

# **The Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers**



**Newsletter Autumn 2015**

*Issue Number 16*

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 2015 Newsletter: I hope you find it enjoyable. By reporting a selection of events across the whole Association, it's intended to help you keep in touch with what's happened beyond your own patch over the past year.

This is my last edition as editor. What started as an experiment with the approval of a General Meeting has somehow gone on to 16 editions over 10 years. This, coupled with my being able to remember what I did on VE Day back in 1945, as mentioned later, suggests it's time to hand over to someone fresh.

I have enjoyed my time as editor. It has enabled me to get to know Members County-wide and the strengths (and weaknesses) of our nine Branches. All in all, from what's appeared in the Newsletters, I think the Association is perhaps more dynamic than when I joined it in the 1960s. My sincere thanks are due to my colleagues who have uncomplainingly dealt with the layout over the years, Anne Deebank, Matthew Blurton, Jean Doman and Holly Leese (née Webster).

### What of the future?

I gave the Association's principal Officers notice of my retirement several months ago so they could plan what should follow. This accepts of course that a permanent record of a few aspects of the 'feel' of the Association and its 'health', rather than simply the bald, factual statements in the Annual Report, is something the Members wish to continue. To reach a conclusion on what to do however will undoubtedly require time, effort, wide consultation and perhaps some thinking 'outside the box'.

At the moment we have four means of on-going, Yorkshire-wide, communication – this Newsletter, the Annual Report, the Web Site and a Facebook group – two permanent records and two ephemeral. As a starter for consideration, could perhaps these be merged, with data from some transferring to others and perhaps resulting in only one costly printed publication?

Change is endemic to any organisation and bellringing and its Guilds and Associations are no exception. Indeed, change in them may be happening faster these days than at any time in the past. It is a challenge this Association has to face in order to continue to provide an effective Service to its Members.

*Robert Cater, November 2015.*

## ASSOCIATION LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE

Our library is held as part of the York Minster's Library in The Old Palace in York. Details about it are on our web site ([www.yacr.org.uk](http://www.yacr.org.uk)), under LIBRARY.

This gives the Old Palace's quite complex rules and regulations for inspecting and borrowing our holdings, which are held in four separate parts of its collection. The Old Palace's opening hours are also shown. It should be noted that the Old Palace's Library is merged with that of the University of York.

Our holdings have all now been catalogued in detail by The Old Palace staff in accordance with current librarianship practices and can be seen via our web site. The essential process is -

1. Open our web site [www.yacr.org.uk](http://www.yacr.org.uk)
2. Select LIBRARY
3. In the text, select [www.york.ac.uk/library](http://www.york.ac.uk/library) (or start with this web site)
4. In the YorSearch box (not in the Search box at the top right corner of the screen) put – in full – Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers

5. Our catalogue is then shown.

Do have a look at it all please.

Our archive is also held in The Old Palace, but in a quite different department. The rules for inspecting it are shown as stated above. Note that nothing may be borrowed. Our archive runs to 29 box files whose contents are shown on our web site, most of it input in great detail by an archivist.

For two years or more I have not been able to input further material until the Archivist had cleared his backlog, which he's now done. By the time this Newsletter appears I will have input a further 4 box files (numbers 30, 31, 32 and 33). I intend to add a list of their contents to that of the other 29 boxes, providing our web site is up and running.

Members should note that I do not in future have complete freedom to store any artefact I wish. Only those deemed 'worthy of archiving' by the Archivist may be stored.

*Robert Cater (Association Librarian)*

### Mayhem at Middleham a Century ago.

'The first 720 by a woman'.

The Ripon & Richmond Chronicle of 1961 related the take-over of the call-change band at Middleham in 1904 by a group of change-ringers. Change ringing had been promoted at the tower in 1901 by "regular practices on silent bells by probationers of both sexes". The group gained membership of the Cleveland & North Yorkshire Association and a meeting was held there in 1902, members arriving by brake (sic) and train.

But the early days were not all plain sailing for the new band, for they were one of two bands of ringers operating in the town. Although the new band could practise at the tower, it was the old band of call-change ringers who rang for services.

This went on until June 1904 when it is recorded in the ringers' records "Rang for service for the first time, being in possession of the belfry, a plain course of Plain Bob Doubles. The old band, being in disagreement amongst themselves, could not ring and would not resign, so they were requested to do one or the other by the Rector. They resigned". Dr Henry C Pauli was appointed ringing master.

By December 1904 all 10 members had rung a 720. On 11 October 1906 the first 720 to be rung by a woman in Middleham tower was rung by Mrs H C Pauli. At the time she was the only lady member of the C&NYA and possibly the first woman in the North of England to have rung a 720.

In 1911 the six bells were augmented to eight after "the treble fell out" (sic) of the old frame.



## 2015 NATIONAL 12-BELL FINAL

### At St Peter's Mancroft, Norwich - a view from Leeds

Norwich welcomed us with a beautiful sunny day on June 27, complementing the fantastic organisation by the welcoming locals. Mancroft ringers had invited the competition in order to celebrate the tercentenary of the first recorded peal, as well as the fortieth anniversary of the first 12-bell competition. Leeds was the sole Northern representative amongst bands from London, Exeter, Bristol, Melbourne, Birmingham, Cambridge and Towcester to join the Mancroft ringers competing on their own bells.

Lincolnshire Surprise Maximus was an intentionally tricky choice of test piece to ring on bells renowned for their challenging go and several of our team had learned it for the first time following our unexpected progress through the March eliminator. We had thoroughly enjoyed our practice session at Mancroft in May and ended at a high standard. On final day we were drawn first; always a challenge, especially for those ringing in their first final, and sadly we weren't able to reproduce our best ringing. That skill only comes with time and experience so we're working on it! However that did release us to enjoy the rest of the day and we made the most of the good company and plentiful food and beer on offer.

