

Founded 1925



President - Maurice Sharland

www.devonbells.co.uk

Devon Calls

Nov 2014

FOCUS ON A PAST PRESIDENT

– MR. IVOR HOOKWAY.

OFFICERS

President:

Maurice SHARLAND

President-Elect:

Brian DRAKE

Chairman:

Graham SHARLAND

Vice Chairman:

James STEER

Hon. Secretary:

Margaret WHITE

Hon. Treasurer:

John BARNES

Web Master:

Dr James KERSLAKE

Devon Calls:

Acting Editor:

Colin ADAMS

Acting Technical Eds.:

Dr Colin BARNES

Elinor D'ALBIAC

Inside this issue

Thanks to the Judges	3
Devon Calls progress report	4
Why is Ringing Important?	5
Day in the life of a 'Ringer	5
"Auntie's Army" on Tour	6
St Budeaux Bell Dedication	7
Bishopsteignton's Bells	7
Plympton St Mary's Bells	7
Devon Historic Churches	
Trust	8
Annual Raffle Results	8
A Muffled Peal	9
Chagford Bells Centenary	10-14
West Down Tower Screen	14
Obituaries:	
David Hampson	15
Marie Miller	15
Brian Heywood	15
Carol Service	15
Training Certificates	15

This time the focus switches to one of our more senior members – Mr. Ivor Hookway. Ivor rang with the West Down team, in North Devon near Ilfracombe, for many years.

Those with long memories will remember West Down as being a consistently competitive team, amongst the top teams in the county, particularly during the 1950s and 60s. Ivor occupied a place in the team, ringing the fifth bell, for well over sixty years.



IVOR HOOKWAY

With his five granddaughters (from l to r)
Darcey, Kelly, Katrine, Elin and Maddy

When he decided to give up ringing he became a judge, judging regularly at Devon Association competitions and also at invitation ringing festivals. Such a commitment frequently meant driving long distances and spending many hours away from home.

The team of ringers at West Down remains active and highly competitive. It is through the legacy left by people such as Ivor, and the late Mervyn Phillips, that the team still remains active and highly competitive today.

We now have the opportunity to hear from one of our more senior members whose ringing career actually spans seventy-seven years!

Do you come from a family of ringers?

Yes. My father William Hookway had five brothers and one sister; she became the mother of the late Mr. Mervyn Phillips. As many will recall, Mervyn was a very enthusiastic ringer and the tower captain at West Down for a number of years. At Mervyn's christening in 1924 six Hookway brothers rang for the service. A few years later they all rang at their father's funeral service.

Where did you learn to ring?

At West Down in 1937 at the age of nine. I started on the fourth bell.

(continued on page 2)

Do we have your correct address and contact details?

Please send to Margaret WHITE (Secretary) bittadon@googlemail.com; Colin ADAMS (Acting Editor) kentonian@eclipse.co.uk or John BARNES (Treasurer) jcbarnes482@btinternet.com

(continued from front page)

Who taught you to ring?

My father William together with one of West Down's 'key' ringers, the late Mr. F. White (father of Fred). Mr. White actually lost one of his legs during the First World War, as result he was fitted with a prosthetic limb. In spite of his incapacity he rang regularly at West Down and did so by leaning against the wall behind him. He was a wonderful ringer, a very good teacher, mentor and a great inspiration to us all.

Were there other people learning to ring at the same time as yourself?

Yes, Mr. Mervyn Phillips, Mr. W. White and Mr. Len Smale.

During the time that you were learning how was the Ringing Chamber lit?

By an oil lamp, like the rest of the church, as electricity did not come to West Down until 1954.

Who were the team members when you were learning to ring and what bell did they ring?

Fred White or Jack Taylor (local blacksmith)	Treble.
Isaac Phillips or Bill Hewitt	Second.
Alf Copp or Lionel Hookway	Third
William Smale or Frank Hookway	Fourth
William Hookway or Walter Phillips	Fifth
Jack White, Brinley Phillips)	
Arthur Down or Frank Phillips)	Tenor

Did the team ring twice on Sundays and when was their practice night held?

We always rang for the 11.00 a.m. Matins and on most Sundays at 6.30 p.m. for Evensong; sometimes even ringing after the service. Those who rung for Matins often stood down for the Evensong service. Practice nights were always held on a Friday evening.

Did the tower where you learnt to ring compete in any of the competitions organised by the Devon Association of Ringers?

Yes, but only on alternate years and when the venue was in North Devon due to limited transport being available.

How old were you when you competed in your first competition?

Sixteen.

Which bell did you ring and where was the venue?

I rang the fourth bell at Tawstock in a competition organised by Barnstaple Deanery.

It is important to remember there was no ringing during the period 1939 and 1945 due to the Second World War.

Who were the main competing teams when you were involved with competition ringing?

In the north of the county there was: Chawleigh, Down St. Mary, Mortehoe, St. Giles-in-the-Wood and Swimbridge. In the south there was: Kenn, Plymstock and West Alvington.

Overall would you say the standard of striking achieved at competitions has improved or remained the same since the days when you were actively involved?

I think there are some very good teams who are capable

of producing a high standard of striking around at the present.

The old West Down team were well known for their distinctive style of lowering the bells e.g. a lower could last anything from between three to five minutes and was invariably flawless. Was there a particular person who stamped this unique "trademark" on the team?

Yes, this was down to the late Mr. Fred White. Many years ago at West Down when we were near the end of a peal and in "Queens" with the sequence being 1 3 5 2 4 6 Mr. White would call "downward" and "steady". Just as we were about to pull in at the bottom of the lower he would shout "upwards" and on reaching the top of the rise "downwards". This kind of practice required good rope control, for if you did not gather your coils in correctly you were left floundering. Sometimes during a peal he would call "downward" especially when the fifth bell was behind the treble and the second bell in front of the tenor. This required great skill from those who were ringing bells two and five.

I recall once when we rang in a competition at Witheridge. On emerging from the tower we were approached by the late Mr. Tommy Kingdom, Tower Captain, (and also of Down St. Mary) who informed us that our lower took over six minutes and was virtually faultless. This was later confirmed by two of the judges, one of whom was Mr. Tommy Darch – the local "Godfather" of all ringing!

Would you like to see this style of lowering more widely practiced?

I would but as with raising the bells it takes a great deal of practice.

During the late 1950's Mortehoe were a team that could ring well, except for the rise. One weekday evening the team came across to West Down for guidance, hoping particularly to tap into the knowledge and skills of Mr. White. In the first peal Mr. White rang the treble with Mortehoe ringers ringing behind. The rise was good and everyone looked pleased. A second attempt was made with the same line-up. Again, no problems it was a good rise. Things were changed for the third attempt. Bert Yeo, a former secretary of the Devon Association of Ringers, took the treble with five of West Down ringers behind. The rise was a total disaster, consisting of a stop go, stop go affair all the way up. Another attempt was made with the same line-up. Again it was a disaster.

Poor Bert Yeo. He was so mad he threw down his rope and stormed out of the tower. He was the owner of a local bus and taxi business and had driven the Mortehoe team to West Down in one of his taxis. As he stormed out of the tower he jumped into his own taxi and drove off, leaving five of his team stranded! They had to call another taxi to get home!

Are there any special ringing moments, perhaps involving a character from the past whom you would like to recall?

In terms of "special ringing moments", in May 1953 West

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page2)

Down rang to mark the return of Queen Elizabeth 11 from her first tour of Australia. The Queen's Coronation had taken place the previous year in 1952 and West Down were honoured to have their bells broadcast live on BBC radio. A similar exercise was repeated in the early 1960's when West Down's bells featured on the BBC's radio programme "Christmas Bells" broadcast on Christmas morning. On this occasion the team were chosen to represent all six-bell teams in the country.

