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Devon Calls

Late 2021

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The Port of Dartmouth Royal Regatta

It all started back in 1822 when the people of Dartmouth decided that a festival was needed in the town, so they organised rowing races, a fairground, a concert and, because one of the founding members was a bell ringer, bell ringing was also a feature. Over the years there have been a few interruptions - wars, pandemics, etc - so this year we found ourselves celebrating the 176th Port of Dartmouth Royal Regatta.

I am pleased to say that many of you have been a part of the bell ringing associated with the Regatta. Some took part during my time as Tower Captain of the three Dartmouth churches - St Saviour's, St Petrox and St Clement's - and a few of you before that time. Although I have been ringing for 42 years, my connection with ringing for the event started a few years before I became Tower Captain of St Saviour's - where the ringing takes place - in 1997. Before then it was John Dietz (Tower Captain of St Peter's, Stoke



St Petrox, Dartmouth



St Saviour, Dartmouth



St Clement, Dartmouth

L-R Stuart Calvert,
Will Ridalls,
Heidi Gillard, John Lagdon

Fleming) with the support of Dartmouth ringers who ran the show, Ern Tucker, Brian Ridalls and Clive Pearson. I was a very young Tower Captain when I took over in Dartmouth and was so glad to have the instruction and guidance of those brilliant bell ringers over the following years.

For those of you who have not experienced a Dartmouth Royal Regatta, the bell ringing is seen as the "alarm clock". The gun of the Royal Dart Yacht Club fires at 8.00am which is the signal for the eight bells of St Saviour's to "Ring Out!" and for vessels on the River Dart to "dress ship".

It can be a tense moment in the tower as silence falls over the ringers as we all listen for that gun. I remember the days when Clive Pearson would be our "look-out", sitting by the window making sure at least one of us heard the signal to start ringing. If the wind was with us, it would be a good loud bang. If the wind was against us, you would hear Clive say: "They need to put a bit more powder in that gun next time!" For many years Clive, who was a long-time ringer in

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Deadline for next edition - 16th January 2022

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

Articles and letters should be sent to the Editor: Colin ADAMS - devoncalls@devonbells.co.uk

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Dartmouth Regatta - continued from page 1

Dartmouth and past president of the Dartmouth Bell Ringers, was our Regatta committee representative. Now that privilege has been passed over to one of our younger ringers, John Lagdon.

I always feel that the Regatta bell ringing on our wonderful set of Taylor's bells – re-cast in 1938 with a tenor bell that weighs in at just under a ton in weight – produces some of the most beautiful music you will hear on a set of eight bells. Please don't think that I am blowing our own trumpet because it is the visiting bell ringing talent that joins with the local Dartmouth team that ensures we are able to create such a feast of music to the listening ear.

Over the years I have welcomed ringers from across Devon – Stoke Fleming, Stoke Gabriel, Torquay and Exminster, to name but a few - and from much further afield - Birmingham, Manchester, London, Truro and the counties of Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and Nottinghamshire. It is not unusual that I will have around 30-40 ringers turn up for the Regatta Thursday, Friday and Saturday ringing. I have also welcomed visitors from many countries across the world who have found themselves in Dartmouth for the Regatta and then made their way up the ancient oak stairs to our bell ringing chamber. They have come from Europe – Belgium, Germany, France, Portugal and Bulgaria: and further afield – USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, China, Japan and the Philippines.

The Regatta ringing also generates a lot of interest from non-ringers. I often spend time in between the peals talking to young families – about the future of our art – what is going on not only in the ringing chamber but also what is happening over 100ft up in the air as tons of metal are swinging around! Children can be the most inquisitive and as our towers are full of colour, sound and movement it can be quite a spectacle for them. As a tower captain I find that it is a huge part of my role to help educate as many as I can about the art of bell ringing. Who knows if a little time spent now talking about the bells may inspire a ringer of the future? To finish with, it is a bit of fun to show our visitors how the swinging of the bells 100ft up in the tower makes the flags of the Royal British Legion down in the body of the church



Ringling at St Saviour's



Ringling at St Saviour's



The tenor bell at St Saviour's

flutter, the two large chandeliers shake and pictures on the walls rattle. Very thought-provoking.

Although we welcome all ringers to our tower during the Regatta, irrespective of ability or experience, on the Saturday at 10.00am I ask that only Dartmouth ringers are present in the tower to ring our annual "Pearson Peal" in memory of the Dartmouth ringers that are no longer with us. This tradition was started in 2013 when we lost our president and long-time ringer, Clive Pearson. Every year since we have remembered our friends and fellow ringers that have gone before us, so that their names are never forgotten – Clive Pearson, Brian Langworthy, Brian Ridalls, Alan and Judith Barnes, Bernard Sture and Cyril King (Honorary bell ringer.) All true Dartmouth names associated with the Regatta bell ringing.

When I look back over the years and especially this year, having been through the effects of the Covid-19 virus over the last 18+ months, it is so good to see so many familiar faces.

