

Ring Round Devon

LOCKDOWN ISSUE no.5

Pictures from the Virtual Guild AGM



A bowl and base presented to John Martin and Charlotte Boyce by Janet Ritterman on behalf of the members who had contributed to it in thanks for their work for the Guild during lockdown.



The base is inscribed with the Guild logo

THE GUILD OF DEVONSHIRE RINGERS

Newsletter 122 June 2021



At the Guild AGM the master elect (Neil Deem) took over as master from Janet Ritterman

Exeter Diocesan Advisory Committee Bell Consultant James Clarke Retires



James Clark

Having worked alongside James as a DAC bell consultant for the last nine years, James informed me that he intended to retire. We have been a good team during that time and James has taught me well the ways of the DAC. It is an interesting role and can be quite rewarding when a proposed scheme, following advice and

approval, comes to fruition and produces a good result in an improved ring of bells for the future.

James's knowledge of bellhanging and bell history is second to none and he will be a hard act to follow. It is due to his guidance that many schemes achieve DAC approval fairly quickly. One has to strike a balance between what is desirable against the modern day preservation requirements as many official bodies are consulted by DAC before a final faculty grant is awarded. The ability to weigh up schemes in a balanced way is therefore important. In some cases arguments have to be put thoroughly to succeed. Many thanks to James for 18 years of valuable service.

The DAC consultants also liaise with Guild advisers in discussing proposals to reach balanced conclusions.

This then left a vacancy as it really is a two-man job, partly because of the sheer number of towers in Devon but also from a health and safety point of view as sometimes we are not accompanied going up into a tower to carry out an inspection.

To that end, I am delighted to say that Neil Deem from Withycombe Raleigh has been appointed as an assistant/trainee, as I was nine years ago, and we already have one inspection under our belt. Neil has a lot of experience of practical bellhanging, having helped with a number of installations over the past few years including that of Combe Raleigh where we were both part of the volunteer hanging team. He is an early retiree with time to attend midweek inspections so I am sure we will form a good team.



David Hird, Exeter DAC bell consultant



Neil Deem, Exeter DAC assistant consultant

Guild AGM

The Guild AGM will be taking place over Zoom, as last year, on June 19, starting at 10:00. Papers for the meeting, including the agenda, minutes from last year's meeting and the online version of the 2020 Guild annual report are available from the Guild web site, including the joining details. A limited number of printed copies of the annual report have been produced for those who requested them on their subscription forms and for eventual circulation to towers. These contain information covering the last two years.

Lyne Hughes will not be seeking re-election as Guild publicity officer so we are looking for someone who would be interested in taking this role on. A [Role Description](#) is available on the Guild web site.

At the AGM three proposals for vice-presidents have been made. The Guild officers have asked that the nomination citations be published here.

Nomination for Guild Vice-President: Sheila Scofield

Sheila Scofield's ringing history within the Guild of Devonshire Ringers spans over 50 years and without doubt her contribution to ringing throughout this time has been instrumental in the development of many ringers she has taken under her wing. Her enthusiasm to ringing has never waned, even in the face of adversity and even during brief moments of non-ringing activities, Sheila would seize opportunities to recruit bell ringers. One such event was a garden party hosted by my neighbours when she could see I was slightly worse for wear on red wine! I was soon under her spell and the rest is history as they say.

To encapsulate Sheila's ringing career, I offer the following:

RINGING HISTORY

Sheila was elected a member of the Guild in June 1968 and gained her certificate in May 1970. She rang her first quarter peal in March 1987 (Grandsire Triples at Tiverton St Peter) and her first peal in March 1989 (Plain Bob Minor at Brampford Speke). Since then, she has rung eight peals and 575 quarters.

In more recent years Sheila has developed her teaching skills by becoming an accredited teacher and teacher-assessor with ART (The Association of Ringing Teachers). In January 2015 she took the initiative to set up an after-school bell club with Bampton C of E Primary School. This ran successfully for five years until February 2020 when Covid put a stop to all activities. Pupils graduating from the club have continued their ringing into their secondary years, gaining Guild certificates and scoring quarter peals. They have formed the basis of an active branch young ringers' group and this has regularly supported Guild young ringer events at the Denmisch ringing centre in Exeter.

In recognition of her work, Sheila was elected Guild Master for 2018-19.

TOWER OFFICES

Sheila has held several posts at tower level:

Tower secretary (1986-89)

Tower captain at St Peter's, Tiverton (1994-2000) and (2019 to date)

BRANCH OFFICES HELD

Sheila has held various offices in the North East Branch:

Guild committee member 1992-1997

Education officer 1993-1997, 2013 to date

Branch chairman 1998-2003

Publicity officer 2003-2009

Branch ringing master 2010-2013

As is clearly demonstrated by example of Sheila's outstanding contribution to the Guild, I have no hesitation in proposing her to become a vice-president in recognition of her exceptional impact

in enhancing the field of training and retention. Her remarkable run of offices within the NE Branch have without question been instrumental in making it the success it is today, and we are eternally grateful for everything she continues to do at every level.

I do hope you will join me in acknowledgment of Sheila's exceptional 50+ years of loyal and unwavering service and thereby approve this proposal for nomination to be elected as Guild vice-president.

Proposed by: Mark Heritage (NE Branch Chair)

Seconded: Mike Mears

Sylvia Johns – Vice-President Nomination

Sylvia joined the Guild in 1968 as a ringer at Newton St Cyres, gaining her Guild certificate there in 1973. After this time she moved to Ottery St Mary and rang there until 1980. On her move to Aylesbeare she soon took over as tower captain, holding the position from 1985 to 1994 and then again from 2016 to date, some 15+ years overall. Sylvia was Aylesbeare Branch secretary for four years during the noughties.

She is a stalwart member of the Aylesbeare Branch ringing scene on a regular basis at several branch towers, including Clyst Honiton and Sowton as well as her own tower.

I therefore have no hesitation in nominating Sylvia as a vice-president of this Guild, having been a member for 50 years as well as for her dedication to both Aylesbeare tower and branch.

Proposed by: Janet Deem

Tony Williams – Vice-President Nomination

Tony joined the Guild in 1958 as a ringer at Clyst St George and must have quickly become a reasonably proficient ringer as he received his Guild certificate the same year. He has been a loyal member of the tower, becoming tower captain in 1966, a role he still holds today.

He held various branch office posts between 1990 and 2006, being Assistant Branch Secretary for three years, Ringing Master for ten years and General Committee Rep for three years.

Despite being in his 70s, Tony not only works full time in the construction industry(!), but he is a stalwart service ringer at many towers within the branch, in particular ringing at Withycombe Raleigh three out of four Sundays, as well as maintaining a long term commitment to Clyst Honiton on top of his own tower.

I therefore have no hesitation in nominating Tony as a vice-president of this Guild, having been a member for well over 50 years and also having held branch office for more than ten. I feel his nomination is therefore long overdue.

Proposed by: Janet Deem

Guild Library

The Guild Library will resume monthly openings at St Petrock's in Exeter on Saturday 17 July between 3 and 5pm, unless we are prevented by further Government restrictions. In the meantime, the Librarian is happy to answer enquiries and, if necessary, postal loans can be arranged. Contact Les Boyce on 01884 256819 or librarian@devonringers.org.uk.

The planned openings for the next three months are all between 3 and 5pm on Sat 17 July, Sat 21 August and Sat 18 September.

COVID-19 and Guild History

The word 'unprecedented' has probably been overworked in the last 15 months, but not since 1943 has the ringing of tower bells been restricted or prevented altogether for such a long period as recently. Given the unusual experience we have been through it would seem appropriate to record some of the reactions, stories and activities which ringers have undertaken since March 2020 in the absence of tower bell ringing. Maybe you have tried one of the online ringing platforms such as Ringing Room or had virtual social meet-ups over Zoom or Skype. Some of you, we know, have been busy with craft activities to raise funds for the bell

restoration fund or your local church. And the remarkable series of Monday night sessions at 'The Internet Arms' should certainly have a place in the history of our Guild.

Your stories, photos and videos of what your group has been up to would make a valuable archive of ringing in the pandemic and might form the basis of a chapter in the history of the Guild we are planning in celebration of its 150th anniversary in 2024. Where contributors are happy for their information to be made public, we can also publish it on the Guild website. Please email any contributions to the Librarian (librarian@devonringers.org.uk)

Les Boyce

Update from the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund

It's been a relatively quiet year so far, but with us getting back to ringing and bell inspections starting up again as lockdown eases, I'm sure things will ramp up. No doubt some of the outstanding grant application forms will start to be received by the Trustees and those projects put on hold due to Covid will now come to fruition and requests for grants to be paid out will be heading our way.

Here are details from the Trustees' meeting held via Zoom at the end of March:

Applications for Grants (March 2021)

Axminster - A revised application was received for overhauling the bearings, re-profiling the clappers and replacing hinge-pins and bushes, new cast nylon pulley sheaves for the third and tenor bells, and new runner boards for the treble, second and third. A grant of £700 had been offered in 2016 for similar work, though this was never carried out. A grant of £950 was agreed for the revised work.

Bigbury - A grant of £6,250 was agreed towards a complete rehang of the six bells in the existing frame, but on completely new and re-positioned supporting grillages.

Total agreed = £7,200

Grants paid to date in 2021

Ermington - £1,200. Work carried out included investigating the sub-frame and repairing where necessary, also cleaning down, de-scaling and painting all ironwork of the frame and fittings.

Shaugh Prior - £900. Work carried out included cleaning down and repainting the bell and sub frames, dismantling and galvanising some of the steels, refurbishing the clappers and repairing a cracked bell pad.

Pilton - £3,000. Cleaning down and repainting the bell-frame and support grillage, repairs to the treble, seventh and tenor clappers, removal of old crown staple stumps, servicing of bearings, sliders and runner boards and turning the second and fourth bells.

Dunkeswell - £1,900. The beam ends of the frame foundation were descaled, treated and painted, new padstones inserted, a new access staircase to the ringing chamber was built and access to the bell chamber was replaced, insulation between bell chamber and ringing chamber improved.

Axminster - £950. See above for work completed.

Total paid = £7,950

All the Trustees would like to thank everyone who took the opportunity to give a donation towards the bell fund when they paid this year's subscription.