Characters, well there were several and the late Ned Vanstone of Langtree was certainly one of them. In the 1960s he was one of the judges invited to judge at a competition which was held at Kentisbury. West Down rang peal number four. After we had rung we moved on to Georgeham to ring in the evening. On entering the tower we were surprised to find Ned standing there. We enquired if all was finished at Kentisbury? His reply was "only poor teams ring there". So he had "walked out" and journeyed across to hear us ring at Georgeham leaving the other judges to carry on!

Is there a peal of bells you are particularly fond of?

In the north of the county I like to hear Bishops Nympton for a six bell peal and also the back six at Torrington.

In the south of the county I think St. Budeaux, Plymouth are a very nice ring.

Is there a particular reason why you have selected these?

I remember an occasion when we rang two excellent peals at St. Budeaux, and all without a practice. This peal brings back a lasting feeling of pleasure

Thank you Ivor for your willingness to be interviewed and for sharing a selection of your treasured memories with us.

Colin Adams.

FOOTNOTE.

Ivor was too modest to mention an event in West Down's history which I personally recall and which I think needs to be mentioned as it was such an outstanding achieve-

-ment by the team.

On Saturday 30th June 1970 the Devon Association of Ringers Six-Bell Final competition was held on the light little peal of six at St. Petrox, Dartmouth. In those days teams entered the church in pairs and once inside drew for ringing order. West Down with Kentisbeare went in as the first pair. Inside the church a coin was tossed which resulted in West Down having to ring first

At the close of the competition West Down were announced the winners. The team had travelled from practically the most northerly tip of Devon to the most southerly, were drawn to ring first and won the competition by a margin of just two marks – what an achievement!

The results were:

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|------|---------------|
| 1. | West Down - | 13 | (*Peal no.1) |
| (awarded the Ross shield and first certificate). | | | |
| 2. | West Alvington - | 15 | (*Peal no.5) |
| 3. | Plymstock - | 18¾. | (*Peal.no.3) |
| 4. | Down st. Mary - | 23¾. | (*Peal no 8) |
| 5. | Swimbridge - | 25½. | (*Peal no. 7) |
| 6. | Kentisbeare - | 31 | (*Peal no 2) |
| 7. | Kenn - | 32 | (*Peal no. 4) |
| 8. | South Tawton - | 37½. | (*Peal no. 9) |
| 9. | Stoke Gabriel - | 38¾. | (*Peal no. 6) |
| 10 | Dunsford - | 42. | (*Peal no.10) |

(* Drawn as)

The judges were: Mr. H. Pidler (High Bickington), Mr. A.C. Thorne (Colebrook), Mr. A. Tapper (Yealmpton) and Mr. R. Elliot (Bridford).

I well remember this historical day. I was not ringing but had come to listen to the top teams in Devon ring at St. Petrox; such a picturesque setting and the whole area was bathed in warm summer sunshine. There was no doubt about the quality of striking achieved by West Down and listening to their distinctive lingering lower, always their trademark, was something which I shall never forget.

Editor

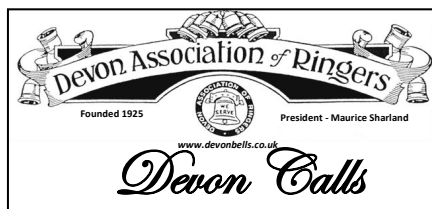
THANKS TO THE JUDGES

After many years of taking part in bell ringing competitions, we would like to thank all the many judges throughout the county, who have given their time, knowledge and experience to make competitions possible.

As a ringer you probably only have to concentrate for fifteen or twenty minutes on a Saturday, but as a judge you need to concentrate, probably harder, for possibly up to twenty peals. It goes without saying that without you, competitions would not take place.

Many Thanks.

Fred and Margaret White.



DEVON CALLS - A PROGRESS REPORT

As I put together this reflective account on what has taken place to main-

tain Devon Calls, work is underway towards producing a third edition before the forthcoming AGM. Shortly after the AGM last November a new team was established consisting of Dr. Colin Barnes, Elinor D'Albiac and myself. Colin and Elinor are both ringers at Chagford and I am most grateful to Julia Endacott, also of Chagford, for introducing them to me. Both have proved to be invaluable in terms of their commitment and desire to enhance the overall quality of the magazine. We have succeeded Michael Webster who so successfully ran Devon Calls single-handedly for well over ten years (one person has now been replaced by three!). We have Michael to thank for enabling such a smooth transition to have taken place.

From the outset it was decided that I should become the Acting Editor (although I am not qualified in this particular field). Colin and Elinor were both appointed Acting Technical Editors. These positions and the responsibilities that go with them will need to be ratified at the forthcoming AGM.

Collating material for publication in Devon Calls has been an interesting exercise. Most of the articles included were sent in voluntarily whilst some required a word of 'encouragement'. People who submitted articles obviously did so because they feel strongly about their hobby of bell-ringing and had given considerable thought about the presentation of their views and ideas. These contributions were most welcome. One of our aims will be to encourage lively debate, one possibility being that in future editions a 'letters to the editor' page may well evolve. Other articles which featured have covered news about restoration projects and the extent to which the efforts made by the local ringers reduced costs. Detailed reports on the Devon Association's annual competitions and a report on a Training Day have also been featured.

The appearance of the magazine has changed. This has been achieved through the efforts of one of our Technical Editors, Dr. Colin Barnes, through his contact with the printers. Informal reports received so far have been positive and most like the 'feel' of the new look magazine. It is important to point out that where Michael Webster had acquired access to a low cost system for producing

the magazine; production costs for the new design are much higher.

On the two occasions that we have met to package and distribute the magazine we have become increasingly aware of the cost involved when using the postal service, e.g. often well over £100 each time. We have discussed ways in which the distribution costs could be reduced. One way, of course, is to send out as many copies as possible by hand. We aim to produce three editions per year, i.e. late February, 1st July and 20th October, the last in anticipation of the AGM so that agenda papers can be distributed at the same time. If committee meetings were to be held immediately after these dates a large volume of envelopes could then be distributed by committee members. We are also keen to hear from other groups of ringers who may be able to help with distribution. We have discussed the benefits arising from having an editorial board made up of regional representatives. Board members would be required to assist with gathering copy and help with distribution, as well as helping to increase circulation to individuals, rather than one copy per tower.

In closing I would like to thank Michael Webster, for helping the three of us to become familiar with the running of Devon Calls, and Julia Endacott for promptly contacting me after last year's AGM and wisely, as it turned out, suggesting that I make contact with Colin and Elinor. I also want to thank Julia for the great help which she has given towards the packaging and distribution of the magazine. My grateful thanks to those who have submitted articles for publication; with special thanks to Mrs. Joan Clarke for providing such detailed and lively reports on the festivals which took place in the north of the county.

Finally, I really am most grateful to Colin and Elinor. Twelve months ago we were strangers but since coming together and producing our first edition in February this year we have come to know each other quite well, and I feel we work together well as a team. The layout and appearance of the magazine is entirely due to their imagination and creativity. They have both been a pleasure to work with. I like to think that between us we have enabled the magazine to not only survive but also to enter a new phase. I hope you agree.

13th September 2014.

Colin E. Adams.

PROPOSED DEVON CALLS SCHEDULE

	<u>Final copy date</u>	<u>To Printer</u>	<u>Distribute</u>
<u>March edition:</u>	1 st February	approx. 10 Feb.	late Feb
<u>July edition:</u>	Monday after		
	2 nd Monday in June	approx. 15 June	1 st July
<u>November edition:</u>	30 September	10 October	20 October for AGM

WHY IS RINGING IMPORTANT?

