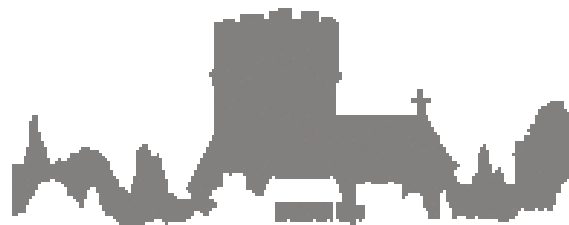


Ringling Round Devon



THE GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

Newsletter 117, March 2020

Tributes to two West Country ringing Stalwarts

John Conduct and Charlie Taylor both did a lot of their ringing in North Devon and East Cornwall; they died within ten days of each other, both being almost 90 years old. Records show that they rang eight peals together, including three at Stratton and a notable one at Marhamchurch of Grandsire Doubles in 1971, conducted by Charlie Taylor.

May they both rest in peace.

Ian Campbell / Janet Ritterman

John Conduct, died 9th December 2019



Many of you may not have heard that John died on 9th December, a few days short of his 90th Birthday. Mention his name to anyone who knew him and the response is always 'such a kind man', 'a lovely man, modest, helpful', 'a brilliant striker'. A well respected ringer from Cornwall once said that it was such a pity that because the striking competitions included a raise - something that John's health could not entertain - one of the best strikers in the county could not take part.

John learned to ring in 1943, on muffled bells, at Erdington. His father also rang there and they were both in the choir. He later went on to become tower captain. He regularly attended the 43ers reunions until they stopped due to dwindling numbers. When he was courting Jean he told her not to expect to see him in the week as he would be out ringing. When he and Jean married, he rang before the service, linking the two great loves of his life. Jean became a ringing widow while they lived in Birmingham, as John was off most Saturdays ringing as well as Sundays for services and a couple of practice nights in the week. His records show that he rang 91 peals (conducted one) and 259 quarter peals (44). He was happy on all numbers. He was always interested to hear where I had rung on my travels, and would quite often relate details of peals he had rung there, who was in the band and the conductor. He rang quite a bit in the early years with the Beresfords. He could not have known that he would be ringing with them and the next generations in more recent times.

The family moved to the West Country in the late 60s, ringing at Stratton with Harry Stacey, Charlie Sanguine and Henry Trewin amongst others. As well as ringing, he inscribed several peal boards for Stratton, calligraphy being one of his many talents. His daughters, Susan and Debbie, learned to ring at Stratton but gave up after a couple of years. John was thrilled that Debbie took it up again more recently at Alphington. By this time John and Jean had moved to Oxford but they still visited Devon from time to time and John was happy to go ringing with Debbie, but sorry that he could only sit and watch on recent trips.

John was keen to help learners progress and had a way of explaining

things that everyone understood. He enjoyed conducting too and always had his little book to hand, often passing you a piece of paper with a touch that he thought we would enjoy. He particularly enjoyed calling Stedman. He was always happy to travel for some good ringing, and was a regular in the St Brannock's Society quarter peals, but he still hankered to ring one more peal while his health would tolerate it. For Jean's birthday in October 2008 he chose four-spiced at Bridgerule (where he and Jean were living). We were all relieved when it came round. After they moved to Oxford he rang for a while at Radley until the walk up the church path became too much for him.

John was a member of several ringing groups in Devon and Cornwall, so when arranging the quarter peal in his memory it seemed only right to include ringers from those groups and the towers where he had been a regular helper: Ancient Society of College Youths, Guild of Devonshire Ringers, Truro Diocesan Guild, St Brannock's Society, Taw, Torridge & Tamar Midweek Group, Marhamchurch and the northern branch of the Truro Diocesan Guild. We were delighted that Jean and Debbie were able to listen to the ringing.

In his last letter to me he said, 'Oh I do miss my ringing.' Not as much as we will miss you, dear friend.

Bridgerule, Devon
Wednesday, 12th February 2020
1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major
1 Alison Waterson
2 Louise James
3 Ruth Reeves
4 Rob Corney
In fond memory of John Conduct

5 James Clarke
6 Mike Rose
7 Hilary Beresford
8 Donald Carter (C)

Other performances in his memory include:
9th January Pinhoe: 1280 5 Spiced S Major
21st January Wobbly Bobs Campanile: 5152 Doubtful Sound S Major
Louise James

Charlie Taylor, died 30th November 2019



Charles Edward Taylor

Charlie was born in Marhamchurch, attended the village school, then the secondary modern at Stratton, and got a part-time job whilst still at school at Penhele, the big house at the west end of St Marwenne's church. By the time he left school in 1945 he was already an integral member of the tower band. He had started to ring in early 1944 and first rang in the service band at Marhamchurch on Easter Sunday that year. His links to the tower went back to his grandfather who had been captain in the last

years of Queen Victoria. He became a member at a time when Robert (Jack) Hicks was working towards starting a method ringing team and Charlie was lucky to have people of his own age and determination to work with, like Alan Hicks, James Rich and John Bowden. In the summer of 1947 he rang his first peal at Poughill and rang the first peal at St Marwenne's for the village Revel in August that year which was dedicated to Fred Sangwin who had helped the band so much.

The following year he joined the Truro Diocesan Guild of Ringers, the Devon Guild of Ringers and the Tamar Valley Guild of Ringers. In November 1948 he was elected to the Ancient Society of College Youths. 1949 saw his first peal on 8, at Bridgerule, conducted by Thomas Myles. In January 1950 he rang the first peal of Plain Bob Minor at Marhamchurch for his 20th birthday. He was part of the Stratton band in its heyday, and the names on Stratton peal boards list those who have now passed on; the Sangwin brothers, Harry Stacey, Henry Trewin and Edgar Nunn. We were amazed when Michael brought his father to the tower just over a year ago as we were preparing to ring a quarter peal to mark his 70 years as a College Youth, the last time he was able to make it to St Marwenne's.

His ringing career went on well into the 21st century. The Beresfords used to holiday at Harry's house in Stratton, and in the 2000s, Alison Waterson (née Beresford) brought young Tom to our practices, with another good friend of Charlie's, John Orchard from Okehampton. He had a busy month in October 2004 when he and Bet celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. He rang quarter peals at Marhamchurch and Combe Martin, went on an Okehampton outing to Gloucestershire and another outing with his local ringers to South Devon, that culminated in a memorable dinner at Widecombe-in-the-Moor. He was still keen to master new methods in his mid-seventies and rang a quarter of Cambridge at Inwardleigh in 2006. If pressed on Charlie's favourite event as a ringer he would opt for the annual Appleton dinner where he met so many of his old friends and had a week of ringing as it used to be, with plenty of time for socialising. One of Charlie's dear friends, Roger Mitty, came down from Oxfordshire to contribute a heart-felt, and possibly redacted, tribute to Charlie at his funeral.

He was a man of strong opinions but in ringing terms he was ahead of his time. As he developed his own undoubted skill, in conducting as well as the basis for all good ringing, striking, he branched out into passing on the benefits of his experience and was always delighted, and sometimes surprised, when friends made a breakthrough in their ringing. At a time when there were few women in tower bands he was keen to help them locally, and was so proud when an all-woman band rang a quarter peal at Marhamchurch in April 2013, the self-styled 'Charlie's Angels'. There are few bands in Cornwall today where five women are able to call a touch of Grandsire Doubles. Charlie will be greatly missed by ringers on both sides of the Tamar.

Robert Corney and Michael Taylor

(Acknowledging the contribution from the late David Willis' North Devon History)

Devon Ringers Carol Service at Exeter Cathedral

Those who eventually found the door to the Cathedral amongst the clamour of the Christmas market were in for another pre-Christmas treat. Once again Ian Avery had organised this annual celebration and ringers supported it in good numbers. An excellent choir, this year including outstanding soloists, led the proceedings which also included Exeter Cathedral handbell ringers ringing a superb touch of three leads of Kent Treble Bob Royal and the Lamerton ringers again thrilling us with a simulated call change peal.

There were also plenty of chances to exercise the vocal cords in well-known carols. And if all that was not enough to tempt you to visit Exeter then there was also the launch of the Devon Guild Library in its new home of St Petrock's. The Cathedral bells were also available for open ringing following the service. This really is the best way to get the Christmas season started.

Martin Mansley

...and from the perspective of Ian Avery, who serves as Director of Music for the occasion, and makes it all happen – training and conducting the choir and making the arrangements for the service.

The first Friday in November sees choir rehearsals commence in preparation for the Carol Service organised by the Devon Ringers' Council, which took place in Exeter Cathedral on Saturday 7th December. A service loosely based on the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols has for some years now been a regular and well-attended event where ringers, family

and friends from both the Guild and Association gather for a celebration of words and music for Advent and Christmas.

The day arrives and from around 2.30pm, with the lofty and regal sound of the Cathedral bells echoing around the Cathedral Close and beyond. As people make their way to the grandeur of the West Front entrance, one feels a draw towards something special about to unfold.

This feeling of expectation (fitting so aptly with Advent) continues when inside the Cathedral, with the congregation arriving from all over the county and beyond, the choir having rehearsed in the morning slowly returning from lunch, readers familiarising themselves with the lectern microphone set-up, handbell ringers seeking out their reserved seats and organ voluntaries beginning. The time is fast approaching for the celebration to kick-off at 3pm. The members of the choir arrive from the Chapter House, their base for the day, to take up their position in the South Transept where at the stroke of 3 o'clock, Bach's chorale 'Glory now to God we Render' is sung as an introit. They then process to the choir stalls with everyone singing 'Once in Royal David's City'. The music for this service tends to be a mix of traditional carols for congregation, readings from representatives from both the Guild and Association, two handbell touches showing the intricacies of both method and call change ringing and carols for the choir.



The choir ready for the service

The idea of a choir for this service was formed in the early 90s and an idea of the late Reverend Bob Southwood. Initially the choir was made up mainly of ringers and whilst many ringers still form a large part of the choir, over the years it has grown to include family and friends. The main reason for this is to maintain a balance in the four parts.

In 2019 two of the choir items included in the service gave the opportunity for soloists. Will Carew sang the solo part in Peter Cornelius' 'The Three Kings'. This piece calls for the gentlemen of the choir to sing in four parts underneath the solo part. This is then repeated but with the sopranos and altos taking the top two parts. This gives a sumptuous contrast in the singing of what is a gloriously written carol. Ginnie Cox sang the solo part in the equally glorious 'O Holy Night' written by Adolph Adam. This is not unlike the previous carol in that the choir sing four parts underneath the solo part, one of the differences being that it has sections just for the choir. This remains a firm favourite of not only the choir but of congregations and audiences up and down the country.

Holding the service in the Quire of the Cathedral brings about an intimacy for the choir and congregation not evident when held in the nave. This facilitates some enthralling carol singing with descants bringing a spine-tingling and uplifting climax to the carols – something we never get tired of singing or hearing year in, year out.

The Devon Ringers' Council and I'm sure all ringers are extremely grateful to the Dean and Chapter for allowing us to hold our service in what is such superb surroundings. Thanks also must go to the Cathedral's organists for allowing us to take over for the day in what is an extremely busy time for them, to the floor managers for their much appreciated support on the day, to the Cathedral bellringers for ringing both before and after the service and to administrative personnel in dealing with bookings and requests over the past twelve months and that includes our very own Clare Griffiths who is so efficient at being our link between the Cathedral authorities and bellringers. Special mention and sincere thanks must go to Wyn Turner, our organist. Wyn has so generously given his time for the past 26 years. His musical mastery, interpretation and accompanying skills are second to none and for which I am personally extremely grateful. We just could not achieve this most joyous and uplifting pleasure our service brings without all this dedicated support being in place. A huge thank you to one and all. The collection taken at the service for Children's Hospice South West amounted to £707.36.

The 2020 Bellringers Carol Service will be held in Barnstaple Parish Church on Saturday 12th December at 3.00pm.

Ian Avery, Clerk, Devon Ringers' Council

Guild Committee meeting 2020

The Guild Committee meeting in January prepares proposals to present to the AGM in June.



