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Devon Calls

Mid 2021

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Inside this issue

Cornworthy	2
Editorial	3
Milton Abbot	4
Pilton	5
Wednesday Night Ringers	6
DCBRF	7
Martin Dodd	8
Des May	8
Horace Clements	9

St. Lawrence Church Bigbury

According to Naylor, G. A. the church was built in the 12th Century and dedicated to St. Lawrence. The tower is mainly of the 13th Century and consists of three stages with a slightly overhanging embattled parapet (stuccoed); lancet top windows and diagonal buttresses to the base of the top stage. A plain equilateral arch sits North, South and West and the stone spire is octagonal with lights in alternate faces.

The church was rebuilt in 1672 -73 following a lightning strike which caused a severe fire. The bulk of the fittings and some of the fabric of the earlier building were fortunately preserved. The tower and spire were restored.

The building originally consisted of a Chancel, Nave and Tower, and the Lord of the Manor was the Knightly family of *de Bikebury*, who gave their name to the parish-Bigbury. The last male representative of this family was killed in a duel at Morley Bridge, near



Photo - John Salmon

Woodleigh, and the North aisle of the Church is said to have been added by his two daughters in memory of their slain father. They are commemorated by two graceful brasses in the South transept which must be more than 500 years old.

The tower contains a peal of six bells with a tenor weighing just over 7cwt in the key of G. According to the late Revd. Prebendary John J. M. Scott, "Three bells are listed in the Inventory of 1553. Pennington cast five bells for the church in 1788 (presumably using metal taken from the original

three bells). Church records show that in 1879 the five bells were re-hung and a sixth one added cast by Warner's of Cripplegate, London. In 1908 Aggett of Chagford re-hung the bells placing the back three heavier bells above the front three on a new iron frame."

This arrangement later proved to be wrong; the lighter front bells should have been hung above the heavier back bells. In 1960 the six bells were tuned, quarter turned and re-hung

COPY for "DEVON CALLS" is always welcome and we rely on you to submit articles
Deadline for next edition - 19th September 2021

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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Bigbury - continued from page 1



The bells and ringers 1960/61

L-R Harry Bardens, Harry Lob, Cyril Radford, Bill Burgoyne, Tiny Bricknell, Tom Hollett

in a new two tier steel frame with all new timber work. This time the front four bells were hung above the two heavier back bells. According to Harry Bardens the Tower Captain, "The sound proofing took a bit of sorting out as the two back bells drowned the sound of the front bells." The work to re-hang the bells was carried out by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough at a cost of £1,300. The fund to meet the cost of the work was opened by Mrs. B.J. Hoopell marking the 54th year of her husband's tenure of office as Treasurer and People's Warden. The bells were rededicated by the Bishop of Plymouth at a service held on Saturday 28th January 1961. This was immediately followed by a ringing competition in which twelve teams were invited to compete. Refreshments were provided by the local ladies in the Memorial Hall.

The Rector, Revd. F.E. Davies, writing in the Woodleigh Deanery Monthly Magazine in January 1961 said, "The bells are provided not merely for the pleasure of people hearing them. The ringers are not just engaged in a pleasant hobby. Their sound is a call to everyone to come and worship God in His holy temple."

The church tower being located so close to the coast has meant that, over the years, salt air has caused corrosion to the iron frame and fittings, so much so that the whole structure is now considered to be unsafe. The bells at Bigbury have been silent for at least 14 years. It was on 18th April 2007 when Harry Bardens received the following message from Revd. John Elliot who was the Rector at the time. The message read "We have a real problem here. The Diocese advised us last week that we should close the tower in the light of our quinquennial problems." The message did not specify what the "problems" were.

The "quinquennial problems" cast doubt on how long it would be before Bigbury's bells ring out once more? How nice it would be if they were able to be rung when the Devon Association of Ringers celebrates its Centenary in 2025.

I would like to thank Harry Bardens, Tower Captain at Bigbury for his help in compiling this account.

Colin Adams

Reference:

Naylor, G, A. *Church Crawler's Journal. A short history of St Lawrence Church, Bigbury c1934. Published by Graham Naylor. Dec.2016. <https://someolddevonchurches.wordpress.com>*

Scott, John G M. Mack, F D. Clarke, J M. *Towers & Bells of Devon, Vol.2. 2007: St. Lawrence, Bigbury. The Mint Press.*

News From Cornworthy

At last! We are back ringing for the first time since the lockdown. A very successful (and surprising!) practice ring on Thursday 20 May. Everyone delighted, including the village, to hear the bells once again. Apart from a muffled bell tolled by the Bell Captain signifying Prince Philip's death and a single bell for a joyous wedding on 4th May it has been a very "silent" time. However, to the amazement of the married couple we used a recording of the bells as they proceeded



Photo - Derek Harper

up the aisle. This was enabled by Paul ringing in with a virtual set up that is used for practice.

Before the lockdown we had been gifted with a fine set of hand bells so the team are looking forward to getting to grips with those, too!