Although the Regatta bell ringing is the pinnacle of our annual calendar in Dartmouth, it also brings a lot of work with it. Tower maintenance from top to bottom ensures that our whole team play a part in ensuring that we are ready. For some it is work on the actual bells and frame. This year we have been involved in painting and preserving the headstocks, and metal fixtures and fittings on the frame. Checking ropes, pulleys, guides, tightening nuts and bolts have all got to be done so that the bells, their supports, and fittings are in an excellent state to welcome all our ringers.

Down in the ringing chamber several of the team work hard to dust and polish, and make sure the bits that you can see are looking good. I am proud to say that I have a very hard-working team behind me without whom I would not be able to run the Regatta ringing.

Once we are at that point when all the jobs have been done it is time for the final set piece to be put in place – a vase full of hydrangeas on the centre table. This is another tradition that started long before I was ever ringing, when the then Tower Captain, Ern Tucker, would walk down from his house in Victoria Road, having just picked a selection of flowers from his garden to put in the tower. When Ern

Dartmouth - continued from page 2

passed away in 1992, I decided that this was a tradition that we should keep going. For the first few years I had to “acquire” the hydrangeas. Now, I am pleased to say that I have a goodly stock of them in the garden ready for the late August Regatta ringing.

I wonder if anyone has a favourite set of Devon Call Changes? For me it is definitely “Kings” – 7 5 3 1 2 4 6 8. I do a lot of calling throughout the Regatta ringing, but I always like to start with Kings. There are some wonderfully magical patterns that can be heard throughout this piece. We are so lucky in Devon to have the traditions of our Call Changes. I do not dispute the complexities and creativity of method ringing, but well struck Devon Call Changes can rarely be rivalled. And during the Regatta, ringing that I have overseen for (nearly) the last 25 years this has been the case with the standard of ringing raised to a whole new level. I may be biased, but I know good ringing by good ringers on good bells can send a shiver up your spine. Dartmouth Regatta bell ringing has the power to do that to you.

So, to conclude, what is the Dartmouth Regatta bell ringing all about? Yes – it is about bell ringing. But so much more. It is about the people. As bell ringers, we are a diverse bunch. We are of all ages, we come from different walks of life and between us there are probably not many things that we haven’t experienced! But for me it is our friendship, our loyalty to the cause and the support we have for each other. For the three days of Regatta bell ringing, each year we come

together and re-new and make new friendships. We catch up on each other’s lives from the last twelve months, although for some of us we are quite often in regular contact. And when all of that is done, we get on with the one thing we all have in common – good ringing.

For me, organising the Regatta bell ringing can be a challenge. Making sure everyone gets an equal number of rings, and an equal number of good rings (!) And as for remembering all those names – my memory isn’t as good as it was.

But the satisfaction at the end of that final peal on the Saturday session at 11.30am brings with it a sense of achievement and a flood of emotion as the bells start to roar in the last stages of that final lower. Then it is not just about the eight ringers pulling on the ropes. It is about everyone else in the tower – and that can number 25+ - who are willing them on to create that final masterpiece of bell ringing for that year.

The Regatta bell ringing has truly ended for another year when you hear the call: “Final round”, and everyone sitting on the seats around the tower erupts into a round of applause.

Tim Chapman

Editorial

Welcome to this edition of Devon Calls. Whether you read the magazine from cover-to-cover or simply flick through its pages, I hope you will find this edition interesting. People have been very good in submitting articles and these give an indication as to what has been taking place ringing wise, since the gradual easing of the lockdown restrictions.

A return to ringing. The Prime Minister announced on 22nd February 2021 his roadmap for easing restrictions and the third lockdown, which began on 4th January 2021, ended on 2nd June 2021. Ringing resumed in accordance with guidelines issued by The Central Council of Church Bellringers. However, it is important to keep in mind that despite the tremendous success of the vaccination programme and the adoption of the Central Council’s guidelines, Covid 19 still poses a serious health threat. As I write the number of new daily infections hovers around 34,000; a stark indication of the threat still out there.

DCBRF. The *Mid 2021 edition* contained a very interesting article on the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund (DCBRF) by Janet Deem. In it Janet referred to the fact that the fund was first set up in 1972 jointly by the two ringing organisations in Devon. She gave a breakdown of the grants that had been made over a ten year period from 2010 – 2020. This totalled £115,650 given to 24 different towers. One of the many valuable points which she made was that, “with 117 affiliated towers, each tower would have to contribute almost £100 per year to match this level of funding.” She said, “We can be

very proud of the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. It helps to show that by **not** having an insular view on maintenance and restoration we can achieve, far more.” That’s certainly true and to show our support for the fund, particularly given that for the last two years there hasn’t been the customary DCBRF Annual Draw; I would like to propose that each affiliated tower donates £25.00 to the fund.

If you haven’t read Janet’s article yet I urge you to do so.

