



Founded 1925

President—Mr Gerald Stevens

# DEVON CALLS

**October 2003**  
**Volume 1, Issue 11**

**Special points of interest:**

- Minor final report
- The facts-Frank Bye
- Profile of our President
- Wrinklies Rounds
- Association Festivals
- Rehang at Lydford
- Bill and May's 70 years

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## Devon Final-Egg Buckland set a record?

Thanks to Jack Rhymes, the Associations Major Final was broadcast on Radio Devon. On Sunday 22nd June, at 7.25am, an interview with our Hon Sec, Mr Jereme 'Dart' and Lincoln Shaw was put out to listeners. During the interview, West Alvington were coming to the end of their top ringing. This short piece of broadcast included comments on recruitment, young ringers, lady ringers and the crème de la crème of the call change ringing fraternity. When asked by Mr Shaw if ringing would continue for years to come, our enthusiastic Sec

answered 'that it would if I have any thing to do with it! The final afternoon took place at a wonderful setting, with the River Dart and steam train line close by. The weather was glorious, with the ringing chamber getting heated for more than one reason. Staver-ton ringers were excellent hosts. The tea was noteworthy. Our President competed with West Down. Only three teams rose the bells without a strapper — Littleham, West Down and Stoke Gabriel. Although on the lumpy side, this finely restored peal of six went

well, and much good striking was heard. Congratulations to Egg Buckland — is this the first time that a tower has entered two teams in the Devon and been placed first and second in the Final? According to Edgar Cole, Colin Adams and Jack Rhymes, this is a first. Please tell us if you know different! Well done to all competing teams. They did well to qualify. Ringing in a Final is a pretty good achievement. Especially Black Torrington — who have not been in the final for a year or two.

## Road Show Report

On Saturday 26th July, the 2003 Ringers Road-show was held at the Lincoln show ground. The doors opened at 10.30 am. There were a large number of trade stands and exhibition stands. Demonstrations were organised. Seminars were held in a number of rooms on interesting topics, including 'a forum for young ringers'; 'where methods came from'; and 'method ringing on handbells'. Con-

gratulations to Jon Bint and Lester Yeo, who spent the day 'manning' the Devon Ringers Council stand. The recently produced Devon Ringing CD was on sale, and created much interest — have you purchased yours? (See page 12 for details.) Egg Buckland ringers and friends attended the road-show for a couple of hours. Bob, the first team's 4th man, was preparing himself for autographs! A peal of call changes rung at

Egg Buckland is the first track on the Ringers CD. Some north Devon ringers were bumped into — Chris from Sampford Courtenay and John and Norma from South Tawton. This was a road-show organised for all ringers nationwide. Attendance looked to be pretty good. The next one is scheduled for 2005. Well done to those Devon ringers who made the effort to travel nearly 300 miles to support this event!

## Grand Draw 2003

Can I through the pages of Devon Calls thank all those people who helped in achieving a profit this year of £2,686 – my long suffering husband Evan who sat for endless evenings screwing up tickets, Jonathan for holding the fort on the day of the raffle until I arrived in the evening, to all the distributors (more than 25 in number) who delivered the tickets to individual towers and finally to all the people who bought tickets.

Although, on the whole, this raffle is very well supported, there are things about it, which make me rather sad. For example, large numbers of books unsold in active towers and unsold books returned from towers which, in recent years, have had work done to their bells and have been supported in this by grants from the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund.

Out of the 4,000 books that were distributed, 572 were either returned unsold or unaccounted for. I think that is too many! I feel that every active tower should be able to sell at least 30 books of tickets.

I know the chances of winning a prize are pretty remote, given the size of the raffle, but perhaps next year when the books are given out, instead of thinking, "Oh no, not again", you could look upon it as your annual donation to Church Bell Restoration here in Devon.

The bells are so much a part of our English heritage and we, the ringers get so much pleasure from them.

This year's prize winners are printed below:

1. Simon Tucker – Exeter
2. Chris Ley – Burrington
3. Toni Setheron – South Molton
4. J Lock – Dolton

5. Paul Lagdon – Dartmouth
6. Stuart Aplin –  
Buckland in the Moor
7. P George – Shirwell
8. Andrew McLean – Exeter
9. Robert Clarke – North  
Tawton
10. Derek Chalcombe – Roborough
11. Jill Thorne – Goodleigh
12. M Deacon
13. M Phillips – Totnes
14. D Sprague – Burlescombe

Prize 12 is unclaimed. There was only part of an address and a mobile phone number on the ticket. I have left a message but have received no response. The ticket is 04619. Name: M Deacon, Address: 137 Tamara. If anyone knows who this is, could you let me know please. If it remains unclaimed the money will be put back into the Restoration Fund. See you all next year. *Julia Endacott.*

## Minor Final 2003—report from the Secretary

Saturday May 24th arrived, with no rain. The sun was doing its best to break through. Following a practice ring at Westleigh, I arrived at Littleham Church, to be greeted with a friendly welcome from Claude Nicholls. Littleham Church is situated in a picturesque spot on the outskirts of the village. Parking had been organised and the portaloo was ready for action!

The president, the judges and myself then had a peal of sixty on thirds — led by Harry Bardens on the treble. Following an enjoyable ring, several were heard to mutter 'there be worse than that today'. Following an introduction and a moment's silence for the state of mourning for Jenny Kelly, a roll call was made for the expected 10 qualifying teams. Sadly only 8 were present — over the last two weeks, FOUR teams had pulled out! Interestingly, the four North teams drew one to four and the South teams five to eight (the secretary is South biased you know!?)

Due to the lack of teams, and following consultation with our President Gerald Stevens and tower Captain Claude Nicholls, we put a 'Presidents Six' in to ring number

one. This would break the ice and not be eligible to enter the competition.

At 4pm, we stopped for the service. A rather jubilant Rev Pirrie led an enjoyable celebration. Of note, and probably a first — we sang the carol 'Ding Dong Merrily On High'. The words are certainly appropriate, but the tune very out placed!