Paul Hunt

Editorial

I hope that the magazine has played a part in enabling us all to be kept together during the pandemic and subsequent periods of lockdown. As I write we face a further delay in the easing of restrictions due to the spread of the Delta variant. On Monday 14th June the government announced a 4-week pause at Step 3 meaning that plans to “remove all legal limits on social contact” in England have been put back until 19th July at the earliest – subject to review.

One of the restrictions to remain in place is the Rule of Six which means “up to six people or two households can meet indoors.” NOTE: Six is still the maximum even if some are the same household, so not five unconnected, plus a household. For further information please see the Central Council’s “Summary Ringing Guidance (England) Version 1.03 published 17th June 2021.”

Some towers, in keeping with the Central Council’s guidelines, have managed to continue ringing during the pandemic. A few of those towers featured in the Early (Spring) 2021 edition of the magazine.

One tower that has done remarkably well in this respect is at St. Michael the Archangel, Chagford. Tower Captain Jonathan Bint and his 18 year old daughter Holly featured on Radio 4’s “Sunday” programme on 20th June being interviewed by Emily Buchanan. Jon mentioned how initially during lockdown he chimed the bells each Sunday morning, sometimes playing hymns and at other times seasonal tunes which were very well received. He chimed the bells to mark VE Day on 8th May 2020 and for the Duke of Edinburgh’s funeral on 17th April 2021. During the third lockdown, with help from Holly and three other members of his family (wife Ruth and sons Joe and Gabriel), they were able to ring five bells. Speaking on the programme, Holly said that during lockdown the town became something like a ghost town. When the bells were rung the local people said how grateful they were for the return of the sound of the bells. Congratulations Jon and Holly, you both came across very well.

Hopefully, the 19th July will signal a return to ringing and enable us all to become reunited once more. Let’s hope also that the local people will welcome the sound of the bells being rung as they have done at Chagford, given that in some quarters the bells have been silent for 18 months. Even with the bells silent one local resident living very close to the church at Kenton has made it known that he objects to the sound of the church clock chiming each quarter and on the hour. He has reported the matter to Environmental Health who, it seems, are investigating. What the outcome will be remains to be seen, but the clock which has been heard chiming out over the village since 1910; may be silenced. All as result of a complaint made by one person who had decided to purchase a house next to a church! If the complaint is upheld I think we can all guess what next might be in his sights!

My son Scott came across an excellent web site recently depicting some of Devon’s churches with supporting text. Scott suggested that I should get in touch with the owner to ask if he would be willing for the photos to be used in Devon Calls. I have done so and I’m pleased to say permission has been given, providing we acknowledge the source. We haven’t used any of the photos in this edition but there will be occasions in the future when we will. Meanwhile, if you would like a preview of the kind of material which the owner, Douglas, has produced go to <https://devonchurchland.co.uk>

As most people know, Robin Burnham died at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth on 25th December 2020. Robin was a keen and dedicated ringer up until the time that ill health prevented him from continuing. I am trying to put together an account of Robin’s ringing career as an obituary to feature in Devon Calls, even though he passed away just over six months ago. I know that Robin once rang at Dartmouth St. Saviour and latterly at St. Eustachius, Tavistock and, although I had known him for many years, there are gaps in my knowledge. I am sure there are people around who knew Robin far better than me. If they would care to get in touch with further information I would be grateful. Robin did so much for ringing and, in view of his contribution, I don’t want the year to pass without his obituary featuring in Devon Calls.

My thanks go to the anonymous person who kindly sent me an article from The Guardian newspaper dated 11th May 2021 with the title “Ringing the changes” by Hettie O’Brien. It was a fascinating account about the history of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, the recent interests in the site expressed by large financial institutions, the possibility of converting the premises into a boutique hotel and the campaign to preserve the site. Oh to be able to write in that style. Hettie has written a detailed account which is compelling reading for anyone interested in the fate of the foundry which, incidentally, had been casting bells since 1570. It is a valuable article and one which I have archived.

My grateful thanks to those who have taken the trouble to submit articles for this edition. Thanks also to Elinor and Colin, our two proof-readers, for the time and effort which they have spent carefully reading the articles and making constructive comments, as well as correcting my errors! Thank you also to James, our Technical Editor, for carefully setting out the pages and ensuring that the magazine is published on time.

Finally, thank you to Chris our Treasurer for regularly journeying down to Crediton each time; making it easier for me to hand the magazines over. Also for the work which she and her husband Tony does by packaging and posting Devon Calls. I feel I am privileged to head such a dedicated team of people.

Colin Adams

A Reminder from our Honorary Treasurer

Please can you remember that your tower affiliation fees and any Devon Calls individual subscriptions are due by the end of October 2021. Thank you!

Milton Abbot

We thought you would like to see the excellent leaflet that has been produced by the Milton Abbot ringers to help with their appeal...