Devonchurchland. I recently had a very useful meeting with Douglas Young. Douglas has developed an interesting website depicting some of Devon’s churches with stunning photographs and supporting text. He has granted permission for us to be able to copy material from his collection for use in the magazine, which is very generous. In exchange he has asked for information about Devon’s bells, and any recordings which we may have to provide an additional dimension to his work. You can see Douglas’s work by going to <https://devonchurchland.co.uk> I think you will be impressed.

New arrival. It is not often that we are able to announce the birth of a baby to parents who are both ringers. It is therefore a pleasure to be able to announce the arrival of Alfie Colin Carew, son of Will and Kate. Further details on page 8.

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Two Obituaries and a Eulogy. Tavistock lost two well respected and popular ringers; George Boucher and Robin Burnham. Ringers at High Bray have lost their Tower Captain Raymond White. Just how loyal and dedicated these ringers were can be judged by the eulogy and obituaries that feature in this edition (pages 9-11).

Departed.

Mary Barnes. We are sorry to hear of the death of Mary and send condolences to her husband John (Past President) and his family. For many years John brought Mary along to Chagford where she assisted with the packaging and distribution of Devon Calls. Mary was always cheerful and ready to lend a hand.

John Pugsley. John, who lived at Hawkridge which is one of the oldest communities on Exmoor, recently passed away. He was a popular figure who led the team at Molland for many years. The team competed regularly in ringing competitions across Devon. Molland were awarded the Ross Shield & First Certificate at the Devon Six Bell final at Churchstow on Saturday 27th May 2000. We send our condolences to John's family.

Jim Jones. We understand Jim passed away in 2020, just before the first lockdown was announced. We send our condolences to his wife Margaret and sons Julian and Jason. Jim, who was a ringer, lived in a house close to the grounds of

Buckfast Abbey. He used to take care of the tower and bells at Buckfast. The nave and altar of the church was destroyed by a fire many years ago.

Mike Webster has already provided me with some information about Jim but I need more. He always struck me as being a truly altruistic person and I am keen that his contribution to ringing is recorded in Devon Calls. If you can provide any information about him please get in touch.

William "Tailor" Barrow. With help from Bev Gould and Reg Yeo I have been able to obtain more information about this remarkable ringer. The article will feature in the Early 2022 edition of Devon Calls.

Looking ahead. In four years time the Devon Association of Ringers will celebrate its Centenary. I can think of no better way to mark the occasion than with the publication of a booklet on the history of the association. What do you think? Any volunteers?

Thanks. My grateful thanks to all those who have come to my rescue and made the publication of this edition possible, either by submitting articles, proof reading, setting out the pages or printing the magazine. News gleaned from ringing competitions is no longer an option which means other sources have to be explored. This is quite challenging but I hope you will find that the magazine contains information that is lively and interesting.

Colin Adams

Milton Abbot Bell Restoration Project - Update

The bells were lowered and put on display at the back of the church during the first week in July. An 'Open Day' was held on Sunday 12th July 2021, and everyone interested was able to examine all six bells, together with all the fittings which were on show. The following Tuesday the bells, together with the bells-wheels were transported by lorry to Taylor's of Loughborough. Although the bells are listed (Pennington 1769) permission has been granted to allow for slight tuning which will enhance their tone. The crown staples of each bell will be drilled out and all new fittings assembled. A new metal bell frame will be made and then the bells will be initially installed in the frame whilst at the foundry. This will be done in order to make sure everything is correct and in place before returning to the church.

Fund raising still continues in earnest and I must highlight the wonderful response that the project has received so far from funders, towers, and individual ringers alike. Around £20,000 has still to be raised, but we are optimistic that other funders will come on board to enable the project to reach its conclusion.

The old clappers, together with the headstocks and bearings are for sale individually – one clapper has already been sold and is to be used as a door stop!! Anyone interested in purchasing these items or donating (preferably via Gift Aid) to the project, please contact Pat Lovell on 01822 618452.



The bells,

Geoff Hill in the background



L-R Reverend Andy Atkins, David Denton, Michael Blatchford, Liz Padmore, Pat Lovell

Geoff Hill

Treble's gone! The ringing career of Mervyn Langdon

Having known Mervyn for such a long time and rung with him on numerous occasions, now that he has retired from ringing I wanted to put together an account of his ringing career. I have heard him talk with fond affection, particularly over a glass of ale, about the people he has rung with and the situations which he has experienced, that this struck me as being too important an opportunity to miss. So, on the afternoon of Wednesday 8th September 2021, I set off and went to see him in his bungalow in Whipton, Exeter, where he lives with his wife Angela.