We then wandered up to the hall, where tables were laid for tea. Claude and Joyce's daughter had worked extremely hard. We had a 'proper' ringers tea — cold meat salad and all the trimmings, with a choice of sweets for after. A certain North Devon judge was seen to have two sweet portions — Mrs Hockin wouldn't have known as she wasn't there! After tea, the ringing continued, with four very reasonable peals. Time for the results —

1	14	Stoke Gabriel
2	15.75	Dunsford
3	24	Burrington
4	41.5	Iddesleigh
5	42.25	Drewsteignton
6	47	Holbeton
7	75.75	Colebrooke
8	85.75	Shebbear

The Presidents Six were awarded 33 faults!

Congratulations to Stoke Gabriel and Dunsford — going onto the Major competition. Commiserations to the other six teams. The judges commented on the good standard of ringing. A big pat on the back to Colebrooke for taking part, and to all teams for attending, and supporting the secretary on the day.

I wish to thank every one for making my day so enjoyable, it was certainly a day to remember!

*Jereme Darke*

**Thank you to all the contributors. This is your newsletter, please make use of it.**

**You are welcome to send any articles or reports from your Deanery, or from your competition or tower.**

**Please forward to the Editor,  
Michael Webster  
5 Kings Rydon Close  
Stoke Gabriel  
Totnes  
TQ9 6QG**

**Email: mtwebster@btinternet.com**

## The Facts-by Frank Bye

Having read the last issue of "Devon Calls" I feel I must put the record straight. I started my ringing career at Topsham in the mid 1950's under the Captaincy of Roy Berry, who is still Captain today. Topsham was affiliated to the Guild of Devonshire Ringers and was therefore a 'scientific' tower. After a few years and having learned some 'scientific' ringing, myself and a group of young ringers from the Topsham area rang a number of peals under the guidance of the late Frank Mack. We also went tower 'grabbing' at every opportunity going all over the South West, mainly at the invitation of George Retter, who was Captain of Clyst Honiton...even in those days, ringers were few and far between and we helped out at all the local towers whenever possible. I was out ringing every night of the week, ringing at Clyst St. George, Lymstone, Woodbury, Littleham, Withycombe Raleigh and Clyst Honiton amongst others.

As most of you know, I was a member of the Devon Ringing and Rescue Service and on promotion was transferred to Barnstaple in 1973. One Tuesday evening, I ventured up the tower at Pilton, where I was welcomed by the ringers. I became part of the competition team and took part in a number of Association and

other 8 bell festivals and 6 bell competitions around the County. This was my first taste of competition ringing and was amazed at the friendliness of all competitors and soon got to know a lot of ringers in North Devon and to a lesser extent, the rest of Devon. 5 years later, I was further promoted and transferred back to East Devon, and after a while was 'enticed' to ring at Kenn. Again, I was lucky enough to become part of the competition team, ringing in all sorts of competitions all over Devon and getting to know even more people that way. Because of this I was asked to judge, which I enjoyed doing as much as ringing, especially enjoying the various 'ringers teas'. In 1993 Brenda and I moved to Hatherleigh and I was 'invited' by Brian Drake, to ring at North Tawton, eventually becoming part of that famous team. My greatest pleasure came when we won the Devon 8 bell at Georgeham and I was part of that team. I can say that I have never rung in such an enjoyable peal as that one. Also in 1993, I retired from the Fire Service and was elected to the position of Secretary of the Devon Association of Ringers and remained as Secretary until 2002. I did not give up because of pressure of work, as was reported in the newsletter. I became very dis-

illusioned with some 'goings on' by certain members of the Association and what, it appeared, they were trying to do. I reluctantly forwarded a letter of resignation to the Chairman, stating the reason why, which I believe was not read in FULL at the AGM. I was very sorry to go under those circumstances. However, I thoroughly enjoyed my time as Secretary as it brought me in to contact with a great deal of ringers from all over the County and indeed, all over the Country even to the extent of the Association being invited to give a demonstration of 'Devon call-change ringing' at the first Ringing World Road Show held in Birmingham.

As most of you will be aware, Brenda and I are now living in Scotland, right in the middle of the 'Malt Whisky Trail'. If any of you are in the area of Tomnavoulin, where we are, we would be delighted to see you. Just telephone 01807 590429 or e-mail at twobytes@tiscali.co.uk. We have a couple of spare bedrooms and our B & B rates are pretty good. May I take this opportunity to wish the Association every success in the future. I do keep in touch with the goings on of the Association through the newsletter which I can read on the internet. If it is ever decided to have non-affiliated members, please count me in.

## Forthcoming Competitions

### Wilfred Edworthy-Novice 6 bell

On 25th October 2003 it is intended to hold a Novice 6 Bell Ringing Competition at St Mary's Church, Plympton in the memory of the late Wilfred Edworthy.

This is the second year of holding this competition. Ringing will be on the front six and the first section will be round ringing and the second, call changes. No rising or lowering for either. Section one will take place at 1pm and section two at 2pm.

Teas will be available, along with parking and nearby towers for further ringing.

The main aim is to encourage ringing and have fun. The fees will be £3. For details or booking please contact B Meek, 01752 406317.

### St Giles in the Wood

The 5th Annual 6 bell competition is to be held in conjunction with the village Autumn Show on Saturday 25th October 2003.

There will be 3 classes. Open, Senior and Novice Section. Teams are required to ring "Sixty on thirds" lasting 15 minutes. Entry will be £3 a team. Ringing commences at 2pm and the last peal starts 8.40pm. Teas will be available from 3.30pm to 6pm. Please provide numbers if tea is required.

Trophies and certificates (three for each class) will be presented following the church service at 9pm. Applications for practise, competition times and tea numbers should be made to Andrew Gist, tel: 01805 624690.

