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# Devon Calls

July/August 2017

## DANIEL COPESAKE - YOUNG DEVON RINGER

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During a recent visit to St. Margaret's Topsham with Exminster ringers I was struck by the appearance of a young lad standing on a box receiving instruction from Tower Captain Matt Pym. Matt later introduced me to Daniel whom he said had expressed a desire to learn to ring and started last year when he was 12 years old.

Daniel's father Keith rings at the tower and it seems Daniel asked his dad if he could join him on a practice night. Dad Keith brought him along and at the tower introduced him to Matt and Deputy Captain, Harry Fowler. Matt and Harry quickly took Daniel under their wing and it was not long before Daniel's potential began to shine through. He has made such progress that now aged 13 he has progressed from initially standing on two boxes to currently using just one. He started to learn on the treble bell but has since progressed to the second. Now he is able to ring unassisted in call changes and is progressing towards method ringing which is quite an achievement at such a young age. Although currently learning to rise and lower on his own he is on the verge of doing so within the rest of the team. The other point to make is that he has done all this without any peer group support. Most young people when they learn something, particularly activities outside school hours, join a group and learn with the benefit of peer group support.

When I first saw Daniel handling a bell under Matt's supervision I was amazed at his degree of confidence and enthusiasm. At the same time I was struck by his tidy rope handling skills and how he keenly watched other ringers



L. to R. Matt Pym, Daniel and Harry Fowler

perform whilst he was sitting out. The aptitude which he has shown has taken him beyond Topsham to ring at: Exminster, Huntsham, Littleham (Exmouth) Silverton, Tiverton (St. Peter's) Uffculm (where he rang the 2<sup>nd</sup> on 8). More recently during a branch practice held at Withycombe Raleigh he extended his skills by ringing the 3<sup>rd</sup> during a 12 bell peal.

Dad Keith learnt to ring as a young man whilst living at Yardley, Birmingham. After a break of 20 years he came back to ringing. It was whilst attending a Christmas service at St. Margaret's Topsham and hearing the sound of the bells that re-kindled Keith's interest and he started to take up ringing again. Would Daniel have taken up bellringing if his father was not a ringer? Well we shall never know but full marks to him for trying something other than the more main stream social activities.

Colin Adams

Distributed FREE to towers affiliated to the Devon Association of Ringers

COPY for "DEVON CALLS" is always welcome and we rely on you to submit articles

Deadline for next edition - 30 September 2017

We would be very interested in including "Letters to the Editor".

Articles and letters should be sent to the Editor: Colin ADAMS - [kentonian@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:kentonian@eclipse.co.uk)

*(Continued from previous page)*

He told me that he does enjoy swimming and he also recently successfully completed two courses in kayaking at Exeter's Haven Banks. He also enjoys technology and playing computer games such as Minecraft. I asked him if any of his friends are aware that he rings. He told me that he has one friend who is aware and who shows an interest in ringing. Apparently this friend tried bellringing whilst living in Australia. Does anyone at your school know you are a ringer I asked; a teacher for example? "No" said Daniel. I followed this up by asking if he would encourage any of his friends to try bellringing and a prompt "Yes" was the reply.

With more young ringers like Daniel the art of bellringing is likely to survive. Matt and Harry together with dad Keith have done well in enabling Daniel to acquire a unique skill and one which is sadly not widely

recognised today. Daniel himself has concentrated and keenly followed instructions. Now he has the ability to perform a complex skill which is poorly understood and which is a challenge to master. It is also one which is invariably practiced far from public gaze.

Topsham also has in its band 88 year old Tony Appleton. Tony is at one end of the scale whilst 13 year old Daniel is at the other; between them there is an age gap of 75 years! Could Tony be one of the oldest ringers in the county of Devon and Daniel one of the youngest? Please get in touch with us here at *Devon Calls* and let us know if you have similarly 'distinguished' ringers within your band.

**Colin E. Adams**  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2017

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## EDITORIAL

**W**e understand that the cost implications associated with printing and distributing *Devon Calls* was discussed by committee members at its meeting on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017. It seems strong views were expressed that the magazine should be published on-line to save costs, although it was acknowledged that not all members have access to the internet. The discussion concluded with a proposal made by the President, Mrs. Christine Ley, "That Devon Calls should be published on-line and distributed by email in tandem with hard copies in the medium term with a view to a phased reduction in the number of printed magazines". The proposal was seconded by Scott Adams. In being put to the vote the majority were in favour of the proposal with five members abstaining.

In our opinion the committee needs to re-examine the proposal keeping the following points in mind:

- The need to present the proposal for wider discussion at the next AGM and to gauge reaction.
- The need to devise a plan for introducing the proposal and giving it wide publicity. Very firm publication dates must be established and must be adhered to otherwise no one would know when to look for the next edition on-line.
- The editorial effort in assembling an edition is the same whether printed or circulated on-line. The final manuscript - tidied, proof read and corrected, laid out properly, etc.- and available on-line or by email is, after all, exactly the same as is currently sent to the printer (and submitted to the web site).
- The need to ascertain who exactly will continue to receive a hard copy. It is hoped that new recruits would see a hard copy in their belfry at a stage when they probably would not be sufficiently committed to go looking for it on-line.
- The need to decide whether hard copies will be sent through the post or be distributed by hand. If by hand who the designated distributors will be?
- The need to consider how any additional documents produced by the association (AGM minutes and agenda, competition schedule, officers contact details, etc) and currently circulated with the magazine would be distributed in future.

