

Founded 1925



[www.devonbells.co.uk](http://www.devonbells.co.uk)

# Devon Calls

Late 2025

## OFFICERS

President: Ian Avery  
President-Elect: Vacant  
Chairman: Jon Bint  
Vice-Chairman: Ian Fielding  
Hon. Secretary: Andrew Vincent  
Hon. Treasurer: Nigel Bateman  
Web Master: Tim Jones  
Training: Graham Sharland  
Publicity: John Staddon  
Victoria Tucker  
Competition Secretaries:  
Julia Jarvis (South)  
Martin Mogford (North)  
Fundraising: Julia Jarvis  
Safeguarding: Charles Conibear  
Guild Liaison: Ian Avery

## DEVON CALLS

Editor: Colin Adams  
Technical Ed: Robin Canniford  
Proof Readers: Elinor D'Albiac,  
Deborah Jones, Peter Buckland

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Editor  
Back in Time  
Centenary Ringing  
Westland Fest  
Obituaries Brian Drake and  
Roger Trout



Please Send Copy for the Next  
Edition before 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to  
Colin Adams -  
[devoncalls@devonbells.co.uk](mailto:devoncalls@devonbells.co.uk)  
(articles should be submitted using  
MS Word)

Arriving at Sourton for the 5-Bell Festival (see inside)

## FROM THE EDITOR

I want to start by making two apologies. First of all to those who found their articles were not included in the previous (Mid) edition which was due to a lack of space. Secondly, for the delay in publishing this edition. The reason for this is a problem I had with my ISP blocking contact to anyone using Gmail. Thankfully the problem has now, at last, been resolved but I apologise to all those people who didn't receive a reply from me and for the knock-on effect it had on the publication of this issue.

Although the year has been full of celebrations it has also been tinged with sadness due to the death of Roger Trout, whose obituary appears in this issue, and of Dr. Colin Barnes. Roger was known by practically everyone connected with the Devon Association.

Colin was also a popular figure who rang at Chagford and took a keen interest in ringing activities. Most of all he was a great help to me as one of our proofreaders. I well remember when I took over the editorship of Devon Calls from Mike Webster in November 2013 the late Julia Endacott, who was the Tower Captain at Chagford at the time, suggesting that I contact Colin to see if he would like to become a proofreader. I rang Colin that same evening, introduced myself and asked if he might be able to help. He didn't hesitate to say yes and for the next 12 years we worked together and got on extremely well.

Looking back, I remember his beady eye for detail and how astute he was in terms of spotting errors (mostly mine) with grammar and punctuation. I later discovered that he had been a proofreader for medical textbooks and professional journals. Colin was a tremendous help to me, and I consider myself lucky in being able to draw from his expertise. I am also grateful to the late Julia for suggesting that I contact him in the first place. Continuing in his absence and maintaining the standard he was instrumental in achieving will become quite a challenge.

Thanks to all those who have worked so hard to make this, our Centenary Year, such an outstanding success. The year began with the Novice and Intermediate Festivals taking place at Down St. Mary in March. This was followed in April by the Centenary Film Launch and Centennial All-Devon Challenge at Chagford. The film gave a sense of rural life as it once was, centred round the local church, and it depicted very well the value which ringers place on keeping local tradition going.

Research into the state of call-change ringing as it is in 2025 was undertaken by Darrelyn Gunzburg and Bernadette Brady and has been published for the Devon Association. Taken with the film produced by Martin Pailthorpe these are important pieces of work which both helped to define our Centenary Year and they will become valuable sources for future generations to consult. Their collective efforts resonate towards making us all feel proud to be a 'Devon' ringer.

A great deal of time effort and energy went into developing a programme of events which gradually unfolded during what was to become one of the hottest and driest summers on record. Due to the care and diligence taken by those involved everything went off extremely well. All the hard work came sharply into focus at the Centenary Lunch held at the Waie Inn at Zeal Monachorum on 5th October. The event was very well supported and the chosen venue perfect. Our thanks go to James and Linda Steer and Victoria Tucker for providing such a memorable day. We must repeat the display set up so carefully by Victoria.

At the AGM, held for the very first time at Moretonhampstead, a "cabinet reshuffle" took place. Jonathan Bint replaces James Steer as Chairman and Andrew Vincent replaces Deborah Jones as Secretary. The rest of the officers remain unchanged. Thanks go to James and Deborah for all they did to keep us together and we pledge our support to Jon and Andrew.

During the year we have unfortunately lost members whom we knew well and will no longer see, but this 'special' year has also brought us more closely together; keen as ever to enrich our heritage and to maintain the pleasures which ringing brings.

How proud our forebears would have been knowing that when they first came together in the tiny village of Zeal Monachorum 100 years ago the Devon Association of Ringers has not only survived but continues to flourish, a testament to years of loyal commitment.

I am grateful to all those who took the trouble to submit articles during the past year. Please continue to do so and if you happen to be one of the many people who haven't yet done so please give it a try. You will be communicating to a wide circle of ringing friends whilst at the same time helping to keep the magazine lively and informative – I urge you to give it a go!

Wishing you and your family a Very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Colin Adams

## 30th August 2025 Centenary Celebration Devon Association of Ringers - Five Bell Festival

We were quite anxious about the weather for our long-awaited Five Bell Festival - turns out we were right about the downpours but also right about the amazing resilience of those fabulous ringers that turned out to enjoy the tour!

Jon Bint devised a very clever route around West Devon (and a bit of East Cornwall) where a lot of 5-bell towers can still be found. Starting at 9am on the uniquely-tuned bells at Gidleigh (1 - 5 of 6, but with a flat treble, according to *Dove*), we had, at different times, over 40 ringers travelling around different stages of a trail that also included Jacobstowe, Sourton, Mary Tavy, Brentor, Coryton, Germansweek, St Giles on the Heath and Boyton. Along the way we encountered some wonderful and kind hospitality including much needed tea stops at Jacobstowe and Boyton, and a sherry-tray laid out at Coryton! The captains and key-holders came out in (at times) some truly awful conditions and we cannot thank them enough for their time and generosity, especially when timings began to slip somewhat towards the end.

Teams represented on the day included (but were not limited to): Bow, Okehampton, Chagford, Drewsteignton, South Brent, Holne, Exbourne, Kingsteignton, Bere Ferrers and Sampford Courtenay. Apologies if I've missed any!

