How do we attract new ringers?” An oft-heard rejoinder in the pub, following a practice for a handful of mainly forty-somethings and upwards.

Dwindling numbers at practice will usually bring up the well-worn discussion about how to recruit new ringers. It is a problem that ringers have all thought about. We know we must attract new blood into the tower. We are all willing to give of our time to teach new ringers. And we all know how difficult it is to attract new members, especially young ones. So what can we do about it?

This is the issue that we have at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and it is exacerbated by the difficulty and draft of our bells, which makes teaching on them almost impossible. We are addressing the ‘bells problem’ by installing dumbbells and computers in a purpose-built Ringing Heritage and Training centre in what is currently the ringing room. This is an exciting resource for the East of England. So to recruiting new blood.

As part of our Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) bid, we have developed a set of activities that we are currently taking into schools. These are intended to provide a ‘ringing taster’ – bait! We are fortunate to have a portable Higby mini ring, ‘The Carter Campanile’, at the centre of our outreach work, but there are also handbells, computers, hand-chimes and wooden bell shapes.

The session is planned to last about an hour. A class of about thirty is split into five groups of six and they rotate around five different tasks, each lasting ten minutes. Children in upper Primary range and above have so far proven to be most suitable. An introduction, including a demonstration of rounds and call changes on the mini ring, and a plenary with a course of Bob Minor on the handbells, accounts for the remaining time.

“I really enjoyed it when we had the bell ringing people to come and my favourite thing was ringing the big bells.” Florrie

Activity 1 – Mini ring

The children are given the opportunity to ring handstrokes and then backstrokes individually, and finally given a go at ringing on their own. This activity needs as many helpers as are available – ideally one to one, but the more gifted and talented among you would be able to double-handle teach. We have found that some get it fairly quickly, while others …

Activity 2 – BelTutor

Derek Ballard’s wonderful software, BelTutor – a cut down, almost free, version of his BelTower – is used by pupils to return bells to rounds. A change on four is set up by the group leader and the pupils are shown how,
by clicking beneath a number beneath the picture of the ringer, a ringer’s bell moves up a place. They then continue until rounds is achieved. This can be then extended to doubles and, if time, call changes on six. The children can also be challenged to get back to rounds in as few changes as possible. The number of bells can also be increased. Generally, ten minutes is enough for the children just to return five bells to rounds.

Activity 3 – handbell lapping

Children are given one handbell each and a corresponding bell number label to wear. They are lined up in front of the tutor, who will guide them through plain hunt on six. The children are firstly given the opportunity to learn how to sound their handbell. This will add greatly to the surrounding tintinnabulation! They then practise ringing rounds, firstly through the group leader pointing or calling out bell numbers in order and then with the children ringing rounds automatically. They then move onto Plain Hunt on six. The leader tells them when to swap positions with their neighbour or when not to move – leading and sixths. Once this has been achieved fluently, with guidance, the children can try it on their own. Much fun is often had as they can get themselves into quite a muddle!

“I liked doing the activities and learning how to use bells. Ringing church bells is so fun!” Ashleigh

Activity 4 – Blue Line Maker

Simon and his Beltutor group

Making a ‘Blue line’

Write the starting order of your bells

write the 1st change
write the 2nd change
write the 3rd change
write the 4th change
write the 5th change
write the 6th change
write the 7th change
write the 8th change
Keep going until you reach 123456
This activity is designed to show the children how we learn our ‘tunes’. They are shown a blue line, our music, which means absolutely nothing to them! They are given six wooden, differently coloured bell shapes. Each one is numbered so that they have bells numbered 1 - 6. The children put these down in any order on the table in front of them. They are then told that they must get them back to the order 123456. They also have a recording grid: rows of six squares one underneath another. They may only move a bell one place at a time, although they can swap more than one pair. After each move they write down the new order (row) underneath the last one on the grid provided. When they get back to rounds they draw a blue line through one of the numbers and they have their own blue line! This can then be copied out and given a name. Whether it can be rung remains to be seen – and heard!

“I really enjoyed when we played songs on the bells and also when we organised the bell ringers on the computer, finally I liked it when all the real bell ringers played a song!” Hudson

Activity 5 – tune ringing

I purchased a coloured set of very small hand-chimes. They come in a choice of two sizes and we bought the very small ones, which work well (Tobar ‘Rainbow Music Bells’, available online for under £20). The hand-chimes also come with a selection of tunes. These are notated using coloured circles which match the colour of each bell, and there is a number which matches the number on the bell. The music is quite small so we have reproduced, in a larger format, the tunes that we wanted to use on a spreadsheet and have laminated them so that they last (teachers, even ex ones, love laminating!). The children are worked quickly through three phases:

1. Sing out the bell numbers and point to children as they have to play.
2. Say quietly the bell numbers and point to the ‘score’.
3. Play from the score unprompted.

There is usually time to play two tunes: Twinkle twinkle little star and Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree. I know these by heart now! If there are handbells available, as there were at the school in the photo, I also try to use these as well, even though they don’t have colours or numbers on them.

Schools are given a letter to send to parents telling them who to get in contact with if they want their child to continue with bell ringing (discussed and agreed with the people and towers concerned). With both of these school visits we have managed to include the ringing master of one of the locally recommended towers as a helper. So if a child does follow up this taster session, they will know one face in the tower.

At present we have visited three schools, so it is too early to judge long-term effects. However, we have already been invited back by the headteachers for next year! We have more planned and hope that once the word gets round we will be inundated!

If you have any questions, do feel free to get in touch with Richard Carter on Pike5039@gmail.com

The Mini Chimers

New handbell tune ringers

Editorial

Our regular columnist Steve Coleman certainly knows how to generate an attention-grabbing headline: “Sex” and “Central Council” (p.475) are not words normally seen or heard in the same sentence. His reputation (deserved or not) as the man who brought a previous incarnation of the RW board and the CC Ringing Trends committee to their knees must have members of CRAG quaking in their boots ...

On a more serious note, The Ringing World is always keen to air alternative points of view, and hopefully Steve’s article goes some way to counterbalance the overwhelmingly positive correspondence that we have received to date about the findings of the Council Review Action Group. In this instance we did feel it appropriate, however, to offer the CRAG Chairman, Phil Barnes, an immediate opportunity to respond (Letters, p.478).

Hopefully Central Council members will make the time to read the full version of the CRAG report, consult directly those whom they represent about it and take careful note of arguments made in the debate at Edinburgh at the end of this month. Then they must vote according to their own conscience. This may turn out to be one of the most significant annual meetings of recent years.

First Peal Congratulations

Edward B. Groome (Barton Seagrave), Rebecca J. Sharpe (Shambrook), Michael Philips (Lytham)

The on-line Dove’s Guide for Church Bell Ringers can be found at: dove.cccbr.org.uk/home.php

Updates to your tower’s information (such as change of practice night) are really helpful to potential visitors.

Also – do please supply full details of your bells and frame if not already shown.

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Early scientific change ringing in Devon
Part 1 – A false dawn
by John Eisel

In the Devon newspapers in the 1840s, 1850s and early 1860s there are a number of references to change ringing. It must not be assumed that this implies an earlier introduction of scientific or half-pull change ringing, for in general these references are to call-change ringing. Indeed, in Devon today the term ‘change ringing’ is applied to both call-change ringing and to so-called ‘scientific’ ringing. In this article, I will be careful to distinguish between them, but any use by me of the term ‘change ringing’, without qualification, refers to half-pull change ringing.

That there was some awareness of change ringing in Devon before its introduction is evident. A series of letters about change ringing proper appeared in the Exeter press in the summer and autumn of 1862, and correspondents included Samuel Austin, a prominent member of the College Youths. The series developed into a dispute in the pages of the Western Times, between Edward Bulled, representing the young ringers of Witheridge, and the old ringers of Witheridge. In one of Bulled’s letters, published in the issue of 23rd August 1862, he makes the telling remark: ‘I do not think a ringer is any the better ringer for calling the changes as we do here.’ This is clear evidence of call changes, at least at Witheridge.

With this awareness of change ringing, a move was set afoot to bring a band of College Youths to Exeter to demonstrate the art, which was supported by the local Architectural Society. On 16th September 1862 the Western Times reported that the Revd H. T. Ellacombe (who had joined the College Youths in 1861) was one of the two secretaries organising this proposed visit. A week later, it was reported that the subscriptions were coming on well, but that Messrs. Seage and Son, iron workers and machinists of Exeter (and later manufacturers of Seage’s Apparatus, for practising without disturbing the neighbourhood), had raised concern about the condition of the bells at St Sidwell’s. A meeting of the Architectural Society took place on 18th September 1862, and the report of its proceedings which appeared in Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post six days later, said, in reference to the proposed visit:

‘The Rev. Canon Woollcombe stated that the defective nature of the machinery at the Cathedral would prevent the use of the bells there. St Sidwell’s was the most effective peal open, and even there the machinery required some repair. The Rev. H. T. Ellacombe observed that the Rev. Mr. Galton had promised everything should be done to place them in an efficient state.’

Ellacombe’s confidence in the Revd Mr. Galton’s promise was misplaced, however, and because of the poor condition of the bells in Exeter in general the proposed visit never took place. However, it is clear that the idea of a visit to demonstrate change ringing remained. In that same year (1862) a treble was added to the bells of Clyst St George, Ellacombe’s own parish, to make a ring of six. These were opened on 24th November 1862, and after a service they were inaugurated by a mixed band of ringers from St Mary ‘Redcliff’ and St Stephen’s, Bristol, who rang two 120s of Grandside Doubles, 120 Stedman Doubles, and 720s of Kent Treble Bob Minor and Grandside Minor.

This occasion was treated as a showcase for change ringing, and the printed programme listed what was to be rung, and gave an explanation of each touch, explanations which were reproduced in the report of the proceedings that appeared in the Western Times on 29th November 1862. Present at the opening were many invited guests, as well as ringers from Exeter and eight other towers. Afterwards the rector entertained the ringers to a dinner at the rectory; then they rang touches on handbells in the village school-room, and departed for Bristol by the last train. A short report of the proceedings also appeared in the Bristol Mercury on 29th November 1862, which stated that, after the service,

‘some of the best methods of the day were rung, and many companies of ringers together with many hundreds assembled who never heard scientific change ringing were delighted.’

Half-pull change ringing, often referred to as scientific change ringing – as opposed to call change ringing – came to Devon in the middle 1860s. The outline of how this came about was elegantly described by John Scott in Devon Bellringing 1874-1975, his history of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers (the first territorial ringing association). However, as research into contemporary newspaper reports has continued, more information has been found that not only adds much detail to his rather broad-brush picture but also illustrates the background. There is a considerable amount of this information, such that a story emerges with several parts, focusing on different people, places and times leading up to the mid 1870s.

An evocative engraving of Exeter Cathedral as it was c.1840.
Sex and The Central Council

by Steve Coleman

Here in St J’s we’ve never thought about the Central Council much. St P’s got a lot of Central Council help with their rehang – both technical and with the fund raising – and we’ve bought booklets from the CC and been to the Ringing Roadshow. And of course, we’re grateful for all their advice on safeguarding and suchlike, and we’re pleased about their liaison with English Heritage, Ecclesiastical Insurance and those other national bodies.