Ali (president), John (secretary)

The rota for hosting the Guild AGM and the Striking Competition was discussed at some length. It was finally decided to recommend that the AGM rota is retained essentially as currently agreed, with the exception of the North/North West and South West Branches swapping slots so that the Exeter Branch with its larger urban centre can accommodate a visit from the Central Council in 2024. However the proposal is that the rota for hosting the Striking Competition is changed to ensure that from 2021 onwards there will be a longer time gap for branches between hosting the AGM and the Striking Competition.

The scheduling of future Guild AGMs and Festivals was also discussed with several options put forward. It was decided to stay with the current date of the third Saturday in June as changing the date of the AGM would probably create more problems than it solved. This proposal will go forward to the AGM in June 2020.

The organising of the 2020 Guild AGM by the East Branch is well underway and will be based in and around Sidmouth. There will be various activities arranged for the morning and in the afternoon there will be a presentation by Steve Coleman. At present there are no plans for an evening event.

The 2020 Striking Competition hosted by the Aylesbeare Branch will be on 17th October (the third Saturday in October). The provisional venues are:

- 8 bell competition: Woodbury
- 6 bell competition: Aylesbeare
- 6 bell novice competition: Topsham
- 8 bell novice competition: East Budleigh

The 8 bell methods will be spliced Cambridge and Yorkshire for the harder method and Penultimus Major for the easier method.

Note from editor: To find this method its proper name is 'Little Little Little Little Penultimus Little Place Major'. It is very simple – no dodges anywhere and only one place made per course!

The 2020 Guild Ringing Festival will be held between 16th October and 1st November. The overall response last year to the change of emphasis of the Festival, from focusing on quarter peals to being a broader ringing festival involving many more ringers was felt to be disappointing. In this regard North East Branch was singled out as a notable exception, though they did admit that part of their apparent success reflected a certain number of lost quarter peal attempts! Since the funds raised by the festival go to Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, from which many towers benefit, it was felt that the festival should aim to involve not only the Guild's more experienced ringers but also ringers at all stages of experience. It was agreed that to achieve this, the festival needs more and better advertising. Whilst quarter peal attempts will still be a central part of the festival, ringers who are not yet at that stage should be encouraged to undertake shorter pieces of ringing as contributions to the festival. It was emphasised that these could include ringing done as part of a normal practice night or a Sunday service, and could take the form of call changes or a first touch of Bob Doubles. These shorter pieces of ringing should also be sent to BellBoard and linked to the Festival.

The Guild accounts for the year ending 31st December 2019 were approved, the balance sheet showing a surplus of just over £9,000. Following discussion of the annual Guild subscription, a revised annual rate (including a revised peal fee) will be proposed at the AGM in June. It was agreed that Guild funds should cover the cost of donations to towers hosting the striking competitions, that the Education Fund has sufficient funds and does not need topping up this year; and that a donation of

£2,235 should be made by the Guild to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. It was noted that although the DCBRF is currently in surplus, any sizeable grant made in the coming year would eliminate that surplus. Anyone able to make a regular donation (e.g. by standing order) or a one-off donation was encouraged to contact the DCBRF Treasurer, Mary Mears mm@1applegarth.co.uk.

The Guild Librarian, Les Boyce, gave a very positive update on the Guild Library and the Friends of the Library Group, which has been set up to help support the library financially and practically. He reported that to mark the opening of the library, which is now safely stored at St Petrock's Church in Exeter, an Open Day with a buffet lunch was held there in December, on the day of the Guild Carol Service. This well attended event raised £88 for the Library Fund. Funds raised by the Friends will help offset the £240 per year cost of hosting the Library and so far the fund has transferred £90 to the Guild's General Funds to offset that cost for 2019.

The Committee gave its support to two proposals: for the Friends scheme to be opened to non-Guild members and for the selective disposal of duplicate holdings. Duplicate copies in reasonable condition will be offered to Guild Members and Friends of the Library or alternatively to other ringing associations. Duplicate copies available (in return for a donation) will be listed on the library section of the Guild website and any remaining duplicates will be brought to the AGM in June. Duplicates in poor condition and deemed to be of no historical importance will be sent for recycling.

This year's Central Council Meeting will be held in Nottingham. Questions or comments for any of the three Guild representatives (Lynette Costello, Lynne Hughes, Fergus Stracey) should be addressed to them. It was noted that the workshops held during the weekend are open to others to attend (provided that they sign up in advance).

Branch representatives were reminded of the importance of keeping details up to date on the Guild website, especially practice nights and contact details.

Nicola Jones

How your Guild membership subscription is used

The purpose of this article is to provide information about the way in which Guild subscriptions are used. At the AGM in June, proposals to increase subscription rates will be considered. These have not increased since 2010.

Subscription rates

Currently the membership subscription is £6 per member and the tower affiliation fee is £6 per tower. There are currently no reduced rates for the young or the old.

Each branch collects these moneys. Branches retain 30% of subscriptions, to be used locally. The tower affiliation fee and 70% of the membership subscription go to the Guild general funds.

Proposal for subscription Increase

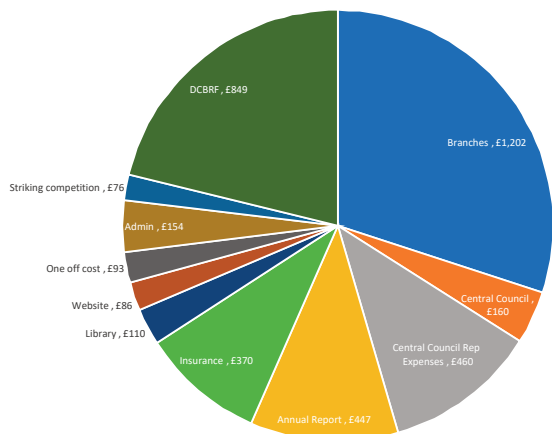
At the Guild Committee Meeting in January a proposal for an increase in the subscription rate from 2021 to £10 per annum was discussed.

The reasons for this proposal are as follows:

- Some branches felt that the 30% part of the membership funds they retain were insufficient to support the local events they want to hold;
- The Guild is run very economically, but costs have increased so in order to maintain our current donation to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund (DCBRF), we are now starting to dip into reserves as illustrated in the second pie chart below;
- We now have a new cost of £240pa for housing the Guild Library at St Petrock's;
- The costs associated with producing certificates and awards, such as the laminated tower affiliation certificates, first peal and striking contest certificates, have all increased;
- The Guild now offers four separate striking competitions rather than three; this has also resulted in a modest cost increase;
- It was felt that we should be making a larger donation to the DCBRF. As we do not have to buy the bells which we ring for services and as our hobby, it is important that we support the work done by the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund in order to maintain and improve bell installations around Devon. This is one of the Guild's charitable objectives.

How your membership fee is currently used

The following pie chart shows how your £6 membership subscription was used in 2019.



Major costs in 2019

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) is the national representative body for bell ringers. We pay an annual membership fee of £160 which is based on the size of our membership and we also pay reasonable/economical expenses to our three elected representatives to attend the CCCBR annual meeting. In 2019 costs were higher than normal because the event was held in London.

Each member receives a copy of the Guild Annual Report. The cost within this pie chart are net of the advertising revenue and the cost of producing the peal report pages which are covered by peal fees.

We budget approximately £100 per annum for acquisitions and preservation of the Guild Library assets. Following the re-housing of the library in St Petrock's, Exeter, in October 2019 we now pay an annual fee of £240 for twelve afternoon access sessions. Costs for 2019 were covered by funds raised on the Library Open Day.

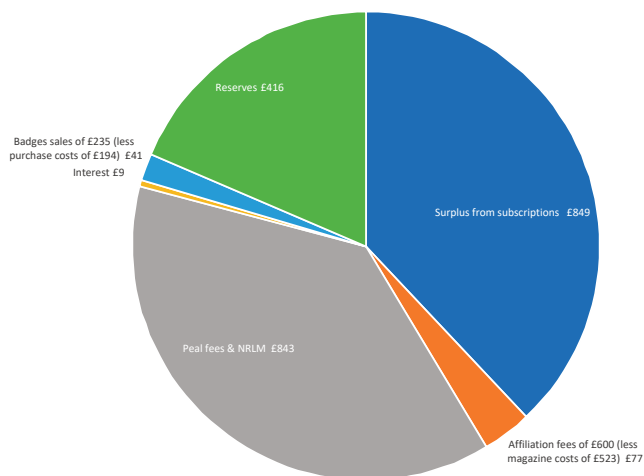
There was a one-off cost in 2019 of £92.50 concerning the write down of a loan to the Devon Ringers Council.

Tower affiliation fee

The tower affiliation fee is currently £6 per annum. Towers receive an affiliation certificate, a copy of the Annual Report and one copy of *Ringing Round Devon* per quarter. Each tower has also been provided with a tower handbook and benefits from the advice available from the many officers of the Guild.

General Fund Donation to DCBRF

At each AGM, members may vote for a proposed donation to be made to the DCBRF and to top up the Guild Education Fund. This year my proposal as Treasurer is for a donation to DCBRF of £2,235. The chart below shows how this donation would be made up.



Peal fees are stated net of a contribution to print the annual report and the Peal Secretary's expenses for downloading data. Peal fees are 60p per rope and the Guild has for many years set this fee at 10% of the membership subscription. While there are currently several very enthusiastic peal ringers in Devon generating significant peal fee income, the amount raised from peal fees cannot be guaranteed to continue.

Other ways that members support DCBRF

In addition to this donation to DCBRF, all monies claimed back from HMRC from gift aid donations, all monies raised in the annual ringing festival, any sundry donations and collections are donated to DCBRF. We claim gift aid on your donations and subscriptions: this raises approximately £260p.a. During the 2019 Ringing Festival £235 was raised.

It should be noted that the branches also make donations to DCBRF from their funds. Some branches donate a significant proportion from their funds.

The benefits of Guild membership

The benefits of Guild membership go far beyond the tangible benefits described above. Guild and Branch Officers give huge amounts of voluntary time in order to put on practices and events which provide ringing opportunities outside of individual towers. We are a community which supports ringing throughout our affiliated towers and beyond. All ringers have benefitted from time spent improving their skills with other ringers and put their time and expertise back into the exercise to support and encourage newer ringers.

Charlotte Boyce, Guild Treasurer

Guild Library

This is a shortened version of an article which first appeared in The Ringing World.

Open Day

On Saturday 7th December many Devon ringers were due in Exeter for the annual Devon Ringers' Carol Service at the Cathedral. This seemed too good an opportunity to miss to celebrate the Guild Library in its new home and to promote the new facilities. An Open Day was arranged for the lunchtime and over fifty ringers and friends came along, many of whom joined us for a buffet lunch.



The catering team (l – r): Jenny Jones, Les Boyce, Sheila Scofield, Janet Ritterman, Hazel Turner (and Anne England not shown)

Dr John Eisel, former Central Council Librarian, kindly consented to come to Exeter as our Guest of Honour to open the new library. Given his interest in the history of Devon ringing which he had shown through two series of articles published in *The Ringing World*, we felt he was the obvious choice to open the Library. The Rector of Central Exeter, Revd Sheila Swarbrick, also came along and explained the background to the St. Petrock's refurbishment project.

Importance of Ringing Libraries

John Eisel entertained his audience with some newspaper extracts which featured 19th century complaints about the ringing at St. Petrock's. He also stressed the value of collections, such as the Guild Library, in preserving the heritage of ringing and providing a tangible link back to great figures of ringing's past like the Revd H.T. Ellacombe. Ellacombe was Rector of Clyst St George for 35 years, a prominent figure in the belfry reform movement and one of the founders of the Guild (which is the oldest territory ringing society in the country).

Despite much information being available on the internet, there is still a role for the organised collection of local material relating to bell ringing, much of which, being ephemeral, could easily be lost to future generations. He urged that the Library should now be well used. Following his remarks John unveiled a certificate marking the official opening of the Library at St Petrock's.



John Eisel relating stories about St Petrock's

History of the Library

The Devon Guild Library was formed in 1956 by the Revd Prebendary John Scott who was its first Librarian. It grew thanks to many donations by Guild members and now numbers over 300 printed volumes, together with journal back issues, leaflets, manuscript and non-book items. John Scott remained Librarian until his death in 2007. He had a particular interest in bell archaeology and co-authored the definitive *Towers and Bells of Devon* which was published shortly before he died. The Library is particularly strong in stocking the county bell histories, but more recently has also tried to hold an up-to-date collection of items covering teaching and learning in ringing. Three 'see-before-you-buy' travelling cases of the current publications of the Central Council, ART, the Whiting Society and others are available for branch meetings and Guild events and are targeted at the needs of new ringers, their teachers and conductors.