When I arrived at his bungalow I was warmly welcomed by Mervyn and Angela. Sadly, neither of them is in good health, yet for all that they appeared remarkably cheerful. On the coffee table in the living room were two small books which he showed me. One, Hymns Ancient and Modern and the other, The Book of Common Prayer. Inside Hymns Ancient and Modern was an entry made by Miss Clapp the Sunday School Teacher - "To Mervyn, From C. Clapp. Sunday School January 1956." The other contained an entry made by the Bishop of Plymouth - "On the occasion of his Confirmation in the church of St. James Avonwick on Sunday 26th April 1958. Easter 2."

His ringing career began in 1954 when he was 10 years old at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Diptford, a small village situated in the heart of South Devon. The church has a peal of six bells with a ground floor ring and a tenor weighing just over 11 cwt.; the ideal place in which to learn to ring.

Like many of us who were born in the 1940s, he attended Sunday School and he was a member of the church choir. Interestingly the organist at the time was Miss Ciceley Clapp, who was also the Sunday School Teacher. Remarkably in 1988 Miss Clapp had served as Diptford's organist for 70 years! She also ran the village Post Office. Mervyn graduated from choir boy to bellringer and at the time there were several other young people interested in learning how to ring. They were Mervyn's sister Janet, Elizabeth and Michael Watts, Brian and Keith Wollington, Alan Hodge, and Sylvia Stone, daughter of Tower Captain Les, who taught them; there was a separate practice night for the learners. Mervyn learnt to ring on the third bell. Apparently, Les Stone was musically inclined; he was not only a very good treble ringer with a keen ear, but also a self taught violinist. Mervyn remembers some of the more experienced ringers at Diptford being Albert (Bill) Blake, John Summers and Norman Preston. The senior team always strived to achieve a high standard of ringing and used to compete at ringing competitions.

Under Les Stone Diptford had a team of handbell ringers too which Mervyn joined. He recalls going round to farms and houses in and around the village playing the handbells. The influence of Les Stone was to prove invaluable later in life.



Having spent his formative years at Diptford, in 1959 the family moved to Collaton St. Mary where he and his sister Janet then joined the Collaton team. At the time the team consisted of John Came (father of Stephen), Paul Bright, Ken and Wally Lewis, Derek, Roger, and Jim Tucker.

In the early 1960s he moved to Paignton and, by chance, into a house right opposite St. John the Baptist, Church, where John Kelly (senior) BEM, was the Tower Captain. John's wife Jenny was also a member of the team. It was at Paignton that he took up handbell ringing once more. John Kelly had formed an active group of handbell ringers and Mervyn

was invited to join. The group raised funds for the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust, a charity situated at Ivybridge which exists to enrich the lives of young adults with a range of disabilities. John Kelly's handbell ringers first began supporting the charity as long ago as 1955.

From Paignton came a move to Axminster where he got married in 1964. It wasn't long after moving to the town that he returned to ringing once more and was there for the next fifteen years. During this time he also rang at neighbouring Musbury and Uplyme. Whilst at Axminster he discovered a set of handbells lying dormant in a box in the tower. His previous experience at handbell ringing began to kick in; he quickly dusted the bells off and formed a team by successfully appealing to the local youth club for members. It wasn't long before young people came forward to learn. He arranged for practice sessions to take place in the skittle alley of The Millway Inn (since demolished) which was situated nearby. The handbell team, that Mervyn had gathered around him, continued to practice and give performances long after he had left Axminster. At one time the team even gave a performance at the International Handbell Concert in the Great Hall of Exeter University.

The early 1980s brought a move from Axminster to the Village of Kennford. Quite by chance he then joined the Kenn ringers. This came about during a harvest supper held in the Village Hall. A casual conversation at the supper between Mervyn, and Ken Raddenbury, who was the Vice-Captain at Kenn, led to him being invited to join the Kenn team. Soon after joining the team his interest in handbell ringing was rekindled again when he discovered another set of handbells, lying dormant in a wooden box under the steps leading into the ringing chamber. It was a question of déjà vu. Having checked the bells over he taught his wife Angela, her daughter Barbara and Barbara's boyfriend Mark (who later become her husband). Teaching and practising on the handbells took place in the living room of their house at Kennford.

At Kenn he rang the fourth bell, journeying out regularly from his home at Exwick, Exeter, where he had moved to in 1986.

Mervyn Langdon - continued from page 5

The ringers at the time were Reg Staddon (Tower Captain), Ken Raddenbury (Vice-Captain), Pete Verney who rang the tenor, Marcus Tape, Roy Stickling, Dave Bennett, Alan Durman, Michael Adams, Scott and Colin Adams. The team was joined

from time-to-time by Frank Bye and Jereme Darke. With the support and encouragement of Ken Raddenbury, Mervyn taught his son Carl to ring. Carl made such progress that he later went on to ring the treble and to lead the team in several competitions. Mervyn fondly recalled his time spent ringing at Kenn and how successful the team was. The pinnacle was reached when the team won the Oak Cup at Meavy on 22nd August 1994. The ringers were 1 - C. Bergfeld, 2 - S. Adams, 3 - K. Raddenbury, 4 - C. Adams, 5 - M. Langdon, and 6 - F. Bye.

