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President - Mrs. Christine Ley

www.devonbells.co.uk

Devon Calls

Feb & March 2017

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Inside this issue

St. Peter's, Cornworthy	2
John Cooper	2
St. Peter's, Stoke Fleming	3
Tedburn St. Mary	4
Trip to Taylor's, Loughborough	5
Make friends - a new passion	6
Bell ringers shortage	6
New Year at Westminster	7
Moral Awakening - Giles Fraser	8
St George's, Georgeham	9-10
Carol Services	10
Obituaries - M. Beer & S. Aplin	11
Devon Association BEMS	12
Devon Association officers & programme	13
Devon Calls (AGM report)	14
DCBRF (AGM report)	15

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Address given by the incoming President, Mrs. Christine Ley, at the Association's AGM on Saturday 12th November 2016.

For those of you who do not already know me allow me to introduce myself. My name is Christine Ley. I am a ringer and I ring at the churches of High Bickington and Burrington in North Devon. I have helped to run the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund annual draw for a number of years. I currently help to organise the Association's annual dinner. I am the secretary of the South Molton Deanery Bellringers. In addition to carrying out these duties I also spend time teaching people how to ring.

It is a great honour to be standing here today as your newly elected President. I never dreamt that during my life I would be elected to hold such high office. Thank you for inviting me to become President and thank



you for electing me. I hope and trust I will not let you down.

(continued on page 2)

CHAGFORD'S BELLS ARE BACK HOME



CHAGFORD BELLS REDEDICATION

The service of Thanksgiving and Rededication following the refurbishment of the bell mechanism and installation of the new frame will be on

**Saturday 1st April 2017 at 11.30am
by the Bishop of Exeter**

followed by Open Ringing from 2.30pm
(contact Julia Endacott 01647 432550
or juliaendacott@live.co.uk)

**COPY for "DEVON CALLS" is always welcome and we rely on you to submit articles please
Deadline for next edition - 12th June 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

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

(continued from page 1)

I owe the church and ringing so much. If 20 years ago I had not been asked by the late Cecil Crocker, along with my son, if I would like to learn to ring the bells at Burrington my life would not have been as enriched as it has since become.

As your President I hope to be able to use the opportunity to repay some of the happiness and fulfillment ringing has given me, and to encourage others to take up ringing. I aim to provide help wherever it is needed and do what I can to keep the tradition of 'Devon style' call-change ringing going, with its wonderful 'family' of ringers, for generations to come. I hope to develop my role and responsibilities positively within the Devon

Association of Ringers and to reach out to all those who ring across Devon.

Ringing is a fundamental part of our heritage and we all have a duty to see that it is maintained. Everyone in this room and in the county have benefitted in some way or another from ringing.

So I ask you all to step forward and to do more by promoting 'Devon style' ringing in whatever way you can. Please think positively and be supportive.

Thank you all for what you do as without your support we would not be here today.

Here's to the future of Devon call-change ringing. Thank you.

Chris Ley.

ST PETER'S, CORNWORTHY, TOTNES

Some exciting news about the six bells at St. Peter's Cornworthy!

Fund raising to restore Cornworthy's peal of bells started in 2015. Following confirmation of financial assistance from The Heritage Lottery Fund in 2016 a decision was taken to go ahead with repairs to the bell frame and restoration of the bells.

Work is expected to begin in March/April 2017 and will be undertaken by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough. Parts of the bell frame are to be removed and replaced with two new foundation beams and three stub end beams. The remains of the old cast in crown staples within the bells will be removed. The fittings are to be overhauled and the bells re-hung. The contract also involves overhauling the existing Ellacombe chiming apparatus.

The ringers would like to thank all those who have been so very helpful and supportive, particularly acknowledging the advice and encouragement which has been generously given by Graham Sharland and the ringers at South Brent.

Other organisations the ringers would like to acknowledge and thank are: The Archdeacon of Totnes, The Barron Bell Trust, Churchcare, The Cooper Legacy c/o Exeter Diocese, Cornworthy Parish Council, Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, Devon Historic Churches Trust and the Devon County Council.



L to R: Steve Hunt, Elizabeth Sherwood, Ginny Pease, Peter Fowler, Dawn Williams, Paul Hunt

The Sharpe Trust. Garfield Weston and last but by no means least, Cornworthy's vibrant and generous community who have given unstintingly of their time and money.

Caroline HUNT
Churchwarden
21st November 2016

Paul HUNT
Captain of the ringers

CONGRATULATIONS MY BOOTY !

2016 saw the 60th year of ringing for **John COOPER** at South Tawton. John started ringing when he was 14 years old at South Tawton and he has rung there ever since. Nora Bertram organised a surprise celebration for him at her house following a normal practice night and everyone enjoyed good food and good company with plenty of laughter thrown in.

John is a 'Devon' ringer through and through. He is well known across the county for his uninhibited use of the Devonshire dialect and his willingness to engage with anyone, ringer or not.

Congratulations John from everyone here at *Devon Calls*.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, STOKE FLEMING Re-hanging and Augmentation Completed

Stoke Fleming bells were last rehung, and the fourth bell was recast, by Gillett and Johnston in 1928. However our tower is only a few hundred yards from the sea and very exposed to south westerly gales blowing in across Start Bay, making the tower masonry very damp. In 1928 the steel of the frame was not galvanised and consequently the foundation beams had rusted badly where they were supported in the tower walls.

Surveys by four bellhanging firms in late 2012 and early 2013 all indicated that a complete rehang was the best option and, importantly, it would be possible to install an eight-bell frame all on one level. It was our chance to turn a problem into an opportunity.

A considerable amount of enabling work was required. The bellhangers wanted to use the girders supporting the tower roof as lifting beams, but they were also badly corroded and needed to be replaced first. In 1928 the bells were taken out through the west louvres but that would have meant disturbing a considerable amount of masonry again and was not desirable. We needed a better solution this time, so the clock mechanism was removed and hatchways formed in three floors to clear a shipping route for the bells inside the tower. In the process the clock chamber floor was completely replaced.

The scheme from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry was to rebuild the bellframe re-arranged to accommodate eight and re-using the 1928 cast-iron side frames. The new frame is galvanised and bolted to a concrete ring beam with resin anchored stainless steel studs to avoid having steelwork embedded in the tower walls. The original 1777 Pennington bells were retuned, all the bearings and pulleys were replaced and the remaining ringing fittings overhauled. Galebreaker mesh, supported by a stainless steel grid, was installed inside the east and west louvres to prevent water ingress during the winter storms.

Originally the idea of an eight-bell frame was in the hope of adding two extra bells at some unspecified time in the future, but a fortunate coincidence enabled the augmentation to take place much sooner than expected. Johnson Matthey PLC is now a FTSE 100 British multinational company and a leader in sustainable technologies. Their founder, Percival Norton Johnson, lived in Stoke Fleming from 1855 until his death in 1866 and is buried in the church; there is a plaque and window dedicated to him in the chancel. Johnson Matthey PLC generously donated two new bells to St Peter's in his memory and to celebrate their bicentenary in 2017. The new trebles, cast by Whitechapel, were added to the peal as part of the renovation project.