But even so, the CC’s always just been there when we needed them, and we’ve never really thought about them.

But this week it’s different. We’re social media people too, and all the posts are telling us that a small group have given four weeks notice of their intention to do away with the existing Central Council and give the chop to all those people who’ve been helping us.

That’s worrying in itself, but in addition there’s a stridency in their supporters’ posts that makes me very uneasy. They remind me of the French revolutionaries baying for blood around the guillotine, and I get the feeling that it’s blood that they’re after. The posts seem to be full of shouting, urging feeling that it’s blood that they’re after. The democracy certainly creaks but it works.

Last year

But last year the CC decided that further change was needed and set up a group called CRAG – to make recommendations. Somewhat oddly, the CRAG team were largely self-appointed – which made them appear independent but which naturally attracted those with revolutionary tendencies.

One person told me he wanted to put a bomb under the Central Council, and CRAG’s certainly done that.

So the question we’re all pondering is: will the CC allow the bomb to be detonated, and if they do, how much else – including the essence of democracy – will be destroyed in the explosion?

Hearing a say

But first, let’s look at the deadline, because, after 126 years of the CC’s existence, our Reps have been given just four weeks to decide whether or not to self-destruct.

And that certainly seems odd. The CC is an organisation of Ringing Societies, set up and maintained by our predecessors, and if it’s going to be altered out of all recognition, surely we Society members should have a chance to discuss it? Indeed, surely we should have a chance to at least think about it? The full Report is a staggering 87 pages long and can only be read on line, yet we’ve been given a mere 28 days to read it, consider it, discuss it, and give our Reps our views.

And that’s absurd. In 28 days we can’t even get our Association Management Committees together, and there’s certainly no time to receive members considered views. Proposals this far reaching need to be discussed quietly and sensibly, face to face, with everyone sharing their views and listening to each other with open minds. Emails and social media are no substitute.

Social media

And certainly, many of those social media posts trouble me. The bullying tone of some is very worrying, and I fear that some CC Reps may be intimidated by the amount of vitriol that will be poured upon them if they vote against.

The level of debate from the detonation supporters isn’t high either. The response to anyone pointing out real problems in the proposals is that they’re “nit picking.” There’s a lot of shouting and a lot of emotion – and a lot of, “Right or not, it’s now or never,” – but not much reasoned thought.

The tone of the Report

And I’m concerned, too, with the tone of the CRAG Report itself. It seems that anyone who pointed out the many good things the CC does was “being defensive;” and there’s a great deal of “damning with faint praise,” and pejorative remarks about long service.

There’s also an overwhelming theme that all change is good and anything not changed is bad; and all new ideas will work as long as they’re the result of change.

But that’s simply not right. Any proposed change needs to be evaluated, quantified and tested. It needs to be measured against the likely available resources – both human and financial – to gauge whether it’s deliverable; and most important of all, if it has a significant chance of failure, there needs to be a Plan B.

But the Report has none of that. Elegantly written though it is, it’s based on faith alone. CRAG seem to believe that everything they’ve thought of will work simply because they’ve thought of it. And in all the huge welter of proposed changes there’s not a single Plan B.

Finance

And that’s exactly why time for consideration is needed. And it’s why the CC needs to pick and choose among the recommendations. I could list many examples where the assumptions that appropriate human resources will come forward appear wildly unrealistic; but there’s not enough space for that, so instead let’s just look at the financial proposals.

CRAG wants the replacement to the CC to raise an extra £25,000 per year by 2020 with an increase to £100,000 per year after that. Yet the bulk of their ideas for money raising are complete non-starters to anyone with financial understanding, so the only two left are getting the Ringing Societies to pay up and persuading individuals to become direct members of the replacement body.

Getting sufficient direct members to raise £100,000 a year seems to me to be in the “God will provide” category, and that just leaves the Associations. But would Associations be willing to stump up £1 per member – and then a little later, £4 per member – when their democratic rights are to be so drastically reduced? And if the Associations didn’t pay and so ceased to be affiliated, what then? How does the replacement CC survive? Where’s the Plan B?

Spending

And why does CRAG want all that money anyway?

Partly, apparently, to pay professionals to change the CC’s name. Yet once again, CRAG’s made no attempt to find out what a rebranding exercise would cost, even if it were needed. The Royal Mail, for example, spent £2 million on rebranding itself as “Consignia,” – the new name being “modern, meaningful and entirely appropriate,” – and then changed back again fifteen months later.
Even if the new CC spent only £100,000 on a similarly pointless rebranding, affiliations would drop off very rapidly indeed.

The Work Groups

But CRAG doesn’t just want to rename the CC, it also wants to rename the Committees. There’ll be fewer of them and they’ll become “Work Groups.” More important, their members will no longer be elected by our Representatives, because every single one of them will be appointed by the new Executive instead – presumably in the Executive’s own image. Indeed, it wants our Representatives to have almost no effective democratic rights at all. The only thing they’ll be able to do is elect The Executive – a group of eight who’ll be elected for three year terms on a rolling basis.

Thereafter the Executive will make all decisions entirely by themselves, and our Reps will have no power to overrule or reverse their decisions no matter how inappropriate or financially disastrous they turn out to be. And somewhat oddly, CRAG calls this an increase in democracy.

Ageism

Quite rightly, CRAG also believes there should be a regular turnover of those in power – although that’s no change because the posts of President and Vice President have had fixed three-year terms for decades.

But CRAG also wants those not in power to have maximum terms. The current Committees consist of volunteers who mainly do a hard job quietly, conscientiously and well because they want to serve their fellow ringers. But they’re not just workers, they’re also specialists. Many of the roles are very specialised indeed, and they either require professional expertise or benefit hugely from experience. Yet CRAG wants to limit periods of service to a maximum of seven years.

Ideological madness

I can’t see this as anything but ideological madness. You wouldn’t sack your doctor simply because he’d already been treating patients for seven years, and you wouldn’t turn your solicitor into a gardener simply because already he’d spent seven years helping people.

Indeed, if you turned up at the surgery and found you were to be treated by a bricklayer – because the doctor’s seven years were up – you’d be pretty miffed. And you’d be equally miffed that your bricks were now going to be laid by the doctor.

And it doesn’t sound much fun for the Work Group members either. Under the proposals their tenure would be at the whim of the Executive and they would have to do exactly what the Executive told them.

Disagree or show originality and they could be out. Indeed, unless they promised to toe the line they might not be in to start with.

So how many of the existing CC workers would want to volunteer on that basis? And if many of them wouldn’t, how many new people would come forward to replace them?

We don’t know. And CRAG doesn’t know either because it’s made no attempt to find out. The possibility of the new CC not having enough volunteers to function properly simply hasn’t been addressed.

Dead wood

Of course, CRAG’s rationale for limited terms is that there are some CC members whose input to the workings of the Council is small. “Dead wood,” they call them, and they want to get rid of them. But you don’t burn down the entire forest to get rid of a few dead branches; and besides, it’s a fallacy to think that all old wood is dead and all young wood is alive. And for that matter, what harm do a few dead branches do anyway.

The CC has many virile old oaks – and many virile young oaks who’ve been there more than seven years – and they’ll be sorely missed if CRAG turfs them out. And if CRAG’s worried about people becoming CC members just to enjoy the annual jolly, the simple answer is to do away with the jolly. But CRAG wants to keep that.

The Rules

But you also ask, do the Rules allow the CC to detonate the bomb planted beneath them? You ask whether, as a registered charity, the CC can legally do it?

That’s a very good question, and personally, I don’t think it can without a two thirds majority. The very first thing CRAG was mandated to do was look at the Rules. But it didn’t bother with that bit. Instead it’s putting forward two motions which, whatever their wording, are really a whole mass of Rule changes dressed up as something different.

In my view Charity Law doesn’t allow that. The CC Rules have been registered with and approved by the Charity Commission, and attempting to subvert them by way of a pretext could result in Charity Commission intervention. And that’s the last thing ringing needs.

The revolution

But of course, revolutionaries are never interested in Rules and the Law – just as they’re not interested in testing, evaluation and Plan B. To them, all that sort of thing is just “nit picking.” Rules and the Law should never apply to them, and while they’re waving their rifles and shouting slogans, a revolution can seem like a great idea. But the sad lesson of history is that when the revolution is over, tyranny, destitution and collapse always follow.

Beware!

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LETTERS

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CRAG Chairman responds to Steve Coleman

SIR, – Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment upon Steve Coleman’s article. Steve is a national treasure within ringing and many of us, myself included, greatly enjoy many of his books and articles. I am therefore disappointed that Steve doesn’t agree with what CRAG was set up to do, or with our results.

There is a danger that readers will read his article and think it is an accurate summary of the CRAG report. In fact, it is nothing of the sort. Steve has failed to acknowledge that the negative comments within our report are what ordinary ringers wrote to us in their submissions because we deliberately asked people to let us know what they thought. The balance between positive and negative is the balance that was found in the submissions. If anything we have overplayed the positives relative to what we received.

Let me start with where I agree with him. First, I deplore personal attacks and bullying on social media (and elsewhere). Second, I can agree with him that I would not recommend anyone having their bricks laid by me, a doctor! Finally, I am also a supporter of the Council and want it to thrive. That is why I put my name forward to be considered for membership of the group (note we were not “self-appointed” – see below).

I am concerned that Steve repeatedly attributes comments to us that in reality appear nowhere in our report. If you don’t believe me then simply do a search in the full report (at cc-cragswebby.com) for the phrase “dead wood”. You will not find it there, yet Steve has a whole section devoted to what he claims is our rationale for limited terms in post which he has headlined “Dead wood”.

Not only haven’t we used the phrase anywhere within the report but the rationale
for our proposal is not to deal with any “dead wood” anyway! Fixed terms of office on a committee or workgroup are to ensure a healthy turnover, hence fresh ideas can be brought to the service of ringing with such ideas being welcomed rather than being the object of suspicion and ridicule. Turnover also means there is a need to develop others for succession planning. In other words planning for the future, of which we are all guardians.  

There are many other inaccuracies in Steve’s article but one that seems bizarre is the assertion that “the CRAG team were largely self appointed”. This is simply not the case. All members of CRAG submitted an expression of interest to Ruth Marshall who was acting on the officers’ behalf in recruiting the members. There was an advert in The Ringing World!  

Rather than casting valuable column inches in The Ringing World going through the inaccuracies line by line, we shall be using Steve’s article as source material for our Frequently Asked Questions document which is on our website at cc-crag.weebly.com/faqs.html and which we will also be distributing via normal email channels.  

There are, however, two threads that run through the article which seem designed specifically to produce an emotional response in the reader and therefore need a reply. One is the repeated invocation of democracy and the other the relation of charitable status and rules.  