Bells are an evocation: a call to celebrate; a call to mourn; a call to gather; a call to arms; a call to reflect; a call to worship; a call to lunch. They maintain this purpose today. They are in every way an early telecommunications technology, contemporaneous with the horn, smoke signals, bullroarer and carrier pigeon, and the predecessor of the telephone, television, Internet, Facebook and Twitter.

We ring the bells as a service to the parish. The bells call the parish to worship and remind the community of the role of the church in everyday life.

We ring the bells because we enjoy collaborative team sport, the challenge of controlling tons of swinging metal in a group.

We ring the bells because we enjoy the challenge of coordinating the changes and working our way through the permutations of the bells.

We ring the bells to rise to the challenge of striking our unique music in perfect rhythm.

We ring the bells because, yes, we enjoy making a loud noise in public.

All of these things are true, but they are not enough. The real reason is that the ringers are a community. We are a diverse group of people with a common interest, a common language, a group of friends. Conversation over a drink at the pub is an integral part of practice night. We cannot hope to continue the tradition of ringing bells unless we are a welcoming friendly community. We are a local community, ringing here at Stoke Gabriel and many other towers. We are part of a national community, drawing on the communities from all over the United Kingdom. We are also part of an international community, working to support our friends abroad.

We are a community which spans social divisions and generations. Ringing communities includes children aged 4 and 6, and the oldest bellringer in the world, 102-year-old Fred Smeaton, who still rings handbells and still joins in for service ringing and practice night, as scribe and mentor. As a community, we enjoy our hobby together, maintaining, nurturing and challenging a tradition going back centuries so that it will move forward for centuries to come.

Stoke Gabriel's bell tower is a part of that tradition, and holds its own place in bellringing history. We ring here to celebrate the bells given by our ancestors.

Your bells sound out an evocation to celebrate, to be thankful not only for the bells but for the parish community and the communities around you. And we thank you for being part of our bellringing community, too.

Be part of Britain's heritage, ring bells.

Mike Webster

A DAY IN A LIFE OF A BELLRINGER IN FEBRUARY

No month seems to be dull for me, there is usually some ringing or organising, or both, to be completed. This particular day was a Saturday. It was a morning of a wet and windy day in February (remember the sequence of storms we had) and 2 competitions had been planned for today, being a Deanery 3 tower competition throughout the afternoon and another different Deanery competition in the evening.

My day started with a telephone call before 9am informing me of the start time of the afternoon competition. I telephoned the judge of that competition as I had offered him a lift. My other ringers were already aware of both competitions. I then telephoned the organiser of the evening competition to give an indication of when we were likely to be available. This regrettably was unavoidable where you happen to ring for more than one church, in different Deaneries, every Sunday and wish to assist with bringing ringers on by ringing for striking competitions.

Having skipped breakfast I decided to make a call to a Vicar, as I was arranging another ringing event for the following month, after speaking to the tower captain of that church the day before.

I checked my emails to see if there were any relevant emails and there was one saying that another event I was arranging was unlikely to happen on that day. I would have to come up with of an alternative.

Lunch time was early, and this was the reason for skipping breakfast, as I was to be out by 13:15 to pick up 2 other ringers and a judge. This afternoon we were to ring at 3 different towers in a series of striking competitions. I was required to ring for the A and B team at each of the towers and was delighted to have been asked.

At the last of the 3 churches, we had time for a cup of tea and a wonderful selection of cakes but could not wait for the results or the raffle as I was to take the judge, who would be ringing with us, and the other two ringers for the evening competition. We were already 2 hours late for that evening competition.

Thankfully, we arrived before the last peal had finished finding, perhaps to our advantage, that the tea and cakes had all gone. We rang again and by this time we were very used to ringing, we were quite excited and rang with a lot of enthusiasm. After the peal we could relax, and the results for us were that we had rung far better at that tower than we had done for some years. The raffle only yielded one prize for the passengers of my car and we then went to the pub. A nice pint of Bob, a beer from the Wickwar brewery, and we decided that as we had not eaten a meal since lunch time, we should have an evening meal in that pub. I got home by 10pm to find I have a copy of Devon Calls to read. This prompted me to write this article. How much better could I end the day especially when I remembered that I would ring at 3 different times the following day – it would be Sunday, of course.

Chris Clayton

"AUNTIE'S ARMY" ON TOUR

Chagford Bellringers Outing 15 - 17 August

For their 23rd Annual Ringing Outing, the Chagford bellringers and friends, under Julia Endacott (Auntie), headed to Guildford, for a weekend of good ringing and good company. Bright and early on the Friday morning, 22 ringing friends assembled on the coach, and with breakfast *en route*, soon reached the first tower of the day at the attractive village of Mere. This weighty ring of eight bells needed urgent running repairs by the band, as the rope on the sixth was close to breaking. But tape and perseverance paid off, enabling us to enjoy some good ringing, including an all ladies peal.

Next we moved onto Andover where we were joined by three more friends – one from London and two from the Isle of Wight.. The church is Victorian boasting a precarious wooden spiral staircase up to the ringing chamber. On the whole, we decided that the eight bells there did not warrant the climb! After lunch in the town, we reached our final tower of the day, Odiham. This beautiful church, with striking stained glass windows, impressed us all - particularly the television showing a live screening of the bells above us as we rang them. We all appreciated the ground floor ring of six, complete with a pub in close proximity. We then headed to our hotel in Guildford, relaxed, and savoured a sociable dinner and drinks together late into the evening.

Saturday took in the most demanding ringing schedule of the weekend, seeing "Auntie's Army" based in Guildford for the day. Early morning found us gathered



Bells of Guildford Cathedral

at Guildford Cathedral, one of the few Cathedrals built in the twentieth century having been consecrated in 1961, and set strikingly on top of green hills where it overlooks the city. The interior was equally striking, soaring, light and clean. All that height had to be surmounted to reach the bells though, and 140 steps later we eventually emerged into the ringing chamber! The twelve bells here were a real highlight of the weekend for everyone, and we all enjoyed some excellent ringing.

We then headed into Guildford, where our amenable coach driver, Nigel, dropped us off so we could take in the city towers on foot. First, we rang the eight bells at Holy Trinity. Being a heavy peal of bells, we were expecting hard work, but these bells were certainly memorably hard work as the tower swayed from side to side

during ringing, and we struggled to ring well. Some were heard to complain of seasickness! After lunch, we moved down the hill and onto St Mary's, the oldest church in Guildford where people have worshipped for more than a thousand years. The bells here proved challenging, both to reach and ring. Having clambered through the dark and dusty roof space, we were greeted by an anti-clockwise ring of six, where the stay promptly dropped out of the fourth! Intrepid Chagford ringers went up into the bell chamber, recovered the stay and we rang on – literally – as the fourth could not be stopped! Some repairs needed upon our departure.....

Our last Guildford tower was St Nicolas, and this recently re-hung peal of ten bells were a real favourite of the band, and we made the most of our time here, with plenty of good ringing. Then it was back on the coach and a short drive to the nearby village of Shalford, where we were greeted by tea, coffee and biscuits, and a lovely light ring of eight. A good end to a memorable, if tiring, day of ringing! We unwound in the evening over a superb group meal at a nearby American style diner, and finished off with drinks back at the hotel bar – ringing is thirsty work!

On Sunday morning we put our bags on the coach and then crossed the road to the church of Stoke next Guildford, possibly one of the nearest towers we had ever rung at on an outing! Here, we rang this light, easy peal of six bells before their service. Then it was onto the coach, farewell to Guildford, and off to Farnham; this glorious peal of ten bells finished the weekend off on a real high, as evinced by the cheerful group photo taken outside the tower afterwards. Then it was time for "Auntie's Army" to head westwards and home to Devon again, breaking the journey with a leisurely and excellent carvery lunch near Wincanton.

