



Founded 1925

President—Mr Claude Nicholls

# DEVON CALLS

**Oct 07**  
**Vol 1 Issue 21**

- Special points of interest:*
- AGM notice and minutes included as a supplement
  - Rolling League application included
  - Denmisch Simulated Campanile

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## Merton

The bells of All Saints Church at Merton have been recovered. They were stolen from a workshop in Tavistock on August 13. The bells had been found by a scrapyard owner who had keyed in their numbers on the Internet and contacted police when he discovered they had been reported stolen.

## Association AGM

See inside for a copy of the Agenda and minutes of last year's AGM and Committee meetings. The AGM is on 10 November at 2.15 South Tawton.

## Affiliation Fees

Affiliation fees for 2007 are payable on 1 October 2007. The fees have been held at £5 for the year. If you wish to enter the Association's competitions the rates will be £14 for 6 bell towers and £17 for 8 bell towers, these include the £5 affiliation fee. You may pay at the AGM on 10th November at North Tawton or by post to Mrs Janice Gist, Honorary Treasurer, Barries Corner, 5 St Giles in the Wood, Torrington, EX38 7JQ. Please enclose SAE if a receipt is required.

## Brian Drake

The 2007 AGM will be the end of the current Triennium period. According to our Constitution the Chairmanship will be by a South-Committee Member to allow the alternation every three years. This will mean that Brian has held office for three complete decades - thirty years as our Chairman.

## Carol Service

The Devon Ringers Carol Service is to be held at Exeter Cathedral on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 3.00pm. This is a wonderful event where the Guild and Association members worship together

## Bell maintenance

Bath and Wells has an annual maintenance course that is popular. Fifteen delegates attended, the youngest aged 10. Devon's own James Clarke was a course leader along with Jim Taylor. Both are members of the Towers and Belfries Committee of the CCCBR. Practical sessions were held on a steel frame and on a wooden frame. The final session was rope splicing where delegates could help and learn from each other.

## Age profile

The number of ringers over 60 may be greater, this is not necessarily a matter for undue concern. Life expectancy has increased and older ringers show no signs of diminishing capability and enthusiasm. Dynamic charismatic leaders are needed and these are found in the over 60s as much as among younger ringers.

## Roadshow 2008

You may have heard how Egg Buckland amazed people with their ringing at the last Road Show and that "Glorious Devon Bells" was a sell out. The next Roadshow is to be held on 5/6 September 2008 at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire. Planning is well advanced and it is time to get the date into every ringer's diary. Posters can be downloaded at [www.ringingroadshow2008.org.uk](http://www.ringingroadshow2008.org.uk), use this site to keep up to date. A full programme and seminars is planned and there will be a grand ringers' party on Friday evening. The show will take the best of what has been done previously and build on that, adding many new attractions for all ages and interests. Why not organise a coach party?

# Shortage of ringers

A growing shortage of trained bell ringers may silence some of Devon traditional church bells. Now a campaign has been launched to attract more younger ringers to an art that has fallen out of fashion. Bell ringing has played an important part in church life for hundreds of years, but that tradition is under threat.

With hundreds of peals, Devon has more church bells than any other county in England. But the bells don't ring themselves and many bell towers are in danger of falling silent as interest in bell ringing drops off.

Most church towers in Devon require more bell ringers and new ringers need to be recruited and trained over the next 10 years to reverse the decline that has already taken place across Devon.

Many ringers ring at more than one tower to keep the bells ringing. A recent survey of 500 Devon churches uncovered details of 3,000 bells around the county. So serious is the threat of bells falling silent, that the national body representing Britain's 40,000 ringers, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR), held a crisis meeting in June 2007 to discuss future strategies. "There are many reasons for the decline," added Mr King on behalf of the Devon Guild. "It's largely a church-related activity and these days fewer people are going to church. Most churches are short of ringers. And fewer people are coming into ringing from Sunday schools and church choirs - I suspect that bell ringing just isn't cool to many of today's younger generation. Kids lead more pressurised lives, they have more homework and have far more options on how to spend their leisure time. So we have to be more imaginative in how we attract new recruits."

The CCCBR hopes to recruit more teenagers and younger adults through schools, congregations and open days. In August 2007 ringers joined the Scouting centenary jamboree, where they promoted a revival the Scouts ringing badge.

"You can see why young people aren't keen to join," said CCCBR president Derek Sibson. "It's not that attractive if you are the only young person in a group where the average age is 50 or 60."

"The number of ringers in the UK currently stands at around 40,000,

but the average age is going up. And the worry is that older ringers aren't being replaced as they retire.