The results were late, always the sign of a tight result. Firstly the Chairman of the 12 Bell Committee David Pipe gave a warm vote of thanks and small presentation to George Unsworth, stepping down as the competition's secretary after years of hard work co-ordinating very successful eliminators and finals.

The judges were given very little time to make comments but it was clear the top places were very close and hope rose that the Brummies may have been toppled at last. We came 9th, so were comforted not to have come last and remain proud of qualifying for seven finals in eight years. A mighty cheer greeted the new champions, the College Youths, led by their Master and Senior Steward, Katie Town and Rob Lee. Our sincere congratulations to them; Leeds, York and Stockton will all do their very best to emulate them at next year's competition when the final will be held in Aston.

**Wendy Bloom, Leeds Minster**

*Leeds was the only Yorkshire band to get through to the Final this year, which was won by the Ancient Society of College Youths from London. Sadly, York Minster and Stockton on Tees were defeated in the Eliminators - Ed.*

**Photo (Above): Back row l to r: Simon Kemp, Steve Ollerton, Ed Brightman, Paul Bennett, Graham Bloom, Matt Young.**

**Front l to r: Hannah Betts, Lucy Crowder, Adrian Moreton, Wendy Bloom, Rachel Robinson, Gill Moreton.**



## WHISTON AND THE EAGLE

Here's a photograph and a few words about the band of young lads at Whiston shown in The Eagle of 2 January 1960. It was shown courtesy of The South Yorkshire and Rotherham Advertiser. I've asked around of a few men of the right vintage, but no names have been forthcoming.

A band at Whiston was apparently taught by the late Norman Chaddock, before he moved to Rotherham Minster and afterwards to Market Weighton, before retiring to look after the bells at Inveraray on Loch Fyne in Scotland.

The Eagle was the seminal comic for boys, started in 1950 and continuing until 1969. I bought the first issue with my pocket money and kept it for many years, but now sadly lost. Who can remember 'Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future', which was always on the first few pages? It spawned a series on Radio Luxembourg.

The papers came from the late Mr J R Hutchinson of Stillingfleet.

*(If you don't know the importance of Radio L, ask anyone over 70).  
Editor*



# All Saints' Roos



*Lloyd Ainley and Harry Wilkie, two of the new young ringers.*

## A Tale of Two Augmentations

Just over two years ago, All Saints' Roos was a ring of 5. The three 17th century bells together with a newly cast Taylor treble and tenor (12-3-11) had been hung by J Taylor and Co for full circle ringing in a single tier metal frame in 1911.

One hundred years later some major maintenance was needed if the bells were to continue to ring and so a very successful appeal was launched. It was decided to augment to 6 at the same time. The bells were rehung and refurbished in 2012 and the new treble donated by the Beverley and District Ringing Society was cast by Taylors and installed by Whites of Appleton.

The Whites scheme involved moving the third of the 6 to

a new frame on an upper tier and moving the second along, the new treble thereby occupying the old treble pit. This arrangement proved to be very successful – and it was not by accident that the supporting steelwork and design could easily accommodate two more bells. The local band progressed to ringing Cambridge and Beverley. The local community enjoy hearing the bells – and we enjoy ringing them.

### But what of the future?

Roos Primary is a Church of England School. Most of the pupils live in the village. As a foundation governor I had long felt that teaching some children would be a wonderful way of further strengthening the links between the church and the school. I am trained school teacher, and have taught adults

to ring, but somehow I did not feel confident enough to teach children to ring safely.

ITTS Module 1 gave me the toolkit, the confidence and the accreditation I felt I needed. A lot has been written in The Ringing World about the pros and cons of the ITTS. All I can add is that I found it immensely helpful.

One child was used as a 'guinea pig' on the understanding that he didn't have to continue ringing if he didn't like it. I simply wanted to find out whether I could teach a 9 year old to handle a bell successfully. All went well. Lloyd is now a regular member of our Sunday service band – as are his four friends....

The children rang for their school end of term service in July 2013 while the rest of the school looked up from the church to the ringing gallery. The



*Helen Audley receiving the two new bells from John McWilliams (Churchwarden), with Revd Giles Galley looking on.*

concentration on their faces had to be seen to be believed and they did really well. So we had a situation where there were five children fighting over who was going to ring one of our six bells, and a substantial upper tier frame supporting just one solitary bell.

It was time to implement stage 2. Thanks to another generous grant from the Beverley and District Ringing Society, one from the YACR and some private funding, the order was placed with Whites of Appleton for two more Taylor trebles. They were cast in June 2014 at the Loughborough foundry witnessed by Years 5 and 6 from Roos Primary. Roos to Loughborough is a very expensive coach trip, but grants by 'The Archbishop of York's Mission Fund' and the Ann Watson Trust covered the full cost. The children had a tour of the museum and works, culminating in the casting. This was an experience the children will always remember and helps them to feel a part of what is

going on at the church. It is literally watching history in the making. Several months later they are still talking about it.

At the end of September, Graham Clifton from Whites of Appleton arrived with the new bells. The entire school plus staff (including the school secretary who was late leaving and arrived on a child's bike borrowed from the bike shed) walked down to the church for the occasion. The 5th of the 6 had been lowered to create some working space so the children were able to see the difference between the old and the new. They listened as a new bell was struck. While it was still humming, an answering note came from high in the tower – the oldest bell (1665) sounding in welcome. Everyone watched as one of the new bells was hoisted up the tower. They were totally enthralled.

The installation went according to plan. James Haseldine and Graham from Whites had measured very, very carefully. Yes – it is a tight fit up in the

tower, but the bells handle very well and they sound glorious. The 8 were rung on Sunday October 5th for morning service, and we have had our first practice night. The learners have already adapted surprisingly quickly. So far, so good.