If you wish to circulate details of your competition through this newsletter please send them to:

The Editor

Michael Webster

5 Kings Rydon Close

Stoke Gabriel

Totnes

TQ9 6QG

or by email to

mtwebster@btinternet.com

## Results

### 24 May 2003 Devon Association 6 Bell Minor Final Littleham N. Devon

1	Stoke Gabriel	11.50
2	Dunsford	15.75
3	Burrington	24.00
4	Iddesliegh	41.50
5	Drewsteignton	42.50
6	Holbeton	47.00
7	Colebrook	75.75
8	Shebbear	85.75

### 14 June 2003 Devon Association 6 Bell Major Final Staverton

1	Egg Buckland A	14.0
2	Egg Buckland B	19.0
3	South Brent	26.0
4	Molland	27.0
5	Morthoe	30.5
6	West Alvington	40.5
7	Lamerton	42.0
8	West Down	44.5
9=	Dunsford	57.5
9=	Stoke Gabriel	57.5
11	Littleham	60.0
12	Black Torrington	65.0

### 28 June 2003

#### Loddiswell Invitation 6 Bell

1	Collaton St Mary	29.0
2	West Alvington	35.5
3	South Brent	38.5
4	Stoke Gabriel	42.5
5	Lamerton	44.5
6	Egg Buckland	48.5
7	Loddiswell	57.5
8	Holbeton	68.5

### 2 August 2003

#### Widecombe in the Moor Invitation 6 Bell

1	Egg Buckland	6.50
2	South Brent	12.50
3	Stoke Gabriel	15.25
4	Morthoe	15.50
5	Molland	17.50
6	Littleham	23.75
7	Collaton St Mary	31.75
8	Buckland in the Moor	32.00
9	Exwick	38.50
10	North Bovey	58.25
11	Exminster	64.00

### 16 August 2003 Lydford Invitation 6 Bell

1	Egg Buckland	14.0
2	Exminster	19.0
3	Stoke Gabriel	19.5
4	Littleham	22.5
5	Molland	31.0
6	West Down	31.5
7	Black Torrington	35.5
8	Holbeton	36.5
9	Pyworthy	61.5

### 16 August 2003 Bridestowe Invitation 6 Bell

1	Littleham	14.50
2	Molland	19.25
3	Egg Buckland	21.00
4	Stoke Gabriel	22.25
5	Black Torrington	30.00
6	West Down	34.00
7	Exminster	60.00
8	Holbeton	74.00
9	Pyworthy	119.00

### 23 August 2003 National 6 Bell Final Plymtree Devon (Rise +Queens + fall )

1	Egg Buckland (Devon)	13 1/3
2	Morthoe (Devon)	18 1/3
3	Exeter Cathedral (Devon)	24 1/3
4	Lamerton (Devon)	26 1/3
5	Stoke Gabriel (Devon)	31 2/3
6	Dunsford (Devon)	34 2/3
7	Exeter St Petrock's (D)	35 2/3
8	Chagford (Devon)	40 2/3
9	Dorset	58 1/3
10	Hampshire	60
11	Birmingham	65 1/3
12	Shepton Beauchamp (Somerset)	74 1/3

### 13 September 2003 Bartlett Invitation held at Malborough Invitation 6 Bell

1	Egg Buckland	28 1/3
2	Stoke Gabriel	47 2/3
3	Holbeton	64
4	West Alvington	65
5	Lamerton	68 1/3
6	Modbury	123 1/3

### 27 September 2003 Kenn Deanery 6 Bell at Dawlish

1	Dunsford	15.5
2	Kenton	28
3	Exminster	50
4	Kenn	54

### B Section

1	Christow	95
2	Ide	133.5

### Novice Section

1	Doddiscombesleigh	38
2	Dawlish	61

### 4 October 2003 South Devon 8 Bell Widecombe

1	Eggbuckland	8.5
2	Buckland in the Moor	17
3	South Brent	18.5
4	Lamerton	26
5	Exeter Cathedral	36
6	Tavistock	36.5
7	Stoke Gabriel	37
8	Kingsbridge	40
9	Kingsteignton	81.5
10	Exminster	87.5
11	Chagford	101
12	Ashburton	150
13	Widecombe	162

There are more results on page 11.

Results are usually available within 24 hours on the website [www.devonbells.co.uk](http://www.devonbells.co.uk). If you wish your results to appear, please contact the publicity officer, Michael Webster of 5 Kings Rydon Close, Stoke Gabriel, Totnes, TQ9 6QG. Tel: 01803 782591 or via the website under contacts.

### Thanks from the Editor

Thank you to all contributors to this edition of Devon Calls. The support has made the job a lot easier and I do hope that all readers enjoy reading the articles. In response, please write to me with news from your area.

There are a lot of activities within bell-ringing and the articles do give other towers ideas and enthusiasm.

### Deanery Secretaries

Kindly send reports from your deanery, whether this be competitions, election of officers or social events. I hope that this will not only assist ringers in your own deanery but other readers generally. Entries may also be made via the website.

## Profile on our President — Gerald Stevens

My father was born in the village of Langtree, North Devon in December 1921. He started to learn the art of bell ringing at Westleigh at just ten years old. I feel sure that he would have gone along with his father Charlie and sat in the belfry from a much earlier age! His first competition was at South Molton in 1935, and he rang in his first Devon Competition held at Kings Nympton in 1936 on the second with his father ringing the treble. There were at least 20 teams taking part that day and they came 7th (In fact I have a photo of my father sitting in Westleigh church holding 2 framed Devon Association certificates — one of Kings Nympton and the other when the Devon was held at Yealmpton in 1937 at which they took the 3<sup>rd</sup> certificate.) My father and grandfather moved to Brookham Farm, Fremington, and he rang with Fremington.

In 1939 when the Devon Association competition was held at West Alvington the team came first. The team was treble (and captain) Charlie Stevens, 2<sup>nd</sup> my father, 3<sup>rd</sup> F Gaydon, 4<sup>th</sup> W Morrish, 5<sup>th</sup> W Latham and tenor S Butt. At that time he was the youngest ringer being just 17 years old to win the Six Bell Devon Championship. I think I am right in saying he held this record up until 1996 when in fact Andrew Phillips was 16 years old when Morteheo won the Devon at Bere Ferres.

Dad and Mum, Eileen, married in 1947 and they moved to Higher Delworthy Farm, Yarnscombe. My father then rang with St Giles in the Wood near Great Torrington along with my grandfather. He continued to ring there regularly for several years. He rang in the

team to win the Devon in 1952 when it was held at Stoke Fleming, St Giles came second in 1953 at Weare Giffard and 1954 when it was held at Whimble.

In 1956 the family (there was by this time myself and my sister) moved to Hewish Barton, Muddiford. He joined the West Down team of ringers and in 1957 he rang when they won the Devon at Landkey. This win meant that he had rang with three different team that had won the Devons.