The opportunity was taken to have the clock overhauled and its face repainted and re-gilded. Converting it to electric auto-winding meant that it now uses much smaller weights, thereby allowing us to remove the old weights chute to gain more space in the ringing chamber. The clock mechanism was replaced in the south east corner of the tower, thus leaving the central shipping route clear for future use.

The project has now been successfully concluded thanks to support from our bell-ringers, our contractors and many generous donations. One of our ringers spent many hours working on two major grant applications totalling some £58,000 and the idea to approach Johnson Matthey was inspired. We were very fortunate.

The first ringing after the re-hanging was well attended and everyone agreed that the new trebles are excellent and

the augmentation has made a fine peal of eight. Several local residents have since remarked on how good the bells sound and how much they had been missed. At the dedication service, on Sunday 9th October 2016, Alan Hughes, representing the Bell Foundry, presented a bell rope to the Rt. Revd. Nick McKinnel, Bishop of Plymouth, as a token handover of the bells (*see photo below*).

The project cost over £170,000 of which roughly half was for work to the tower structure and the clock. It was paid for with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), The Landfill Communities Fund (through Viridor Credits), the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund, the local group Friends of St Peter's, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Sharpe Trust, a number of other trusts and funds, and local personal donors.

The bell work was by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, the building work by a local firm, Elliott Construction, and the renovation of the clock by the Cumbria Clock Company. The programme of work was managed by a small committee of local volunteers, mainly Stoke Fleming Bellringers. More information about the project can be found on the Tower website: <http://www.stokeflemingtower.org>.

Details of the bells:

Bell	Weight	Approx. Note	Date	Founder
Treble	4-1-19	F	2016	Whitechapel Bell Foundry
Second	4-3-2	E	2016	Whitechapel Bell Foundry
Third	4-3-13	D	1777	}
Fourth	5-0-18	C	1777	} J III, C IV & W Pennington
Fifth	5-2-25	Bb	1777	}
Sixth	8-0-13	A	1928	Gillett & Johnson
Seventh	7-2-14	G	1777	}
Tenor	12-1-6	F	1777	} J III, C IV & W Pennington



Photo by Chris CARYER



L. to R. Peter Bailey, Nick Teage, Richard Stramik, Christine Prendergast, Margaret Davey, Robert Dietz, Rosemary Shiffner, John Dietz, Janet Dietz, Anne Bailey:
photo by Nick Teague using a time delay camera

HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all from Tedburn St Mary, Bell Ringers.

We rang out the old year with muffled bells, and welcomed 2017 with a full peal. Afterwards the church wardens treated us to sherry and nibbles. We look forward to more outings and social events, and hosting our competition towards the end of the year.

Happy New Year to all our friends.

TEDBURN ST MARY'S RINGING OUTING

In November 2016, ringers from churches at Ideford, Tedburn St Mary and the Netherexe region joined together for an afternoon of ringing around the churches in the Teign Valley.

We started off in the beautiful village of Christow. St James church boasts a fine set of 8 bells with 11cwt tenor. It was nice to hear all 8 bells being rung as so often there are not enough on a practice night to get them all going together. The bells are really well balanced and all our ringers enjoyed this lovely set of bells.

Next stop was just up the road at St Mary's Dunsford. This Grade 1 listed Church has 6 bells, the tenor being slightly heavier than Christow's tenor at 12cwt. We all enjoyed ringing in this beautiful Church with bells that rang with ease.

And while we waited for our turn, there were other things to keep us occupied.... It all goes to show this is very much a Church for young and old to enjoy.

Our final visit was at St Mary the Virgin, Tedburn St. Mary. Many of the group had not rung here before so it was nice to end our afternoon ringing this lovely six.



Christow



Dunsford



Tedburn St. Mary



We ended a lovely afternoon with a very nice meal at The Red Lion Inn, Tedburn St Mary. All agreed it had been a great afternoon, and we are already planning more trips to come in 2017.

CHAGFORD BELL RINGERS TRIP

TO TAYLOR'S OF LOUGHBOROUGH - 1st December 2016

A condition of our Heritage Lottery Fund grant towards the rehanging of St Michael's bells was that we visited the foundry when Chagford's bells were there. Unfortunately we were unable to time our visit when casting of other church's new bells was taking place - our bells not needing recasting.

A long day was envisaged. The coach left Chagford School at 6.00am. picking up others at Whiddon Down, Exeter and Worcester - a grand total of 28 passengers. We breakfasted at Gloucester Services North then made our way to Holy Trinity Stratford upon Avon to ring their light 10 cast by Taylor's in 1948. All agreed they were wonderful. For the non-ringers it was a wonderful sunny winter's day. The church is the burial place of the Bard and five of his relatives.

The misericords are spectacular and as the church is on the banks of the Avon there was pleasant walking.

Our lunch was pre-ordered at the Three Nuns in Loughborough where we were joined by Margaret Peirce and Rachael Hurdle. Unfortunately, we were late arriving but Mary from Taylor's postponed the start of our tour and to help us find the foundry escorted us through a maze of flats! The tour was conducted by George. After a short video he explained the process involved in casting bells pointing out this was largely unchanged over 100s of years.

We saw our bells along with those of numerous other towers. We did espy two of our new headstocks and some parts of the new frame. George explained the construction of wheels and how they now used beech and not oak. The virtues of stainless steel screws to secure the flanges results in a longer life for the wheel. We then moved on to the tuning room where the theory of tuning bells and the five constituent notes in the ring of a bell were explained. A demonstration of the tone produced by other metal and alloys left us in no doubt that gun metal could not be bettered. Finally, we descended to the museum and shop. We could have stayed longer in the museum but were due to ring at All Saint's at 4.30pm. Alas, through lack of time we were unable to ring the light 12 in the foundry tower.

All Saints and Holy Trinity Loughborough are Taylor's cast in the late C19. The tenor is 30cwt and although they went 'quite well', Stratford came out on top. Non-ringers in the main body of the church were alarmed

at the movement of the beams below the ringing chamber but were reassured all was safe!

We boarded the coach at 5.30pm. deposited Rachael at the Railway Station and headed for the South West, a snack at Gloucester Services South with 'drop offs' at Worcester, Exeter and home to Chagford around 11.00pm.

Our thanks are due to our drivers from Taw and Torridge Coaches, Mary and George at Taylor's and the staff of the Three Nuns. As the trip was a requisite of the Lottery Heritage Grant, St Michael's P.C.C. kindly underwrote the payment for the coach and all the party wish to express our thanks for their generosity. Whilst the Lottery grant appeared to give and then demand, we had to spend over 8% of the grant on this trip but those on the trip would agree it was a wonderful experience.