Janet Deem

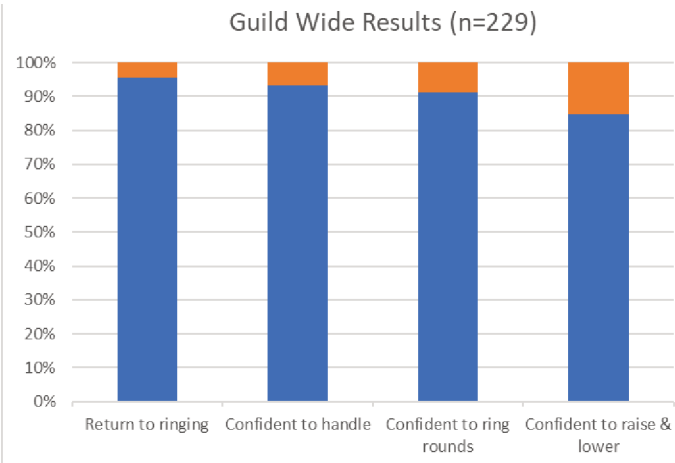
Ringing Recovery

Ringing Recovery Working Group

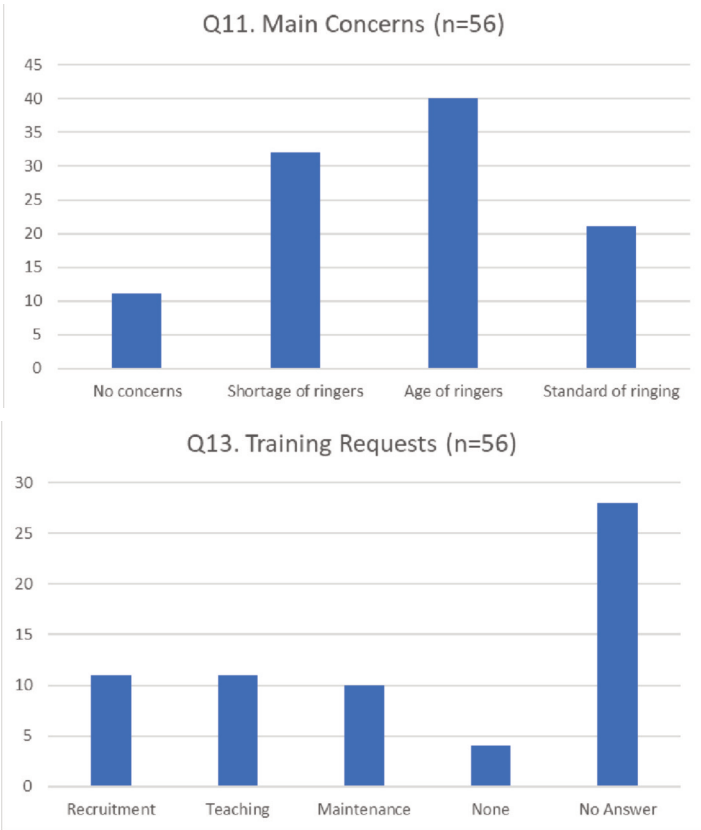
In March 2021, the Guild Ringing Recovery working group was formed to promote a safe and timely return to ringing when relaxation of the Covid-19 lockdown permitted. After more than a year with little or no ringing, it was unclear what the 'ringing

landscape’ would look like, or what ringing would be permitted as restrictions were relaxed. The first thing we did was to undertake surveys of Guild members and tower captains to try and establish the current situation.

The members’ survey suggested that 95% ringers would be returning, with most feeling confident to ring, though about 15% did not feel happy to raise or lower a bell. However, responses were only received from about 30% of the membership. Was this representative, or were the other two thirds of ringers not planning on returning?



The results of the tower captains’ survey indicated that approximately 10% of ringers would not be returning. This survey also showed that the amount of ringing and chiming that had taken place (when permitted) since lockdown began in March 2020. This varied considerably from tower to tower, as did the level of social contact and on-line ringing activities. Many tower captains were concerned about the number and age profile of their ringers. Approximately 20% of tower captains felt they needed assistance with recruitment and training of new ringers, and in the maintenance of their bells.



The Ringing Recovery working group has been working hard to disseminate information from the Central Council and the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) to branch officers and tower captains, and there is now a page on the Guild website at <https://devonringers.org.uk/guild/ringing-recovery> with links to

lots of useful resources. The group can be contacted by e-mail: ringingrecovery@devonringers.org.uk or by telephone: 07751 340436.

Looking to the future, we are keen to see how we can help towers with the recruitment and training of new ringers once bell handling tuition can safely resume. We will also be contacting those tower captains who requested training in belfry maintenance to see how this can best be achieved.

Phil Dunn

Return and Recovery workgroup

This Guild group continues to be very active. Their work was well illustrated by a talk by Catherine Saunders at the Internet Arms on Monday 10 May and was repeated on Saturday 15 May. She started by describing activities prior to Covid and then went on to remind us of what had been going on (a lot!!) during lockdown. Her main thrust was to explain the discussions held by the workgroup and to report on what was also being carried out nationally by the Central Council and the Association of Ringing Teachers in particular.

Catherine gave some of the results of the surveys carried out by the group. The main gist was that experienced ringers felt reasonably confident to return but less experienced ringers needed some support. The main concern of many was recruitment, which was a worry even before Covid.

The good news was that limited ringing would soon be possible (rule of six) and a more normal situation return by the end of June (subsequently revised until 19 July at the earliest). For now the ringing period has been extended to a maximum of 45 minutes and ringers permitted to swap ropes after hand sanitisation. Catherine explained that replacing the air in the ringing room was one of the key issues. Although sophisticated measuring devices were available a much easier ‘rule of thumb’ method was quite sufficient. This was the air spray test: using an air freshener in a room and seeing if the smell disappeared meant the air in the room has been exchanged sufficiently.

Questions included the desirability for temperature tests and it was concluded that these offer very little useful information. One participant mentioned that she had suffered from Covid but had none of the main symptoms and certainly no high temperature. Another questioned if ‘immunisation passports’ had been discussed and it was made clear that immunisation was not a condition of returning to the tower. It seemed a good idea to make sure all members of a band were happy to return and anyone who felt uncomfortable should be respected. It was mentioned that at least one member had stated that they would feel happier once they had received their first injection.

There were over 40 members present on each occasion, showing the popularity of these Internet Arms sessions. At the end John Martin (Guild Secretary) told us that this was the last projected Monday evening meeting. He and Charlotte were warmly thanked for all the hard work they had put in to make these presentations so enjoyable.

Martin Mansley

Exercises to prepare for ringing

Catherine Saunders (who is a qualified physiotherapist as well as a ringer) has designed a series of 37 exercises specifically to help prepare you for ringing after a period of inactivity. They include:

- 14 flexibility exercises and stretches
- 7 leg strengthening exercises
- 11 arm strengthening exercises
- 5 balance exercises

Some of you might find them useful when getting back to ringing following the various lockdowns.

Full details are available from the Guild website at:

https://devonringers.org.uk/gdr-media/Mid-Devon_Files/Ringing_exercises.pdf

With thanks to Catherine Saunders

Guild Email lists update

During the last few months I have created and populated email lists for the remaining branches which did not already have them. If you indicated on your Guild membership subscription that you are happy to be contacted by email then you will have been added to the list for your branch. Branch officers are now using the lists to send communication to members which makes it very easy to keep in touch with all members.

If you have been added to an email list you will have received a confirmatory message explaining how it works. It is important to remember that you are responsible for your membership of the email list: if you change email address or want to unsubscribe then you can do this by following the instructions received in the monthly email reminder. That monthly email also contains your login information to the list server.

If you are a Guild member but believe you are not subscribed to one of the branch email lists please contact your branch secretary who can provide joining instructions.

A summary of all the available lists is available at:
<https://lists.devonringers.org.uk/mailman/listinfo>.

Matt Hilling, webmaster@devonringers.org.uk

Guild Zoom Presentations

Monday 8 March: A virtual tour of Ottery St Mary church

Simon Jenkins' judgement about 20 years ago that Ottery St Mary had one of the best 19 churches in the country attracted many visitors.

However they would only have seen a fraction of the interesting things which were covered in this illustrated presentation, and certainly not heard anything about them. Our guide for the evening, Richard Coley also spoke about a fascinating unsolved mystery.

Monday 15 March: Inspired by Bells

Bells of all kinds feature in a great deal of music - film music, popular music, traditional music from many different cultures. This illustrated talk by Janet Ritterman focused on music by a handful of composers who have written works particularly inspired by bells - mainly large bells.

Monday 22 March: Ringing outings both near and further afield

One of the enjoyable things about ringing is being able to visit lots of interesting, unusual and out of the way places and many of us will be looking forward again to some sort of ringing outing.

At this session a number of members looked back at outings both nearby and further afield and shared some experiences and why these trips were particularly memorable.

From the South Western-most tower in the British Isles, through Cornwall and Devon and visiting islands with bells before heading off to more exotic locations we travelled on foot, by plane, train and automobile on our virtual trip.

Monday 29 March: Through the camera lens

At this session James Wray discussed how his photography developed around bell ringing, getting photos onto the front cover of *The Ringing World*, the styles and processes he uses, and where he wants to take it in the future.

Monday 12 April: European Alpine peaks and Mount Elbrus

We had already marvelled at the exploits of Peter Ellis climbing the highest peaks in Asia, Antarctica and Australasia. Peter returned to take us on a virtual tour of European Alpine peaks, culminating in an ascent of 18,000-foot Mount Elbrus in Southern Russia. Remember your fur hat - it's cold at that altitude!

Monday 19 April: Moor to Sea

Catherine Saunders guided us through the Mid-Devon Branch, stopping at each branch tower and giving snippets of information about the towers, churches and surrounding areas. We were guided around the branch from Bovey Tracey, the Gateway to Dartmoor, and the haunted Berry Pomeroy, to the seaside resorts of Torbay, Teignmouth and Dawlish. Catherine concluded the evening with a look at what activities the Branch usually gets up to and what has been done during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Catherine is a ringer at St Marychurch in Torquay and is also a Ringing Recovery Champion for the Guild.

Monday 26 April: I do not know, says the Great Bell of Bow

A talk by Mark Regan, Ringing Master at Worcester Cathedral, about Gordon Selfridge and the restoration of the bells of St Mary le Bow.

Between 1933 and 1961 there were three different rings of 12 at St Mary le Bow and for 20 of these years the tower was bomb damaged and derelict. This is the story of why the date of the 1933 recasting was deliberately omitted in 1956.

Monday 10 May and Saturday 15 May: presentation by the Guild Ringing Recovery workgroup

An introduction to the Guild's Ringing Recovery Workgroup: who we are, what we are doing and what we can offer to help you. Presentation of the key findings from the surveys recently completed and of the latest CCCBR guidance.

Opportunity to discuss concerns about returning to ringing and share possible ideas and solutions.

Ringing to mark the death of the Duke of Edinburgh



HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, died on 9 April aged 99. He had been dedicated to Her Majesty the Queen and the many interests for which he was Patron. His legacy of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme has benefited bell ringing through service and activities for young people.

Half-muffled tolling or chiming of a single bell on Saturday 10 April at 12 noon, 99 times or up to five minutes was recommended to mark the occasion. The Cabinet Office declared eight days of official mourning, during which time any other ringing should be half-muffled and in accordance with current COVID-19 restrictions. Half-muffled tolling or chiming of a single bell was recommended on the day of the funeral.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

A number of Devon towers contributed to this on 10 April, with 24 Devon towers recording their efforts on BellBoard. At Heavitree we rang the tenor (26cwt) full circle, one blow every 15 seconds.

Setting the bell every time was made easier with Michael Cannon on the bell frame, but it still used several muscles that hadn't seen such exercise for a long time because of lockdown.

A number of Devon towers also recorded tolling for the funeral itself on 17 April.

Ian Campbell



The 11th at Exeter Cathedral was tolled 99 times, half-muffled - once every 15 seconds - at noon. The tolling was carried out by David Hird, Oliver Bates and Matthew Hilling. The BBC were present and briefly interviewed David afterwards. The piece was on BBC Spotlight at 5.20pm the same day.

Matt Hilling

Marie Curie Day of Reflection (23 March)

The Church of England partnered with Marie Curie on 23 March to mark the first anniversary of the first lockdown in the UK with a national day of reflection to reflect on our collective loss due to COVID-19, support those who have been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future.

Bellringers were invited by the Church to participate in this day by marking the end of the one-minute silent reflection at 12 noon and tolling a bell at 12:01.

A number of Devon towers followed this request, with eleven towers recording their ringing on BellBoad (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/>).

John Martin, Guild Secretary

Obituaries

Mary Mack (4 December 1929 – 1 April 2021)



It was a great sadness to learn that Mary had died after a lengthy period of failing health. Together with Frank, she was a great contributor to the ringing life at the church of St John the Evangelist, Withycombe Raleigh and, as a member of the Sewing Guild there, she and other friends made wonderful items for sale at fetes and coffee mornings, raising valuable funds in the process.



Mary as a young woman

Mary was a graduate of Bristol University, where she introduced Frank to the art of ringing, and taught Maths at a well-known independent school in Bedford before she and Frank moved to Bapton Lane, Exmouth in the late 1950s. They taught their four children to ring and remained stalwarts of the local band at Withycombe Raleigh until no longer able to ring.