"We're in the process of setting up a 'Ringing Foundation' which we hope will help fund more up-to-date training. "There are some examples around the country of very successful young people's groups. By working together they can put the cool back into bell ringing"

The Troyte Ringing Centre, based in the villages of Bampton and Huntsham, was recently awarded the 2007 Founders' Prize, in recognition of its significant contribution to the teaching of ringing at all levels. Here computer technology is used to bring out the best in trainees. "We have a designated practice bell at Bampton which we rescued and restored," said centre spokesman Mike Hatchett. "The clapper has been removed and replaced by a sensor linked to a computer. This allows trainees to practice at any time of the day or night without disturbing the neighbours.

"We'd prefer to recruit young people, but most don't have the commitment needed to follow through the training. So we have to look for alternatives. People are retiring from work younger and they are often looking for things to do in their spare time. That's why we're using the latest training techniques to get people from rank beginners to very good bell ringers in the shortest possible time. Bell ringing is an activity that requires dedication and regular attendance," explained Mr King. "Quite a lot of people dropped out because there was no instant gratification. It can take a month or more to learn how to handle a bell and a lot longer to become a proficient ringer. We can now speed this up by using some of the Troyte computer-based techniques.

Ringing in the Millennium brought in a lot of adults, but failed to inspire young people. Links with schools, Scouts, Boys Brigade and other youth activities play a vital role in helping raise the profile of ringing. However, we still find one of the best ways to recruit is to get existing members to bring their friends and family along. We're all getting older, which is why we need to concentrate on attracting younger people to reverse the decline."

Mike Ellis, tower captain at St Michael's Church in Musbury, said: "We haven't been able to ring properly on Sunday for ages. "You really need six ringers and at the moment I can only get five experienced enough at a push. We need more or we may find that in the future we can't ring at all. When we do ring people say how much they enjoyed it so I think it will be missed by many."

Mr Ellis said he would ideally like to recruit young ringers but, due to commitments they often leave before training can be completed. Dennis Moss, tower captain at St Andrew's Church in Colyton, has been a bell ringer for over 70 years and said: "I do know that numbers are falling and some churches are really struggling. "In Colyton we're okay, but elsewhere there just aren't enough numbers. What we do is help each other out by sending ringers to other churches. "It's good exercise and a public service too so it is sad that churches are slowly running out of numbers. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers has launched a training campaign to boost the numbers of ringers and estimates 1,000 will need to be trained in order to keep the county's bells ringing.

## Mid Week Ringers (Ringklies) proposed towers for 2007/8

### Second Wednesday of the Month

November 2007	Drewsteignton	Spreyton
December	To be decided	
March 2008	To be decided	

Please check the venue before setting out.

Any queries please contact: Ken Rowe on 01803 521489

## Obituary—John Scott

John was a man of many talents and his interests were wide and varied, which always made him good company. He lived in Devon for most of his life and I had always assumed that he was a Devonian by birth, so it came as quite a surprise when he told me, not long before his death, that he was born at Blackheath. He spent part of his childhood overseas, as his father was in the Navy, before settling in South West Devon when his father became King's Harbour Master at Plymouth. John was educated at Sherborne School in Dorset, before serving in the Royal Navy and then reading history at St Edmund Hall in Oxford, where he rowed, learnt to ring with the Oxford University Society and met Claire, whom he married in 1954.

On leaving Oxford John went to theological college at Cheshunt, and was ordained deacon in 1951. His first curacy was at Exeter St Thomas followed by Wolborough. In 1958, he moved to North-West Devon and became vicar of Clawton with Tetcott and Luffincott. I can remember him telling me stories of the cold winter of 1963, especially of driving between the parishes on the snow and ice and not using brakes.

I first met him when he became vicar of Newton St Cyres and Cowley in 1966, where he remained until the end of 1983. I was only fourteen when he arrived, and clergymen in those days were put on a bit of a pedestal by their parishioners and as a result seemed a little distant. John was different. He soon got involved in all aspects of village life, including serving as a school governor and editing and duplicating the *Newton Wonder*, which he reminded everyone was a magazine of the full parish, not just for those who went to church. He also started the annual event of beating the bounds and led the carol singing around the village at Christmas, both activities raising money for charity. He was often seen walking around with an open-necked shirt instead of the traditional dog-collar. He kept bees – that was a first for a vicar at Newton. He always seemed happy when surrounded by young people and, if you will excuse the expression, 'simple country folk'. He was not one for visiting parishioners just for the sake of it, but was very supportive of those who needed him, particularly the

sick and elderly.