Colin Adams

Please tear off and send to :

Milton Abbot Bells Appeal
The Vicarage, The Parade,
Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0NZ

Data protection: We guarantee not to share your information with any other organisations. We would like to keep you informed about the Bell Restoration Project. If you would prefer not to receive any updates please tick this box. ☐

Other Ways To Donate:

- Anonymous donations can be made.
- Payment can be made direct to 'Taylors of Loughborough'.
- Sponsorship of specific items can be arranged.
- BACS to "Milton Abbot with Dunterton PCC" sort code - 30-98-46 a/c no. - 00174550
- <https://justgiving.com/campaign/mabells>
- Text MABELLS to 70085 to donate £5.
- Practical and labour help can be offered.

To discuss any of these options, or for more information please contact

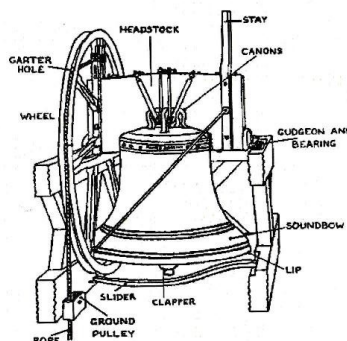
Rev. Andy Atkins
Tel. 01822 870298
Email. vicar@southtamar.church

To keep up to date with our progress and for more information please visit our website:

<https://www.southtamar.church/milton-abbot-bells/>

Sponsorship: We are now offering sponsorship of the bell frame and other items as illustrated. If you would like further information on this, please contact Rev. Atkins. Donations to the frame, headstocks and wheels will be acknowledged on a brass plaque.

Frame £1,000 x 17
Stay £60 x 6
Ropes £195 x 6
Roller Box £295 x 6
Sliders £48 x 6
Runner Board £115 x 6
Bearings £286 x 12
Headstocks £1,384 x 6
Restored Wheels £496 x 6
Clappers & Crown Staples £445 x 6
Floor Bosses £39 x 6
Salley jugs £58 x 6

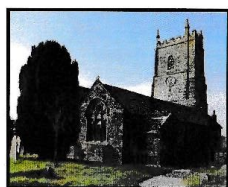


Milton Abbot Church Bell Restoration Project



The Church of
St. Constantine and
St. Aegidius, Milton Abbot

13 cwt Tenor



Your Help is Needed

For centuries the peal of St. Constantine and St. Aegidius bells has been part of the rural heritage of Milton Abbot and its

surrounding villages, uniting our local parishes in faith, solidarity and hope.

Sounding joyfully across the Tamar valley, for worship, celebration and remembrance; for many people the bells commemorate important milestones in their lives.

A deep rooted community focal point, our bells provide an opportunity for inclusive fellowship and learning ancient skills. Bell ringers of all ages have come to Milton Abbot, having fun and making music in our rural surroundings.

Sadly, essential repair work to the bells have silenced their music.

Why Are We Doing This: After an inspection in 2016, it was discovered that the bell frame was starting to suffer from rot and losing its structural integrity. It was also found that the general condition of the moving parts especially the plain bearings, headstocks, pulleys and wheels are in need of urgent replacement to ensure that the ringing tradition in Milton Abbot is able to continue. The oak frame is sadly beyond economic repair and a new frame will be required, along with new fixtures and fittings. Those who have rung the bells before will know how difficult they have become to ring.

What Are We Doing: After lengthy consultation and deliberation, the Parochial Church Council have agreed to re-hang the existing bells within a new bell frame.

John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, have been tasked to supply a new steel bell frame for our existing 6 bells. New canon-retaining headstocks will be manufactured for each bell. New rims will be manufactured for the wheels, along with new pulley assemblies. New clapper and crown staples will be fitted to each bell and each will be re-tuned.

The cost of these most urgent works is :
£97,246 inc vat

What We Still Need: We have paid our first payment of £30,139 thanks to donations, legacies and fundraising. We are very grateful to those who have supported us so far.

We are asking for your help and prayer in contributing to the remaining costs of the work. Our goal is to have completed the restoration project by the end of 2022, **we now only need £67,107 to complete our project.**

What Will Your Help Achieve: Your help will ensure that the bells of Milton Abbot are restored and then sustained for future generations. Donations of all sizes are welcomed and can be posted to the address on the reverse.

There are also many other ways to help. Spread the word to your friends and family, employers and organisations with which you are involved. They may be able to help with donations and fundraising. You may also be able to help by organizing a fundraising event. Please do get in touch.

Charity Gift Aid Declaration

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ _____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

Name of Charity: Milton Abbot PCC

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____

Surname _____

Full Home address _____

Postcode _____ Date _____

Please notify the charity if you:

- want to cancel this declaration.
- change your name or home address.
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please send or drop in your donations to:

Rev. Andy Atkins, The Vicarage, The Parade, Milton Abbot Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0NZ

Cheques should be made payable to: 'Milton Abbot PCC'

Many thanks from the Church PCC.

If donations exceed the amount required the balance will be transferred to the PCC general fund. If insufficient funds are raised then only immediate essential works will be carried out to enable ringing to continue in the short term.

The Bells of St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Pilton

We have 8 bells, and they are known throughout the country as a good quality heavy eight. As well as our own team, which has had very healthy numbers for some time now, and like most Towers in Devon, guests from all over the country come to ring them.