My brother was born in 1960 completing the family. My father then with West Down went on to win the Devon title on a further 10 occasions, and they took second place on a further 7 occasions in the period up until 1987.

I learnt to ring at West Down in 1962, which my father was very pleased about. The last time that Dad won the Devon in 1987 the team was as follows treble (and captain) Mervyn Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> Margaret White, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fred White 4<sup>th</sup> Sue Belton (Mervyn's daughter) 5<sup>th</sup> Gerald Stevens, tenor Morley Williams. This competition was held at Kentisbeare.

I know he was very proud when my daughter Sue learnt to ring (well just enough to get by!) to ring four generations of ringers in our family in 1983. My mother also learnt to ring at West Down in the 1970's and also took part in several competitions around this time. After a few years of ringing at Morteheo dad gave up ringing for a while. We are very pleased that he decided to return to ringing and is now back with West Down.

Dad retired from active farming in 1976 and sold Hewish, but kept back some ground and had a bungalow built where he and mum

continue to live. He is interested in all aspects of the countryside and still likes nothing better than pottering about outside.

On a Saturday (when he isn't ringing) he often takes part in helping my brother with the shooting and beating in the pheasant season. He likes hunting, in fact he has only given up riding with the Dulverton West Fox hounds in the last few years.

He is a past Chairman of the Barnstaple Deanery of Ringers and I am almost certain he was secretary for a good number of years. He is also a past chairman of The North Devon Conservatives and until recently he was President of The Barnstaple Conservative Club.

I know that my father is very proud of his family, wife Eileen, my sister, brother and myself his nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

I know when he was elected President of the Devon Association for this year he felt very honoured and proud, especially seeing that his father was also a past president. He is taking his role very seriously by attending as many Association events as possible. I know that he especially enjoyed going along to the novice competition at Christow in March. He was delighted to see so many young ringers there and taking part from all over Devon.

In summing up I know he would like me to thank every one for all their support over his year in office and I he would like to join me in wishing our in-coming president Harry Bardens every success in his year as president and also to all members of the Devon Association for the future.

*Margaret White*

## President avoids embarrassment

Margaret has been able to provide a few more details of her father. She recalls that a few years ago when they were helping out a team and her father was ringing the treble, and Margaret on the second the tenor man's trousers started to come down during the rise and her dad did not notice at all and went through the peal without noticing! When ringing had finished he still did not realise until Henry apologised. That shows the concentration he had. Margaret also recalls that her grandfather made front headlines in the

News of the World when he lost his trousers at Bridestowe.

Margaret further recalls that one Saturday afternoon her father went competition ringing at Yarnscombe and ended up in the A & E of the old North Devon Hospital in Barnstaple. West Down had just rung and he and Len Smale, who was the old tenor ringer, were mucking around as they came down the church path. Len playfully pushed dad and he fell over on his shoulder and dislocated it. That certainly put paid to his ringing for some time.



## SERs escape pub fight at Whimble.

The SERs meet on a Friday night for a ring and then for a meal afterwards. If you are proficient at ringing at the majority of towers, are sociable, and enjoy a late evening meal once a month this may be for you. Ringers from all over Devon meet and after the meal the venue is decided for the following month. If you wish for more details, please contact Marcus Tape, of Kenn, in the first instance.

At the May meeting after a number of very pleasant peals on the superb Whimble bells the ringers retired to the pre-ordered meals at the Thirsty Farmer. The pub was rather crowded and a little noisy. At first the ringers thought that there must be a real ale festival. It was later discovered that there was a darts tournament in progress. As the evening worn on, voices were raised and a fight broke out between the darts teams when the trophies were being

awarded. A number of ringers were seen being lead out of the back door by a young waitress who stated that there had never been any trouble in the pub before. Thankfully, no ringer was involved and the incident was quickly contained by the pub staff who later called the police when a fight broke out a second time. In classic style "the police are now investigating the incident". Please share your interesting moments with our readers.

## Notes

### Totnes Deanery

At the AGM on 26 September 2003 Norman Mortimore was elected President, the following were re-elected. Mike Hallet, Chairman, Liz Hallet Secretary and Mike Webster, Treasurer. The Deanery Competition would be held on 1st May 2004 at South Brent started at 4pm with the service at 7.30pm.

The winter league dates for 2003 would be October 25, November 22 and December 6.

Next year's AGM will be held at Dartington on 25 September 2004 at 6.30pm.

### Wartime ban on bellringing

Harry Bardens reports from Bigbury Ringers' Minute Book. Bells were rung for a Wedding on Thursday April 4th 1940 and £1-10s was paid at 5s per man. No mention of a ban but the ban on ringing was lifted on Sunday Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 1942 to celebrate the African victory. Ringing took place at morning service. Ringing also took place on Christmas Day. At Easter 1943 the ban was lifted altogether for ringing on Sundays and Special Days. The bells were rung twice on Easter Day. Ringing Practise recommenced on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1944.

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# Wrinklies Rounds by Oddstruck

## May

May saw the wrinklies arrive in Chris Clayton Country or to be more precise Sampford Courtenhay. We were greeted by coffee being served in the medieval courthouse. This building remains almost unaltered and is as it was in the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> century. We all sat at an enormously long 14th century refectory table with benches attached, the timber required to manufacture it hewn from what must have been enormous oaks. As we sat there having our refreshments one could not help but to wonder at the countless thousands who through the centuries had sat on those benches. One could only imagine the vast banquets that would take place on feast days, as the table would have sat 30-40 easily maybe more. The ringing went quite well as everybody seemed to manage a reasonable peal. We then had an added bonus; we were invited, if we wished, to ring the bells at nearby Honeychurch. The medieval church has retained all its original features including a medieval wall painting that at present is awaiting restoration. The peal of bells amounted to the grand tally of three weighing in at about 4 cwt. Before lunch was served at the New Inn in Sampford Courtenhay Chris Clayton invited us to view his son's cabinet making workshop and what a surprise it was. Lunch as usual was of a very reasonable standard with a lot of banter about the trip to Wales the following month. The afternoon was in nearby North Tawton again everyone having a pleasant peal.