On the subject of democracy, I think it best simply to quote from the submission of a former Guild chairman:  

“If I am a female, Roman Catholic, Oxbridge graduate police officer, living in West Yorkshire and a member of the CC can represent me, compared with just one member representing an “ordinary” ringer in West Wales. That cannot be right. Proper democracy requires that all ringers are represented equally.”  

I have 12 reps by the way, as does my wife. Each of the other ringers in my tower has five, including the two life members of our Association who gave up ringing years ago. I dread to think how many David Brown has! That is not democratic and nor is the lack of accountability of the Council.  

The issue of the rules and the charitable status is an important one and has not been ignored as Steve would have you believe. The rules of the Council date back to 1971 and have been added to and amended ever since. They were far more detailed than the previous rules and moreover so that about items of day-to-day operations that one rarely finds in a charity’s governing document.  

The Council’s rules require a complete overhaul, irrespective of the other changes proposed by us. That task is one that requires equal thought and care to the CRAG work. It could not and should not have been rushed for this meeting. We could of course have spent all of our time dealing with the rules for the currently configured Council, but the changes to the Council itself seemed more important.  

The Charity Commission’s general advice is that a charity of the Council’s size and type can change its name, how its members and trustees are appointed, how its meetings should be managed, whether it can borrow or invest money and how it can work with other charities all without reference to them. The Commission would (and will) need to approve changes to the charitable objects as well as rules on a number of other issues.  

The rules require that any changes to them may only be made at an annual meeting. If the Council wants to act until all of the rule changes are neatly in place then this would mean at least one year’s delay, a significant loss of momentum and further risk to the reputation of the Council. The rules should assist the Council to do the right thing, not be its master.  

What we propose is that the new structures are set up in parallel while the detailed rule changes are developed. After all, the officers will still be the core of the Executive and this can be accommodated within the current rules. If the Council rules allowed for changes at an extraordinary meeting then we may have proposed doing it that way. However, it was not an option and the clear message that we have received from ringers is that change is long overdue already.  

There is always a risk of taking ourselves too seriously and I am sure Steve’s article with its colourful metaphors is designed to lighten the mood rather than to offend those who believe that the future of ringing is important. If that makes me a revolutionary then please let me send you a Kalashnikov, even though I hate violence. Personally, I think it’s important not to confuse passion to do the best for ringing now and in the future with ill-disciplined revolutionary fervour.  

PHILLIP BARNES  
For, and on behalf of CRAG  

CC President clarifies  

SIR, – I should just like to clarify a couple of points arising last week’s issue. In Richard Smith’s overview of the CRAG report, play is made that secular bells, handbells and peals are not part of promoting the Christian Church (one of the objects of the Council). It should be pointed out that if all the “secular” ringing of peals, quarter peals and private bells is added together, this only amounts to some 4% of total ringing time over a year; the rest is still church orientated.  

John Loveless’s letter regarding the York situation and references in the CRAG report appendices infer that CC involvement was not hands on. Besides meeting with the Dean, I also met with Peter Sanderson and corresponded with the two Archbishops, lead Bishop for Safeguarding and Church HQ in Westminster. Assistance was also offered in the Minster’s quest for defining and choosing paid leadership. It is unfortunate that the Minster has sought to keep the whole issue under wraps with no official minutes or helpful public updates.  

Finally, the reference to my letter regarding the Council must have provided amusement, written as it was by a callow firebrand after first encounter with the meetings. Contrary to assertion I have not been a Council member for the whole of the intervening period, but I do still acknowledge the need for reform, but with the experience of involvement with day to day work of the Council.  

CHRIS MEW  
(wearing several hats!)  
Warwick  

Waiting in the wings  

SIR, — It would be a shame if the covering statement that featured on the RW front page last week (p.449) was interpreted as being “defensive”. The commentary was sent as a covering statement for the Central Council meeting papers, exhorting Central Council representatives to study the papers closely, consult with their Associations, and come to the meeting well informed and prepared. In his own covering commentary to the final published CRAG report, Phillip Barnes himself noted “… our recommendations are radical. To some CC members they will no doubt seem a little scary. Again, however, all of the members of CRAG have undertaken our work driven by the same desire to create an organisation fit for the future.” So for Chris Mew and I to use the word “challenging” is merely agreeing with Phillip and stating the obvious. Further, surely it is only right that CRAG’s proposals and their underlying assertions are subject to scrutiny. This is not “defensive”. Richard Smith’s article (pp.451-42) similarly points out that there are some gaps in detail, notwithstanding his broad support for the proposals.  

We all seek the best for ringing, and ensuring we have the right structures is an important means to that end. But by way of enlarging the debate, while structural review is important and necessary, it’s also important to maintain focus on bigger themes in ringing.  

I am pro-reform, and look forward to working with like-minded colleagues, in whatever agreed structure, to strive for the advancement of ringing. We are all very much aware of the larger issues facing ringing. If I’ve offered the opportunity, my intention over the next few years is to mobilise the central ringing organisation (whether it be called “CCCBRR” or some other name) to deliver across six core areas:  

Recruitment – to provide resources, toolkits, support and encouragement for recruitment at all levels – tower, district, association, especially for those areas identified as being most in need. Central Council already does this in a number of ways, but it is now time to sharpen the focus.  

Leadership – intimately connected to recruitment – to encourage and support the development and delivery of programmes that bring on new leaders. That is: leaders at tower level who can teach recruits well, develop individual and team competence, engage well with their communities; leaders at district and association level who can promote and deliver collective goals, training programmes and
The CRAG report

SIR, – Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant! This carefully thought out, clear-minded, hard-hitting masterpiece is exactly what ringing needs. Phillip Barnes and his team deserve enormous congratulations for such a comprehensive work in such a short time. But will the turkeys vote for Christmas? EVERY ringer should read this report and then email their CC reps to tell them how they wish to be represented. As Richard Smith (p.452) says, there is unlikley to be a second chance on this: the Central Council MUST embrace this report, because if they do not, they will have forfeited the right to claim to represent ringers, and so will cease to have any purpose whatever.

CHRISTOPHER O’MAHONY
Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex

SIR, – Your Editorial is too kind! I am MORE than disappointed in the CC Officers letter in this week’s issue. Firstly they say that “The Officers have a duty to offer commentary...” but where is that commentary? Then they clearly hint that they see the proposals as unworkable – without clarification! Secondly I feel that their Key Queries are inappropriate at this time.

Query one – answered by Phil Barnes – the key phrase is “perfectly achievable – so long as there is the will to do so.” I do hope the representatives are a lot more positive than the Officers are.

Query two – To require neatly parcelled rule changes at this time is, I feel, just a blocking tactic by the Officers. Never mind the timescale – I fully support CRAG in not putting up such detail at this time. Such detail would only distract the meeting into nit-picking the words and punctuation of the rules, and the high-level principle for discussion and agreement would get lost in the argument. More consultation will be needed before the detailed rules are written and approved.

Query three – isn’t this a little off-remit for CRAG? I have long believed the way many affiliated societies elect their representatives is wrong; this re-form of the centre, giving a new role and limiting representation, will surely encourage those societies to have a re-think. But that is not for CRAG or the CC to dictate.

Query four is surely addressed: cost neutral initially, but a platform to enhance support to ringers as required.

I commend CRAG for their work, and hope that the Officers can find a way to support their proposals.

ALISTAIR DONALDSON
Welford, Northamptonshire

SIR, – I strongly support the initiative to revise and modernise the workings of the Central Council that has resulted in the CRAG report. There is a good deal of value in the report and its conclusions. However, I find that the resultant proposals seem to me to be inconsistent with the objectives that were set regarding implementation. Their goal is “Providing an outline approach for implementing these suggested changes”, whilst putting out of scope “Detailed implementation plans”, and this, I believe, is exactly right. The proposals they have produced, however, are quite specific and are littered with numerous dates that together go well beyond an outline and could reasonably be described as detailed implementation.

I am concerned that this is a mistake, and that the rush to press on with implementation, before the wider community has had a reasonable chance to consider the implications, risks undermining the good analysis that has been done. Representatives at the forthcoming Central Council meeting are unlikely to have the opportunity to consult widely on this important topic in the limited time that is available. By failing to present any alternatives in their report, CRAG unfortunately give the impression of a ‘take or leave it’ approach that is most regrettable.

Furthermore, there are only really two decisions emanating from the work of CRAG to be made right now, and these are an acceptance of the Vision and Mission and agreement on whether an Executive is the best structure to support them. It would be better to get strong, committed and considered support for these limited objectives if the far-reaching changes CRAG envisages are to have any chance of success.

Graham Lay
Knebworth, Herts

SIR, – Having now read and digested the CRAG Report I find myself compelled to write to encourage the Central Council to consider not just the content and recommendations of the report but to accept that such a far-reaching, indeed critical, assessment of how the future of bellringing might be managed needs more than just a Council Conference only four weeks after the Report’s publication. I would go further; in my view the report and its recommendations must be the subject of a simple bellringing-community-wide consultation. Not through a bureaucratic diversion to diocesan ‘study groups’ or ‘requests for views from representatives’ but a straightforward, in or out, accept or reject, referendum with EVERY member of the bellringing community having an equal vote.

To those who might object that ‘we’ve not done this before’ I would just say that when needs must then hard choices must be made; we are all aware of these in our current General Election. I believe that no matter how, individually, Council Members might have the future of bellringing to heart, they are not the only ones who can say that, although they are the only ones with the franchise at the moment. Extend that franchise to all members of the bellringing community, initiate a simple choice referendum, and then let’s get on with the job in the direction that the CRAG Report has set out.

I am, Sir,

MIKE GANDER
Coltishall, Norfolk

SIR, – Respect for Victorian values was probably at an all-time low in 1968 when Chris Mew wrote to The Ringing World suggesting that ringers at large should act through their local associations to demand less 1890s gentlemen’s club and more efficiency from a space-age Central Council. I don’t suppose many ringers did.

Fifty years later the Council is still going, and still puzzling over the future. The CRAG report appeared on 28th April, too late for many association AGMs. Coventry did not discuss it, or offer any guidance to its representatives on how to vote on the motions being put forward at this year’s Council meeting. How many Guilds ever do?

Richard Smith (RW p.451) says the heart of CRAG’s proposals is the creation of a
Disgusted of Chevening

SIR, – Is it just me or were other ringers appalled to read in the "What’s Hot on Bellboard" (p.459) that a group of Southampton University Guild ringers rang a quarter peel "completely naked as a birthday ‘treat’ for Lizzie"?

What do the Rector and Churchwardens of St Andrew’s Farnham think about this (if they even know)? And should Wil Bosworth have been allowed to have included it in such an appreciative way without the Editor using his red pencil?

My band of ringers, some of whom are not churchgoers, were equally of the opinion that this was totally “out of order”. Sadly, “respect” and “reverence” seem to be of little importance these days.

CAROLE CRESSWELL

Chevening, Kent

Ed. – We apologise to those offended by this hoax footnote and the commentary in these pages.

The Goftons

SIR, – I found the article about the Gofton family in the edition of 28th April very interesting. When I learned to ring in the North-East in the 1970s there were still a few ringers that remembered them. They certainly were a remarkable ringing family.