Our Bell Captain, Ron Kenwood, has always inspected the bells and was in the team that repainted the Bell Frame some years ago. We don't have to grease the bearings as we have been told they're sealed. We've broken the odd stay over the years but not much else, par for the course from what I understand.

Our story started on a cold Tuesday practice night back in 2018 when our ringing was brought to an abrupt halt by a mighty crash above our heads. We soon found that the clapper on the No 6 Bell had fallen out and struck the ceiling above our heads.

We engaged Nicholson Engineering to replace the clapper and give all the bells a once-over to ensure none of the others had a faulty clapper or any other potential hazard.

Nicholson Engineering repaired the clapper and gave us a report which basically said that all needed to be refurbished having not been thoroughly inspected nor overhauled since 1969. The total estimate was approximately £28,000 + VAT.

We sought advice on the report from one of our Ringers who is an Architect with specialist knowledge of ancient buildings. He indicated that it was a very thorough and well written report, Nicholson Engineering being a well-respected company with a great reputation. Our next question was HOW were we going to pay for it?

We started by setting up a fund and a plan for raising the necessary monies which included:

1. increasing practice night fees to £1 per Ringer,
2. each Ringer donating their Wedding fees to the fund,
3. several Ringers carrying out Sponsored events,
4. seeking help from North Devon District Council, Devon County Council and Pilton United Charities,
5. contacting the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund,
6. writing articles about the "Sound of Pilton" with requests for donations in all our local newspapers, including the Church magazine,



Photo - Mike Searle



L-R Ian Hasam, Mike Snell, Tony Featherstone, Ron Kenwood

7. inviting all donors to use Gift Aid when appropriate.

We were successful with all these initiatives. We found that the articles encouraged a lot of local people to donate various amounts. One local resident who loves the bells, but doesn't ring, gave a considerable amount and offered more if required providing his identity was not revealed. All in all, eventually we managed to raise the required amount.

We found that we had to pay the VAT and then claim it back, which potentially would have caused cash-flow problems. To overcome this Nicholson Engineering agreed that their fee could be paid in three instalments. This approach enabled us to reclaim the VAT at each stage. This, with a little help from another anonymous supporter who lent us money to ensure our account didn't go into the red, helped us get the

project over the line. It was a very successful way of ensuring that we could afford to get the work carried out.

Two of our Ringers, Ron Kenwood and Mike Snell, also volunteered to assist Ian Hasam, the professional bell hanger, undertake the refurbishment with some help from Steve Parker (Captain of Goodleigh) and Tony Featherstone (Pilton Secretary). This assistance was part of the contract with Nicholson Engineering resulting in a price reduction.

The work was meant to be carried out in the summer of 2020 but due to the Covid Pandemic this was not possible, and the work was postponed to Spring 2021.

Work started on 15th March 2021 and was completed on 30th April 2021.

The refurbishment of the bells has included:

- cleaning, removal of rust and repainting the Bell Ringing frame that is built into the framework of the tower,
- installation of new imperial bearings for all the bells,
- installation of a new composite clapper for the No 8 bell,
- inspection and overhaul of all the other clappers,
- removal of all the remnants of iron studs within the

Pilton - continued from page 5

bells to prevent any of the bells from cracking due to corrosion and the presence of dissimilar metals,

- turning of two bells to improve their performance and longevity,
- inspection of the Bell Ringing frame and each bell to ensure there is no excessive wear, corrosion, cracking or other damage, and
- development of maintenance schedules for the next 50 years to be implemented before each Annual General Meeting

In all this work, the most obvious thing has been the cleaning and repainting of the frame. The new bearings and clappers have greatly improved the performance of the bells, but the most important aspect of the work is invisible; the removal of the remnants of the old iron studs that were cast into the bells. Over the years the iron corrodes and, since it is cast into a different metal, it has the potential to crack the bell and cause untold damage. Our bells are now protected from this hazard.



The refurbished bells

Those of us lucky enough to have seen, heard, and rung the newly refurbished bells, which will form the Sound of Pilton for years to come, are delighted with the results and can only thank all involved.

Anthony Featherstone

Wednesday Night Ringers Celebrate Twenty Years

The Wednesday Evening Ringers Association celebrated their Twentieth Anniversary on Saturday 26th June 2021. Covid-safe Call-Change peals were rung at Tiverton S. Paul, Halberton and Huntsham with a lunch at The Globe Inn, Sampford Peverell. It was quite poignant making a return trip to Tiverton S. Paul since this was the venue of the very first Wednesday Evening Ringers meeting on Wednesday 27th June 2001. Since then, the Association has gone on to ring at some very notable rings of bells throughout the Country including the Oxford Colleges, York Minster, St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Similarly, the Association have been proud winners of the John Scott Devon 10-Bell striking contest on numerous occasions and took part in the 90th Anniversary ringing celebrations at Exeter Cathedral in 2015.



