the base of the tower and in the ringing room to ensure only experienced ringers manned the bells. CCTV screens had been set up so that anyone



Past President Lester Yeo quickly found the beer tent



Ringling at the festival

interested could watch the ringers and bells in action. This proved very popular, possibly as somewhere to shelter from the rain! One of these screens was in the Schiller Hall where an enthusiastic group of handbell tune ringers gave workshops and a very large exhibition of handbell tune ringing. Every hour a short concert was given by the Jolly Jingers from Modbury, with three of them ringing tunes on four bells each. A bar and barbecue catered for refreshments as well as the Grange, all of whom did a roaring trade. Indeed by tea time reports were coming in that the Grange (the main restaurant on the site) had run out of food!

A break was taken at lunch time and this was followed by The Big Ring. A flare was set off by the Dartmoor Rescue team from the top of the Abbey tower and at this signal both the Abbey bells and those at nearby Holy Trinity church in Buckfastleigh rang a simultaneous call change peal, filmed by the BBC Spotlight team at both towers. The mini-rings were kept busy throughout the day and very many people had their first taste of ringing.

Despite the weather, plenty of ringers turned out for the event with open ringing slots as well as timetabled ringing for constituent branches of the Devon Association and the Devon Guild. There was such a stream of keen people wanting to have a grab that a one-in-one-out policy was introduced to the tower at one point to prevent overcrowding! The weather did not dampen any spirits and the beer tent was always busy despite the tent itself not being watertight.



Les Boyce manning the ART exhibition

At 3.30pm an invited band rang a touch of Grandsire Cinques before the celebration service in the Abbey. Ian Avery had assembled his ringers' choir (usually in evidence at the carol service) and they led the singing. Lester Yeo had put together a suitable service and he and Father Christopher (one of the monks who had learned to ring many years ago) led us in prayer and praise. He also gave us an insight into the early days of the ringing activities of the monks including the number of times they were expected to climb the tower steps to carry out their duties. He is the very proud recipient of a Guild Certificate! Following the service the local call change band rang all twelve bells and they were soon augmented by other ringers anxious to ring.

It is always difficult to gauge how well a project like this has fared. Its main aim was to educate and encourage recruitment – did we succeed? We do not know, but many people went away with a much-enhanced knowledge about bells and ringers. 'There is much more to it than I expected!' was a common reaction. We must thank the boundless enthusiasm of Geoff Pring, Alison Gagg and Anna Harris of Buckfast Abbey as well as the Abbey monks, and all the many ringers who gave their time so enthusiastically. Will there be another one? You never know!

Fame indeed! We made it to the front page of the Ringing World for Aug 31st!!

There are some excellent photos at Buckfast Abbey website <https://www.buckfast.org.uk/photos/289/buckfast-bell-ringing-festival-11th-august-2018>



The Frank Mack mini-ring



The Jolly Jingers ringing tunes four-in-hand
Screen behind shows the ringing chamber and bells



The Bowerdon Ring



The organising committee L to R: Peter Bill, Anna Harris, Alison Gagg,
Paul Hext, Geoff Pring and Martin Mansley

Martin Mansley and Helen Maynard

HISTORY OF THE BELLS AT BUCKFAST ABBEY

When the buildings of the present Abbey church commenced in 1907 plans were put in place to cast a new ring of bells. Sir Robert Harvey offered to pay for the casting of a new ring of twelve bells (plus two semi-tone bells) and the contract for their casting was awarded to a London Bell Foundry, John Warner & Sons of Cripplegate. The new bells were cast in 1910 and blessed on Michaelmas Day that year. However they could not be hung until the central tower had been built.

By 1920 the tower, although not finished, had risen sufficiently high for the bells to be hung in a temporary wooden belfry constructed on top of the walls of the incomplete tower. The contract for constructing the bell frame and hanging the bells was awarded to the local bell hanging firm of William Aggett & Sons who were based in Chagford, Devon.

The bells were first rung for the Christmas services of 1920, but the ringing of them proved somewhat hazardous with the monks ringing from a narrow stone gallery on the inside of the tower just above the main arches.

A decade or so later, work recommenced to complete the central tower with the building of a stone belfry stage and the bells had to be removed from their temporary home. At this stage, the tonal deficiencies of the Warner peal were recognised and it was decided that an entirely new ring of bells and a great bourdon bell should be cast.

The casting of the new ring and bourdon was entrusted to John Taylor & Co of Loughborough. The new bells would be heavier than the previous ring, with a tenor weighing over two tons and a great bourdon bell weighing seven and a half tons.

The new bells and the bourdon bell 'Hosanna' were cast in 1935 and still serve the Abbey today.

Helen Maynard

Richard Bowden, Guild Vice-President

Richard Bowden was a friend of Devon ringing and the Guild for many years. Though he had lived in Bristol since 1950, he retained a close link with the Guild, and with Tiverton in particular, until the death of his sister in 2014. Richard had a deep knowledge of Guild history which he shared in articles for Ringing Round Devon and in letters to his friends in Tiverton. In recognition of his long association with the Guild he was elected a Vice-President in 2008, and regularly made every effort each subsequent year to attend the Guild AGM with Lis, his wife.

Richard was born in Tiverton in 1930, educated at Tiverton Grammar School and learnt to ring at St Peter's in 1943. He rang his first peal, of Grandsire Doubles, at Calverleigh in 1948. On moving to Bristol he became a stalwart contributor to ringing in the city, being a founder member of the Cathedral band on the installation of their bells in 1958 and captain at SS Philip and Jacob (Pip & Jay) from 1964, doing much to sustain ringing there over the years. He also supported his local tower, Westbury-on-Trym, and rang regularly for the evening service and at their practice night. In recognition of his commitment to ringing in the Bristol Branch he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Gloucester & Bristol Association in 2006.

Richard was a prolific writer of letters and several of us in Devon treasure a collection of his missives, many of which were accompanied by an immaculately detailed pen and ink drawing. He was a particular expert on the Llewellyns & James foundry in Bristol, on the Troytes of Huntsham, and on H T Ellacombe. He had also researched the Taylor archives in Loughborough for the story behind Tiverton's 'Missing Two' (the ring of 10 that never was).

Tiverton ringers have a special reason to remember Richard fondly. On two occasions when St Peter's bells were out of action, he arranged whole day outings for us on Sundays around the

central Bristol towers. On another occasion he dragged Fr David Cawley down to Tiverton for a Tuesday evening practice. David in jeans and dog-collar, and their double act in the Queen's Head afterwards, left quite an impression on the locals!

Sadly, ill-health dogged Richard's final years as dementia took its toll and this prevented trips to Devon latterly. Nevertheless, he had a long and full ringing career which included nearly 600 peals (sixteen of them at St Peter's) and visits to almost 3,500 towers. As a long-standing friend of Frank and Mary Mack, Richard was one of the band who rang in the pioneer first peal on the garage mini-ring, back in 1965. Several members of the Guild joined Bristol ringers and others from across the country at his funeral. As a College Youth and an Honorary Member of the University of Bristol Society his friendships ran through much of the ringing community. May he rest in peace.

Leslie Boyce, with Lester Yeo

LY adds, 'My first meeting with Richard was in 1977 at Heavitree, when we lost a peal of Plain Bob Major. After ringing a compensatory quarter of Yorkshire, most of the band then went to Frank's house, and rang a memorable quarter peal in the bedroom (now the Myzantha ring in Withycombe Raleigh). While ringing, at Heavitree, Richard had noticed a small nude statuette on one of the shelves, and innocently asked if it was awarded to the ringer who had the lewdest thoughts!'

Guild Striking Competitions

Saturday 20th October

Every Guild tower is entitled to participate in the 6-bell competition where they can ring 240 changes in a method of their choosing.

Every tower can also enter the 6-bell novice competition, ringing plain hunt, but the band must include a novice ringer, usually one who has not rung a quarter peal on an inside bell.