He moved to become vicar of Bampton, with three other country parishes, at the beginning of 1984, the same year he was appointed a Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral. He retired to Totnes in 1991, where he continued to take services in the Totnes group. Retirement enabled him to follow and develop many interests, particularly sailing. He had always been very keen on sailing, but hadn't had the time to enjoy it as much as he would have liked. Sadly, in 1998, Claire died suddenly, but it was typical of John that he learnt to cook for himself and reminded me on more than one occasion that he hadn't needed to resort to ready meals from supermarkets. He was a very practical man and very able wood-worker. Many a time at Newton St Cyres I found him in his well-equipped workshop, mending something or making something new, including items of furniture and detailed models (particularly ships and boats).

In his early days he developed a great love of Dartmoor and spent many hours walking all parts, including walking from South to North in a day, and became very knowledgeable on wildlife, particularly birds and butterflies.

He always had a great interest in architecture and at Newton St Cyres developed an interest in clocks, when he and one of his parishioners set about restoring the church clock, which had been silent for many years.

His ringing career makes different reading than most. He was not a prolific peal-ringer and certainly didn't keep records, but there are a few worthy of mention. His first peal was Plain Bob Minor at Oxford St Thomas, with the OUS, conducted by Rodney Meadows. He rang a few peals for the Devon Guild during the 1950s including ringing the tenors at South Molton and Crediton to Major and strapping the tenor at Exeter Cathedral to a peal of Caters. He was very proud to have rung in the first peal of Surprise Major for the Guild by a resident band, Cambridge at Wolborough in January 1956. After moving to North Devon, he rang very few peals and his last was Plain Bob Major at Newton St Cyres in December 1983.

However, his contribution to the ex-

ercise was much more than most of us will ever equal. He was elected as Chairman of the Exeter Branch of The Guild of Devonshire Ringers in 1954 and remained an officer until his death, including over 50 years as librarian. He was Bell advisor to the Diocese for over 40 years, Central Council rep for over 30 years as well as being a Vice-President and serving a year as Guild Master.

He also did a great amount of work for the Central Council, serving as President from 1981 to 1984, being a member of the Towers and Belfry Committee for over 40 years and was a long-standing member of the Rescue Fund for Redundant bells. As mentioned above, he represented the Devon Guild on the Council for over 30 years before being elected an honorary member in 1986 and remaining in that capacity until becoming a life member in 1998.

He was the longest-serving member of The Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund and was chairman from its founding in the early 1970s until succeeded by James Clarke in 2003. He was also a member of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths.

When I first knew John he was a very active ringer, ringing regularly on practice nights and Sundays at Newton St Cyres as well as attending Guild meetings and practices at Exeter Cathedral and other local towers. However, as he took on more and more duties the time spent on the end of a rope diminished and there are many current Guild members who have never seen him ring, even though they might have considered that they knew him well.

He enjoyed call-change ringing and in his younger days took part in and judged competitions. He was a good teacher and always enjoyed helping learners. He was very proud of the young band that he taught at Newton at the end of the 1960s, including his own children Rebecca, John and Joe. Although he didn't have as much time to further his own ringing, he took a keen interest in the activities of his trainees that continued in the exercise.

He told me on many occasions of the sense of pride he felt on discovering that I had been included in the band that rang a peal at St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate the centenary of the Central Council.

(Continued on page 4)

### John Scott (contd from page 3)

Most of us will remember John as a bell historian and marvel at his great knowledge of not only bells but church architecture and church clocks. Over the years he had taken part in many radio and newspaper interviews and appeared on television talking about bells. He wrote a short history of the Devon Guild to coincide with its centenary in 1974 and a short booklet on the bells of Exeter Cathedral. At the end of 2006, a lifetime's work came to fruition with the publication of *The Towers and Bells of Devon*, a book in two volumes containing over 700 pages. It had involved him making many visits to get details of all the bells in all the towers in the County – this would be a big task in any county, but in Devon it must have been a huge commitment. The work on this book had been undertaken jointly with Frank Mack and latterly, James Clarke.

John was first discovered to have bowel cancer in the early autumn of 2005, but he made a very quick recovery from surgery and was able to join his family and friends to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in December of the same year. The cancer returned towards the end of 2006 and even though he was undergoing treatment, he still led a very active life. His final illness was very brief, less than a week before his death his son, John, had taken him ringing at South Brent.

I remember John as a large, good humoured man with a great enthusiasm and unlimited energy for life. I consider myself very privileged to have known him and be able to regard him as a true friend. I miss him now and will continue to do so.

Our best wishes go to Rebecca, John and Joe. *Michael Mears.*

### Wooden Clapper Shafts

Wooden clapper shafts have been installed in Dursley, Worcester Cathedral and York Minster. At Wantage Brian White produced a wooden clapper in January 2007 the 71 year old ringing master successfully rang it up right first time single handed, the first time for 30 years including striking all the way down when lowering. A visiting call change band from Devon rang it in peal several times before a morning service endorsing the success of wooden clapper shafts.