Special kudos to all the ringers that climbed Brentor in the heaviest showers of the day to experience those delightful little bells. Hearing them ringing through the mist, while not being able to see the church, was a slightly surreal experience. Many ringers also had the chance to ring on fully synthetic ropes for the first time at Brentor and Sourton, both of which handle very nicely, if a bit stretchily!

It only remains to say a huge thank you to all the ringers that took part in another Centenary event that didn't follow the usual Devon-ringing traditions. The number of positive comments (despite the rain) and the evident enjoyment of doing something a little different has given Jon and I some ideas .... watch this space for more fun and frolics in the future! We'll try to arrange better weather next time.

Victoria Tucker



## Back in Time: 1925 Devon Association Final Report

At this year's Major Final the Zeal Monachorum ringers had a small display of articles and photos in the parish hall from past ringing related events which had happened in the village. One item of particular interest was an article published in a local newspaper on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1925 reporting on the original Devon Association competition. Unfortunately I didn't manage to capture the full headline or the name of the publication in which the article appeared in the photos I took, but I did capture the full text of the article which is reproduced below in full.

James Kerslake

### [New Bell Dedication] And Ringing Tests At Zeal Monachorum.

Great interest was evinced on Saturday in the dedication of a new treble bell and a ringing festival at Zeal Monachorum Church. The new bell, cast and installed by Messrs. Gillett and Johnston, of Croydon, has proved an excellent match to the five bells previously in the tower, and "cries" like a good treble should do. The dedication was carried out by the Rector (the Rev. A. F. McCarthy) at a simple, but hearty, service, for which the church, appropriately decorated for the harvest festival, was filled to overflowing. Miss D. Seward presided at the organ. Associated with the dedication was the first festival of the Devon Association for the Encouragement of Round Ringing.

Ten teams of six and four of five ringers each took part in the festival, which it is hoped to make an annual event. A handsome trophy for teams of six has been provided by Mr. C. J. Ross, of Exeter, President of the Association, of the stated value of £25, but probably costing much more, and having 25 silver plates for inscribing thereon the names of winning teams which will hold it for the year in which success is achieved. Messrs. Gillett and Johnston gave on this occasion a bell-shaped inkstand, suitably inscribed and mounted, for the first team among the sets of five.

The festival was preceded by a luncheon in the Parish Hall, where the Rector (who acted as hon. secretary of the festival) presided, and the company of about 120 included Messrs. W. J. Southwood (hon. Secretary of the Exeter District Branch of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers), Cyril Johnston, A. W. Searle (joint ringing master at Exeter Cathedral), and Fewings (Northtawton [*sic.*]), the last three of whom acted as judges of the ringing, and were assisted during part of the time by Mr. Southwood. Mr. Ross, much to the regret of all, was prevented by pressure of engagements from being present. Toasts honoured at the lunch, which, together with the subsequent tea, Messrs. Palmer and Edwards, of Exeter, excellently served, comprised "The King," "Success to the Association," "The Judges," and "The President." The speakers included the Rector, Messrs. Southwood, Searle, and Johnston, whose remarks were mainly devoted to recognition of the usefulness of round ringing as a stepping stone to scientific

methods (though the Rector twitted half-pull men on the noise they often made) and to the desirability of promoting a closer understanding and appreciation of each other's efforts between the two classes of ringers.

Six-bell teams taking part in the competition had to ring 18 minutes each, and during the allotted time raise the bells, ring 60 call

changes on thirds, and fall the peal. The first five and the last one of the ten competing sets had a superabundance of faults, trebles and tenors being the chief sinners. The other four did much better, and two of them rang with machine-like precision and had a margin of difference of only six points.

The report made by the timekeepers (Messrs. W. Martin and W. Mortimer) to the judges revealed the fact that one team had failed to complete by 60 seconds the stipulated period of 18 minutes. This team, upon referring to index numbers, was found to be Burrington, the one with least faults, and, in the ordinary course of events, entitled to the Ross trophy. When the question of disqualification arose, and it was ascertained [*sic.*] that the team next in order of merit was Northtawton, Mr. Fewings withdrew, at his own request, as a Northtawton man, from the deliberations.

The other judges, in view of the fact (1) that the timekeepers' declaration that they had explicitly notified the Burrington leader that another minute had to be rung, and (2) that no complaint or representation had been lodged with the Hon. Secretary or anyone else officially concerning the timekeeping, felt they had no alternative but to disqualify the team on the grounds that conditions and instructions had not been carried out and that it was possible, if another minute had been rung, the tally of faults might have increased. The final order was as follows:

1. Northtawton ... 12 marks.
2. Crediton ... 41 [ditto]
3. Chulmleigh ... 57 [ditto]
4. Ashreigney ... 126 [ditto]
5. Kingsnympton [*sic.*] ... 173 [ditto]
6. Lapford ... 270 [ditto]
7. Chawleigh ... 274 [ditto]
8. Okehampton ... 375 [ditto]
9. Shobrooke ... 550 [ditto]

None of the five-bell bands, who had to raise the bells, ring rounds, and fall in peal, did particularly well. The placings were:—

1. Throwleigh ... 95 marks.
2. Crediton ... 107 [ditto]
3. Spreyton ... 115 [ditto]
4. Down St. Mary ... 155 [ditto]

At the presentation of the trophies and certificates to the most successful teams it was alleged by Burrington that there had been a misinstruction about time, but, in the absence of formal complaint to officials, this could not be considered. Mr. Johnston offered a replica of the five-bell memento as a consolation award for Burrington. The Rector announced that, as a result of the day's and incidental receipts, all the expenses connected with the new bell, luncheon given to competing ringers and officials, and the festival generally had been met, and a small sum left to the good. He also stated that Crediton would be invited to receive the festival next year.

A dance in the Parish Hall, with Mr. Yelland as M.C and Miss West as pianist, concluded a notable day in the parish.

A photograph of the teams and officials was taken during the afternoon by Messrs. Heath and Bradnee, of Exeter.