Back row L-R Nicola Bennie, William Bennie (Age 2), Stuart Bennie, Graham Sharland, Suzanne Driscoll, Steven Came, Scott Adams (Group Organiser), William Carew, Kate Carew & Alban Forster

Front row L-R Mervyn Langdon, Sam Massey & Colin Adams.

Absent from the photo are: Sue Ashton, Lee Avery, Carl Bergfeld, Robin Canniford, Jereme Darke, Elaine Grant, James Grant, Gillian Herniman, Stephen Herniman, Tony Jeffrey, Kathryn Kerslake, James Kerslake, Christine Ley, Mark Lovell, Andrew Phillips, Victoria Tucker, Fred White, Margaret White & Paul Wright.

We fondly recall past members: Christopher Clayton & John Pearce.

Scott Adams

Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund and The Association

The Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund was set up in 1972 to provide financial support to all towers in Devon with Bells. As we know there are two ringing societies within Devon with towers affiliated to one or other, with a handful affiliated to both and many to neither. I thought it would be interesting to see which towers affiliated to the Association have received grants from the DCBRF since 2010. Below are details of where, when and how much:

2010 – Chittlehampton (£550), Merton (£1,000), Sampford Courtney (£4,600)

2011 – Chittlehampton (£400), High Bray (£2,800), Plymtree (£1,400), Stoodleigh (£5,000)

2012 – Stoke Canon (£7,500)

2014 – Hatherleigh (250)

2015 – Bishopsteignton (£4,250), East Budleigh (£3,250), High Bickington (£7,000), Ipplepen (£350), Kingsteignton (£3,100)

2016 – Ashreigney (£2,500), Stoke Fleming (£7,500)

2017 – Chagford (£7,400), Combe Raleigh (£10,000), Cornworthy (£8,400)

2018 – Alphington (£3,500), East Anstey (£2,300), Exeter Cathedral (£8,500), Ugborough (£15,000)

2019 – Kingskerswell (£7,500)

2020 – Bradford (£1,750), Holbeton (£6,000)

Agreed not paid – Broadhempston (£1,000), East Anstey (£5,700), Pilton (£3,000), Shaugh Prior (£900)

This totals £115,650 given in grants to 24 different towers with a further £10,600 promised but not yet paid to a further 3 towers (East Anstey and Chittlehampton feature twice above). That's 23% of the 117 towers affiliated to the Association as at the end of 2020 that has received grants from the DCBRF. (Six of the towers listed are currently affiliated to both the Association and the Guild.) Between 2010 to the end of January 2021 we have paid out £209,450 to projects throughout Devon.

To put this into context, with 117 affiliated towers, each tower would have to pay almost £100 per year to match this level of funding.

What also needs to be put in context is that according to on-line Dove there are 406 rings of bells in the Exeter Diocese (which covers all of Devon). Of those, I counted only 24 towers showing as unringable or ringing suspended, most of which are 3's and 4's (just 6% of all towers with bells in the County). Of those 24 there are 3 who are currently in the process of completing work with grant requests having been received by the DCBRF.

This is in stark contrast to Suffolk where there are 258 rings of bells on Dove with 54 marked as unringable (nearly 20%). A different comparison is that the Bath & Wells Association only provide grants to towers that are affiliated to the Association.

I therefore think we can be very proud of the Devon Church

Bell Restoration Fund and all the help it has given Devon towers over the years and also all those who give in any way to the Fund. Whilst we may only have a handful of towers that are currently unringable, the continuing maintenance and unglamorous work of scraping tower frames and repainting, repairing frame foundations etc continues, ensuring that most of the bells in Devon can be rung today. It helps to show that by **not** having an insular view on maintenance and restoration we can achieve far, far more.

We have always been able to provide a Grant to all projects, regardless of whether the tower is affiliated to the Association, the Guild or neither, that fall within our remit. In order to continue to be able to do this we still need to maintain and, if possible, increase our income. Projects are getting more and more expensive. Full re-hangs are likely to be anything from £60,000 - £120,000 + and more general maintenance projects can be £1,000 - £10,000 +. Meaning in order to give 10% as we currently do we will be looking at £6,000 - £12,000 for a rehang or £100 - £1,000 for a much smaller project. Again, not the sort of money any ringing Society can afford to give easily at the drop of a hat.

Between April 2019 and April 2020 DCBRF Trustees and the Diocesan Bell Advisor with the help of other Devon ringers, carried out 21 inspections to advise on work that would be needed to improve the "go" of the bells and there were also 5 Quinquennial inspections carried out. Some of which have already been acted upon and grant requests received.

Although very little ringing occurred in 2020, we ended the year with income very similar to that of 2019. However, this is only half the story. The £3,000 raised by the 2019 Association Draw wasn't paid until 2020. The Guild has paid everything from its bell fund account much earlier than normal so whilst the overall donations seem high, 2021 could be very different. We also received many more individual donations than normal, something that may not be sustainable over the next couple of years.

One recent donation we have been made aware of was from a group of ringers in the South West holding a "Not the Dinner Day" Zoom meeting. Instead of their usual annual service and dinner, they had a short service followed by a quiz evening. The participants were asked to 'buy a drink' for the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. This raised an astonishing £400. Just one way of doing things differently in Lockdown. Can you think of a way of raising funds of any amount?