If I may make one small correction: the church pictured on p.389 is not Whitley Bay. The church concerned is Great Tey, Essex.

MIKE CHESTER

Ed. – Our apologies – this mistake occurred in-house.

Chogolisa

SIR, – I am grateful to Richard Smith (p.454) for drawing attention to the alternative extensions of Bitteswell Surprise Major that I overlooked during my investigations. I agree with his findings and conclusion that Chogolisa Surprise Maximus does not have to be renamed, and apologise for any inconvenience.

I wrote to the band the day after the peal was rung at All Saints’, Worcester and it was only when I had not received a response after two weeks that I wrote an almost identical letter to The Ringing World (p.365). So there might have been an opportunity to resolve the matter without taking up space in The Ringing World. However, the correspondence clearly demonstrates the benefit of having democratically agreed CC Decisions which enable such questions to be resolved impartially.

ANTHONY P. SMITH

Winchester, Hampshire

Belfry politics

SIR, – John Loveless’s letter (RW p.453) regarding the situation at York Minster gives us yet further insight, and I feel that the time has come to ask further questions to, as John says, “help establish truth when interested parties would like truth to stay nicely concealed”.

The former ringers of York Minster are quite clear that no safeguarding problem existed, which suggests it was contrived. Was “safeguarding” used by someone outside the Minster team to settle old scores? Who might benefit from the chaos created? Certainly no one in the then happy, healthy, thriving and competent Minster team.

No apology has been offered by the Dean or Archbishop to that bell ringing team for the maligning of their reputations – why not?

Initially, advice was asked from Chris Mew, President of the Central Council, someone who has more knowledge and insight into safeguarding than anyone else in the ringing fraternity – why then were his services dispensed with? Was his advice too balanced and sensible and not what the Dean wanted to hear?

And who was this group who stepped in to assist the Dean? How were they chosen, and why were they involved? Were they neutral in this matter, or did they act with other motives? Whose mates are they? They certainly appear to have been quite unsupportive of the Minster team.

Mark Regan has admitted to being involved at York Minster since last autumn, so will he now please help answer these questions so the truth can be established?

Safeguarding is such a serious matter that it has to be dealt with with the utmost integrity and honesty by those in positions of power, otherwise it does terrible damage to the reputations of both individuals and the church. It is vital in safeguarding matters that the policies and processes of the Church of England are followed absolutely. It appears they certainly were not followed in this case.

DE DEREK JONES

Musings on the Minster

SIR, – There has been much speculation and conjecture about the situation regarding ringing and the ringers at York Minster. I know that I have been privy to information that is not widely known about the case and I have been frustrated by many comments which have been made in the public forum which have been wide of the mark if not completely false.

That said, I have been considering what hypothetical situations could have arisen that would cause the Chapter to dismiss the entire band of ringers. What is widely known is that one of the ringers had been suspended from ringing at the Minster, and that safeguarding concerns were at the heart of this suspension. I also understand that by someone outside the Minster ringers, at the time of their dismissal, supported that said ringer and could see no reason why that ringer could not ring at the Minster.
Just suppose that the suspended ringer turned up at ringing, possibly on more than one occasion, and that not one of those ringers present reported this to anyone in authority at the Minster. Would this be sufficient grounds to dismiss the entire band of ringers? Maybe, but shouldn’t it just be those ringers who were present and witnessed this flouting of the suspension who were dismissed? Possibly! However, the whole scenario relies on inaccurate recording of those ringers present. Therefore, there would be no certainty of targeting the ringers guilty of failing to report the presence of the suspended ringer. In this case, would the Chapter really have any other option than to dismiss the entire band?

This is pure speculation and, with the CCTV recording equipment in the Minster, and in the ringing chamber, wouldn’t absolute proof have already come to light? It is nearly as farfetched as the tale of one of the former ringers turning up at the Minster in heavy disguise to note which outside ringers have been ringing since the dismissal of the band.

No one knows the entire truth of the York Minster situation and I suppose we never will.

ANDREW ASPLAND
Harrogate, North Yorkshire

God help

SIR, – As a Sunday service ringer of more than twenty years, it is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I read the latest ongoing ‘news’ regarding the York Minster dispute in this week’s RW. Surely in this day and age, why can we not wind the clock back say one year? All the people concerned should say, “Sorry, we might have got this wrong”. Let’s start again and work through the problems, praying and asking for God’s help, so that the bells at the Minster can ring forthwith.

Llangollen, Denbighshire

FRED MIERS

What’s Hot on BellBoard?

Will Bosworth

Top of the list is a three-generation family ring by the Ainsworths – see p.495 for fuller details, but many happy returns to Elva and congratulations to the new and returning family ringers. Second place goes to a great tenor-ringing achievement by young Ewan Hull in York.

The band who rang a quarter for Lizzie’s birthday in Farnham last week have managed to hit third place for the second week in a row... though with a slightly different footnote. See last week’s What’s Hot, otherwise the footnote of the fellow SUG ringers at number five won’t make any sense. Lastly, fourth place goes to a band at Writtle for a special centenary peal.

At number six there’s a peal at Edgmond in Shropshire celebrating the birth of a grandchild for two of the band, to a composition printed fifty years ago but believed unrung until now. Something unusual is a peal of Grandsire Maximus in London, apparently only the 13th peal of it ever rung. There was a quarter of Julie McD Triples in Cordonhall, conducted by Kevin Fox a year after his own stem cell transplant, underlining the amazing work of SBABC.

A peal in Hull celebrated that city’s ongoing year as UK City of Culture, and the forthcoming promotion of Holy Trinity Church to being a Minster. Final repeated thanks to Elva Ainsworth for sending in a photo and a snippet about her family touch – do consider doing the same, or at least marking your BellBoard photos for publication in the RW! (They don’t all have to follow the Farnham example.)

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CLARIFICATION

In response to the letter from John Loveless last week, Mark Regan has shown The Ringing World correspondence between himself and a senior official at York Minster which we believe proves that Mark’s involvement at the Minster cannot pre-date 11th November 2016.
PEAL REPORTS

AMHERST GUILD

STOKE POGES, Bucks, St GILES
Wed Apr 5 2017 2h57 (15)
5083 Old S Major
5 Kenneth R Davenport
2 Maurice F Edwards
1 J Alan Ainsworth (C)

OXFORD, St Thomas the Martyr
Wed Apr 19 2017 2h58 (15)
5080 Stedman Triples
8 Frank W Rivett (C)

HUGGENDEN, Bucks, St Michael & All Angels
Fri Apr 7 2017 2h59 (15)
5080 Old S Major
3 Janet E Menhinick
7 Peter J Blight
9 Stuart R Gibson

HUGGENDEN, Bucks, St Michael & All Angels
Wed Apr 12 2017 25h8 (15)
5152 Primrose Major
5 Alan G Reading (C)
5 Ian W Avery
3 Claire F Roulstone
1 Ian W Avery

BARROW GURNEY, Glos.
Thu Apr 27 2017 3h8 (15)
5040 Spliced S Minor
5 Michael Chester (C)
6 Michael Angrave
3 Julie A Tarling
2 David G Harrison

KENT C.A.

MAIDSTONE, Kent, All Saints
Wed Apr 19 2017 3h28 (32)
5080 Spliced S Royal
9 Michael E C Mears
6 Peter Bridle
5 John R Lodge

ALDERSHOTS, Hants, St Michael Archangel
Sun Apr 23 2017 25h6 (9)
5080 Spliced Major
5040 Stedman Triples
2 Paul M Mason
180 com, atw)

HERFORD D.G.

STONE, Wors, Beaconsfield
Fri Apr 28 2017 2h02 (6)
5040 Surprise Minor
8 Michael Chester (C)
7 Michael Angrave
6 Peter Bridle
5 Mike Pidd

FACILITIES

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The Ringing World – 483

May 12, 2017
BICKLEY, London, St George Sat Apr 22 2017 3h4 (4)
5024 Double Norwich CB Major
Art J W Belsch
2 Paul F Curtis
2 Nicholas Willis
2 Benjamin D Kipling
2 Ian J Mills
2 Andrew D Hodgson
6 Christopher J Cooper
2 James W Belsch (C)
2 Pink
To mark the patrimonial and the birthdays of Melanie Wilding (31 today) and Shirley Holdridge (20 tomorrow).

LANCASTER ASSN
LYNCH, Lambs, St Cuthbert Sun Feb 12 2017 2h43 (14)
5040 Grandville Doubles
1 Richard G Jones
2 Rob A Chapman
3 Paul Hart
4 Neil McGary
5 Sidney F Lloyd (C)
6 Michael Phillips
For the life of John Boardman, late Tower Captain & bellringer at All Saints Church for 65 years.
1st peal at: 6
1st peal inside: 3.
£7.60

WALKDEN, Manchester, St Paul Fri Apr 28 2017 3h2 (19)
5010 Yorkshire Major Comp. N J Pltow
1 Jane Owen
2 James E Andrews
3 Annie C Orme
4 Gat L Randall
5 Peter G Randall (C)
6 Peter G Bellamy-Knights
7 Brian J Owen
8 Derek J Thomas
£4

LINCOLN G.D.
SPROXTON, Leics, St Bartholomew Wed Mar 22 2017 2h44 (9)
5056 Spliced S Major
1 Pauline Campling
3 Simon L Edwards
3 Ruth Curtis
4 Hilda C Ridley
5 Jack E Page
6 Graham A C John
7 Alan G Reading (C)
8 Matthew D Dawson
9 David A C Matthews
10 Louis P H Suggett
1st peal on 12: 7.
1st anniversary of these Waterloo
11 Margaret Miller
7 Chris Ruch
6 Ted Clark
Comp. Donald F Morrison
5040 Plain Bob Cinques
1st peal with Derek & Jane Sibson.

BARTON SEAGRAVE, Northants, St Martin Wed Apr 26 2017 2h56 (9)
5035 Cambridge Major Comp. C Middleton
1 D Graham Hall
2 Anne P Cook
3 Edward B Groome
4 J Richard Hough
5 James M Alsop
6 Alastair M Donaldson
8 Paul S Seaman (C)
A 21st birthday compliment to Edward Groome (April 27th).

EAST ELSLEY, Berks, St Mary Thu Apr 27 2017 2h4 (8)
5184 Sapello Delight Major
1 Brian Bladon
2 Nicola J Turner (C)
3 Colin M Turner
4 Cynthia E Howell
5 Peter Bridle
6 John C Sheppard
7 Claire F Roulstone
8 Graham A C John
A birthday compliment to Stuart Roltone, 70 years young tomorrow.

DORCHESTERCAMBS
WHALLOWFIELD, All Saints Sun Apr 23 2017 2h57 (13)
5040 Surprise Minor
7 Michael S Austin
8 Matthew D Dawson
10 Louis P H Suggett

Use BellBoard to submit performances.
In Memoriam

Birchington, Kent. (All Saints) 23 Apr, 1260 Stockbury Doubles: Michael Little (C) 1, Tim Atttridge 2, David Sheeky 3, Emma Tapsell 4, Douglas Neve 5, Stuart Willott 6. For St George’s Day. Rung open for the life of Maise Higgins.