## END OF AN ERA?

At the 1977 Annual General Meeting of the Devon Association of Ringers, which was held at Exeter, On November 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr Brian Drake was elected as Chairman. Mr Arthur Tapper was elected as President, with Mr Edgar Cole Secretary and Mr W Mortimer as Treasurer.

At our 2007 AGM, all Officers and Committee Members will be up for re-election. This will be the end of the current Triennium period. According to our Constitution, the Chairmanship will need to be taken on by a South-Committee Member, thus to allow the alternation every three years. Our current Vice-Chairman Mr Ryan Trout from Egg Buckland is likely to stand for election.

This will mean that Brian has held office for three complete decades – Thirty years as our Chairman. We are greatly indebted to Brian for his huge and continuous effort in Office. He has played a huge role in steering the Association through the latter part of the twentieth century, the Millennium and into the twenty-first century. Nothing has ever been too much trouble for our Chairman – giving his time in many ways, not forgetting the judging he has been (and hopefully will continue) doing. Fellow Officers and the Committee sincerely hope that many will come to show your appreciation of Brian at the AGM in November. *JJD*

### Denmisch Simulated Campanile

A simulated campanile has been installed and 'quartered' in Okehamp-ton in August. Six wheels with heavy weights are hung in the loft of a home with the ropes falling through to make a nice circle. An Abel computer programme provides the sounds as each wheel passes a sensor, and the installation handles more like a light ring than a mini-ring, enabling six people to practice as normal. They are certainly enjoyable and easy to ring.

Having the Abel technology also means an individual 'bell' can be rung with the computer providing the other bell sounds, for any number of bells. Excellent for rhythm and listening skills. A light 'bell' offers less natural rhythm than a heavier one, but this shouldn't put anyone off.

Denis and Mischa are keen to have lots of visitors to their simulator.

## Excellent hospitality

The competition season cannot be rounded off without a mention of the welcomes that the Association has received this year. No individual event should be singled out, as the host tower's hospitality could not be faulted at all!

At Ide in March, despite a large turn out the Ide ringers were able to cope and put on a plentiful spread. I must thank them again for their generous donation at the end of the afternoon. The church was full at the service that certainly put a seal on this enjoyable day.

The sun continued to shine for the Eight Bell. A fine setting at East Budleigh. All amenities were handy by, including the hall, which proved to be an excellent venue for the tea and prize giving. Sadly a disappointing entry – let's hope numbers pick up in 2008!

Two fine venues were used for the Qualifiers. Despite Mrs Pester being in hospital, Percy and his helpers looked after us very well at Colaton Raleigh. The judges had a grand position to listen from. A fine spread was put on at Bishops Nympton, being supported by a good entry this year.

Mrs Quance and her helpers did us proud at Shebbear. A shame that some teams that rang early could not support the tea, they will never know what they missed!

Then to the Final. Blackawton WI looked after us very well (along with the George Inn providing some additional beverage!

And finally Mr John Bass of Branscombe, where the National was held. Despite a call changes competition not being held there before, we had an excellent afternoon.

The judges were well catered for and positioned ideally in this picturesque part of East Devon.

Much preparation and effort goes on behind the scenes on each occasion. Yes the Secretary plays his role in coordinating things, but we could not manage without the sterling effort put in by the tower captains and their helpers of all the host towers that we visit for our festivals.

To all that have helped us enjoy our festivals this year (and previous years are not forgotten either), a big thank you on behalf of the Association.

*JJD Hon Secretary.*

## Results

### Lapford on Sat July 14, 2007

1. South Tawton -	30½
2. Exminster -	31½
3. Zeal Monachorum -	32½
4. Littleham -	36
5. Down St. Mary -	36½
6. Ilfracombe -	41½
7. East Anstey -	48
8. Black Torrington -	54½
9. Chawleigh -	59
10. Alphington -	64½
11. Inwardleigh -	67
12. Sandford -	81
13. Mariansleigh -	138

Judges: C. Clayton & W. Tremain

### Burrington on 28th July 2007

#### A Section:

1. Egguckland	20 <sup>1/3</sup>
2. East Anstey	30 ½
3. Littleham (Rung 16:13 mins)	46 <sup>2/3</sup>
4. High Bickington (Rung 16:42)	46 <sup>2/3</sup>
5. Dunsford	47 ½

#### B Section:

1. West Down	53 <sup>1/3</sup>
2. Mortehoe	57
3. Mariansleigh	60 ½
4. Chittlehampton	87
5. Sampford Courtney	92 <sup>1/3</sup>
6. Ide	126 <sup>1/3</sup>