All too soon, we were saying goodbye to friends as we reached Chagford, not forgetting to thank Andrew Gist and Mervyn Langdon (who was absent and much missed, along with Chris Clayton) for their superlative planning which had resulted in such a successful and memorable tour for everyone. And as ringers one and all headed home, we thanked "Auntie", and looked forward to her army marching again next year!

Clare Griffiths

(always a Chagford ringer!)



ST. BUDEAUX PARISH CHURCH

DEDICATION OF THE BELLS

Having fallen silent in 2012 the six bells at St. Budeaux rang out once more for a service of dedication on Monday 9th June 2014. Around eighty people, consisting of ringers and non ringers gathered and they were joined by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Mr. Michael Fox and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Rosemary Fox. The service of dedication was conducted by the Archdeacon of Plymouth, the Venerable Ian Chandler.

In his welcome and exhortation message the Archdeacon addressed the congregation by saying "Brothers and sisters, we are met here to commit to God the work which these bells, now re-hung and to be hallowed in our tower, shall do in the years to come, to ask God's blessing on all who shall ring them, and to ask that all who hear them shall lift up their hearts to God.

Let us thank God for the craftsman who during the centuries have cast and re-hung bells in this, and other towers throughout the land; for the ringers who in times past have rung these bells: let us pray also for the ringers throughout this land and overseas, that through their art, we may in faith be one for evermore.

Let us pray that the message of the bells may bring joy to the sad, penitence to sinners, and encouragement to the faithful and all who seek truth. In the music of these bells, may we find peace in our souls".

During the service the Archdeacon spoke about the purpose of the bells and said "that bells can be heard regularly in many parts of the city". He said "that what happens inside the church should also reach out across this parish and the city with the sound of the bells sending a clear message of the love of God".

During the dedication the wardens handed a token bell rope to the Archdeacon who then said, "In the faith of Jesus Christ, I do solemnly set apart and dedicate these bells to the Glory of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and Holy Spirit – Amen".

At the close a presentation was made to Mr. Peter Sparkes, Tower Captain. Within the space of two years Peter had raised £40,000 to meet the cost of the work which involved: removing the bells to Taylors of Loughborough for cleaning and the fitting of new bearings, re-bushing of clappers and refurbishment of the wheels. In the tower new steel foundation beams were fitted and a new ringing chamber created on the ground floor.

Peter, in response, paid tribute to the work carried out by Paul Mason and Steven Westerman of Taylors as well as acknowledging the valuable contributions made by all those who had provided voluntary labour, in particular Kevan and Owen Borlase.

Photographs depicting stages of the work were on display.

Historical

The church contains a plaque stating that the tenor bell was rung at the wedding of Sir Francis Drake.

A photograph on display dated 1958 shows the 1st. St. Budeaux All Girl Guides ringing team.

BISHOPSTEIGNTON'S BELLS

Work is underway which will secure the use of the bells at Bishopsteignton for many years to come.



Nicholson's bell hangers, together with local voluntary labour, began the task of removing the bells from the tower on Monday 15th September. Later during the week the bells were transported to the Whitechapel Foundry in the East End of London.

At Whitechapel the bells will be cleaned and re-tuned. At the same time the cast in crown staples, used for attaching the old

clappers, will be removed. After Whitechapel have completed the tuning, the bells will travel down to Nicholson Engineering in Bridport where entirely new ringing fittings will be made, including canon-retaining headstocks and self aligning ball bearings.



The bells and their fittings are to be re-housed using the existing frame.

It is anticipated that the work will be completed early in the New Year.

PLYMPTON ST. MARY'S BELLS

Work on the eight bells and their fittings continue. Currently the Whitechapel Foundry is carrying out work on the clappers, which includes fitting wrought iron bottom ends to replace the ductile iron clappers on the 4th and 7th bells. New rims will be fitted to the wheels and a completely new set of pulleys made

Tower Vice-Captain Brian Meeke wishes to thank everyone who has been engaged with the project so far.

We look forward to hearing further news from Brian in the New Year and wish him and his team well as they reach the final stages of what has become a major restoration scheme.

Colin Adams.

DEVON HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

The annual fund raising competition for the Trust took place on the newly restored ring of six at St. Budeaux, Plymouth, on Saturday 9th August 2014. With just two teams competing in the Intermediate section entries were down on previous years. However, nine teams came forward to compete in the Senior section.

The competition began with the Intermediate section, after which a short informal service followed and then the results for this section were announced. During the service two hymns were sung. The first 'Eternal Father, strong to save', was chosen because of St. Budeaux's close proximity to Plymouth and the city's strong naval tradition. Prayers were led by Norma Dyer who regularly assists at the church. Prayers were said for those unable to be present. Prayers were also said, and a brief period of silence kept, for those ringers who had recently passed away including the late Beric Bartlett of Upton, Torquay. It was Mr. Bartlett who, back in the 1950's, came up with the idea of holding a competition each year to raise funds for the Trust. The brief service closed with the hymn 'Angel-voices ever singing'. Musical accompaniment was kindly provided by Beryl Gruitt.

During the late afternoon the Senior section began. Teams had previously been invited to select a time for ringing which helped towards ensuring that the event finished at a reasonable hour.

The local ladies kindly provided teas throughout the afternoon and part of the evening.

Towards the end of the competition an event occurred which might have overshadowed what was a successful day. A member of a competing team used their mobile phone to record their peal, only to find after the ring that the phone had disappeared from the spot where it was placed! A search took place, all to no avail. Later after the results were announced and thanks conveyed, a local lady

came into the church holding the phone. Apparently it had been picked up by a friendly dog and delivered to its master. The dog since answers to the name – "Ringer"!!

Thanks go to the Tower Captain, Mr. Peter Sparkes, and the PCC at St Budeaux, for kindly hosting the event, together with the competing teams for their support. The venue provided an opportunity for teams to find out just how well the bells would sound and handle, particularly as they are now a ground floor ring.

The event raised £107.00 for Devon Historic Churches Trust.

The **results** were.

Intermediates section:

1. Dartmouth St. Saviours' 45 faults
(awarded the Arthur Tapper memorial shield).
2. Holbeton 'B' 53½

Senior section:

1. Egguckland 18 faults.
(awarded the George Middleton shield).
2. Stoke Gabriel 23½
3. Kingsteignton 35½
4. South Brent 56
5. Plymstock 60½
6. Lamerton 87
7. Ide 90½
8. Widecombe-in-the-Moor 128½
- Holbeton 'A' 77½ Unfortunately disqualified for ringing under time.

The judges were surprised at the high marks made by the majority of teams.

The **judges** were:

Scott Adams. Nick and Ruth Tuckett.

Colin E. Adams.

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS ANNUAL RAFFLE - RESULTS 2014

- 1st. John Connibear's grandchild - £250
- 2nd. Don Lawson, Ilfracombe - £75
- 3rd. Mrs Boyce, Atherington - £50

£25 prizes

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 4th. Amery EX32 OAD | 10th. J. Shearing, East Budleigh |
| 5th. Chris Dent, Exeter | 11th. A Colton, Exmouth |
| 6th. Cynthia Borrowes, Witheridge | 12th. Andrew Snell, Bishops Tawton |
| 7th. Meavy Tower | 13th. James Steer, Bow |
| 8th. Lewis Stevens, 01271 | 14th. Ian and Wendy Campbell, Exeter |
| 9th. Bill Crispin, Dodbrooke | |

A MUFFLED PEAL - Monday 4th August 2014

To mark the anniversary of the declaration of what became known as the First World War the ringers of Exeter St. Petrock gathered on Monday 4th August 2014 at 6.30pm to ring a full muffled peal. This is an old tradition where the bells are muffled on both sides of the clapper, except the tenor, which is muffled on one side only. This gives a deep and sorrowful sound with a loud tolling on every other round. This was traditionally rung for the death of a National figure, a National disaster, the death of a Vicar or notable local figure and, of course, the death of a ringer ! This is now a very rare sound and for several of the team this was the first time they had ever taken part in such a peal.