We have some more potential young ringers in the pipeline waiting to start. Practice nights need managing carefully. (Yes, I have now completed ITTS Module 2). We start half an hour early, at 7pm, the first hour being devoted to rounds and call changes and plain hunt for the youngsters. Methods are rung after the 8pm watershed! It is a fine balancing act trying to further the progress of the entire band, but a lovely problem to have.

The thanks of the Roos band go to Andrew Bicknell and James Blackburn of the B & D who gave freely of their time to assist with the installation, to J. Taylor & Co both for casting the bells and for giving the children such a fabulous afternoon, and of course to Graham Clifton and all the Whites team for a job well done.

The Service of Dedication was conducted by Revd Giles Galley on Saturday, 1st November 2014 (All Saints Day) at 2pm, followed by afternoon tea at the Roos Memorial Institute. We were delighted to welcome many ringers who have supported the project and who shared in our afternoon of celebration.

*Helen Audley*



# DONCASTER AND DISTRICT SOCIETY

## A Coptic Church encounter

The October 2014 meeting promised to be a bit special as a visit to Eastwood, Rotherham, had been arranged. The Victorian church of St Stephen in Eastwood was declared redundant in 1991 and was under threat of demolition for several years. It was saved in 1997 by the intervention of the Coptic Orthodox Church, which took it over and adapted it for use in its own traditions, and it now serves the entire north east of England. The bells, a complete Warner octave of 1909 had suffered from neglect and were listed as unringable. The Coptic Orthodox Church has no tradition of bell-ringing and so there was little cause to invest in maintenance of the installation, but a few Rotherham ringers established a good relationship with the new church officers and were permitted to undertake restoration work. Their determination and hard work led to an excellent restoration and the bells are now in good ringing order.



*Rev. Father Mousa Rashdy Ghattas presents an Icon on papyrus to Doncaster and District Society Vice-president Helen Nichols (Photo; Ted Steele)*

Some pleasant ringing was had on the bells and everyone was very impressed with the quality of what had been achieved. Warner's bells are not renowned for their tunefulness but these repay good striking and sound well in full peal, when some of their hum comes through. The ringing was however something of a side-show compared to what became the main event of the day. Rev Father Mousa Ghattas, the Coptic priest, visited the ringing-room with a lay colleague and listened to some of the ringing. Both were shown the rudiments of handling a bell English style and with assistance they each rang some back stroke only rounds. Both were apparently quite surprised to find how difficult it was and just how much it differed from their expectations. Father Mousa then invited us to go down to the church where tea, sandwiches and cakes had been prepared for us. This was entirely unexpected, but was extremely welcome as no "ringers' tea" had been possible on this occasion.

During tea Father Mousa disclosed another surprise, one which further demonstrated the outstanding kindness and warmth of the Coptic Orthodox Church members. We are, he said all Children of Christ whatever branch of the Christian Church we follow, and in this spirit of shared faith, to mark our visit and to reinforce the bond between our communities he presented the Society with an icon on papyrus. This is a wonderful modern rendition of the crucifixion in traditional iconic style. It was formally accepted by our Vice-president, Helen Nichols and it is true to say that she was quite overwhelmed by this wonderful gesture, as indeed we all were.

Father Mousa then led us in a tour of the church in which we were thrilled by the wonderful workmanship that has transformed this typically Victorian Anglican church into one which fully reflects the Coptic traditions. The main item is the iconostasis, what we would perhaps refer to as a chancel screen. Beyond this and into the former Sanctuary area only Priests may go, and they go shoeless.

Father Mousa explained the historic rationale for this tradition, which dates back to Old Testament times. He then described the various icons that are to be seen in the iconostasis, the same saints being found in the same traditional arrangement in all such churches. We were able to admire the excellent craftsmanship of this screen. Quite apart from the painted icons (done with traditional inks made in the anciently established way) there are patterns of painted colours and inlaid motifs of ivory and mother of pearl. Every colour in the icons and patterns, and every material has its own special significance and it was all explained in Father Mousa's easy, friendly style, although he quite unnecessarily apologised for his "poor" English.

Finally we came to a side chapel where we saw more icons, including an ancient one brought from North Africa and painted on a goat skin. It was explained that the smaller groups that meet through the week use this chapel to pray and so it was fitting to invite Father Mousa to conclude our tour with a prayer, which he did, praying God's blessing upon our communities, our churches and calling us all to stronger faith.

*Ted Steele*

## Handbell Course at Clifton

For years, change ringing on handbells has been a closed book, the sort of thing to be impressed by at dinners, but not for me. All changed in July when we attended a beginners' course at Clifton, York, run by Elaine Scott and a cohort of very patient helpers. We didn't start with handbells, but with a dance! Or it seemed like it as we stood in line and weaved our way around each other to bring home the rudiments of hunting up and down.

Hunting theory is OK written down and performed by walking through it, but try to change into holding two bells, and teach the hands to ring after each other in the coursing position with another bell between, then swap over and come back. This took plenty of patient teaching before some rudiments of rhythm arrived, but we got there! And then of course, there's the other positions, the 'Opposites' and the '2-3' position. They're still to be conquered but a careful look at the theory now tells me how they all fit together.



**Back row l to r : Neil Donovan, John Leech, Peter Scott, Pat Schofield, Penny Thorley, Elaine Scott.**

**Fron l o r: Gail Cater, Bob Schofield, Marian Thomas.**

Perhaps one day, this old dog might have learned some new tricks. Time to open up the dusty handbell box in the tower and have a go.

Thanks to Elaine and Peter and all the other willing volunteers who so patiently enables us to enter into this fascinating world. I can't let it rest here.