The day was tempered with the news of the possible closure of Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Maybe there is not enough work for two independent foundries. However, the closure of the oldest and the loss of competition within the industry is a concern, as is the disquiet in York, and 'Countryfile' has recently highlighted the overall shortage of ringers. We hope this trip has fired the imagination of many and that the tradition of ringing in the Whiddon Parishes will live on.

Chris Smallwood



Chagford's bells at Loughborough

WANT TO MAKE FRIENDS AND FIND A NEW PASSION? TRY BELL RINGING

Rhiannon Meredith

Daily Telegraph: 9 September 2016 (reprinted with permission)

When I was applying for my first real job, my father gave me some CV-writing advice: "Don't put that you're a bellringer on it; they'll think you're weird." He was right, but not for the reason he thought.

The problem when you have an unusual hobby is that people keep asking questions, so you spend 20 minutes explaining why, no, bellringing is not like the Mars Bar advert with monks leaping up and down to dance music but, yes, there really are people in church towers who choose to ring bells for fun.

I am a first-generation "ringer" and got in to it through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. I had lessons with the local band; after six months, I was hooked.

Even at that point, in the late 1990s, there was a debate about recruitment and retention of new ringers. Now a BBC survey finds delegates to the annual conference of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers lamenting the difficulties of attracting new members – particularly young new members.

It's true. We need new recruits from a range of ages and backgrounds to keep the pastime alive and it's difficult to know how to achieve this. The lure of the internet and the full array of home entertainment options is overwhelming. Why go out to a cold and draughty church on a dark winter's night when you can curl up on the sofa and work your way through a box set?

The answer is for the divine magic of a unique human interaction. You cannot ring church bells alone. There's a sense of camaraderie, of course, like singing in a choir, playing in an orchestra or being on a sports team – you have fun with each other and rely on each other. I've made brilliant friends through ringing.

But there's also a mental and physical challenge involved that is specific to bellringing. You can ring up to 12 bells, as at Southwark Cathedral, and the mathematical permutations of the sequences and the feat of memory and co-ordination needed to produce them can test the most experienced ringer. Though there's a general aim to ring as accurately as possible, there are

also some ringers out there determinedly pushing the boundaries of complexity.

It's not for everyone. What I think of as music, others consider noise. One occasionally hears about Londoners moving to beautiful rural villages, only to complain about bells and church clocks chiming. And naturally, we ringers need to realise that our passion is not everyone's cup of tea. But while sound control technologies can be put in towers to muffle the chimes a little, the truth is that the style of bells we have in this country is a peculiarly English joy.

Most people become accustomed to it; and in any case, it can be just as big an issue in cities, where high-rise living means that flats might be on a level with the tower louvres.



I now ring bells at two towers every week and teach new ringers of all ages. Most towers with bells in both countryside and cities are looking for recruits. Instruction is usually provided very cheaply or for free, and all that is asked for is a commitment to the time required to learn the motor skills necessary to ring safely.

After that you can put in as much or as little as you wish, stick to the basics or make it a lifetime of learning, all the while preserving one of the nation's greatest wonders.

Information: bellringing.org/learnring

BELL RINGER SHORTAGE AS YOUNGSTERS NO LONGER FIND HOBBY 'APPEALING'

Sarah Knapton, Science Editor

Daily Telegraph: 4 September 2016 (reprinted with permission)

Church bells could fall silent in Britain's towns and villages because of a shortage of bell-ringers.

The BBC surveyed delegates at the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and three quarters said it had become harder to recruit new members in the past decade, while eight in 10 said it was difficult to engage under-21s.

Pete McCoy, the tower captain at St Mary's Church in Walkley in Sheffield - who met his wife Judith bell ringing - said teenagers today have more distractions than when he was young. He said: "There weren't so many things for a teenager or young person to do as there are today.

"And is it cool to ring bells? I think it is. But does everyone else?"

Dickon Love, the Tower Captain at St James Garlickhythe in London, whose job is to direct the ringers, said young people viewed bell ringing in a similar bracket to Morris dancing – a pursuit for old men with beards.

But he said that the hobby was stimulating and a good way to meet new friends.

"Bell ringing is exciting for the mind," he said. "It's the best form of heavy metal; it's a big loud noise, it keeps you fit, there's a competitive element as well.

"And it's a very social thing to do - after each practice without fail you can find us down the local pub."

The Ring in 2000 campaign by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers aimed to have every church tower in the country equipped with its own local band to ring in the new year and sparked a temporary boost in numbers.

But the crisis has now become so bad that many campanologists are forced to dash from tower to tower on Sundays to ring the bells of several churches.

Youngsters who do become bellringers through the Scouts, Guides or the Duke of Edinburgh often give up the hobby when they leave for university.

Kate Flavell, of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, says the 66 affiliated societies need to do more to promote their hobby.

They have teamed up with the Heritage Open Days initiative to ring bells for the public at 500 sites.

And it is not just bellringing that is in danger. In recent years several foundries have gone into administration, meaning that soon there may not be any bells left to ring.

(see page 7)

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY, LONDON

Collegiate Church of St. Peter. 10 bells 30-1-15 cwt in D

Our newly elected President Mrs. Christine Ley described it as being "A once-in-a-life time, never to be forgotten experience" and it certainly was. Never in their wildest dreams did anyone in the party of 21 imagine they would one day be invited to ring "Devon style" call-changes at Westminster Abbey. Sunday 1st January 2017 was an experience no one in the party of the Wednesday Evening Ringers Association will ever forget. It was special and rare: the first call-change band ever to ring at Westminster Abbey.

It was way back in February 2016 when Scott Adams, who organises monthly visits for the Wednesday Evening Ringers, broke the news that he had received a surprise invitation from the Ringing Master at the Abbey for the team to ring there on New Year's Day 2017.

At 6.45am on New Year's Day everyone gathered at Sampford Peverell car park ready to board the mini-bus for the first leg of the journey to Basingstoke. Apart for some patchy fog the journey along the A303 to Basingstoke went well and we arrived at 9.15a.m. It was then off for breakfast at a nearby Weatherspoons. Suitably replenished we then caught the 10:10am train to London Waterloo Station.

The journey went smoothly, the morning fog and mist lifted and excitement mounted as we approached London. At 12.20pm we all assembled outside the Abbey and were warmly greeted by Jeremy Pratt, Conductor of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers. Jeremy spoke to us about the history of the Abbey bells and the ringing arrangements that apply. He then lead us to the Ringing Chamber and rounded off his talk. In the Ringing chamber we were greeted by three other members of the Abbey band.

Jeremy announced that ringing would commence immediately after the Westminster chimes at nearby Big Ben had struck 1:00pm. Sam Massey was chosen to lead the first peal of ten and the ringers were ready and poised. Jeremy counted down and Big Ben boomed out. With the solitary note fading in the background Sam pitched off with the treble and lead up the first peal. The bells sounded glorious. Everyone was determined to ring at their very best and not let

themselves or the team down. Once we had become familiar with the ring we achieved some very good striking both on the ten and the back eight bells. The programme of ringing ensured a slick turn around between peals. During our 1.5hrs visit we completed four 10-bell peals and one 8-bell peal.