Mary was the tower secretary and treasurer and helped to organise the augmentation of the bells from 10 to 12. She was a very tolerant lady, permitting the installation of a mini-ring of six

bells in her garage and another (ten bells) in one of her children's bedrooms. A large bell purchased from Peterborough Cathedral was also stored on her driveway for almost ten years in anticipation of the previous augmentation from 8 to 10. She was rather glad when it was eventually transferred to the church and became the new tenor!

The two mini-rings meant a steady stream of visitors passing through the house over the years, but Mary always appeared to be quite relaxed about it. Sometimes she needed all her patience and juggling skills when making cups of tea for so many people. On one memorable occasion in the early 1980s a TV crew turned up to film a spoof item for *Game for a Laugh*, which was a popular Saturday evening programme at the time. On a hot summer's evening, ten ringers piled into Mary's smallest bedroom, together with a cameraman and lighting crew and TV personality Henry Kelly (tucked up in the bed for the night, ahead of his 'ringing lesson' with Frank the following day). Mary took the invasion in her stride as always.



Mary and Frank on their wedding day

Mary always firmly declared that 'Mary Mack has never rung a peal!' but a quick search of PealBase reveals that she rang 21 peals prior to her marriage, nine of these for the University of Bristol Society. She was also a faithful member of the Exeter Cathedral band for a great number of years, and a Guild Vice-President.

Mary was a keen Bridge player, being active at the table and behind the scenes for many years at the Exmouth Bridge Club and Royal Beacon Bridge Club. She remained independent and at home until the end, supported by friends, neighbours and her family, which was her great wish. Her socially-distanced funeral was held at the East Devon Crematorium in Strete Raleigh, a gentle and moving service. It was a little sad that someone who had rung bells most of her life and been a huge part of the ringing community had such a quiet departure. Two quarter peals have been rung to her memory: one on handbells in the garden (well wrapped up on a very cold day because of socially distancing laws) and the other 'virtually' on Ringing Room



Oliver, Lynne, Matt, Ian, Sue – well muffled up in the cold

Exeter Cathedral Society

84 Whipton Village Road, Exeter

Tuesday, 6 April 2021 in 42m

1280 Kent Treble Bob Royal

1–2 Oliver Coldrick

7–8 Ian Campbell

3–4 Lynne Hughes

9–10 Sue Sawyer

5–6 Matthew Hilling(C)

Rung by members of the Exeter Cathedral Society in fond memory of Mary Mack, who died on 1 April.

Ringing Room, Devon

Sunday, 25 April 2021 in 49m

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Susan A King

4 Roger King

2 Janet Ritterman

5 Oliver Coldrick (C)

3 Lisa Clarke

6 Anne Burn

Rung in celebration of the life of Mary Mack, Vice-President of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers, who contributed so much to the ringing at Withycombe Raleigh. Died 1 April 2021.

Roger King and Wendy Campbell

Bill Ford



We were sorry to hear that Bill Ford passed away on 28 May at the age of 94. He had a fall at his care home which resulted in a broken hip. Although he came through the operation to pin his hip he deteriorated a few days later and did not recover. As I write, he is to be buried at Thorverton following a funeral service on 25 June.

Bill was a Guild Vice-President and the tower captain at Thorverton for many years where he instigated the augmentation from 8 to 10 bells in 1994. The easy availability of the bells got them affectionately known as the Devon Peal Factory. I remember

someone once asked Bill how many peals he allowed on the bells. He replied that he normally restricted it to not more than two ... in a DAY, unless ... someone wanted a third one. The neighbours were very tolerant – and the sound proofing good, although when renewing it a few years ago it seemed to be mostly made up of Bill's old coats, jumpers, and other old items of clothing.

Ian Campbell

I have just heard that my wonderful friend, neighbour and bell ringing teacher, Bill Ford passed away yesterday, Friday 28 May in hospital in Swindon after a recent fall and a long illness. Bill had a life-long history with the Guild and within the world of ringing. Many of us who knew him will remember the kindness he always showed to fellow ringers, young and older, his love of bell ringing and his enthusiasm to teach new ringers method ringing, no matter how long it took them to grasp it. Even after moving to live close to his family in Swindon he managed to carry on ringing until fairly recently.

He returned to Thorverton four years ago for a surprise 90th birthday celebration when so many of his bell ringing friends attended. It was a splendid party with lots of sandwiches and cakes and he loved it. He will, I know, be greatly missed by us all.

Jane Flaxington, Thorverton tower captain

Bill was tower captain at Thorverton for many years and also attended practices at Exeter St Mark, Pinhoe and Silverton to name just a few.

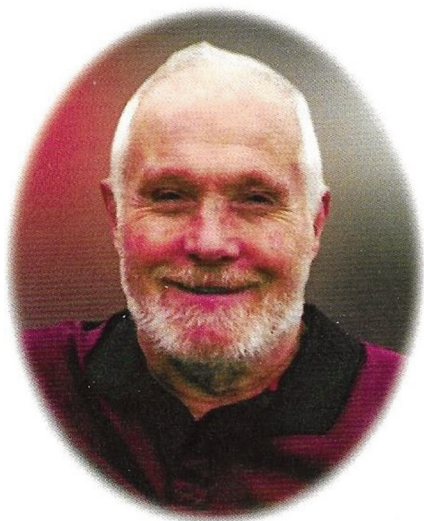
He also rang many peals, particularly at Thorverton.

In the mid-1990s Bill started arranging regular quarter peals at Thorverton which Neil and I were part of. Over the years we ended up ringing approximately 140 quarter peals with him.

Bill was well into his 90s and had been living near Swindon with family for the last few years.

Janet Deem

Martin Dodd



The sudden death of Martin on Good Friday has robbed the branch of its longest serving tower captain. Very few of us can remember a time when Martin was not at the helm at St Michael's, Teignmouth. He had kept a band together since the 1960s – no mean feat. There was always a warm welcome to visitors, and we know that many holiday-making ringers returned over and over again because of the warmth of that welcome. He taught very many ringers over that time and was also a branch officer, being branch Ringing Master in the 1970s. With Barbara to support him the Teignmouth outings became legendary – five or more towers and then a return to their house for supper. It was always a high spot when, after a hard day's ringing, the tables would be heaving with delicious food and the day was rounded off with good fellowship. More recently these outings ended with a pub meal – often at the Smugglers but still forming a highlight of the day.

Martin was not a prolific peal ringer and his list shows his devotion to St Michael's that was such an important part of his life. Only the first of his five peals (Cambridge Minor at Torre for the Queen's Silver Jubilee) was not rung at St Michael's. Quarter peals were much more to his taste, and he rang many of them over the years. We have already mentioned the outings and he delighted in ringing at new towers. At present we do not have details but we know he must have rung at well over one thousand. A particularly happy memory is the delight he so obviously felt after some superb ringing on the 14 bells at Winchester Cathedral – one of his last new towers.

Understandably the Teignmouth ringers have been devastated by this sudden loss. At the same time they are determined that ringing continues at the two Teignmouth towers as soon as they are allowed back. Due to the Covid restrictions only a small number were allowed inside the church for the funeral but a good representation of ringers was outside the church to greet the coffin and the rope of the tenor bell that he must have pulled on numberless occasions was on display on top of the coffin. The fifth bell was rung half muffled in support of Ann and family as the hearse arrived at the church. All being well a more appropriate memorial service will be held towards the end of July (hopefully planned for Wednesday 21 July at noon). We will keep you informed and hope that many of you will be able to join the Teignmouth ringers and friends on this occasion.

Martin Mansley

East Devon Branch Striking Competition cancelled

I am writing to inform you that regrettably the branch striking competition, scheduled to take place at Combe Raleigh on 10 July will not take place.

The Covid situation still appears to be a little uncertain, with the date of relaxation of rules postponed from 21 June to 19 July, so even when the relaxation goes ahead your committee feels that with many towers not having rung at all, or at least only in a very limited way, any competition held would not be sensible.

Hopefully things will improve steadily and we will look to see what may be possible for an Autumn meeting although it will be at a venue other than Shute which was the original plan.

I do hope that many of you are able to start ringing again and that the support from the Guild Ringing Recovery Group has been helpful.

Judith Reynolds, secretary

My journey through Ringing Room

Bell ringing had been on my wish-list for many years but it wasn't until November 2018 that it moved from a wish to a reality. I approached Anne Bailey who at the time was tower captain at Sidmouth and she agreed to teach me. My first few lessons were real eye openers, and I realised that bell ringing was much, much harder than I had thought. It was equally clear that I had struck gold in having Anne as my teacher. But I was quickly bitten with the bug and 'ringing' became one of the highlights of my week.

Time for some honesty. I am not a 'natural' and whilst my brain knew what I should be doing, my arms, eyes and ears just flatly refused to get on board and my ringing was closer to a noise than a joyful sound. But I stuck at it and with the help and support of all Sidmouth tower ringers (and others) progress was made, so that when lockdown arrived last year I was able to ring rounds and call changes and was even trying a 'touch' of Bob Doubles. I was happy, although I was very conscious of the fact whilst I was certainly ringing more, my standard of ringing wasn't much better; my arms still wouldn't allow me to place my bell accurately, my eyes still didn't see the order in which the ropes came down and my ears still couldn't pick out my bell reliably and, frankly, methods were a mystery.

During the first weeks of lockdown ringing gradually slipped

from my mind. I had meant to carry on ringing online (I use Tadhil Ringing) but inactivity got in the way. I then got a call from one of Sidmouth's ringers inviting me to join a small group to try and keep our hand in and 'BeesKnees' was set up on Ringing Room. Initially there were just a few learners, and we stumbled our way through rounds and then some Plain Hunt. It was fun. We kept going. We got better, and better.

We expanded our repertoire. We started to ring some method and for the first time I looked at the whole method, rather than just what 'my bell' would be doing. Patterns started to emerge and as they did I found learning the 'blue line' became relatively straightforward and I started adding bells as I moved along it. I've been learning 'touches' - still a challenge, but I've conquered a few. Our numbers grew. Our skills improved and we tried ringing on higher numbers. We persevered and now ring Minor, Triples and Major with the 'Sidmouth canters' (no, not a spelling error) becoming our signature ring!!

So Ringing Room has been a tremendous resource during lockdown, enabling many in our band to stay together and grow our skills. My big question of course is how much of what I've learnt will pass across to tower ringing. Will my months on Ringing Room help my striking or my rope sight? Not sure, but I hope so. I certainly think my listening skills have improved. When first using Ringing Room I found all those ropes bobbing up and down distracting, so I copied one of the other ringers and shut my eyes. Chaos, but I gradually improved and 'tapping' blind has become my preferred method. But with the resumption of ringing looming I knew that I would have to open my eyes in the tower and so now try to watch the other ropes when I tap - a struggle, but I'm getting there (I think). So if I hear and see more in Ringing Room, maybe I will hear and see more in the tower??

But the greatest benefit for me has been an unravelling of some of the mysteries of method construction. I no longer look at a new method with horror but with interest - how does it fit together - how does the dodging at the front affect the bells at the back? Elementary to an experienced ringer but new and fascinating to a beginner.

So Ringing Room gets a big 'thumbs up' from me. A huge thanks to the instigator of BeesKnees, as well as our various conductors, session leaders and attendees.

Sarah Collins

Exeter Branch

News from Exeter Cathedral

Bell Ringing is Back

From *Cathedral Life*, a newsletter for staff and volunteers:



The front page of Cathedral Life showing the Cathedral bells

This Sunday, 23 May, some members of our Cathedral Society of Ringers will return to sound the Cathedral's bells for the first time since Christmas morning 2020. It's another welcome step towards normal Cathedral life as lockdown measures ease.

For the last five months it's only been possible to use the automated chiming hammers and, whilst they've been a good substitute, nothing matches the real thing. Although we can't

bring all our ringers back just yet, we hope that all 12 bells will be ringing out from 21 June if the Government's roadmap progresses as planned.