## One Day in September, or They Didn't Write a Song About This...

At St David's in Exeter we have a copy of the first four volumes of a work called 'Order & Disorder' by John Eisel, a collection of newspaper extracts on church bells and bellringing from the early 1700s through to around 1850. Whilst sat out not ringing the other evening I was idly flicking through one of the books in the set and came across a section regarding a competition that happened at Alphington in 1838 and its somewhat amusing fallout. (cont.) The initial article, which appeared in both Wolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette and the Western Times on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1838 doesn't really give much away:

*Alphington Ringing Match.* – A ringing match for a prize of ten guineas will take place on the musical peal of eight bells, at Alphington, on the 18<sup>th</sup> instant, when a large attendance of practical men as well as amateurs is anticipated.

Since it's clear that the early Victorians were not averse to ringing for money\*, it may partially excuse what follows. Nevertheless, it seems that the contest was keenly fought as both the newspapers mentioned above carried similar reports of the event on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September:

*Alphington Ringing Match, &c.* – The ringing match at Alphington came off on Tuesday, when nine sets of ringers presented themselves to compete for the prizes, some of whom gave proof of rigid exercise, and the attainment of great perfection in this art; and after a generally good display, the first prize of four guineas was awarded to the ringers from Exminster; the second, of three guineas, to Christow; third, of two guineas, to Tedburn St Mary; and the fourth, of one guinea, to Crediton. The ringing being concluded, other amusements followed, such as donkey racing, climbing the poll [sic] for a leg of mutton, running for a cap and chemise, &c. &c.

I presume that the 'chemise' here is some sort of robe of honour rather than the ladies undergarment, but this is all the information relayed by the book aside to say that the report concludes with a description of these side shows. However that is not the end of it: the Western Times had an additional paragraph at the end, where the plot thickens:

*We are requested by the Christow ringers to state, that although they lost the first prize at Alphington, they are in readiness to ring with the Exminster ringers, who won the first prize, at any time on any six or eight bells within six or eight miles of Christow or Exminster, (Exminster excepted) for five or ten sovereigns. They state that they lost the first prize in consequence of the rope breaking, & that the Tedburn ringers met with the same misfortune.*

And we thought we had keen rivalries! But wait, there's even more – someone in Exminster must have read the Western Times that particular Saturday, as seven days later, on September 29<sup>th</sup>, the same paper carried the following as a reply to Christow's offer:

*Christow and Exminster Ringers.* – We have received the following in reply to the challenge of the Christow ringers inserted last week: – "To the Christow Ringers. – Observing a paragraph in the Western Times of last week, inserted by you as a challenge to the Exminster Ringers, we cannot for a moment hesitate to accept the same, although it would have given us greater pleasure to have had a more competent set of men to compete with. We are desirous to make the bet Ten Sovereigns, and as you have given us the choice of Bells any where within 8 miles of Exminster, we therefore beg to say that we have fixed on Woodbury, being one of the finest Ring of Bells in the County of Devon, and within the distance specified. Choose your own time and let us know, when we will deposit the needful, and arrange as

to Tryers, &c. It is necessary to observe that there are six bells at Woodbury, and will take eight men to ring them, which will comprise the same number, and of course the same men as contended at Alphington. We are quite at loss to know what excuse you will next make should you lose the ten sovereigns as you did the Alphington first prize. Signed ROBERT MANLEY, for myself and the other seven ringers. Dated Exminster, 27<sup>th</sup> Sept., 1838.

Trash-talk from Exminster there, pretty strong stuff... Unfortunately the result of the rematch wasn't published, so we don't know if the rematch occurred or whether Mr Manley had to eat his words.

If you'll excuse the doggerel, here's how it may have been sung about:

(to the tune of 'The Men of Northlew')

One day in September, I surely remember,  
To Alphington village I'd wended my way.  
When the bells started ringing and then they were pealing  
I'll tell you the tale of that late summer's day

'Twas in Alphington tower some men of great power  
Rang off for a purse of ten guineas and pride.  
But the men of Christow broke a rope on the go  
And the first prize went all to the Exminster side

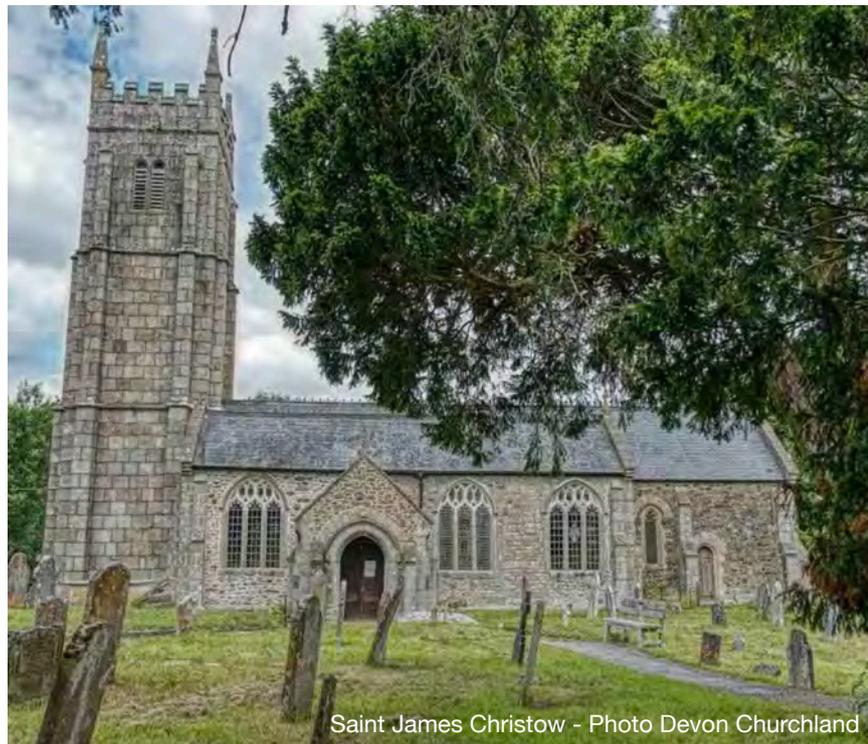
Now the Christow men's band got their arse in their hand  
And in the newspaper a replay proposed.  
So Exminster agreed, "At Woodbury we'll be,  
"And ring off again for a ten sovereign trove."

'Twas in Alphington tower some men of great power...