At the close Scott thanked Jeremy for his kind and generous hospitality. The immaculate looking visitors book was signed by us all and group photographs were taken (*see page 12*). There was just chance to look around at the many decorative peal boards on display all recording peals that had been rung for royal occasions. All too soon it was time to leave this wonderful building.

As we stepped outside and walked to The Feathers situated in nearby Broadway it was raining heavily. In the comfortable atmosphere provided and with a wide selection of sustenance on offer everyone chatted enthusiastically about the visit to such a special place. Soon it was time to leave and venture out and across to Waterloo Station to catch the 4.50pm. train back to Basingstoke.

Arriving at 5.46pm we made a return visit to Weatherspoons for our evening meal. Feeling replete we left Basingstoke by mini-bus arriving back at Sampford Peverell at 9.30pm. It had been a fantastic day.

Sincere thanks to Jeremy Pratt, David Dearnley and the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers for kindly inviting us.

The ringers were:

Colin Adams (Exminster)	Scott Adams (Exminster)
Sue Ashton (Eggbuckland)	Lee Avery (Kingsteignton)
Nicola & Stuart Bennie (Drewsteignton)	
Steven Came (Exminster)	William Carew (Liskeard)
Suzanne Driscoll (South Brent)	Alban Forster (London)
Elaine Grant (Kingsteignton)	James Grant (Kingsteignton)
Steven Facey (Burrington)	Stephen Herniman (Burrington)
Tony Jeffery (West Down)	Christine Ley (Burrington)
Sam Massey (Stoke Gabriel)	Phillip Morse (Callington)
Andrew Phillips (Mortehoe)	Graham Sharland (South Brent)
& Martin Sharland (Dunsford).	

Colin Adams.

Daily Telegraph 9th September 2016 (letters) - with permission of the author.

SIR - I was delighted to read the article by Rhiannon Meredith on bell ringing (Comment September 6) (*Ed: see previous page*). It can certainly sometimes seem akin to solving Sudoku. But the rewards are tremendous for those who stick with it through those early days of trying to control a lump of metal. (Ours range from 6 cwt to nearly 15 cwt bells.)

In our tower we try to make practice evening sociable by having a beer together after ringing. We also have other activities during the year, the most pleasurable of which, I suppose, is New Year's Eve, when we all dine together with partners and other friends, retiring to our church about 20 minutes before midnight to ring the old year out on muffled bells, and at midnight ringing fast, "clean" changes.

As soon as anyone can handle a bell they are invited to ring for services - we ring to their capability.

Some 90 per cent of full-circle rung bells are in English

churches, and I know anyone wishing to try their hand at this peculiar English pastime will be made most welcome.

Geoffrey Aldridge

Wingrave, Buckinghamshire



St. Peter & St. Paul, Wingrave

8 🛎 14-2-21 in F#

THE CALL OF THE BELLS IS A CALL TO A MORAL AWAKENING

Giles Fraser/12 Jan 2017

theguardian web site of the year (www.theguardian.com)

For centuries, bells have served as prompts for us to become a better version of ourselves. But their days appear numbered

Charles Dickens spent most of the year after he wrote *A Christmas Carol* in Italy. Under contract to write a series of five Christmas books, and struggling to think of a follow-up to his popular story of Scrooge's redemption, Dickens was woken one morning by the bells of the city of Genoa – “the clang and clash of all its steeples, pouring into his ears, again and again, in a tuneless, grating, discordant, jerking, hideous vibration” as John Forster, his first biographer described it. The book that this inspired was to become *The Chimes* – not one of his better known works maybe, but characteristically Dickens in its concern for the poor and our need for a moral awakening to their condition.

The bells serve as a moral metaphor throughout the novel. “High up in the steeple of an old church, far above the light and murmur of the town and far below the flying clouds that shadow it,” he wrote, “is the wild and dreary place at night: and high up in the steeple of an old church, dwelt the Chimes I tell of.”



The church he referred to was probably his local **St Saviour Overie, now Southwark Cathedral**, where he once joined the ringers in the church tower. And this week those same bells have been rededicated at a special service in the cathedral, now lovingly restored by John Taylor & Co, the Loughborough Bell Foundry. Since the

14th century, these bells have rung out to call the faithful to prayer and to mark special occasions: the weddings of royalty and commoners alike; the funerals of those who had dedicated themselves to the community.

Such as the former dean, my old friend the Very Rev Colin Slee, who died in 2010 and after whom one of the bells has now been named. He was a noisy advocate for social justice and an inclusive church, and it feels perfectly appropriate that he will continue to go on making a loud noise in the bell tower of the cathedral.

On Monday evening (9th January 2017), the bells were baptised by the bishop, Christopher Chessun, ready to be rehung in the tower. Traditionally, bells wear a

christening gown for the ceremony, treating them as if they were alive, like people. I find this rather touching – for there is something about the personification of bells, giving them names like Big Ben and Great Tom (at Christ Church, Oxford) that speaks to the way we have traditionally valued their presence in the soundscape of the city and the countryside, marking out time and drawing attention to significant events.

But these days the stockbroker who may have bought the Georgian vicarage next door to a church resents its



The bells of Southwark Cathedral being rededicated. ‘Since the 14th century, these bells have rung out to call the faithful to prayer.’ Photograph: The Diocese of Southwark

bells waking him up on a Sunday morning. Now it's the Shard and the great glass towers of the City that call more people to prayer. Dickens would be horrified.

Last month, in a sign of the times, the Whitechapel Bell Foundry announced it was closing. Guinness World Records cites it as the oldest manufacturing company in Britain, having begun during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. This was the company that in 1752 made the famous Liberty Bell in Philadelphia.

For centuries, bells have patterned the public square with the sound of moral purpose. The Liberty Bell is marked with words from the book of Leviticus, 25:10: “Proclaim LIBERTY Throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof.” Many Americans forget that this is a reference to the liberty of the biblical jubilee, in which property and wealth are redistributed and debts forgiven – something Jesus later called “good news to the poor and freedom to the captive”.

And for John Donne, in one of the most famous poems ever written in English, it was the insistent tolling of a funeral bell that jabbed him into a recognition of our common humanity, that “no man is an island”. As he concluded: “therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

As many bells fall silent, so we lose another of those little routine prompts that seek to poke us into being a better version of ourselves. ☐

Dr Giles Fraser is priest-in-charge at St Mary's Newington in south London and the former canon chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. He writes the *Loose canon* column for the Guardian

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH, GEORGEHAM

The name Georgeham comes from the Saxon *Hama* and is recorded as such in the Domesday Book of 1087. It seems the old name for Georgeham was simply Ham but in subsequent years the village became known as Hamme, Ham, Ham St George, George Ham and finally Georgeham.

The first record of a church in the village was in 1231 when Robert de Edington was stated as being persona (parson?) and patron of Hamme. The first record of the church being dedicated to St George was in 1356 (Sci. Georgii Hamme). St. George was a 4th Century Roman Christian put to death at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He rose in popularity with the return of knights from the Crusades. During the reign of King Edward III (1327 – 1377) George came to be recognised as the patron saint of England. This led to the dedication of many of our churches, possibly including the one at Georgeham.