Three years later on 24th May 1997 Kenn came second in the Devon Association Six-bell Final at Swimbridge. The ringers were 1 - C. Bergfeld, 2 - C. Adams, 3 - K. Raddenbury, 4 - M. Langdon, 5 - S. Adams, and 6 - J. Darke.

With the amalgamation of St. Andrew's Kenn with St. Martin's at Exminster in the early 1980s, a United Benefice was formed. Colin Adams was invited by the Reverend John Good to become Tower Captain at Exminster. Exminster ringers were supported by some of the ringers from Kenn and later Mervyn came and joined them. This provided an opportunity for the ringers to extend their skills by ringing on Exminster's eight bells.

On one occasion it was arranged for Mervyn to provide handbell ringing at Exminster's Annual Dinner which took place in the Stowey Arms, Exminster. After a while two new recruits, Julie Phillips and Beryl Mudge both friends of Mervyn's wife Angela, joined the team. For a couple of years, the team was invited into the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Wonford at Christmas to ring the handbells on certain selected wards.

After ringing at Kenn for such a long time, Mervyn joined the Chagford team when Julia (Auntie) Endacott was in charge and

he rang there for approximately twenty years. He fondly recalls going on Chagford's outings which he said were always well organised and such good fun. At the same time Exeter St. Petrock's, under the captaincy of the late David Trist, began to

take shape and enter ringing competitions and Mervyn was invited to join. He rang the fourth in a team which mainly consisted of David Trist, Stephanie Brown, Ryan Brodie, Scott Adams and Hilary Beresford. Exeter St. Petrock's competed in many six bell competitions across the county. Sadly David Trist died suddenly in April 2015.

He was a member of the Wednesday Evening Ringers which was organised by Scott Adams. The group recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Again, he spoke enthusiastically about all the towers at which he had rung

and the excitement of being part of a skilled group of ringers, capable of ringing not only six - and eight bell peals of any weight, but also those of ten and twelve bells.

We were coming to the end, and I just wanted to know if he has any favourite Devon peals. He thought for a moment, and said it was too difficult a question to answer given the number of really good peals that are around, but he named the two Tiverton peals, the six at Paul's and the eight at St. Peter's as his favourites.

After being introduced to ringing sixty four years ago in the tiny village of Diptford he could never have imagined where ringing would take him and the pleasure it would provide. Unfortunately, it all came to an abrupt end in 2018. Earlier, he had lost a great friend when fellow ringer Chris Clayton, Tower Captain at Sampford Courtenay, died in 2014, but for all that he has managed to keep in touch with everyone and during the short period that I was with him he was in good spirits. He was as happy to reminisce as I was to listen.

Thank you Mervyn, and Angela, for your kind hospitality.

Colin Adams



Kenn band in 1997

*Rear L-R Colin Adams, Wally Crump, Mervyn Langdon, Frank Bye
Front L-R Ken Raddenbury, Scott Adams, Carl Bergfeld, Jereme Darke*

Carol Service 2021



Unfortunately, it has been decided that there will be no live Carol Service this year due to continued uncertainties over Covid but it will as last year be available via zoom. Further details will be circulated.

Ian Avery

Ringkly Ringers Revival

On August 11th 2021 the Dedicated to Call Change Ringing Ringkly Ringers met for their first Monthly Meeting since March 2020s Covid Lockdown.

Twenty Six members gathered at Alwington Church in North Devon at 10 am. Coffee and biscuits were provided in the Church Hall, and while their experiences during all the Covid restrictions were shared, a welcome return to ringing the bells together was the highlight, before moving on to Littleham Church for more ringing. An excellent carvery lunch was then enjoyed by all in the Crealock Arms where more reminiscing occurred.

On September 8th the Ringkly again met, first at Sandford, before moving on to the Church of the Holy Cross in Crediton, to ring the 12 bells. Very satisfactory round ringing on the 12 bells was accomplished before some other peals on the back 8 and the front



Alwington church, photo: David Spender

6 were enjoyed by all. Lunch was taken at the Red Deer before all made their homeward journeys to all parts of Devon, North, South, and Mid.

Venues for the rest of 2021, all Wednesdays are;

October 13th Great Torrington at 10 a.m. followed by Buckland Brewer.

November 10th Exminster at 10 a.m. with Powderham after.

December 8th Colebrooke at 10 a.m. and then Bow.

Should you want more information please email John Staddon

on littleanchorlovers@gmail.com or call 07971832180.

John Staddon

Harberton's bells ring out to celebrate the church clock chiming again

A legacy had been left for the clock to be repaired and improved and as a result it has now been operating since March 2021.

On 4 September 2021 there was a late summer, early evening celebration. Short messages of thanks were given in the garden of Matt White's house where further fund raising took place and from where there is a spectacular view of the church clock. The house is situated within easy hearing-range of the bells that were ringing from 6.10pm adding to the celebrations.