*Bob Schofield*

## SIX GO MAD IN HUDDERSFIELD



*Happy faces at the YACR Summer Course*

*(With apologies to Enid Blyton)*

'It's that time of year again' said Amanda. 'Let's go and have some super fun ringing round

Yorkshire for our holidays'. Gillian, who'd never been before, was bubbling over with excitement. She'd heard about the last adventure and was bouncing up and down with anticipation. 'I'll get the gin', she said. Amanda, who'd been on a training course, had already packed a Swiss Army knife and a net of lemons. Ian had been told that he, as the only boy, had better behave himself and be more generous with the Fentiman's Tonic Water. Sue and Jennifer offered to provide the nuts, crisps and olives.

At last the day dawned and the chums set off. Storthes Hall looked as pretty as ever, bathed in sunshine, miles away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Huddersfield and not a bit like the Lunatic Asylum it once had housed. First stop, the kitchen of our student flat, where Gillian produced an amazing bottle of 'Yorkshire Gin'. 'Well, that makes a change from Bombay!' the merry band

shouted in delight. More fun was in store as Pat produced a jar of ready sliced lemons. 'Here's to Booth's' said Amanda, pocketing her knife and juggling the net of lemons expertly back into her bag. 'No need to waste time this year cutting up citrus fruits when we can be studying our methods! And my fingers will remain undamaged - until the first ringing blisters appear.' With Amanda's words ringing in our ears, we dashed off to meet our various Course leaders for an introductory chat.

At dinner in the refectory, the food was splendid and our party of bellringers was joined by a team of rugged footballers from California and some equally sporty cyclists also from the USA. It was an interesting variety of people. That day was Gillian's birthday and Jennifer was celebrating hers on Saturday so Steven Soames from Settle, aka 'Food for Thought' and a Bellringer himself, had been persuaded to bake a pair of Victoria Sponge bells for our pair of birthday Belles; the kitchen staff generously hid them from view until dinner was over, when they lit the candles and led the assorted diners in a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday'.

Full of fish pie and birthday cake, we made our way to our various churches to start to practise our chosen Methods. The chums decided later that Team leaders and helpers must be both super skilled and eternally patient to ring the same method over and over again to accommodate the varying abilities of the learners. 'Here's to them all,' agreed the intrepid Six, as they gathered round the kitchen table later, to revise their learning over a small G & T. One or two of the Team Leaders arrived to check that the chums were behaving themselves and stayed to supervise the camp fire singsong. (That bit's made up. There was no camp fire!)

Saturday dawned bright and clear. With a hearty breakfast to set them up for the day, the Six set off to meet their various tutors for a theory lesson. Cheered by the fact that most of them had done some homework at least, negotiating the Blue Line wasn't too awful, even after the Yorkshire Gin, so it was good fun to try putting theory into practice at our morning session, followed by lunch at a local hostelry.

The Course Organisers, Jane, Jean, Sharon and Stuart, had altered the timetable this year to give a little more time to get around and enjoy the extra activities, and everyone agreed this was a jolly good thing, especially as the Saturday afternoon ringing session was usually the one when everyone got very fed up with their lack of progress and wanted to go home and sulk. For Pat, at least, this proved to be very true. Fortunately, the helpers and tutors were patient and encouraging and patted everyone on the head and said they'd feel better soon.

Another excellent dinner preceded a corporate ringing session at Ecclesfield at seven o'clock. Several of the chums passed on this as it was quite a long drive and went to the local pub for a lemonade and an informal session with a friendly tutor. Lots of laughter followed, along with another little G and T and so to bed.

Sunday morning was quite relaxed, with lots of extra bell-based activities laid on to keep everyone out of mischief; Jane guided us expertly through 'Computers and Bell Ringing For Dummies' as the chums' fingers whizzed over iPhones and Androids in search of any elusive App they might have



**One of the practical Groups in Cawthorne ringing chamber.**

**Back row l to r: Margaret Perrott, Gail Cater, Marian Thomas, Anne Deebank, Helen Ahmed, Amanda Jones, Pat Harding.**

**Front l to r: Michael Sheeran, Stuart Raggett, Julia Jennings, Stuart Holtam, Ben East.**

missed which would perfect their ringing overnight. Amanda, Pat, Gillian and Jennifer then had loads of fun ringing excellent tunes on handbells with Ann encouragingly cheering them on, 'Cwm Rhondda' pealed out alongside 'Jerusalem' with amazingly few clashes and clangs.

An excellent Sunday lunch gave us the opportunity to say a hearty thanks to the staff at Storthes Hall before we all left for our final ringing sessions at some other local churches and our trip home.

All of the chums agreed that they had had a spiffing time and that the course organisers had been jolly good company and super teachers once again. With a hearty and happy 'hip hip hurrah!' the Six wound their weary way through the pretty countryside to home, their ears ringing with Bob Minor, Grandsire Triples and Kent, Oxford and Cambridge. 'What does 'bats in the belfry' mean?' asked Gillian later. 'It means we're all mad about ringing' shouted the Six with perfect timing.

*Pat Harding*



## SUNDAY SERVICE BANDS STRIKING CONTEST

This year's Contest was held at Rotherham Minster on 19 September and judged by Julia Cater (of Penrith, Cumbria) assisted by myself. We sat on the Minster's nave roof and thankfully it was one of those glorious Autumn days when the sun shone continuously after a misty start. Indeed, quite surprisingly to us, the lead roof got hot under our feet. Teams entered from seven of the Association's nine Branches.

The results were declared at the General Meeting afterwards at nearby Rawmarsh. York Minster was the winner, taking the trophy from Leeds Minster which had won it for the past three years. York was closely followed in joint second place by Selby Abbey and Leeds. Indeed, Julia commented on the satisfying Doubles ringing by the Selby ringers to a consistent beat set by the tenor, but with sadly enough very slight striking errors by other bells to be pipped at the post.

At the meeting we stood in memory of John Siddle of Filey who had recently died. We also adopted a proposal to have a post of Public Relations Officer for the Association, with Robert Wood of Ripon being temporarily appointed to it.