The oldest part of the main structure is the 14th Century Church Tower, although some 13th Century artefacts in the church suggest there was a previous building on the site. The church also contains a small Quatrefoil window in the north wall of the chancel near the Alter and a trefoil-headed piscine in the Chancel, both dating from the 14th Century.

The tower houses a peal of eight bells which are rung from the ringing chamber on the first floor. Six of the bells were cast in the 18th Century and two in the 20th Century. Records state that in 1553 during the reign of Edward VI in the parish church at Georgeham there were: "IIII belles in ye towre". No further records exist about the bells until 1714 when the Rector recorded the following in the church register: "The bells of our parish of Georgeham were made and cast on the 28th October 1714 – Mr. Carew Hoblyn – Rector."

In 1748 a new peal of six was cast by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester. The church register records: "The bells of George Ham were cast in 1748 by Mr. Rudhall – Wm Chichester – Rector." Five of the bells bear the 1748 date but the second (fourth in the current ring of eight) is dated 1765 T.R. suggesting it was recast, probably as a result of a fault in the 1748 casting. A questionnaire sent out in 1750 by Reverend Jeremiah Milles, Precentor of Exeter Cathedral stated that there were six bells in the tower.

An interesting account about ringing at Georgeham appeared in the North Devon Journal on 1st August 1861. "A Grand Ringing Match took place in Georgeham yesterday (Wednesday). Six sets of ringers contended for the prizes, Viz: - Barnstaple, Berrynabor, Goodleigh, Branton, Heanton Punchardon and West Down. The ringing was pronounced by competent judges to be excellent. The prizes thus awarded were: Barnstaple First Prize - £1:15/- (£1.75p). Berrynabor Second Prize - £1:7/- (£1.35p). Goodleigh Third Prize - £1:00. Branton Fourth Prize - 12/- (60p). Heanton Punchardon Fifth Prize - 6/- (30p).

At the close of the competition dinner was served at the Rock house by Mr. Goss, at which the Revd. Hole presided

and on the removal of the cloth several toasts were drunk and the evening spent in great harmony.

Church accounts from the 1850's show that in 1893 six new bell ropes were purchased for £3-12 (£3.60p) shillings. In 1894 the bells, their fittings and the supporting frame was overhauled by Mears & Stainbank, Founders and Church Bell Hangers of 267, Whitechapel Rd

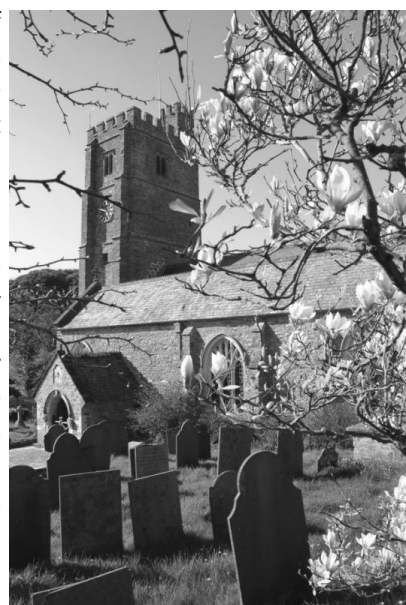
London. On completion of the work the company left a card detailing the weights and inscriptions of each bell.

On Armistice Day, 11th November 1918 the bells rang out once more. The ringers were: G. Williams (Capt). W. Brown, J. Smith, J. Gammon, T. Physick, A.B. Thomas and E. Richards.

At its meeting on the 3rd March 1925 the P.C.C. agreed to "reserve two pews at the rear of the church on Sundays for the bell ringers". During the meeting Mr. J. Smith proposed that the bells should be re-hung and a special meeting was convened in 1926 to discuss the proposal. The P.C.C. lost no time in inviting both Mears & Stainbank and Taylors of Loughborough to inspect the bells and produce a report. The reports contained information that the oak frame was of light construction and not suitable for supporting the weight of the bells, in addition deathwatch beetle was reported to be in evidence in some of the main beams. The key of the bells was said to be a little sharp of F concert pitch and perfectly sound although the harmonic tones were not in tune with each other. Quotations for refurbishing the ring ranged from £246-00 to £326-00 which included fitting a new steel bell frame, making new headstocks, clappers, bearings, sliders, stays and fittings. Also included in the estimate was the supply and fitting of new trunking for the bell ropes.

Colonel Edward Elliot of Pickwell offered to loan the money to the parish to cover the cost of the repairs and the work began. Much of the heavy work was carried out by the villagers themselves under the guidance and supervision of the bell hangers. It was decided to sell the old oak bell frame to the highest bidder but in the end only £2-00 was offered. The six bells were sent to Taylors of Loughborough for refurbishment and an order was placed for two new bells to be cast thus augmenting the ring to eight. One of the new bells was paid for by the parishioners and the other by Helen Robertson of nearby Putsborough Manor.

(continued on page 10)



(continued from page 9)

Descriptions of the bells:

Tenor 12cwt. F#

THE REVD. MR CHICHESTER RECTOR.

JOHN HARRIS. A.R. 1748

7th WE WERE ALL CAST AT GLOUCESTER BY ABEL RUDHALL.

6th IN CONCORD SUCH THEYD PLEASE AS MUCH.

A.R. 1748

5th AS WE THAT CHEER THE LISTENING EAR.

A.R. 1748

4th MR JOHN RICHARDS GENT CH WARDEN.

T.R. 1756

3rd LET MEN AGREE AS WELL AS WEE.

2nd IN MEMORIAM W I PEACOCK PATRIA SUL DEO
DEDIT.

HELEN STUART ROBERTSON PUTSBOROUGH 1926

Treble MY MORNING RING DOTH CALL THEM IN

OCTAVE COMPLETED BY PARISHONERS.

Interestingly the author Henry Williamson who lived at Ox's Cross near Georgeham, in response to an invitation that went out amongst the local people to produce a suitable inscription for a bell came up with the following, "With iron tongue I bid men come" but it was never taken up. It is possible this was for one of the new trebles that were cast. Henry Williamson is famous for *Tarka the Otter* and amongst other titles *Life in a Devon Village* and *The Labouring Life*.

At a P.C.C. meeting held on the 11th April 1927 members were informed that it was impossible to ring the bells from the ground floor as originally anticipated. In view of this it was agreed to construct and install a new ringing chamber at second floor level. A fayre to raise money towards the cost of the refurbishment which had taken place was held in Georgeham Glebe Field on the 3rd May 1927.

Having given service for 72 years it was discovered in 1998 that the steel sub-frame was seriously corroded and in need of replacement. Bell hanger Arthur Fidler who was based at Crediton at the time was contracted to remove the corroded iron work and replace it with galvanized steel beams. Repairs were also undertaken on the bells at a cost of £11,000's.