The bell ringers will start their work around 9.15am on Sunday, heralding the 10am Choral Eucharist. If you live locally, listen out!

The Very Revd Jonathan Greener, Dean of Exeter

An Octogenarian Ringer

While searching for something else, I came across this fascinating item in *Church Bells*, 10 January 1890: an account of how one particular 80-year-old Cathedral ringer spent Christmas Day 131 years ago....

'Mr Henry Milford, a respected tradesman and newsagent of Thorverton, Devonshire, attained his eightieth birthday on the fifth of December last. He is the oldest ringer in Exeter Cathedral, and as the usual custom is to ring a peal at the Cathedral on Christmas Day before the six o'clock morning service begins, he left home on foot at three in the morning, arriving at the Cathedral at five, a distance of eight miles, the first on the list and had to ascend 146 steps to the belfry. Having an interval before twelve, when the bells stopped for another service, he walked to Alphington to see his sister, Mrs Mallett, who is three years his senior, and who is enjoying the blessing of good health and sight. After the usual greeting he returned to Exeter, took dinner with the ringers, and rang throughout the afternoon, walking back to Thorverton in the evening, and upon the following morning doing his usual rounds, well and hearty.'

Roger King

Cathedral News – May 2021

FROM THE BELLRINGERS: BELL TOLLED HALF MUFFLED IN MEMORY OF HRH PRINCE PHILIP

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic the Cathedral bell ringers have been unable to access the tower to ring the bells since the very brief and limited removal of the restrictions over the Christmas period. We were able to ring six bells for both the Grandisson service and also on Christmas morning.

We therefore felt it both an honour and a privilege to be asked, along with other churches and cathedrals throughout the country, to toll a single bell half muffled 99 times to mark the passing of Prince Philip on the day following his death, Saturday 10 April at 12 noon. The weight and deep tone of our bells makes them particularly suitable for this kind of occasion, but in some ways it is technically more difficult than our normal ringing, because the required speed of about once every 15 seconds is much slower than the natural speed of the bells. A team of three was required so that, in addition to the person ringing, we could have assistance in the belfry to ensure the sombre speed of ringing was maintained. We also chose to ring our second heaviest bell, as that



David Hird being interviewed by the BBC team

would be easier to control, but even so still weighs just over 2 tons. This bell is called 'Stafford' after Bishop Edmund Stafford (1395-1419) who was the original donor, but it was recast in 1676 by the Somerset bellfounder Thomas Purdue, and to quote the bell historian, the Revd John Scott, it 'is reckoned by many to be one of the noblest bells in the kingdom'.

The team of ringing master Matthew Hilling, steeple keeper David Hird, and ringer Oliver Bates were accompanied by a crew from BBC Spotlight, who captured the event on film which was then broadcast on the local television news later that evening. The same team returned a week later and this time tolled 'Stafford' for 30 minutes prior to the one minute's silence at the start of the funeral. We were so pleased to be part of the tribute to Prince Philip, especially as bell ringing is one of many volunteer activities involved in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, from which our art has benefited greatly over the years.

We now wait with anticipation for further reduction of the lockdown restrictions when we will be able to return to the tower for service ringing, hopefully from May 17 under the rule of six, and if all goes to plan from June 21 when we should be able to ring all 12 bells again.

Peter Bill, Secretary to the Cathedral Bell Ringers

Mid-Devon Branch

Extracts from Tower Talk – the mid-Devon newsletter

Branch presentation to a Guild Internet Arms virtual pub meeting

It was great to see a good representation of branch members at Cath's presentation. Another title could easily have been 'the things you did not know that you did not know about the Mid Devon Branch'. It was immediately obvious that she had really researched her subject. To cover her title 'Moor to Sea' she started at Bovey Tracey, worked across the branch to the coastal towers and finished her virtual tour at Berry Pomeroy. For each location she gave a brief description of the bells and ringing as it existed before lockdown but then went on to describe some of the interesting features of each location. There was such a variety that the hour seemed to fly by and I am sure we all felt proud that we were members of this branch. I know that Cath is very grateful for all the suggestions and photographs she received from branch members and we in return can only say a heartfelt thankyou to her for such a fascinating insight to our area. We know that Guild members from outside the branch were equally impressed.

Future events

Before very long we hope to return to 'real' ringing and branch practices. It was felt that these should take the form of training events and requests have been made for 'Raising and Lowering' (an old favourite!) and 'Basic methods'. Once we are clearer how we can proceed we will let you know dates and we will be keen to have experienced helpers.

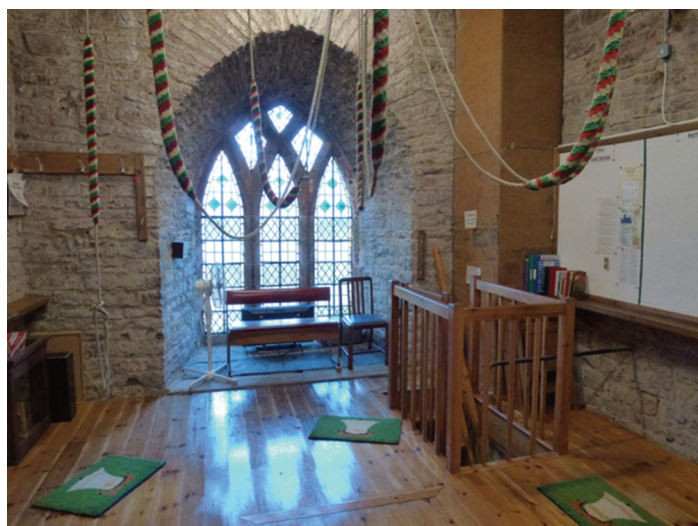
An introduction to calling short touches

Several people have stated that they would be interested in trying some calling. We have put together a short introduction to calling which can be done online. Please contact me if you are interested. I should emphasise that this is very basic and intended for those who are very new to calling. Part 2 is in preparation but that will include real ringing so can only take place once we return to our towers. The first part tries to be a gentle introduction to this important part of our ringing repertoire.

The session can be timed to suit individuals and should take no more than about 30 minutes. So, if you have ever thought you might like to give conducting a try, get in touch!!!

Martin Mansley

North-East Branch New Ventilation System at Bampton



The ringing room at Bampton – note the large west window

Good ventilation and air flow are now regarded as important as hand hygiene, social distancing and face coverings in reducing the risk of infection from the Covid virus. At Bampton tower a new air extraction ventilation system has recently been installed and tested. The lack of an opening window in the ringing room had long been a problem, particularly with the sun shining through a large west window later in the day. With Covid, the Troyte Ringing Centre (TRC) decided that a solution to lack of air movement needed to be found. A feasibility study was carried out by a specialist ventilation company with the brief that, being a Grade 1 listed building, structural alterations were unlikely to be approved.

The answer the company came up with was to use the old clock weight chute to install ducting with vents from the ceiling of the ringing chamber up into the clock and bell chambers above. This draws air and any aerosol particles up into the clock chamber (where the duct fan is located) and then blows them out in the bell chamber above that. The fan can run at six different speeds and attenuation filters have been installed in the ducts to reduce any excessive sound from the fan or the bells. An added complication was that the electrical supply to the base of the tower had already proved inadequate when several appliances were switched on, so this had to be upgraded as part of the project. The cost of the system was just over £3,000, together with a similar amount for the electrical work, and a faculty was required. However, the Bampton PCC agreed to meet much of the cost.



The new ducting in the ringing room

In a recent test ring six ringers rang for 45 minutes while CO₂ measurements were taken with the ventilation system running at level 3. CO₂ levels reached 776 parts per million after 20 minutes but declined steadily after the fan speed was increased to 4. The safe CO₂ level is 1,000 ppm. Measuring CO₂ is regarded as a proxy way of determining the likely build-up of aerosols from breathing which might contain viral particles. The TRC was especially pleased to have help in making the measurements from Dr David Pouncey who has been advising the Central Council. on ventilation and CO₂ measurement. David set up the monitoring equipment and explained the science behind the test. Afterwards he sent us a complete listing of the measurements taken at 15-second intervals throughout the test.

So at Bampton (TRC) we are well pleased that we now have a safe space in which to ring and hope to welcome local and visiting ringers soon.

Les Boyce, TRC Trustee

South-West Branch Milton Abbot Church Bell Restoration Project



The peal of six bells, tenor 13cwt, were cast by the Penningtons in 1769. They were rehung in an oak frame by Harry Stokes of Woodbury with elm headstocks and plain bearings in 1902.

After an inspection in 2016, it was discovered that the bell frame was starting to suffer from rot and was losing its structural integrity. It was also found that the general condition of the moving parts, especially the plain bearings, headstocks, pulleys and wheels are in need of urgent replacement.

John Taylor & Co of Loughborough have been tasked to supply a new steel bell frame for the existing bells. The bells will be retuned and fitted with cannon retaining headstocks, and new fittings. The total cost of the work is £97,246, of which 'only' £67,107 is now needed. Any donations will be gratefully accepted. Further details are available from: <https://www.southtamar.church/milton-abbot-bells/>.



Geoff and Valerie Hill

Getting a Dose of Ringing!



The intrepid Elena using Ringing Room while in hospital

As many of you may remember, I had a long stay in hospital last year. My health had been steadily worsening with a mystery condition up until that point, and my long stay involved lots of investigations, tests and various treatment before we discovered that the diagnosis of Ehlers Danlos Syndrome was behind my problems. It was a rough and scary ride.

If it wasn't for COVID-19, the lockdown, Ringing Room and Zoom meetings the only bell I would have been able to ring would have been my call bell and my ringing would have flatlined...

However, thankfully (in a strange way) the lockdown allowed me to be part of what was going on with no extra effort on the part of my fellow ringers.... well... a ringer brought me my laptop (thank you, Owen!) and ringers across the county and beyond kept me in the loop about each and every online event I could join in with. But largely, because the events were happening already, I could simply join in.

It was amazing to be able to have an escape from the upsetting and confusing world of the hospital ward. It helped me to be virtually surrounded by my familiar ringing friends when I wasn't allowed visitors, and of course... to ring bells.

We all found it very amusing when I had to try and keep in time while having my blood pressure taken! The hospital WiFi was not amazing, and my health prevented me from doing too much, but in the end as my strength began to return I found I could ring for longer periods of time. It was helping me to be able to see how much progress I was making.

I was discharged from hospital with my new diagnosis and a thorough treatment plan to get me back to health. I've continued to build up my strength and I am so thankful to be able to say that I have now finally managed to ring some real bells too!

Thank you to everyone who has been in contact and supported me over the past year, and thank you to everyone who invited me and accepted me to be part of your events while I was in hospital to ensure I had my steady dose of ringing.

Elena Brake

Quiz Night with the South West Branch

15 May was a social highlight in the calendar of the South West Branch. It should have been our annual outing, but instead we did some excellent ringing in the well-furnished and comfortable Ringing Room - a bit like home from home - in the afternoon, followed in the evening by a quiz, courtesy of Zoom.

Bring on the evening's compere, Alena Wardle, and our very own question master, Trevor Vercoe. These eminent members of our branch led an extremely well presented and most enjoyable

entertainment. Fifteen rounds of challenging questions were puzzled over and disputed by 25 participants, from nine different parishes of the county. These worthy puzzlers were formed into four teams of five members. Despite a lack of knowledge of pop stars and celebrities, the competition and excitement were fierce, contained into politeness by Alena, whose decision was final.

A great time was had by all, and our thanks go to Alena and Trevor, and also to the very able technologically talented team leaders.

Christine Harris

‘Would you write something for....?’