Bradling, lOW. 23 Apr, 1260 Doubles (5m): Kieran Downer 1, John Mitchell 2, Barry Downer 3, Caroline May 4, Margaret Downer 5, Ken May 6. Rung for St George’s Day & in memory of Pat Deacon, former choir member. RIP.


Methods named

The following methods are believed to have been rung for the first time.

Sully, Vale of Glam. 26 Apr, 1440 Harry S Minor: Valerie J Batten 1, Martin Batten 2, Alex G Saunders 3, Christopher E Saunders 4, Roger S Harpole 5, Julian C Parker (C) 6. Run & named belatedly in celebration of the birth of Harry Rhys Batten, second grandchild for Valerie & Martin, on 26 November 2016. 1st in m.

General quarters

Sheffield, EsseX. 16 Apr, 1260 PB Doubles: Sue Matthews 1, Beth Johnson (C) 2, Ray Jones 3, Alwyn Deebank 4, Rachel Coates 5, David Lazzerini 6. For Easter. 1st in m: 5.

Shenley, Buckis. 16 Apr, 1260 Doubles (3m): Linda Maycroft 1, Beckie Fawcett 2, Ann Birch 3, John Brookman 4, Edward L Fawcett (C) 5. Rung by the Sunday service ringers for Easter. Also as part of the MKSO celebrations. And remembering George William Maycroft, grandfather of 1, on the anniversary of his birth in 1915.

Shiplake, Oxon. 21 Apr, 1260 Carlisle S Minor: Cyril Crouch 1, Joyce Vernon 2, Pam Elliston 3, Josie Irving 4, Lavinia Sullivan 5, Robert Partridge (C) 6.

Shrewsbury, (S Chad) 16 Apr, 1260 PB Caters: Eiff Patterson 1, Amanda R Craig 2, Maurice G Ingram 3, Elizabeth S Menhinick 4, Madeline J Harris 5, Alan M Patterson 1, Amanda R Craig 2, Maurice G Ingram 3, Lavinia Sullivan 4, David Lazzerini 4, Dave Kelly (C) 5, Rachel Coates 6. Run as a birthday compliment for Revd Prebendary Alan Berners-Wilson.


Tewkesbury, Glos. Abbey Church of St Mary the Virgin 16 Apr, 1280 Yorkshire S Major: Sheila Taylor 1, Marianne Fisher 2, Ruth Bagley 3, Peter Elliott 4, Greg Jones 5, Malcolm Taylor 6, Mike Seagrange 7, David Bagley (C) 8. To celebrate Easter.


Torrington, Kent. 9 Apr, 1293 Stedman Triples: Janine Byrne 1, Jacqui Fletcher 2, Catherine Heathcoat (C) 3, Pam Thomas 4, Darren Elphick 5, Gordon Hill 6. For the Tuesday lunchtime Songs of Praise Service.

Twyford, Lincs. 20 Apr, 1260 Doubles (4m): Dave Kelly 1, Sue Marshall (C) 2, Lynda Lazzarini 3, Anne Deebank 4, Rachel Coates 5, David Lazzarini 6. For Easter.

Tynemouth, Berks. 21 Apr, 1280 Doubles: John P Burton 1, Clare Coleman 2, Matthew D Hardy 3, Raymond H Daw 4, Margaret Simpson 5, John S Boorman 6, Malcolm Quinby (C) 7, David J Simpson 8.

Bovis, London. (St Mary) 28 Apr, 1272 Cambridge Min: Thomas F Lawrence (C) 1, Eva, Redier 2, Jinny Kulkuk 3, Rachel C Billeging 4, Gregory Rose 5, Carl G Benton 6. £2.50

Brackenfield, Derby. 26 Apr, 1320 Woodbine D Min: Derek Butterworth 1, Peter England 2, Lynda Lazenzeri 3, David Lazenzeri 4, Colin Lord 5, Martyn Marriott (C) 6. £3

Bradford Peverel, Dorset. 26 Apr, 1250 Bristol S Major: Timothy Collins 1, Patricia Garrett 2, Robert Crighton 3, Flick Warwick 4, Thomas Garrett 5, David Crighton 6, Nick Cronin 7, Richard Pullin (C) 8. £4

Bradford Peverel, Dorset. 26 Apr, 1260 Julie McDonnell Bob Doubles: Janet M Collins 1, Joanna Wenborne 2, Julie Miles 3, R Nicholson Lawrence 4, Pauline Campling 5, Timothy F Collins 6. £3

Brailsford, Derby. 28 Apr, 1272 Trinity Sunday TB Min: Pat Hall 1, Gill Pearson 2, Ruth Jopp 3, Fred Pearson 4, Luke Heaton 5, John Hawes (C) 6. £3

Breckland, Essex. 28 Apr, 1320 PB Doubles: Di Wilkes 1, Nigel Coupe 2, Sue Barnett 3, Richard Chamberlain 4, Maurice Starkey (C) 5, Steve Beech 6. Rung to welcome Jo & Paul back home after another year abroad in New Zealand!

Bromyard, Herefs. 16 Apr, 1565 Grand Master Caters: J Anthony Ellis 1, Jo Hall 2, Madeleine Johnson 3, J Anthony Ellis 4, Jo Hall 5, Chris Jenkins 6. £125

Buckland Newton, Dorset. 24 Apr, 1320 PB Doubles: John Cowdow 1, Jan Keenahoe 2, Nick Baker 3, Gareth R Evans 4, Mark D Symonds (C) 5, Lynda G Guest 6, Lisa Evans 6. £1.50. By members of the West Dorset Branch for SDGR firsts weekend.

Burbage, Leicestershire and Melton Mowbray. 22 Apr, 1312 Bristol S Major: Nigel Harrison 1, John Collett 2, Alan Hodges 3, Michael Collett 4, Sally Austin 5, Dave Glyde 6, Tony Crabtree 7. £1.50

Burnley, Lancs. 18 Apr, 1280 Spl S Major (4m): Pauline Campling 1, Christine Silksone 2, Jane Owen 3, Brian J Owen 4, Matthew D Warburton 5, Richard J Parker 6, George H Campling (C) 7, James E Andrews 8. £1.50

Camborne, Cornwall. 25 Apr, 1260 Grand Master Doubles: Catrimona Sharer 1-2, Alan Winter 3-4, Marjorie B Winter 5-6, Michael G Purdy (C) 7-8. 1st Kept: 1-2. £2

Chalker, Kent. 29 Apr, 1260 Grandmaster Doubles. Florence Hamp 1, Margaret Funnel 2, Alan Driver 3, Stuart Edwards 4, Gordon Dickens (C) 5, Peter Hartley 6. £2.50. In celebration of the 83rd Birthday of Michael Wilkinson, Tower Captain of Chatham.

Cheltenham, W Gloucestershire. (St George's) 29 Apr, 2017 PB Min: Mike Collett 1, Barbara Pettett 2, Alison R Williams 3, Reg Higgins 4, Ben Gooc 5, Roy Williams (C) 6. Rang as the opening entertainment for Musicacon at St Christopher's for The Cheltenham Christmas Arts festival 2017. £3


Clencresio, Glos. (St John Baptist) 29 Apr, 1260 Grandmaster Doubles: Edith 1, Robert 1, Charles Wood 2, John 1, Carole Bucknell 3, John Sheppard 4, Rob Clive (C) 5, Matt Thewsey 6, David Chalk 7, Ian Bucknell 8. To celebrate the marriage of Irene & Simon Smith, churchwardens.


Colneborough, Kent. 25 Apr, 1259 PB Min: Nicky Scott 1, Peter England 2, Monica C Smith 3, Stephen J Bedford 4, Martin Scott 5, Edward C W Lupton (C) 6. £3

Corston, Carisbrooke. 25 Apr, 1259 Grand Master Min: Nicky Scott 1, Jody A Wood 2, Helen Udall 3, Matthew A Skues 4, Josh D J Jones 5, Matthew J Butler 6, Michael J Studubs (C) 7, Georganna Barratt 8. £2.25. £2.25. By the Chaldon Branch of St Mary with Cheriton for the 250th anniversary of the opening of the church.

Cookley, Worcestershire. 29 Apr, 1260 PB Min: Jim Lott 1, John Tett 2, Chris Lott 3, Bob Harvey 4, Kevin Fox 5, Dave Hipkins 6. £3. Rung to celebrate the 60th Birthday of our Rector, Revd. Roy Woodhams.

Cromondall, Hants. 28 Apr, 1260 PB Min: Del Baker 1, Dudley Elsmore 2, Paul Meadows 3, Ros Fox 4, Joseph Sharp 5, Kevin Fox (C) 6. Rung to celebrate the 60th Birthday & retirement of the C. Also a Birthday compliment to Andy Day. Cheltenham W Gloucestershire.

Doddrelli, Worcs. 29 Apr, 1260 PB Min: Almas Groom 1, Rosemary 2, Jenny Walton 3, Martin F Stallard 4, Mark Ingledew 5, Andrew R Gray 6. £2. £2.90. Steve Townsend (C) 7, Alan Blake 8. For the annual Dowlitch St Richard's Festival.


Eardisley, Herefs. 24 Apr, 1260 Grand Master Doubles: Peter Hargreaves 1, Alison R Williams 2, Brian Downing 3, Brian Holdaway 4, Ian Price (C) 5. Geoff Cowling 6. The first of many Qs to be rung on the simulator. £2.50

Edinburgh, (S Cathedral) 29 Apr, 1260 PB Min: Corston, Carisbrooke. 25 Apr, 1259 PB Min: Nicky Scott 1, Jody A Wood 2, Helen Udall 3, Matthew A Skues 4, Josh D J Jones 5, Matthew J Butler 6, Michael J Studubs (C) 7, Georganna Barratt 8. £2.25. £2.25. By the Chaldon Branch of St Mary with Cheriton for the 250th anniversary of the opening of the church.

Ely, Cambridgeshire. (St Peter) 28 Apr, 1260 PB Min: Brian Holdaway 4, Ian Price (C) 5. Geoff Cowling 6. The first of many Qs to be rung on the simulator. £2.50

Elsham, Lincs. 29 Apr, 1260 PB Min: (Toby) C Hibblet 1, Patricia A Donnelly 2, Karen A Lane 3, Rosina M Baxter 4, Barry F Peachey (C) 5. £1.50. By the Church Bellringers of Lincoln and Lincolnshire. £1.50. £1.50.

Elsham, Lincs. 29 Apr, 1260 PB Min: (Toby) C Hibblet 1, Patricia A Donnelly 2, Karen A Lane 3, Rosina M Baxter 4, Barry F Peachey (C) 5. £1.50. By the Church Bellringers of Lincoln and Lincolnshire. £1.50. £1.50.
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Halsingham, Essex.


Hastings, Essex.