Whilst we agree that the cost of producing and circulating the magazine does need to be kept under review it is in the area of postal charges that the greatest savings could be made. If an enthusiastic network of distributors across the county were to be established the overall cost of the magazine could be reduced by at least 50%.

The editorial team of volunteers consistently look towards ways for reducing costs. We have no vested interest in retaining the magazine in its present form. It is already sent to the Association's web master for inclusion on the web site which should, in theory, make it more widely available. However, no matter how fashionable it might be to go on-line the move does need to be carefully thought through. Otherwise there is a risk that the magazine's content may not reach as wide an audience as it currently does and ideally should be much wider.

**Colin E. Adams**

**Colin G. Barnes**

28<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

## BRIAN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE AS CAPTAIN OF NORTH TAWTON RINGERS

After the death of Jim Bennett as captain of North Tawton Bellringers, the team elected Brian Drake as their new captain. He then had to reposition the team as they had lost their treble ringer.

Brian worked hard for the team; pushing, prodding and steering them to even more success. This success continued for many years until age took its toll. As the last remaining member of Brian's competition team, I am proud to have had the privilege of ringing with him and being able to call him a friend.

**Mervyn C. WAY.**



W. Folland (7), E. Cole (3), W. Axworthy (6) M. Way (1), C. Westlake (8)  
C. Pike (2), B. Drake (5) - Captain, W. Mortimer (4)



North Tawton, Winkleigh and Sampford Courtenay Ringers with the Rector of North Tawton - Revd. Nick Weldon (back left)

*What a wonderful achievement. Congratulations Brian from the Devon Association of Ringers together with the team responsible for **Devon Calls**.*

## NOTES FROM ST. PETROCK'S, EXETER

It has been two years since we lost our Captain, David Trist. Much has transpired since then at St. P's.

We have new ropes, excellent ones from Avon Ropes. Philip Pratt and his mother, Diane, organised and produced our ropes and we have never looked back. Philip very kindly invited Ryan and me, Joanna came as well, to watch their construction and, as much as we thought that we knew about ropes, it didn't compare to the education we received. He uses British wool and has his own self-invented technology to ensure a correct and even tension throughout the process. As a result there is virtually no stretch. I am sure in his own trade as an electrical engineer they too profit greatly from his ingenuity and cleverness - ever helpful making sure that we have got it right. I got to see the first rope he had ever made for a tiny bell. In short, St Petrock's have never rung so well. We could not have imagined what a difference it would make in terms of the ringing experience; far less flighty and easy to ring.

As well the church, at least the half in which the bells reside, is going through a major refurbishment. Front porch, etc., has been removed. Monuments have been cleaned under the sympathetic and watchful eye of our Vicar, Sheila

Swarbrick, who has helped us in no small way to ensure our ringing is supported and uninterrupted.

Due to the works, however, St. Petrock's will be closed until October for 'ringing'. As a further note - visiting towers are always welcome. We had St. Columb Major visit as part of a tour. Very nice to see them all and some good peals as well.

The Cathedral children still ring here and it is a pleasure to see their progress under the patient and watchful eye of Adrian Rowland.

From October we will have our usual open practice at 4.30 to 5.30pm on Saturdays. If you are travelling a distance and wish to be sure we are there by all means email me at [steffie.brown@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steffie.brown@hotmail.co.uk)



St Petrock's

Regards  
**Stephanie and Ryan**

## CHAGFORD'S BELLS ARE RINGING AGAIN

As most of you will know the project to refurbish the bells and replace the old oak bellframe is just about complete. The bells were raised into the tower in February and after some trial peals they were rededicated by the Rt Revd Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter, on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Bishop admitted, during his sermon, that he had visited Chagford *incognito*, to see the bells on display at the back of the church and had received an explanation of their refurbishment from one of the bell ringers who was acting as a steward at the time (yes, we do know who it was!).

During the rededication service, which was largely based on the Service of Rededication in 1915, the rope Spider and a Ciborium, made by Chris Smallwood of oak from the old frame, were presented to the Bishop by our two youngest ringers, Finn Goodwin and Gabriel Bint, as shown in the photos. The service was followed by a buffet lunch in the Jubilee Hall attended by over 100 people

An archive of the project and of the bells has been compiled in a display file box largely paid for by a generous grant from the Devon County Council Locality Budget Fund by the kind support of Cllr. James McInnes.

The Appeals Committee was disbanded on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017, having been formed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015, The total sum raised was over £84k of which a remarkable 64% (including Gift Aid tax reclaimed) was given by individuals and families, 28% came from Charitable Grants and 7% from fund-raising events such as the auction organised by The Globe, the inaugural concert organised by Freddie Crowley and a 24 hour sponsored (silent) ring organised by Stuart and Laurence Bennie. We are all most grateful for the support of so many people to this project. It is impossible to list everyone but those especially acknowledged are:

- the support of the PCC & congregation
- the support of the community
- the generosity of donors to the appeal
- those who provided accommodation for the bell hangers
- those who contributed to the Rededication service and lunch on 1<sup>st</sup> April
- the crafting of a new spider, ciborium and ringing chamber coat rack from the old oak frame
- the help of photographers and calligrapher
- Organisers of fund raising events (concert, coffee mornings, auction, etc.)
- the Appeals Committee and its officers,
- Grants including those from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, and
- many others

Now the bells run magnificently and sound fine although some differences have been noted. Well they are hanging on a new frame, have new headstocks and bearings and are not in the same places within the tower as before. Visitors are already queuing up to ring, but not too many, and an acknowledged expert Devonshire ringer was heard to say that these are now "the best ring of 8 in Devon".