Or – how I got roped in to writing something for the South West Branch in this month’s Ringing Round Devon

Well, I don’t quite know how this happened, but I found myself saying ‘oh, alright then’ when Elena said ‘Sue, didn’t you say you’d write something?’... because I had no recall whatsoever of what I might or might not have said, and now feel that I was ever so slightly and very cleverly hooked into doing this. But, never mind, and, in any case who can say no to Elena? So, with that rambling beginning out of the way, I’ll proceed. Are you sitting comfortably? With the caveat that I have had my second vaccine today, so I might just wander off at a tangent slightly more than usual. Plus I have spent the weekend in Cornwall, and eaten far too many pasties and had far too much of a ‘good thing’. So here is a slightly light-hearted look at my time with the South West Branch.

Well, first of all, a BIG thank you to SW Branch for inviting me to ring with them at their Wednesday evening practices. I cannot quite remember when I did start doing this, but it followed on after being very kindly (again, thank you) being asked to join in the Monday night ‘Plymouth Tower’ practices, by Alena. Which I suppose must be in lieu of the ones I used to occasionally attend at St Budeaux Church when I was in Plymouth. This was way before all of this lockdown shenanigans happened.

Now, are you following all this? It’s a bit like an Oscar Wilde play, only instead of Ernest in town and Jack in the country, I am sometimes Sue in Sidmouth and at others Susan (or even Cilla) in Plymouth. Well, on Mondays, anyway. And once or twice even on Tuesdays. And – just once – at Emmanuel, on a Thursday. I really should have been in Sidmouth on the Tuesday nights, because, after all, that is my own tower’s practice night. But sometimes, I just could not get back home from Plymouth in time. But I do digress. Have you ever read Alice in Wonderland? Or Through the Looking Glass? You can tell I have, and my line of reasoning is quite similar to that of Tweedledum (or was it Tweedledee?) (Elena, I told you that you would regret getting me to write something!)

Where was I? Oh yes, ringing with Plymouth towers, and at the various towers in the SW Branch practices. Tonight was a fairly typical virtual practice. Some excellent ringing and some equally excellent banter. With Alena and Dan keeping us on the straight and narrow. Except that, with the pubs being officially open for drinking indoors, Alena was enjoying a pint or two of Guinness. And wearing a green top, to boot. Very Irish. Here’s an example of the chatting in between ringing. All part of the pleasure, for me. Someone said it (the Guinness, not the top) was for the vitamin B intake, which is undoubtedly true. Anyway, the conversation did digress (as it so often does, especially when I am at the practices) to my receiving free (and also three, one with each meal) half pints of Guinness or Mackeson (another spell check please, Elena), when in Treliske hospital, after the birth of my daughter. This was for the iron content in these brews. And no, Dan, we were not offered Irn Bru, because, contrary to its name, it contains nothing but sugar. But it was most efficacious, having my three free bottles of Guinness, both for my iron levels, and for the sleep inducing properties in my baby daughter, Jenny. A win-win. Her penchant for the occasional binge drinking session in adulthood has absolutely nothing to do with my intoxicating her as a baby. Blame

the NHS. Why am I telling you this? Because we were chatting about it tonight. And then we grabbed a rope. No messing about. Straight from chat into the ringing. Like a well oiled machine.

Other interesting conversations (how I wish I could remember the order of work or my course and after bells as clearly as I do these conversations) tonight included the benefits of a good Yorkshire brew – of tea, obviously - as a pick-me-up, post vaccine, or to get rid of a hang-over, or a headache. No guesses which Yorkshire lad gave us that top tip. Oh, and about the baby-eating bishop of Bath and Wells. (I thought this was a fact, but no, it was a reference from Blackadder). This was prompted by my meeting the Bishop of Truro yesterday, when stopping off at St Buryan church (but I may have said St Budock.. so sorry), on my way to Lands End. And I did pop inside the church (photo attached) – having had a very long drive, two coffees and the St Buryan Inn being closed. Very nice church, lovely looking ringing chamber, and I was asked to please come back and grab a rope when ringing resumes. Which I hope to do. But is it St Buryan or St Budock which has the heaviest ring of six in the world? Alena, you did tell me this, tonight, but I cannot remember what you said. Should I or should I not grab the tenor, if and when I take them up on their kind offer at St Buryan? But I digress. Again. Sorry.

Back to bell ringing, virtually, with friends from various towers in South West Branch. Thanks to being able to ring from the comfort of my own home, I have had some awesome evenings in Ringing Room with these guys, with lots of lovely banter, but somehow we always manage to ring quite a lot, despite the merry quips and lively conversation. And I have been stretched. And learned a lot, which I really hope to take back to my tower ringing. Not just doing new methods, but learning about how to follow the pattern of the work and the relationship between the other bells. About how much easier it is to ring using your course and after bells. More relaxing altogether. And so much easier virtually than on a real bell. And about when the treble leads, or when it is at the half lead. Or how you dodge in Grandsire when the hunt bell leads, not the treble. All these tips on how to approach ringing are what I hope to be able to take back to my tower bell ringing when it restarts very soon.

Tonight, we rang plain courses of Bob Doubles, Bob Triples, St Simon’s Triples, (which I rang by thinking St Clement’s Minor and adding on the work at the back – such a great tip!) and Canterbury (or was it Reverse Canterbury?) Major. Oh, and some treble bobbing on eight bells. Dan did query the name of the Major method we were going to attempt, saying ‘Canterbury? It’s London under Carlisle, with a 6th place lead end’. Fortunately that is not the Canterbury we were actually attempting to ring. We were just doing Plain Bob Major with Reverse Canterbury places in 3rds and 4ths. Just as well, as I have absolutely no idea of what Dan was talking about. But one day, I will, I am sure. He did try to explain this to me, something to do with what you do when under and over the treble. Luckily the Zoom timed out at this point.

On Monday nights in ‘the Plymouth Tower’ we ring all sorts of things, as tonight, focussing on what we can already do well, and just gradually extending that to move on to slightly trickier variations. Or the same method, but on more bells. Or to a method on seven that is like a Minor method we already know with four blows behind tagged on. So we hardly know we have been possibly taken out of our comfort zone. On Wednesday night SW Branch practices the focus has been different, and I have had a great time looking at and ringing the methods in ‘The Blue Pathway’. Which I thoroughly enjoyed doing as I felt a real sense of achievement every time we rang a short touch of something I had had to learn new. And which I really focussed on practising on Mobil before the next virtual get-together. Like the ‘Learning the Ropes’ ART scheme (which I was enjoying very much prior to lockdown), I have very much enjoyed the focussed and sequential nature of the ‘pathways’, which leads you on to more complex things, but in small, achievable steps.

We are now moving on to look at the methods in ‘The Red Pathway’. Something that I would have thought inconceivable before the Ringing Room SW Branch practices. Starting with

getting to grips with Cambridge Surprise Minor. Which I now can just about totter through, including the odd touch. Plus attempting some spliced Minor methods. There is no way I could have contemplated doing anything like this before Bryn and Leland's brilliant virtual ringing chamber Ringing Room.com, nor without the targeted Wednesday night SW Branch practices to help with the methods on both Blue and Red Pathways. There have been the odd additional Saturday SW Branch targeted practices, too, and a huge thank you to Trevor, for kindly including me in the invitations to these. Not forgetting the occasional social events and quizzes.

Little did I know, when I first found St Budeaux's beautiful church on a freezing cold Monday night back in 2019, and rang some things that I had no idea I could do - and became part of an impromptu Cilla Black singathon (whilst ringing!), with Jo - that I would come to feel so at home as a visiting and then a guest ringer (both f2f and then online), with all the gang in the SW Branch. I am very lucky being 'Ernest in town and Jack in the country', as I have never rung so much. Not just with my SW Branch friends, but also (in Ringing Room), with Lisa and my Combe Raleigh friends too, as well as with my own Sidmouth tower friends, of course. And with those friends in East Devon Branch I - we all - have also made great progress, and had a lot of fun, and achieved so much. Including completing our first virtual quarter peals of Grandsire Doubles, plus learning some fun variations of Doubles methods, such as April Day, May Day and even 'Great April Day' (April Day Triples). Not forgetting our specialities - Grandsire Triples and Stedman. So, to my friends in East Devon Branch, too, I thank you all.

In conclusion, thanks to the lockdowns, and to using Ringing Room, I have spent far more time with the ringers of the South West Branch than ever I would have done on my occasional visits to stay with my daughter in Plymouth. So thank you Alena, and Trevor, and everyone whom I meet and ring with on Monday and Wednesday evenings (and now even on the occasional Tuesday evening, with Fergus and the St Andrew's tower, too). Thank you Elena for inviting me to write something for the Guild magazine, too. Not only have I made progress, and had a lot of fun, but I must say that my confidence has come on in leaps and bounds. Now, let's just try to remember that confidence, and be that relaxed, when I grab a rope - for real - in my own beautiful tower of Sidmouth, tomorrow morning. For a bit of rope handling revision. Yippee!

Sue King

How to Call all Ten Extents of Grandsire Doubles for a Quarter Peal

Grandsire Doubles is a classic method to ring for service ringing, for a practice night or for a quarter peal. It is often the second method learnt by ringers after they have understood Plain Bob Doubles, but has the major advantage that many more touches exist for Grandsire than do for Plain Bob.

There are ten true and different touches of 120 rows (an extent on 5 bells) of Grandsire Doubles. These are listed below:

- 1st extent: SBSP repeat twice (SBSP SBSP SBSP, 3rd observation)
- 2nd extent: SPSB repeat twice (SPSB SPSB SPSB, 3rd observation)
- 3rd extent: SPBPBP repeat (SPBPBP SPBPBP, 3rd observation)
- 4th extent: BPSPBP repeat (BPSPBP BPSPBP, 3rd observation)
- 5th extent: BPBPSP repeat (BPBPSP BPBPSP, 3rd observation)
- 6th extent: BSPS repeat twice (BSPS BSPS BSPS, 5th observation)
- 7th extent: PSBS repeat twice (PSBS PSBS PSBS, 5th observation)

- 8th extent: PSPBPB repeat (PSPBPB PSPBPB, 5th observation)
- 9th extent: PBPSPB repeat (PBPSPB PBPSPB, 5th observation)
- 10th extent: PBPBPS repeat (PBPBPS PBPBPS, 5th observation)

Eagle-eyed readers will realise that 10 extents of doubles only gives 1200 rows - 60 rows short for a quarter peal of doubles. A 60 row touch must be rung in addition to the 10 extents to achieve the desired number of rows (1260). Examples of 60s of Grandsire Doubles are:

- 0th (half) extent (version 1): BPBPBP (3rd observation)
OR
- 0th (half) extent (version 2): PBPBPB (5th observation)

That's all very well, but really it is 11 strings of specific letters: P, B and S - these stand for 'Plain Lead', 'Bob' and 'Single' respectively, with a total of 75 calls! Is there any way to make learning this quarter peal composition easier?

Happily, yes there is - look what the observation bell is doing. In extents 1 to 5, the 3rd is the observation bell. The 3rd rings a double dodge at 45-up for the call (bob or single), followed by making thirds unaffected at the next lead end (as the treble takes the 3rd from lead). The 3rd repeats this pattern to complete the extent, before repeating a similar pattern in the following extents. In extents 1 and 2, the rules in the previous sentences still work, specifically double dodging 45-up at the single, followed by making thirds unaffected at the next lead end. Whilst making 3rds, a bob MAY be needed, depending on which extent you are ringing and where you are in an extent!

Further good news: in extents 6 to 10 with the 5th as the observation bell, the 5th rings the path of the 3rd's swapped around! So the path of the 5th observation starts by making thirds unaffected at the 'primary' lead end (as the treble takes the 5th from lead), followed by a double dodge 45-up for the call (bob or single) at the next lead end. The rules in extents 1 and 2 are mirrored in extents 6 and 7 for the 5th: making thirds unaffected (plain lead or bob called), followed by double dodging 45-up at the single.

The previous two paragraphs can be summed up by:

3rd observation: double dodge 45-up at the call (Single or Bob), make thirds unaffected (Plain or Bob) and repeat.