Hastings, Essex. 17 Feb, 2012. Methods: Louise G Pink 1, Jenny Parker 2, Jennifer A Dearie 3, Pauline M Kendall 4, Sandra M Titherly 5, Alan D Pink (C) 6. Rung for Bellringers Strike Back Against the centenary of World War I

High Wycombe.


Hooe, Sussex.


Laughton, E. Sussex, 2 Jan, 1260 Doubles (11m): Pat Ayling 1, Louise Pink 2, Pauline Kennard 3, Penny Neal 4, Anne Franklin 5, Richard Neal 6.

Laughton, E. Sussex, 23 Mar, 1260 Doubles (9m/1p): Mary Burr 1, Jenny Beckhaming 2, Louise Pink 3, Pauline Kennard 4, Penny Neal 5, Richard Neal 6.

Leigh on Sea, Essex, 25 Mar, 1290 Julie McDonnell All Major: P Jonathan Franklin 1, Sandra Y Alford 2, David S Smith 3, Sally M Cotton 4, Mark Chatterton-Pile 5, Stephen J Beckingham 6, Jeremy Alford 7. 1st blows in m.

Lee, Sam, 26 Jan, 260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Terry Nichols 1, Sheila Matthews 2, Alison Wickson 3, Dee Urch 4, Helen Brown 5, John Tucker 6. 1st in m for all.

McAmpach, 15 Mar, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: John Gander 1, Terri Horton 2, Chris M Trafford 3, Sue Cameron 4, Peter Joyce 5, Cathy Reilly 6. Rung for St John the Baptist Church, Sandbach 8. With Birthday compliments to Cathy for today. 1st touch in m: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Mersham, Kent, 4 Mar, 1344 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Margaret Franklin 1, Jennifer A Dearie 2, Sandra Titherly 3, Louise Pink 4, Alan D Pink 5, Roger Pocock 6, Rupert Chesser 7, Neil Jones 8. 1st in m: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. For SBABC.

Newton, Lincs, 11 Feb, 1260 Julie McDonnell Bob Doubles: Alan D Bird 1, Sylvia M Taylor 2, Susan E Marsden 3, Nick Ellis 4, Anthony D Walker 5 conducted by the band. All except 4: 7. A SBABC Q (Cathedrals, Abbeys & Monasteries challenge) 489.


Pettistree, Suffolk, 5 Feb, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Pipa Moss 1, Mary Garner 2, Elaine Townsend 3, Mike Cowling 4, Kate Eagle 5, Mike Whitty 6. With the band's best wishes to Lucy Williamson for her 21st Birthday.

Petittridge, Suffolk, 5 Feb, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Mike Whitty 1, Pipa Moss 2, Gill Waterson 3, Stephen Cooper 4, Mark Ogden 5, Richard Munnerlyn 6. For Evansong.


Staplehurst, Kent. 22 Jan, 1296 Julie McDonnell Little Allot Royal: Adam A Brady 1, Jacqueline M Barb 2, Elizabeth A Barnes 3, Philip J Barnes 4, Sarah L Kent 5, Jennifer A Basset 6, Ruling 7, Adam A Brady 8. 1st in m: 1,7. “April hath put a spirit of youth in everything”... “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”.

Stoke on Trent, Staffs. (Minister of Church of St Peter ad Vincula, Stoke-on-Trent) 28 Jan, 1296 Julie McDonnell New Bob Caters: Wendy Dav 1, Selwyn G Jones 2, Pauline M Kennard 3, Caroline Stockmann 4, Ruling for the Bellringers Strike Back Against Blood Cancer & with our best wishes to Julie.

Stow, Lincs. 7, Apr, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Roger Forster 1, Julie McDonnell 2, Leslie Barclay 3, Alan D Pink 4 (C), Adrian D Pink 5, Michael S Simpson 6, Caroline Stockmann 7, Ruling 8. “All the world’s a stage, And all the men & women Wigney (C) 3, Jacqueline M Barlow 4, Caroline Stockmann 5, Alan D Pink (C) 6, Barbara Clark 7, Ruling 8. For Strike Back against Blood Cancer. This Q is part of the International challenge for 2017, ringing in Cathedrals, Abbeys & Minsters, at 25th D Major as C.

Stock, Staffs. 1, Mar, 1296 Julie McDonnell S Major: Katherine J Cobb 1, Beverley Perry 2, Penelope I Hooper 3, Leslie J Perry 4, Helen Brown 5, Brown 6, Andrew J Pink 7, Roger J Pink (C) 8, Dickon R Love 9, Martin Sutcliffe 10. Rung on St Patrick’s Day supporting Bellringers Strike Back Against Blood Cancer. $

Sundry on, Surrey. 18 Jan, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Dennis Brock 1, Julie McDonnell 2, Geraldine Forster 3, Mike Wigney 4, Caroline Stockmann 5, Mary Gow 6, Roger Forster 7, Mike Flynn 8. “This I do vow & this shall ever be. I will be true, despite thy scowly & thy’. Oldest ringer of JMD method (aged 98): 1, 3, 4, 6, 7.

Swanseor, Dorset. 19, Feb, 1260 Julie McDonnell New Bob Triples: Marisa Bartlett 1, Mike Jenkins 2, Matthew Pike 3, Philip Miles (C) 4, David Hird 5, David Sloman 6, Ruling for the Bellringers Strike Back Against Blood Cancer. 1st in m: 1, 4, 7.


Thorverton, Devon. 10 Jan, 1296 Julie McDonnell Alliance Royal: P Wendy Campbell 1, Susan M Simpson 2, Leslie Tucker 3, Charlotte A Boyce 4, James Kaldy 5, Graham Tucker 6, Roger King 7, Nigel G Birr 8, John R Martin 9 (C), David Hunter 10. Ruled as first Q in m: 1, 7.

Uckfield, E Sussex. 10, Feb, 1280 Superlative S Major: Mary Burr 1, Frances Pink 2, Barbara Pink 3, Margaret Jones 4, Christine Hinton 5, Sandra A Alford 6, Anne E Franklin 8. 1st in m: 1, 4. Remembering Graham Taylor, football manager of Lincoln, Watford, Aston Villa, Wolves

Wadhurst, E Sussex. 22, Mar, 1296 Grandes Excises: Inges Edw 1, Mary Burr 2, Sandra Alford 3, Christine Hinton 4, Sandra A Alford 5, Anna Franklin 6, Mary Burr 7, Catherine Heathcote 8.

Wakefield, W Yorks. (Cathedral) 15 Jan, 1296 Julie McDonnell Triples: Julie Heslop 1, Gill Moreton 2, Adrian Moreton 3 (C), Alan Shebourne 4, Rod Pagdin 5, Andrew Morton 6.

Walton, E Sussex. 2, Jan, 1260 Stedman Triples: Louis E Perrys, Penny B, Philip J Barnes 3, Philip J Barnes 4, Jennifer A Basset 5, Ruling 6. “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”


Warbleton, E Sussex. 28, Mar, 1260 Julie McDonnell Doubles: Penny Parker 1, Louise G Pink 2, Julie J D Pink 3, Pauline M Kennard 4, Alan D Pink (C) 5, Sandra M Miterly 6.

Wellesbourne, Warwick. 25, Feb, 1260 Grandes Excises: Beverly Faber 1, Nick Elks 2, Caroline Stockmann 3, Eileen Joy Butler 4, Bruce N Butler 5, Hydie Whittaker 6, John A Hendy 7, Andrew J Pink (C) 8, Bob J M Bailey 9, Ruling by members of the Central Council PR Committee to round off a successful PR Matters day.


Wey, Kent. 4, Mar, 1269 Cambridge S Minor: Jacqueline Barb 1, Louise Pink 2, Roger Pacifico 3, Julian D Pink 4, Alan D Pink 5, Neil Jones 6, On front 6. For SBABC.

Answers to The Pub Quiz

1. The Beatles: Help! (1965)

2. Street for Street (1974)


4. Blue.

5. Blue.


7. Blue.

8. Blue.


10. Blue.

11. Blue.


15. Blue.

16. Blue.

17. Blue.

18. Blue.


20. Blue.
**OBITUARY**

**Michael John Hobbs (Mick)**

16/12/1943 – 10/02/2017

It is with great sadness that I report on the loss of a much loved friend. His popularity was illustrated by a packed church at his funeral on 10th March at Coalpit Heath, with ringers and many work colleagues travelling from all corners of the UK.

An uplifting service was conducted by Revd. Tim Hawkin, rector of Axbridge, and past master of the Bath & Wells Diocesan Association, who got to know Mick through the monthly “Codge” gatherings on the first Monday of each month. All three of Mick’s children delivered moving tributes to their Dad. Mick had been very aware about the inevitability of his condition and with the help of his family wrote his own eulogy, which Tim read at the service. The main body of it is replicated below.

Mick was a Bristolian through and through. Born in December 1943. Had it not been for the wartime ban on ringing, the first bells he heard would have been those of St Michael’s, which is a stone’s throw from the hospital at which he was born.

In 1948 his parents moved from the Barton Hill district (pronounced Batnill) to the upmarket suburb of Whitehall, where they had bought a house for the astonishing amount of £500. It was there he joined St Ambrose Church.

He went through the usual pattern of cubs, scouts, youth club, choir and then, when strange things started to happen to his voice, he left the choir and was asked if he would like to have a go at bell ringing. So in 1958 he had his first ringing lesson, taught by Reg Hooper, who was tower captain at St Ambrose. At that time six other bell ringers lived in the same road as Mick. St Ambrose had a good steady band that served up a staple diet of Grandsire, Stedman, Plain Major, the greatest number then rung to a peal, and the first of a series of peals in high method numbers. The photograph of them outside the church at Stratton St Margaret pictured them smartly dressed in suit and ties! The number gradually increased to 110 in November 1966 at Malmsbury, which was rung for Cathy’s christening. Jackie remembers, “All through the pregnancy we would sit in bed and I would test Mick on his methods!” In February 1967 they reached 165-spliced, at Longney.

Apart from ringing he was a member of the Whisky Club, with whom he made many journeys north of the border to visit distilleries. He accumulated a vast collection of different whiskies, specialising in Bells miniatures and commemorative decanters.

Trains, too, were a big part of their lives. The last big holiday was travelling to France via Trains, too, were a big part of their lives. The last big holiday was travelling to France via Eurostar and TGV to Montpelier for their Golden Wedding in 2013, and then two years later to Amey and Mont Blanc. He always promised to take Jackie to Switzerland one day, and they made it!

Their favourite place was Roscopp, France, and he looked forward to going to the Wine Warehouse at the end of each holiday and loading up the car.

He joined Imperial Tobacco on leaving school, and worked first in Share Registration and then eventually in the computer department, where he met and made some lovely friends.

In 1986 he got a job with Gresham Life in Dorset, and eventually came back to Nat West Life and Nat West Insurance services in 1992 in Bristol. Things had come full circle.

In his seventieth year he was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer, which had spread and was only able to be managed. He took all the treatment in his stride, but after he had kidney stents fitted, it meant that he was unable to stretch and he had to give up ringing in 2014. This was a real blow.