Nevertheless the work will continue as - **"RINGING THE CHANGES"**

- with the purpose of continuing the heritage of Devon Call Change Ringing tradition;
- by maintaining an active squad of ringers within the Whiddon Mission Community;
- through ongoing recruitment, retention, training and education of new ringers

It has been agreed that, as the finance is available, a "dumb bell" for training should be installed in the clock chamber as soon as possible.

*Julia Endacott*  
*Tower Captain*

*Colin Barnes*  
*Appeal Chairman*



Novice ringers Finn GOODWIN (l) and Gabriel BINT (r) presenting the Archive, and the Spider & Ciborium crafted from the 1914 Aggett oak bellframe by Chris Smallwood (a ringer), to the Right Revd Robert ATWELL, Bishop of Exeter, for Blessing  
1st April 2017

# DEVON SOCIAL RINGERS CONQUER RUTLAND

The twelve ringers set off on their journey to Rutland to grab all 6 bell and 8 bell towers (21) in just five days, plus one in Northamptonshire and one in Gloucestershire. It was a damp March morning for the greater part of the trip travelling North. Four cars set off from the four corners of Devon and all arriving at Caldecott within minutes of each other having negotiated various routes to get there. Whilst the weather at home was appalling we bathed in sunshine for the most part during our visit..

The towers were:

**Caldecott** 8cwt 6, **Lyddington** 12cwt 6, **Seaton** 10cwt 6, **Glaston** 7cwt 6, **Preston** 10cwt 6, **Braunston** 10cwt 6, **Brooke** 8cwt 6, **Belton-in-Rutland** 10cwt 6, **Uppingham** 14cwt 8, **Exton** 12cwt 6, **Langham** 13cwt 6, **Whissenden** 12cwt 6, **Cottesmore** 14cwt 6, **Greetham** 10cwt 6, **Oakham** 24cwt 8, **Barrowden** 9cwt 6, **Ryhall** 11cwt 6, **Great Casterton** 5cwt 6, **Empingham** 15cwt 6, **Edith Weston** 7cwt 6, **North Luffenham** 11cwt 6, **Harringworth** (Northants) 10cwt 6 and finally **Eastington** (Gloucs) 11cwt 6.

Despite the intensity of the ringing with a small party there were few blisters in evidence and only precautionary strapping was needed. There were lots of fine bells and equally good ringing throughout. We did not have a single lock out although we came close at Exton where the lady arrived late and without the correct key. However, bless her, she sorted it with some rapid phone calls.

The best bells were the 24cwt 8 at Oakham, they had a beautiful tone and apart from the 5<sup>th</sup> were hung well. Rutland is a small county and the density of towers very high. Therefore the inter tower journeys were very short, never travelling more than 15mins at a time. The villages were beautifully maintained: a total lack of litter and well maintained verges and properties. Village greens and duck ponds were well in evidence. There was just one blemish - mobile phone coverage was poor.

Due to the county's small size the jungle telegraph worked incredibly fast. For two days we were being told that Great Casterton was unavailable due to electrical contractors working in the tower. As we visited each tower this message was delivered. With the possibility that our tour would not be complete our intrepid organiser David made a vital call and the tower was cleared for our arrival and what a delight the bells were. We had many admiring fans with the quality of our ringing. People coming out of their houses to listen. Comments like, "they don't ring them like that here". Some more knowledgeable people could not understand why we raised and lowered with every peal, that's "Devon Call Changes", we explained. Another common thread was the low sallies and long tails.

Bells and towers to avoid were the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at Barrowden and Harringworth the whole set! The 4<sup>th</sup> at Barrowden was a full cut at each hand stroke, cuts for changes were a work of art.

No report is complete without those champagne moments! Julia despatching a pheasant with Charlie's car. No avoiding

action was taken by either and a full cloud of feathers rose in her wake. No damage to the car; neither the pheasant or Julia stood a chance! Now for a milestone. Marie one of the less experienced tourists has trouble rising and lowering. Well at North Luffenham Marie turned in a performance which brought applause and plaudits from everyone, the smile on her face was a picture. Keep it up Marie.

There were two notable landmarks to enjoy. The first was the Welland viaduct built in 1878. The longest rail viaduct in



the UK comprising 82 arches, 60 feet high and extending 1,275 yards across the landscape. The

second was Rutland water, the largest man-made lake in the UK with a perimeter

of 25 miles. It was completed in 1975 to provide drinking water for the county of Rutland. On Sunday morning after breakfast we walked to the waters edge. A beautiful view, sun shining in the crystal-clear waters and a huge fleet of dinghies racing.