5th observation: make thirds unaffected (Plain or Bob), double dodge 45-up at the call (Single or Bob)

For the 0th half extent (zeroth, as it is probably rung before the first extent), the rules above still apply for the respective 60 row touch. Only bobs are required for the calls.

So calling the 60 rows and all 10 extents can be broken up into 5 (unequal) 'parts' for a quarter peal, with tricks to make the calling the quarter easier for the conductor. Looking at the bells that the observation bell double dodges with in 45 at the bobs and singles and learning this pattern prior to calling this quarter peal is another useful trick!

When you have learnt all this article has to offer (as I did for my 25th birthday quarter peal) and undergone some practice, you find that calling 75 calls for a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles is slightly easier than you first thought and can go on to exclaim with pleasure the words that every quarter peal ringer wants to hear: 'That's all!'

Ringing Room, UK, Plymouth
Sunday, 10 January 2021 in 47m
1260 Grandsire Doubles
10 different extents (plus 60)

1 Elena L Brake	4 Fergus M S Stracey
2 Alena J Wardle	5 Daniel T Calvert (C)
3 Maurice Calvert	6 Trevor C F Vercoe

Rung for the 25th birthday of the conductor

Daniel Calvert

On Dizzying Heights - Wednesday Ringing Room Practice of the SW Branch

We pick up knowledge in different ways and ringing is no exception. For me ringing apps never helped a lot, the relentless striking, always perfect, of the computer isn't something I can work with, more something to work against. In consequence I - or my brain - was wary to try Ringing Room. This programme saved the ringing world from being completely cut off from bells and each other in the pandemic. However, same difference to Mabel and Co? Strangely, not. I got persuaded to try Ringing Room on one of the Saturday SW practices and quite liked it. People ring the bells and a computer facilitates it. Nice.

And that's how, in early summer 2020, I ended up in the advanced Wednesday group. Some people had already started with the new Blue Path. I didn't join the Path officially, just had a go at all these St. Clement's, St. Nicholasses, Reverse Canterbury's and other (and seemingly countless) variations of Bob Doubles. It was quite exiting, confusing; and reassuring. It is possible to achieve something without a proper bell rope.

We used our 2Z units (aka two 40 minute zoom sessions) pretty intensely. A couple of jokes (mostly by Sue) or some screen freeze were the only interruptions. The latter was getting better in time. Everybody tweaked their internet. I tended to ping behind, but due to tips by Phil I invested in an ethernet cable (couple of quid) and got a smoother connection.

At the end of each evening our brains put the white flag out, we were pretty done, but happy to have achieved more methoding and some bobbing.

The Doubles methods weren't the end of the road. They prepared us (me) for a new level: Cambridge Surprise wasn't anything I had envisaged to tackle at all in my ringing career, theoretically or otherwise. As the opportunity was there, I gave it a go: we started one lead end (number of strokes till the treble returns to lead) per week. Like a masterclass. Then two lead ends, then three. This was always followed by the same number of lead ends of Little Bob. Because of the additional challenge of splicing two methods, this often proved to be more confusing than the Cambridge itself. (The lead end and the split approach helped to get a better idea what a place bell is. Every little helps.)

Then, in April, we got it: a couple of courses of Cambridge Surprise. No Little Bobs needed. We had big smiles on our faces ...

It was a useful way to spend this horrible year. Sure, the transition back to physical bells will present its own problems. But there is some Cambridge lodged in our brains. We are not going to start at zero at all.

A big thank you to Phil Dunn and Alena Wardle for challenging the group and all the helpers and fellow learners.

Barbara Hocke

Other News Ellacombe Anniversary

Dear UK participants in the Ellacombe Chimes Celebration on 26 June,

We are all looking forward to the Ellacombe Chimes celebration on 26 June. I think we can all be confident that there will be some way in which can celebrate on the day. In the worst-case scenario, should we have a continuation of lockdown, we should be able to chime at those towers/churches where Ellacombe Chimes are installed. Hopefully we will be able to have more extensive celebrations and also include as many towers/churches as possible whether they have full-circle-ringing, baton-claviers, carillons or Ellacombe Chimes.

I am pleased to advise that we are planning to launch details of the event to the media on 25 March. This will be a Press Release supported by the Ellacombe Chimes leaflet and videos. The article

in the latest issue of *The Ringing World* (5 March, No. 5732) is an excellent pre-cursor to the launch.

A Facebook page for our activity has been kindly set up by Dr Victoria Gibson from St. George's Church in Chorley: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/135681541720946/>

The commemorative book, *Ellacombe Chimes: Two Hundred Years*, (ISBN 978-1-304-70761-1) can now be purchased from the publisher Lulu. We hope that in a few week's time this will be available through other outlets including Amazon and Barnes and Noble, but in the meantime you can pre-order from Lulu on the link below:

<https://www.lulu.com/en/gb/shop/mike-gates/ellacombe-chimes-two-hundred-years/paperback/product-me5dpw.html>

There are seven Devon churches represented in the book: St Michael and All Angels, Heavitree, Exeter: St Margaret, Topsham: St David, Exeter: St Mary, Offwell: St George, Clyst St George: St Michael the Archangel, Chagford: St Giles, Kilmington.

Further details on the Ellacombe Chimes are available at:

Facebook

<http://www.bittonhistory.org.uk/ellacombe-chimes/>

<https://www.stmarysbitton.org.uk/bells.html>

<http://www.churchside1.plus.com/Goldhanger-past/Ellacombe.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiDdiiQ5s9w&t=4s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SWHI914N4A>

Mike Gates, Secretary Bitton Parish History Group

Note from Editor: It is understood that the Guild Librarian has ordered a copy of the book for the Guild library.

We all know a piece of equipment that appears in a great number of towers and many of us don't even give it a second glance. However with many services taking place on Zoom during the past year and the cessation of normal ringing, some towers have been using this equipment to good effect. The reason for mentioning this is the fact that this year celebrates 200 years since the apparatus was devised by the Revd Henry Ellacombe. The first one was installed in St Mary's church, Bitton, Nr Bristol in 1822 when Henry Ellacombe was the incumbent. It is said that he devised the system as an alternative to using his own ringers so that he did not have to tolerate what he described as their 'unruly behaviour'. He was also editor of a church periodical called 'Church Bells' and in this he often criticised the actions of ringers who did not ring exclusively for church services. He particularly criticised what we now know as striking competitions especially when a social event in the nearest hostelry followed the event. One example of which would be of interest locally was when he wrote a scathing article against a striking competition held at Slapton. Apparently he wrote, 'We blame the Vicar and churchwardens for allowing the bells to be so prostituted for the benefits of a publican's pocket.' I wonder what he would have thought of the 12-bell competition in 2019 and the associated events in the Bishop's garden on that wonderful day!

Also of interest locally is that Henry Thomas Ellacombe was born in 1790 in Alphington, the son of the Revd William Ellacombe who was rector at St. Michael's. Henry was ordained in 1816 and his first living was at Bitton, initially as curate and then as vicar. In 1850 he returned to Devon and lived at Clyst St George until his death in 1850.

So when we next walk past a set of Ellacombe chimes wherever we may be, we may remember the local connection with Devon that these chimes hold. If I remember correctly there is a picture of Henry Ellacombe hanging in Exeter Cathedral ringing room.

Michael Cannon

Precautions when using Ellacombe chimes

A number of bells have been cracked when used with Ellacombe chimes. Many will show chips out of the rim where they have accidentally hit the hammer while being swung, perhaps without releasing the mechanism. However a common cause of cracking

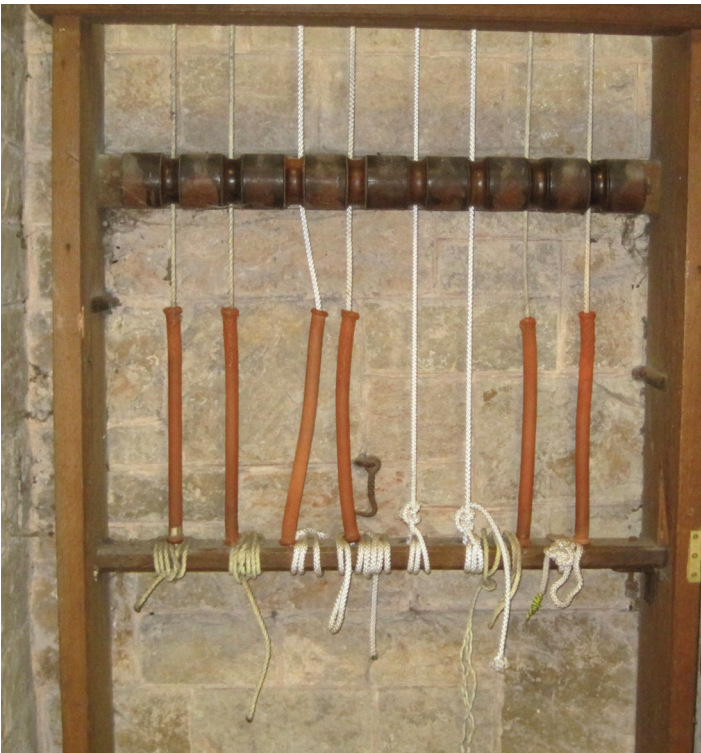
is where the hammer is pulled too hard, and then held against the vibrating bell. The correct technique is to pull the rope with a jerk, and release it before it hits the bell so that the hammer can safely hit the bell and then bounce off. Some more modern Ellacombe hammers have a pivot along the length of the shaft, and a stop preventing it from moving too far. When the shaft hits the stop the pivoted hammer carries on to hit the bell and then rebound. Please ensure that all chiming ropes are slackened before full circle ringing commences, and make sure that they cannot be pulled while ringing is in progress.

Ian Campbell

Ellacombe chimes at Heavitree, Exeter



To contribute to a booklet publicising the anniversary of the Ellacombe Chime, we produced the following on behalf of Heavitree. The equipment is not in a very good state but has been used during lockdown when conventional ringing was not allowed. Indeed, the first time I ventured up the tower after the initial lockdown I had to replace two of the chiming ropes!



The chiming apparatus in the porch

The church of St Michael and All Angels, Heavitree (part of the city of Exeter) was built in 1897. An earlier tower had been constructed from the soft, local sandstone and therefore was not robust enough to support the weight of a peal of bells. The tall and elegant granite tower that is seen today was therefore specifically designed to house the eight bells with a tenor weighing 26cwt that are widely regarded as some of the finest work ever to come from the Loughborough bell foundry of John Taylor & Co, and they remain a great favourite with visitors and local ringers alike.

It is therefore thought that the Ellacombe chimes were installed at the same time. From the hammers that strike the bells high up in the tower, the ropes drop down to the apparatus situated in the porch, just inside the entrance door to the church on the west face of the tower. The frame that the ropes are attached to is a simple wooden construction with no plaques or labels to indicate who the manufacturer might be, and a tongued-and-grooved wooden door keeps everything tidily hidden away. The chimes themselves pass through the ringing chamber upstairs, where a hook-and-eye system connects or disconnects the hammers, depending on whether the bells are to be rung by the ringers, or chimed downstairs.

Ian and Wendy Campbell

Tower Captain, John Tristram, celebrates the 200 year anniversary of the Ellacombe Chimes at St Mary’s, Offwell

The sound of bells ringing is deeply rooted in British culture and almost everyone in Britain lives within hearing range of church bells. By the 17th century bell ringing became extremely fashionable with the aristocracy as it provided physical exercise and intellectual stimulation. In rural churches, however, bands of ordinary ringers strived to outdo one another in ringing competitions. By the 1800s change ringing became synonymous with ‘swearing, smoking and a barrel of beer’. Some belfries became notorious as the meeting place of the village riff-raff who indulged in ‘heavy drinking and riotous behaviour’.