Judges: Scott Adams, Jereme Darke and Steve Facey

### Torrige Valley Guild of Ringers

The Guild celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and marked the occasion by presenting an attendance certificate to every team that rang in the annual Ringing Festival. This year it was held at Bradford on 28 July, the venue where the Guild was set up in 1932. The results are as follows:

### Bradford on 28 July 2007

#### Open Section

1 <sup>st</sup> Dunsford	15½
2 <sup>nd</sup> Burrington	15¾
3 <sup>rd</sup> West Down	21¼
4 <sup>th</sup> East Anstey	36¼

#### Torrige Section

1 <sup>st</sup> Littleham 'A'	13¾
2 <sup>nd</sup> Black Torrington 'A'	18¾
3 <sup>rd</sup> Black Torrington 'B'	29½
4 <sup>th</sup> Littleham B	32¾
5 <sup>th</sup> Matt's Misfits (made up local team)	45½
6 <sup>th</sup> Little Torrington	60¾
7 <sup>th</sup> Monkleigh	61½
8 <sup>th</sup> Torrington	85½

#### Junior Novice Section

1 <sup>st</sup> Bradford A	21¾
2 <sup>nd</sup> Bradford B	34½
3 <sup>rd</sup> Shebbear	43

Judges: John Wickett and Helen Robinson  
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 section. Brian Broadhurst, (Hon Secretary)

### Results of the Widecombe in the Moor competition held on Saturday 4th August 2007

1. Egguckland	21 ½
2. Burrington	36
3. Collaton St Mary	38
4. Stoke Gabriel	41 ½
5. Exminster	51 ½
6. Kingsteignton	53 ½

7. South Tawton	54 ½
8. West Alvington	57
9. South Brent	65
10. North Bovey	81 ½
11. Burrington B	135
12. Ide	140

Judges:

Jereme Darke & Percy Pester

### Shebbear on 11th August 2007

#### A Section:

1. Egguckland	7
2. Dunsford	11 ½
3. Exeter, St Petrock	20
4. Burrington	20 ½
5. East Anstey	21
6. Devon Belles	29 ½
7. Littleham	33
8. Exminster	33 ½

#### B Section:

1. Zeal Monachorum	16
2. Mariansleigh	19
3. Inwardleigh	19 ½
4. Black Torrington	39
5. Little Torrington	77 ½

#### Junior Section:

1. Shebbear	19 ½
2. Bradford B	23
3. Bradford A	32

### Lydford on 18 August 2007

1. Egguckland	14
2. Dunsford	29 ½
3. Lamerton	20 ½
4. East Anstey	21
5. Exminster	21 ½
6. Burrington	22 ½
7. Stoke Gabriel	27 ½
8. South Tawton	31 ¾
9. Alphington	36
10. Ide	48 ½

Judges:

Pat Johnstone and Bernard Miners

### Bridestowe on 18 August 2007

1. Egguckland	11
2. Dunsford	19 ½
3. East Anstey	27 ½
4. Alphington	29 ½
5. Stoke Gabriel	29 ¾
6. Exminster	30 ½
7. Lamerton	37 ½
8. Burrington	37 ¾
9. South Tawton	49
10. Ide	79 ½

Judges:

Helen Robinson & John Wickett

### National 6 Bell Call Change

#### Competition at Branscombe,

#### 1st September 2007

1. Egguckland	41 ¾
2. Kingsteignton	45 ¾
3. Lamerton	55 ¾
4. Dunsford	59
5. Society of Royal Cumberland Youths	60 ¾
6. Hampshire West	69 ¾
7. Exeter Cathedral	70 ¾
8. Exeter, St Petrock	70 ¾
9. Moorland Ringers	80 ¾
10. Bath and Wells - Glaston Branch	83 ¾
11. Stoke Gabriel	88
12. Bath and Wells - Axbridge Branch	88 ¾
13. Exeter Colleges Guild	111 ¾

### Judges:

Chris Clayton, Jereme Darke, Steve Herniman and Paul Wright  
The SRCY win the Trinity Shield for best placed non-Devon team

### Mariansleigh on 8th September:

#### A Section

1. Mortehoe -	11
2. East Anstey -	22
3. West Down -	27
4. Littleham -	28

#### B Section

1. Zeal Monachorum -	38
2. South Molton -	82
3. Morebath -	120
4. Bishopsnympton - No Result	

### Iddesleigh on 22nd September

#### A Section

1. Egguckland -	9
2. Mortehoe -	14
3. West Down -	18
4. Iddesleigh -	22
5. Littleham -	25
6. Burrington -	30
7. East Anstey -	54

#### B Section

1. Zeal Monachorum -	15
2. Sampford Courtney A -	31
3. Little Torrington -	53
4. Mariansleigh -	55
5. Dolton -	89
6. Sampford Courtney B -	93