*Robert Cater*



*I to r: Peter Sanderson (York Minster), Andrew Aspland (YACR President), Julia Cater.*

## OXENHOPE



**Worth Valley Ringers on tour at Giggleswick. In front (L-R) are Gabriel (Oxenhope), Hannah and Amy (both Kildwick) and Amy (Oxenhope) with Beatrice and Cat (Haworth).**

### 'My first bell ringing tour'

In October 2014 I went on my first ever bell ringing tour. I was fascinated, as I am still a learner and have only rung in two towers before, Oxenhope and Keighley. I found this trip truly rewarding.

The first tower we visited was the church of Saint Oswald's, Horton in Ribblesdale, a beautiful Norman church with a lot of ancient graves. The bells were even better! There were six of them and compared to my home tower, Oxenhope with eight, they were hard to control. Nonetheless I thoroughly enjoyed ringing at this wonderful church and also getting to climb the narrow, spiral staircase and seeing the giant bells.

The second church was the Holy Ascension church at Settle. We saw a steam train on the way! This church was slightly more modern, with different sounding bells to the previous church. They were higher pitched, but I loved the sound of them ringing rounds.

After a hearty and tasty lunch at the Harts Head Inn, we were back ringing again at St Alkelda in Giggleswick. I liked how you entered the tower through a trap door under one of the bell ropes, and you could see the ringers from down in the church. It was a small tower, and if I could give a tip, it would be to keep your arms straight.

I found the last tower, Saint Andrew's at Kildwick very interesting because I had never rung with a Yorkshire End before. If you don't know what a Yorkshire end is - it's a second sally on the end of the rope. This church was a lovely place to finish our amazing tour. This was my favourite place to ring because I found the Yorkshire ends an interesting challenge.

*Gabriel McCarthy aged 11.*

## JASPER WHITFIELD SNOWDON COMMEMORATION EVENT



*The Handbell Band l to r: Paul Brook, Iain Scott, James Holdsworth, Elaine Scott, Peter Scott.*

This year's event to commemorate our first President, Jasper Whitfield Snowdon, who held the office for 10 years from 1875, took the form of an evening Dinner in Wakefield, followed by a Ceilidh. Around 50 members attended.

The hotel used was York House and the ceilidh band our usual one comprising essentially talented both musicians and ringers from Sheffield.

Andrew Aspland, our President, reflected on the Association's activities over the past year, especially mentioning the ringing on the centenaries of the deaths in 1915 of members who fought in the First World War. He read a prayer in their memory (see other pages).

Andrew proposed toasts to the memory of Jasper and to the future well-being of the Association. The response to the first was the traditional touch on hand bells – this year three leads of Kent TB Royal.

Energetic dancing continued into the small hours.

## GENERAL MEETING AT OSSETT

The 226 feet high spire at the mini-cathedral of Ossett Parish Church, set on a dividing ridge north of the valley of the River Calder, dominates the skyline in this central part of the old West Riding of Yorkshire. Indeed, it is sometimes mistaken for Wakefield Cathedral, a few miles away.

The church was built in the 1860s during the height of Ossett's and nearby Batley's prosperity and confidence as the centres of the Shoddy and Mungo textile trades, whereby old rags are torn down into their original fibres and rewoven into less-glamorous fabrics. The church's graveyard is also a gothic masterpiece of funerary commemorating self-made men who accumulated lots of brass.

Gawthorpe, nearby and in the parish, boasts a superb maypole and is the venue for the annual races for hardy souls carrying a hundredweight sack of coal on their shoulders. The area is also in the country's 'rhubarb triangle', where early forced rhubarb grown in heated, low and dark sheds is still a significant business.

This then was the setting for the Association's General Meeting on 7 February. It particularly delighted the writer to hear well-struck Cambridge S Minor pealing out with traditional closed leads ('cartwheel' style) by the local band before the Service at noon, with the 27 cwt tenor being rung by David Pygott. The main dish at the lunch following was meat and potato pie with succulent gravy, a Yorkshire speciality, and was enjoyed by the 75 or so members present: it was first class.

At our Meeting, we firstly stood in memory of recently departed members – Brian Moorhouse (Wetherby), Derek Wagstaffe (Tickhill), Billy Hayton (Otley), David Appleton (Bingley). Tony Boughton (Bridlington), Neil Spencer (Beckwithshaw) and Dennis Chapman (one time at Doncaster). We learned that our late member, J Colin Ashworth of Todmorden, a one-time mill owner, had generously bequeathed £54,000 to our Bell Repair Fund.

Simon Percy put Ossett's 14 bells to continuous use for two hours after the Meeting, never using fewer than 12. All abilities were well-catered for from Rounds to Little Bob on 14 and Plain Hunt on 11 to Bristol Maximus.

All in all, it was 'a grand day out'.



*New and upgraded Members of the Association after receiving their certificates from Andrew Aspland, our President.*

*L to r: Wendy Crow (Knottingley), Susan Mann (Drighlington), Janet Voakes (Wakefield), Andrew Morton (Wakefield), Andrew Aspland (President), Lucy Williamson (York), Marylyn Clayton (Drighlington), Vic Gorney (Drighlington) and John Pickles (St Anne's, Leeds).*



# ST WILFRID'S YORK

## New Year in Westminster

The bells of Westminster Abbey are among the most famous in the world, ringing out for state occasions and broadcast on television and radio. They are one of the very few rings of bells to be rung by a paid team of ringers - the Westminster Abbey Company. Every New Year's Day, the Abbey ringers invite a band from elsewhere to ring their bells, and it was the great privilege of the St Wilfrid's ringers to be invited on 1st January 2015.

We took the opportunity to have a few days in the Capital, including many unforgettable experiences ringing, socialising and toasting the New Year's fireworks from a vantage point high in Parliament Square. Our first ringing was on the 30th December when we joined the London members of the Ancient Society of College Youths for their weekly practice which took place at St Sepulchre without Newgate, Holborn Viaduct.