The journey home was eventful for the wrong reasons. We were due to ring at Eastington which is a short drop off the M5 in Gloucestershire. Unfortunately, there was a lorry fire close to our exit junction. Two cars managed to leave the motorway at an earlier junction navigating through some small hamlets near Stonehouse, arriving just 15mins late. The other two became stuck in the motorway queue, one of which managed to arrive over an hour late. The remaining car had a brush with a passing car transporter and lost a wing mirror, this prevented them from making the final tower.

Eastington were excellent bells, we had some quality striking including a peal of 120 unrepeated call changes to finish off a very enjoyable tour. Unfortunately, the final eating stop had to be cancelled due to our lateness.

A big thank you to David Trout, for his impeccable organisation and the company from all our tourists. For the most part great bells and beautiful scenery. Tourists were Sue Ashton, Ryan Brodie, Stephanie Brown, Charlie Hard, Julia Jarvis, Tony Jeffery, Graham Pascoe, James and Linda Steer, David and Hilary Trout, Marie Yates and Jo.



**Graham Pascoe**  
Broadhempston

Touring party minus Steph, Ryan and Jo. Missing on the motorway!

# OBITUARIES

## **JOHN KELLY BEM -**

**18 September 1935 - 4 May 2017**

John Kelly was born 18 September 1935 and died at Brixham Hospital on 4 May 2017. He started life at the Devon Constabulary HQ, New North Road, Exeter, son of the then PC Sam Kelly who in 1937 became the first Civil Defence Sergeant in the Devon Constabulary at its Headquarters.

The family lived at Honiton from 1938 to 1946 and when they moved to Moretonhampstead John missed the 11 Plus and went to Chagford Secondary Modern School for the remainder of his schooling. His father was later posted to Torquay and the family lived there. John worked for Eric Perry, a Rootes Distributor in Torwood Street, from April 1951. John was conscripted to National Service from 1954 to 1956 and served in the REME and attached to the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment as a recovery mechanic driving Centurion Armoured recovery vehicles in Germany. John was recalled from August 1956 to December 1956 because of the Suez crisis and was stationed in Mill Hill, London, as a Recovery Mechanic.

It was John's skills working in the garage and in the Army that prompted a fellow bell ringer to suggest to John that he considers working for the Gas Board where he started as a driver in August 1959 and retired in October 1993 as a gas distribution supervisor.

John was taught to ring at Moretonhampstead in 1948 and when the family moved to Torquay John visited Upton and Cockington where he met some Paignton ringers who encouraged him to continue with his ringing. He joined Paignton Parish church in 1952 and had been Captain there from 1958 until the day of his death.

While at Paignton, John started handbell ringing and raising money for the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust in 1956. This group was started by John Lippiett in 1955 and John continued this and had supported Dame Hannah Rogers Trust by raising funds through hand bell ringing, in addition to other charities, every year up until 2016. 50 consecutive years of raising money for Dame Hannah Rogers School at Ivybridge.

John had been in the Special Constabulary from 1959 until 1991 and retired at the rank of a Sergeant.

John married Jenny in September 1967. She started ringing at Paignton in 1957. Jenny died in May 2003 leaving a son and two daughters. John Richard is now a Sales Manager at Motor Parts Direct. Tracey is a Science Teacher at Westlands and Louise is in New Zealand where she is a marketing manager.

In 1991 John was presented with the British Empire Medal for services to the Community. John had long service with the Gas Board and had been raising money for charities continually from 1956. He had been a regular church bell ringer and a hand bell ringer. He had been a special constable and also a volunteer with the Paignton to Dartmouth Steam Railway since 1968 where he was a

guard and signaller at Britannia Crossing and had been regularly inspecting the line up to 2009.

John still found time for special interests and one of these was the Paddle Steamers of the Bristol Channel, a life long interest of his. In 1951 he provided relief at the ticket office at Haldon Pier for the TSS Empress Queen and travelled every year between 1949 to when it ceased in 1980, other than 1954/55 due to being called to National Service.

He has had many holidays on steamers and motor vessels with his family. He was a deckhand on the Balmoral travelling from Westward Ho in 1974, 1975 and 1978 and use to spend the remainder of his holiday in Ilfracombe. There were various trips along the South Coast and some for refitting. John also had many trips on the Paddle Steamer Waverley from the 1980s. He also recalls being on the Prince Ivanhoe with his family on 3 August 1981 when the ship leaving Port Eynon, hit an object off the headland to Overton. The ship had to run aground on the beach at Horton where the full complement of passengers and crew were rescued.

John was also well travelled and trains and church bells figured in all of these. He had been to Canada where he travelled from West to East and also in the USA. He had travelled in Australia East Coast to West Coast in Australia on the Indian Pacific Train, from Perth to Sydney journey taking 3½ days.

John had rung the Swan Bells of Perth, a set of eighteen bells hanging in a specially built 82.5 metres (271 ft) high copper and glass campanile in Perth, Western Australia. The bells take their name from the Swan River, which their tower overlooks, and forming a sixteen-bell peal with two extra chromatic notes. They are one of the largest sets of change ringing bells in the world. Ringing exhibitions are given daily so visiting ringers are always welcome.

John had also been to New Zealand and to Europe where he had numerous footplate experiences and had driven Steam and Diesel Engines. It was in New Zealand that John was made to feel very comfortable by the method ringers whilst ringing at Christchurch Cathedral and at Auckland. He had travelled on the world famous TranzAlpine Train from Christchurch to Greymouth and on the New Zealand trains from Auckland, Picton and to Christchurch. It was in New Zealand that John discovered that the majority of freight railway staff took a great deal of interest in the UK railway.