I'm unsure what transpired, as the rematch's tryers  
Did not share the score in the local news press  
But I'll bet the bellringing, was like a choir singing  
And the name calling made both teams give of their best

'Twas in Alphington tower, then in Woodbury tower...

James Kerslake



Saint James Christow - Photo Devon Churchland

# 100 Towers Ring Out! Across Devon and Beyond..... 31st May 2025

When John Warne first suggested that 100 Devon towers ring simultaneously on the fifth Saturday in May 2025 to celebrate the Devon Association of Ringers' Centenary, there was immediate support from everyone he mentioned it to and lots of hands of support went up at the AGM in November 2024 to sign up their towers. Andrew Vincent volunteered to compose a 100 change peal for 6 bells for the occasion and I followed his example with an 8 bell composition for people to use if they wanted to.

But there were a couple of logistical problems - how to make sure we had 100 towers ringing, and how to record the event for posterity. The Devon Association is different to many others by affiliating towers rather than people, so aside from the tower contacts we don't have an official membership list. So we began a communications exercise with all the Devon Association towers, which rapidly gained momentum and then snowballed into tower tours, open days, awareness events, fundraising, recruiting and ringing trips. The amount of engagement for this event has been truly astonishing and has included ringers of all ages and abilities. It has been shared that the youngest named ringer was 4 years old with an animated chiming contribution, and we think (without asking too many personal questions) that the oldest was 92!

We have also been honoured with celebratory call change peals being rung out-of-county in **Taunton, Fulham, Hackney** and in **Quebec Cathedral!** Thank you to those of you that celebrated with us and let us know if you come to visit, we'd love to ring with you. Some ringing visitors happened to be staying on **Lundy Island**, and when asked if they would ring too they took up the challenge with great enthusiasm. Thanks to them our most remote

tower was ringing out proudly over the Bristol Channel towards the mainland, with some of the youngest contributors.

We were also featured on BBC Spotlight news - to see our 20 seconds of fame please visit our YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@DevonAssociationofRingers>

Then began the task of collating all the ringing. Unlike other Guilds and Associations, Devon Association ringers are not generally very familiar with the use of Bellboard. So for the uninitiated we asked people to send their performances by email or WhatsApp for inclusion. Wherever we have received notifications of special peals or general ringing for the Centenary on 31st May 2025 this has been uploaded to our event on Bellboard. These have now been submitted and 157 performances have been associated with 100 Towers Ring Out! We have also collated names of ringers where these have been provided, and we know that at least 653 people rang a bell in the name of the Devon Association on 31st May 2025. This is an incredible and humbling number of people supporting this event, right across our county and beyond.

Success, of course, takes many forms and different teams used the day to meet different objectives.

**Georgeham's** Open Day and Tower Tours coincided with the Festival of Flowers and resulted in 2 new ringers for the team.

**Whimble** ringers had such an enjoyable and successful open morning that it's going to become an annual event in their tower.

**Weare Giffard** ringers were offering taster sessions as well and were delighted to welcome 25 people to the tower, in between ringing the 100 change peal for 6 bells twice!

**Bow** also welcomed visitors to the tower, as did **Branscombe, Christow** and **Lamerton**. **Littlehempston** used the event to fund raise for new bell ropes and held a competition to determine the colours of the new sallies. **Broadhempston** bells are out of action, but Julia Jarvis and Graham Pascoe were determined that they should be part of the day and rang the Ellacombe Chimes instead. **Exeter Cathedral's** publicity team were very taken with the event and generated lots of interest from visitors to the Cathedral throughout the day.

**Loddiswell's** open day encouraged the return of a lapsed ringer and their partner, who is now keen to learn! Loddiswell's home grown village team rang together to celebrate the centenary, while also welcoming ringers from South Brent who went on tour.

Several trips were undertaken to ensure that at least 100 towers rang throughout the day. Intrepid groups from **Chulmleigh, Stoke Canon, South Brent, Eggbuckland, Tiverton St Paul's, Bridestowe, Bideford, Swimbridge, East Anstey, Chagford, Moretonhampstead, Down St Mary** and **Mariansleigh** were just some of the ringers that took to the road in the name of the Devon Association.

The day in numbers:

~ 137 towers were rung during the day. 133 in Devon, 2 in London, 1 in Somerset and 1 in Quebec.

~ 653 ringers took part.

~ 157 general ringing or 100 change performances were recorded on Bellboard.

~ More than 100 photos and videos were submitted and shared online.

It only remains to say a massive **THANK YOU**. Most of all to John Warne, whose brilliant idea brought the county's ringers out in such numbers, but just as importantly to every person that contributed to the day by ringing, offering taster sessions, running tower tours, planning a ringing trip and sharing the love of call change ringing everywhere you went. What an utterly brilliant day.

Victoria Tucker



NEW PEAL OF EIGHT IN RADIAL FRAME TOGETHER WITH ELECTRICALLY SWUNG BOURDON AND STATIONARY SERVICE BELL, SOUTH OCKENDON.

## CHURCH BELLHANGERS of DISTINCTION

We offer quality without compromise, using only the finest materials, age-old craftsmanship and impeccable standards of service. If *your* church is seeking the very best, we are ready to help.

[bells@nicholsonbellhangers.com](mailto:bells@nicholsonbellhangers.com)  
[www.nicholsonbellhangers.com](http://www.nicholsonbellhangers.com)

### WORKS

Church Bell Works  
St.Swithin's Road  
Bridport  
DT6 5DW  
Tel.01308 422264  
Fax. 01308 427172

### CORRESPONDENCE

Walton  
Woodmead Road  
Lyme Regis  
DT7 3AB  
Tel. 01297 445865  
Fax.01297 444798



St. Andrews Ashburton Ringers

They are rung as Call Changes – that is, in different patterns according to which ringer pulls their bell and in what order. These are called out by the Tower Captain. There is a special Devon Call Change, among many others, so high levels of concentration are necessary to get the sequences correct. Because of the height of the tower the ropes are synthetic to prevent them stretching. Only the last few feet are hemp. For over 100 years ringers have pencilled

## RING OUT THE CHANGES

On the last day of May more than 100 towers and more than 1000 ringers celebrated the hundredth birthday of the *Devon Association of Bellringers* by sounding peals throughout the county. That seemed a good time to talk to Clive Davey, the Tower Captain of St Andrew's Church, Ashburton about their craft.