The sound of church bells has resonated from the tower at Georgeham for well over 450 years, first from a peal of 4 bells in 1553, then to 6 in 1748 and eventually 8. Apart from calling people to worship the bells have been rung to mark national events, an

example of which was in 1997 when the bells were rung to mark the Silver Jubilee of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. During that year the team consisting of: Ben Isaac, John Shapland (who rang at Georgeham for nearly 60 yrs), Fred Shapland, John Barnes, John Welch, Bill Howard, Bill Thomas and Anthony Barrable successfully competed in many ringing competitions held across the county. The bells were rung to celebrate the Millennium in the year 2000 with half muffled peals being rung up until mid-night on 31st December 1999 and open peals after midnight on 1st January 2000. Open ringing also took place at mid-day on 1st January; in line with ringing that took place across the United Kingdom. The ringers were: John Barnes (Capt.) David Barnes, Audrey Isaac, Susan Holmes, Jenny Clarke, Les Oldham, John Shapland, Gordon Norman, Gerald Fisher, Ken Cook and Brian Harris.

On the 22nd April 1994 Georgeham successfully hosted the Devon Association 8-bell Festival. The team has a long record of participation in Devon 8-bell competitions much of which was due to the enthusiasm of the late tower captain Mr. Ben Isaac. It was Ben who stooped down and picked up the tower key when it was apparently thrown to the ground by the previous captain when he resigned. It was Ben who kept the band together and he worked hard towards improving the standard of striking by the team. I well remember visiting him at his farm house with the late Chris Clayton during the time of the competition in 1994; unfortunately he was unwell and not able to come to the church.

World War 1 ended with the signing of an Armistice on 11th November 1918. It is to be hoped the bells at Georgeham will be rung half muffled in 2018 on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice not only for the thousands who lost their lives but for Henry Williamson who fought during that war, was fortunate to survive and then went on to write about his experiences. His body rests close to the west door of the church.

Colin Adams. 30/01/17.

Acknowledgement.

Church Guide to St. George's Church, Georgeham.

Thanks are due to Mr. John Barnes, Tower Captain at Georgeham for his invaluable help with this article.

THE DEVON BELLRINGERS' CAROL SERVICE

The Carol Service was held at Buckfast Abbey on Saturday 10th December 2016 and was an outstanding success. Once again we congratulate Ian Avery for the way in which he brought the whole programme together and we thank Father Christopher and the Community of Buckfast for kindly hosting the event.

If you missed last year's service make a note of this year's –

Exeter Cathedral at 4.00 p.m. on Saturday 9th December 2017.

Elvis has left the building but his music goes on! This is the attitude we here at Bishops Tawton are taking following news of the sudden death of our much respected Tower Captain, **Michael BEER**. Sadly Michael died of a heart attack on Wednesday 14th December 2016.

On the previous Friday evening we had all gathered for our Christmas Dinner at the nearby Chichester Arms and on the Sunday we rang for two services at the church. I was shocked therefore to receive a call on the following Thursday informing me that Michael had suddenly and unexpectedly passed away.

I had known Michael since January 1970. This was the time when, with my family, I moved into the village and I have been ringing with Michael on and off ever since.

Michael was born in September 1934; he started to learn to ring when he was twelve years old. His ringing teacher was Harry Lock who once asked him, "Michael do you think you will ever be a ringer?" To which Michael replied "I hope so Mr. Lock". Michael progressed and his first big ring was when the bells were rung to celebrate the birth of Prince Charles on the 14th November 1948. He went on to become a regular ringer with the team and, although learning on the fourth, he rang the tenor for most of his ringing career. Latterly he moved over to ring the second which he was ringing the week-end before he died. Michael's father was also a ringer. His son Graham also learnt to ring but unfortunately for Bishops Tawton work took Graham away from the village and he now lives in Torquay. He does return from time-to-time and rings with the team.

In the late 1970's the tower was put out of action whilst work was carried out on the steeple. Michael's father said to him before he retired that he doubted whether the bells would ever be rung again, but Michael proved him wrong as Bishops Tawton has always managed to find and teach ringers. Only last year the tower had a team of nine ringers, all living within walking distance of the church. This was something which Michael was really proud of.

Stewart APLIN (1926-2016) was a true gentleman, a stalwart bellringer and churchman. He was Devon Association through and through. He seldom missed a practice or service ringing. If he was not able to take part in competitions he would be there to simply listen and enjoy the company of the ringing fraternity.

Stewart originally learnt to ring at Ashburton and joined my dad (Pickles) at Buckland-in-the-Moor in 1960 where dad had started a team from scratch including myself. He travelled up to Buckland twice a week summer and winter on his BSA Bantam. It was not until many years later that he changed to a car. At first they were frustrating times with almost a total group of novices to contend with. Stewart did not seem to mind at all, enjoying the little triumphs as we progressed. After 6 months we entered the annual Deanery competition totting up 250 faults, we were not last. Stewart was part of that team and relished in our first success.

As we moved through the 60s our standards improved dramatically with the addition of experienced ringers. Our first win was at Blackawton, in Beric Bartlett's 6 bell competition. We were on the ringing map! Tom Wright was confounded by our success saying, 'you don't have the material, ringing first with an entry approaching 20 teams, it can't be true' he said.

With ever improving standards Stewart would get very worked up about things. Today it would be labelled, 'panic attacks'. He did not want to let the side down, standing aside on many occasions if we had surplus ringers. He would however listen intently and always offer advice on how we had rung. Stewart invariably rang the 4th in a 6 bell peal. He would commonly be ringing superbly, head bobbing up and down and with a broad smile. That was until he got into lead late in the peal. A grey mist would overtake him

Amongst our group of nine ringers there is one who is over eighty; three are over seventy and four over sixty! With this situation in mind and thinking of the future I went to see Michael and asked if he had any objections to me trying to recruit some more ringers. I explained that although I had never taught anyone to ring before I was willing to have a go. As I half expected Michael was pleased with the idea. With the help of two other ringers a notice advertising bellringing was placed on the village Facebook page. The point was made within the notice that "Practice takes place in the tower from 7.30 until 8.45 p.m. and is followed by theory in the nearby Chichester Arms". This drew a lot of favourable comments and eventually five people turned up. Of the five who came four pulled out but we were undeterred. We repeated the exercise the following week and, low and behold, four new people arrived; all opting for the theory afterwards! Word gradually went around and few more people came to join us. I'm delighted to say we now have six regular learners and the Chichester Arms does a roaring trade on Wednesday evenings!

Throughout the time that we have spent rebuilding the team we have received a great deal of help and encouragement from Christine Ley, President of the Devon Association of Ringers.

Michael would frequently enquire about the learners and how they were progressing. He said he was hoping to come to the tower to meet everyone as soon as the weather improved. During his time at Bishops Tawton Michael had been an active member of the church. He sang in the church choir, he helped with the services, he was on the PCC and for many years he was also Churchwarden. He had been our Captain for many years and he was a real gentleman. We all respected him and we shall miss him greatly.