Being a ringer in one place, Paignton, for so long meant that although he was a call change ringer he was often called upon to ring the tenor, covering in a number of different methods and also rang in a number of quarter peals, again, covering on the tenor.

A memorable occasion for John was winning the Devon Association 6 Bell Minor Competition held at Littleham in May 2003. The significance being that this was three days before his wife's funeral and he felt it was a fitting tribute to her.

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Another pleasant ringing experience was at Langtree when John rang with Stoke Gabriel and the team came fourth in Devon Association 6 bell Major Competition. John's grandfather had been a school master at the Primary School there during the First World War and he later became headmaster at Exminster until his retirement in 1947.

John's proudest moment was when he was ringing with Stoke Gabriel in 2012 and the team, with John ringing the 5th bell, won the Devon Association's Major Final, at Down St Mary. A first for John and a first also for Stoke Gabriel. While John was ill, he had asked me, some time ago, to thank all of his friends in all of his interests including bell ringing and railway engines. He stated that it had been a blessing that they had all been good and kind to him and kept him very busy since he lost Jenny. He said that he realised that he could not do everything and had wanted to thank everyone who had been thoughtful to ask. John had packed a lot into his life and despite illnesses and getting older, he said that he may have slowed up a bit but he felt so enthusiastic that he had always been ready to get involved. John took part in regular bell striking competitions up until December 2016. His ringing stopped after his fall in Totnes later that month. Even when not ringing he had always looked forward to the outings and competitions. He had been motivated by the steady stream of new recruits and he encouraged them as much as he could.

He remarked on several occasions that he had been privileged to have been President of the Devon Association of Ringers from 2009 to 2010. A position he took great responsibility in and enjoyed every moment of that 12-month period.

John, a very familiar face at ringing meetings, would always be pleased to talk to people and took a great deal of interest in them and what they had to say. Bell ringing had been a very important part of his life and he thoroughly enjoyed the last 20 years where he became more involved in competition ringing.

John was an excellent role model. He was enthusiastic, he had perseverance and never thought once to give up on anything. He astounded the medical profession by his strong will to live and managed many years beyond what was expected.

He loved and respected life and was always busy. He could not wait for the next bellringing trip, the next competition, the next Sunday service ring. He looked forward to accomplishing everything he could, he recognised and appreciated that among his talents he also had a gift in ringing. He was determined to use that gift to its fullest. He did not take any of his talents for granted.

With the lack of mobility in the last few months, he took to phoning many people up. I am aware that some had phone calls daily and yet, despite his illness, he would still be interesting to listen to. John, always thoughtful and considerate he certainly found fulfilment in his life.

Most of all, he had great love and devotion for his children and grandchildren and they for him. Each of us will have memories of John, these will live with us for ever. I felt that John had lived life to the fullest and had shown us how to get the most out of our lives.

**Michael Webster**

Tower Captain, Stoke Gabriel.

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## **ROBERT (BOB) FREDERICK SCADDING** **19 February 1933 - 12 April 2017**



St Mary & St Gabriel, Stoke Fleming

Bob was born and brought up in Stoke Gabriel, by the River Dart near Totnes. He attended the village primary school and later Totnes Grammar School which, in those days, was in Fore Street, Totnes.

His father was a local builder and after leaving school Bob became an apprentice carpenter with the firm of R. J. Knapman & Son at nearby Galmpton. Along with many other young men of that time he was called up for National Service and became an aircraft instrument technician in the RAF. He did so well with his training that he was considered to be 'officer material', but Bob was sure that would not be the life for him and turned

down a career in the RAF to return to his beloved Stoke Gabriel and work for his cousin, who had taken over his father's business. He later set up his own building business, married Rosemary in 1955 and went on to have two daughters, Janet and Susan.

Art Seymour, the captain of the Stoke Gabriel ringers, was the stonemason in Bob's building firm and he encouraged Bob, who was by then in his thirties, to learn to ring. Being a very coordinated and practical person, he made rapid progress. He was a loyal Sunday ringer as well as being very active in competition ringing, both in the Devon Association and invitation competitions throughout the 1960s and '70s. He spent many hours in various local towers making sure that the bells were well maintained.

The bells at Stoke were originally rung from the ground floor, but he worked out how to raise the floor so that the church could have a choir vestry underneath and his building firm constructed the ringing room, despite the architect of the time saying it couldn't be done! He spent many happy hours travelling around to various towers with the late Jack Hine and members of the well-known Plymstock team of those days.

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However the tragic sudden death of Art Seymour while Stoke Gabriel were ringing in the Devon Major Final at Meavy affected him very deeply. From that time onwards he had a number of health issues of his own, which forced him to withdraw from the ringing scene and approach life as a whole much more cautiously.

There is no doubt though that he had greatly enjoyed every aspect of his ringing 'career' and he particularly treasured the time spent in the company of ringers across the county, and their friendship. He would often call to mind a particular ringing event or reminisce about ringing friends and acquaintances right up to the end of his life.