On New Year's Eve, we began the day ringing ten bells at St Dunstan's in the West, Fleet Street. We were confident in our repertoire here because this is the same number of bells we ring at St Wilfrids. Following a tasty pub lunch, we visited St James, Garlickhythe and enjoyed ringing the eight Royal Jubilee Bells. It is extraordinary to remember that the same bells were rung from a boat during the Diamond Jubilee Thames river pageant in 2012.

Our next tower was St Michael, Cornhill (12 bells) where we worked up an appetite for our evening meal at Pizza Express. Our final tower of the day was St Margaret-of-Antioch, Parliament Square, Westminster. Following some special ringing here, we greeted the turn of the New Year standing on the roof of the tower listening to the chimes of Big Ben and appreciating the magnificent fireworks.



On New Year's day, we began with the twelve bells at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square. The energy from parade crowds added to our gathering excitement on the walk to our next tower, Westminster Abbey. After climbing the tower steps, I enjoyed reading the commemorative boards of ringing for Royal occasions and it was easy to feel the weight of history here. We are proud to have scored a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal here. The quarter peal was conducted by our youngest member, 12-year-old Ewan Hull.

Following a well earned lunch, we concluded our tour at Imperial College in South Kensington. The 87m tall, freestanding "Queen's Tower" houses ten bells, each named for Queen Victoria, her children and grandchildren. The unusual, exaggerated sway of the tower during ringing offered exciting technical challenges alongside uninterrupted views of the London skyline.

*Sophie Palmer*



**Are you a YACR Young Ringer under the age of 19?  
Does your tower have any Young Ringers under 19?**

**If so the Yorkshire Tykes would like to hear from you and invite  
you all to join their practices on the  
2nd Sunday afternoon of each month.**

**The practices are very friendly and encourage everyone to have a go  
at Rounds and Call Changes, or methods, you have been learning in  
your own tower. We sometimes follow the practice by going out for  
food or other social activities.**

**For more information please contact Jane Lynch**

**By email at [j.lynch6@btinternet.com](mailto:j.lynch6@btinternet.com) or text 07807 159086**

# Todmorden Unitarian Church

## Restoration of the Bells

Todmorden Unitarian Church is a Grade 1 listed building and stands in a prominent location overlooking the town. It was built between 1865 and 1869 in memory of John Fielden MP, with funds supplied by his sons John, Joshua and Samuel, who were all wealthy cotton manufacturers in the town, at a cost of £35,000. The church was designed by the eminent architect, John Gibson to replace an earlier Chapel built in 1823 whose facilities had become inadequate. Money being no object, only the best quality stone, marble and oak were used and stained glass in the chancel was by Capronnier of Brussels. The interior is stark, there being only memorials to the three brothers and the fallen in WW1. Opened in April 1869 the church quickly became a thriving centre of the Unitarian faith until well in to the 20th Century.

During the centenary year, 1969, great efforts were made to raise money to keep the church going, but decline continued and the church closed in 1987. Services moved to the gatehouse, but these ceased in 1992. During this time, the church fell into disrepair and suffered both vandalism and decay. However, rescue was coming. It was acquired by the Historic Chapels Trust in 1994 and significant

financial investment in its repair and renovation, in great part thanks to English Heritage, has enabled the church to be restored to its former glory. However, the bells were very much "out of sight and out of mind" until funds could be made available.

In 1868, Robert Stainbank cast 8 bells with a tenor of 14-0-17 in F. These were hung in an oak frame on elm headstocks at a cost of £660. A band was quickly taught and rang a peal of 5040 Grandsire Triples on 30th April 1870. This peal is recorded on a peal board in the tower and in an ornate hand written peal book, the footnote being remarkable stating that this was the first attempt by all the ringers to ring a complete peal, and was rung in fewer than 11 months from their first lesson in change ringing.

Ringing continued with a local band until the late 1960s. After that, the band having dispersed due to age and relocation, the bells were then rung as required by the ringers from the other towers in Todmorden. Maintenance was carried out by Colin Ashworth and Geoffrey Cheetham, who are sadly no longer with us, amongst others. The fittings were still the originals, by then nearly 100 years old, and much patching needed to be done on the wheels. During a peal of Bristol Surprise Major in early 2002, the



tenor gudgeon failed causing the bell to fall sideways and damage the headstock. A replacement gudgeon was found in the tower and refitted after the headstock had been repaired. This was only a temporary solution since the gudgeon was a little too long causing a lot of friction in the plain bearing. Although the bell was safe, it was very difficult to ring for any length of time. The deterioration in the fittings was causing concern and representations were made to the Historic Chapels Trust to see if there was any possibility of restoration work being done on the bells. Despite much correspondence, it was not possible due to a lack of funds.

Geoffrey Cheetham, who died in 2011, had been the tower key holder for many years and in his will he left a substantial legacy to the Historic Chapels Trust, specifically to restore the bells. At last, there was some prospect of work being done and quotes were obtained in 2012 from both Taylor's and Whitechapel for the bells to be rehung, preferably in a new frame with new fittings and sound control. However, the

cost of a new frame proved to be prohibitive, but it was suggested by Taylor's that the existing frame could be used provided that it was strengthened. There was still a shortfall, but this was filled by a substantial gift from a local ringer, together with grants from both the Lancashire and Yorkshire Associations, the Rochdale Branch of the Lancashire Association and the local Council. Details of these are recorded on a plaque in the ringing room. A number of other small, but very welcome, donations were also received.

The last ring on the bells was on 14th September 2013 and proved how necessary the work was when the 7th came loose on its headstock causing the wheel to disintegrate. Fortunately, there was no damage to the bell and the work to dismantle the bells commenced the following week. The bells were taken to Loughborough where they were sandblasted, quarter turned, crown staples removed and canon retaining headstocks fitted. New clappers, ground pulleys, stays, sliders and wheels were also supplied.