(see Group photo on page 12)

Alan Watts.

Newly appointed Tower Captain at Bishops Tawton

the smile would disappear and his head would be shaking from side to side and his striking would falter. As a result we would call the changes more quickly in order to relieve Stu of his torment. On other days he would sail through sublimely.

Then came his greatest achievement, winning the Devon 8 bell competition at N Tawton in 1977, ringing the 6th.

He also keenly followed the progress of his Grandson Simon Ford who was learning to ring at Kingsteignton. I am sure his second best day was when Simon rang with Kingsteignton when they won the Devon 8 at High Bickington in 1997. He was clearly proud of Simon.

As Buckland started to compete in competitions Stu would hitch a lift when ever he could. One hot day at Sheepstor he fell off a chair and ended up in Derriford. Was this the start of his progress to a near fatal stroke which left him stranded in a nursing home for three years, paralysed down one side and with no powers of speech? Despite his difficulty in communicating he was always happy and uncomplaining. He never wanted his visitors to leave. Firmly grabbing them with his good hand, and not letting go.

His funeral was held at the Exeter crematorium on the 21st November. Only close friends and family attended. Apart from the bearing party (past ringers at Buckland) there were no reps from the Moreton Deanery or Devon Association. Sad for a man who had supported both organisations, for over 50yrs with such dedication.

The following evening we rang in tribute to him at Buckland in the Moor, where Brian Redstone, Colin Symons, Simon Ford and I joined the current band in his memory.

Graham Pascoe

Tower Captain Broadhempston

TWO DEVON ASSOCIATION BEM'S

caught on camera in the belfry at Berry Pomeroy
on 19th September 2015.



On the left is Don Roberts, who was awarded his BEM in 2015, and on the right former Devon Association President, John Kelly, who received his BEM in 1991.

Don and John were regular attendees at ringing practices at Cockington in 1953/54 when Alf Wills was captain and Roy Stickling was a regular member of the band there.



Bishops Tawton ringers

(see Obituary Michael BEER [front row, 3rd from left] on page 11)



Ringing in the New Year at Westminster Abbey - see page 7

Don and John have rung many times together. One memorable occasion was on the 21st January 1965 when John rang the tenor at Kingskerswell in a full peal of 5040 Grandsire Doubles, rung in 2hrs and 42 minutes, which Don called from the 5th bell. The peal commemorated the first 120's of Grandsire Doubles at Kelly on the 21st January 1865.

The band at Kingskerswell was:

1. Peter Shipp.
2. Keith Fursdon.
3. Peter Lock.
4. Gregory Roberts.
5. Don Roberts.
6. John Kelly

John also rang the tenor at St. Marychurch, Torquay on 18th July 1975 when the bells there were rung for the first time after 36 years of silence. The Queen's peal was rung

The band at St. Marychurch, Torquay: was

1. Don Roberts.
2. Keith Fursdon.
3. Bill Simmonds.
4. Bryan Tuckett.
5. Ian Avery.
6. Gordon Martin.
7. Richard Groves.
8. John Kelly.

Don Roberts.



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DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS



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Devon Church Bell Restoration			
Fund Secretary	Ian Smith	01822 811071	dcbrf@church-cottage.wanadoo.co.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017

- Novice Competition – 11 March 2017 – Burrington – Draw 13.00**
Graham Sharland – 07792 125539 – grahamsharland@tiscali.co.uk
- Devon Association Open Festival – 22 April 2017 – Crediton**
Ian Avery – 01626 354415 – iwavery@btinternet.com
- North Devon 6 Bell Qualifier – 13 May 2017 – Bishops Tawton**
Stuart Bennie – 07796 106708 – s2bennie@hotmail.co.uk
- South Devon 6 Bell Qualifier – 13 May 2017 – Tedburn St Mary**
Jereme Darke – 01548 580540 / 07875 054257 – jereme.darke@sky.com
- National Call Change Competition – 20 May 2017 – Longborough**
Stephen Herniman – 01769 560013 – stephen.g.herniman@gmail.com
- Devon Association 6 Bell Minor Final – 27 May 2017 – Ashwater**
Stuart Bennie – 07796 106708 – s2bennie@hotmail.co.uk
- Devon Association 6 Bell Major Final – 10 June 2017 – Dunsford**
Jereme Darke – 01548 580540 / 07875 054257 – jereme.darke@sky.com
- Devon Association 8 Bell Final – 16 September 2017 – South Molton**
Stuart Bennie – 07796 106708 – s2bennie@hotmail.co.uk
- Devon Association Annual Meal – October 2016 – Date and Venue TBC**
Christine Ley - 07890 331478 – christine.c.s.ley@gmail.com
- Devon Association AGM – 12 November 2016 – North Tawton**
Sam Massey – 07854 676889 – sammassey@btconnect.com
- Devon Ringers' Carol Service – 09 December 2017 – Exeter Cathedral**
Ian Avery – 01626 354415 – iwavery@btinternet.com

DEVON CALLS

Report to the Devon Association of Ringers at the AGM on Saturday 12th November 2016.

The current team consisting of: Colin Adams, Editor, Dr. Colin Barnes and Elinor D'Albiac, Technical Editors, have been producing Devon Calls for the last three years.

Throughout that time our approach has been to build on the work of our predecessors and to make the content reflect the work of the Devon Association of Ringers as well as making the magazine appealing to a wider readership. We have adopted the practice of producing three editions per calendar year i.e. February, July and November. These months were chosen as they broadly coincide with the Association's calendar of events and in so doing enable supplementary documents to be included, e.g. AGM papers, etc.

Content.

The focus so far has been on individuals who have achieved a long and distinguished ringing career and made a significant contribution to call-change ringing and the work of the Devon Association of Ringers. In the November 2016 edition attention was given to the outstanding achievements made by Eggbuckland ringers and the way in which they have become so highly regarded by teams across Devon. Future editions will include an account of the contribution made by other teams and not necessarily those who are top class performers. There are teams around who do not bother with competitive ringing but, nevertheless, ring on a regular basis and are affiliated to the association. These groups also have a story to tell. I am aware that some of the articles which I produce probably came across as being long - winded. However, I would say that whatever I have written has not been at the expense of other content. Quite the reverse in fact and I look forward to the time when the pages are full of interesting accounts submitted by the readership and I can just concentrate on the task of editing.

In many respects the magazine presents us all with a unique opportunity for being able to write down and record much of our history, a history going back just over

90 years. Each edition is archived which means anyone in the future enquiring into call-change ringing as practiced in Devon will be well served. Not only this but the activity of bell ringing will be seen as very much a part of village life. So I urge anyone, even if they haven't written anything for a long time, to seriously think of doing so as you will be making a contribution to our legacy.

Production.

The responsibility that our Technical Editor, Dr. Colin Barnes, has for setting out the magazine and checking the content for accuracy is not inconsiderable. It is a task which he has enthusiastically and reliably carried out for the last three years. Whilst we can be reasonably sure no one is 'waiting in the wings' to take over from Colin, equally it would be wrong to assume that he will carry on for ever. The association therefore needs to give some thought as to who will take over from Colin if and when he decides to retire.