Les Boyce and the Guild are immensely grateful to the Rector and PCC of St Petrock's for making this exciting development possible, to Stephanie Brown, Tower Captain at St Petrock's, for brokering and supporting the arrangement and to John Eisel for helping to launch the Library's new home.

The Guild Library will be open at St Petrock's, Exeter on the following dates: 21st March, 18th April, 16th May, 20th June (all Saturdays, 15 00 – 17 00). New versions of the library catalogue have been launched on the library pages of the Guild website. In addition to the usual alphabetical author listing, there is now also a subject listing which reflects the shelf arrangement at St Petrock's.



John Eisel unveiled a plaque to open the Library.

Friends of the Guild Library

The Open Day also saw the launch of a Friends of the Guild Library scheme. Guild members are being invited to become Friends to offer financial and practical support for the Library.

This scheme was launched at the Open Day in December and is designed to enable interested persons to support the library through financial contributions and promoting the Library. In return for a minimum donation of £5 per year a member of the Friends is offered the following benefits which are additional to those offered to ordinary members of the Guild:

- An annual newsletter updating on latest developments and sharing research done in the Library.
- Two additional free postal loans each year.
- An invitation to join the Devon Ringing History Group run by the Friends.
- The opportunity to book space at St Petrock's for research or small meetings during normal library opening hours at no extra charge.
- Opportunities to volunteer and to act as ambassadors for the Guild Library.
- Friends may, if they wish, assist the Librarian with staffing library opening and collection maintenance and development tasks such as book repair, digitisation of records and research.

At the Guild Committee meeting in January it was agreed that non-Guild members could join the Friends, subject to giving the minimum donation and providing proof of identity and address. Anyone interested in joining the Friends is invited to contact the Librarian (librarian@devonringers.org.uk), whether or not they are members of the Guild.

A key part of the work to be done over the next few years is to make digital copies of many of the Guild's manuscript and unique records. This will enable researchers to access these items remotely. Some of the annual reports of the Guild and its first Peal Book have already been made available in this way and more will follow.

Devon Ringing History Group

The Friends are setting up a group to facilitate and encourage research into the history of bells and ringing in Devon. It is hoped that this group will also be the focus for promoting research into Devon's rich ringing history in the run-up to the Guild's 150th anniversary in 2024. The ability to contact others interested in similar topics will be a key benefit of membership of the Group. An email list (and possibly a Facebook page) will be established to facilitate this. Enquiries about joining the Group should be directed to the Librarian.

Les Boyce, Guild Librarian

What's the point of the Central Council?

Lynne Hughes writes: *I was asked a while ago to write something for RRD to explain more about the Central Council – what it is, what it does, why we should be affiliated, etc. I have been struggling to know where to start, then I received the following article from Simon Linford, the new Central Council President, and I can't put it better myself, so here it is.*



1. What are the benefits to the Association/Guild of being affiliated to the Central Council in its new format?

Any activity that has mass participation and common purposes needs to have an overall governing body that is responsible for things like keeping and developing rules, dealing with external bodies, record keeping, etc. For ringing, that governing body is the Central Council, which has specific functions like managing method names, and looking after Dove's Guide - because someone needs to.

There are things that can be done centrally that have direct or indirect benefit to ringers in all areas of the country. These are specific projects such as Ringing Remembers or developing the Safeguarding policies, and ongoing activities such as the maintenance of Dove's Guide and the method libraries. Imagine just for a moment how much more difficult it would have been to get ringing safeguarding policies agreed if individual associations had to agree policies with their own Diocese, rather than the Council dealing with the Church of England and agreeing a universally acceptable code. Some would probably have failed with potentially dire consequences. Imagine also what a wasted opportunity it would have been, had the Council's Public Relations Officer not grasped Ringing Remembers and coordinated the recruitment of over 3000 new ringers.

It is also worth having a network of people who can be called upon for advice, and a central body can manage that and share that expertise widely, plugging gaps in local knowledge.

So although ringers may justifiably ask why associations are affiliated to the Central Council, the answer is that affiliation is a commitment to a common purpose and set of standards. It recognises that generally all the broad and quite extensive range of things the Central Council does via its

various volunteers are of benefit to all ringers, and that it is better for these things to be done by one body than devolved.

2. What are the benefits for the Association/Guild of attendance of the Representatives at the Central Council meeting, and with the new format Executive and Workgroups, what is the role of the representatives at the meeting?

The purpose of the representatives is to hold the Executive and its Workgroups to account, i.e. make sure the people who have been elected to these working positions are doing good and useful things. The annual meeting is the time when progress is reported and the Executive and other team members can be quizzed. Having to present results once a year is a good way of making sure things happen!

The Association/Guild only therefore benefits if its representatives find out what is going on, report back to the members they represent, and take the opportunity to raise questions either from themselves or on behalf of their members.

A central ringing body, whatever it is called, now needs to do more to consider strategies for arresting the decline in recruitment and training of ringers, strategies that are likely to involve boots on the ground in all areas of the country. Pulling together is likely to be more effective than territorial associations doing their own thing, good ideas will be shared, and cross border initiatives developed to recognise ringers' mobility and willingness to travel to learn. There is also the chance that any association that is not effective in providing opportunities for ringers to develop will be bypassed, and new groupings will be developed perhaps around cities or centres of excellence to provide greater opportunity where there is a critical mass of help. Some of the best ideas are already coming from outside traditional structures. Representatives of associations will be critical in helping to get new strategies and ideas down to where they matter and can be implemented. At the Council meeting next September we intend to have a couple of topical debates where we hope members will be able to air views and make suggestions in an open environment.

3. What benefit does the Central Council derive from the affiliation of our Association/Guild?

The Council needs to represent all ringers, and the way ringing is currently organised is that ringers are largely represented by territorial associations of which they are members, plus a number of 'special interest groups'. While the Council would no doubt continue to operate if the odd association was not affiliated, the Exercise would start to fall apart if more and more associations were not affiliated. Different rules and standards would start to emerge, a body only representing part of the ringing community would probably cease to be motivated to do anything, especially if there was a feeling that a major recruitment drive (like Ringing Remembers) benefitted unaffiliated societies as much as affiliated ones. This would probably just hasten the creation of a direct membership ringing body that could replace the Central Council and many territorial associations. There is therefore benefit overall to ringing that all associations representing ringers are affiliated to the Central Council, abide by its rules and support its activities, rather than it being possible to identify the specific benefit derived from the affiliation of specific associations/guilds in isolation.

*Simon Linford, President
Vicki Chapman, Public Relations Officer*

Exeter Branch Branch calendar for 2020

This year we are having six branch practices. These will be jointly run by our new ringing master and deputy ringing master (Oliver Bates and Peter Richards). We want to use these practices to help members advance in the methods they are learning at their local towers as well as spending part of each practice on a focus method. These methods, and the dates and locations of the branch practices, are given below, in Oliver's section of this article.

We also have our annual train outing to look forward to, which this year will take place on the late May Bank Holiday Monday (25th May) to avoid clashing with the VE Day celebrations and ringing on early May Bank Holiday (8th May). This outing is being organised by Peter Richards, with the current plan being to ring at three or four towers around the Weston-Super-Mare area plus a pub lunch. This will involve leaving Exeter around 8.30 in the morning and returning late afternoon or early evening. The trip is still being organised and more details will be advertised nearer the time. On 18th July we will be ringing at Poltimore (as a tower close to Exeter but one many have not rung at before) before having a branch barbecue in Broadclyst. Also on a sociable note, we will be having our

annual skittles and supper evening on 9th October at the New Inn pub in Broadclyst.

This year we will be going to Crediton for our branch AGM, which will be on 21st November. This tower will provide many members with an opportunity to ring on a larger number of bells than normal, from rounds and call changes through to methods.

All the dates and times for these events are in the calendar on the Guild website (<https://devonringers.org.uk/branches/exeter/events>) and any changes will appear here. Please put the dates in your diaries now, as it would be great to see many of you during the year.

Robert Neal, Joint Exeter branch secretary

Branch practices in 2020

Last year's branch practices were all very successful. They had a high turnout and many who attended were given the opportunity to try something new, with a strong band around them.

Last year we introduced the idea of having a 'focus method' for each of the practices, which we would ring several times throughout the evening. This is something I would like to continue for upcoming branch practices, to give people the opportunity to develop their ringing. My suggestions for focus methods this year are:

Thursday 27th February (Heavitree) - Double Norwich Court Bob Major
Monday 23rd March (St Petrock's) - Cambridge Surprise Minor
Thursday 30th April (Hatherleigh) - Grandsire Triples
Wednesday 10th June (St Mark's) - Rounds and Call Changes / Grandsire Caters
Thursday 3rd September (St Thomas) - Lessness Surprise Major
Wednesday 14th October (St David's) - Methods for the Guild striking competitions

Hopefully this includes a variety of methods with varying levels of difficulty, so all abilities will be catered for. Of course we will accommodate people of all abilities who attend these practices, so if there is anything else you would like to have a go at just let Peter or me know. As I said previously, branch practices were well attended last year and I hope that this will continue. It would be great to see as many of you there as possible, so please do try and make the effort to come along!

Oliver Bates, Branch Ringing Master

The Editor celebrates his 70th birthday in Wellington, NZ



Reminiscences on a 70th birthday

A group of forty-year-old ringers had just completed a peal and were discussing where to go for a drink and something to eat. After some discussion they decided to go to Weatherspoons because the waitresses there had big boobs and wore short skirts.

Jump forward ten years, where they are now in their fifties. As they come out of the tower having completed a quarter peal they again needed food and drink. After further discussion they decided on the Weatherspoons because the waitresses were attractive, the food and service was OK and there was an excellent selection of beer to choose from.

Ten years later they are in their sixties and have just finished at a local practice night. They decide to go to the Weatherspoons because parking is easy, the beer and food are good value and they can dine in peace and quiet as there is no loud music to annoy them.

A further ten years down the line and they are in their seventies and coming out from a short Sunday service ring. Again they decide to go to Weatherspoons because there is easy disabled badge parking, the doors are wide enough for a wheel chair, and there is a good accessible toilet....

Twenty years later there are only two of these old ringers left, Joe and Jim, both well into their nineties. Joe is failing fast and Jim is at his bedside as they recount old times. 'Joe' says Jim, 'do you think that there will be any bell ringing in heaven?' 'Well I don't know' replied Joe, 'but if there is then I will do everything I can to let you know'.

Fairly soon after that Joe passed away. A few nights later Jim is in bed in the middle of the night when he is woken up by a blinding flash of white light and a voice calling him 'Jim, Jim, are you there? This is Joe'. 'You can't be Joe as he died a few days ago' calls back Jim. 'Yes it is – I have come to let you know about bell ringing in heaven. There are lots of good things about ringing here in heaven, and one bad thing as far as you are concerned.'

'There are loads of towers to ring at – twelves, tens, eights, sixes, all really good and in tip-top condition. There are even a few derelict three-bell towers for David Hird! And you can ring them any time you want – all day and night if you have a mind to. So it is possible to ring a peal in the morning, one in the afternoon and a third one in the evening if you want to just like Mike Mears does now! And all of your old friends are here to ring with you – I have met up with Frank Mack and Howard Egglestone, and even a much older chap called Fabian something – he is a real wiz with Stedman. And the best bit is that we all feel as though we are 18 years old and can ring for ever.'

'But', said Jim, 'you said at the start that there was a bad thing about ringing in heaven.' 'Well', replied Joe, 'there is a big 12-bell striking competition here on Saturday and I have been looking at the bands which are to ring. The bad news is that you are down to ring the tenor in our team'. (*With apologies to jokes.com*)

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Pinhoe, Devon, St Michael and All Angels

Thursday, 13 February 2020 in 2h 55 (10–0–19)

5184 Turramurra Surprise Major

Composed by R D S Brown

1 Alison C Waterson

5 Ian W Avery

2 Pauline McKenzie

6 James Kirkcaldy

3 Charlotte A Boyce

7 William P Carew

4 Roger King

8 John R Martin (C)

Rung as birthday compliments for 14th February to Ian L C Campbell (70) and E William Ford.