The ringers were let into the ringing chamber by Peter Patrick, acting in Jim and Geraldine Hoddinott's absence. All three have been highly supportive to Harberton church with Peter and Jim being part of a team of volunteers working on the churchyard and the exterior of the church. The ringers were: Graham Sharland, Mark Pring, Suzanne Driscoll, Michael Webster, John Lagdon and William Carew.

St Andrew's Church has a lofty tower at the west end that holds a peal of six bells. These were cast in 1762 by Thomas Bilbie of Collompton, and were re-hung in 1896. There is



Photo: Douglas Young, DevonChurchLand

evidence that as early as 1553 the church possessed a peal of four bells.

The tower clock was given in 1898 by Sir Robert Harvey of Dundridge. It has two exterior faces on the South and West sides of the tower. This unusual arrangement was installed so that the time could not be seen by the rival landowner at Tristford, to the North.

The first stage of the work in the tower is now complete. The clock is functioning again, and the clock chamber floor has been made safe.

There is more to be done but progress is ongoing.

During lockdown Harberton Church Community Fund, a registered charity, had been planning and raising funds to support the beautiful and outstanding church, a Grade 1 listed building. With the relaxations of lockdown local gardens had been open to the public with cream teas provided, along with a local craft exhibition. Over £3,000 had been raised for the church.

For more information, please see www.harbertonccf.org.uk.

Michael Webster



Devon Association of Ringers Affiliation Fee Reminder

Hello everyone. I hope you are safe and well.

Thank you so much to everyone who has paid their tower affiliation fee for 2021 - 2022, and to those who paid to receive individual copies of Devon Calls.

This year has been hard going with little or no ringing. Unfortunately the association has not been able to support you as we would like to have with training workshops, maintenance workshops, splicing workshops etc. However, thanks to the Devon Calls Team and to all of you who have submitted articles, Devon Calls has been able to carry on as normal. If you paid your tower affiliation fee or for an individual subscription we hope you received your copies - if you didn't please let me know.

Anyone can contact a Committee Member and ask for help, [details on the website at devonbells.co.uk] or share ideas that may help others, that's what being a member of the association is about, to get help and support and to be a part of something special. You can also write an article for Devon Calls, which will always be gratefully received.

The £15 affiliation fee for 2021 -2022 is due to be paid no later than the AGM on 13th November 2021. I would prefer before the day of meeting as it makes life easier for all concerned.

Please post your fee to me, cheques should be payable to **DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS**. Please also confirm your name, address and tower name, so that I can ensure I have the correct details for Devon Calls distribution.

Your cheque and details should be sent to;

Mrs C Ley, Fort House, Alexandra Road, Barnstaple, DEVON, EX32 8FD.

You can also pay by bacs at NatWest; Named Devon Association of Ringers

Sort Code 53-50-28 Account Number 09202153

If you use "bacs", please put tower name on the payment sent, so I will know which tower has been affiliated when I receive the monthly bank statement. Please also send me an email at hon-treasurer@devonbells.co.uk saying when you paid and to confirm your address to which Devon Calls will be sent.

If you wish to receive your own personal copy of Devon Calls please send a cheque for £10 with your details to me at the above address.

Please also, to conform to the DAR Rules and Constitution, include a list of your tower ringers with your affiliation fee, as is required in Rule 2.1 of the Rules. The Committee realises and accepts that many ringers ring in more than one tower. Do please however, list all who are ringers in your tower. It would also be useful to know the number of learners you have, but please do not identify them by name. This would help to indicate future trends for ringing throughout Devon.

Best wishes, Chris Ley, Treasurer and Past President.

Alfie Carew



Congratulations to Will and Kate Carew on the birth of their son Alfie Colin. Alfie was born on 9th July 2021 weighing 6lb 11oz. We wish the family well and look forward to seeing Alfie grow and develop, even perhaps one day becoming a ringer, just like his parents.

Colin Adams

Eulogy given by Tower Captain George Mudge at the funeral service of fellow ringer George Boucher at St. Eustachius Church, Tavistock, on Thursday 12th August 2021

George Boucher died on 22nd July 2021 aged 91. He had been a loyal member of our band at St. Eustachius, Tavistock for nearly 50 years. We rang half muffled peals before the service with all the ringers that knew George so well taking part.

I first met George at ringing competitions in the 1960's. He was ringing for Lamerton with Geoff Hill, Barry Osborne and Willy Dawe, et al. At the time George was Church Warden at Lamerton.

After moving to Tavistock he started ringing at St Eustachius and in 1972 he was made Tower Captain. He remained in post for approximately 10 years. He was, as you would expect, very welcoming to any new or visiting ringer. During that time, and later when Robin Burnham was Captain, the team rang in six- and eight-bell competitions all around the county and took part in ringing outings all over the country.