We often listen to our bells with pleasure but have little realisation of the training involved in becoming a competent ringer. To be really confident about what you are doing takes about two and a half years of practice, Clive says. St Andrew's has eight bells; the treble is the lightest, tuned to E major, at six hundredweight, and the heaviest, the tenor, at twenty-one. The metal is mix of 75% copper and 25% tin, which becomes bronze.

There was a time when bells would have been cast in the church grounds and local folk would throw in pennies for good luck, but then they became too heavy and had to be made in a foundry. There the workers turn them slowly, to scrape the inside of the bell, "ping it," and use a tuning fork to get exactly the right pitch. Bear in mind that to get them in place they had to be pulled up the tower, by hand, on pulleys. They are mounted on a frame of huge oak beams, hand crafted and dovetailed to fit, by a Mr. Stokes of Denbury in 1896. Inside it are the wheels to which the ropes are attached. Ringing is not just hauling on these ropes, however, as many of us might think.

## Woodleigh Annual Deanery Competition Saturday 3rd May 2025 at Dodbrooke parish church

The afternoon started with a ringers service at 12.00 noon. The draw for ringing was held at a previous monthly practice. For the first time we started with Rounds ringing section, followed by the junior section and tea, the Senior section followed tea, with results and presentations in the church. Basically enjoyable afternoon. Good peal of bells and made very welcome. A good entry, pleasing to see Bigbury.

Round ringing - 6 minutes off the stay with 1st minute not judged.

- 1 Churchstow 7.25 faults
2. Dodbrooke 8 faults
3. Malborough 10.75 faults
4. Galmpton 12 Faults
4. Stokenham 12 faults
6. Salcombe 13.5 faults
7. Sherford 19.5 faults
8. South Pool 23 faults
9. Modbury A 28.5 faults
10. Bigbury 36.75 faults.

their names on the wooden beams up there – nothing new about graffiti!

We are accustomed to hearing the bells calling us to prayer on Sundays and listening to the practices on Wednesday evenings, but of course we love it when they peal out joyously to celebrate a wedding, just as they reflect the sombre mood of a funeral by the muffled tolling of a single bell. They are also there to mark the special times in the life of a nation. They rang out at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth the Second and of her son, King Charles the Third. The Queen's death was observed by the muffled tenor bell tolling the 96 years of her life. The elaborate clock mechanism was made for an earlier queen, Victoria, to feature Westminster chimes, in preparation for her Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

Clive says what he loves most is to see a couple who have had the bells rung for their marriage come back a few years later and climb the tower with their children.

Article reproduced by kind permission of the author Barbara Dunball

The present team, which includes two women and two strong 15-year olds, wished this article to be dedicated to the memory of Mike Lowrey, who rang the tenor bell for many years and who was much loved and respected.

Julia Homans

Junior Section changes off the stay

1. Modbury B 29.75 faults
2. South Pool 32.5 faults
3. Galmpton 33.5 faults
4. Salcombe 36.5 faults

Senior Section - Rise, full peal 60 on thirds and Lower

1. Churchstow 95 faults
2. Modbury A 98 faults
3. Dodbrooke 98.5 faults
4. Stokenham 114.25 faults
5. Malborough 133.5 faults
6. Sherford 145.5 faults

Shields awarded to winner of Junior and winner of senior sections. The judges were Martin Sharland and John Dietz. President Mrs Janet Turner of South Milton. Hon Sec - Mr Ben Johnson

We have a monthly evening practice and hope to continue format next year.

With thanks. Jereme Darke, Chairman



The Bowerdon Peal In Action

## 6th September Ringing Festival Weekend: “Westland Fest” Bratton Fleming, Combe Martin and Kentisbury

After a number of us had battled against the elements ringing 5 bells in West Devon and East Cornwall at the end of August, the first weekend in September saw us taking to the road again to join Andy and Nicky Cleave for the brilliant ‘Westland Fest’ – a fantastic event hosted on their working farm with camping and glamping. As well as a weekend of fun and ringing, Andy was keen to raise money for both the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund and the Kentisbury Bell Fund.

Many ringers could be found heading north on Friday night where we pitched tents, parked vans or settled into the lovely glamping options dotted around the site. The weather conditions had been deemed changeable for the weekend with increasing winds, so the decision was made to host the festival itself inside the enormous barn that was specially cleared out for the event. It was apparent from the start that an incredible amount of work had gone on behind the scenes to be ready for everyone’s arrival, and that we came in at the end of weeks of planning and preparation by Andy, Nicky, Will, Tom and their extended family.

Ringers got to work setting up the mobile training bell in the barn, helping to assemble the bar and admiring Andy’s precision with a tractor as he forklifted the Bowerdon mini-ring into position on the hardstanding outside. Nicky and a team of volunteers started work on a welcome BBQ with associated salads, and about 50 people assembled in the evening to enjoy the food, the training bell, mini-ringing and kegs of cider and ale that appeared around the back of the stage. Several people started refining their technique on the slippery pole game, ready for some serious competition the following day! The Bowerdon Peal was also given a thorough testing; the mysterious Midnight Ringers attempting to ring the competition peal in near-darkness.

Saturday morning was very breezy but everything ran smoothly for the three-tower competition that Andy had masterminded while

setting up the last of the festival arrangements. With seven teams completing a tour around all three towers, Bratton Fleming, Kentisbury and Combe Martin, each team’s faults were averaged across their peals and one set of results per team was announced. A beautiful new trophy has been created and it is hoped that this competition will run for many years! It’s a great format, unusual in that it was run in the morning rather than the afternoon, but this was very successful and was a great lead-in to the rest of the day. The results of the North Devon Ringing Festival were:

- 1) Bow – average 33 ½ faults
- 2) South Brent – average 50 ¾ faults
- 3) Swimbridge – average 52 faults
- 4) East Anstey – average 57 ½ faults
- 5) Ashreigney – average 64 ¾ faults
- 6) Mariansleigh – average 84 faults
- 7) Berrynarbor – average 106 faults

Judges: Chris Lock (Kentisbury), James Steer (Bratton Fleming) and Owen Borlase (Combe Martin)

At about 3pm people bearing tickets started showing up for the festival itself. By this time the barn was full of things to see, do and drink! The bar did steady trade all afternoon and evening, and the musical acts were all very well received, including our own Andy Phillips and his band Would Robots and of course the Ringing Singers with their beautiful harmonies! Of the six acts, four of them included multi-talented ringers. A certain Mr Fielding was seen wielding drumsticks on stage at one point! All the acts had to compete with the Bowerdon Peal outside, which was in demand for nine hours once the event started (see picture above). The training bell also got a huge amount of use, and Graham Sharland, Ian Avery and Ian Fielding spent many hours supporting potential ringers to have a go and practice their handling. What a huge aid it is for recruiting and demonstrating!