We do expect the next couple of years to be very difficult to maintain the income levels previously enjoyed. Without the 2020 Association Draw the amount received fell from an average of £3,000 to just £500. Without on-going help, support and giving from the ringers of Devon we may, for the first time, be unable to help every project. Please help the Trustees to continue the very excellent work of the DCBRF in the coming years by giving even a small amount.

We only have approximately £18,500 in liquid funds available to give to future projects. With 9 forms sent out but not received back as yet, this could very quickly be used up.

DCBRF - continued from page 7

We have all saved money by not being able to ring over the past 12 months,

- No competitions
- No fuel costs of getting to the tower on Sundays and practice nights
- No drinks in the local after ringing

If we all tot up what we spent in 2019 doing all the above we will all be surprised just how much we spend, without thinking, on enjoying our hobby. So why not give even part of your savings to the DCBRF to ensure the bells are there and in good order throughout the County when we are able to get back to our beloved hobby. Easy ways to give are:

- Switch to Smile. Amazon for your on-line shopping and choose the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund as your Charity. 0.5% of all eligible shopping will be donated to the Fund (link available from the Association website)
- Make a donation via Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) – using any card, PayPal or if you have a CAF log-in (link available from the Association website)
- Contact our treasurer Mary Mears – dcbrftreasurer@devonringers.org.uk

Janet Deem

Martin Dodd 12th July 1946 to 2nd April 2021

The sudden death of Martin has robbed the Guild of Devonshire Ringers, Mid Devon branch of its longest serving Tower Captain. Very few of us can remember a time when Martin was not at the helm at St Michael's, Teignmouth. He has kept a band together since the 1960s – no mean feat. There was always a warm welcome to visitors and we know that many holiday making ringers have returned over and over again because of the warmth of that welcome. He has taught very many ringers over that time and was also a branch officer being Branch Ringing Master for the Guild of Devonshire Ringers in the 1970s. He was also the Chairman of the Kenn Deanery.

With Barbara, his wife, to support him the Teignmouth tower outings became legendary – 5 or more towers and then a return to their house for supper. It was always a high spot of the day when, after a hard day's ringing, the tables would be heaving with delicious food and the day was rounded off with good fellowship. More recently these outings ended with a pub meal – often at the Smugglers, but still forming a highlight of the day.

Martin was not a prolific peal ringer and his Guild record shows. Instead he devoted much of his ringing to St Michael's, and that was such an important part of his life. Only the first of his five peals (Cambridge Minor at Torre for the Queen's Silver Jubilee) was not at St Michael's. Quarter peals were much

more to his taste, and he rang many of them over the years. We have already mentioned the outings and he delighted in ringing at new towers. At present we do not have details but we know he must have rung at well over 1000. A particularly happy memory is the delight he so obviously felt after some superb ringing on the 14 bells at Winchester Cathedral – one of his last new towers.

Understandably the Teignmouth ringers have been devastated by this sudden loss. At the same time, they are determined to make sure that ringing continues at the two Teignmouth Towers. This week both practice and ringing for Sunday Service resumed at St Michael's, Teignmouth, under covid 19 CCCBR guidelines. The band considers their return to ringing to be part of their ongoing tribute to Martin.

Due to the covid restrictions only 30 mourners were allowed inside the church for the funeral but a good representation of ringers was outside the church to greet the coffin. The rope of the tenor bell that he must have pulled on numerous occasions was on display on top of the coffin. The fifth bell was rung half muffled in support of Ann and family as the hearse arrived at the church. All being well a more appropriate memorial service will be held towards the end of July. We will keep you informed and hope that many of you will be able to join the Teignmouth ringers and friends on this occasion.

Julia Brett

RIP - Des May (96) of Collaton St Mary

Des May passed away on 5 June and his funeral service was held at Collaton St Mary church on Monday 21 June at 1:30pm.

I do not expect many people knew Des, however he learnt to ring late in life at Collaton St Mary, after his first wife died in 1975. He had been very supportive to the church and Parish Rooms being elected to the PCC and Chairman of the Trustees, respectively. When he remarried, he encouraged his second

wife to learn to ring and both attended ringing and services on a regular basis for many years up until about five or six years ago.

Des had been a landscape gardener and was a keen gardener who entered numerous horticultural shows with his produce.

Michael Webster

Horace Clements 1 Sept 1929 – 29 May 2021

Past Captain of Stoke Gabriel



Horace started ringing at Diptford in 1938 and became a dedicated, loyal and devoted member of the Stoke Gabriel bell ringing team from 1949 until shortly before his demise. He captained the team from 1976 until 1994.

He led by example. There was no compromise in his loyalty, devotion and commitment. Horace would consider it his duty to put the team first. He was reliable and punctual and could be depended upon to ring whether for services, practice nights or competition ringing.

Being blessed with good health and a supportive family, Horace continued to ring for almost every weekly service and practice sessions and, in his retirement from work, enjoyed the many day-long ringing trips provided by the Ringkly Ringers. Throughout his long career of ringing, Horace had always been loyally supported by his wife, Eileen.