## June-Wales

### Monday.

The trip started with the first pick-up point being at Ashburton and the second at Exeter. Our first ring was at Newport Cathedral. As the party consisted of mainly six bell ringers with a liberal sprinkling of eight bell ringers we were "well suited" to ringing the twelve bells the tower contained. In order to improve we moved on to St John's at Cardiff that had a mere ten bells. The ringing was not magnificent but was acceptable so we obviously needed so more practice on large number peals so we then proceeded to Llandaff

Cathedral Cardiff which had twelve bells and by this time as everyone had some practice on ten and twelve bells the ringing was of a reasonable standard. We arrived at our hotel at Carmarthen at about 6.30 pm with the local tower open until 9 pm.

### Tuesday.

We set off in the morning after a hearty breakfast about 8.45 am as we had quite a lot of travelling to do. Our first stop was St Mary's Cardigan, a six-bell tower although the ropes were short compared to Devon standards we all managed a decent peal even though it meant hanging on to the tail end by your finger tips.

Our next stop was the cathedral at St David's a magnificent building. It had ten bells set in a campanile situated on a hill about a hundred yards from the cathedral. The final stop of the day was St Mary's, Tenby, which had a decent peal of eight. All enjoyed ringing them. We then made our long journey back to Carmarthen having had an enjoyable days ringing.

### Wednesday

This day, in order to give the coach driver a break, was centred on Brecon and after the coach had dropped us off we were left to walk between churches the first being a peal of eight situated in the church of St Mary. Access proved to be a rather tight doorway and low spiral stairs, which seemed to be the norm for Wales, but the bells proved to be very well looked as the tower captain was also the tower captain was also the captain of the cathedral which we were visiting next. When we remarked that access was rather restricted he said wait until you go up the cathedral. We arrived at the cathedral another marvellous building. For readers who suffer from claustrophobia do not attempt this tower, for those over 5ft 6ins or over 12 stone be prepared for difficulties and do not attempt the trip up to the bells without a competent guide. Most of the passages are between the walls hence the narrowness.

Two more towers containing six bell peals completed the day. They were at Brecon St David's and one in a village on the way home with

the unpronounceable name of De-fynnog St Cynog (you didn't expect easy names in Wales did you?).

### Thursday

Just for a change we started off the day at Neath the first tower being at Cadoxton St Catwg this being a light six (6cwt) to be followed by another light six (8cwt) at Neath St Thomas both with the now infamous short ropes. The next three towers were peals of eight at Sketty St Paul, Swansea St Mary and at Gorseinon St Katherine. We arrived at Gorseinon with no one to greet us but the vicar was contacted. It was disconcerting to some ringers as there was a large hole in the floor where you could see through to the floor many feet below. Although meshed over it gave a feeling of vertigo to some.

### Friday

We all mounted the coach and headed for Abergavenny a 25cwt ten bell peal with a beautiful tone. We all got a good peal out of the them having got use to ringing 10's and 12's by now. The church at Abergavenny was an old priory and has been describe as the Westminster Cathedral of Wales and is a magnificent building having within it a large wooden carving representing a "Jesse stone" unique in Britain as they all disappeared in the reformation. Another surprise was to find a group of ladies from the church working on an enormous tapestry, which they had started before the millennium, and which they didn't expect to finish for another three years. When finished it will rival the Bayeux tapestry and not a word has been mentioned in the press or media, maybe that is to come.

We then had a ring at the eight bells of St Mary's, Usk and then the eight-bell 9 cwt tower of St Cadoc Caerleon.

We arrived back at our various destinations having had a glorious week of ringing and thanks must go to the organisers for all their work in organising it, so stand up and take a bow Bernard and Pat and John Staddon and his wife we would all like to express our thanks. When's the next one?

## Association Festivals 2003-J.J. Darke

Well done to all teams who entered and took part in the Devon Association Competitions this year. The spirit was ignited at Christow in March, where we had a magnificent turnout. The service was probably the best attended for many years — Colin Adams certainly thought so anyway.

The Eight bell had a maximum entry, 12 teams! This year saw an extra team from the North. We also had some new faces, with Ipplepen, Ashburton and Alphington competing. Exeter Cathedral were delighted with their third place result, it would be some achievement for them to win. Keep practising!

The qualifiers went well. A pity that entries were lost prior to the day. Thanks to Clive Ward for running the North at Clovelly, and well done to Littleham who won the North. Sadly, only 8 teams competed in the

Minor final. This becomes embarrassing when the host tower goes to much trouble in organising the day, especially numbers for tea. Despite this, an enjoyable afternoon was had by all, with Stoke Gabriel and Dunsford attaining the two qualifying places. Thanks to Holbeton, who travelled so far after coming 12th at Dodbrooke.

The final went off well at Staverton. As Graham Pascoe had previously documented, it would not be a stroll in the park to rise these bells. However, the ringing standard was good. South Devon attained the first three placings. Congratulations to the Trout family from Egg Buckland — making history in the final!

My thanks are extended to all the clergy and church wardens who allow us to hold these festivals. My gratitude is offered to all tower captains and their ringers for doing the

'ground' work before and on the day. Our President Gerald Stevens for his solid support and reading the lessons so well, not forgetting Harry Bardens helping at Dodbrooke.

We must all pull together to ensure that these festivals continue to gain support. However, the Association is not only about competition ringing. We must continue to reach out to lesser known towers. Affiliations are up this year. The Association is here to offer advice, support, education; and above all to ensure that call change ringing stays alive.

I am looking forward to future Association events and meeting more of our membership — both existing and new ones to come.

Remember that you can contact any of the Association officers, or the committee members who may be more local to you. Let us know how WE can assist YOU.

## Bill and May: 70 years of wedded bliss!

On Tuesday 22nd July, 2003, Bill and May Elliott celebrated 70 years of marriage. The couple have spent the majority of their lives at Hillside, Stokenham. Bill was Captain of the ringers at Stokenham for many years, being succeeded in the late 70's by the late Bill Sanders of Torcross and ringer for West Alvington. Bill usually rings the tenor. He still keeps his hand in at Malborough, where the couple moved a few years ago to be nearer their daughter Joyce. Bill is a former President of the Woodleigh Deanery Bellringers Association. He has assisted with the teaching of many ringers

(including our current Hon Sec).