Our bells are very light and despite trying the muffles of the lightest bells from Exminster and Crediton the clappers were still double striking. Ryan Brodie and I devised a means of using an old lorry inner tube and some cable ties to make our own muffles. The six ringers were Colin and Scott Adams, Ryan Brodie, Stephanie Brown, Steven Came and David Trist.

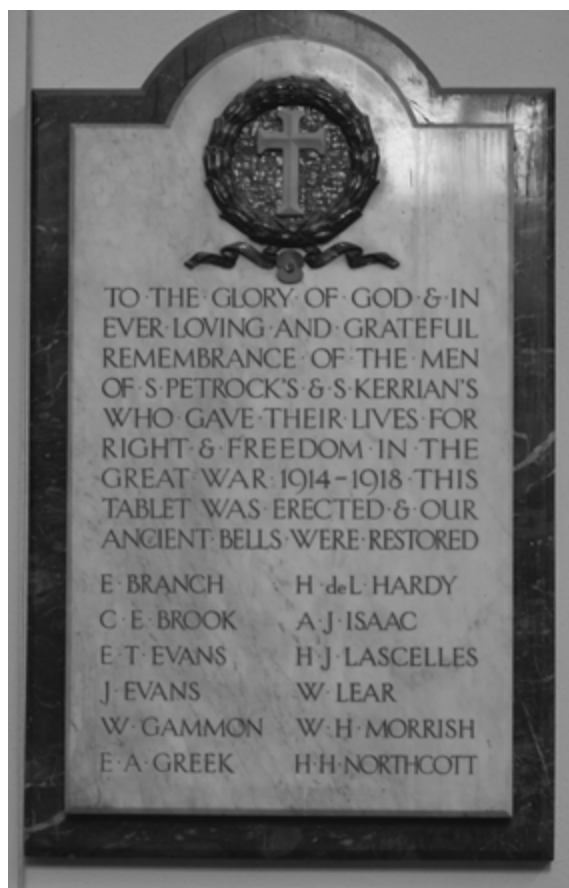
Before ringing, we gathered round the monument, pictured here, to honour those from St. Petrock and St. Kerrian (our sister Church which is now demolished) who did not return from that conflict. We imagined what was going through the minds of those young men and their families as the declaration of war was announced. Colin also read out the names from the war memorial in the blocked up doorway of St. Olave's which is just a few yards away (lower picture).

We then rose the bells and rang a full peal of 60's and lowered. The mournful sound of the bells being rung very slowly was very moving and we felt we had made a fitting tribute to those who came before us.

David Trist

St. Olave's 1914 - 1918

James Balsom	Thomas Moore
Herbert Chapman	Hedley Potter
John Clapp	Wilfred Pinniger
William Clapp	Reginald Pinniger
Thomas Edwards	William Pyle
John Godfrey	Charles Snellgrove
William Huish	Reginald Sullivan
Ernest Heywood	John Sampson
William Jones	William Stoye
John Lock	Harold Wade
Leonard Luckcraft	



1914 ~ 2014

Centenary of the Recasting of the Bells of St Michael the Archangel, Chagford



The commencement, this year, of World War I centennial commemorations has a particular resonance for the ringers of St. Michael's, Chagford, as the following account bears witness. Over the course of two years, the Parish Magazine of St. Michael's, Chagford, provided monthly updates of the work undertaken to put the tower and bells back into good order, beginning with the issue of May 1913, when we learn of:

The Belfry – an Appeal

The state of the belfry is causing considerable anxiety, and will require much attention in the near future. Messrs. W. Aggett & Son, a firm famous in Devon and beyond, have drawn up a most reasonable estimate for the work needed. In their report they mention that "The bells at present are in a bad condition, the supporting old oak beams are rotten at the ends that rest on the corbel. The bell frames are worn out. Some of the timbers have been cut about to make room for the bells to swing. The frames are sunk out of level, making manipulation very hard work in peal-ringing. The present peal of eight are discordant, and some of a bad tone. The approximate weight, according to measurement is about 3 ½ tons. This is quite sufficient to make a good peal, and if tuned on Canon Simpson's 5-tone principle, and sand-blasted, it will be a fine musical peal."

Can Chagford raise 500 guineas? Will those who still call Chagford "home", but who are now perhaps far away in distant parts of the world, remember the old Church, and the bells they used to hear ringing out across hill and dale? Or shall we let things slide, so that in a few years time, no bells shall call us to Church, no peal shall ring out some message of joy and festival, no warning of life's limits reach us through the solemn knell?

(Signed) C. G. Hayter-Hames & T. Amery,
Churchwardens. Hubert C. Studdy, Rector.

This second paragraph proved to be rather prophetic, though not in the way they had anticipated...

Before taking up the story, a look back over the history of Chagford's bells provides plenty of interest. There had been a bell/bells in Chagford's tower since it had first been completed in the **late 15th century**: Chagford is fortunate here, in that Churchwardens' accounts survive from the period 1480 to 1600. (In the mid 20th century, these accounts were transcribed by Ethel Lega-Weekes & Francis Mardon Osborne – himself the son of John Osborne, who was tower captain at the time of the 1914 recasting of Chagford's bells.) The first reference dated **1482** notes "whereof there was paid to William Tavener for ringing

when it thundered 4^d and the second such, in 1492, when "thereof is paid to John Westcote for ringing the bell 2d". Certainly, it is safe to say that before the century was out, there was a ring of four: in 1496 it is recorded "10d for repairs to the great [tenor] bell" and "10d paid for the clapper repaired of the third bell"; and subsequently in 1516 "Item, for four bell ropes 3s. 10d." & 1527: "To four men for tolling a knell for the soul of Roger Bartlett 4d."

In **1537** the four old bells were sold at a price of 18s. per cwt, with the "Great Bell" weighing in at 13 cwt 10lbs. In addition to the money raised from the sale of these old bells, the Churchwardens borrowed heavily from various parishioners in order to purchase a new ring of (probably) five bells. With the (first) Suppression of Religious Houses Act of 1535-36, it is surmised that these bells came from a dissolved priory or monastery – possibly in Exeter?.. Certainly, the Inventory made in 1553 by the Commissioners for Church Goods records "ffyyve bells in the churche, and one bell in the chapel of Southteyn". One of these bells was later recast in Chagford in 1592, with the Churchwardens of the time (one of whom was called Endecott!) being both actively involved in the work.

On 12th August **1765** a licence was granted by the Bishop (Keppel) of Exeter to recast the five bells and create a ring of six. This work was undertaken the following year by Thomas Bilbie of Cullompton. Almost a century later, on 21st October 1864, noted bell historian Rev H T El-lacombe found the installation pretty much unaltered when he visited Chagford as part of his mammoth survey of *The Church Bells of Devon*.