One of the biggest successes of the event must be attributed to the brilliant Immy Snaith, who dedicated the whole weekend to the smooth running of the raffle and tombola stalls. A staggering array of attractively displayed prizes caught the eye of everyone in the space, and she and her team did swift and steady business until well into the evening.

As well as bells, bars, raffles and slippery poles, people could guess the name of the piglet; guess the weight of Tyson the therapy sheep; play the Whack-a-Rat game; have a bounce on the bouncy castle; sing along and dance with the bands; enjoy the fabulous hog roast and play super-sized Hook-a-Duck, using Andy's diggers. With all these different games available to test attributes, we could see that there are some surprising hidden skills out there in our ringing fraternity!

By nightfall the party was definitely underway and some familiar faces started leading the way onto the dance floor. A great time was had by all and the music, singing and dancing went on into the night.

People re-convened in the barn on Sunday morning to assist with the tidy-up, and there was a general count-up of funds. As with any event there were costs incurred, but everyone was more than delighted to discover that Immy's dedication to the raffle and tombola had raised enough money to cover the costs completely, leaving the rest of the takings from the tickets, camping, stalls and side-shows to be donated to the two bell funds. It was determined that just over £3500 was raised, to be split between DCBRF and Kentisbury Bell Fund. What a fantastic result following a fantastic weekend!



Andy and Nicky with a selection of the weekend's helpers

None of this would have been possible without Andy and Nicky Cleave and their incredibly accommodating family and friends. I don't think they stopped working or smiling all weekend, and nothing was too difficult or too much trouble. I hope they know how much their efforts were appreciated, and that this is an event we will be talking about for years to come.

Victoria Tucker



Andy Phillips wowed us all from the stage



Team Bow - North Devon Festival Competition Winners



Make friends  
with an Otter



OTTER BREWERY

01404 891 285 [otterbrewery.com](http://otterbrewery.com)



## Uplyme Bell Ringers Ring To Help Celebrate A Special Birthday

Uplyme Bell Ringers were delighted and honoured recently to be asked by the family of a local Uplyme resident to undertake a celebratory ring for her birthday. The person in question was 100 years old on the 30th September and the ring took place starting at 5 pm on that day and finishing just after 6pm.

To celebrate the ringers undertook 100 call changes, two sets of 50 call changes rung consecutively. The ringers were led by Tower Captain Andy Jarvis. The event was videoed by family members so the birthday girl not only could hear the bells as we rang them but could also watch the 'action'.

Uplyme Ringers advertise the chance to ring for occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries in the parish magazine and were especially pleased to be able to undertake this on such a special birthday to a local life long resident.

Jo Clarke



Uplyme Ringers: Left to right: James Booth, Dee Hearne, Jo Williams, Donna Heath, Janice Hodge, Jo Clarke



Musbury Fundraiser Band: Wendy Gill, Wendy Campbell, Patricia Slade, Lesley Tucker Graham Tucker, Ian Campbell(c)

## Ringling to commemorate VE Day at Yealmpton

At 8.00pm on Thursday 8 th May 2025 a peal consisting of 80 changes was rung on the 6 bells at St. Bartholomew's Church, Yealmpton, South Devon. The 80 changes were composed by Tower Captain Don Chaffe and were rung in 22 minutes.

The ringers were: Mary Ayers, Keith Baldry, Don Chaffe, Jinny Jeffery, John Irish and Ted Pinsent.

Don Chaffe

Congratulations Don and your team of ringers. Ed.

## Musbury Fundraiser

The ringers of Musbury St Michaels have had a busy couple of years fundraising. We need in Excess of £50,000 to have the bells totally refurbished.

So far we have raised £8700.00 through several events including two separate open gardens with tea coffee and bacon butties. We have an honesty stall in the village selling plants and produce which is successful.

A book stall at the village table top sale.  
Bingo nights are well supported.

Our local pub The Hind has helped by hosting a Quiz night with a raffle. A ringer held a small cream tea and donated the proceeds with donations.

And our latest event was Butterflies off the church tower. Tea Coffee cake and lots of fun. The Paper Butterflies were sold then the butterflies that landed nearest the target won a prize, one actually landed on a little girl! This raised £1243.00

We invited a team from Exeter Cathedral who rang a quarter peal of Cambridge surprise minor, 1296 changes in 46 minutes.

After the bells were lowered, we invited people to go into the tower to have go at pulling the ropes. This event raised over £1100. We are hoping that once we get the bells refurbished and rehung they will be easier to ring and also more tuneful.

Dee Hearne



# Big Wilf's<sup>®</sup> Bell Muffles

Both brands are now at a new location

**Our products and services:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Velcro bell muffles</li> <li>Traditional muffles</li> <li>Church bell ropes (12 British Wool colours)</li> <li>Light pull bell ropes (30 colours)</li> <li>Model bell ropes</li> <li>Modern slimline Yorkshire tails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 week bell rope repairs</li> <li>Machine spliced tail ends</li> <li>Pre-stretched polyester rope</li> <li>Dyneema rope</li> <li>Mini ring ropes</li> <li>Leather garter sleeves</li> </ul>
--	--

For enquiries please contact us at:

<a href="mailto:sales@avonropes.co.uk">sales@avonropes.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.avonropes.co.uk">www.avonropes.co.uk</a>	01179 603909 <a href="mailto:sales@bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk">sales@bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk">www.bigwilfsbellmuffles.co.uk</a>
--	--

Avon Ropes Ltd, Unit 4 Avondale Works, Woodland Way, Bristol, BS15 1QH  
 Big Wilf's Bell Muffles is a trading name of Avon Ropes Ltd and Registered in England 11552159



North Tawton Ringers - Back row, L. to R. : Bill Folland, Edgar Cole, Walter Axworthy, Mervyn Way, Joe Palmer, Cliff Westlake. Front row, L. to R.: Cecil Pike, Brian Drake, Reverend Bailey, Walter Mortimore. Sitting in the front is 4 year old Ashley Way – son of Mervyn. Photo taken circa 1971 - courtesy M. Way.