The 8-bell novice competition is a new venture this year, bands ringing Plain Hunt Triples and including an 8-bell novice ringer. Teams can be made up of members from different towers (and even branches if I read the rules correctly!).

The main 8-bell competition is open to branches, not individual towers. A set touch is rung from a choice of two methods.

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

All competition entries should be booked in advance with the Guild Secretary (secretary@devonringers.org.uk). The order of ringing for the 8-bell inter-branch competition is determined by a draw, while for the others a timed slot can be requested in advance.

Details of this year's competitions are as follows:

Morning:

6-bell Competition for the J P Fidler Cup

Location: Stoke Damarel

Judges: Sheila Scofield & Martin Mansley

6-bell Novice Competition for the John Longridge Plate

Location: Plymouth, St Budeaux

Judges: To be advised

8-bell Novice Competition

Location: Plymouth, Emmanuel

Judges: To be advised

Afternoon:

Location: Plymouth, Emmanuel

Results of the morning competitions followed by draw for the afternoon.

8-bell Inter-branch Competition for the Andrews Trophy

Judges: Patricia & Robert Newton

Set Touch: 224 changes of Lincolnshire S Major (plain course) or Plain Bob Major (touch below)

H 23456

— —

S 24356

S 23456

This is two plain courses joined by singles.



Plymouth Emmanuel

John Martin and Ian Campbell

Quarter Peal Festival

Please start planning your quarter peal contributions. This year, the Festival takes place between Friday 19th October and Sunday 4th November inclusive.

Please submit your quarter peal through Bellboard and link it to the event 'Guild of Devonshire Ringers - Quarter Peal Festival'. All quarter peals will be held for publication until I have collated them.

All the money raised will go to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund (DCBRF).

The minimum donation is £1 per ringer per quarter peal, although larger amounts are welcomed. Please Gift Aid donations individually, wherever possible. Gift Aid forms can be found on the Guild website (under 'The Guild', 'Useful documents for members'). If an individual has previously completed a multiple donation form then they do not need to complete another.

The conductor is responsible for submitting the quarter peal, linking it to the event and forwarding the donations. I will collate them via Bellboard, so there is no requirement to notify me directly. Please ensure that all donations reach me by Saturday 20th November at the latest. Cheques should be made payable to 'Guild of Devonshire Ringers'. The money must pass through the Guild accounts before the end of 2018.

James Kirkcaldy

East Devon Branch Striking Competition

The East Devon Branch striking competition was held on 14th July at the church of St Andrew, Feniton. A total of nine teams were entered. As well as the tower band competition for the Edward Summers Memorial Trophy, an Open Class, competing for the Alan Tucker Memorial Bell, has been introduced, allowing bands of any composition to take part. On a gloriously sunny day we had five teams in Class 1 and four teams in Class 2.

The competition was judged by James Clarke and after complimenting all the bands who took part declared Honiton St Paul's to be the winners of the Class 1 trophy, with Combe Raleigh, last year's winners, the runners-up. In Class 2 the winners were the Jurassics, with the Blackdown B team the runners-up.

It was a delightful afternoon's ringing, with the winners of each class ringing superbly, well justifying their wins and it was a pleasure to listen to them.

Refreshments were available all afternoon with a splendid selection of cakes on offer: the coffee and walnut sponge was a certain winner. As a result, the Feniton funds were increased by £142.25.

We would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the event, the Feniton contingent who made us all so welcome, our judge and, of course, all the teams that entered. It was a superb effort.

Class 1

- 1 Honiton
- 2 Combe Raleigh
- 3 Ottery St Mary
- 4 Talaton
- Dunkeswell - Did not finish

Class 2

- 1 Jurassics
- 2 Blackdown B
- 3 Friday Group
- Blackdown A - Did not finish



The victorious Honiton team (Derek Ballard, Alison Phelps-Beaumont, Lisa Clarke, Sally Church, Anne Burn and Peter Simpson) with the Edward Summers Memorial Trophy.

Trevor Hitchcock, (East Devon Branch Publicity Officer)

First Combe Raleigh Quarter Peal

This might seem a little odd, but there again a lot of people might think that Combe Raleigh is a little odd. In the June edition of Ringing Round Devon there was a report of the first peal rung on the new bells. The more observant might have noticed that there had been no quarter peal rung on these bells. I can't imagine that there are too many towers whose first peal was before their first quarter peal. It wasn't for lack of ambition on our part, we did try, several times, but each time something went wrong. It was time to call up reinforcements and along came the cavalry in the shape of Ian Campbell. Thus it was that on the 8th August a band of five Combe Raleigh ringers plus Ian scored the first ever quarter peal on these bells, 1260 changes of Plain Bob Doubles. This was just one more example of the help Ian has given us over the last few years, so much so that we now consider him to be one of us.

Combe Raleigh, Devon, St Nicholas

Wednesday, 8 August 2018 in 46m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Janet Reynolds

2 Trevor Hitchcock

3 Lisa Clarke (C)

4 Ian Campbell

5 Paddy Priscott

6 Mark Moran

First quarter peal on the restored and augmented bells. Rung by a Combe Raleigh band plus Ian who was the first person to suggest that the original three bells could be rung regularly again after some 50 years with no village band. He was also the first to suggest augmentation to six bells. We are glad he did - the project began soon after and the rest is history.



The happy band in order from right to left:
Janet Reynolds 1, Trevor Hitchcock 2, Lisa Clarke (C) 3, Ian Campbell 4,
Paddy Priscott 5, Mark Moran 6.

Trevor Hitchcock

Learning to Ring Church Bells From a new learner

I'm not sure why, but since attending a demonstration in Exeter many years ago, I have often thought I'd like to learn to ring church bells. Maybe it's because it brings back fond memories of my childhood, staying with my lovely nanny, hearing the local church bells chiming on the hour and half hour and every Sunday morning. The sound evokes such joy in my soul.

I've not really had the opportunity or time before to take on the commitment to learn. Other commitments took precedence. Now life is simpler, so when I saw the advert for the Ringing Remembers Campaign, I seized my opportunity.

My family has a deep affiliation with the military, with several of my nearest and dearest having been in the forces, fighting in various wars around the world. One of my uncles was a POW, working on the Burma railway line, enduring unspeakable horrors. Two others fought in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. Another, a member of the rear guard, captured at Dunkirk and kept prisoner in a German POW camp in Poland during World War Two.

I remember going to see the poppy display at the Tower of London and seeing the shrouds in Northernhay Gardens, in Exeter. It made me weep to see the numbers of fallen men. I cried, not only for the dead but for the living, the families they left behind. The trauma, the shell shock, the violence, the addiction; all the dysfunctional behaviour that ensued, ripping families apart well after the end of any war, permeating generations.

War has affected my family.

War is so futile.

So, what better tribute to 'Learn to Ring for Armistice Day', one hundred years on! This not only fulfils an ambition but is my way of paying homage to all the men and women who have fought, some still fighting, to enable me to have the freedom and privilege to be able to choose to Learn to Ring.

I couldn't wait for the date to come around and slightly nervously went along to St Paul's church, Honiton on the frosty morning of 24th February for my taster session. I was helped to ring some back strokes and left the church with a feeling of achievement and anticipation of commencing the sessions that were organised for all the prospective learners at Combe Raleigh church.

The intensive training started weekly, every Thursday, with almost one to one tuition and our dedicated teachers, Tim, Lisa and Andrew gave up their precious time getting us to a place where we could safely handle a bell, to passing Learning the Ropes, Level 1 and subsequently being good enough to join a tower.

On my part there has been frustration due to my 'wanting to get it right, now,' but immense satisfaction as I've started to master various aspects of ringing. I've learnt that it is a challenge and there is so much more to ringing than meets the eye; that it exercises not only my body, but my mind and memory. But life is all about challenges, some harder than others and in my opinion, learning to ring can never be as challenging as having to jump out of the trenches to physically fight an enemy, knowing that the likelihood was that, you were jumping into the arms of death!