The restrictions of the COVID pandemic did not deter Horace from ringing. He was anxious for it to resume when there were relaxations to the lockdown. Ringing at 91 with a mask was a wonderful feat, especially as we were only permitted to ring three of the six bells at the time, however this showed his commitment and determination. The last peal that Horace rang for was on Sunday 1 November 2020. Another lockdown followed and unfortunately, he did not return to the ringing chamber after that.

Numerous people had been taught by Horace to ring. He had the patience and words of encouragement to teach. Those who knew him will know that Horace was quick-witted, and he would always have an answer. If, prior to a peal, someone said 'Do your best', he would reply, 'No, do your very best.'

Horace took an interest in people and was a very friendly and easy person to get on with. He took an avid interest in sports, having played football in his younger days, and followed horse racing with a lifelong interest in horses. He was still following horse racing a few weeks before he passed away. He had won numerous shields playing football and in darts. In fact,

anything he turned his hand to, whether sports, work, or family life, he took them on with great discipline, determination, and enthusiasm.

The garden at Horace's home was always well cultivated. He kept the jobs and projects to a strict timetable. The garden was planted out this year, but alas, not by Horace, however it was under his supervision. Unfortunately, he will not now see the fruits of his labour.

Ringers will remember Horace for representing Stoke Gabriel at competitions and social events, as Vice Chairman of the Totnes Deanery and as President of the Devon Association of Ringers in 2001. After retiring from work, which was well after 65, he was a regular attender of the Ringkly Ringers travelling all over Devon, and sometimes Cornwall and he enjoyed the Ringing Holidays organised by the Ringkly Ringers.

Horace Clements was born 1 September 1929, in Diptford and started ringing in the winter of 1938. He recalls that at nine years old he was so short he had to stand on a mound of hassocks in order to ring the bell. His friend, Donald, who was taller, had been asked to ring however Horace had not, presumably because he was shorter. Not to be beaten, yes, he was competitive even at that age, Horace asked if he could try too. Much to the surprise of others he picked it up very quickly. Donald struggled and lasted 6 months. Horace got on well and was rising and lowering after about three weeks and continued to ring for the rest of his life.

Horace started on the third bell and his tutor, Les Stone, was very strict. Horace says that ringers had to remove items such as watches from their wrists and there was certainly no hand allowed through the loop. You were not permitted to ring in peal until you had mastered the rise and fall to a reasonable standard. When ringing in peal, you were made to face the wall and then ring by ear. Horace recalls ringing the old year out and the New Year in 1938/39.

Horace worked as a mason from 1943. He had been ringing

Horace Clements - continued from page 9

for Stoke Gabriel since 1948. He married Eileen, a Stoke Gabriel girl, in 1949 and was called to National Service from 1950 until 1952.

There was a break in ringing during the war years and Horace remembers ringing for VJ day, August 1945 and then for the end of the war in November 1945. He recalled that they did not practice in the summer months before or after the war but did ring every Sunday morning and evening when this was allowed.

Horace remembered that he rang for the Queen's Accession in February 1952, her Coronation in 1953, the Silver Jubilee in 1977, the Golden Jubilee in 2002 and the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. He had rung for countless weddings and funerals and an estimated 7,000+ weekly Church Services.

It was not all about bellringing as one of Horace's interests was horses. He used to ride bareback when he was a school pupil and had to take them out on a Saturday to be shod. Horace also milked the cows every morning and evening outside of school hours, and mucked out the shippen, especially during the winter when the cows had to be fed and bedded down.

When Horace moved to Stoke Gabriel in 1952, he was readily accepted into the ringing team, having been ringing there on Sunday evenings. He said that in 1966 Stoke Gabriel became more involved in the Devon Association Competitions.

As he was a regular and dependable ringer, this encouraged Stoke Gabriel to enter ringing competitions. The regular team in those days was Stan Martin, Brian Baker, Colin Heath, Bob Scadding, Horace and Art Seymour, the Captain.

Through the dedication of those ringers and the example of Horace in not missing any events, and with the regular support, the team improved rapidly. In the 60s not only were there numerous teams, with some towers having more than one team, there was also a very high standard of striking and the competitions were highly competitive. That team laid down the foundation for future years and Brian and Colin continue to ring for Stoke Gabriel today and in competitions on a regular basis.

The first competition that Horace remembered was the Major Final at St Budeaux, Plymouth where Stoke Gabriel came last. The next year they went to Ilfracombe and came last again. The team knew that they had to improve.

Such was the commitment of ringers that, Arthur (Art) Seymour, Captain of Stoke Gabriel from June 1967, did not make the Major Final at Ilfracombe due to his son getting married that day. This was a sore point as there had been an expectation for people to always be available for competitions. Bill Hine from Collaton St Mary, who rang mainly for Diptford and Stoke Gabriel, was invited to ring. He died in a tragic fishing accident in June 1968 with two other Stoke Gabriel men.