Ian Campbell

Mid-Devon Branch Centenary Celebrations Centenary Peal at Teignmouth

The Mid-Devon Branch centenary year is now well under way and there have already been several celebrations. Those so far have been centred on the early towers involved with the branch. When the branch was formed there were only two towers in the branch area that were already members of the Guild: these were Teignmouth St Michael and Cockington. When this was mentioned this to Martin Dodd (Teignmouth), he kindly obtained permission for a peal attempt as part of the celebrations and exactly one hundred years after the meeting which started the Mid-Devon Branch activities, a peal was scored. In general the ringing was of a good standard but the ringers were grateful that the highly skilled conducting from Mike Mears got them through the one tricky patch.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

St Michael, E Teignmouth

Monday, 6 January 2020 in 2h 59 (22–1–0)

5024 Cambridge Surprise Major

Composed by J W Parker; arr D F Morrison (No 6632a)

1 Philip Stevens

5 Neville Stanford

2 Peter L Bill

6 Martin G Mansley

3 Peter M C Richards

7 William P Carew

4 Ian W Avery

8 Michael E C Mears (C)

Rung on the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Mid Devon Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers.

Congratulations to the band who marked the exact centenary of the first Mid Devon Branch meeting. Branch towers represented included Kingskerswell, St Marychurch, Bovey Tracey and several unattached members. Congratulations to Philip Stevens who has now rung a peal in 61 consecutive years: he was very young when he rang his first!

Martin Mansley

More centenary quarter peals

We are hoping that each of the towers in the Mid-Devon Branch will attempt a quarter peal during the centenary year. Congratulations to Dawlish, which was the first tower to do so, on 19th January. Better still, this included Wren Manley ringing her first quarter peal. Very many congratulations to her: we hope that this will be the first of many.

Only eight ringers for practice on 4th February provided an opportunity to ring a quarter peal at St Marychurch. This received a double dedication – the branch centenary and get well wishes to Peter Sawyer recovering from emergency heart surgery. Congratulations to Nicola Jones for her first on eight and Graham Crouch who has recently returned to ringing and last rang a quarter peal about fourteen years ago:

Torquay, Devon, St Mary the Virgin, St Marychurch

Tuesday, 4 February 2020 in 49m (17–1–24)

1260 Plain Bob Triples

1 Nicola Jones

5 Neville Stanford

2 Janet Ritterman

6 Tim King

3 Michael H Tompsett

7 Martin Mansley (C)

4 Rowena G Mansley

8 Graham Crouch

First on 8 - 1. A Mid Devon Branch Centenary Quarter Peal. Get well wishes to Peter Sawyer.

After several months lay-off another quarter peal has been scored on handbells. So we decided that it was a branch officers quarter peal to mark the centenary:

Torquay, Devon, Bartcombe, Jack's Lane

Wednesday, 19 February 2020 in 34m (11 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1–2 Nigel Birt (Secretary)

3–4 Martin Mansley (Ringing Master)

5–6 Michael H Tompsett (Asst Ringing Master) (C)

Rung by branch officers to mark the Centenary of the Mid Devon Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Members of the branch are encouraged to attempt as many quarter peals as possible and to do so sooner rather than later. Perhaps a date touch (2020 changes)? There are several compositions available either in the Christmas issue of *The Ringing World* or in the diary.

Health and Safety

I recently read an article in *The Ringing World* about a response to a ringer becoming ill whilst in the tower. This caused me to review our tower risk assessment section regarding a medical emergency.

As recommended in the *Ringing World* article, we do have a tower safety notice which gives the name of the church and its post code, should we have to ring the emergency services. However, I have always had concerns about whether they could find the tower entrance. The *Ringing World* article suggested also using a system called 'What three words' <https://what3words.com/about-us/> which has divided the world into a grid of 3m x 3m squares and assigned each one a unique three-word address. This is so much more detailed that it could take the emergency services to the tower door. Do have a look for the three-word address of your tower: you may feel that a more precise location gives the best chance of quick access for emergency services.

Whilst continuing to review our response to a possible medical emergency, I also realised that we did not have a contact list for our ringers' next of kin, so this is my next action.

Rowena Mansley

Centenary festival

A mini-festival was held on 11th January, the nearest Saturday to the first meeting of the branch. That very first meeting was at Upton in Torquay and we were delighted to return there. Tower Captain Don Roberts welcomed everyone and provided a link with that meeting, as he remembers ringing with some of the founder members of the branch when he started ringing, back in the 1950s. We hope to persuade Don to share some of those memories via Tower Talk as the centenary year progresses. A variety of methods was rung, including methods which would have been rung in the early days, such as Grandsire and Stedman Triples. It was also a joy to have Anne and Kevin with us: they have just started ringing at Dawlish, having learned to ring at Aspley End in Hertfordshire.



Mid-Devon ringers at Upton

It was then time to move on to The Drum Inn at Cockington where the staff gave us a warm welcome. Once everyone had assembled, the food was quickly served and we were able to enjoy a relaxed lunch which included many opportunities to catch up with the news from across the branch, as almost every branch tower was represented at some point during the day. The meal was dispatched so swiftly that ringing started earlier than planned at Cockington. A very short draft and fairly odd struck bells make them something of a challenge but Cambridge Minor and Stedman Doubles were among the methods rung – probably the best ringing being the Stedman although we were also complimented on our lower. The ringing room at Cockington is extremely pleasant and includes a fine model belfry including floors.

The day was voted to be a great start to the branch celebrations even though it would have been good to see a few more members.



Lunch at The Drum Inn, Cockington

Herald Express article

Many congratulations to Peter Bailey who gave a talk to the Babbacombe and St Marychurch Probus Club about the re-hang at Stoke Fleming. This was comprehensively covered by an article in the Torbay *Herald Express* (see <https://dphinchcliffe.wixsite.com/babbacombeprobus/news>).

Peter gave a detailed account of the bells and the long process of planning and undertaking the re-hang and augmentation project, which was completed in October 2016. (see <https://www.stokeflemingtower.org/history-of-st-peter-s/bells/>). Any chance to publicise our art is worth grabbing with both hands and we thank Peter (and Anne) for doing just that. We never know where these opportunities will lead.



Peter with the model bell he used to illustrate his talk.

Martin Mansley

East Devon Branch Combe Raleigh Snowdrop Tea

There was some doubt as to whether or not the Combe Raleigh Snowdrop Tea, organised by the bell ringers, should go ahead. On the Saturday both roads from Honiton to Combe Raleigh were flooded, but passable with care. With further heavy overnight rain forecast the event was surely in doubt. Sunday's forecast was a little better, the flooded roads were no worse so despite the worst efforts of Storm Dennis which threatened to disrupt everything, the Combe Raleigh Snowdrop Tea went ahead as normal. Though, as expected, the number of visitors was down, over 70 brave souls came along to admire the churchyard snowdrops and enjoy tea and cake in the church. In fact the afternoon was mainly dry and we were even blessed with a little sunshine. With 2,500 snowdrops for sale and some very colourful primroses it was fortunate that the plant sales held up remarkably well. We were left with less than 800 to sell by other means. Together with receipts from tea/coffee and cake and some generous donations the event took nearly £700 which, after expenses, should leave a worthwhile profit which the ringers are donating to St Nicholas Church. We are extremely grateful to all those who supported us in any way and especially to our visitors.



Snowdrops at Combe Raleigh

Quarter Peals at Combe Raleigh

Ringers have enjoyed two successful quarter peals at Combe Raleigh recently. A band including ringers from Colyton (Kathy Matthews), Honiton (Theo Millard and Derek Ballard), Ottery St Mary (Laurie Palmer), Combe Raleigh (Lisa Clarke) and Axminster (Peter Simpson), conducted by Lisa Clarke, successfully rang Cambridge Surprise Minor.

Combe Raleigh, Devon

St Nicholas

Saturday, 15 February 2020 in 44m (5–2–19)

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

1 Kathy Matthews

4 Derek Ballard

2 Laurie Palmer

5 Lisa Clarke (C)

3 Theo Millard

6 Peter Simpson

First of Surprise inside (3), first Treble Bob and Surprise inside (6), first Surprise as conductor



L-R: Kathy, Derek, Laurie, Theo, Lisa (C), Peter

A few days later young ringers from Combe Raleigh (Sophie), Honiton (Theo), Awliscombe (Kirsten) and Kilmington (Arthur), supported by Lisa Clarke and Derek Ballard, successfully rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles. This was Kirsten's first quarter peal ringing an inside bell and means our two Ringing Remembers recruits (Sophie and Kirsten) have now rung quarter peals on treble, tenor and inside.

Combe Raleigh, Devon, St Nicholas

Saturday, 25 January 2020 in 42m (5–2–19)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Sophie Ramsamy

4 Kirsten Hawkins

2 Lisa Clarke (C)

5 Derek Ballard

3 Theo Millard

6 Arthur Yarnold

First quarter inside at first attempt (4)



L to R: Sophie, Lisa, Theo, Kirsten, Derek, Arthur

As there are now a number of young ringers in East Devon, on Friday 21st February during half term we held our first youth practice on the light, easy-going six at Combe Raleigh. Eight young ringers and six helpers rang whatever was required, from call changes and Cloister Doubles to Cambridge Minor. During the break we devoured fabulous cupcakes made by one of the mums. It was a fun and productive morning - everyone enjoyed it so much that there are plans to run monthly practices on Saturdays.

Lisa Clarke

Branch AGM

At the AGM of the East Devon Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers held at Sidmouth, Laurie Palmer (Ottery) was elected Chairman, Derek Ballard (Honiton) Ringing Master, Judith Reynolds (Ottery) Secretary, Jeanne Mills (Northleigh) Treasurer, Lisa Clarke (Combe Raleigh) Guild Committee Member, Richard Coley (Ottery) Education Officer and Trevor Hitchcock (Combe Raleigh) Publicity Officer, additionally Laurie also took on the role of Bells Advisor. The event, also attended by John Martin (Guild Secretary) and Janet Ritterman (Guild Ringing Master), was well supported. The large ringing chamber was packed with ringers with others waiting outside and not everyone managed to get a ring, there were so many. Sidmouth practices are always well attended, but this was exceptional. The tea too was quite exceptional and we were greeted by laden tables which hungry ringers proceeded to demolish. By forcing down just one more sandwich, one more mouth-watering cake little was left. We were all fed and watered very well. Our thanks go to all at the Sidmouth tower for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

Friday Group meetings

The Friday Group meetings at Combe Raleigh run by Richard Coley continue to be enthusiastically supported. Due to the numbers wishing to attend, places have had to be limited. Starting at 9.30 am and running until 12.30 pm with a half hour break for coffee/tea and biscuits (or sometimes cake) the two sessions, before and after the break, have a different emphasis. The first session concentrates mainly on Plain Hunt, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles as an introduction to method ringing, moving on in the second session to other Doubles or Minor methods. Several have rung their first quarter peals and are now ringing with the second session group. Held on a Friday morning most attendees are retired, but during school holidays the young ringers come into their own. In fact during the recent half term break the 'oldies' were banned to make room for the younger element! It sounds harsh, but is never the less a sensible move. Lest anyone is concerned about the reaction of the villagers to three hours of ringing every Friday morning let me say that most are completely unaware of it. With all six bells connected to the simulator and the clappers tied there is nothing to hear outside the church. Inside it is a different matter and we have had visitors not realising that they are ringing tied bells as the sound they hear is exactly what they would expect from open bells. The group is very grateful to the more experienced ringers who come along to help.

Trevor Hitchcock

North East Branch

North East Branch changes the practice formula

In reviewing its 2019 activities, the Branch Committee concluded that the Open 6-bell event on Saturday mornings remains very popular and successful and that the Surprise Major practice on the fourth Wednesday has made progress and attracts enough support to continue to be viable. So, these events are still regular parts of the mix of branch practices.

The two Wednesday night events for more advanced 6-bell ringing and for plain triples and major struggle to get enough ringers to run reliably. St Peter's own Triples and Major practice on the first Tuesday of the month has also met short on occasions. It was therefore decided to combine the St Peter's event with the Branch triples and major practice. We also thought that a lower entry level for a focused 6-bell practice on a Wednesday evening might encourage more ringers to attend – those wanting to move on from Plain Bob Doubles. But what should provide the focus for these practices? *The Ringing World* Blue Pathway came along at a very opportune moment and will be used to suggest methods for each monthly event.