Both May and Bill are in their early nineties and remain to be real characters. They have their ailments, but are never heard to complain. Bill is renown locally for his sense of humour and his party piece — 'A hole in my bucket'.

The couple had a quiet day with the family on the 22nd July. A surprise ring was arranged by Jack Rhymes and John Cole for 7.00 pm that evening. Bill and May came up to the church, where they met local ringers and friends. A team of six rang the 120 on 6 sequence of changes. This included a rise and fall.

The team was

Treble	John Cole
2nd	Tony Brooks
3rd	Clifford Weekes
4th	Jack Rhymes
5th	Jereme Darke
Tenor	Mike Ellis

A group of Stokenham ringers came along to support Bill and Mays' evening and all had a ring.

The highlight of the evening was when Bill climbed the stairs to ring the tenor. He enjoyed a short peal of call changes rung off the stay.


  
 Congratulations Bill and May.
   


## July and August Wrinklies Rounds by Oddstruck

July saw us in Tavistock. The tower has a peal of ten bells, which proved no problem at all after our trip to Wales. As we were ringing peals of 15 minutes duration we were soon running out ringers there being only about 35 ringers in total. So everybody had at least two rings if not three before retiring to the Oldulph Hotel for lunch. The afternoon found us at the nearby church of Whitchurch. This was a pleasant ring of six and the church was conveniently situated next door to a pub. As ringing progressed we had some surprise visitors. The local village school being situated opposite had decided that being disturbed by the "noise" it would bring the pupils across to see what was happening. They were all 6 to 8 yrs old and thoroughly enjoyed it when they were all offered to take position and toll a bell.

August took us to the deepest darkest depths of North Devon and for some of us it was like a Michael Palin adventure travelling from coast to coast, the English channel in the south to the Atlantic in the North. The weather although threatening rain when we started turned into a fine day. The church at Littleham was tucked away in one of those north Devon villages that were quite

difficult to find but was well worth it when you found it. Thank you to Claude who signposted so well. Littleham has a glorious little 14<sup>th</sup> church dominated by a huge screen separating the chancel and choir from the plainly decorated nave area. A huge alabaster and marble tomb dominates the nave which from a distance one would have imagined would have been the resting place and memorial to a medieval knight but on closer inspection one finds it was put in to commemorate a Victorian gentleman who only died in 1892. It certainly seems out of place and a "wee" bit ostentatious in a church that is decorated so simply. Having said that in a lady chapel situated to one side behind an altar is a naive painting that has been recently uncovered said to date from the 11/12<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed to represent St Swithan, the churches patron saint, and is painted on a wall from an older building, this being incorporated in the present church.

The church had a light peal (c.9cwt.) and thanks must go to the person who maintains them as they rang like a dream with everyone enjoying their ring. A few new faces were evident these being ringers from north Devon and they made us extremely

welcome. Lunch was at the Royal Hotel in Bideford and what a lunch it was. It was a carvery with everyone having more than a fair share of all that was on offer, this was followed by a choice of excellent sweets and all for a very reasonable price. Speeches were made with the main topic being the organising and approval of a week's trip next summer (2004) trip to the Chester area, another reason for newcomers to join us.

The afternoon found us taking a trip back into the countryside for a visit to the church at the village of Parkham for another ring on an equally light peal (81/2cwt.). These were a little more difficult but that is not to say they did not ring well and everyone enjoyed ringing them. Thanks must be expressed to Claude who organised everything, including the excellent lunch, and we must not forget the ladies who greeted us at Littleham with not only coffee and biscuits but sausage rolls as well which went down extremely well. If you would like to join us in the future and are available the second Wednesday of the month then we promise that we won't eat you and that you will have an enjoyable day out, contact Mike Webster on 01803 782 591 or Ken Rowe 01803 521 489.

## The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

"The council is just a talk-shop for peal ringers - it has no relevance to me". Sentiments like the above are often heard in towers up and down the country, but is it true? The majority of the work of the council is done by committees throughout the year and it is probably worth looking in more detail at some of these to see what they do.

### Towers and Belfries.

This committee is available to any tower to give advice on towers and bells such as installations or sound problems inside or outside the tower. In Devon, John Scott and James Clarke are members. Courses and seminars on different aspects of tower maintenance are arranged which recently included the way towers move when bells are rung. Regular meetings are held between the Central Council and bodies such as English Heritage and the Council for the Care of

Churches. Often the deliberations of these bodies result in problems in our churches so it is important to have a dialogue at the highest level so that problems can be minimised.

### Education.

This committee works to improve training at all levels. A video has been produced which is useful to trainers who are often tower captains who have had no formal training in how to teach ringing. Seminars are available - which includes teaching bell handling and listening skills - both very important to all towers.

### Public Relations.

This committee works to publicise the work of ringers both in local and national news media. They were at the forefront of the Ring in 2000 campaign and oversee the very successful Road Shows which have now been running for several years. They also run a com-

plaints hot line which gives ready advice to any tower.

### Publications.

The publications committee produce a wide range of books for ringers varying from text books on method ringing to highly technical books on the theory of ringing. There are useful tower handbooks with a wide variety of information especially useful to tower keepers or bands embarking on bell restoration.

### At your service.

This is just a taste of the work of the Council. In the wider world having a body which is highly respected means that ringers have a powerful voice in the church community and in the secular world as well. All ringers, therefore, have the Council at their service when they need help. Why not talk to one of your CC reps to find out more? They are there to represent you. Association reps are Paul Pascoe and Mervyn Way.

## Rehang at Lydford. Bob's 50 years of ringing

With the five originals pitted and in danger of cracking, Bob Parker of Taunton was called in and he turned the bells, fitted new clappers and replaced the wooden headstocks with metal ones along with new bearings and refurbished the wheels. Bob Pengelly, Captain, states that the work was one of prevention rather than cure and we are all delighted with the results. The rehang coincided with Bob's 50th year of ringing in St Petroc's. Bob was a choirboy in 1952 and stayed behind because the choirmaster was a bellringer and practices were after choir. Bob says that several stayed on but he has been ringing ever since. During the rehang, he and his team rang at neighbouring churches, and he felt that it did everyone good.