In 1822 the Rector at St Mary’s, Offwell, John Gaius Copleston, tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade the ringers from celebrating Guy Fawkes night and ringing in the New Year instead. Around the same time the Revd Ellacombe at St Mary’s in Bitton, South Gloucestershire, was having problems with his own ‘unruly and drunken ringers’. He was the editor of the bell ringing column of a church periodical called ‘Church Bells’ and he was not slow to criticise the actions of bell ringers who did not ring exclusively for church services. A particular target was prize ringing where different churches competed for the best ringing, usually accompanied by a social event. He described this as: ‘...allowing the bells to be prostituted for the benefits of a publican’s pocket.’

The Revd Ellacombe’s solution was to devise an apparatus that enabled one trusted person to ring all the bells of a church. Each of the bells is struck while the bell is static instead of the bells being rotated and on 26 June 2021 there will be a worldwide celebration of the 200th year anniversary of the ‘Ellacombe Chimes’. Churches around the world will join ‘Chime Around the World’, beginning at Timaru in New Zealand at noon on 25 June. Over the next 17 hours, working their way across the world, bells will be chiming at noon local time in each of the major time zones, arriving at their birthplace at Bitton at noon (BST) on Saturday 26 June.

During the 20th century the apparatus fell out of fashion and few remained in useable condition. Consequently Ellacombe devices were removed from a number of church towers in the UK but in Offwell the Ellacombe Chimes have been restored between lockdowns by bell captain, John Tristram, and Cllr Clive Whithear. With only one ringer allowed in the bell tower during 2020 John was able to chime the bells to welcome parishioners to the Christmas morning service, and they will chime again to celebrate the anniversary on 26 June.

The apparatus looks very Heath Robinson and John Tristram agrees:



Photo by Melanie Jolly of John Tristram ringing the chimes

'Well, it was developed by a village blacksmith in 1821. The bells remain down so it's not as rich a sound as full circle ringing, with fewer harmonics which are produced by movement of bells and clapper. It's rather like plucking the strings of a harp. With a skilled operator and more bells, more than one can be pulled at a time to give extra notes. It's hard work so the chimes can only be played for a fairly short amount of time.

'John Seymour, the previous bell captain, told me that when he first came to Offwell the Rector would sometimes play tunes on the chimes but when I became tower captain I found several of the pulleys which brought ropes down to the chime frame in the ringing chamber were jammed. The ropes themselves were unserviceable. Some were actually parted, others knotted together, all worn and frayed.

'I found that tension of the control ropes is very critical. The ropes operate a hammer inside the bell as it hangs down; too vigorous a strike swings the bell so much that it's not in position for the next strike. I need to do some fine tuning for the Ellacombe 200 year anniversary on 26 June.'

Carol Hayes

Woodbine: Snubbed or Stubbed out?

Woodbine is one of those methods that I have been aware of throughout my ringing life, but until recently never rang. I learned to ring in Cheshire where many peal boards recorded achievements in methods with unusual names like Violet, Woodbine, Tulip, Duke of York.

FRODSHAM, CHESHIRE.—CHESTER DIOCESAN GUILD.
On Saturday, November 14, 1895, in Two Hours and Fifty-seven Minutes,
AT THE PARISH CHURCH,
A PEAL OF TREBLE BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;
Being 720 each of the following :

College Exercise, College Pleasure, City Delight, Killamarsh, Woodbine, Duke of York, and Violet. Tenor 15 cwt.	
JAMES MAINWARING Treble.	SAMUEL HORSFALL 4.
HARRY MOSTON 2.	ROBERT GEO. LEWIS 5.
THOMAS BURROWS 3.	FREDERICK T. SPENCE .. Tenor.

Conducted by FREDERICK THOS. SPENCE.

The above is the first peal on the bells, and was rung to celebrate the birthday of the Vicar's son. The ringers, who all hail from Grappenhall, wish to thank, through "THE BELL NEWS," the Rev. H. B. Blogg for the use of the bells, and Mr. Forster for having them in readiness.

Fig 1. Typical local Cheshire record

I was fascinated to think that a method would be named after a cigarette, but as my diet of methods was restricted to Plain Bob, Grandsire and Original, the peal board methods remained curiosities. Over the years, visits to various towers have reminded me of those old methods; I supposed they were historical novelties that were developed into what we ring these days. Not necessarily better, just different.

During lockdown, I joined the Combe Raleigh virtual ringing practices in Ringing Room. As a change from the usual fare, it was suggested that we ring Woodbine Minor. I remembered an article in *The Ringing World* about Woodbine and the so-called Forbidden Methods and offered to do some digging. I quickly found Karl Grave's 2010 booklet in which he argued that these old Minor methods hadn't just slipped from people's memories and gradually been replaced with others, they had been deliberately obliterated by the zealous reformers of the early 1900s.

By the end of the 19th century, a wide range of popular Minor methods, such as Tulip, Violet, Woodbine, Duke of York, College Delight were rung in several English counties.

NEW MILL, YORKSHIRE
The Heavy Woollen District Association.
On Sunday, December 31st, 1899, in Two Hours and Fifty-four Minutes,
AT CHRIST CHURCH.
A PEAL OF TREBLE BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;
Being 720 each of Duke of York, Woodbine, Kent, New London, Merchant's Return, Violet and Oxford. Tenor 12cwt.

George Gill	-	-	Treble.	*Herbert Haigh	-	-	4.
John Tinker	-	-	2.	Harry Haigh	-	-	5.
Herbert Biltcliffe	-	-	3.	H. W. Barrow	-	-	Tenor

Conducted by H. BILTCLIFFE.
**First peal. Second peal by the others.*

Fig 2. Peal of Seven 720s

Yorkshire Association
Change Ringers,
ST. PETER'S, BRAMLEY.

A Peal of 5040 Changes was rung on these Bells on Tuesday October 5th 1909, in 3 Hours and 7 Minutes, consisting of
24 each of Cambridge, Surprise, Morning Exercise, Evening Exercise, College Treble, Tulip, Primrose, College Exercise, London Scholar's Pleasure, Popston, Sandle, College Pleasure, Arnold's Victory, City Delight, Killamarsh, Tanners' Pleasure, New London Pleasure, Duke of York, Kent, Woodbine, Violet and Oxford. Tenor 12 cwt.

THE RINGERS WERE:-

JAMES GUY.	Treble	J.W.T. HOLGATE.	1
T. LATIMER.	2	WALTER BROWN.	5
J.W. CHADWICK.	3	EDWARD REDSHAW.	Tenor

Conducted by T. LATIMER. Rev F. WOLDE, M.A. Vicar.

Fig 3. Peal of Twenty one 240s

In the North of England, it seems that the Minor bands delighted in inventing new methods to increase variety. In fact, by 1900 well over 100 Treble Dodging Minor methods were practised.

Inevitably some methods were unwittingly duplicated and locally given different names. Royal Bob was rung as Horbury Delight, Royal Pleasure, Black Rock, Old Bumper, and College Youths' Pleasure. Morning Exercise was colloquially called Boatrace, because it was Cambridge below and Oxford above the treble. Clearly some national standardisation was called for, but as ever, beware the law of unintended consequences! As part of the great Belfry Reform of the 1890s, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR, or CC) was founded as an advisory and coordinating body, to develop the Art and to arbitrate on ringing rules. The CC had rapidly dealt with the definition of a peal on seven and higher numbers of bells as constituting 5000 changes but deferred a decision on six bells, so the term peal often meant 720 changes of Minor. The CC tentatively proposed that a peal of Minor should comprise seven 720s (even in just one method, but called differently). Again, ringers in the North of England challenged this assumption and argued that fourteen 360s, or even twenty-one 240s in different methods were more complex and therefore should be recognised (see Fig 3). At the time, splicing was not recognised. The arguments continued until 1928, when it was resolved that a peal of Minor must consist of 7 true 720s, spliced or in single methods.

The CC turned its attention to sorting out which methods should/could be rung and the Legitimate Methods committee was established in 1899 under the chairmanship of the Revd H Law James. The conditions for legitimacy seem to have been a mix of dogma and personal preference, cleverly promoted as 'Natural Laws', to deflect criticism and minimise debate. In 1903, the Committee established broad rules for legitimacy based on these 'Natural Laws':

- 1 Lead ends MUST be Plain Bob lead ends i.e. 135264,156342,164523,142635
- 2 Methods must be symmetric
- 3 No more than two blows in any one place other than at a call
- 4 5ths place above the treble are absolutely forbidden
- 5 No 65s at backstroke, even in a 720

Today, we understand symmetry in methods and accept it as a sensible precondition for blue lines, but the other conditions seem to be pretty arbitrary, to make conducting easier or to avoid certain non-musical permutations, and could be interpreted as personal preference.

In 1907 the CC published their Collection of Legitimate Methods. Only 147 treble dodging Minor methods satisfied the Natural Laws, including Kent, Oxford, Cambridge Surprise, London Surprise, Tulip (modernised), College Exercise and College Bob IV. Between 80 and 90 popular methods were judged inadmissible.

At the time, Woodbine (Fig 4) was one of the oldest, most popular and musical methods, being published as Oxford Triple Bob in 1677, and variously known as Old Oxford or Oxford Delight. However, Woodbine's lead ends of 152364, 165243, 146532, 134625, were not those of Plain Bob and it was forbidden by the Committee. Also forbidden were old favourites like Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire Minor. Jasper Snowdon's *Diagrams* (1901) show many of the traditional old methods, like Woodbine, Duke of York and Violet. But after his death, his brother William produced the revised 1908 edition (Fig 5), proclaiming ...methods with irregular lead-ends omitted; ordinary methods producing '65s at backstroke expunged and correct examples substituted, i.e., only Legitimate methods. As expected, Woodbine was excluded. Controversially, Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire Minor, both classified by the Committee as Forbidden, were included.

Interestingly, in 1913, *The Ringing World* published the following: 'We give, this week, the diagrams for Woodbine and Violet Treble Bob. They are not among the legitimate methods, but are rung so much that we make no apology for their publication in this form'. It seems the RW had a pragmatic view of the declaration of legitimacy of methods.

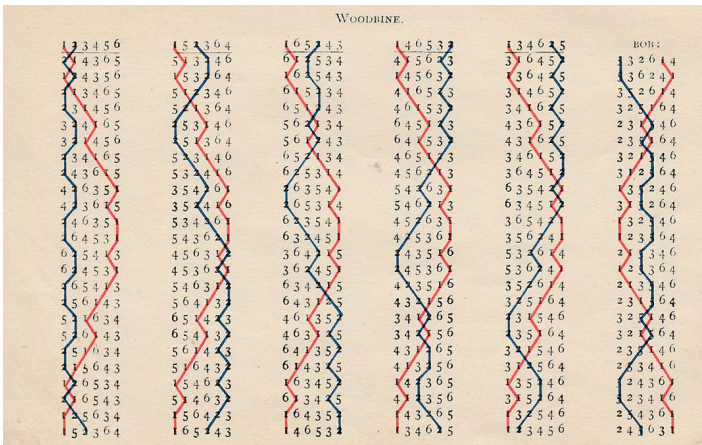


Fig 4. Woodbine Treble Bob Minor from Snowdon's 1901 book.

STANDARD METHODS

IN THE ART OF CHANGE RINGING.

BY THE LATE
JASPER W. SNOWDON.

REVISED AND ENLARGED
BY
WM. SNOWDON,
President of the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers.

LETTER-PRESS.

ALL MINOR, TRIPLE, AND MAJOR METHODS WITH IRREGULAR LEAD-ENDS OMITTED;
ORDINARY METHODS PRODUCING '65s AT BACK-STROKE EXPUNGED;
AND CORRECT EXAMPLES SUBSTITUTED;
TOGETHER WITH A SELECTION OF
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Complete with a Calling, in the letterpress portion, for the benefit of the young Conductor, of each Coloured Example, whether in Doubles, Minor, Triples, or Major.