Coupled with the Extended Practice events at the Troyte Ringing Centre and four practice towers in the Branch, where individual members wanting extra practice can join the local band on their practice night, we hope that there will continue to be plenty of opportunities in the branch for those wanting to progress their ringing.

So for 2020 the pattern of regular monthly North East Branch events looks like this:

1st Tuesday, 19 15 – 21 00. Venue: Tiverton, St Peter. Triples and Major Practice

St Peter's ringers have signed up to *The Ringing World* Red Pathway. Enquiries to Les Boyce.

1st Wednesday, 19 30. Venue: normally Huntsham

A quarter peal arranged by the Troyte Ringing Centre, to support ringers wanting extended practice in a particular method. Requests can be made to Sheila Scofield.

1st Saturday, 10 00 – 12 00. Venue: varies

Open 6-bell practice for all who want to ring rounds, call changes and whatever methods those attending are capable of ringing. Requests for specific methods can be made to Richard Barker.

2nd Wednesday, 19 30 – 21 00. Venue: Huntsham

Focused 6-bell practice for those wishing to move on from Plain Bob Doubles and Minor. Those wanting to pursue *The Ringing World* Blue Pathway and use this for achieving targets in Learning the Ropes Plus will be supported, but participation in these schemes is not compulsory.

2nd Sunday, 17 00 – 18 00. Venue: Cullompton

10-bell service ringing, usually call changes at present. Participants should be competent in call changes on 6 or 8 bells already.

4th Wednesday, 19 30 – 21 00. Venue: varies but Huntsham April to November

Surprise Major Practice focusing mostly on the Standard 8 methods and particularly Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland. Enquiries to Les Boyce.

*Les Boyce, Richard Barker and Catherine Thorpe,
Branch Ringing Masters*

Young Ringers

New Year Outing

With nine enthusiastic young ringers we had a busy session at Farway on Friday 3rd January. The final day of the school holidays, supported by adult helpers and parents, both tower bells and handbells were kept busy. Ranging from rounds and call changes to touches of Plain Bob Doubles on the tower bells, some young ringers achieved some new goals. Many touches had three or four young ringers in at a time and the good striking was commented upon by the local ringer. Thomas rang the treble to 120 of Plain Bob Doubles whilst James called himself as observation. Jacob rang backstrokes to call changes and Red called Plain Hunt Doubles. Flo, Jess and Fergus all rang Plain Bob Doubles.

On the handbells everyone took turns to ring rounds, Queens and dodging. Lots of laughter from the children's corner as the success was applauded. Thanks to Liz and Nellie for their help in running this *ad hoc* group.

Too busy with organising 19 ringers, I forgot to take a group photo. However the lunch was enjoyed by 18 at the Hare and Hounds. The Silverton contingent returned home to see what mischief their puppy had been up to, while the rest of the party enjoyed a good lunch at the Hare and Hounds. Thanks to the parents for their support in transporting and the helpers for ringing and 'standing by' as necessary.



Young Ringers and older helpers enjoying lunch at the Hare & Hounds
Sheila Schofield

Young Ringers striding ahead in 2020

North East Young Ringers felt it was time to take stock and achieve some targets during this half term.

The Cruwys Morchard Young Ringers are now attending weekly term time sessions, on Tuesdays, with Blundells School at Tiverton, St Paul. With a support band of local ringers we are working through the Bell Club card (Sherbourne Teaching Aids). This practice session was instigated by Nellie Croft who, as we write, is packing up and setting off for pastures new on the Isle of Mull, Scotland. We wish her well in her new life.

The Bampton Young Ringers continue to attend Bampton and Huntsham practices or Bampton After School Bell Club. We are working our way through the ART scheme, Learning the Ropes. The Bell Club are

all working towards level 1 and incorporating handbell ringing. They are about to perform at a school assembly in March.

During the half term we held two sessions for Bampton ringers. At Bampton we held a practice for Fergus on ringing St Simon's Doubles as he works towards level 5. Earlier in the week Jess scored the first of three quarter peals necessary to gain level 5.

Tiverton, Devon, St Paul

Tuesday, 18 February 2020 in 46m (8–3–5)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1 Jess Sully

2 Mandy Burnett

3 Jenny Jones

1. 1st QP on treble to minor

4 Leslie Boyce

5 Sheila Scofield (C)

6 Mark Heritage

The Silverton Young Ringers have benefited from the branch support focusing on Plain Bob Doubles at their own tower. During half term two quarter peals were scored by the young ringers, with thanks to Richard Shere for organising these. On 21st February, at Huntsham, Thomas scored his first quarter peal, with his brother James in the band.

Sheila Scofield

Progress at Silverton

Back in 2018 a remarkable recruitment drive for the Ringing Remembers project brought forward about a dozen expressions of interest in learning to ring in the village. Equally remarkable is the fact that at least six of those recruits are still regular ringers at Silverton. After a period of learning Plain Hunt and Plain Bob Doubles in early 2019 it was decided that an intensive programme of training support was needed to get Bob Doubles firmly embedded. So, members of North East Branch rallied round and joined the Silverton practice fortnightly for six sessions in the run up to Christmas. As well as the newer recruits most of the other Silverton ringers joined in and good progress was made in treble ringing, covering and ringing plain courses and touches on inside bells.

To mark their achievement a celebratory ring was arranged at Bramford Speke on 8th February. At this, the Branch Ringing Master, Les Boyce, presented each of the participants with a certificate. A pub lunch was then enjoyed at the Agricultural Inn.

Three of the newer recruits have now gone on to ring quarter peals, Thomas, Jane and James. These quarters were arranged during school half term so that Thomas (aged 13) and his mum Jane could ring their first quarters (see Notable Ringing Events, below). Congratulations to them both and thanks to John for conducting and to Richard for making the arrangements. James (16th birthday on 29th February) is already progressing well by attending Exeter St Mark's weekly practices; he recently rang his first quarter on the treble to Beverley Surprise Minor at St Petrock's, Exeter. There is a new Rector being inducted at Silverton on 16th March and he and his wife both are bellringers, so we hope that good ringing progress will continue at Silverton.

Les Boyce

Celebrating Success at Cruwys Morchard

Following a period of intensive support with helpers drawn from North East Branch, members of the Cruwys Morchard band have been consolidating their progress in ringing Plain Bob Doubles. Some are now able to ring 120s reliably on an inside bell, while others have mastered the treble and tenor. In recognition of this, Branch Ringing Master, Les Boyce attended a Monday night practice at Cruwys Morchard to present five ringers with their Guild certificates.

The picture below shows the five relaxing in the Cruwys Arms at Pennymoor following the practice and presentation ceremony.



L-R: Les Tosdevin, Liz Paxton, Liz Chadwick, Guy Cruwys & Claire Clarke.

North/North West Branch Mini Outing despite Storm Dennis

On 15th February members of the N/NW Branch went on our first mini-outing of the year. Despite Storm Dennis doing his best to dampen our enthusiasm, the day started at 10:00 am, at Poughill. That is unless you were the Branch Chair, who despite telling everyone else that the start time was 10:00, got it into his head that the start time was 10:30! I think I had better read my own emails next time.

After some very pleasurable ringing the group took a short drive to St. Andrew & St. Swithin at Launcells. Many of the group had previously rung there, however there has been major work to put in a ringing room at first floor level, with the result that the ropes were now a good deal shorter than they were before.

Finally, the group moved onto Woolsery. It would be fair to say that the experience at Woolsery was different from earlier in the day, wet and cold being the most appropriate adjectives to use. The very final stop for the day was the Merry Harriers Garden Centre for a cup of tea and scone to warm up.

Thank you to Mike Rose for organising the day and the ringers at Poughill. Thanks also to James Clarke and John Ross for organising the ringers at the other towers.



Simon Needham, Branch Chair

South West Branch

South West Branch AGM at Walkhampton

On 25th January, South West Branch members gathered at Walkhampton for our AGM. This was a special event, summarising a fantastic year of celebration and opportunity for our centenary year in 2019.



Walkhampton Church



The day began with some open ringing on the six bells, covering everything from rounds to spliced minor. We enjoyed a buffet spread that members had gathered, plus teas and coffees 'on tap'!

Our Ringing Master Phil Dunn presented a workshop on striking, which included listening to various clips and scoring them on their accuracy. There was also a brief introduction to *The Ringing World Pathways*, new this year. Throughout 2020 there are a number of focused pathway sessions within the branch to focus on the Blue Pathway, which will complement the Guild events focused on the Yellow Pathway.



The AGM itself went very smoothly with many new members elected to the Guild, as well as welcoming Bere Ferrers as a new tower to the branch. Centenary souvenirs were also distributed during the AGM. This included a mug and coaster set emblazoned with the new logo for the South West Branch, as well as a copy of *The First Hundred Years*, a history of the branch researched and written by John Steere (see following article).



Elena Brake

Centenary Year Performances

As part of our centenary celebrations, performances were recorded on BellBoard and linked to a South West Branch centenary event. An amazing number of performances were recorded over the year, with an impressive amount of firsts, and huge number of individuals and towers involved. This table shows the extent of the efforts of our members. Congratulations everyone!

Alena Wardle

The Guild of Devonshire Ringers South West Branch



Ringing during the Centenary Year		
27 quarters	94 people	21 1sts
19 towers	Headline statistics	
16 methods	57 branch members	7 peals

Towers	QP	P
1 Bere Ferrers	2	
2 Brent Tor	1	1
3 Bridesowe	1	
4 Camberley		1
5 Charleton		1
6 Emmanuel	4	
7 Laira	1	
8 Litton	1	
9 Peter Tavy	1	1
10 Plympton St Mary	1	
11 Salcombe	1	
12 Sampford Spiney	2	1
13 Shiplake	1	1
14 Sowton	1	
15 St Andrew	2	
16 St Budeaux	3	1
17 Stoke Damerel	1	
18 Sydenham Damerel	1	
19 Tavistock	4	

1 Elena L Brake	1st P
2 Jessica L Metcalfe	1st P
3 Jack T L Finch	1st QP
4 Roxanne Jeyes	1st QP
5 Mike Erith	1st QP
6 Pater Lake	1st QP
7 Harry J Liddy	1st QP
8 Matthew W Thewsey	1st P as C
9 Elena L Brake	1st QP as C
10 Ben Routley	1st QP as C
11 Elena L Brake	1st QP inside
12 James H Wray	1st QP inside
13 Barbara M Hocke	1st QP inside
14 Roxanne Jeyes	1st QP on treble
15 Jessica L Metcalfe	1st QP Royal
16 Elena L Brake	1st QP Royal
17 Matthew W Thewsey	1st QP Royal as C
18 Elena L Brake	1st QP major inside
19 Elena L Brake	1st QP triples inside
20 Matthew Dancy	1st QP minor inside
21 Sally Jackson	1st QP Minor inside

Methods	QP	P
1 Cambridge S Minor	1	2
2 Doubles (7m)		1
3 Grandure Caters	1	
4 Grandure Doubles	8	
5 Grandure Triples	2	
6 Lincolnshire S Major	1	
7 Minor (Cambridge, St C, Kent & PB)		1
8 Painswick S Major		1
9 Plain Bob Doubles	7	
10 Plain Bob Major	1	
11 Plain Bob Minor	3	
12 Plain Bob Royal	1	
13 Plain Bob Triples	1	
14 Rutland S Major	1	
15 S Minor (7m)		1
16 Yorkshire S Major		1

For commentary on the peal and quarter peal rung at Peter Tavy, see under Notable Ringing Events.

A 'potted history' of the South West Branch: the first hundred years

At last year's Branch AGM in January, the day's activities and business were proceeding as they usually do, and Alena Wardle, our Chair, sidled up to me and asked if I would write a 'potted history' of the branch as our centenary was to fall in the following November. In an unguarded moment, I said OK, no doubt thinking that within ten months I could spend a few hours producing something that would do the job.

Little did I think that a hundred years of reports, records, minutes of meetings and anecdotes would involve so much research. No doubt any real historian wouldn't be surprised, but as soon as I began delving into the archives, in one form or another, I discovered such a mine of information, of leads, and of glimpses into the personalities of, and relationships between, the characters in the story of the growth of the Guild in our corner of the county.