It is thought that in the 7th century, in the original Saxon wooden and

thatched church there was one bell. Throughout the years the church was rebuilt with stone and the tower built in 1450 when three bells were installed. The early five date back to 1789 and the later treble was added in 1921. Lydford needed to raise £14,000 and this was raised quicker than expected within five months with help from the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. This appeal started just after the Foot and Mouth Crisis. Michael Crocker, a sixth generation farmer and Churchwarden was unable to join in the ringing as he could not leave his 270 acre beef and sheep farm. Although the epidemic did not reach his particular farm, he could not move anything. 23 steers had to be burned, being over age and he lost 200 sheep. During this time he became ill and was in Derriford hospital for two

weeks with thrombosis in the leg and clots in the lung. Michael stated that the appeal to restore the bells succeeded in bringing all the village back to life again. It gave them a real purpose. There were a series of well attended events such as abseiling down the tower, a flower festival, a cardboard horse race and a quilt raffle. The bells were rededicated by Rev Tony Wilde, Archdeacon of Plymouth on 1 June 2003.

Ringers were invited to the annual competitions held at Lyford and Bridestowe on 16th August 2003. Some observant ringers noticed that the epitaph on the watchmaker's tomb had been moved inside the church to protect it from the weather. A replacement slab, with grants from Dartmoor National Park and Devon County Council, had been fitted on to the tomb.

## National Call Change Challenge-David Trist

We were blessed with some beautiful Devon weather for the second Devon National Challenge on 24 August held at Plymtree. Local Captain, Tony Eames made life easy and we had time to visit the Blacksmith's Arms. Judges were Brian Drake, Chairman of the Devon Association for 25 years. Percy Pester, experienced judge and Captain of Colaton Raleigh and Bill Avery, elder statesman of a long lineage of ringers, very experienced judge and Captain of

Kingsteignton. Very little was likely to slip their notice! Eight Devon teams and four 'up country' teams lined up for the draw. Tension was high with the defending Champions hoping to retain their prize and other teams determined to win. Some teams took advantage of other open towers with others sat in the churchyard sun listening to the ringing. The bells caught everyone out and it was the time it took to settle that eventually decided the outcome.

The tremendous efforts of Stephanie Brown for her world class cakes needs to be recorded as does the tremendous help by Takara Ewings, Ryan Brodie and Martin Needs. I would also like to record the ever helpful Daphne and Maurice Sharland and others who supplied cakes and generally helped out.

Keep your eyes open for next year's event which will be part of a Devon wide ringing event over the same Bank Holiday weekend.

## Durham and Newcastle Ringers-thanks

Peterlee. 1 September 2003.

Dear Sir,

May I through the pages of your journal, thank the Devon ringing community for their kindness, courtesy and patience during the visit of the ringers from the Durham and Newcastle Association in August. We came to learn how to ring changes the 'Devon' way. We were helped in our quest by so many folk who gave up their time to

discuss and demonstrate their skills and to pass them on to us. We learned a lot—the most important thing being that call change ringing to such a high standard is not learned overnight but is rather the product of many hours of team building and dedication. We ended our week at the Shebear competition where we were shown, as everywhere else, great courtesy and patience. We did not come last, but

we 'could have done better'! The warmth of the welcome, the excellence of the ringing and the 'full English' ringers' tea was for us, a unique experience. I'm sure we will be back for more! In the meantime, thank you all again, for a week of ringing and friendship which will for long remain warm in the memory of us all.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Turner, President.

# Reports

## Torrige Valley Guild of Ringers (founded 1932)

The Guild held its second social evening of ringing at Bradford in April, and based on their success, will continue twice yearly at a different tower each time.

The next one will be held at Shebbear in October.

The Guild's annual Ringing Festival took place recently on 26 July at Parkham.

The results were as follows:

### Open Section

1 <sup>st</sup>	Mortehoe	18 faults
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kenn	62 2/3
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mariansleigh	95

### Torrige Section

1 <sup>st</sup>	Littleham 'A'	24 2/3
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Monkleigh	48
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Idlesleigh	53 1/2
4 <sup>th</sup>	Littleham 'B'	63 2/3
5 <sup>th</sup>	Torrington	71 2/3
6 <sup>th</sup>	Black Torrington	75
7 <sup>th</sup>	Appledore	96
8 <sup>th</sup>	Shebbear	154 2/3

### Novice Section

Unfortunately, only one team entered the novice section, Bideford, so they were awarded the trophy but not placed in the competition.

The number of teams was slightly down again this year, perhaps due to holidays and other events taking place at this time of the year.

May I remind everyone that any tower within the guild can enter the Torrige or Novice section and others will be welcomed to ring in the Open.

Many thanks to our hosts at Parkham for their hospitality and the wonderful spread of refreshments they provided.

Brian Broadhurst,  
(Hon Secretary)  
1 Aug 2003

## Okehampton Deanery

The Okehampton Deanery Annual Six Bell Ringing Festival was held on Saturday June 7th at St. Andrews Church, South Tawton. The weather was kind and a wonderful tea was provided by the Ladies and Ringers of South Tawton. A big thank you to them all. There were three sections of ringing. Novice - 5 minutes of round ringing, no rise or lower. Intermediate - half peal of 60's on 3rd, no rise or lower. Main - full peal of 60's on 3rd with rise and lower.

The Service at the end of ringing was lead by the new Rector, Rev. Michael Thayer and the organ played by Jonathan Bint. The Judges were Percy Pester from Colaton Raleigh and Ralph Chapman from Holsworthy who gave their verdicts in Church House. Rev. Thayer presented the Shields, Cups and Certificates. This being my first year as Deanery Secretary, I found the planning for the Festival and the day itself an enjoyable experience. If I am given the opportunity to plan next year's events hopefully I will make less mistakes. Thank you to everyone for making it such a good day. Looking forward to next year's Festival with more Deanery teams entering. Geoff Baker

### RESULTS

#### Novice Section

1 <sup>st</sup>	Chagford.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hatherleigh.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sampford Courtenay 'B'.
4 <sup>th</sup>	Sampford Courtenay

#### 'A'. Intermediate Section

1 <sup>st</sup>	Okehampton.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gidleigh.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Chagford.
4 <sup>th</sup>	Bridestowe.
5 <sup>th</sup>	South Tawton.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Sampford Courtenay Hatherleigh-no result

#### MAIN SECTION

1 <sup>st</sup>	North Tawton.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Chagford 'A'.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	South Tawton 'B'.
4 <sup>th</sup>	South Tawton 'A'.
5 <sup>th</sup>	Chagford 'B'.
6 <sup>th</sup>	Okehampton.
7 <sup>th</sup>	Sampford Courtenay.
8 <sup>th</sup>	Bridestowe.