So, I can now ring in rounds, keeping relatively good time but, am having difficulty with call changes. My poor brain often becomes frazzled. I was amused by a quote I recently read, which said: *'I came, I saw, I forgot what I was doing, retraced my steps, got lost on the way back, now I have no idea what's going on!'*

But I'm assured that it will come and gradually it is coming, with time, practice and patience!

Being new to East Devon and living alone, another reason for learning to ring was to meet others within my new community. I have been overwhelmed by the help, support and friendship that has been extended to me, even beyond the borders of Devon. With the aid of social media sites I am communicating with other ringers over England and was recently asked to participate in a BBC Radio Devon interview with Lord Bourne, Minister for Faith who is promoting the government funded Ringing Remembers campaign.

(The interview is on YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2UGTmJDaAU>)

My enthusiasm has led me to do some research into the history of bell ringing. This paragraph struck a chord and perhaps helps explain the appeal and aptness of the Ringing Remembers Campaign for Armistice 100: *'The bitter sweet sound of just one bell or the majesty of a whole peal, has become part of the English heritage and much of the country's history can be traced through the history of its bells. They call us to wake, to pray, to*

work, to arms, to feast and, in times of crisis, to come together. Above all, bells are the sound of freedom and peace as in World War 2 they hung silently until the day they could ring in the peace.'

It will be a great honour and privilege on Sunday 11th November 2018 to recreate what must have been such a relief to all those that endured the First World War; to ring in memory of the 1400 fallen ringers and in honour of all military personnel that have ever served our country.



Lesley with some of the Combe Raleigh ringers (she's in jeans and a floral/stripey top).

Lesley Oats

Exeter Branch

Ringing for Remembrance

Back in February a county-wide recruitment event was held to find people who would be interested in learning to ring as part of the national event 'Ringing Remembers'. The idea was to train 1400 new ringers to remember the 1400 ringers who lost their lives in the First World War. Within the Exeter Branch special teaching sessions were setup at Pinhoe and now, several months on, a number of newly trained ringers are starting to ring regularly at different towers. As part of this exercise a new band is being taught at Brampford Speke where there is now a regular Wednesday morning practice. Ringing at Stoke Canon has also picked up with a married couple who recently moved into the village and have learnt to ring, and ringers from these towers are helping each other out.

In Exeter there are now learners at Heavitree and St Mark's as well as at Pinhoe and Broadclyst that we know of and I believe there to be more at other towers. Regular Tuesday practices have restarted at Pinhoe and Sunday morning ringing there and at Clyst Honiton, Sowton and Poltimore have all benefitted.

Overall this is a result far better than we could have imagined. However it is down to a lot of hard and sustained work from all the tutors and helpers who have given unstintingly of their time. There are too many to mention individually but special thanks must go to Rob Franklin who started out as just the key holder for Pinhoe and has attended every practice and is now running them, as well as helping out at other towers. It remains to be seen how the ringing will pan out on Remembrance Sunday!

Ian Campbell

Branch ringing outing and Barbecue

7th July 2018

As with the early May Bank Holiday train outing to Taunton we had perfect weather for our local ringing outing to Sowton and Clyst Honiton. This was followed by a barbecue in Broadclyst, where we ate plenty of food, played garden games and watched England beat Sweden 2-0 in the football world cup



Sweating in the confined tower at Sowton



Enjoyed by all the family

Rob and Lucy Neal

Exeter Cathedral Bells out of Action

Work to refurbish Exeter Cathedral bells started on June 18th when the local ringers helped Taylor's bellhanger to remove all the ropes, clappers, wheels and pulleys. The two trebles were removed from their fittings and moved to a platform which was constructed to allow them to be lifted through a louvre and removed to Loughborough. The pulleys and clappers were taken to Loughborough.

Early in the morning on 7th July an extending jib crane was used to lift out the two treble bells and to lift in some additional steelwork. This was to strengthen the frame, which had been observed twisting slightly, especially between the tenor and the ninth. The steelwork was installed the following week and the two trebles and new clappers were lifted by crane back into the tower on August 4th.



Trying to keep cool in the garden



Fun and games in the garden



A motley collection of old clappers in Taylor's van

In the meantime workers from Taylor's have been scraping and cleaning the frame which is not a very pleasant job, especially in the heat of August this year. From the start of September they have been repainting it with volunteer help from a large number of local ringers. This is turning out to be a mammoth task; apparently the cathedral bell frame is the largest steel bell frame anywhere because that at Liverpool is made of concrete while St Paul's Cathedral in London has a wooden frame.

Repainting the frame is only one of a number of parts of this refurbishment. The work on the trebles involves removing the 'button tops' and rehanging them closer to their headstocks to increase their speed of swing. The clappers are being replaced; the old ones were all different designs from many different makers and did not work well together. Clappers on the back bells will have wooden shafts which will make them sound better and may make them easier to ring. A metal grillage is being installed between the bells and the walkway (between the 10th and 11th) so that access can be controlled when the bells are left up.

It is hoped that this work will be completed by the end of September and the bells will be ringable in plenty of time for the national 12-bell competition which is to be held at Exeter next year.

During the absence of the bells the Cathedral band have been ringing at St Petrock's prior to morning services at the cathedral. Practices have been held on the twelves at Withycombe Raleigh, Crediton and Taunton.



The two trebles awaiting collection



The treble leaves the tower

Ian Campbell

St Mark's Cycle Outing Saturday, 28th July

Once again Graham Tucker's organisational skill found us some towers in Somerset which were within cycling distance of each other (13.6 miles) and with a total ascent of only 738 feet. Most were even grabs for many of the band. About ten cycled the course while the support cars carried those not up to using a bicycle.

We rang at three towers in the morning: South Barrow (3), North Barrow((5) and Lovington(3). We were warned that the bells at Lovington were VERY loud so rang with ear muffs on but weren't warned that some of the others were just as loud!

Following lunch at Lydford on Fosse we proceeded to the six-bell towers at West Lydford and Babcary before retiring exhausted (at least the cyclists were!) for a barbecue at Matt's house in Whimple.

Despite the recent hot and dry weather there were warnings of rain but most of this was avoided during ringing or lunch. Following lunch some of the cyclists tried a short cut which consisted of several miles of barely passable hard baked track, terminating in a ford of indeterminate depth. All got rather wet – at least on their feet.



Waiting to ring at Lovington



So how deep is this water?



The assembled company

Ian Campbell

Team Building Day at Pinhoe

Following a request from Victoria Tucker of the Devon Association a team building day (actually a morning) for her work colleagues took place at Pinhoe church on Wednesday 27th June. The date had been changed several times; the latest postponement was when Pinhoe was just about cut off in the snow. There were no problems this time as it was one of the hottest days of the year and copious amounts of bottled water had to be provided.

With a band made up of Graham Sharland, Robin Canniford (visiting from Australia) and Victoria (from the Devon Association), and Gareth Gill, Rob Franklin and myself (from the Guild) we were able to demonstrate both call changes and a course of Grandsire Doubles. The delegates then took turns trying to handle a bell (under supervision of course) and also had a chance to take a trip up the tower to see the bells and the view, have a go at 'lapping' on handbells, and a chance to try out the Guild demonstration bell.



The Team collecting in the Sunshine



Trying their Skills at lapping on Handbells

Thanks go to the helpers who came along, and especially to Rob Franklin who masterminded it all. Although we are unlikely to gain any new ringers from this exercise it is clear that all publicity is good publicity and some members of the public now know much more about what goes on in the tower.