When he retired from the RAC he worked part time for us repairing sheep shearing machines and doing anything we needed help with, he was very versatile and could turn his hand to anything. He came with me to a number of shows including the Royal Show at Stoneleigh. I also remember George and one of my boys selling equipment at a sheep event somewhere north of Scots Gap Yorkshire. As the years went by he came out less often, but I knew I could always ring him to do little jobs like taking parts to Plymouth or picking up bearings or delivering something that someone needed in a hurry. It was a bit extreme one day when I rang George and said, "I have a little job for you. Can you deliver two shearing trailers to Spain for us please?" We loaded one on top of the other then George, his wife Reta with daughter-in-law Jill, set off for Spain. On return some days later George said, "It was quite a long way you know, the car got a bit hot going up through the Pyrenees", but as with everything George achieved his objective.

Two years ago, my son Andrew and I qualified to represent England at the World Championships Sheep Shearing event which was held in France. I drove to the south of France to get some practice in March and to help teach one of the French Team of shearers. I then decided to travel to Spain, and I met the man to whom George had delivered the trailers approximately twenty-five years previously and found that he is still using them today!

George was a lesson to us all; he would do anything for anyone if humanly possible. They always say, "If you want something done ask a busy person" and it is largely true.

In 1997 I had the idea of augmenting our bells at Tavistock from eight to ten to celebrate the Millennium. My late wife



Doreen designed sweatshirts, T shirts, Christmas cards, notelets, prints of the Church and all manner of things to raise money to get our bells done. George and Doreen were the ones that did most of the work selling the merchandise to raise our share of the money needed.

We arranged an outing in 1999 to Loughborough to see the new bells being cast. It was a great trip with George, his wife Reta, Robin Burnham and all our ringers and families, and choir members. John Rawlings, our Vicar, joined us as well as some members of the congregation. We saw the bells cast, rang at the foundry's bell tower and also at Loughborough Parish Church and rang at three other towers on the way home. It was a very memorable outing.

Also in 1999 George was proud to have been a member of our band of Sunday Service Ringers that won the Devon 8-bell competition for the first time, when it was held at Barnstaple Parish Church. At that time Tavistock were probably the only team to have competed in the event every year since it started in 1927, and it was the first time Tavistock had won. George was a life-long call-change ringer but more than happy to ring the tenor behind for methods and he also learnt how to hunt the treble.

George was a lifetime member of the Devon Association of Ringers and in later years he also joined the Guild of Devonshire Ringers. He had the honour of being made President of the Devon Association in 2005/2006.

Many times, I have rung George to say, "There are visitors coming at 2.30 p.m. can you open up the tower please?" He would always oblige if at all possible.

George rang up until a few years ago and said, "I would like to come up to ring but I cannot leave Reta for too long".

He will be sadly missed by his wife Reta, sons Brian and Roger, and all of us who knew him. We are all better off for having known George and I call it a great honour to have been one of his many friends.

Life is for living and George lived it to the full. I never heard him moan or complain and he was an inspiration to us all. Do what you can when you can, you may not get the opportunity again. We can truly say - WELL DONE GEORGE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

He was a true CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN. May he rest in peace.

George Mudge

Eulogy given by Geoff Hill at the Memorial Service to the late Robin Burnham at St Eustachius Church, Tavistock on Saturday 3rd July 2021

I have been asked by the family to say a few words and I feel honoured to be able to pay tribute to Robin.

It's funny how time goes by but I count myself very fortunate in having known him for a long time. Robin's early years were spent at Dartmouth and his love of the sea and marine knowledge was well known, and I'm sure many of you know about his connection with this much more than I do. He was a perfectionist as a rope chandler and, very much connected with this, I had the pleasure of witnessing his talents through our shared interest in church bell ringing.

There are three rings of bells at Dartmouth – St. Petrox at the Castle, Townstal and the superb octave at St. Saviour. Robin was very keen to learn and received his lessons at St. Saviour's. The late Bob Middleton was the tower captain and the team took part in a few call-change competitions. It was not long before Robin rang in the team. The main priority though was service ringing, and he was a very loyal member of the band. At the time St. Petrox had an enthusiastic group who were very keen to take part in call-change festivals and he was asked to ring with them!! As with his job Robin was also a perfectionist in his rope handling and a superb ringer when it came to good "striking." It is no wonder his team had great success in winning a few of the many competitions in which they took part. His memory was good and he reminded me of their success at Stoke Fleming many years ago. Lamerton was ringing there as well and we didn't do so well. No wonder he chose to remind me again and again!!!

Ringers of his calibre are few and far between and his move to live and ring at Tavistock was for us triumphantly overwhelming. His loss from Dartmouth must have been devastating. After a while Robin took over as Tower Captain from George Boucher, with his wife Pauline and their two children Zara and Jeremy becoming new members of the team, all three having been taught by him. This proved to be a great asset to the Tavistock team and the glorious ring of bells at St. Eustachius. The tower has always been well known for its good belfry maintenance and Robin continued with this. The clappers were re-bushed whilst he was at the helm. After refurbishment at Loughborough, they were returned to the tower and refitted by one of Taylor's Bellhangers. Meticulous though they are, the company had overlooked providing a hoist to haul the clappers back into the belfry ninety feet above! It was Robin who came to the rescue. He made a hoist and the superb piece of kit which he made solved the problem. So impressed was the bellhanger rumour had it that he offered Robin a job!!

