

# Charles Troyte & “Change Ringing”

The inspiration for the “Nine Tailors” (?)

# Who were the Troytes?

- Charles Arthur Williams Troyte (aged 15) inherited the Huntsham estate in 1857
- Already a “ puller and hauler of bells” when he met John Taylor who introduced him to method ringing
- His brothers, John and Reginald, were both ringers, having learnt at Oxford
- John was a founder member and first Master of the Oxford University Society
- John & Reginald compiled “Change-ringers guide to the steeples of England”



# Troytes and the Huntsham Tower & Band

- In 1866 Charles paid for Taylors to augment the Huntsham 3 to 6
- December 1866 the Huntsham start teaching themselves method
- Mostly Grandsire, but by 1874 were ringing “treble bob” + Stedman
- That year Huntsham was augmented to 8 and CAWT was made the first President of the newly-formed Guild of Devonshire Ringers
- First peal for the Guild was rung at Huntsham in February 1875 by the local band (Grandsire Triples)

# “Change Ringing”

- The progress of the Huntsham band was aided only by the occasional letter from John Taylor and visits from William Banister. Troyte writes: *but this was learnt without any of the practical printed aid which was so much wanted, and [the author] therefore determined to keep a careful account of the questions which he and his crew most wanted to find answered, and the following pages are in a great measure the result.*
- Hence in 1869 the first edition of “Change Ringing ... for the use of beginners”. Printed in Exeter and published in London.
- 4 editions, the 4<sup>th</sup> being most common reprinted several times
- Available until c1940. Then all copies destroyed by enemy action as described by Frank Eland, the printer Henry Eland’s son

# “Change Ringing” & “The Nine Tailors”: Chicken or egg?

- Many of the chapters in *Nine Tailors* start with a quote from Troyte
- Well-known story that DLS picked up a copy of *Change Ringing* in a second-hand bookshop on the Charing Cross Road.
- But did Troyte directly lead DLS to write *Nine Tailors* ?
- Letter from Dorothy Rowe, college friend of DLS, to John Scott (May 1974) – DLS was interested in bellringing before acquiring *Change Ringing*

# Sources used:

- The Whiting Society *Old Ringing Books* website :  
<https://www.whittingsociety.org.uk/old-ringing-books/change-ringing-troyte.html>  
(accessed 19 Feb 21)
- John Eisel *Early scientific change ringing in Devon: Parts 6 – 7*  
*Ringing World* 7 July & 4 August 2017
- *History of the Troyte Family*. Troyte Ringing Centre website:  
<http://www.troyteringingcentre.org.uk/Troyte%20History.PDF> (accessed 19 Feb 21)
- Huntsham Change Ringing Society *Attendance & Fines Book*  
[1874 – 1881] MS in Guild Library
- Charles A.W. Troyte *Change Ringing*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition  
[Archive copy in Guild Library with MS letters from Frank Eland and Dorothy Rowe]