Trying to Master the Guild Demo Bell

Ian Campbell

Exeter Colleges Guild

50th anniversary of first ECG tower bell peal

On Saturday 16th June, eight members of the Exeter Colleges Guild met at Broadclyst to commemorate the first towerbell peal by the ECG. The same method, Plain Bob Major; and composition – 5088 by John Longridge were rung. The band included two founder members, David Atkins and Malcolm Turner who had rung in the original peal in 1968. These two had also rung in the very first ECG peal – Plain Bob Minor on handbells earlier that same year. Both these early peals had been conducted by John Longridge. A very enjoyable peal was rung on these fine bells, followed by lunch with friends at the nearby Red Lion Inn. David Atkins treated us to a short Presidential address, in which he shared some of his reminiscences about early ECG peals.

The band was also joined for lunch by William (Bill) Perrins, who had rung in the 1968 peal as a supernumerary to strengthen the band, before his move to Australia. By a lucky chance Bill was in the UK to visit his daughter, so three members of the original band were present for lunch. David Atkins explained that the first ever ECG dinner had been held the same day as the 1968 peal in the upstairs room of what is now 'The Chevalier' on Fore Street in Exeter, so it was fitting that some of us gathered together for a meal following the anniversary peal. Later that evening, some of us went for a quick pint at The Chevalier and concluded it wouldn't work as a future dinner venue...

This peal concluded the rather extended celebrations of the ECG 50th anniversary, which started in February last year with two peals the day before the dinner; Kent Royal on handbells and a 5050 of Spliced Caters at St Mark's, the ECG's original home tower. The anniversary dinner itself was well attended and

featured an enjoyable afternoon of competitive activities at St David's (the current home of the ECG) and a speech by Tom Longridge, son of the ECG's founder member and first President, John Longridge. In September 2017 a 5050 of Stedman Cinques was successfully rung at Exeter Cathedral, and in October a peal of Plain Bob Major was rung at St David's by a band of former Masters and Secretaries. The 50th anniversary of the ECG's first peal, Plain Bob Minor on handbells, was marked in March 2018 with a weekend of handbell peals and quarter peals, including a peal of Plain Bob Minor on the same six bells used for the first peal.

Hopefully the ECG will continue to prosper over the next half century, and hopefully some of us who took part in these celebrations will still be around for the centenary!

Details of the first peal:

Exeter Colleges Guild (Guild of Devonshire Ringers)
Broadclyst, Devon, St John the Baptist
Tuesday 18 June 1968 in 3hr16
5088 Plain Bob Major
Composed by John N Longridge

1 Malcolm S Turner	5 Peter Hendy
2 David J Atkins	6 Raymond J Talbot
3 Angela C Hughes	7 John N Longridge (C)
4 Gordon H Baldam	8 William T Perrins

Details of the anniversary peal:

Exeter Colleges Guild (Guild of Devonshire Ringers)
Broadclyst, Devon, St John the Baptist
Saturday, 16 June 2018 in 3hr6
5088 Plain Bob Major
Composed by J N Longridge

1 Nathan Evans	5 Malcolm S Turner
2 David J Atkins	6 Stephanie E Hills
3 Richard S Johnson	7 Matthew J Hilling
4 Thomas J Hinks (C)	8 David G Maynard

Rung to mark the 50th anniversary of the first towerbell peal rung by the Exeter Colleges Guild: 5088 Plain Bob Major at Broadclyst on 18th June 1968, to this composition. David Atkins and Malcolm rang in the original peal.



L to R: Tom, Richard, Malcolm, Steph, David A, Matt, Nathan, David M
David Maynard

Marriage of Neil Williams and Jen Freeman



On Saturday 21st July Neil (Exeter Branch member) and Jen were married at St Leonard's, Exeter, a church that unfortunately possesses only a single bell in its impressive tower. After an overcast start to the day, the sun eventually came out at around lunchtime as the guests were arriving. The marriage ceremony was conducted by the Rt Revd Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, who just happens to be Neil's brother, and he was supported by the Revd Simon Austen, vicar of St Leonard's, together with friends and family members providing readings and intercessions, and the church music group leading the rousing singing of the hymns.

After the wedding, Neil and Jen took a few days to go walking in Cornwall, and they will then spend a longer honeymoon at Lake Garda later in September. We understand that Jen has no plans to learn to ring, but she does share a love of walking with Neil and doubtless they will spend plenty of time in the future in pursuit of their hobby. We wish them every happiness in their new life together.

Wendy Campbell

Mid-Devon Branch

Extracts from Mid-Devon Branch Tower Talk Branch mini-outing South Hams

Thanks to the immaculate organisation of Chairman, Rodney Horder, we enjoyed a superb outing to the South Hams. First off were Churchstow which are not the easiest ring in the world but by keeping things relatively simple we managed fairly well. Next were Galmpton which are quite light but have a very short draught which caught one or two people out. Pick of the day came next with Malborough. A fairly new gallery may be part of the cause but these bells went well and sounded well. We even managed to keep the standard of ringing up when we were interrupted by shrieks when England won their match in the World Cup!! Dodbrooke were the first Ground-floor ring with fairly long ropes. Last of the day were West Charleton. These are a pleasant ground-floor ring with a band that rings some method so the ropes were a good length. Rodney had booked us in to the Ashburton Arms for supper. This was a brilliant choice as we were made very welcome by the landlord and his staff. A lovely meal rounded off the day and all agreed that it had been a very enjoyable afternoon. There was a very good turn-out so the treasurer was happy as well!

Peal at Kingskerswell

Many of you will have met the Revd John Leonard, who has been vicar of Kingskerswell with Coffinswell for thirty years. He retired at the end of June and a full peal was rung to mark this sad day for the parishes. John has been a very strong supporter of ringing and an influence for good in the community; there are many initiatives in the villages which he has started and/or encouraged.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Kingskerswell, Devon, St Mary
Friday, 29 June 2018 in 2h 36
5040 Surprise Minor (12m)

(1) Westminster, Allendale, Fryerning (2) Norwich (3) York, Durham (4) Caithness (5) Beverley, Surfleet (6) Bourne (7) Cambridge, Ipswich

1 Philip Stevens	4 Peter L Bill
2 Ian W Avery	5 Peter J Sawyer
3 Richard H Johnston	6 Michael E C Mears (C)

A farewell compliment to the Revd John Leonard, vicar of Kingskerswell and Coffinswell for 29½ years and priest in charge of Abbotskerswell for 11 years. Rung prior to his last service before retirement and celebrating the 45th anniversary of his ordination.
650th peal: 5.



Ian, Peter S, Peter B, John Leonard, Richard, Mike and Phil

Tony Woodville RIP

Tony was a regular attendee at Mid Devon Branch practices and outings until advancing Parkinson's disease made it impossible for him to ring. He was a ringer at Dawlish. Tony's funeral was on Wednesday 22nd August at Chudleigh church.

Don Roberts is eighty-eight

We must congratulate Don Roberts on masterfully calling a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples to mark the occasion of his 88th Birthday on Sunday 5th August. An attempt at St Marychurch the previous day failed through no fault of Don's so Nigel Birt rearranged it for Kingsteignton where a well struck quarter peal was rung with Don calling loud and clear!

Kingsteignton, Devon, St Michael
Wednesday, 8 August 2018 in 47m
1260 Grandsire Triples

1 Rowena Mansley	5 Nigel Birt
2 Jo Brown	6 Martin Mansley
3 Mike Tompsett	7 Don Roberts (C)
4 Donald Carter	8 Peter Brown

Specially arranged and rung to celebrate the conductor's 88th birthday last Sunday.



The band I-r Mike, Wenna, Martin, Nigel, Jo, Don, Donald, Peter.