## Woodleigh Deanery:

Annual Festival 2003.

On Saturday 3rd May, 16 teams assembled on Blackawton for the Woodleigh Deanery Bellringers Association annual competition.

Mr Jack Rhymes presided as Secretary.

Messrs J Darke and M Langdon were the judges.

There were 21 entries originally, with five having to withdraw for various reasons before the day. A tremendous entry!

The results were as follows

Senior section --- ringing a peal of 60 on thirds, including rise and fall

1	West Alvington	34
2	Churchstow	55
3	Modbury	70
4	Chivelstone A	72.25
5	Stoke Fleming	80.5
6	Modbury B	105.5

Junior section --- ringing a peal of 60 on thirds, off the stay

1	South Milton	72
2	Loddiswell A	80.25
3	Salcombe	108.5
4	Dodbrooke	121
5	Chivelstone B	125.5
6	South Pool	148
7	Sherford	148.75
8	Loddiswell B	170.5
9	East Portelmouth	201.5

Ladies Team 43.5

Thanks to Blackawton for their kind hospitality (and the beer festival in the George Inn).

Thanks to Jack for running a good afternoon.

This was the tower where JJ Darke rang his very first competition when the Woodleigh Deanery Festival was held there in 1984.

Deanery Secretaries-please  
send in your reports.

## Notices and additional matters

### Affiliation Fees

The annual affiliation fees due in November 2003 have been increased to £5. Entries for the 2004 competitions have been increased to £1.50 a ringer. 6 bell total will be £14; 8 bell total will be £17. The increase was approved at the last AGM and will now cover insurance, along with certificate and administration costs.

### Dates

**The AGM will be held on 8 November at North Tawton Town Hall starting at 2.15pm**

The Carol Service is to be held at Barnstaple Parish Church on Saturday 20 December 2003 at 3.00pm.

**The next committee meeting will be at North Tawton 26 February 2004 at 7.30pm**

The Novice Competition will be on Saturday 13 March 2004 at Holcombe Burnell.

### Clothing

Any bellringing related clothing or badges can be obtained from Janice Gist (Iddesleigh and St Giles in the Wood).

### Personal

Best wishes and a speedy recovery to Ivor Hookway, Treasurer.

Happy 80th birthday to Mervyn Phillips on 17 June.

Congratulations to Katy Adams who married on 9 August 2003.

### £24,827 grant

A project run by Princetown based Aune Head Arts is to record the sounds of bells in village churches across Dartmoor for posterity. The organisers plan to make an audio CD and possibly a DVD of the bells ringing from each tower. Interviews with ringers are expected, this will include the significance of bells to them, and to village life.

At the Widecombe 6 bell competition in August recordings were taken of the peals competing and Eggbuckland and Stoke Gabriel were filmed in the ringing chamber while ringing their competition peal. This was not to deter Eggbuckland who came first and Stoke Gabriel third.

### Editor

The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the Association. Any articles, comments to The Editor, see page 2.

### Why have an AGM?

The committee, elected representatives from most Deaneries, spend many hours in Committee debating points raised either by members or by people writing in. The committee this year had to devote an entire and additional evening to discussing the proposed constitution as instructed by the members attending the AGM.

The committee also proposes judges and towers for the 6 and 8 bell Association competitions.

The committee, elected at the AGM, is only responsible for debating the issues and making recommendations to the AGM when the members may accept or reject the recommendations. It is the membership that ultimately decides and this is the reason why we have an AGM.

### New Blood for Judging Panel?

At the September committee meeting judges were proposed for the Association competitions in 2004.

There was no magic or secret list in compiling the names, merely putting forward names of judges who had officiated in various competitions in the past. If you are a keen judge, or know of one, and they wish their name to go forward, please notify the Secretary, Jereme Darke so he may add to his list.

It is important that the more experienced judges can pass on their own experiences to the newer judges. It is important to ensure a continuity of judges.

If you are older, you probably have the experience, if you are younger, you may wish for more experience, either way, we need you, please help.

-Advertisement-

### Glorious Devon Bells

**A full length compact disc of recordings of Devon bell ringing containing towers throughout the county.**

Devon has more rings of bells than any other county, and two traditional ways of ringing them. This Compact Disc includes a cross-section of towers throughout the county, and examples of both Devon call changes and method ringing.

Its two societies, the Guild of Devonshire Ringers (method ringing) and the Devon Association of Ringers (call changes) work closely together to promote bell ringing across the county.

Devon is very much a rural county, and there has been no attempt to remove birdsong from the recordings! Other extraneous noises can also at times be heard, as they would by the listener in the churchyard.

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Egg Buckland         | Rise and peal of changes on six |
| 2. Exeter Cathedral     | Stedman Cinques                 |
| 3. Stoke Damarel        | Plain Bob Major                 |
| 4. Buckland in the Moor | Rise and changes on eight       |
| 5. Combe Martin         | Yorkshire Surprise Major        |
| 6. Buckerell            | Cambridge S Minor               |
| 7. Kingsteignton        | Call changes and lower on eight |
| 8. South Brent          | Call changes on six             |
| 9. St Marychurch        | Erin Caters                     |
| 10. Mortehoe            | Call changes on six             |
| 11. Tiverton (St Peter) | Grandsire Triples               |
| 12. Stoke Gabriel       | Call changes on six             |
| 13. Tavistock           | Grandsire Caters                |
| 14. Clyst St George     | Grandsire Doubles               |
| 15. Dunsford            | Call changes and lower on six   |

Sold in aid of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund

**£10.99 each** (inc £1 UK postage and packing).

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