### Kenn Deaney on 22 September at St Michael, East Teignmouth

#### A Section:

1. Dunsford	25 ½
2. Exminster B	40
3. Alphington	56 ½
4. Exminster A	57
5. Ide	66

#### B Section:

1. Teignmouth	71
2. Dawlish	87

#### Novice Section:

1. Dawlish	55
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Judges: J Coulthirst and P Pester

### South Devon 8 Bell Competition

#### at Plymstock on 6 Oct 2007

Top ringing shown in brackets

1. Kingsteignton	(13)	26
2. Lamerton	(14½)	31
3. South Brent	(15½)	32
4. Exminster	(17½)	38½
5. Exeter Cathedral	(18½)	40½
6. Stoke Gabriel	(20½)	41½
7. Kingsbridge	(24)	45½
8. Plymstock	(30½)	49½

Egguckland no result.

Judges: B Drake and M Way

### Tedburn St Mary on 20 Oct 2007

#### Section A

1. St Petrocks	23
2. Exminster	34 ½
3. East Anstey	40 ½
4. Stoke Gabriel	44
5. South Tawton	54

#### Section B

1. Spreyton	69 ½
2. Sandford	75
3. Zeal Monachorum	84 ½
4. Drewsteignton	92 ½
5. Ide	117

Judges: Percy Pester and Colin Adams.

## Ringling in Herefordshire - Episode 2!

This year we made our way to Herefordshire on Friday 28th September and return to Devon Monday 1st October. The party Dave and Hilary, Ryan, Louise, Roger, Martin and Sue (Eggbuckland), they were joined by Suzanne (S.Brent), Jereme (East Chinnock), Graham (Dunsford), Paul and Steve (Burrington, High Bickington), Scott (Kenton and Exminster), Chris (Sampford Courtney) and Mervyn (Chagford). We were also joined by Dan Trout and his girlfriend Michelle on the Saturday. Nine of the party driven by Jereme were to meet at 7:30am at Huish Episcopi as Chris wanted BREAKFAST. Most of the party therefore had to leave their respected homes at around 6am, I don't think Mr Clayton was the flavour of the month!! We left Plymouth at 7:30 and made our way to Redmarley D'Abitot in Gloucestershire, a French Connection somewhere perhaps? We all arrived at Redmarley at around 10:15am, these 6 the Tenor 9-3-22 in G, were a good peal, one or 2 were slightly odd struck but went well and sounded good, this was Louise's first proper tour and she rung these bells with great confidence and so that was to continue with the others commenting on how she had progressed in the last couple of months. Onto our 2nd tower of the day, crossing into Herefordshire and on our way to Bosbury, these bells were one of my favourites all trip, ground floor peal of 6 in a huge detached tower, the Tenor weighing 15-1-6 in E, all 3 peals we had were of a good standard and I think everyone enjoyed them, for 15cwt they went very well and had nice mellow sound, the Tenor here dates from around 1450! The Bell Inn opposite made a pleasant resting place. Onto Bishop's Frome for Lunch at the Green Dragon, Herefordshire's Camra pub of the Year, unfortunately it was closed so a quick trip to the Chase Inn next door was had, the Ale wasn't bad but the food was good especially the Bangers and Mash! Luvvly Jubbly! We then rang at Bishop's Frome, Peal of 6 Tenor 11-3-15 in G, the most disappointing of the trip and were quite tricky, they seemed to fall away in certain sequences although they weren't on plain bearings! They were by no means unringable. We then made our way to Cradley near the Malvern

Hills, these were a ground floor peal of 8 hung in a massive west tower, these were a little tricky too but had a wonderful sound outside in the church yard, the Tenor 13-2-20 in F#. Then to Stoke Edith, the Church which was part of the Estate has a truncated Spire, the top part being blown off in a storm some years ago. These bells were re-hung by Taylors in 1903 and re-cast Treble, 2nd and Tenor, they were a magnificent sounding peal which went extremely well for bells on plain bearings, they are well looked after, the Tenor here was 14-2-14 in F#. We all then went to our Accommodation in the centre of Hereford City, a quick change and out to watch the Rugby, some of us fragmented the group (you know who you are) and the others watched the Rugby, all parties involved in the weekend had a curry and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Saturday morning after breakfast we made our way to Almeley, a ground floor 6 with a long draft, went well and sounded superb, good striking was had here. Onto Staunton on Wye, a lovely peal of 6 Tenor 10-0-11 in G, they went very well and sounded superb. Unfortunately Dave and Hilary's car broke down here but they only missed Preston on Wye, these bells again sounded good and were augmented to 6 in 1995, they were a little tricky mostly due to the rope length. We were soon off again through the back lanes of the Herefordshire to Madley, a fine 8 Tenor 15-2-24 in F, they sounded good and went well and some good striking was had, a quick pint in the Red Lion down the road and a nice chat to the locals was had here, they couldn't believe how much we paid for a pint in Devon in Hereford we paid no more than £2.30 and in some places £1.75!! We were soon off again and arrived at another beautiful 8 at Kingstone, they were a fine sounding ring that went well and the Tenor here 12-0-22 in G. We were soon heading for the Castle Inn at Little Birch where we had a lovely meal the landlord and lady here were spot on, well worth a visit if you're in the area.