Apart from his ringing activities Bob had a fine bass voice and was a loyal member of the church choir. He had a great love and understanding of the countryside and nature. He was an excellent shot and loved fast cars. His passing is a great loss to the family, but we are

all able to take comfort from the fact that he clearly lives on in his grandsons. The two eldest, Robert Dietz and Sam Massey, are both good ringers. Robert has also qualified to shoot for England in 'Down the Line' Clay Pigeon Shooting competitions and Sam is a very talented musician.

Bill Massey, also a good musician, has inherited Bob's love of practical work and fast cars and is pursuing a career with Jaguar. Finally, John Richard Dietz has inherited his great love and understanding of nature and conservation and, after several years of study, is soon to start employment as a National Trust Academy Ranger.

Bob always did everything, including his ringing, to the best of his ability. He was also a man of his word with strong principles and simple tastes. The world is a much poorer place without him.

**John A. Dietz.**

## **ALPHINGTON BELL RESTORATION 2017**

Taylor's of Loughborough have been commissioned by the PCC to carry out the restoration work. This is the first major work to be done since the bells were rehung on a metal frame in 1939.

The total work will cost £19,500 + VAT.



The bell ringers have been working hard since October last year to raise funds to complete the work. Letters were delivered to all the houses in the parish earlier this year and more than £4000 has been donated by the local inhabitants. Much was gift aided.

The Bellringers have also gift aided just over £3,000 and have committed to act as labour for Taylor's workforce during the whole works which will save over £3000 from the original quotation.

Several charity grants have been promised as well as other direct grants received.

Fund raising events to date have raised £320 from a Boot Sale at Newton Abbot Racecourse, another being planned for later this year. The concert by the ExeVox Choir on 16<sup>th</sup> July, raised just over £600. A hand-bell recital is planned to be held in the church in the Autumn and a Car treasure hunt in the Spring.

Work will start on the clappers during August and September and most of the other work in February and March which will include a complete repaint of the metal frame.



St. Michael and All Angels, Alphington

**John Staddon**

## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF RINGING AT PLYMTREE



30th June 2017 will mark 60 years of ringing for **RON CHEAL** at St John the Baptist, Plymtree, Cullompton.

Ron was born and brought up in Plymtree and at the age of 14 years learnt to ring the bells at St John the Baptist Church, Plymtree and has continued for 60 years.

Ron lives in Cullompton but comes to Plymtree every Wednesday evening for practice night to support the bellringers and to impart his wealth of knowledge . Ron also can be counted on to ring for Weddings, and Special Church Services.

When looking at the past Devon ringing competition certificates in the tower, Ron's name can be found for many years together with his brother.

We thank Ron for all his hard work and support and wish him many more happy years of ringing.

*The Bell Ringers of Plymtree*

## DEVON CHURCH BELL RESTORATION FUND DRAW - Dunsford 10<sup>th</sup> June

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize** of £250 went to M. J. Snell of Barnstaple

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize** of £75 went to D. J. Perkin of Tavistock area

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize** of £50 went to A. Epstein of Crediton area

**£25 Prizes** went to:-

Jill Thorne	Goodleigh
M. G. Evans	Sth. Molton
Liz Pocock	Bishops Tawton
Mark Warren	Mariansleigh
D. Barnes	Georgeham
Jan Wood	Chawleigh
Ken Creber	South Brent
Dominic Meredith	Beckenham, Kent
Dr. & Mrs Clarke	Sidmouth
Ginny Pease	Dittisham

# Our Publicity Officer's SUMMER UPDATE

## Devon Association Appreciation Awards



This year we have already presented two Devon Association Appreciation Awards.

Our President Christine Ley had great pleasure in presenting awards to Josie Barnes of Beaworthy and Gerald Herniman of High Bickington for their very great service to ringing in their area.

Appreciation Awards are a great way of recognising someone's contribution to ringing, whether that is for teaching, organising, recruiting, or just plain enthusiasm that pulls their team along! If you have a possible recipient in mind, please contact Victoria Tucker or Christine Ley.



**Outing to Mendip Ropes**

**Saturday 29 July 2017**

⌚ 12.30pm to 1.00pm ~ Convene at Curry Rivel  
*Pre-order for dinner to be taken here*

⌚ 1.00pm to 2.30pm ~ Ringing at Curry Rivel

⌚ 3.00pm ~ Tour of Mendip Ropes

⌚ 5.00pm to 6.30pm ~ Ringing at Fivehead

⌚ 6.45pm for 7.00pm ~ Evening Meal  
*At The Hatch Inn, Hatch Beauchamp.*

*Book early to secure your place!*

*Please contact Victoria Tucker on 07769 571263 or  
email [publicity-officer@devonbells.co.uk](mailto:publicity-officer@devonbells.co.uk)*

*Cost will be £8 per person for tower and tour fees.  
Food to be paid for separately.*



## Mendip Trip

This is now all in place, we just need a few more ringers! We have about 20 spaces left.

Ringing at Curry Rivel and Fivehead, the trip to the Rope Walk and an evening meal at The Hatch Inn, Hatch Beauchamp. The cost is £8 per person to include tower and trip fees. Please book now to secure your place and share the attached poster with anyone who may be interested in coming along.

## Earrings and branded items

There are not many gifts for ringers out there!

The ladies in the county may appreciate earrings made of silver plated hooks and bell charms. Price is £4 to include all post and packing and 50% of proceeds from Devon Association sales will go back to the Association. Please contact Victoria Tucker to secure yours!