Horace's family always knew never to arrange things on a Thursday, bell ringing practice night or on a Sunday when Horace would be ringing for the morning and evening services. The bell ringing hobby would not have been possible if it had not had the support and enthusiasm of his wife Eileen.

Art Seymour, who rang the tenor, died suddenly whilst ringing at the Major Final at Meavy in May 1976. Horace remembered that Colin Adams was the first on the scene and proved to be very helpful. Horace had been Vice Captain before Art's untimely death and then succeeded as Captain at Stoke Gabriel for 18 years from 1976 to 1994.

Horace recalled that at Modbury, at a South Devon Qualifier, in the late 70s or early 80s, there were 21 teams competing. Ringing started at 1pm and finished 9:15pm. He also remembered that Kenn had beaten them that day. In those days the clergy used to attend the ringing festivals.

One fond memory Horace had, was that in 1980, he helped a young man towards his Duke of Edinburgh Award. Horace only signed him off when he was proficient enough and had rung in a striking competition.

About 1978, while Horace was Captain, he suggested to the Totnes Deanery (formed in 1947) that a competition league should be formed. Two towers would ring against each other on their respective practice night, home and away and be judged. Then, from all the teams that rung, the points were added up at the end of the competitions. This later became the Totnes Deanery Winter League and nowadays several teams ring on the same day at one tower. Prior to the Covid pandemic this happened at about six other towers throughout the winter, ringing at churches within the Deanery. At the end of all the competitions the positions from each competition would be added up and teams had their final position in the Winter League.

Horace recalled with pride that Stoke Gabriel won nine cups one year and that their ringing became progressively better during the 80s and 90s. Horace said that his proudest moment was being elected as President of the Devon Association of Ringers in 2001.

Another proud moment for him was when the Stoke Gabriel team won the Major Final at Down St Mary in 2012. Although Horace did not ring that day, he had certainly contributed by being so supportive to ringing at Stoke Gabriel over the years, and by encouraging ringers to take an active part, not only in their tower but also, by entering competitions run by the Deanery and the Devon Association.

When asked what is different in ringing now, Horace said that he really enjoyed the monthly meetings with the Ringkly Ringers where he met many ringers and had formed wonderful friendships.

Horace loved horses and followed races with great interest even in his last few weeks. He will be remembered locally for always being out and about doing odd jobs for people and he was a keen gardener despite his knee restricting his movement later in life.

Horace and Eileen celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with Tony Beard as their guest and he gave a performance that was remembered with great affection.

On another wedding anniversary Horace heard the village bells ringing without him. He was told that the church was

Horace Clements - continued from page 10

marking their celebration, his and Eileen's 60th wedding anniversary. The family had planned a roast dinner for family and close friends in the Village Hall. It is difficult to surprise people who have been married for 60 years but the Stoke Gabriel bell ringers had yet another surprise as they presented Horace with a Shield, in his name, to be awarded to winners of the Developing Section of ringers at the annual Stoke Gabriel competition.

The church was aware that Horace had been ringing church bells since 1938 and at Stoke Gabriel church on 10 June 2018 it marked his 80th year of ringing by holding a Sung Eucharist to celebrate this. He was also presented with a commemorative bell and celebration cake by the PCC and church members. Horace was interviewed by Radio Devon and by BBC TV. The interview was broadcast later that day.

In 2019, Horace and Eileen celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary and hosted an evening meal for family and friends at the Stoke Gabriel Football Club raising funds for charity.

Horace celebrated his 90th birthday on Sunday 1st September 2019 and the Stoke Gabriel bell ringers honoured this by an open ringing session at which it was reported by guests that Horace was ringing as good as ever. Following this the ringers organised a buffet in the Church House Inn, Stoke Gabriel. This was Horace's local after ringing and where he continued to play darts several nights each week. Thanks were given to Horace for his many remarkable bell ringing achievements and for his dedication and loyalty as a bell ringer to Stoke Gabriel.

For his 90th birthday Horace was delighted to receive 73 cards from all over the country. Greetings were also received from Australia. Horace was so grateful that people thought enough

of him not only to wish him a happy birthday but also to send him a card.

Horace had reported that his 90th birthday was a thoroughly enjoyable day. As it was a Sunday he was ringing in church and when he came down the tower steps the choir sang "Happy Birthday". Then the vicar invited him into the church where the congregation and choir sang "Happy Birthday" a second time also accompanied by the organ.

At the age of 91, Horace had passed plenty of milestones, many happy memories and he had made a lasting contribution to bell ringing at Stoke Gabriel; thanks to Eileen for supporting him in his pursuits.

Horace is succeeded by his wife, their two sons, four grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Parents are the ultimate role models for their children, and this is something that Horace and Eileen have done so well. Horace valued his family very much and had set a wonderful example as the whole family is a credit to him. Horace was blessed with wonderful family support, a reflection of the love that he had shown.

Horace showed me a card once that Eileen had kept. It read:

Every time I pass a church,

I pay a little visit,

so when at last I'm carried in,

the Lord won't say: "Who is it?"

Michael Webster



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