Upton Outing

Don Roberts once again organised an ambitious programme for his ringers and supporters. Starting at the pleasant six at Yealmpton, the next stop was just along the road at Brixton. These bells are a little more challenging so good preparation for the next tower of Holbeton. These bells are important in Devon history because the Guild's first peals of Minor were rung here (Plain Bob and Cambridge). They have a long draught and don't go too well these days. To recover, lunch was taken here and much enjoyed. The twisted spire at Ermington was next on the agenda and everyone enjoyed looking round the church, where the daughters of a previous incumbent were responsible for the ornate carving. Probably the highlight of the day was Modbury which are a glorious 17cwt six. A treat on the way back to the car was triggered by a sign outside a house offering apples to anyone who wanted them; these were an enjoyable refreshment on the way to the final tower at Kingston. The day had been one of nostalgia for Ernie Pryce and was capped for him when old friend Harry Bardens came along to ring at this final tower. Many thanks to Don for yet another excellent day.

Martin Mansley

Ringling at Brentor



Access to Brentor Church

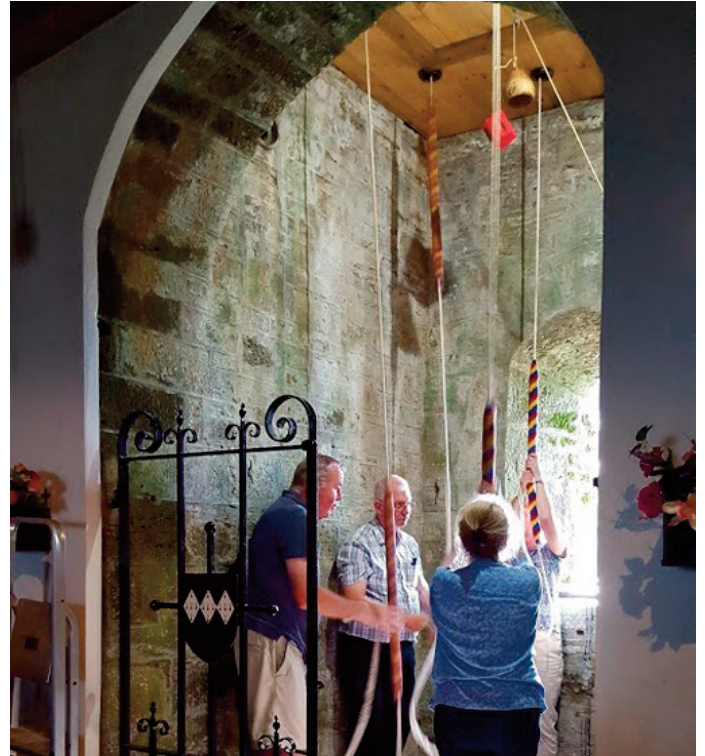
There was always a faint possibility that the visit might be called off at the last minute. We had been warned that Evensong at Brentor church (where regular services take place only between Easter and the end of September) might be cancelled if a serious storm threatened. And, given the church's location, it is not difficult to see the reason for this. The Church of St Michael de Rupe (St Michael of the Rock), at 1,110 feet above sea level the highest working church in the south of England, is perched precariously on a hilly Dartmoor outcrop, and reached only by an exposed winding, rough path. But on Sunday 22nd July, we had nothing to fear from the weather. On a beautiful sunny afternoon, a small group of Mid-Devon ringers set off to visit this ancient church to ring the five bells and to stay for Evensong. This was not the first time that Mid Devon had visited Brentor: it was during a summer branch outing about three years ago that it was suggested that we might return to ring for one of the church's summer Evensong services. This was the return visit.

Climbing up to the church, which is surrounded by an Iron Age earth-walled hill-fort, we could already begin to enjoy the spectacular outlook for which Brentor is also known. On this clear sunny afternoon, as well as good views over Dartmoor, we could see practically to Plymouth Sound to the south, the Tamar Valley and Bodmin Moor when looking westwards, while from the top of the tor, it was possible even to glimpse hilly parts of Exmoor to the north. Once there, we were warmly welcomed by the tower captain, Carol Sargent, and in the hour before Evensong, rang call changes and a range of doubles methods (without a tenor cover). The ringing concluded with a service touch as the tiny church began to fill with visitors and locals who, as the celebrant mentioned, were able to enjoy the sound of the bells ringing out from the tor as they made their ascent, and to see the ringers as they arrived. It is a ground floor ring, where the bells go fairly easily (the heaviest weighs only six cwt). Of the five, two date from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, one from the seventeenth century and two more from the early twentieth century, when (in 1909) all were recast.

After the traditional service of Evensong, during which the ringers – true to tradition – contributed to some full-throated singing of the hymns and canticles, the congregation made its way back down the slope. As we did so, it felt natural to cast a glance back at the tor, where there has been a church attracting worshippers and pilgrims since the early twelfth century. The sense of authenticity of place is very strong and as a group of ringers, we could only feel glad that together we had been able to experience its unique atmosphere on so lovely an evening. But then, once back in the car park, we were more than ready for some physical sustenance. So we were glad to stop for refreshments at The Dartmoor Inn in Merrivale, where we ate and drank well before heading back to our own side of the county and our own towers, where any climb to the ringing chamber ought now to seem relatively insignificant.



Enjoying the view from the church



Ringling before the service

Janet Ritterman

North East Branch Young Ringers

During the summer holidays we have had a number of events to keep our young ringers busy. At the start of the holiday we had a morning at Huntsham where our two newest recruits were able to try their hand at ringing rounds. The more experienced in the group rang plain hunt, plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles, tenor behind and calling call changes and we all had fun with whole pull and stand, moving round the circle to ring each of the front six in turn.

On Monday 20th August Fergus completed Level 3 of Learning the Ropes by ringing tenor behind to a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles, ably assisted by Jess on the treble.

Huntsham, Devon, All Saints
Monday, 20 August 2018 in 41m
1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Jess Sully

2 Jenny Jones

3 Sheila Scofield

1st as cover bell and completes "Learning The Ropes" Level3 (6)

4 Michael Hatchett

5 Leslie Boyce (C)

6 Fergus Kettleborough

Wednesday 22nd August took us on an outing into Somerset where we rang at Langford Budville, lunched at the Martlet (to be recommended) and rang at Stawley. Despite recovering from jetlag Nano and Eddie rang rounds and call changes with help. Fergus, Red and Flo rang and called some good call changes and Plain Hunt Doubles. Fergus completed the day by ringing plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles independently and as observation to a touch with a little support, assisted by Red on the tenor.



Taken at Stawley

Back row L-R Jenny Jones, Les Boyce, Sheila Scofield, Mandy Burnett
Young Ringers L-R Flo, Red, Fergus (with QP certificate)
Eddie and Nano

Our final holiday is planned for Tiverton St Paul on Monday 3rd September where we hope to be joined by the Cruwys Morchard Young Ringers too.

Sheila Schofield

Ringling Remembers at Silverton

The photograph shows six of the seven new ringers recruited at Silverton through the national campaign on a recent training night with their tutor, Albert Campbell. Training started in late March and they are all making good progress with a view to joining in the ringing for the country-wide 100-year anniversary of the end of WW1 on the 11th November 2018 and the campaign in honour of the 1400 ringers who died during the War.



BACK: Jane Selley-Steer, Jo Worth, Gemma Smith, Tony Melville,
Albert Campbell
FRONT: Simon and James Selley-Steer

Martin Clough

Young Ringer at Cruwys Morchard



Pictured here is Wilbur who has been learning to ring at Cruwys Morchard since he was almost eight. Here we use the Sherbourne Bell Club record cards where the children colour in little bells to show what they have learnt. Ten bells will earn you your blue badge, 25 bells a green badge and Wilbur, now aged ten, after a lot of hard work and perseverance has just received his red badge - 45 bells coloured in. Congratulations Wilbur.

Now he'll be pressing on towards a gold badge - a total of 75 bells needed for that!

Nellie Croft

Chums give new life to local Jewel-Shanty style

Imagine a sunny late summer evening finding yourself travelling twixt Crediton and Bickleigh when you see the sign for Cadbury village. A few houses and a valley maybe but take a quarter mile trip through on the road to Thorverton and let yourself dally a while at the church on your right.