It was enormously helpful that Les Boyce has digitised and put online the Guild reports since the earliest days of the Guild. Fergus Stracey also made available the Guild Reports held in hard copy in the St Andrew's Minster archive. The first minute book of the South-West Branch, dating back to the inaugural meeting on 8th November 1919, was held at the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, and they have kindly allowed me to have it while writing up the history. (As an aside, it might be more appropriate for it to be lodged in our own Guild Library now that it is so conveniently situated at St Petrock's, Exeter.)

The so-called 'potted history' resulting from that process omits more than it contains. Its sixteen pages is more a collection of statistics than

narrative. Someone with time, skill and energy could put much flesh on its bones, possibly from the perspective of oral history, and telling the stories of influential individuals. Elena Brake has contributed some interesting artwork. The booklet could only ever be a snapshot of the branch as it existed when it was compiled. Already one new tower, Bere Ferrers, has been welcomed into the branch since its publication, proof that the branch consists of more than its history, but is a living, growing organisation.

A copy of the booklet can now be found occupying a few millimetres of the shelves of the Guild Library. When the library was inaugurated at St Petrock's, it was fascinating to have a conversation with John Eisel, Steward of the Library of the Central Council, and author of the authoritative series of articles published in *The Ringing World* between May and September 2017 entitled 'Early Scientific Change Ringing in Devon'. The price paid by Alena for asking me to write the history was putting it in booklet form and printing it. Each member of the South West Branch has been given a copy, and further copies will be available for a donation to the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund from Trevor Vercoe at southwestsec@devonringers.org.uk

As guest editor for the latest edition of *Ringing Round Devon* during the Campbells' antipodean adventures, Janet Ritterman asked if I would contribute something to *Ringing Round Devon* about the experience of writing the booklet – writing about writing. In another unguarded moment, I again agreed. Maybe I'm not a quick learner. Here is the result. The good news is that it didn't involve any more research.

John Steere

Notable Ringing Events In Memory of Norman Mallett

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Pinhoe, Devon, St Michael and All Angels

Monday, 23 December 2019 in 2h 46 (10–19)

5024 Yorkshire Surprise Major

Composed by D F Morrison (No 8107)

1 Charlotte A Boyce

5 Peter L Bill

2 Lester J Yeo

6 John R Martin

3 Alison C Waterson

7 Peter J Sawyer

4 John Hill

8 Michael E C Mears (C)

In memory of Norman Mallett, Guild Vice President, by a band of his ringing friends and Guild Officers.

John Hill (87 years old) rang a peal with Norman at Wells Cathedral in 1952.

First Quarter Peals

Huntsham, Devon, All Saints

Friday, 21 February 2020 in 42m (8–27)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Thomas Selley-Steer

4 James Selley-Steer

2 Sheila Scofield

5 John Foster (C)

3 Richard Shere

6 Leslie Boyce

1. First quarter peal at the first attempt. 16th birthday compliment to 4.



Anticlockwise from front left: Les, Tom, Sheila, Richard, John, James

Huntsham, Devon, All Saints
 Friday, 21 February 2020 in 45m (8–0–27)
 1260 Plain Bob Doubles
 1 Jane Selley-Steer 4 Richard Shere
 2 Leslie Boyce 5 John Foster (C)
 3 James Selley-Steer 6 Sheila Scofield
 1. First quarter peal. 16th birthday compliment to 3.



Anticlockwise from front left: Les, Jane, Sheila, Richard, John, James

Dawlish, Devon, St Gregory
 Sunday, 19 January 2020 in 43m (11–2–21)
 1260 Plain Bob Doubles
 1 Nicola Twibill 4 Lynne Hughes (C)
 2 Phil Hughes 5 Tim King
 3 Fiona Rock-Evans 6 Wren Manley
 Arranged for the centenary of the Mid Devon Branch. Rung during and after a service of Christian unity. 6. first quarter peal.



L-R: Lynne, Fiona, Wren, Tim, Phil, Nicola

First Quarter Peals inside

Exeter, Devon, St Mark
 Sunday, 19 January 2020 in 42m (12–1–19)
 1260 Plain Bob Minor
 1 Wendy Gill 4 Ian Campbell
 2 James Selley-Steer (1st inside) 5 David Hird
 3 Wendy Campbell 6 Oliver Bates (C)
 Since coming to St Mark's practices James has progressed rapidly and he rang his first quarter peal on an inside bell to Plain Bob Minor in January, making virtually no mistakes. As the reports above show, he is now a real asset to the Silverton band where he lives and he continues to come to St Mark's on Wednesdays to extend his method ringing.



L-R: Wendy C, Ian, James, David, Wendy G, Oliver

Ian Campbell

Christening Quarter Peal

Broadclyst, Devon, St John the Baptist
 Sunday, 16 February 2020 in 50m (20–0–25)
 1260 Grandsire Triples
 Composed by E. Barnett
 1 John Davis 5 Michael Cannon
 2 Andrew Digby 6 Peter Richards
 3 Sue Sturdy 7 Robert Neal (C)
 4 James Kirkcaldy 8 Rob Franklin
 Rung prior to the christening of Henry James Neal, son of local ringers, Lucy and Robert Neal.



L-R: Robert, Michael, Peter, Rob, Andrew, James, John

On Sunday 16th February at St. John the Baptist, Broadclyst, the baptism took place of Henry James Neal, second son of the Exeter Branch joint secretaries, Robert and Lucy Neal. Friends and family were present to witness the special service which was preceded by a nicely struck quarter peal of Grandsire Triples conducted by Robert. Rather fittingly the treble was rung by Robert's father-in-law.

Following the service everyone present was invited to a splendid lunch which included a christening cake superbly decorated by Lucy.



Friends and family gathered for the christening

Michael Cannon

Anniversary of Peter Sawyer's first peal

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Bovey Tracey, Devon, St Peter, St Paul and St Thomas of Canterbury

Monday, 30 December 2019 in 2h 52 (14–2–26)

5088 Bristol Surprise Major

Composed by D F Morrison (No 62)

1 Robert D S Brown 5 John R Martin

2 Ian R Fielding 6 David Hird

3 Charlotte A Boyce 7 Peter J Sawyer

4 Michael H Tompsett 8 Michael E C Mears (C)

On the 50th anniversary of Peter Sawyer's first peal - bet he won't manage another 50.

First Peal of Spliced S Maximus for two local Teenagers

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Withycombe Raleigh, Devon

St John the Evangelist

Thursday, 9 January 2020 in 3h 26 (17–1–10)

5136 Spliced Surprise Maximus (4m)

1344 Lincolnshire; 1296 Cambridge, Yorkshire; 1200 Bristol;

16 changes of method; all the work.

Composed by D F Morrison (No 7209)

1 Ian W Avery 7 Oliver C Bates

2 Pauline McKenzie 8 John R Martin

3 Alison C Waterson 9 Richard Harrison

4 Rebecca J Harrison 10 Peter J Sawyer

5 Ian V J Smith 11 David Hird

6 James Kirkcaldy 12 Michael E C Mears (C)

First Spliced S Maximus: 4,7, both teenagers taught and trained in Devon.



Anti-clockwise from front left. Peter B, Ian H, Lesley, Wendy, Graham, Peter B, Ian C, Mike.



Dunedin Church

Note that Ian Campbell has now rung a peal on the southernmost ringable bell in the world!



The mini-ring at Karearea, Christchurch

First Peal for the Guild in the Southern Hemisphere

The *Otago Daily Times* ran an article **It's quite amazing: church to host two 'peals' in a single month.**

'In a rare occurrence, a complex bell-ringing performance will take place twice at a Dunedin church this month. Bells will toll at First Church on February 15 and again on February 19 as two separate groups of bell ringers, some from the United Kingdom, carry out the performances.

Retiree Peter Whitford, of Christchurch, is organising the first 'peal' and said it was a 'sheer coincidence' the two groups would be conducting peals - a complex bell performance lasting up to three hours - on separate occasions. 'It's quite amazing. These events are rare on their own, so to have two in the space of a week is very uncommon. Eight people, including two bell-ringing couples from England, would be travelling to Dunedin for the peal.'

He estimated it would take about three hours and involve each bell ringer pulling the rope about 5000 times. 'Bell ringing required a high level of teamwork', he said.

'Some of these ringers have taken part in thousands of peals. That's a lot of times pulling on a piece of rope.'

The second peal, on February 19, was organised by Peter Bill, of Devonshire, who would ring the bells in honour of his late wife Carol Bill, who died in 2018. The group would ring a peal to remember his wife, 'on the bells of the city where she first settled in New Zealand about 40 years ago'. She lived in Dunedin during the 1970s and learnt bell ringing on her return to the United Kingdom in the 1980s.

Mr Bill said he and fellow bell ringers from Devonshire were touring New Zealand during February ringing peals on all seven change-ringing bells in the country.

First Church was the southernmost ringing peal of bells in the world, making it 'very special', he said.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Dunedin, New Zealand, First Church of Otago

Wednesday, 19 February 2020 in 2h 43 (6–3–26)

5024 Yorkshire Surprise Major

Composed by D F Morrison (no. 8111)

1 Peter L Bill 5 Graham P Tucker

2 Ian P Hill 6 Peter G Brown

3 Lesley A Tucker 7 Ian L C Campbell

4 P Wendy Campbell 8 Michael E C Mears (C)

Remembering Carol Bill, approaching the second anniversary of her death.



PS I enclose a certificate proving (!) that I have also run on the treble of the Karearea mini-ring just outside Christchurch – the most southerly mini-bell in the world:

Ian Campbell

'Changes' at Peter Tavy

I have my limits as a ringer. Over fifty years since learning to ring, I have still not (quite) rung a hundred peals. I have only dipped my toe in the water of surprise minor and major methods. Maximus remains a mystery.

The peak of my achievements, then, as recorded in the December 2019 *Ringling Round Devon*, is ringing two bells at the same time in the peal of Cambridge Minor at Peter Tavy on 8th November in celebration of the centenary of the South-West Branch of the Guild. Not only did I ring two bells, but they were not side by side, namely the 2nd and the 4th. Could this be a record? I did find it tiring. Now I know why.

A more plausible explanation could be a typo. What seems to have happened is that the ringers of 4, 5 and 6 were transposed between the peal referred to above and the quarter peal rung the following day in the same tower and to celebrate the same centenary. The entries should have read:

Peter Tavy, Devon	Peter Tavy, Devon
Friday 8 November 2019	Saturday 9 November 2019
in 2h 47m	
5040 Cambridge Surprise Minor	1260 Grandsire Doubles
1 George E Mudge	1 Geoffrey C Hill
2 John F Steere	2 Donna Baker
3 Alena J Wardle	3 John C Mitchelmore
4 Lester J Yeo	4 John F Steere
5 Ian V J Smith	5 George E Mudge (C)
6 Fergus M S Stracey (C)	6 Tony Pullan
To celebrate the centenary of the South-West Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers	

Useful learning from these two celebratory performances was that both ringers of the 2nd found the bell a challenge, even without having to ring the 4th at the same time! On its plain, and probably worn bearings, it dropped alarmingly and repeatedly throughout. Ian Smith is going to give it a severe looking-at.

John Steere

Apology from editor: There seem to have been some gremlins in the printer on this occasion.

Training

Learning Cambridge Surprise Minor

Cambridge Minor is very often the first Surprise method we encounter, and it is a very large step from methods such as Plain Bob and Kent Treble Bob Minor. Those methods can usefully be learned by the 'if'-'then' system (e.g. if you pass the treble in a certain position then you ring a corresponding bit of work). Methods such as Cambridge need another approach and a recent request for advice prompted me to write a short article on the subject. If you have rung some of the basic methods, think about taking that step. The initial hard work of learning the method is well rewarded, as Cambridge leads to many other minor methods and indeed, to the vast range of Surprise and Delight Major methods.

Cambridge Minor tips

Learn the starts for every bell and split the learning into five blocks of work. These are referred to as 'place bells'. They are written in this way (e.g. in the Ringers' Diary). If someone tells you that you are 6th place bell it means you are doing the work of 6 at the start of a plain course. This system is vital when ringing spliced.

Place bells are reversals of other place bells. 6th place bell is reversed in 4th place bell and 5th place bell is reversed by 2nd place bell. 3rd place bell reverses half way through.