### A life-long hobby.

Incredibly his ringing career spanned a total of 81 years (1942 – 2023). At 14 years old he progressed from Sunday school to attending the regular church services at St. Peter's Church. One of his tasks was to pump the organ. On his way to the organ he passed the door leading into the belfry. Glancing in, he was intrigued by the sound of the tenor bell being tolled just before the commencement of a service. He would quietly stand and watch fascinated by the sight of the stout tenor man who was chiming the bell and the sound it produced. Once whilst doing so, one or two of the ringers invited him to hold the end of the rope and assist with chiming the bell.

This was to be his first tentative step towards becoming a ringer and a long ringing career was to follow. It was just after WW II when ringing recommenced that he was formally invited to learn. Alfie Lias who was the verger at St. Peter's and also a ringer taught him. At first he was taught how to handle a bell rope safely and then how to ring a bell single handed, he then progressed to ringing rounds and learning the changes.

The bells in those days, like many in the county, were rung twice on Sundays, i.e. before the morning and evening services. As a new recruit he wasn't considered proficient enough to ring

prior to Sunday morning services; this was reserved for the more senior ringers. New recruits willing to accept this unwritten rule rang for the evening services.

Anyone having achieved an acceptable standard of striking progressed to ringing for the morning service. By ringing twice on a Sunday and attending weekly practice nights his potential was eventually recognised and as a result he was later invited to join the competition team and ring in both six and eight bell competitions.

Following the death of William Fewings, Jim Bennett was appointed captain. Whilst Jim was serving in the army Walter Mortimore took over pro-tem. On his return from National Service Jim resumed his duties and the team rallied behind him. Brian and Jim got on well together and between them they maintained and built upon the high standards which had been established over many years. It must have been quite a challenge following on from a team that first won the Devon Association 8-bell competition when it was first held at Alphington in 1928.

Brian's first appearance at a Devon 8-bell competition was either at High Bickington in 1951 when he was 17 years old, or six years later at Witheridge in 1957. In 1967 when Jim Bennett was no longer able to continue Brian was appointed tower captain; it was a position he went on to hold for 56 years. The first time North Tawton won the DA 8 bell under Brian's leadership was in 1971 at Pilton, the last time was at Georgeham in 1995. Between 1971 and 1995 North Tawton, under his captaincy, won the Devon Association's Ross shield on 24 occasions.

He was the association's chairman from 1977 – 2004. He held the remarkable distinction of judging the Devon Association 6-bell final competition on 44 occasions. He also judged the South Devon Ringer's 8 and 6 bell competition as well as judging in numerous invitation competitions. He was also a member of the original band of SER's formed in 1969 and led by Mervyn Way which consisted of a group of ringers drawn from the north and south of the county. The group eventually folded having run successfully for 25 years. With the assistance of the late Percy Aggett who was the tower captain at South Tawton he established the Okehampton Deanery annual competition.

## Obituary - Brian Drake

**25<sup>th</sup> July 1928 – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Brian, who was a Devonian through and through, passed away at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Wonford on 27<sup>th</sup> May, he was 97 years old. He was born and bred in North Tawton and farmed there all his life, initially with brother Donald and later with son Stephen.

### From seed time to harvest.

On his farm root crops and cattle were the main areas of activity and he was highly successful at both. As most farmers will testify farming life is tough and unpredictable, there are good years and bad years. Success comes in many forms and one area where Brian was particularly successful was exhibiting his cattle and sheep at agricultural shows. His most noticeable achievements were at the Bath and West show with his breed of Devon and Cornwall long wool sheep and at the Devon County show with his Fishleigh Fieldsman Devon Ruby bull. At Smithfield he was awarded first certificate for having the 'Best long-wool ram' and the 'Best fleece,' he was also successful with a pair of long wool lambs gaining 'Best at the show.'

At the funeral service a fascinating account of Brian's farming life was given by long standing friend and fellow farmer Melvyn Britton during his Eulogy. Brian's four children, Linda, Stephen, Susan and Kathryn paid tribute to their father and late mother Maureen's nurture, affection and devotion. They each conveyed a sense of having spent a secure and happy childhood surrounded by life on the farm.

His ringing career can be summed up by the fact that he was unique in being one of the few ringers who actually rang for the Coronation of the late Queen Elizabeth II on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953. For the Coronation of King Charles III on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023, preferring not to ring, he was invited by his successor Graham Pridham to chime one of the bells which he did.

His success as a farmer was equally matched by his success as a ringer and he gave a lifelong commitment to both. Now reunited with his beloved and devoted wife Maureen. The couple were married at St. Peter's Church, North Tawton on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1955.

Colin Adams, with grateful thanks to daughter  
Kathie for her help with this obituary.

## Obituary - Roger Trout

Roger was born on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1947 and grew up in Plymouth, spending much of his childhood in Eggbuckland, where his roots remained close to his heart throughout his life.

To those who knew him, Roger was the very definition of a gentleman — our “Gentleman”. Always immaculately dressed, courteous, and kind, his manners and charm left a lasting impression wherever he went. A stranger could walk into a room and leave as a friend — as many at the Prince Maurice Pub in Eggbuckland would fondly agree.

In his early years, Roger joined the choir at St Edward's Church, where his fine singing voice made him a standout chorister. The choir achieved great success, finishing second only to Exeter Cathedral's choir — an extraordinary feat for a small village group in the late 1950s.

Roger was also a natural sportsman. A talented footballer, he played centre half for Eggbuckland, where several teammates went on to be scouted by professional clubs. Unfortunately, an ankle injury brought his footballing days to an early end, but his competitive spirit continued elsewhere. He became a formidable table tennis player, known for his devastating loop shot and reputation as one of the hardest players to beat on the local circuit.

And then there was bellringing — one of Roger's lifelong passions. What began as a pastime became a defining part of his life. With the Eggbuckland bellringing team, Roger was part of a remarkable era, helping them rise from humble beginnings to dominate competitions, winning the prestigious Ross Shield an incredible 22 times over three decades.