A man of humour and warmth, Mick was a genuinely good man and good company. We remember in our prayers Jackie, Chris and Ursula, Cathy and Stephen, and Phil, and the three grandchildren Matt, Adam and Callum, as well as his 96-year-old Mum.

Following Mick’s move to Gordon Avenue, Whitehall, in 1948, my parents moved to the same road in September 1951, when I was 12 and Mick was 8. In 1954, Gillian M Hussey (now Gill Hunt) also moved to the Avenue, aged 9. Mick lived at number 40, Gill at number 39 and myself at number 58. Mick’s very first bell handling lesson, to which he refers above, was on 5th November 1958, when he was accompanied by Gill, who was sharing the same experience. So the three of us became acquainted very early in our lives and remained close friends right to the end of Mick’s life.

I particularly enjoyed visiting them at their home as Mick would always ply me with a variety of malt whiskies.

After Mick had to give up ringing in 2014, Gill and I used to meet up him and Jackie for lunch in various pubs in Bath – we always had to ensure that the girls were prepared to drive home. Throughout this latter period Mick maintained his quick witted sense of humour and bore his problems bravely, ably assisted by Jackie.

His passing will leave the Bristol scene much the poorer, after his many faithful years of Sunday morning service ringing at the Cathedral, St Stephen’s, Christchurch and All Saints.

D. JOHN HUNT

**New Buckenham, Norfolk.**

12 Feb, 1280 Warfords S Major: Betty Baines 1, Katie Wright 2, Michelle Clutton 3, Ann-M Webb 4, Alison Daniels 5, Adrian Maltan 6, Stephen Bounds 7, David Webb 8. 1st in m: 3; for St Stephen’s Evesing. Rung in thanksgiving for the life of Michael J Hobbs.

Portbury, Som. 16Feb, 1272 Ipswich S Minor: A Roy Shatill 1, Teresa J Humphrey 2, Mervyn A Arscott 3, George E Wyatt 4, Gerald V Skelly 5, Andrew H Ball (C) 6. Rung in memory of Mick Hobbs.

Yatton, Som. 18 Feb, 1280 Grandsons Doubles: Janet Garnett 1, Alison Daniels 2, Katie Wright 3, Jonathan C Adkins 4, Simon W Edwards (C) 5, Gareth B R Jones 6. On the back six to the memory of Michael J Hobbs.


Hornitos, (Bames Elders) 12 Feb, 1260 PB Doubles: Mike Gordon 1, John Cornock 2, Rachel M Parker 3, H Rex Isaac 4, David J Clark (C) 5, Kevin J Bateman 6. Rung In Memory of Mick Hobbs of Bristol, a true gentleman.


Reprinted from p.204.
Dursley, Glos. 19 Feb, 1280 Lincolnshire S Major; Hosp. Bledington 1, Ian Unsworth 2, Elizabeth Byrne 3, Jane Bull 4, Andrew Binstead 5, Francis Byrne 6, Andrew Bull 7, Philip Pope (C) 8. In memory of Michael J. Hobbs.

Reprinted from p.229.

Wedmore, Som. (S) Mary 8, Mar 12, 1280 Dudley S Major Harriane Hendry 1, Annabelle F Frost 2, Charles Piper-Wolferton (C) 3, Andrew H Ball 4, Roy Shalliard 5, Tim Hawkinings 6, Matthew C Garrard 7, Bernard G North 8. In memory of Michael J. Hobbs, forerunner of Wimborne Minster. 1st S inside: 2.

Reprinted from p.229.

“By the Exeter Cathedral Society.
In memory of Mick Hobbs.”

Jane Bull 4, Andrew Binstead 5, Francis Byrne 6, Helen Binstead 1, Ian Unsworth 2, Elizabeth Byrne 3, Reprinted from p.279.

Lees 4, Michael P R Woolley 5, Martyn Marriott 6, Phil 4, Michael E C Mears 7 James Kirkcaldy 4 Pauline McKenzie 3 Alison C Waterson 1, Paul J Pascoe 2, Littleport L; 46 com, atw) (5m: 1056 Zanussi; 1010 Bristol; 3039 Glos. & Bristol D.A. (1m: 5) Allendale, Annable’s tower lists to Miss I. M. Pearce, Rosings, Sevenoaks, Oxon, St Blaise

For accommodation list please see the web-site at St Peter’s Community Centre, Bexhill (Tea/coffee available from 2.15pm, payable on arrival).

5888 Pudsey S Major Comp. Nicholas D Brown 1, Tony J Brett 2, Bobbie May 3 Richard L Thumwood 4, Cynthia H Howell 5, John C Sheppard 6, Colin M Turner 7, Nicola J Turner (C) 8, Paul G Ellis In memory of Mick Hobbs.

News of a grant from the Fred E. Dukes International Bell Fund

A grant for 2017 has been offered and accepted as follows: St Gabriel’s Catholic Church, Bexley, New South Wales – £900.

The project is to install a light ring of six, comprising three bells sourced by the Keltke Trust and three new bells from Matthew Higby, who will also supply all the fittings. The new frame will be constructed locally.

IAN H. ORAM
CCCBR Bell Restoration Committee

50 Years Ago

From The Ringing World, 12 May, 1967

Dear Sir, – I should like to point out to M. C. F. (p. 268) that in a tug-of-war the motion and tugging is done by one’s legs, the arms acting purely as a connection between the handle of the rope and body. The position of the hands on the rope is dictated by the position of one’s feet if the left foot is put forward then it is the left hand which is forward on the rope and vice-versa.

I am afraid, M. C. F., I fail to see any connection between the handling of a bell rope and one’s feet during a tug-of-war. It is quite obvious that the uppermost hand on the bell rope must be the stronger hand, because this hand is that fully stretched during ringing. The other hand, a little lower on the rope, is not fully stretched.

The strongest hand is usually the right; this is the hand which holds a knife whilst eating, is used for throwing and is furthest away from the handle end of a cricket bat.

There are, of course, those whose left hand is the strongest, and they should not be discouraged from ringing left-handed.

Battersea

PAUL RODNES

5888 Pudsey S Major Comp. Nicholas D Brown 1, Tony J Brett 2, Bobbie May 3 Richard L Thumwood 4, Cynthia H Howell 5, John C Sheppard 6, Colin M Turner 7, Nicola J Turner (C) 8, Paul G Ellis

In memory of Mick Hobbs.
Final Whitechapel work in York Diocese

In the last few months, work has been completed in three York Diocese churches by Whitechapel Bell Foundry

York, St Helen, Stonegate

2 bells, (1) 23" dia. William Oldfield 1628, (2) 20½" dia. William Oldfield 1621

A brief report on this work has already appeared in The Ringing World (p.141). A new frame to hang both bells has been designed, made and installed. The bells have, where necessary, centre holes drilled. Both bells have been equipped with electromagnetic clappers and a control system in the church which has both a clock chime and service chimes.

A service of re-dedication was held on Sunday, 30th April with the re-dedication being undertaken by the Team Rector, The Revd Jane Nattrass, with Alan Hughes from the foundry and John Arthur the DAC Bells Adviser present.

St. Nicholas, Hornsea

A chime of eight, 15-1-27 in F by John Taylor (1919)

This chime of eight was installed as a WWI War Memorial, and little in the way of major maintenance had been done since their installation. The access to the clavier, located in the intermediate chamber, is via a steep narrow, open, staircase, unsuitable for most people. A scheme of restoration has been undertaken which involved a through restoration of the chime and the clavier, funded with significant help from the War Memorial Fund, and the addition of electromagnetic hammers to all the bells and the fitting of a control panel with chiming options in the church. In order to facilitate greater use of the chimes a key board has also been supplied.

All Saints, Old Byland

Two swing chiming bells (1) dia, 24¼" (2) 21¾" dia Both bells cast by Samuel Smith I 1672

The bells in this small village church have been in a poor state for many years. In 1973 the late Ranauld Clouston recommended that they ought to be rehung! Recent reports also stated that both bells were loose on their headstocks and work needed doing. Access up the tower was difficult, as two floors had been removed in the past. These had been replaced and the two bells removed, drilled for independent clappers and staple removal, and provided with new fittings.

We believe that this is the final rehanging job undertaken by Whitechapel.

A group after the dedication ceremony (l-r): Anthony Hammersley, Margaret Hammersley (Churchwardens), John Arthur (DAC Bells Adviser), The Revd Jane Nattress and Alan Hughes (Whitechapel Bell Foundry)

A view of the completed bell work

The two rehung bells

Old Byland Church
Meetings on Saturday May 20

BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS. Annual General Meeting, Saturday 20 May 2017, St Andrew's Biggleswade. 4.15pm service, followed by tea at approx. 5pm. AGM 6pm, followed by evening ringing until 8.30pm. Agenda/documents available at www.bacbr.org. Please print and bring your own copies if possible. Numbers/names for tea to Charlotte Smith by Thursday 18 May, 01462 700676 charlotte.m.smith@pobroadband.co.uk 2047.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS. NE District. Spring Meeting and Striking Competition. Saturday 20th May at Layer-de-la-Haye, Draw 2.30pm, service 3.45pm followed by tea and the meeting. Names for tea to Martin Piper 01206 734396 by Thursday 18th. 2045.

ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS. Southern District. Striking Comp. Draw 5pm @ Langdon Hills (SS16 8HY), Names for tea to Cathryn on 01702 533944 by Thursday 18th May. 2047.

KACCR. Ashford District. Method and Call Change Competition Saturday 20th May. This event will be held at St Michael, Kingsnorth starting at 5pm. The draw will be at 4.45pm. Band entries and names for tea to Pam Manger by Sunday May 14th (ashfordsec@kacr.org.uk). 2048.

POD. Culworth Branch. Practice will take place on Saturday 20th May at Lois Weeldon from 7.30-9pm. All are welcome.

Meetings on Saturday June 3

GUILD OF ST AGATHA. AGM and Outing. Saturday 3rd June 2017: Laddock, 8, 11ctw, 9.15-10 am, SW894510, TR2 4FL; Probus, 8, 20ctw, 10.30-11.15am, SW889477, TR2 4JW; the tallest tower in Cornwall; St Erme, 6, 8ctw, 11.45-12.15pm, SW847498, TR4 9RF; lunch – County Arms, Hightowr, Truro TR1 3PY. Function room booked for 1.45-2.15pm; Truro, Cathedral of St Mary, 12, 33ctw, 2.30-3.30pm, SW826449, TR1 2UF; Cornwall’s only 12; AGM – Kynwyn Lyghate Schoolroom, 4.5pm; Kenwyn, Truro, 8, 15ctw, 5-6pm, SW819453; TR1 3DR. Friday 2nd June: Wendron, 8, 9ctw, 9.45-10.30am, SW769313, TR1 0EA, max 8 people in the tower at once; Helston, 8, 15ctw, 11-11.45am, SW658277, TR1 8NL, max 16 people in the ringing chamber at once (we will not be covered by their insurance policy); lunch – own arrangements: Mawgan, 6, 8ctw, 1.25-3pm, SW709251, TR1 2AD; St Keverne, 10, 18ctw, 3.30-4.15pm, SW791213, TR1 6NE; Landewednack, 6, 8ctw, 5-5.45pm, SW711127, TR1 2JH; the most northerly tower in England, Thursday 1st June; Penzance, 8, 23ctw, 9.45-10.30am, SW753000, TR18 4AQ; Paul, 6, 14ctw, 11-11.45am, SW645211, TR19 6UA; Sennen, 6, 8ctw, 2.5-3.15pm, SW357254, TR1 7AD, the most westerly mainland tower in England. All towers confirmed. Further details at http://www.guildofstagatha.org.uk/ Cornwall2017Details.aspx.