Don't try to learn too much at once: learn small sections at a time and build up to the whole.

You may find writing out the work in words is useful e.g. 2nd place bell is dodge lead 2nds, dodge lead dodge, hunt to the back, double dodge 5-6 up, single dodge 5-6 down and become 6th place bell.

Work out some rules: always know where you meet and pass the treble and any other tips that help the learning. I think of the odd dodge in 1-2 either side of 3-4 places as part of the places. The dodge is nearest the places and the full lead is away from the places.

On a diagram write in the names of the bits of work. Almost the whole of 3rd place bell is called long back-work. The places in 3-4 are 'places up' or 'places down'. The work in 1-2 in 5th place bell and 2nd place bell is known as Cambridge front work. (It appears in a very similar form in other methods e.g. Yorkshire Major). The dodges in 5-6 are known as 'double and single' and 'single and double' respectively. It is well worth getting familiar with these terms as (a) they come up often in other methods and (b) they will be used to get you right if you falter.

Many people – me especially – find it helpful to draw out the line over and over until you can see it in your mind – again, just a bit at a time, not the whole thing. Others find the symmetry and reversals a useful tip.

Try and work out how you learn best. Everyone is different.

Martin Mansley

Feedback – mind your language



Have you found that feedback is sometimes treated as though it is a dirty word? Whilst it is true that false praise, such as 'That was good' when it obviously wasn't, is worthless, feedback actually has nothing to do with praise. It is quite simply information given to someone about their performance so that they can improve next time.

In the context of teaching bell handling, if you start by recognising that a new ringer does not know the difference between good and bad, then your feedback allows them to understand when they are doing something right or wrong and tells them how they can improve. Without such feedback the learner might well judge their performance by how in control they feel or the look on your face, and then have to guess how to improve. Verbal feedback can be positive, negative or neutral (with no positive or negative connotations – such as 'Remember to keep your handstroke lead open'). Positive feedback encourages; ringers like to receive praise when it is sincere and honest. Negative feedback doesn't encourage: it may well be demotivating and lead to ringers giving up easily.

Don't say don't

The way in which you use feedback will affect the way the learner feels. You should aim to use feedback in a way which leaves the ringer feeling positive. 'Don't' is one of the most negative words you can use. Used frequently it will demotivate, but unfortunately, it is commonly used. Teachers are notorious for recognising and correcting errors more often than noticing things that learners are doing right. Remember to recognise positive aspects of a ringer's ringing and remember to tell them.

Finding it difficult not to say don't?

If you find it difficult not to use the "don't" word, then try using the following technique:

Good – start with what was good about the ringer's performance or attitude.

Better – then give feedback about what needs to be worked on.

How – provide advice on how to improve performance.

Your feedback will be most useful if it is given immediately after they have rung. Leave it longer and it is likely that the ringer will have forgotten *exactly* how they performed. And to give them the best chance of improving, let them practise what needs to be improved straight away. So, feedback isn't a dirty word, it is both powerful and necessary. When used carefully and thoughtfully it can lead to significant performance improvement and leave the learner feeling both positive and ready for more.

Lesley Belcher, Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) Chair

Calendar

March

Fri 20	19:00	Branch Committee Meeting, Heathcoat Centre, Tiverton	North East
Sat 21	15:00	Guild Library Open, St Petrock's, Exeter	Guild
Sun 22	14:30	Judging a Striking Competition - Theory workshop	Guild
Sun 22	17:30	Practice, Emmanuel Church, Plymouth	Plymouth Youths
Mon 23	19:30	Branch Practice, St Petrock's	Exeter
Mon 23	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Wed 25	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Pinhoe	North East
Sat 28	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Sidbury	East
Sat 28	10:00	Yellow Pathway: Focused Practice, Plympton St Maurice	Guild
Mon 30	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West

April

Wed 1	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Sat 4	14:30	6 Bell & Quarterly Meeting: Ringing/Service/Tea/Meeting, Tiverton, St Paul's	North East
Sat 4	19:00	Branch Practice, Ugborough	Mid Devon
Sun 5	10:00	Raising and Lowering in Peal	Guild
Thu 9	19:30	Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Fri 10	19:30	Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sun 12	17:00	10 Bell Service Ringing, Cullompton	North East
Mon 13	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Wed 15	19:30	Focused 6 Bell Practice (Blue Pathway - RW Refers), Huntsham	North East
Fri 17	19:30	Branch Practice, Broadclyst	Aylesbeare
Sat 18	10:00	Blue Pathway: Focused Practice St Budeaux	South West
Sat 18	15:00	Guild Library Open, St Petrock's, Exeter	Guild
Sun 19	17:30	Practice, Emmanuel	Plymouth Youths
Mon 20	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Mon 20	19:30	6 Bell Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 22	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Thu 23	19:30	Surprise Minor Practice, Coffinswell	Mid Devon
Sat 25		Branch Outing, Taunton	Aylesbeare
Sat 25	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Sidbury	East
Mon 27	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Thu 30	19:30	Branch Practice, Hatherleigh	Exeter

May

Sat 2	10:00	6 Bell Open Practice, Rackenford	North East
Mon 4	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Tue 5	19:30	Triples/Major Practice, Tiverton, St Peter	North East
Wed 6	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Fri 8	19:30	Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sat 9	14:30	Spring Meeting, Awliscombe	East
Sat 9	18:00	Branch Practice, Cornworthy & Dittisham	Mid Devon
Sun 10		Branch 10-Bell method ringing practice Tavistock	South West
Sun 10	17:00	10 Bell Service Ringing, Cullompton	North East
Mon 11	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Mon 11	19:30	Branch Practice, Woodbury	Aylesbeare
Wed 13	19:30	Focused 6 Bell Practice (Blue Pathway - RW Refers), Huntsham	North East
Thu 14	19:30	Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Fri 15		Branch Ringing Outing #2	N/North West
Sat 16		Branch Spring Outing, TBC	South West
Sat 16	09:00	Practical Workshop: Rope Splicing/Changing a Stay & Rope, Burlescombe	North East
Sat 16	15:00	Guild Library Open, St Petrock's, Exeter	North East
Mon 18	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Mon 18	19:30	6 Bell Methods, Offwell	East
Tue 19	19:00	8-bell Practice, Teignmouth	Mid Devon
Sat 23	10:00	Surprise Major Practice, Sidbury	East
Sun 24	17:30	Practice, Emmanuel	Plymouth Youths
Mon 25		Train outing (Bank Holiday Monday), TBC	Exeter
Mon 25	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Wed 27	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 30	10:00	Yellow Pathway: Focused Practice	Guild

June

Mon 1	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Tue 2	19:30	Triples/Major Practice, Tiverton, St Peter	North East
Wed 3	19:30	Quarter Peal, Huntsham	North East
Sat 6	09:30	Branch Training - Basic Methods, Stokeinteignhead	Mid Devon
Sat 6	TBC	Branch Outing: organised by Martin Clough To be arranged	North East
Sun 7	14:30	Introduction to Change Ringing on Handbells, Dawlish	Guild
Mon 8	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Tue 9	19:00	Branch Away Evening, TBC	Aylesbeare
Wed 10	19:30	Branch Practice, St Mark's, Exeter	Exeter

Wed 10	19:30	Focused 6 Bell Practice (Blue Pathway - RW Refers), Huntsham	North East
Thu 11	19:30	Plain Hunt, Sidbury	East
Fri 12	19:30	Surprise Minor, Buckerell	East
Sun 14	17:00	10 Bell Service Ringing, Cullompton	North East
Mon 15	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Thu 18	19:30	6 bell Practice, Ideford	Mid Devon
Fri 19	19:00	John Hutchings Striking Competition (Date TBC), Silverton	North East
Sat 20	10:00	Blue Pathway: Focused Practice, Walkhampton	South West
Sat 20	15:00	Guild Library Open, St Petrock's, Exeter	Guild
Sun 21	17:30	Practice, Emmanuel	Plymouth Youths
Mon 22	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West
Mon 22	19:30	6 Bell Methods, Offwell	East
Wed 24	19:30	Surprise Major Practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 27		Annual General Meeting and Festival East branch	Guild
Mon 29	19:30	Branch 6 Bell Practice, Shirwell, S Peter	N/North West

Peter Sawyer

Peter was ringing in a peal on the morning of 1st February when we had to stop as he suddenly had severe pains in his chest, He subsequently collapsed and required CPR and a defibrillator. Paramedics were promptly on the scene and following treatment he was taken to Musgrove Park hospital in Taunton where he was immediately admitted to the Coronary Unit. They undertook an urgent procedure to insert stents in blocked arteries and to blow up other arteries to open them up. The procedure went well and from almost dying at about 12:00 he was sitting up talking (not quite his normal cheery self) at 16:00. He is now home and taking things easy. Apparently he is now a local celebrity and the community is really chuffed that their defibrillator has actually saved a life! We wish him all the best.

Robert Brown

Success for Oakford Appeal



Oakford Church

A whopping £1,000 was raised for the Oakford Church Bells Restoration Appeal at a fundraising event in Oakford Village Hall in February. Those who came were treated to a proper English afternoon tea whilst being entertained by local authors, Liz Shakespeare and Chris Tull.

Organiser Mary Shere commented: 'Whoever would have thought that a little afternoon tea in a remote Devon village would have raised such an astounding amount for the bells.' There was such an assortment of people who came. The attraction was threefold. Some came to enjoy the tea and support the event, some who knew Chris from the 1960s when he was Rector in the Exe Valley and some who wanted to hear Liz Shakespeare's riveting talk about her latest book, *The Postman Poet*.

For the occasion a number of ladies in the village lent their beautiful tea sets, most of which had not seen the light of day for many years. 'As each tea set was unveiled, it came with a heart-warming story and happy memories from days gone by. It was just so lovely to see them all being used and enjoyed once again', said Mary.

Various events have taken place in Oakford to raise funds over the past year and there have been some very generous donations. To date, £8,432 has been raised towards the £60,000 or so that is needed and the church is now in a strong position to apply for grant funding.

For more information on how you can make a donation or help in any way, please contact the PCC Secretary, Mrs Mary Shere, Oakridge, Oakford, EX16 9HH on 01398 351154 or 07803 426686, or oakridgepork@gmail.com

Les Boyce

A Roller Coaster Ride

The December 2019 issue of Ringing Round Devon contained photos and accounts by Philip Stevens (Tower Captain) and Martin Mansley, of the final stages in the successful installation of the new ring of eight at Kingskerswell. The following extract from the report by John Rees, who acted as Project Manager throughout, may be of help to others planning a similar project. It reveals some of the more dramatic twists and turns in the story.

The Kingskerswell bell restoration project was a component of a wider re-ordering scheme that included the refurbishment and augmentation of the bells as well as the provision of a new mezzanine ringing chamber, an extension to the church incorporating full access toilet facilities, baby change and flower arranging area, the refurbishment of the kitchen and the provision of a new heating system.

Tender documentation for the main re-ordering contract was issued to contractors in January 2019 and costed returns were received in March 2019. The availability of Nicholson Engineering Ltd, our chosen bellhanger, was a critical factor and effectively drove the tendering and contracting timetable. Because the bellhanger's availability was so limited, Nicholson's had to be booked and a 33% deposit paid before tendering for the main contract even took place. An important condition of the main and stand-alone contracts was that the church would remain in use throughout Phase 1 of the re-ordering.

Unfortunately the costings for the tender package were over £100k more than the provisional estimates or the balance of funds held. As a result, the building of the extension had to be removed to make the whole package affordable. However, the foundations for the extension and connection to mains services were retained in order to ensure the revised package remained coherent.

Bovey Construction Limited, the successful bidder for the main contract, commenced work on site at the beginning of April 2019. Cumbria Clocks removed the clock weights, drive trains and chime pulls immediately before Nicholson's began the dismantling on 8th April. The bells and frame were removed in the week commencing 13th May and the assembly of the new frame and augmented peal was originally due to commence in September 2019. Had all gone to plan, commissioning of the new installation would have taken place on or around 20th September 2019 and would have marked a fitting end to the first phase of the wider re-ordering plans. However, this was not to be...