While the bells were away, work started on the preparation of the ringing room which had possibly never been decorated since the bells were originally installed. A team of people undertook the repair and decoration organised by Helen Rigby. This work was made more difficult due to the restrictions on what could be done with a Grade 1 listed building and having to try and return the room to as near as

possible the original colours. The existing paint on the rendered walls was very flaky and was removed together with numerous layers of paint on the exposed stonework in the window bays. This took several months of hand chipping, scraping and many choice words. Repainting was eventually completed one week before the reopening. Seating in the ringing chamber comprises three oak benches with high backs and these were restored by Derek Sanderson (a retired french polisher) who has had ringing connections with the tower dating back to the 1950s and taught Geoffrey Cheetham to ring there.

The bells were returned on 26th February 2014. The sound control was fitted and the bells reinstalled along with the new fittings. By 20th March, they were ready to be tested and, as expected, they were considerably easier to ring than before. A peal of Plain Bob Major was rung on the 1st May to mark the 145th anniversary of the first peal on the bells

(RW 5378.0542). The ringers were drawn from those who had helped with the works and included Phil Halstead (a first pealer) and Robert Hodgetts ringing his first peal of Major.

The bells were 'reopened' on 12th July when a large gathering of ringers and general public attended together with the Mayor of Todmorden and the Presidents of both Lancashire and Yorkshire Associations.

Thanks must go to the many people from far and wide who gave freely of their time and talents to help with the work. Possibly the only complete octave in existence cast by Robert Stainbank is now restored for the church and present and future ringers to enjoy. They are definitely a fitting memorial to Geoffrey Cheetham without whose legacy to start things off, we would still be waiting. The bells are available for visiting bands by contacting Helen Rigby on 01706 847964 or at [helen.fwb@talktalk.net](mailto:helen.fwb@talktalk.net)

*J M Donald Bateman*





## ITTS COURSE

### ITTS Module 1 at Tadcaster – A trainee Mentor's perspective

It was with a degree of scepticism that I enrolled for the ITTS Module 1 Course at Tadcaster in September 2014; only going because I'd suggested to a couple of ringers at Pickering and Middleton that they might benefit from attending as trainee teachers, and they would need a mentor – me!

However, it soon became apparent that the Course has something to offer everyone, no matter how experienced at teaching ringing. The theory was dispensed in a timely and pragmatic manner by Neil Donovan, who was also happy for us contribute anecdotes from our own experiences, either as teachers or learners. This was interspersed with the most useful parts of the day, the practical sessions, where we were able to practice the various techniques Neil demonstrated, and it also gave us the chance to think about our own particular ringing styles with a view to improving them so we could truly say 'do as I do and as I say' to our learners!

Finally, Neil gave us a run-down of the 'Learning the Ropes' scheme. The teaching materials available via the Moodle are generally very good, but I still remain to be convinced of the usefulness of the bureaucracy for both potential tutors and learners – probably because I've never been the sort of person who likes ticking boxes and filling in forms, preferring just to get on with it! However, we have some new ringers starting at Middleton and Pickering in the New Year and we will be following Learning the Ropes, so perhaps I can be convinced when we do it for real....as long as I remember to fill in the forms...

*Anne Deebank*

### A trainee Teacher's perspective

I was asked to attend this Course by our Branch ringing master so that I could support her in teaching the beginners in my home tower. I had come back to ringing after a 40-year gap and therefore was a little worried that I might find the day rather intimidating! However, the mix of practice and theory resulted in a very enjoyable day with the added bonus of boosting my confidence in my own ringing ability.

The practical exercises are supported by a comprehensive selection of written material which has become invaluable especially now that I have a learner of my own to teach from scratch. Another valuable resource is the 'moodle' website, access to which is given once this day is completed.

Having a mentor enables me to discuss not only any problems I encounter with my learner's progress but also with my own progress as a teacher; sometimes a different approach is needed to overcome difficulties. The Course is evidence-based and it definitely has improved my confidence as a teacher and a ringer and I would certainly encourage anyone interested in teaching to give it a go. Good Luck!

*Helen Pells*

*Photo (above): L to r - Anne Deebank (mentor), Douglas McNicoll (teacher), Neil Donovan (tutor), Marian Thomas (teacher), Helen Pells (reacher), Geoffrey Johnson (mentor).*



## THE WESTERN BRANCH'S VISIT TO DORDRECHT, HOLLAND

Sally Williams from Brighouse, a teacher, had been to Dordrecht once before and had the bright idea of returning during the half-term break in February. Gathering a few other local ringers a viable group was formed of people keen and available to go to Dordrecht for a weekend's ringing.

Dordrecht is the oldest town in south Holland. It holds a market every Friday and Saturday, selling wonderful cheeses and fish amongst other things. The Grote Kerk, built between 1285 and 1470 has a 65m tower which contains a carillon with 67 bells, one of which weighs 9830 kg and is the heaviest bell in the Netherlands. Ringing of each of these big bells is done by two or three people, and is not full circle ringing. Above the bells is the mechanism of the medieval clock, and access to the outside walkway overlooking the town is off the same room. Magnificent stained glass windows in the church are dedicated to the Guilds of Dordrecht. Within the grounds of the Grote Kerk is a smaller building, 't Klokhuis. Here Paul de Kok has built a fully functional ring of eight bells.

Arriving on Friday 20th February by minibus and car the first four people joined Paul, his son and daughter for a welcome cuppa and Stroopwafels. Shortly afterwards James Holdsworth came into the room, dripping wet from the rain. After James

had a quick rub on a towel, these people were soon ringing a quarter of Cambridge Major. In due course the rest of the group was collected from the station and then everyone enjoyed a continental tea. A look at the mechanics of the bells preceded evening ringing, accompanied by cheese, beer, wine and port.