Please also contact me to ask about badges, key rings, the last of the calendars and all clothing needs.

**Victoria Tucker**

[vj\\_tucker@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vj_tucker@yahoo.co.uk)

## The Lightning Strike on Dunsford's Church Tower - 1923

*From The Western Times*

*Friday July 13th 1923*

*(The incident took place on Saturday July 7th 1923)*

### THRILLS AT DUNSFORD

## Parish Church Tower struck by ball lightning

### CLOCK FACE BLOWN OUT

**D**unsford Church was damaged by the thunderstorm which broke over the village in the early hours of Saturday morning.

During the night a number of fire balls were seen by the cottagers to be falling in different directions. Consequently they left their houses, which are mostly thatched and would easily have caught fire. About 4.10am a fire ball passed through the window in the clock chamber in the church tower and exploded, blowing out the face of the clock, shattering the framework to atoms, passing upwards to the bell chamber, where some very heavy beams and stonework have been displaced. Fortunately the bells were not hit. One large stone, weighing over a hundredweight, fell between the treble and second, another of the same size having fallen through to the clock chamber.

The current seems to have passed upward, as a hole has been blown through the lead roof of the tower. The large church flag, which was hung in the bell chamber, was burnt. Other parts of the west end of the church have been shaken, but it is not yet definitely known what damage has been done. It is considered dangerous to use the bells until a thorough examination has been made, as a great deal of the woodwork is displaced.

Parishioners who saw and had heard the explosion say it was grand but awful sight; the fire was flung in all directions, and the church appeared as if in flames. Large pieces of the stone fell in the churchyard, also glass which was blown from the windows.



The fireball," (remarks London's Daily Chronicle) "was in all probability an occurrence of ball lightning, an aggregation of ozone and oxygen produced in the form of a luminous ball from a negatively-charged cloud after a discharge of lightning. The ball falls slowly earthwards, and if it comes into contact with anything on its way down, it explodes with great violence. Fireballs and thunderbolts, as commonly understood, have no existence, the cylindrical tubes found in the ground after a thunderstorm and known as fulgurites, being formed where they are discovered by the fusing effect of the lightning on the materials near the surface. They are fairly common in dry, sandy soil, and can be manufactured artificially in a laboratory".

---

*From the Western Times*

*14 September 1923*

The work of repairing the damage done to the Dunsford Church Tower bell chamber and clock through the late thunderstorm has been entrusted to Messrs Aggett, bell-hangers, of Chagford. The estimate

is £253.15s, the same being covered by the insurance.

The parishioners are glad to learn that the work is to be commenced at the Harvest Festival and the Agricultural Show, as ringers come from neighbouring parishes for a peal on that day.

# BELLS AND STEAM TRAINS



Members from 10 different towers enjoyed a recent trip out to three towers in the South Devon area, all reached by steam train.

We boarded the South Devon steam train at Buckfastleigh, enjoying the beautiful scenery of fields and the tree lined River Dart festooned with daffodils and spring flowers as we made our way to Totnes. Our first tower was at **St Mary's Church** in the middle of **Totnes**. This 8 bell tower boasts a 28cwt tenor. But we managed to ring some good peals, and everyone was ready

for lunch before we boarded the train from Totnes back to Nappers Holt.

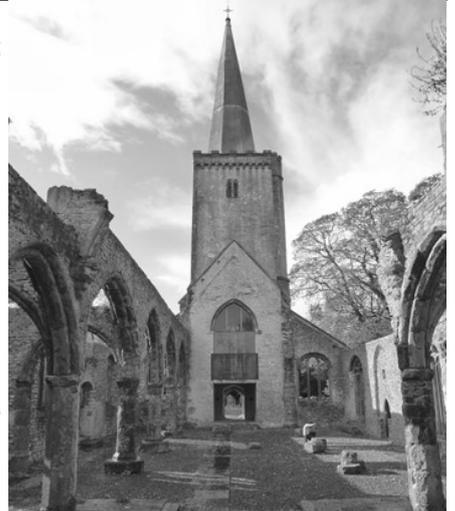


Nappers Holt does not have a platform, so the steam railway laid on a special coach for our exclusive use. This coach has steps so that passengers can alight from the train. Our second tower was **St Paul de Leon** at **Staverton**. The church is just a short walk from Nappers Holt. Again, these bells were quite heavy being a 19cwt tenor on six bells.



We rang some good peals here, then it was back on the train again which made a special stop for us at Nappers Holt to take us back to Buckfastleigh.

Once back at **Buckfastleigh** we drove up to the ruined **Holy Trinity Church**. This beautiful and ancient building was almost totally destroyed by a devastating fire caused by a senseless act of vandalism in July 1992. As an act of faith, the people of the Parish rebuilt the spire and cleaned and rehung the bells. This lovely 15cwt eight are still regularly rung and well worth a visit.



Everyone agreed it had been a lovely day out and a great way to get to some of Devon's fine towers for some really good ringing. The staff at the South Devon Railway couldn't have been more helpful and I think they enjoyed the trip just as much as us, as they don't very often get to stop at Nappers Holt!

Well done to everyone and we're all looking forward to the next one!