Park by the lych-gate and go through into its yard and you'll find an enchanting scene – a carpet of scented flowers, distant cattle calling across the green valley, whilst birds chatter their song making this tranquillity - with the old towered church building warmly resting in the gently dipping sun – a joy to savour in a very English setting.

If luck is with you and it's a Tuesday, you may chance to hear the result of a happy band of locals gently teasing music out of the tower's ring of ancient bells which have graced this place since unrecorded history.

But now the time has come for this generation of ringers to shew their mettle and having obtained permission to proceed from the church diocese, seek funds in getting those ancient instruments tuned and cosseted with new bearings, the ring to be refurbished whilst keeping the essence of its antiquity.

The bell restoration project started with a constant stream of effort to gather funds about four years ago. Having now obtained three quotations from master bell caster, hanging and

refurbishing companies, a start has been made on the intricate process to take the works forward by approaching the Church Diocesan Authority for a faculty, an essential permission before works may be undertaken to church property.

The church authorities first refer the scheme to their own expert surveyors who go over work proposals in intricate detail. This process is intended to provide the best possible result for present and future generations.

The whole is unavoidably time consuming and expensive for whilst the intention is to provide a much more tuneful and operationally superior ring for practitioners, we must of course protect the antiquity of the ring for those who follow us in years to come. So then, the works have to be minimalist in nature whilst the providing this vast operational improvement.

Whilst various grants are available from a number of charitable sources, it is essential that the organising team is seen to be serious players by doing everything they can to self-provide funds. This even though their best efforts are however unlikely to raise but a fraction of the eventual cost.

So, tower captain Gordon Leigh and his committee organised a public Shanty Evening event and bar to help in gaining this standing which was held back in April at Cheriton Fitzpaine parish hall where the amazing Exmouth Shanty Men entertained throughout the evening in having a really good old fashioned evening's sing along with the sell-out audience of locals and visitors participation being wholeheartedly encouraged.

The result is that Gordon now has well over a further £2000 to add to his coffers (part of which is a very kind £750 match funding from Barclays Bank relating to the Shanty evening) and is currently applying for further grant aid towards the estimated £45000 needed to complete the remedial works and provide the best possible modern ring on the bells, most of which have hung in the tower for centuries.

Naturally, the evening was interspersed with comfort breaks where drinks, many supplied free of charge by local donors, further added to the full house ticket sales, making a fun evening for all. Gordon's only regret is in running out of vital supplies caused by the size of the audience and their enthusiasm for the proceedings!

John Skinner - Press Officer, NE Branch (and Cadbury ringer)

South West Branch

Plymouth Youths' Weekend Away 2018

This year marks the sixth time I have attended a Plymouth Youths' weekend away and it is always such a great experience to meet the new members, see friends again and ring at other interesting towers. This year's trip kicked off in Reading and continued out into the surrounding area. We started at St Giles in the centre of Reading, which was a nice, medium weight ring of eight. Next we walked to the only ring of twelve on our itinerary, St Laurence. We were met by some of the local ringers who had kindly agreed to help out to make up numbers so we could ring the full twelve. This was a really good experience for those who hadn't rung on twelve bells before or like myself, who don't often get the opportunity.

After our time was up there we left to go for lunch. It was a hot summer's day so sitting out in the pub garden with cold drinks was on the cards for everyone! We had a lovely relaxing time before leaving for some more ringing. The next tower was Waltham St Lawrence, a ring of six, which were perfect for some doubles methods such as Grandsire and Plain Bob. Then it was on to our penultimate tower, Wargrave, another ring of eight. Our final tower of the day was Shiplake which was definitely one of the most interesting towers a lot of us had ever been to as there were cameras set up in the bell tower so we could watch the bells turning.

Afterwards we gathered for the customary group photo. This year we had new t-shirts with a brand new logo designed by one of our members, Elena. The sun was shining brightly so it was on to the barbecue and games we had planned at the nearby rectory, the home of Matthew, who kindly organised the trip. After Sunday service ringing at Shiplake, we finished the weekend off with a trip into Henley-on-Thames to have a look at the annual regatta and enjoy the good weather. Once again it was a fantastic weekend and I look forward to many more to come in the future!



Plymouth Society of Modern Youths at Shiplake with brand new T-Shirts!

Sarah Lippett

All Action at Laira

Around October last year we became aware of a pigeon invasion at Laira. The louvres were in a state of disrepair and the chicken wire which had previously worked well as the prevention measure was now ineffective and allowed pigeons to get into the bell tower. It was time to cajole the church wardens and treasurer into getting a contractor on board to fix the defective louvres quickly and stop those pesky birds from obtaining access. Time slipped by and Christmas was upon us. In hindsight, I should have found some tarpaulin and wrapped up as much of the frame and bells as possible, this would have stopped pigeon guano getting everywhere! There have been several lessons learnt from this project.

Once winter had set in, it was too dangerous to complete any repair work to the external parts of the tower, so work needed to wait. After the New Year, the church warden had got a quote in which was bit pricey and work didn't look set to start for a little while.

At that point a member of congregation offered to help – Garth aged 76. He was our hero, and with the assistance of his pal Richard, they set to work replacing the louvres. It wasn't an easy task as access was through a small trap door at the very top of the tower steps and then out onto a parapet walkway.

Experienced Garth was unfazed and put up a safety rail using scaffold poles. He created a pulley system by which he could get materials to the top of the tower. Garth and Richard worked quickly, and after months of waiting for the project to start, the job was done.

We had a couple of stubborn residents at that point and under the conditions of a GL05 general licence (Wild and Countryside Act 1981) we were able to encourage the birds to find alternative accommodation. Eventually, they moved out and the clean-up began. This was gritty work which involved full protective overalls and dust masks because we weren't taking any risks! The birds had made a good mess over everything and so we started with scraping down the wheels, bells and frame, until we hit the floor with our scrapers. We hacked and swept; it was sweaty hard graft, but we did it.

Thank you so much to everyone that helped. Now all the poop has been removed there is plenty to do in terms of painting and a bit of TLC. The bells are available to ring for visiting groups and we hope to start up a ringing practice night in the future.



L to R: Matthew, Alena, Sam, Dan, Jo, Garth



Damaged Louvres (before)



Repaired Louvres (after)



Some evidence of pigeons

By Jo Maddick – Laira Tower Captain

Plymouth Ringers' Outing

Bellringing and 'welly-wanging' are two activities you wouldn't naturally put together but a recent outing of St Andrew's and Emmanuel, Plymouth proved that bell ringers can combine these two activities rather well, along with caber tossing and charades.

The unrelenting sun gave way to clouds and drizzle, just in time for our outing to Bere Ferrers on 28th July, but luckily we had glimpses of dry weather too. Whilst some went by car, a number of us took the scenic journey on the Tamar Valley Railway, under Brunel's bridge, to the pretty station of Bere Ferrers where we were met by our hosts, Steve and Sally Jackson and David Pike. David's wife Sara and their children, Joseph, Thomas and Molly joined us later and it felt like a real family gathering.

Some of us had rung here before, but others had to acquaint themselves with the rather cosy ringing chamber. The six bells at Bere Ferrers are hung two over two over two and so the ropes are rather close together. With both captains present (Fergus and Alena) and our Bere Ferrers hosts joining in we rang a number of touches including Stedman, Bob Minor and Bob Doubles. When not ringing we braved the wind and drizzle outside the tower but also looked around the 13th century church where the stone effigy of Sir Reginald de Ferrers reclines, legs crossed, head resting on his helmet, looking totally at peace with the world. Beautiful embroidered banners adorn the church pillars. Made by local parishioners the banners recount the varied activities in the Tamar Valley including fruit growing, farming and mining.