But beyond the trophies, Roger loved the camaraderie, the laughter, and the adventures — from local practices to ringing tours across the UK.

Roger was also a keen walker, often exploring Dartmoor, the South West Coast Path, and taking on notable challenges such as the Two Moors Way. He loved the peace of the outdoors, often accompanied by good company and good conversation.

Family was everything to Roger. He cherished time spent with his brothers Nick, Andy, and Neil, who together could solve

**Brian was our captain for many a year and was an inspiration to us all. An outstanding member of our ringing community who will be sorely missed. He was always happy and cheerful and made new ringers very welcome.**

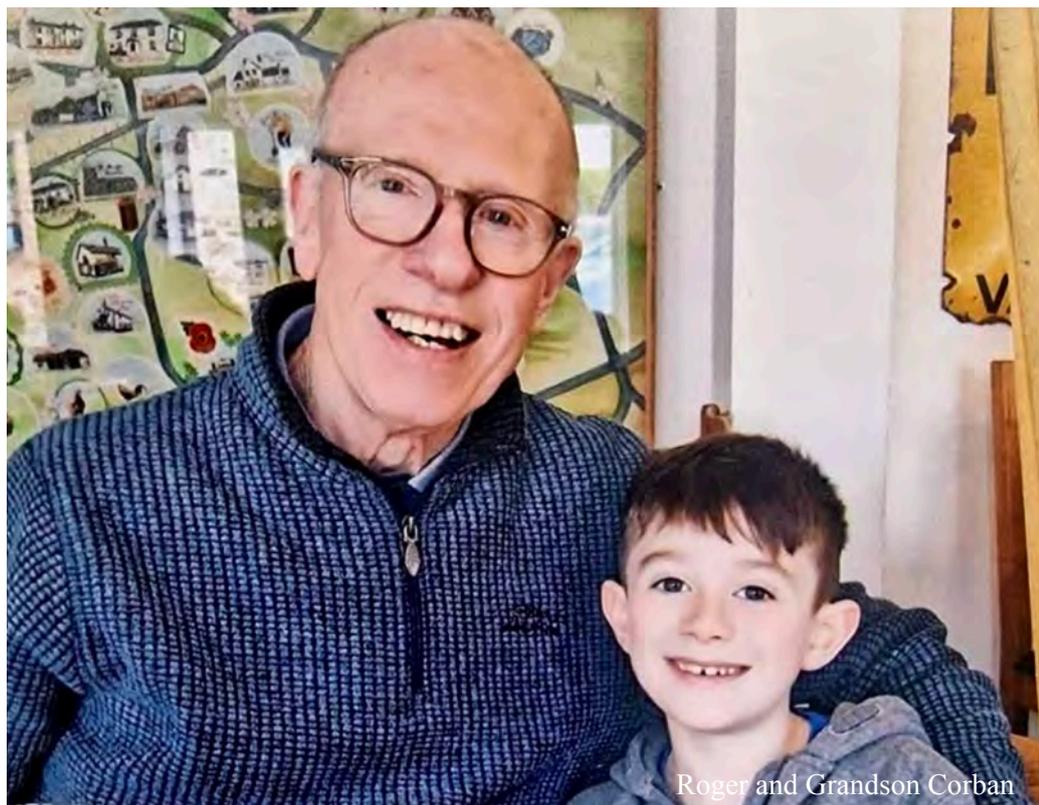
Graham, and all the North Tawton Ringers

the world's problems over a pint or two. He adored his children, Hannah and Ryan, and his son in law Mike and daughter in law Natasha. He was a proud grandfather to Corban, Connor, Talia, and Darcy — always keen to know how they were getting on at school, work, or on the football pitch.

Roger's working life reflected his loyalty and dependability. He spent 35 years with Clarks Shoes, where his craftsmanship and reliability earned him great respect — and where he was known to handcraft a fine pair of shoes for his wife, Carol. After the factory's closure in 1998, Roger went on to spend another 20 years with Toshiba Carrier UK, retiring in May 2020 at the age of 73. He was the embodiment of dedication — always on time, always dependable, and always a team player.

In his younger years, Roger loved to travel. Following his unforgettable experience watching the 1966 World Cup Final at Wembley at just 19 years old, he and close friend John Hyde took off on an adventure across Europe — a memory he often recalled with a smile.

Roger married the love of his life, Carol, at St Edward's Church in Eggbuckland. Together they built a life filled with love, laughter, family, and friendship.



Roger and Grandson Corban

## Roger Trout 17th May 1947 - 8th July 2025

His passing came as a shock to us all, having only been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer a month earlier, on 9th June 2025. Though our hearts are broken, we take comfort in the countless memories he leaves behind and the example he set — of kindness, dignity, humour, and love.

Roger's presence touched so many, and his absence will be felt deeply by all who knew him. But we will continue to honour him, living each day as he did — with warmth, integrity, and a twinkle in the eye.

Ryan Trout



Ryan, Roger and Hannah



Roger and Carol

### John Taylor & Co Bell Founders & Bell Hangers

Britain's last remaining specialist Bell Foundry with a history that stretches back centuries. We undertake all belfry work and will be pleased to quote for your tower or bell work no matter how large or small.



- Beautiful sounding bells cast using traditional loam moulds
- Conservation & repair of historic bells, fittings and frames
- Handbells from repairs to new sets
- Bell fittings of the highest quality for ease of handling
- New bell frames in cast iron, galvanized steel, or hardwood
- Belfry floors & galleries – sound control & weatherproofing
- Automatic chiming systems installation
- Health & safety audits – ladders, walkways & handrails
- Maintenance & servicing contracts
- Free tower inspections/reports in the UK mainland

John Taylor Bell Foundry, Freehold Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1AR. Tel: 01509 212241 Fax: 01509 263305 email: [office@taylorbells.co.uk](mailto:office@taylorbells.co.uk) Website: [www.taylorbells.co.uk](http://www.taylorbells.co.uk)



## SWAN'S NEST

Exminster, EX6 8DZ

**A Carvery Every Day of the  
Week**

**Tel: 01392 832371**

**[enquiries@swans-nest.com](mailto:enquiries@swans-nest.com)**