The Victorian years saw many alterations to the Parish Church, one of which was the addition, in **1877**, of two new treble bells, thus making a complete octave. These bells, although not bearing any founder's marks, were cast by Taylor's. Nevertheless, it seems that things had been allowed to slide over the decades, and that during the latter part of the 19th century, the bells were becoming increasingly harder to ring, and possibly did not sound too good either. Some of the visiting bands of (scientific method) ringers at this time were not overly impressed, as shown by contemporary reports in the *Bell News & Ringers Record* (12th September 1885):

Chagford was reached at noon; here some very fair six-scores were rung on the back six, tenor about 19cwt. Although a local bell-hanger [Mr. Aggett] resides here, these bells do not go at all well. It is worthy of note that this bell-hanger hangs his bells

(continued on page 11)

(continued from page 10)

especially to suit round [i.e. call change/whole pull] ringers, as he says there is more round than half-pull [i.e. scientific/method] ringing in Devon.

Over the years, Mr Aggett *did* periodically undertake some maintenance, such as in 1906, when he rehung the 4th and treble using his “all new patent fittings”... This brings us back to the of **June 1913**, when it was already being anticipated that the amount of money required to undertake the necessary work would need to be more than the £515 of the initial appeal:

The Belfry. – *A personal appeal has been sent to the householders of Chagford.... Already some donations have been sent by absent friends. And some who have never seen Chagford, and have no interest here, have heard of her need and shown their sympathy. We do not suppose £500 will cover the total expenditure. The fabric of the Tower alone is demanding a considerable outlay. It is no good putting our newly-cast bells into a canal! They must have a home, as dry as the skill of man can make it. A word of praise is due to our ringers, who have stood nobly to their work, while the bigger bells have needed Herculean efforts to ring.*

In addition to the subscribers to the appeal, the other big source of funds would come from the event planned for that summer, as July's magazine informed...

THE TOWER AND BELFRY.

.... It is hoped to hold a grand Fancy Fair in the Rectory grounds on August 20th (Wednesday). The organizing Committee...are making elaborate and attractive preparations.... The Chagford Band have generously volunteered their services for the afternoon and evening....

The Rector went to list to the stalls and to ask for contributions to them, and tell how various ladies were “keeping their eyes on everybody's larder and garden in order that their Produce Stall may do a roaring trade.” Further, “...we shall have the pleasure of listening to two talented professionals” giving short concerts (“while the Band recover their breath”) – a violinist and contralto.

...subsequently reiterated in August:

N.B.- We are depending largely on August 20th to swell the funds... The articles on the stalls will not be “put up” in price...

....At present the fund reaches over £360. We take this opportunity of thanking everybody who has helped to make this total. But it is not nearly enough! Apart from the bells, the Tower will eat up every penny we can get for it. The fund has been greatly helped by donations of £50 from Miss Wills, and £50 from Mrs Rowcroft... H.R.H. The Prince of Wales has been graciously pleased to promise £10 for the Tower.

Come the September issue, the Rev. Studdy's was effusive in his joy at the success of the Fair:

It is most satisfactory to be able to state that about £620 have been raised within three months for the tower and the bells. The goal of a rough £700 is now not far off... It may be asked, why is there need of all this money? Because we wish to put the Tower (which is really more important than the Bells) in a state of thorough and lasting repair, which mere pointing will not do. This has been tried on other wet towers – they are still wet.

It would overflow our limited space here to give a list of all those kind friends and helpers who made our Fancy Fair the undoubted success it was Japanese village...electric light...Aerial glide....

During the afternoon and evening, when dancing on the lawn took place, over 900 people came into the grounds. The Glide was kept busy the whole time. The concerts... were greatly appreciated. It is seldom we have heard such talent. The Band (5th Devons, Chagford Company)... handbell ringers, Hoopla, weight-guessing, photography, sketches, mother goose, skittles, putting, tea, etc., etc., ... the poor Editor's handy pen fails to express the pleasures of the day, it would require a poet laureate to describe them. The gross takings at the Fair were £232.... It was a delight to witness so many tokens of goodwill and affection towards the old bells.

By November 1913 the Rector and Churchwardens were

...glad to state that Messrs. Tayl;or and Son of Loughborough (bell founders to St. Paul's Cathedral and Exeter Cathedral), will recast the Chagford peal, while Messrs. W. Aggett and Son will make the new frame and rehang the bells. It is impossible to say when the work will be completed, but we hear it will take at least three months.

In January 1914 a table was printed of the Proposed Expenditure: £717. 13s. 0d. The fund at that time stood at £707. 8s. 0d. The Rev. Studdy also printed his letter to the Bellringers

...written in the “book that goes round” at this time of year:

...“Dinna forget.” That for six months our loyal ringers rang rebellious bells, swinging in their dangerous dance. The work was hard, yet till “cease fire” sounded they stood to their ropes – tho' some thought they would never see home again! They deserve the V.C. They won't get it. But I hope they will get some token of your regard and gratitude. “Dinna forget.”...

In relation to this last point, the February 1914 edition of the Parish Magazine gives a full list of donors and their donations given in appreciation of the efforts of the ringers, totalling £21. 15s. 0d.

During the first half of 1914, progress was evidently slow, but Spring brought further updates to the project:

(continued on page 12)

(continued from page 11)

The Bells. – A faculty has now been obtained. Mr. Aggett has been instructed by the Architect to proceed with making the oak bell cage. Messrs. Taylor and Son (Loughborough) will take three months recasting the bells. At any moment therefore they may be taken down. The tower cannot be commenced before June owing to the fact that the only grouting machine in Devonshire is not available before Whitsuntide. Two other Towers have a prior claim on it, namely Thrushleton and Martinhoe.

Then, in August 1914...

At last! The bells are down, the frame is made, the Tower is being restored. Those who thought there was no need to worry about the wood in the Tower must be convinced of the necessity of thorough restoration if they see the old rotten stuff that once was the wood. The danger of the Tower was far greater than anyone supposed.

October 1914's issue, unsurprisingly, shows how the saga of the tower and belfry was subsequently overtaken by international events:

Our congratulations are due to those from Chagford who have joined the Army since the outbreak of war....

The list of a dozen men who'd joined the 8th Devons, Royal Engineers, Dragoon Guards and Royal Army Service Corps included familiar local names such as Endacott, Bowden, Daymond, Perryman, Dicker, Stoneman, Bond.

That this was to be acknowledged in the process of recasting the bells is shown by the update that followed:

The Tower and Bells. – *The work proves to be heavier than was at first anticipated, and the Tower cannot be ready for the Bells till early in November.*

Although Messrs. Taylor and Sons have been asked to "name the day" they cannot do so at present. The work is proceeding as quickly as possible. That is all we are told. The inscriptions on the bells will of course remain as before, with one addition :-

"This peal was being recast when the Great European War broke out in 1914."

C. G. HAYTER-HAMES T. AMERY Wardens

Meantime do go and look at the oak frame made by that premier firm of W Aggett and Sons. They are always glad to let anyone see the frame, and it is worth a visit. It is magnificent, worthy of the firm, and worthy of the Church.

How glorious it would be if the first peal could be a Peace peal! Is it too much to hope for? It is not too much to pray for.

The following month the Rector was moved to explain why the tower pinnacles (as pictured on the cover of contemporary issues of the Parish Magazine) had been removed during the course of the restoration work – one can imagine that there had been mutterings in the town::

I feel an explanation is due to the Parishioners who

would like to see the Tower restored as it was.... The old ones were poor and dangerous and could not be repaired... Our grand old early English Tower was originally built as you see it today. The pinnacles were added after some four hundred years. It was like adding a motor number [plate] on a Roman Chariot! Therefore it is strictly right from an archaeological point of view to remove them.

He also took the opportunity to put the matter into the wider context:

However, knowing the feelings of the Parishioners I coaxed the Architect into designing some new ones... Then came the estimate, somewhere between £500 and £1000 each! It would be a crime to put up feeble things. It shall not be done. Would it be right in a time of financial strain...to embark on a big expense before we have paid our debts? The Churchwardens and I refuse to do so.this is no time for unnecessary expense. Pinnacles can wait. While the cry for help is going up from the ruined and wounded, it is not time to buy pinnacles. So today, at a time of anxiety and pain and poverty our ears must listen to the human cry, and till that cry is hushed can we think of pinnacles.