Change of Address

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. On May 19th Pam and Ian Davies are moving into temporary accommodation: 38 Granley Road, Cheltenham, GL51 6LH. 2047.

Ringing research success for Austrian student

Niki Stojkovic, a student from Klagenfurt in Austria, came to England last July to “find out about” English bellringing (see RWF 2016, pp 271, 392, 765, 984). After four days of fairly intensive tuition based at St Giles’, Oxford, Niki was able to ring call changes on tower bells when he went on to ring elsewhere, firstly around Southwold in Suffolk, and then in London; and he was also able to ring 5-6 to plain hunt on six on handbells.

As part of his school-leaving exams, Niki wrote a 50-page dissertation about what he had learnt and experienced during his fortnight in England, including responses from over thirty ringers whom Niki met here, to a questionnaire which he had prepared. His study has now been formally examined, and he has obtained the highest available grade, both for the written dissertation, and for presenting it in person before a committee of examiners. Using more or less Niki’s own words:

(Sat 1 April). “Tomorrow I am going to deliver a presentation about bell ringing (basically about the study) in front of a commission which is supposed to grade the study (1-best to 5-worst). However my advisory teacher has already told me that she would suggest the grade 1 for the paper!”

“I even convinced her to join me in bell ringing, we are going to do Plain Hunt on four bells (Austrian Cow Bells), after having practised with her for about two weeks.”

(Sat 4 April). “The results of the presentations and the studies have been revealed! I was graded with a “1” (Sehr Gut), that might be an A in GB, which is the best achievable mark, for the study as well as for the presentation! I was told that I had probably delivered the day’s best presentation, and that especially the Bell Ringing part was enjoyed by the examiners. “I even had an audience of about 30 pupils from lower forms joining us, because my geography teacher had told her pupils to join us during their PE class the afternoon (3.30 pm). I was delighted to have the audience, who made the presentation and the oral exam afterwards more lively (especially by laughing at funny stories I experienced during my GB stay).

“After having rung Plain hunt on 4 with my teacher, who has never rung bells before and did extremely well, I asked the examiners to join me in rounds and called changes (sadly, no photography was permitted). We had an enjoyable discussion about sociological aspects, and talked about the historical development and its connections to political transitions under King Henry VIII.

“Our headmaster, who was one of the examiners, is a former English teacher, and claimed he had rung bells late in the afternoon during his year abroad 35 years ago (1982).”

Congratulations to Niki! I shall be surprised if we don’t hear more of him in future.

If anyone would like to see copies of the English-language Abstract and Foreword (or if the whole 50-page study, mostly in German), please send a request to johnguypusey@hotmail.com

JOHN PUSEY

St Giles, Oxford
Elva’s family ring

Mark Ainsworth (brother), Iain Anderson (husband), Alex Lucas (daughter), Jo Ainsworth (sister), Aidan Anderson (son), Elva Ainsworth (me), Logan Anderson (son), J Alan Ainsworth (father).

Eight members of Elva Ainsworth’s close family gathered at St Mary’s, Amersham on May 1st to ring a special birthday touch of 55 changes of Stedman Doubles (with three bells covering). Three generations were included — aged 10 to 82, distributed in reverse order around the circle. Three of the family were brought out of ringing retirement and two have only learnt in the last year, so it was quite a special experience for everyone!

Amersham, Bucks. 1 May, 55 Stedman Doubles: J Alan Ainsworth (Father) 1, Elva R Ainsworth 2, Joanna M Ainsworth (Sister) 3, Iain J Anderson (Husband) 4, Mark H Ainsworth (Brother) 5, Alex E Lucas (Daughter) 6, Aidan J Anderson (Son) 7, Logan T S Anderson (Son) 8, Rung to celebrate Elva’s 55th Birthday, by a band of her immediate family, in age order.

Bellframe recording day

The recording of bell frames is a fairly niche subject, however it has an importance from a historical perspective. Prior to the age when it was easy to transport heavy items around the country, bell frames would be adapted and re-used regularly. This means that valuable artefacts are hidden away in church towers.

Their importance is now recognised and can have an impact on any bell restoration project. Unfortunately there are few experts in this field, and, like all of us, they are not getting any younger. The subject of bell-frame recording has been raised in different forums recently, at the Church Building Council, English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, but nothing has happened to progress this. It was also mentioned at the 2016 conference of DAC bell advisors in Warwick.

With this background, the Towers and Belfries Committee of the Central Council decided to arrange a day seminar as an introduction to the subject. This was held at Wellesbourne on Saturday, 1st April 2017. Alan Frost took over the arrangements and obtained the services of Chris Pickford and John Eisel to lead the day. After a short welcome from the CCCBR President, Chris Mew, it was down to business. We were also fortunate to have Nick Molyneux from English Heritage with us and he explained some of the current needs when a faculty is being considered; we all should try and have an understanding of the different viewpoints. When relevant, a ‘statement of significance’ is essential in the faculty process.

The rest of the morning was given over to Chris and John splitting the subject broadly in two: firstly, what needs to be recorded, and secondly, how do we record it.

After lunch, those attending were divided in two groups and visited local churches for a more practical interpretation. We are grateful to Chadshunt and Chesterton for accommodating us, especially the latter where the churchwarden who met us had laid on tea and biscuits.

Back at Wellesbourne there was a short discussion on the day, before leaving for home. If there is anyone else reading this who has an interest in this subject, or knows of someone who does bell recording, it would be good to hear from them. We were all very grateful to Chris and John for sharing a little of their knowledge, and to Alan for making the arrangements. The Towers and Belfries Committee are in the early stages of arranging a bell maintenance training day to be held later in the year; again, if this is of interest to you please get in contact; David.Kirkby@gmail.com, or 01903 813653.

David Kirkcaldy

Thought for the week

I had the pleasure of learning to ring in the 1940s with the returning pre-war bell-ringers who were as keen as mustard to re-engage in a wide range of Minor methods. Doubles only rang out when occasionally our numbers were few and it was a case of having to ring the back five bells.

Nowadays, when I ring, with a less experienced band having to ring Bob Doubles, it is of course very clear that our standard depends first and foremost on the rhythmical striking of the tenor bell, the ringer of which may not be fully conversant with the method being rung. Without such talent behind them, those ‘doing all the work’ have no pleasure in ringing – nor will all those within earshot, with less to guide them into the church for Sunday worship; and perhaps, even, to discover the source of all that sound coming from up the tower, with a wish to ‘learn the ropes’ of our wonderful Exercise.

I write this Thought with the very fresh memory of participating in my Branch Striking Competition. My band, with plans to ring Bob Doubles, was drawn to ring first. Then followed my careful listening to the six other entries, and eventually having the enjoyment of hearing the judge award us third place. That was a great improvement from last year, when we unable to enter a band. Now I am wondering whether we can, perhaps, get a higher place in 2018 when we ‘Go next time’. Here’s hoping!

Michael Stephens
Guild of Clerical Ringers

The Pub Quiz
(answers on p.490)

1. In motor racing, what colour of flag is flown to warn a driver that he is about to be lapped?
2. In the nursery rhyme, where did Mary’s little lamb follow her to?
3. What was the name of the ship that Sir Francis Drake circled the world in?
4. FCO is the airport code for which European city?
5. What are the twelve long triangles on a backgammon board called?

From this issue …

6. What are the two tunes that Richard Carter suggests can be played easily on eight hand-chimes?
7. Why is criticising the Central Council like sex?
8. Name one of the three York Diocese towers where Whitechapel Foundry has recently completed work.
9. What date will BBC Music Day be held on?
10. Where were the band from who visited Exeter in 1862 to give an early ‘showcase’ of change ringing?
To unite people through music, the BBC are asking towers around the world to ring at 7pm on BBC Music Day, Thursday, 15th June

BBC Music Day is returning for its third year on Thursday, 15th June 2017, celebrating music’s ability to unite communities across generations, and this year ringers have been asked to play an even bigger role.

The sound of bells, with their power to bring communities and generations together, was a feature of last year’s BBC Music Day, with over 200 bell-ringing groups taking part.

This year’s theme is the power of music, and the day will feature broadcasts on BBC TV, Radio and digital services from 6am to midnight. Bob Shennan, Director of BBC Radio and Music, explains:

“BBC Music Day is a unique opportunity for people to celebrate music and musical talent, whether attending one of the many events taking place or tuning in at home.”

This year’s BBC Music Day will be even larger, and the BBC would like to build on last year’s success by inviting tower and handbell ringers from the UK and around the world to ring out at 7pm at their local time.

BBC Music Day Producer, Rebecca Sandiford, comments “Church bells are a wonderful symbol of community cohesion and since BBC Music Day is all about uniting people through music, bell ringing is going to provide a fantastic unifying moment. This year we’d like to make this even more special by inviting ringers around the globe to join us, ringing at 19:00 local time, to show how the power of music can unite people around the world.”

BellBoard

The Ringing World’s BellBoard website is helping! There’s a diary event for the day, which you can add your intended attempts to in advance, and link your performances to after the day. Click on ‘Diary’ and then ‘Search’ to find the event (‘BBC Music Day 2017’), and then click ‘Add Attempt’ to register some details of what you’re planning to ring (don’t worry if you don’t know everything!). The BBC are asking for anything from a few minutes of ringing, so you can ring a touch, quarter peal or peal, and they can all be added in the same way.

BellBoard also has a link on the front page from which you can download a pdf file of a flyer for the day, to help publicise the event.

How to take part:

- Agree with your venue, plan your band, what you will ring and any special event or dedication associated with your performance. If possible, arrange permission from your band and venue in case the BBC ask you to video or record your ringing on the day.
- Add your planned attempt to BellBoard in advance! Visit the diary event ‘BBC Music Day’ and click ‘Add Attempt’ to register.
- Email the BBC Music Day team at BBCMusicDay@bbc.co.uk as soon as possible to let them know you’ll be taking part, with the subject heading “RINGING EVENT – <Your Location> <Your Country>, and including in your email:
  - A contact email and mobile phone number
  - Who will be ringing and what will be rung
  - Details of any event, story or dedication associated with your performance, which will be of interest to the BBC’s audience.
- Ring! Start at 7pm local time on Thursday, 15th June.
- Link your performances (touches, quarters or peals) to BellBoard.
- The BBC may invite you to submit a video or audio clip of your ringing on the day. If so, they will contact you using the email or phone number you have provided.