Printing.

The number of magazines printed each time considerably exceeds the number of affiliated towers. At a guess the number of affiliated towers is around 100. The print run for the November 2106 edition amounted to 275 copies. The additional magazines are sent to the advertisers and anyone who submits an article. Copies are also sent free to anyone who has held office within the association. In addition copies are also sent privately to individuals who have made a request to receive one, be they a ringer or non-ringer. A few copies are sent to local libraries. We feel that sending copies to this wider audience is justified on the grounds of raising the profile of the association and call-change ringing. The printing charges for the last batch of 275 copies came to £235-00 (making the cost for each copy just under 85p). Postal charges amounted to £46-05 (55 @75p = £41-25 + 4 @ £1-20 = £4-80. Total = £46-05).

The cost involved for printing copies in excess of the number of affiliated

towers is arguably not inconsiderable. With the exception of people who fall under one of the special categories i.e. contributors, advertisers and anyone who previously held office within the organisation, a charge of £3-00 per copy could be levied to private readers.

Advertising slightly offsets the cost of production. Currently the five companies who use advertising space pay £5-00 per edition amounting to an income of £75-00 per year.

Distribution.

Currently, distribution is dependent upon a small core of between 6-8 reliable people. There is a need to increase this number in order to further reduce the postal charges. Areas where the links are weak are: West, East and mid Devon, plus the Plymouth area. By strengthening the distribution network in these areas it should be possible to bring the postal charges down to around £25-00 per edition.

Thanks.

My grateful thanks to our two Technical Editors. Colin for his enthusiasm, reliability and spirit of efficiency and Elinor for the contribution which she makes by not only scrutinising each edition but also by helping with packaging and distributing the magazine. I am also grateful for the help with packaging and distribution that I regularly receive from Graham our Chairman, Margaret our Secretary and Victoria our PR Officer. Thanks are also due to Julia Endacott, Daphne and Maurice Sharland and Ian Avery for their help with packaging and distribution. Finally, I want to thank all those who form part of the small network of informal distributors. You have all played a significant part in helping the magazine to reach those parts of our county where no other magazine can reach! It cannot be over emphasised that by so doing these people have enabled substantial savings to be made in the overall postal charges.

Colin E. Adams.
12th November 2016.

DEVON CHURCH BELL RESTORATION FUND

(Charity Number 276490)

Report for 2016

During 2016 the Fund has been involved with 17 towers at some stage in their restoration projects.

We have again, through the Diocese, been carrying out bell inspections alongside churches' routine quinquennial inspections. This year we have carried out inspections at Yarnscombe, Morebath and Great Torrington. Though not carried out specifically as a fund-raising measure, most churches receiving our reports have nevertheless made significant donations to the Fund.

During the year the usual two meetings were held, in March and October.

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The aim of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund remains to provide financial assistance to churches in the County of Devon and Diocese of Exeter for the purpose of restoring, maintaining and improving their bell installations, so as to ensure their continuing use both for religious purposes and for the ongoing development of the cultural art of English church bell ringing. Though bells are housed predominantly in premises of the Church of England the practice of church bell ringing is open to all regardless of age, creed or culture; and being a very public instrument may be heard by all.

The bulk of our financial assets are now in the form of an investment portfolio purchased from the William Smale Bequest, and managed through the Discretionary Portfolio Service of Cathedral Financial Management Ltd of Exeter. In spite of 'Brexit' the markets have performed well over the year such that the value of the portfolio is now 8.5 per cent higher than at the previous year end, currently standing at £362,339. The continuing benefit of the investment portfolio is in the dividends received which have amounted to £12,204 for the year.

Our income since receipt of the Smale Bequest now having more or less settled back to its previous level we were able to dis-engage Barretts Chartered Accountants as our independent examiner of accounts and have reverted to our former examiner, Tony Coombes.

At the beginning of 2016 the liquid assets of the Fund stood at £62,888. Since that time five grants totalling £21,800 have been paid. £1,800 went to Bradworthy for tightening the frame and rehangings the six bells on the existing elm headstocks but with mainly new fittings; £7,500 to Stoke Fleming for tuning and turning the six bells and rehangings with mainly new fittings in a rebuilt and extended frame for eight bells on a new double beam foundation; £2,500 to Ashreigney for replacing the cracked treble, also replacing the pulleys, stays and bearings and refurbishing the clappers; £7,000 to Welcombe for replacing the heavily corroded supporting grillage and descaling and repainting the bell-frame, welding the cracked fifth bell and rehangings all the bells with new or refurbished fittings; and £3,000 to Meeth where the four bells have been one-eighth turned and re-hung on new fabricated steel headstocks with mainly new fittings.

Income during the year (excluding that from the investment portfolio) has amounted to £16,674, including £1,500 from the Guild as agreed at their Annual General Meeting in June, £564 from peal and quarter peal ringers (including Guild Quarter Peal Weeks), £645 from personal and miscellaneous donations, £4,515 from the Devon Association following the Annual Draw, £909 from the Guild's branches and the St Brannock's Society, £369 from surpluses at Guild functions and other Guild donations, £232 from the competition in July organized by Graham Sharland in aid of the BRF, £870 from various individual towers, £770 following tower inspections and talks, and £500 from the sale of Devon Tower Directories. The largest individual donation was a legacy of £5,000 from the late Brian Horrell. Tax refunds following gift-aided donations and bank interest make up the balance.

At the year end the liquid assets of the Fund stood at £69,940.

Grants agreed this year, other than those to Ashreigney and Welcombe which have already been paid, include

- £11,000 to Ugborough towards retuning and rehangings in the existing frame with all new fittings, and repairing the cracked third, sixth and tenor bells;
- £5,500 to Woodbury for rehangings the fourth, fifth, sixth and tenor bells on new canon-retaining headstocks, work to the clappers, chiming hammers and pulleys, re-ropeing the second, fourth and seventh bells and painting the bell-frame;
- £900 to Chevithorne for rehangings the single bell with all new fittings;
- £1,800 to Harpford towards cleaning and repainting the bell-frame and all other steelwork, and servicing the bearings;
- £7,500 to Beaford towards eighth-turning the six bells and rehangings with mainly new fittings in the existing frame (this grant will be increased to £9,000 if the third bell is welded and all the bells are tuned in addition);
- £700 to Axminster towards overhauling the bearings and other associated work; and
- £2,500 to Payhembury towards painting the frame, improving the rope-circle, re-bushing clappers and replacement of pulleys.

Assuming that all of the agreed grants are taken up, the uncommitted liquid balance of the Fund stands at £11,040.

Ian Smith

Committee Members and Trustees for 2016-2017

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Secretary: Ian Smith, Church Cottage, Mary Tavy, Tavistock, PL19 9PR (01822 811071; DCBRF@church-cottage.wanadoo.co.uk).

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