And to this day, they have never been replaced.

December's opening page of the Parish Magazine brought the solemnest news:

THE WAR. CHAGFORD'S ROLL OF HONOUR.

Private William Burrow, 2nd battalion Coldstream Guards, killed in action on November 6th.

Stoker Richard Mears, H.M.S. Monmouth, sunk by the enemy off the coast of Chilli [sic.]

So the War has come home to us here. They have made the supreme sacrifice.

Nevertheless, following on from this, and on the same page, The Rev. Studdy further informs his parishioners of progress concerning

THE TOWER AND BELLS.

Except for the oak floor in the belfry the Tower is practically finished. Almost by the time these words appear in print the work will be completed. A splendid enforced concrete and asphalt roof is in place. The walls of the tower we trust are now rain proof. Into the West and South walls it is estimated that seven or eight tons of cement have been injected by the grouting machine. The wall inside the staircase has been cemented from top to bottom. If rain does still work through (and we have yet to experience a true Dartmoor test!), it will be on the North side, or through the porousness of the ancient granite. The old wooden louvres in the bell-chamber have been replaced by slate...all that remains to be done now is the adjustment of the oak frame and the bells. Mr. Aggett and Sons have promised to expedite that work without the smallest delay

(continued on page 13)

(continued from page 12)

but at the moment they cannot forecast THE DAY.
....The bells are finished and wait at Loughborough until Mr. Aggett calls them home.

Of course, The War wasn't "over by Christmas"...but completion of the work to tower and bells was nearing. Parish Magazine, January 1915:

THE BELLS.

Wednesday, December 16th was a memorable day, when Mr. Reed's traction engine hauled home our recast bells. They appear to be perfect, an exact octave, and beautiful in tone, far different indeed from the old discordant sounds. A new message has been added to the treble. May that message ring home to everyone to call them to the house of God. "Hear me when I call." The bells will be dedicated on January 27th or Feb. 3rd. Mr. Aggett is quick in work and cautious in promises.

The Rector then printed a list of inscriptions on the bells, "for the interest of parishioners". And sure enough, (Wednesday) February 3rd was announced as the chosen day:

At last! After many months of weary waiting! It will be a day to be remembered in Chagford, and everyone who possibly can, will, I doubt not, attend the service, when the bells will be blessed, and formally given into the charge (not the control) of



Will Weeks	John Endacott	John Osborne	William 'Drummer' Aggett	James Aggett (son)	Charles Endacott	?	Henry 'Granfer' Weeks	Fred Courtier	Sam Stoneman	Henry Dodd
		Tower Captain	Bell Hanger	Bell Hanger	Sexton					

the Churchwardens. Owing to engagements neither our Bishops, the Archdeacon nor Rural Dean could attend. Much work will have to be done afterwards, in connection with the clock. The work on the Tower has been a greater success than we anticipated. There are only one or two small leaks which are not worth considering, due to the ancient spongy granite. The new West door....prevents any wet (as formerly) from coming in underneath. Altogether a vast improvement. We claim a decisive victory over the rain....

The opening article of the March 1915 issue of the Parish Magazine comprised a full report of the service of Blessing, including a brief review of the history of Chagford Bells:

These eight rang out their messages until June 1st 1913, when it became too dangerous to continue, owing to the rottenness of the frame and beams.

Several people did not realise how rotten those beams were until they saw them lying honey-combed and pulverized lying in the Churchyard. Some of them must have been in the Tower since 1490 A.D.

The joy and thankfulness of the parishioners...on seeing the work completed and hearing their bells again was intensified by the fact that practically all the money required had been raised...the actual sum needed for frame and bells (£460) was in hand.

The Blessing was undertaken by the Rev. J. Trelawney Ross, D.D. (Proctor in Convocation), who also preached the sermon: "....He urged all ringers not only to summon other to worship but to worship themselves, and also support their Rector if the bells were ever asked for an unsuitable pupose...." The Rectors of Moreton, Drewsteignton and Gidleigh were also present. After the dedication and blessing a short peal was rung. The Te Deum was sung and the Rector gave the blessing.

After the presentation of the offering (£10. 9s. 6d.) there was a beautiful commemoration of departed benefactors of the Church. A word of praise is due to the Choir who sang really well. In spite of a wet stormy day, the Church was absolutely full. Unhappily the war cloud prevented any festivities afterwards, and no ringers were invited from a distance. The occasion was rather that of a family offering their quiet but real thanks to God without any festive element.

And so, with the work now largely complete, there just followed short notes listing (in June) the weights of the old and new bells (in total 69cwt 1qtr 10lbs compared with 69-0-13, respectively) and (in December) a breakdown of the Tower and Bell Fund. Donations accounted for approximately half of the £817. 18s. 2d. received, with the Fancy Fair providing in excess of a quarter of the total. Every last penny was spent:

	£	s.	d.
Taylor & Co. – Re-casting Peal	180	18	1
Wm. Aggett – Frame, etc	276	18	0
Dart & Francis – Tower Restoration	297	19	9
Architect's Fees	59	4	4
Mears & Stainbank – Inspection	1	13	0
Bell Faculty	1	5	0
	817	18	2

(continued on page 14)

Post Script...

In **1946**, at a cost of £287, the bells were rehung by Taylor's, on new roller bearings (presumably replacing younger Mr Aggett's patent self-aligning bearings), the work being completed in time for the bells to ring out for the wedding of Miss Chadwick, the then Rector's daughter.

In **1961**, as part of the Septcentenary of the dedication of the church, a new ringers' gallery was built at first floor level, thus allowing a choir vestry to be created in the base of the tower. The existing (presumably Victorian) rope layout remained the same however – when the bells had been rung from the ground floor, the ropes were drawn to drop four on either side, in straight lines, to allow folk to walk through to the West door. This, coupled with an excessive rope length without rope guides, made the bells rather difficult to handle.

In **1980** further refurbishment of the bells and gear was carried out by Arthur Fidler, and a specially made carved oak table and a clock were installed in the ringing chamber in memory of Percy Rice, Tower Captain for 33 years, and who had died the previous year. Fund-raising included a group of the younger ringers undertaking a sponsored 40-mile cycle ride along the A30 dual carriageway to Exeter and back – just in time to ring for a wedding.

On 28th **January 2000**, the bells were once more silenced when the church architect, Allen van der Steen, reported substantial decay to the ends of the five oak foundation beams below the bell frame. An inspection the following week with Prebendary John G. M. Scott (the then Exeter Diocesan Bell Advisor) and Stephen Rogers (structural engineer) ascertained that the decay was caused by wet rot – no great surprise with the tower's porous granite being soaked by year upon year's wet winters. As a result of the decay, the frame had sagged somewhat – though the frame and the gear were still in fair condition. Rather

ironically, the bells themselves had been well-maintained and the ring itself was in excellent condition.

Over the course of 11 months, an appeal raised the **£65,000** necessary to undertake the tricky task of inserting three hot-dipped galvanised RSJ's into the tower beneath the oak foundation beams, with some work on the South Porch roof and churchyard wall. (Interestingly, the introduction of the steel into the structure caused the sound of the bells to become considerably, and uncomfortably, amplified in the ringing chamber. As a result, a soundproof layer was laid to the floor of the original ringing room – now the clock room – above.) Fund-raising activities included a bell-ringers' concert (£1,154) in the Jubilee hall followed the next day by a sponsored abseil (£2,300+) down the tower by several of the ringers (assisted by members of 42 Commando Royal Marines). The work on the tower was completed in time for the bells to ring on Advent Sunday.