The bells were rung down and we made our way up the hill to Steve and Sally's farm where a tractor and trailer awaited us for a journey down to the meadows and marshes on the banks of the Tamar river. The drizzle stopped just in time and once all were aboard we rode through the fields and stopped for refreshment and a view of the river. We were greeted by the herd of Hereford

cows and calves as they nosed around the trailer. It was possible to stroke the odd one or two, Topsy and Suzie being particularly accommodating cows on this score.

We then made our way back to the farm where we had a barbecue. Thanks to all those who made and brought food and drink and helped with the cooking and washing up; it was a real collective effort and it certainly helps having a baker as a member of the bell ringing community! Feeling replete and taking advantage of a break in the clouds we went outside for the first of our competitions, 'welly-wanging'. This consisted of hurling a welly down the farmyard and it transpired personal height has a bearing on distance as our 'over six-footers' slugged it out for the furthest throw. Had there been points for technique the 'shorter contingent' (the majority of us including 7-year-old Molly with her pink welly), would almost certainly have fared well. And for entertainment value, Billy might well have won, so no surprises there then...! Caber tossing followed using a fence post, as cabers are in short supply in this part of the world. This was slightly trickier and only the brave attempted it but at least it made our Scottish contingent, Fergus and Doug, feel at home and Steve and Hannah led the way for the Sassenachs.

We went back indoors for more drinks and games, including charades, which produced much hilarity and tested our acting skills. It was a wonderful day, all told. Finally, late in the evening the last train down the valley left Bere Ferrers Station and the last of the revellers were waved off by Steve and Sally as they made their way back down the line to Plymouth.



A tractor ride



Caber tossing



Welly Wanging

Elena Brake

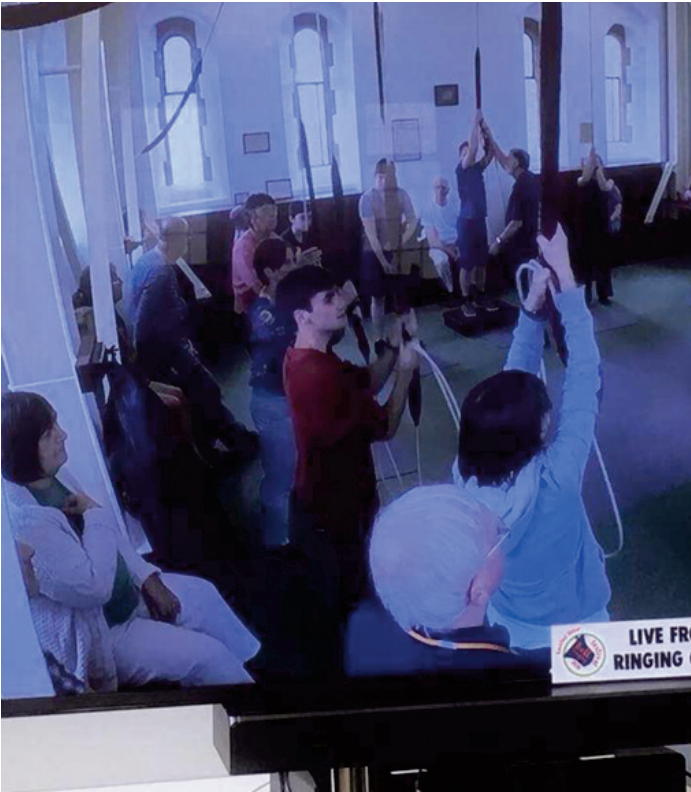
Buckfast Abbey – Bell Ringing Festival 2018 11th August 2018

The South West Branch enjoyed a trip to Buckfast Abbey for a very special occasion – the first ever Buckfast Abbey Bellringing Festival, which was part of a wider celebration of the Abbey's Millennium.

A core group of South West Branch ringers attended to ring, and this was live streamed from the tower into a tent in the grounds of the Abbey. It was a rare opportunity for some of us to ring on 12 bells and with so many volunteers, activities and information around it was a fantastic way for members of the public to learn more about what we do.

Jack, one of our newest ringers at St Andrew's, Plymouth said: 'We all got a chance to ring, as well as taking part on a couple of mini-rings as well. There were also a variety of different instruments to look at and to play that made sounds and notes by striking bells. There was even a set of small, ancient Chinese bells that were up to 3,500 years old. They weren't in bad condition for their age! Some people had a go at ringing hand bells too. The Abbey has twelve bells which are a lot heavier than those at my home tower where we have ten.'

Overall the day was very enjoyable and interesting, as I'm sure many of the other attendees would agree!



Live Streamed Ringing from Buckfast Abbey

Elena Brake

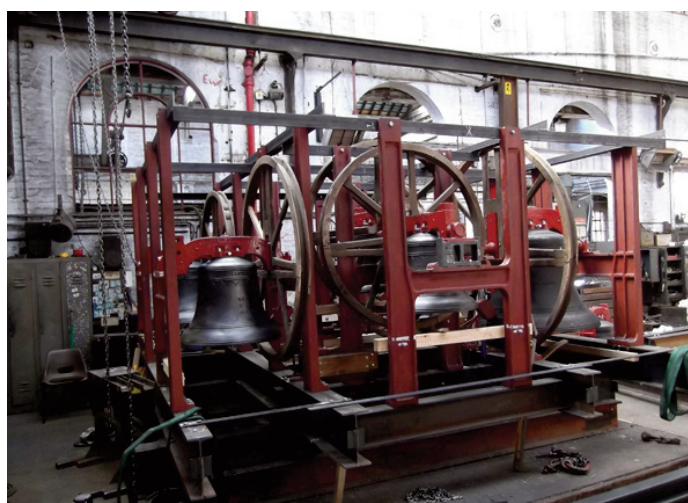
Other News

Rehanging at Moretonhampstead

I attach two photos indicating how the restoration is coming along; the bells are expected to be back in place towards the end of August.



The tenor being removed via the church porch



The refurbished bells in their new frame at Taylor's works.

Joe Scaife

Notable Ringing Events Oliver's first as Conductor

Congratulations go to Oliver Bates on calling his first peal.



L to R: Ian, Charlotte, David, Rob, Oliver, John, Lester, James

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Bovey Tracey, Devon, Wobbly Bob's Campanile
Tuesday, 19 June 2018 in 1h 47
5056 Cambridge Surprise Major
Composed by Charles Middleton and Henry Johnson (arr)
1 John R Martin
2 Lester J Yeo
3 Robert D S Brown
4 James Kirkcaldy
First peal as conductor

5 Ian L C Campbell
6 Charlotte A Boyce
7 David Hird
8 Oliver C Bates (C)
Ian Campbell

90th Anniversary of Last Peal at St Sidwell's, Exeter

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Exeter, Devon, St Sidwell
Saturday, 4 August 2018 in 2h 7 (11 in G)
5024 Lessness Surprise Major
Composed by S Jenner
1-2 Andrew P Digby
3-4 Susan D Sparling

5-6 Thomas J Hinks
7-8 David G Maynard (C)

Rung to mark the 90th anniversary of the last peal on the bells of the old St Sidwell's Church; 5015 Stedman Caters on 7 August 1928. All but the 9th of the ring were scrapped following the destruction of the tower during the Second World War. The old 9th is now hung dead outside the modern church. Also 900th peal for Sue Sparling



The band, in ringing order R-L, beside the remaining bell.

David Maynard

Pauline McKenzie's 3000th Peal

Congratulations go to Pauline on ringing her 3000th peal.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Feniton, Devon, St Andrew
Thursday, 14 June 2018 in 3h 7
5760 Spliced Surprise Minor (41m)
Composed by A E Holroyd
1 Matthew J Hilling (C)
2 Susan D Sparling
3 Pauline McKenzie

4 Ian V J Smith
5 David G Maynard
6 Michael E C Mears

3000th peal: 3.