Sunday was the best day of all, we set out at 9:30 to arrive at our first destination Peterchurch, a magnificent building with the tallest Spire in the whole of Hereford, the bells were of equal quality, a peal of 6 Tenor 9-3-1 in Ab, they went well and sounded superb. We were on our way again and soon arriving at Clodock, a tiny hamlet

that nestles in the foothills of the Black mountains and lies on the border, we were treated here to a magnificent set of 6 from Taylors of Loughborough the Tenor 10-0-2 in A, they went like a dream and sounded excellent, we went into the pub next door which was called the Cornewall Arms, this was like stepping back into a Bygone era, it was extremely welcoming with a slate floor and wooden settles and at the rear it was like being in someone's living room, with a carpet under foot and lovely easy chairs which surrounded the fire, it was superb. Onto the Skirrid Inn at Llanfihangel Crucorney in Gwent, not far from Abergavenny, this pub is said to be haunted and did have a slightly eerie feel to it, the ale and food was good. Abergavenny, were the highlight for me, a superb Taylor 10 both tone and go were excellent, we rose the back 8 in peal twice, the Tenor here 25-0-18 in D, good 8 bell ringing and the locals enjoyed the call changes, back into England (thank God) and were making our way to Kentchurch, these were a pretty little set of 6 but slightly odd struck the Tenor here 7-2-5 in Bb. Our final destination of the day was Ewyas Harold, these bells were again lovely, ground floor peal of 6 tenor 6-2-12 in A, they went really well and sounded good. We then had a roast dinner in the Dog Inn in the village, the Landlady use to live in Plymouth and had a great time explaining that she use to go to Diptford Primary school where Suzanne used to go, this was an enjoyable evening made better by Cathy and Tony!

On Monday we left for Upton Bishop, a pleasant ring of 6 Tenor 10-0-2 in G, they sounded good but were slightly odd struck, especially the 4th! The next village Linton, a lovely place with a lovely church and spire, the bells were a very good set and they sounded good, the Tenor here 8-1-20 in A, the 5th rope unfortunately broke during the 2nd peal but Graham swiftly took a rope and we were soon ringing again. From here we made our way back into Gloucestershire and arrived for lunch at a lovely pub called the Glasshouse in May Hill, we finished our lunch and onto Longhope, a tricky set of 8 Bells tenor 10-3-11 in G, Louise made good work of these (continued on page 7)

## Hereford *from page 6*

bells and had some good striking, this was her first trip and only the 3rd time she had ever rung 8, the other 2 times also being on this trip! Congratulations, I hope your hands are ok now!! From here we made our way to North Nibley, near Dursley, we were met by Derek Carr of Bristol, a member of the Bristol team who came 2nd this year in the annual 12 bell striking contest at Bristol St Stephen, no mean feat from the ringing I have heard! We were also met by the lovely Wynne Holcombe who I had arranged the ringing with. North Nibley are an excellent ring of 6 both tone and go are superb, they have also invited the Association to have their annual National 6 bell call change event there, which is great news! We said our good byes and headed back for Huish Episcopi in Somerset, once we arrived we said our good byes to Scott, Chris and Merv, the 10 that were left walked tiredly up to the tower and were met by Den Sheppard tower captain. Bells in Somerset have a reputation with some Devon ringers, most being too heavy and hard going! But some like Huish Episcopi are worth the wait, very well balanced and beautifully toned bells, for the end of a long weekend of ringing we had some decent striking which was echoed by Den and numerous locals. Finally we headed for the Rose and Crown in Huish to have our last supper together, we were treated here with wholesome home made food, lovely beer and great cider. All in all this was another great weekend that took in some of England's nicest areas, Herefordshire has come up with the goods again and one day we will be back to finish the other towers off.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who came on the trip, I thought it was very good and hope to do another two next year.

*Ryan Trout.*

### **Devon County Show May 2008 Do you attend and can help us?**

The Devon Ringers Council are hoping to have a stand. Do you normally attend the show? Can you assist us for a few hours on one of the three days? Please contact Jereme Darke for more details.