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LEEDS:
FRED. R. SPARK & SON, CITY PRINTING WORKS, COOKRIDGE STREET.
1908.
To be obtained from the Editor, WM. SNOWDON, Civil Engineer, Leeds.

Fig 5. The 1908 publication

In 1969 the CCCBR effectively reversed all decisions of 1903 and the insistence of Plain Bob lead ends was dropped. In the intervening sixty years the Forbidden Methods were rung only infrequently and gradually seem to have been forgotten. Grave showed that the North and East of England were the real centres where Woodbine and the other controversial methods originated and flourished. But my own observations in Cheshire and later in Bedfordshire (Fig 6) confirmed they were popular in these counties too.

I was left wondering what effect the ban on these methods had on ringing in the West Country. The answer, it turns out, is not very much.

Searches of all relevant documentation failed to turn up records of any of the forbidden methods being rung in Devon. Before and

ASPLEY GUISE, BEDS.
THE BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION.
On Saturday, July 10, 1920, in Two Hours and Thirty-Three Minutes,
AT THE CHURCH OF ST. BOTOLPH,

A PEAL OF TREBLE BOB MINOR, 5040 CHANGES;
Being 720 each of London Scholar's Pleasure, College Exercise,
London Surprise, Cambridge Surprise, Woodbine, Oxford and
Kent Treble Bob.

MARK LANE Treble	EDMUND J. HOBBS 4
EDWARD P. DUFFIELD ... 2	HENRY W. GAYTON 5
HORACE H. SMITH 3	CHARLES WM. CLARKE ... Tenor

Conducted by C. W. CLARKE.

Fig 6. A peal including Woodbine TBM, long after it was declared illegitimate

during the time of the CCCBR rulings, in the counties bordering Devon, Woodbine and Duke of York (and Grandsire Minor) were occasionally rung in Somerset but not in Dorset, although method ringing in Grandsire and Stedman on higher numbers was widely practised.

Those who introduced method ringing to Devon in the late 1800s were people like Troyte (first President of the GDR established in 1874); E S Powell, the Revd Maitland Kelly and the Revd Ellacombe, liaising with The College Youths and associates from Bristol, Reading, Cambridge and Oxford. These were exceptional individuals who could also teach and inspire, as documented in the history of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers. Cross border cooperation and self-help were documented too. In 1863, Col Harry Trelawney, brother-in-law of the Revd Maitland Kelly taught himself to 'half-pull ring' using Hubbard's *Elements of Campanologia*, Ellacombe's *Practical Remarks* and Maunsell's *Church Bells and Bellringing*. He trained a band at Calstock and within three years, he and the band, with William Banister conducting, rang the first 720 of Grandsire Minor in Cornwall (Fig 7a,b). Col Trelawney and William Banister were credited with establishing the bands at Plymouth, Plympton, Kelly and Walkhampton. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when Trelawney moved away, the band reverted to call changes.

The methods introduced in Devon were pretty much as set out in the books Troyte and others wrote, *Change Ringing* by Troyte, *Ringer's Handbook* by Powell, *Art & Science of Change Ringing* by Banister. Starting with PB Minimus they move on to Grandsire and Stedman at the Doubles stage, then Bob Minor, Grandsire Minor and Treble Bob Minor (usually Kent), with the addition of PB Doubles and a few PB related methods.

Small wonder then, that Plain Bob, Grandsire, Stedman and Kent, the personal preferences of Troyte and his fellow pioneers, dominated the early ringing scene. Doubtless competition and resistance from call change ringers slowed the introduction of scientific ringing and may have affected method selection. Just as the Legitimate Methods committee outlawed methods based on what appear to be personal preference, it raises the question of

On Midsummer Day 1866 the first Peal
Of Grandsire minor Recorded in
Cornwall consisting of 720 Changes
Was rung on these Bells by the members
Of the Calstock Society of Ringers
Named below. The Peal which was
In six Parts with 5.6. at home and
Contained 34 bobs and 2 Singles.
Was brought round in 28 minutes
Conducted by William Banister.

Treble John Cox	4 th John Baker
2 nd Wm. Banister	5 th John Drew
3 rd M ^d . Kelly Esq	Tenor H.H. Trelawny Esq
Part ends.	Rev. T. Hidliah Rector
243	
432	Francis Luxton
321	
342	Joel Down Church Wardens
423	
234	

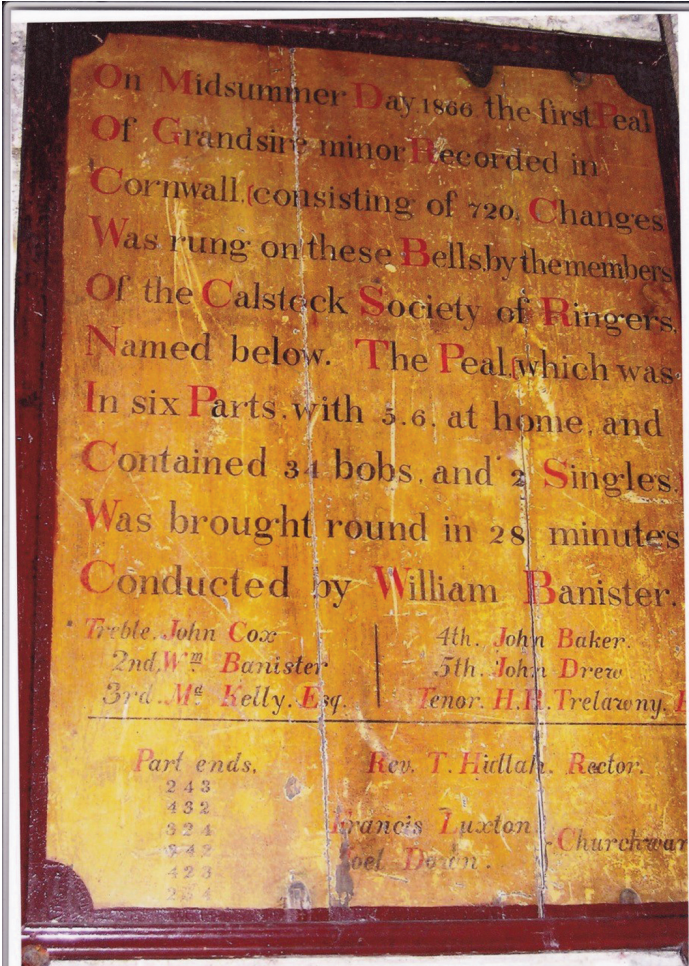


Fig 7a. The Calstock milestone

Fig 7b. Calstock Translation

how different things may have been if Woodbine and other popular methods had been personal preferences of the pioneers?

Interestingly, Grandsire Minor, which was declared Forbidden in 1907 with the additional insult that it was 'nothing short of a mongrel', was rung regularly in Cornwall from as early as 1866, and in Devon from 1878. It seems the locals ignored the ruling and simply carried on ringing the method until many years after 1907 when it fell out of fashion. Although Woodbine was re-classified and renamed Woodbine Delight, quarter peals in it were not rung in Devon until 2009, Cornwall in 2002 and in Somerset until 2007.

Having recently rung what we believe to be the first virtual touches of Woodbine Delight in Devon, as part of the Combe Raleigh practices, we can see why it was so popular in its day. It is rewarding to ring: right places, no leading wrong and very attractive to the ear. Oxford treble bob below and Norwich Surprise above the treble. It would be a good teaching aid in bridging between Treble Dodging and Surprise Minor methods. We are keen to sample Tulip, Violet, Duke of York and other long neglected old favourites, banished in the Forbidden 1907 cull. It's time they were introduced into Devon and enjoyed!

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Leslie Boyce for his encyclopaedic knowledge, patiently trawling through GDR and other archived documents, and for getting me started on online searches on the CC website. Sue McClaghry of Calstock for providing the photos and details of Trelawney's peal board. For enlightening conversations with Mike Mears, Robert Brown, James Kirkcaldy and Lisa Clarke, and for Karl Grave's booklet *Forbidden Methods*, published by The Whiting Society of Ringers, 2010.

Roger King

Notable Ringing Events

Peals

Peals in Matt's garden

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Whimble, Devon, 17 Bramley Gardens
Friday, 2 April 2021 in 2h 17 (15 in C)
5056 Cambridge Surprise Major
Charles Middleton (Arranged by Henry Johnson)
1-2 Jill M Wigney
3-4 Lynne P Hughes
5-6 Matthew J Hilling (C)
7-8 Oliver Coldrick

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Whimble, Devon, 17 Bramley Gardens
Sunday, 18 April 2021 in 2h 49 (15 in C)
5120 Kent Treble Bob Royal
Composed by Thomas J Hinks
1-2 Oliver C Bates
3-4 Lynne P Hughes
5-6 Matthew J Hilling (C)
7-8 Peter M C Richards
9-10 Ian L C Campbell

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Whimble, Devon, 17 Bramley Gardens
Tuesday, 4 May 2021 in 2h 40 (15 in C)
5040 Yorkshire Surprise Royal
Composed by Robin O Hall
1-2 Jill M Wigney
3-4 Oliver C Bates
5-6 Matthew J Hilling (C)
7-8 Lynne P Hughes
9-10 Susan M Sawyer
First peal on Matt's new bells

Mike Mears

Quarter Peals

First on Eight in hand

Exeter, Devon, 34 Woodland Drive
Monday, 17 May 2021 in 41m (11)
1264 Plain Bob Major
1-2 Charlotte A Boyce
3-4 James Kirkcaldy
5-6 Lynne P Hughes
7-8 John R Martin (C)
First on 8 in hand - 1-2

Perseverance crowned with success

Torquay, Devon, Bartcombe, Jack's Lane
Thursday, 27 May 2021 in 34m (11 in G)
1260 Double Bob Minor
1-2 Peter L Bill
3-4 Martin G Mansley
5-6 Michael H Tompsett (C)
At last!! First in method for all

Editorial

Can it really be over a year since lockdown was imposed and all ringing prohibited? It finally looks as though we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, although, as someone suggested following the rise of the Indian Covid variant, the light could just be another train coming. Let's hope not – and that the enormous vaccination program provides sufficient protection for 'normal'

ringing to restart.

From March 29 the 'rule of six' enabled six people to meet outside, which gave rise to the possibility of ringing 'real' handbells again, albeit in the cold but although the next step on April 12 allowed pubs to open, serving outside only, this did not affect ringing. May 17 showed a further relaxation of the rules, allowing the 'rule of six' to apply indoors and the Central Council recommendations suggest that ringing of six tower bells can restart, providing that the tower provides sufficient ventilation. A maximum time of 45 minutes is suggested to minimise any virus transmission. Full details are at:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/guidance-17-may-to-21-june/>

I know of several towers which have restarted Sunday ringing (on six bells) and quarter peals (and even peals) are starting again. The government's current plan is to remove virtually all restrictions on June 21. The enormous task of restarting ringing over the county should be able to commence from then – the Guild has done a lot of preparation for this and you should consult the information available; do ask for help and guidance if you think that you need it, either as an individual or as a tower captain.

Meanwhile, while ringing at St Mark's, I was amused by the picture on the *Ringling World* calendar for May – blue skies, red poppies in front of the church, warm and sunny. This should be contrasted with the current May which has been cold and wet the whole time! So I look forward to the summer, hopefully with some warmer and dryer weather, and the opportunities to get my muscles and hands back in trim, and to meet up again with so many ringing friends.

I am sorry that this edition has been delayed in getting out because of holidays. One advantage of this is that cold, wet May has now turned into flaming June – finally hot and sunny, of course, while I am stuck indoors sorting out RRD! We look forward to the next reduction in Covid restrictions, hopefully on 21 June.

STOP PRESS – the Prime Minister has just announced that the relaxation of Covid rules due on June 21 has been postponed to July 19 although the limits of attendees at weddings and large events will be removed on June 21. The 'rule of six' will still apply indoors which would seem to eliminate ringing on higher numbers of tower bells until July.

Ian Campbell

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