Once the bells had been removed to the bellhanger's works, the third was found to be cracked in the crown. An amendment to our faculty was granted by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Exeter and allowed us to repair the bell by a specialist welding procedure carried out by Soundweld in Newmarket, Suffolk - the only firm in the country with the necessary expertise and equipment. The procedure involved heating the entire bell to 500 degrees Celsius over a period of 24 hours, doing the weld while hot, and then cooling the bell and repair slowly to avoid further damage. A significant portion of the crown had to be removed and back filled with weld. However, this was less difficult than it might have been because the original casting in the crown area was exceptionally pure. Mark of Soundweld noted 'It was almost as if the bell wanted to be mended!'

Unfortunately the euphoria was short lived; after returning the bell to the bellhanger in Dorset, the tuning process uncovered enormous areas of porosity and voids in the soundbow, probably the result of the bell being cast into a damp mould. In sum, the inside of the lower half of the third looked something like a Crunchie bar on steroids. Regrettably, none of this was visible until tuning began but tuning could not take place before the crack had been repaired.

The damage was such that the bell had to be replaced either by sourcing a second-hand bell of the right weight, profile and keynote, or re-casting the existing damaged bell. The Keltek Trust which specialises in finding homes for pre-loved bells had nothing at their disposal which fitted our need. Our only option therefore was to have the bell re-cast. This, and the requirement to obtain an amendment to our faculty, would delay the re-installation of the bells until the end of November and added £5000 to the project costs. Suddenly, ringing for Advent and Christmas were now in jeopardy. This was all duly reported in the Parish Magazine and within days an anonymous benefactor stepped forward, enabling an order to be placed with Eijsbouts bell foundry, the same foundry as had been selected to cast the two new treble bells.

Regrettably, the drama did not end there. A condition of the faculty amendment was that the original inscription had to be reproduced on the recast bell. While the foundry made the necessary facsimile impression, it was not applied to the prepared mould and the bell was cast without the inscription. The recast bell therefore had to be recast yet again and the error added delay to the original timetable. The delay had

a knock-on effect to Nicholson's production schedule in that production of the headstocks could not be started until the new bell had been delivered to their works in Bridport. The new bell carries two inscriptions; these include a facsimile of the original and a dedication which reveals the benefactor's identity. The re-re-cast bell was delivered to Nicholson's at the end of September 2019 and the retuning of the new ring of eight was completed shortly thereafter. A visit to Nicholson's took place on 14th October when a coach load of parishioners saw the assembled frame together with two of the bells hung on their headstocks. One of these bells was the recast 3rd (now the new 5th). The impact of the new inscription was not lost on the crowd. The remaining six bells were in the process of being mounted and it was an emotional moment when the re-re-cast 5th was heard in public for the first time.

A site visit to double check the location of the pockets for the new frame took place immediately after the Bridport visit. The drama continued when it was discovered that the orientation of the drawing in the tower had been transposed 180 degrees by mistake. While this could be made to work without filling and re-excavating the pockets (which would have threatened delays of months and added significant cost), some modifications would be needed to the now fully prepared frame. Nicholson's pulled out all the stops to keep the project on track and the main supporting beams (known as grillage) were moved to Kingskerswell on 28th October. They were cast in place by Bovey construction in the following week.

On 20th November the remaining frame components and bells were returned to the church. Installation commenced immediately after the bells were blessed and, following heroic efforts by Nicholson's and a small band of volunteers, the eight bells were rung in peal for the first time on 28th November. Fittingly, it was on Advent Sunday that the Bishop of Plymouth blessed the work.

John Rees, Deputy Tower Captain

Stop Press

The first peal on the restored and augmented bells was successfully completed on Sunday 8th March to tumultuous applause and cheering from the substantial crowd of well-wishers who had collected inside the church. The tea and cakes provided were gratefully consumed by the ringers! Special congratulations go to John Rees on ringing his first peal.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Kingskerswell, Devon, St Mary
Sunday, 8 March 2020 in 2h 45 (7-0-3)

5040 Grandsire Triples

Composed by J J Parker (12 part)

1 John P Rees	5 Ian L C Campbell
2 Ian W Avery	6 Martin G Mansley
3 P Wendy Campbell	7 Michael E C Mears (C)
4 Michael H Tompsett	8 Philip Stevens

To welcome Rev Michael Wilkie as vicar of Kingskerswell, Abbotskerswell and Coffinswell.

First peal on the bells since restoration and augmentation.

First peal: 1.



The band in order clockwise, starting front right

Ian Campbell

Guild Email Lists

For many years ringers from both the Guild and the Devon Association have been able to join a Devon Ringers email list ('DevonRinging@yahoogroups.com') which was created by Tim King. In recent times this list has not seen much activity: it has mainly been used to advertise the availability of new issues of *Ringing Round Devon* online or the programmes for Monday Ringers outings. Yahoo is now slimming down its Yahoo Groups offering. People can subscribe only by invitation from the group administrator; attachments are not allowed and these cannot be hosted on the Yahoo Groups website. This all seems rather restrictive.

There are a number of ways forward:

- Do nothing and continue with the list as it is now. We might have to make more use of the Branch secretaries to help with email dissemination.
- Either find somewhere else to host the list, preferably at no cost, or use a different service such as 'Facebook'.
- Host the list as a new list on the Guild server 'devonringers.org.uk'. However it might not be thought appropriate to have a service that is used by both Guild and Association running on the Guild system.
- Rationalise the email lists on the Guild server so that every branch is registered and all members can add themselves to the relevant branch list if they wish. General information for all uses can then be sent to all lists. Association members will not be included unless a special 'friends' list is also created.

The situation regarding the registration of non-members (and non-members of that branch) and members of the Association needs to be examined. If lists are restricted to members they could then be used for potentially sensitive items such as minutes of meetings.

Any comments regarding the above should be sent to me (webmaster@devonringers.org.uk).

Matt Hilling

Latest picture of David Hird



David Hird doing his James Bond impression

Wendy Gill



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Editorial

In the final paragraph of his article about the publication he produced for the South West Branch centenary, John Steere refers to an 'unguarded moment' when he agreed to write an article for this issue of *Ringing Round Devon* about the experience of researching and writing this booklet. Like John, I must have had a similarly unguarded moment when Ian Campbell asked me if I would act as a guest editor, to draw together the material for the March 2020 issue of the Newsletter, since he was one of the group of ringers heading to New Zealand for a month-long ringing tour in the New Year. At the time, February 2020 seemed a long way off. So I said yes.

Now, as February draws to a close, I realise that I am glad that I did. It has been a revelatory experience to discover how the material for the Guild's quarterly newsletter comes together and to recognise, even more clearly than before, just what efforts are being made by officers and by individual members across the Guild to maintain and to continue to build a vibrant, energetic and enthusiastic ringing community in Devon. We are very fortunate that we have this quarterly publication in which accounts of activities across the Guild are documented, relived and shared. My admiration goes out to those most involved in its production and its circulation, issue by issue.

Thank you to all those who have provided the material for this issue: I have much appreciated your support and encouragement. I hope that, as the stand-in for the compilation of material for Newsletter 117, I have not made too many errors. Where these occur, these must be attributed to me and not to Ian (the Editor in Chief), even though he did return just in time to cast an experienced eye over the apprentice's efforts. I trust that you find some material that interests you, that brings you enjoyment, and perhaps even some amusement. However I am sure you will also be hoping, as I am, that in a future issue we will have the chance to learn more about what those ringers were doing in New Zealand while the rest of us were rugged up, battling against the storms inflicted first by Storm Ciara and then Storm Dennis.

Janet Ritterman

Would you ring in an 'earthquake prone' belltower?

While Devonians battled with Storm Dennis, which followed hard on the heels of Storm Ciara, and found some towers adversely affected by high winds and heavy rain, the Exeter ringers on their tour in New Zealand, while enjoying southern hemisphere sunshine, found themselves facing challenges of a different order when they visited Wellington Cathedral for a quarter peal on Sunday 16th January:



Notice in Wellington Cathedral, New Zealand

Luckily the warning did not deter this plucky band, as the evidence below confirms:

Wellington, New Zealand, Cathedral Church of St Paul
 Sunday, 16 February 2020 in 57m (27–1–24)
 1346 Yorkshire Surprise Maximus
 1 Ian Campbell 7 Christopher Jarman
 2 Peter Bill 8 Ian Smith
 3 Ian Hill 9 Graham Tucker
 4 Ann Smith 10 Peter Brown
 5 Lesley Tucker 11 David Hird
 6 Wendy Campbell 12 Michael Mears (C)
 Belated 70th birthday compliment to Ian Campbell



Clockwise from front right. Ian C, Peter Bill, Ian H, Ann, Lesley, Wendy, Christopher, Ian S, Graham, Peter Brown, David, Mike. Photo by Jo Brown.

Bylaw prohibits Bell Ringing in Dunedin

This note was seen in the Dunedin (NZ) museum. Note that ‘In 1866 the City Corporation passed a bylaw preventing bell ringing’. I hope that this is not still in effect – we just rang a peal there!

Hear ye

William ‘Sandy’ Low was a well-known identity in early Dunedin, a shipwrecked whaler who eventually became Dunedin’s first town crier. In 1866 the City Corporation passed a bylaw preventing bell ringing, effectively ending Low’s career. Low’s main competitor Joe Munton, who had arrived from the Australian goldfields about 1862, continued to operate as town crier by replacing his bell with a horn.

Ian Campbell

Message from New Zealand

Mike Clayton from Papanui, Christchurch, NZ was pleased to meet with some of the Exeter ringers who came to a recent practice night. He was very impressed with *Ringing Round Devon* and always reads it from cover to cover. He asked how he could be in *RRD* so I suggested that he took a picture of us outside the church. Here it is! Best wishes go to you and your ringers, Mike, and thank you for letting us ring with you.



The Exeter ringers outside Papanui church. L to R: Ian Smith, Ian Campbell, Wendy Campbell, Lesley Tucker, Peter Bill, Graham Tucker, with local ringer Rod Shaw in the doorway

Ian Campbell

GUILD FESTIVAL & AGM

Saturday, 27th June 2020

East Devon Branch

- 09.00-12.00 Peal at Luppitt (8 bells).
- 10.00-12.00 Quarter Peal opportunity for each Branch in allocated 6-bell towers
- 10.00-10.45 Open ringing at Northleigh (4 bells)
- 11.00-11.45 Open ringing at Widworthy (5 bells)
- 11.00-12.00 Open ringing at Sidbury (8 bells)
- 11.30-12.30 Open ringing at Sidmouth (10 bells)
- Between 11.30-13.30 tbc Wedding ringing at Ottery St Mary (8 bells) Limited Places
- 10.30-12.00 Bell Maintenance at Clayhidon Limited Places
- 11.00-12.30 Rope Slicing in Masonic Hall, Sidmouth Limited places
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch in Masonic Hall, Sidmouth Pre-booked pasties and cake or bring your own. Tea/Coffee available
- 14.00-15.00 Presentation by Steve Coleman “Acquiring ropesight and managing without it”
- 15.00-17.00 Guild Annual General Meeting in Masonic Hall, Sidmouth
- 17.15-17.45 Service ringing
- 18.00 Guild Service at St Nicholas & St Giles, Sidmouth

Where there are limited places (as well as for lunchtime food), booking will be required.

Contact Judith Reynolds: eastdevonsec@devonringers.org.uk



The church at Papanui (Christchurch)

Pictures from New Zealand



The temporary "cardboard" Cathedral at Christchurch – yes, the roof is held up with cardboard tubes as is most of the furniture



The sorry state of Christchurch Cathedral after the earthquake in 2011
Note the remains of the tower on the left



Christchurch Cathedral before the earthquake



Intrepid ringers at the top of the Franz Josef glacier



Wellington Cathedral



The mini-ring installed inside the ringing chamber at Wellington Cathedral.
The red door on the right is the direct access from the lift, no stairs here!

RINGING ROUND DEVON is the newsletter of The Guild of Devonshire Ringers and is circulated free to all affiliated towers. Any individual members who wish to subscribe should contact Ian Campbell (01392 469695). The cost is £10.00 for four issues (cheques made payable to *Guild of Devonshire Ringers*). RRD is also available on line on the Guild's website, which holds back-issues.

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Items for inclusion may be sent by post to Ringing Round Devon, 84 Wighton Village Road, Exeter EX4 8AL or by e-mail to newsletter@devonringers.org.uk