Tavistock tower has been affiliated to The Devon Association of Ringers since its formation in 1925; something of which



Robin was very proud. The team has always supported the Association. One of the highlights for the family was when all four of them rang in an 8-bell competition at Buckland Monachorum, with Robin as Tower Captain. The certificate still hangs in the tower. I remember once, when he was incapacitated and no longer able to ring, removing it from the tower and taking to his home for him to see and reflect upon. The Devon Association 8-bell Competition took place at the church of St. Peter and St. Mary's Barnstaple in April 1999. For the first time in seventy years Tavistock were the winners and were awarded The Ross Shield and First Certificate – what an honour!! Robin rang the tenor and weighing a ton it really takes some moving in the rise of the peal. The judges' comments at the close were "BEST TENOR OF THE DAY."

His wife Pauline's untimely death had a profound effect on him, but life must go on and after some time Robin met Sue. To make her a good ringer he taught her himself. Both Robin and Sue enjoyed many ringers' outings together, including ours at Lamerton. They travelled all over the country on the week-long Devon Ringers trips and were also members of the famous "Rinkleys."

Gradually Robin's health issues became more of a problem but, still passionate about bellringing, he began judging at ringing competitions. Anyone who had the pleasure of ringing with Robin could never question his ability as a ringing adjudicator. His results were as good as his ringing had ever been – PERFECT. Sadly this activity also had to come to an end, but he still maintained his interest in bellringing. He was still passionate about the fact that church bells should be kept ringing and recently made a very generous donation to the Bell Restoration Fund at Milton Abbot.

After morning service at Tavistock, I had the habit of dropping in to see Robin on my way home to Lamerton and he and Sue always made me feel welcome. I just loved sitting down chatting to him and could quite easily spend a good hour doing so. Sadly lockdown prevented me from continuing this but fortunately we were able to keep in touch by telephone; virtually until the end of his life. It's difficult to draw a line under anything and it would be so easy to go on.

Other people will come along and prove to be just as good ringers as Robin, but there was, and remains, only one Robin Burnham. It is not just at Tavistock where his absence will be felt, and bellringing as a whole will be much poorer for his loss.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Raymond White

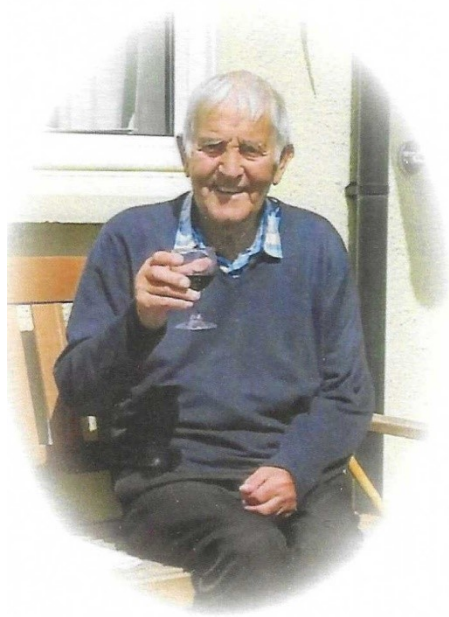
2nd May 1938 – 5th July 2021

Ray started ringing in 1948 at High Bray. Ringing there was suspended in 1964, and shortly after the Tower was closed. In 2011, following lottery funding, the bells were restored and he recommenced his hobby and his role as Tower Captain.

He took a lead in the tower restoration project when the bells were lowered and sent off to Loughborough to be overhauled and retuned, not having been rung for 47 years. After completion of the restoration project he then went about rallying support from many people in the village, who had never attempted the art before, to give ringing a go.

He was pleased when the team rang for his wife, Ruby, and his Ruby Wedding anniversary. The last time the bells were rung was for their wedding, prior to the tower's closure.

He was a true Devonian who was born and raised in Brayford and then married Ruby. The couple have two daughters Rachel and Sarah, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He thoroughly loved living in the village and the lifestyle that went with it.



Ray contributed so much to the village, having served as Church Warden for many years as well as taking on the role of caretaker of the Village Hall from 1962, and acting as a committee member for some time. He worked quietly behind the scenes to make sure everything was in place. He liked things to be done his way and woe betide you if you got it wrong!

Ray was a highly respected person in the village, not only through his commitment to the church but also for keeping the village tidy, gritting the roads, and organising the annual Village Day which incorporates the Duck Race to raise funds for the benefit of the village.

He will be greatly missed.

Russell Burrows




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