## Sam Heath counts his blessings

Sam Heath, 85, when aged two met 'Aunty'. Sam was born in a workhouse in Totnes in 1922 and never knew his parents. He was termed "mentally defected" and was destined for an asylum. Fortunately, for Sam, a woman was in search of a child who would be company for her daughter. She immediately took to Sam and he to her.

Aunty was unable to adopt Sam as she was not married and at 10 he returned to Barnstaple Workhouse. Although Sam had some tough times in the workhouse he never felt hard done by.

Sam got his first job at 14 years working on a farm in Parracombe. His only day off was Sunday and he never missed church. After four years he left to work on another farm in Stoke Rivers and met his future wife, May.

The couple married in 1962 and moved to Charles Bottom so May could look after her father. Sam once again changed jobs and was a general labourer on the Fortescue Estate, where he continued to work for 20 years. He still keeps in touch with Lady Margaret Fortescue.

Sam continued to attend church on Sundays and started bell-ringing at St Michael's Church, East Buckland. He was happy to share his bell-ringing skills with some of the children from West Buckland School who used St Michael's for worship. Sam and May moved from Charles Bottom to Roundswell after May's father died. Eight years later May was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and died in February this year.

Sam moved into Norah Bellot Court, sheltered housing accommodation in Barnstaple in July. Life at his new home is action-packed but he still helps out at Barnstaple's St Peter's Church on Friday evenings with bell-ringing.

He still attends services at East Buckland as this is the one church which holds special memories for him and his family. "I was churchwarden there for many years and when May died a memorial service was held in the church in her memory." "I always count my blessings for a lovely life and for God gifting me with two lovely children, Lilian and David, who have in turn, blessed me with four beautiful grandchildren".

## Auntie's Army

Chagford Ringers and friends had a wonderful long weekend during August whilst in Warwickshire organised by Julia Endacott and the towers and accommodation planned by Richard and Kelly Wilson

We arrived at Southam (8) 15-1-25 our first tower and time for lunch with a small band on a pub crawl. The afternoon would prove to be historic ringing. First was Newbold on Avon (10) 12-0-1 then the two towers at the one church, St Andrew Rugby, the NE tower (8) 24-3-8 and the W tower (5) 9-2-3. How many people have rung at two towers in the one church? We reached our accommodation at the Falstaff Hotel, Leamington Spa. After such a long and tiring day, most did find energy after the meal for the 10 minutes (?) walk to the Star and Garter pub. Saturday saw us ringing at St Nicholas, Kenilworth (6) 14-0-22 set in the grounds of the ruined St Mary's Abbey and then Warwick (10) 24-3-20. St Mary's is featured in England's Thousand Best Churches a wonderful interior and tomb. After lunch we travelled to Henley in Arden (6-) 11-3-4. The brook here rose in July 2007 causing colossal damage. The water literally came pouring down the main road and flooded all the dwellings on the lower side of the road.

The next tower and town was a real treat. Alcester (8) 12-2-13. The town was neat and tidy with houses opening onto the churchyard. A wonderful set of Taylor bells cast in 1948. The last tower of the day was Wootton Wawen (6) 10-2-6. The oldest church in Warwickshire and dating back to the eighth century.

The Saturday meal at the Newbold Inn was a treat with some deciding to walk in the rain, walking past the wonderful municipal gardens and hanging basket displays. Sunday saw us ringing at Whitnash (8) 10-3-5 impressing the local captain with our striking and the rising and lowering in peal. Some stayed to the service other went to Jephson Gardens in Leamington the award winning botanical gardens. Our Sunday lunch was at the Moorings, right next to a canal. The final ring was at Leamington Spa (8) 12-3-16 before heading back home. Thank you Auntie for a really wonderful, entertaining and well planned ringing break.

## AGM notice

The AGM will be held on Saturday 10 November at North Tawton Town Hall starting 2.15pm

The annual affiliation fees are due on 1 October or at the AGM and will be £5. In addition the competition fees will be £1.50 a rope, being £9 for 6 bell towers and £12 for 8 bell towers.

Any bellringing clothing or badges can be obtained from Janice Gist 01805 624690.

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## Treasurer

The Treasurer is Mrs Janice Gist, Barries Corner, 5 St Giles in the Wood, Torrington EX38 7JQ. Please ensure that all subscriptions and competition entry fees are up to date. These are all payable by 1 October each year. All cheques payable to Devon Association of Ringers.

## Editor

The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the view of the Association.

Any articles, comments to: The Editor, Michael Webster, 5 Kings Rydon Close, Stoke Gabriel, Totnes, TQ9 6QG. 01803 782591 or via Email: [mtwebster@btinternet.com](mailto:mtwebster@btinternet.com) Please remember that this is your newsletter and that your contributions are sought. Please make use of this newsletter.

## Ringout Wild Bells 2

**Exeter Autumn 2007 Festival**  
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