A large bequest to the church enabled considerable reordering to the west end of the church, the work taking place during **2006-07**. This created a large extended gallery, giving the ringers considerably more space in the ringing chamber. Also included in the reordering work was the installation of a new granite floor to the rear end of the nave, with under floor heating. Coupled with the piping of the rainwater from the tower roof, and further re-pointing of the tower stonework, this dried out the tower to such an extent that the ropes dried out too and became dangerously unmanageable. Thus, in **2008**, the ringers began to raise further funds to enable several of the ropes to be rerouted with new and additional pulley blocks installed, and a new rope guide to be fitted to give a proper ringing circle - all of which was aimed to improve the handling of the bells (especially of help to new and less-experienced ringers) and sight-lines for the ringers. The bells were only out of use for one week while Nicholson's undertook the work.

Jon Bint

WEST DOWN TOWER BELL SCREEN

In 1992 Mervyn Phillips the captain of West Down at the time, said to Tony Jeffery "How much do you think it would cost to put up a screen between the belfry and the church? There is £1,500 in the bell fund"

After thinking about it Tony said "I think that could be done" Material to come from the Bell Fund. Tony said that he would do the job and he would give the labour free of charge. It was decided to go ahead. Tony drew up some plans, but they were rejected! The church was then involved and went to an architect but those plans were too involved, and the work stopped before it began!

Some years later (2010) Mervyn Phillips passed away and donations in lieu of flowers were to go towards the screen. David Ravenscroft (a ringer at West Down) and Juliet Alexander (churchwarden) worked together and used Mr Lomas, an architect, to draw up some more plans which were acceptable to all parties and allowed the work to go ahead.

The work was all done by Tony Jeffery (all labour free). He started in 2013 and completed the job in Spring 2014. This now included money left in lieu of flowers (November 2011) by the late Gerald Stevens, a ringer at West Down since 1956. Money from the bell fund was also used. Tony

did all the work himself with just a little help from the male ringers and their relations from West Down. I think Mervyn and my late father, Gerald Stevens, would be very pleased with the finished results! All I did was to take the photos!

Margaret White



"Steady as she goes"
(Tony Jeffery—3rd from right)

OBITUARIES

DAVID HAMPSON

I am sorry to announce the death of David Hampson.

David farmed all his life at Greenslade Farm between North Tawton and Sampford Courtenay.

He learnt to ring at Sampford Courtenay in the 1950s, but then rang at Okehampton until he was unable to climb the stairs about 10 years ago.

He then transferred his Sunday ringing to North Tawton until he died during a break whilst ringing for the Sunday Service on 3rd August 2014.

MARIE MILLER 1941 - 2013

Marie Miller died on 16 December 2013 and her funeral was on 3 January 2014.

Marie Miller, previously Bond and neé Chant, lived in Stoke Gabriel as a young child and returned much later in life to her former family home in Yonder Meadow. It was upon her return that she took up bell ringing.

Marie, who had been a state registered nurse was a pianist and had started to take on church organ lessons. She could often be heard practising in the late afternoons.

Marie had a very keen eye and was also an artist and designed covers for the church magazine and also designed the village sign that is at Rydon Cross.

Marie made rapid progress with her ringing and was very enthusiastic and loyal. She could be counted upon to turn up regularly for practices and for service ringing. Marie also rang regularly at Collaton St Mary and at Churston Ferrers where she made many bell ringing friends. Her sense of timing for striking was exceptional and many were amazed at her perfection with call change ringing.

Marie, after retiring from work, joined the Ringkly Ringers, a

Devon group that still meets on the second Wednesday of every month.

Marie was very involved with village life when she returned and was a regular worshipper at the church and also attended on a Wednesday morning. She volunteered for many duties and had also taken on selling raffle tickets for the Stoke Gabriel Annual Carnival. Her duties included sitting down by the Mill Pond for many hours a day for weeks at a time in order to sell tickets, not only to visitors but also to residents. All of this was in aid of village causes.

It was a privilege to be asked to organise ringing for Marie's funeral. We rang before and after and the special request was for the bells to be open rather than muffled. There was no shortage of bell ringers. Refreshments were available in the pub, the same pub where the ringers normally go after ringing on their practice night.

Michael Webster

Captain of Stoke Gabriel Bell Ringers.

BRIAN HEYWOOD

Mr. Brian Heywood, former Captain of St Thomas Kentisbury North Devon passed away at the end of July. His funeral was held at Kentisbury on Friday August 8th

Brian a retired farmer used to ring with a group of ringers regularly in the 1980's some of whom rang a muffled peal before the funeral and an open peal of sixty on third's after the service to celebrate his life.

The ringers who regularly rang with Brian were John Conibear, Bert Conibear, Len Smale, Gerald Stevens, Bert Bartlett, Fred and Margaret White.

The ringers who rang at his funeral were John Conibear, Fred and Margaret White. They were joined by Tony Jeffery, Tom Welch and Christine Ley.

CAROL SERVICE

The combined Guild and Association's Annual Carol Service

will be held at Buckfast Abbey

on Saturday 13th December 2014, commencing at 3.00 p.m.

As in previous years all proceeds will be donated to the - Children's Hospice South West.

It is anticipated that the Abbey bells will be available both before and after the service.

Ample car parking is available within the Abbey grounds.

TRAINING CERTIFICATES

This is just a reminder that you have an opportunity to reward a person who has put effort in to teaching you. The AGM is coming up in November and this is when we traditionally award training certificates to people who have been nominated by their team (without them knowing) to receive a Certificate from the Devon Association to mark their dedication. Just send a letter detailing their effort (which will be read out) and signed by as many of the team as possible and the person will receive their own certificate at the AGM.

David Trist
Training Officer

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS

Vice Chairman (elected February 2014)

James STEER - 8, Gregory Close, Bow EX17 6DD ☎ **01363 82359**

Diary for 2014

October 1st

Affiliation Fees were due.

Honorary Treasurer: Mr John Barnes, Cunnicott, North Buckland, Nr Braunton,
Devon EX33 1HY Tel: 01271 890517 e-mail jcbarnes482@btinternet.com.

NOTE

Saturday 8th November **AGM** Town Hall, North Tawton, at 14:15

Saturday 13th December **Devon Ringers Carol Service**, Buckfast Abbey, 3.00pm

Big Wilf's Bell Muffles

Easy to fit and remove leather muffles that stay put, secured by industrial double sided Velcro.

Free with every order, an embroidered muffle bag with your church tower or logo up to 200 x 200mm.

www.bigwilf.plus.com

MUSICAL HANDBELL RESTORATION

Free written quotations
Specialised repairs by:

Geoffrey C. Hill
New Court Farm
Lamerton
Tavistock
PL19 8RR

01822 614319

newcourtfarm1@btinternet.com

NICHOLSON ENGINEERING LTD



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

CHURCH BELLHANGERS of DISTINCTION

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

bells@nicholsonbellhangers.com
www.nicholsonbellhangers.com

WORKS

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

CORRESPONDENCE

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

COPY FOR "DEVON CALLS"

**Copy is always
welcome and
we rely on you to
submit articles,
please.**

**These should be sent
to the Acting Editor,**

Colin ADAMS -

email:

kentonian@eclipse.co.uk



MALCOLM BROWN BELLROPES

Bellropes made and repaired

Wheels stays and other wooden fittings made and repaired

Well Cottage
Ballingers' Row
Chedworth
Glos GL54 4AQ

[www. MalcolmBrownBellropes.co.uk](http://www.MalcolmBrownBellropes.co.uk)
01285 720757
Malcolm@MalcolmBrownBellropes.co.uk