Mike Mears

First of Spliced Surprise Royal for the Guild on Handbells

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Exeter, Devon, Flat 5, 155 Magdalen Road

Wednesday, 27 June 2018 in 2h 38 (15 in C)

5040 Spliced Surprise Royal (4m)

1280 Cambridge, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, 1200 Rutland.

31 com, atw.

Composed by P C Randall

1–2 Andrew P Digby

3-4 Susan D Sparling

5-6 David G Maynard (C)

7–8 Matthew J Hilling

9–10 Oliver Coldrick

First peal of Spliced Surprise Royal on handbells for 1-2, 3-4, 7-8, 9-10, as conductor, and for the Guild.

900th peal: 5-6

Training Changes at Denmisch

An attempt for a peal on the simulators at Denmisch had to be stopped half way through when the sensor on one of the bells missed a blow and the bell started striking at completely the wrong part of the stroke.

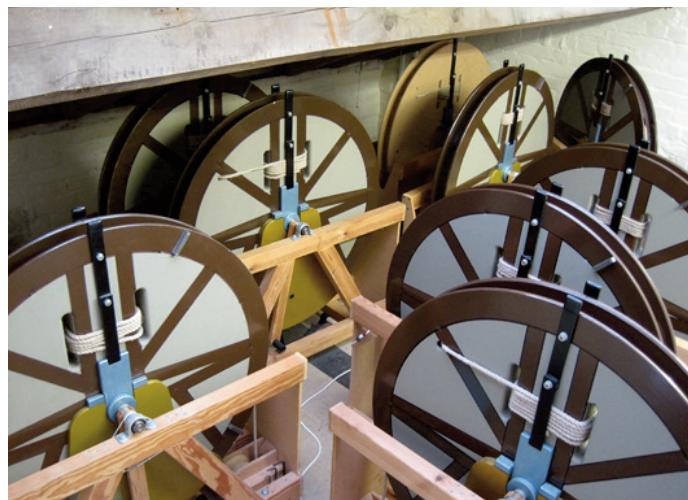
The Denmisch simulators are equipped with simple movement detectors based on a reed switch fixed to the frame which is actuated by a pair of magnets passing it which are fixed to the bell wheel. The magnets and sensors are the same as those used on door and window frames for burglar alarms. The positioning of the magnets is such that the sensor activates at the strike point of each stroke. Unfortunately it also registers as the opposite magnet passes so that the software has to be set to ignore half of the signals (actually only one in four is counted as each one is 'on' and then 'off'). As a result the software has to be reset after the bells are rung up to initialise everything and if a bell is bumped hard, partially rung down, or if a sensor misses a signal otherwise the bell will be heard to ring in completely the wrong place from that time onwards.

Later versions of Abel software enable a single magnet to be used by putting it at the central position between the two strokes ('bottom dead centre') and programming a delay of a few milliseconds between the sensor being triggered and the bell sound produced. This avoids the problems above (although the pictures of the ropes can get out of sync with the actual ropes this does not affect the sound) and does not require the software to be regularly reset.



The Guild of Medical Ringers ringing at Denmisch earlier this year

Over the summer I have removed one magnet from each bell and repositioned the second one. The computer has been reprogrammed with suitable delays before the sounds are produced. However they have not yet been tried in earnest so we wait for the school term and the bell ringing club to restart after the summer break to see if it has had the desired effect.



A view of the Denmisch simulators

Ian Campbell

Calendar

September

Mon 17 19:30	Branch Practice - Stedman and other doubles Offwell	East
Wed 19	Mid-Week Outing	North East
Wed 19 19:30	Quarter Peal on request (arranged by TRC) Huntsham	North East
Wed 26 19:30	Quarter Peal for 8-bell band, Huntsham	North East

October

Wed 3	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Sat 6		Branch Outing, Above Bristol	Mid Devon
Sat 6		Branch striking competition practice, TBC	South West
Sat 6	15:00	N-E Branch Annual General Meeting	North East
Wed 10	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 11	19:30	Branch Practice - Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Fri 12	18:45	Skittles and Supper Evening, New Inn, Broadclyst	Exeter
Fri 12	19:30	Branch Practice - Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sat 13		Branch striking competition practice, TBC	South West
Sat 13	10:00	6 Bell Open Practice, Tiverton, St Paul's	North East
Sat 13	14:00	Branch AGM, Broadclyst	Aylesbeare
Sat 13	15:00	Branch Autumn Meeting & ringing, Luppitt	East
Mon 15	19:30	Branch Practice- Stedman and other doubles Offwell	East
Wed 17	19:30	Practice for 8-bell band, Huntsham	North East
Thu 18	19:30	6 bell practice, Ideford	Mid Devon
Fri 19 to Sun 4		Quarter Peal Festival	Guild
Sat 20		Striking Competitions, South West Branch	Guild
Wed 24	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 27		ART Module 1	Guild

November

Sat 3	10:00	Kaleidoscope Ringing, Thorverton	Guild
Sat 3	10:00	6 Bell Open Practice, Halberton	North East
Wed 7	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Thu 8	19:30	Branch Practice - Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Fri 9	19:30	Branch Practice - Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sat 10		Branch 97th Anniversary Service and Dinner, TBC & Moorland Garden Hotel	South West
Mon 12	19:30	Branch Practice, Woodbury	Aylesbeare
Wed 14	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 15	19:30	8 bell practice, Upton	Mid Devon
Sat 17	14:00	AGM, St David's, Exeter	Exeter
Sat 17	10:00	Safeguarding C2 training course	North East
Mon 19	19:30	Branch Practice - Stedman and other doubles Offwell	East
Wed 21	19:00	Branch Committee Meeting, Heathcoat Centre, Tiverton	North East
Sat 24		Branch AGM, Teignmouth	Mid Devon
Wed 28	19:30	Surprise Major Practice or Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East

December

Sat 1	10:00	6 Bell Open Practice, Bampton	North East
Wed 5	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Sun 9		Carol Service, Buckfast Abbey	Guild
Wed 12	19:30	Triples and Plain Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 13	19:30	Branch Practice - Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Thu 13	19:30	Branch Practice, Topsham	Aylesbeare
Fri 14	19:30	Branch Practice - Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sun 16	12:30	Young Ringers' Practice, DenMisch Simulated Campanile	Young Ringers
Mon 17	19:30	Branch Practice - Stedman and other doubles	East
		Offwell	
Wed 19	19:30	Quarter Peal on request (arranged by TRC)	North East
		Huntsham	

Editorial

Wendy Campbell has been out of action ringing since the end of May following surgery on her shoulder. Rehabilitation is continuing as expected but it is likely to be a while before she is fully back to ringing. Helpful advice was obtained from ringing doctors and physios at a recent meeting in Exeter of the Guild of Medical Ringers!

And then at the start of August we heard that Peter Bill had fallen off a ladder while clipping his hedge and had broken his upper arm in four places. Apparently the best course of action is to put it in a sling and keep it immobile. At least Peter and Wendy have been able to compare notes!



Peter Bill showing off his ailments

Having spent some time at Buckfast Abbey over the last few weeks I would encourage you to put the ringers' carol service in your diaries. If nothing else it will be a good opportunity to experience the spectacular new organ which has recently been installed. Note that this is on SUNDAY 9th December this year. I am sure that Ian Avery would welcome any ringers who would like to sing in the choir.

Ian Campbell

For Sale Secondhand Ropes

We have just changed our hemp ropes to ones with PSP tops to save having to alter the lengths with changes in weather. Our hemp old ropes are in pretty good condition and I wonder if there is a tower in need of five ropes (the sixth is going to the daughter of one of our past ringers). It would be nice to help another tower but also to recoup a bit of money.

They are 60 foot with green, green and white sally. I thought perhaps £20 o.n.o. Our tenor is just over 7cwt so all the ropes are the same.

Jennifer Rowlandson, St Margaret's, Stoodleigh

Spiders in Residence



This Rope Spider seems to have been very active spinning a web!

Ian Campbell



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