*Jenny Codling*



## TEDBURN ST. MARY COMPETITION

### To the Tower Captain

We will again be holding our annual six bell competition at St Mary's Church, Tedburn St Mary on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017**, and you are invited to join us.

Teams will ring the peal known as "Sixty on thirds" and awards will be as follows:

**A Section:** The Graeme Mackie Memorial Cup  
The Shilston Shield  
3 Certificates

**B Section:** The Tedburn Cup  
The Courtier Shield  
3 Certificates

In addition we will be holding a **top ringing competition** for those teams who would like to have a go. 3 certificates will be awarded for this. The entry fee for this year's competition will be £6.00 per team. This year's proceeds of the day will again be split between St Mary's Church and the maintenance of the bells.



#### Ringling times:

2.00pm top ringing		
2.20pm top ringing		
2.40pm top ringing		
3.00pm	3.20pm	3.40pm
4.00pm	4.20pm	4.40pm
	5.00pm tea	
6.00pm	6.20pm	6.40pm
7.00pm		

To book, please contact **John Moody** on 01647 61675 or **Jenny Codling** on 07872 922202. We still have a few times available so please ring John or Jenny to check availability.

## COMBE RALEIGH'S BELLS

**W**ork towards augmenting Combe Raleigh's bells from three to six is almost complete.

The existing three bells have been retuned and three new ones, obtained from various sources, have been added. The existing frame has been modified to accommodate the new ring.

The work is being carried out by Nicholson's Engineering at Bridport.

A rededication service in the presence of the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter, is scheduled to take place during the afternoon of Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2017.



Trevor Hitchcock and Mark Moran with the Coombe Raleigh St Nicholas church bells. Picture: Alex Walton

*Midweek Herald 13 January 2015*



## DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS

### COMPETITION RESULTS

#### **MAJOR FINAL COMPETITION:**

Dunsford: 10 June 2017

##### **Results:**

1. South Brent	16½
2. Shaugh Prior	19
3. Stoke Gabriel	22½
4. Burrington	23
5. Down St Mary	23½
6. Morthoe	26
7. Lamerton	30½
8. South Tawton	32½
9. West Down	33
10. Broadhempston	34
11. Drewsteignton	38
12. Dean Prior	41¾

**Best top ringing cup:** Shaugh Prior 9½

Judges: Ian Avery, James Clarke, John Dietz & Mervyn Way.  
Scrutineer: John Cole.

#### **MINOR FINAL COMPETITION**

Clawton: 27th May 2017.

##### **Results:**

1. Ide	37¼
2. South Tawton	40½
3. Lamerton	41½
4. Monkleigh	48¾
5. Kenton	58½
6. East Anstey	59½
7. South Brent B	64
8. Warkleigh	68¼
9. Dunsford	70½
10. Sampford Courtenay	82

Judges: Kate Avery, Ken Down, Neil Holloway & James Steer  
Scrutineer: Margaret Down

#### **NORTH DEVON QUALIFIER**

Bishops Tawton: 13th May 2017

##### **Results**

1. Down St Mary	23¾
2. Burrington	25
3. Morthoe	25¾
4. Drewsteignton	32½
5. West Down	39½
6. South Tawton	40½
7. Warkleigh	48
8. East Anstey	49¾
9. Monkleigh	52½
10. Sampford Courtenay	66

Judges: James Clarke & Mervyn Way  
Scrutineer: Laurence Bennie

#### **SOUTH DEVON QUALIFIER**

Tedburn St Mary: 13 May 2017

##### **Results**

1. Shaugh Prior	9 ½
2. South Brent A	22½
3. Stoke Gabriel	26
4. Dean Prior	34¾
5. Broadhempston	35
6. Lamerton	35¾
7. South Brent B	46½
8. Ide	47¾
9. Dunsford	57
10. Holbeton	58¾
11. Kenton	60½

Judges: Ian Avery, John Cole, John Dietz & Ruth Tuckett  
Scrutineer: Rachel Avery

### FUTURE COMPETITIONS 2017

**South Molton - 16th September 2017**

**DEVON ASSOCIATION 8 BELL FINAL - Draw 2pm**

Contact - Stuart Bennie - s2bennie@hotmail.co.uk

**8 BELL COMPETITION STRIKING PEAL - Queens**

## DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 11th November 2.30pm  
North Tawton Town Hall

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### 2018 COMPETITIONS

The Committee is now on the look-out for towers willing to host any of the 2018 competitions. If any tower captains are interested in their tower hosting an event please get in contact with either:

Rachel Avery – Secretary – [hon-secretary@devonbells.co.uk](mailto:hon-secretary@devonbells.co.uk) or  
Stuart Bennie – Assistant Secretary (Competitions) North – [s2bennie@hotmail.com](mailto:s2bennie@hotmail.com)

#### TOWERS REQUIRED FOR THE 2108 SCHEDULE ARE:

12<sup>th</sup> May 2018 – North & South 6-bell towers for the **Qualifiers**.  
26<sup>th</sup> May 2018 – South Devon 6-bell tower for the **Minor Final**.  
9<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – North Devon 6-bell tower for the **Major Final**.  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – South Devon 8-bell tower for the **Devon 8-bell**.

If you are interested but unsure what is involved when hosting one of these competitions, advice is available by contacting either Rachel or Stuart.

Invitations need to be received before 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017.



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