An early start was made on Saturday morning with a peal of spliced Cambridge, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Unfortunately the people not ringing were caught in heavy hail as they toured around town. Lunch was cheese, meats, breads and beer/wine in 't Klokhuis.

Early in the afternoon we toured the Grote Kerk. The official Carillonneur led everyone up to his loft, where he demonstrated the versatility of the instrument, amusing us by playing English folk tunes amongst his wide repertoire. Afterwards, while some folk were involved in a quarter of Superlative Surprise Major, Paul led a guided tour of the town. Late that night after more ringing, drinking and wonderful eating, happy ringers were delivered back to the hotel.

On Sunday a 1344 spliced Surprise Major (4 methods) was rung in the morning and a 5120 spliced Surprise Major (8 methods) was rung in the afternoon. Those not included in the peal went to see the sights, including 19 windmills.

All the peal ringers were admitted to the Central European Association. At 6 pm Dutch time the group disbanded, to cars, trains and planes to return home, or go on exploring the country.

*Pat Kefford*



*"Good striking I often prefer  
let methods be ever so plain  
no peal better musick doth make  
because it has got a hard name...."*

**William Laughton  
c 1734, founder of  
The Rambling  
Ringers Club.**

# Bellringers Herald Cyclists

By the time this article and this newsletter reaches you, thoughts will have turned to Christmas. Thoughts of ringing, singing and presents. At which point, if I may be so cheeky, could I invite you to take a look at [www.bellsandbikes.com/book](http://www.bellsandbikes.com/book) where you can find out about my book of how Yorkshire's bells rang for the Le Tour de France in 2014. A good many of you rang, some of you have kindly shared photos and I hope you will enjoy the story. I've worked with a professional publishing house on it and it should be available in late November as a paperback and as an e-book.

Anyway, hot on the heels of all that bellringing for the 2014 Tour de France, May 2015 saw another bike race passing under our louvers. This time it was the inaugural Tour de Yorkshire, a professional cycling race once more accompanied by TV, helicopters and a massive fan base.

It was, admittedly, a little lower key than the Tour de France, but that's understandable when you consider Le Tour is the world's biggest annual sporting event. That didn't mean that we should be any quieter in our musical welcome though!

The Tour de Yorkshire is a new 3 day annual cycle race, seeking to attract the world's top cyclists and show off the very best of our county.

By default that takes it past some of our most historic, magnificent and scenic locations. Including a good spread of churches!

Day 3 of the 2015 race took in many of the churches who rang on Sunday 6 July 2014, passing close to Mytholmroyd,



*Scarborough church and Yorkshire cycling shirt on the day of the Y15 Yorkshire Tourism Event and launch of the 2015 festivities*

Haworth, Ilkley and Otley to name but a few.

However, the 2015 race also came within earshot of fabulous range of other churches which were nowhere near the race route last time.

In particular the race took in the coast and the Wolds and the Moors east of York. That brought forth a keen new population of ringers eager to share in the excitement that towers to the west had experienced a year earlier. Simon Plows, Secretary of the Beverley & District Ringing Society, led the way with a programme embracing an exciting series of towers east of Selby and some good interview time on BBC Radio Humberside as VE Day ringing approached too.

The three days of racing came past the following towers.

Friday 1 May – Bridlington, Flamborough, Cayton, Seamer, Thornton le Dale, Pickering, Middleton, Danby, Whitby, Fylingdales, Scarborough

Saturday 2 May – Selby Abbey, Bubwith, Holme on Spalding Moor, Market Weighton, North Cave, Beverley St Mary, Beverley



*Meltham church and local race branding – the yellow cog*



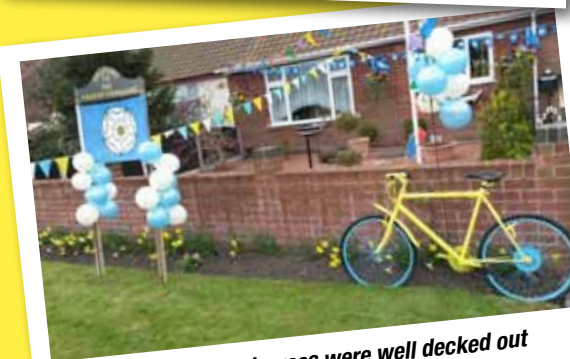
*1. Bikes by the lychgate guided fans to the cakes in Wetwang church. Their 3 bells rang out loudly too*



*It was a happy day in Barnsley and the ringing hadn't even started yet*



*It was all about the bike (and the bells) in Holme on Spalding Moor that day*



*And the locals houses were well decked out*



*Holme on Spalding Moor band on race day*

Minster, Wetwang, Norton, Upper Helmsley, York St Michaels

Sunday 3 May – Wakefield Cathedral, Sandal, Barnsley, Cawthorne, New Mill, Holmfirth, Meltham, Marsden, Ripponden, Mytholmroyd, Heptonstall, Oxenhope, Haworth, Silsden, Addingham, Ilkley, Otley, Roundhay

A good many of them rang, but I'm sorry that I don't have a definitive list of exactly which ones this time. However, it would be great if people could let me know via my email [rismay@virginmedia.com](mailto:rismay@virginmedia.com) or via the YACR Facebook Group.

I have submitted a few photos with this article. I hope they give you a flavour of what a great community event this was. Our streets were packed with fans again and I know that churches like Barnsley and Wetwang, to name just two, put on fantastic food and attracted a lot of visitors. Whether you look at the bike race as a sports event, an evangelical outreach opportunity or simply a good excuse for ringing, there was something in it for everyone.

I am grateful to the ringers of Holme on Spalding Moor and Norton on Derwent for kindly welcoming me to ring with them on the Saturday.



Driving back down the race route after the riders had passed by it was great to see the colourful bikes in the churchyard at Wetwang and the remnants of a serious spread of good food.

I am also indebted to Brian Sanders for arranging and calling our quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor at Barnsley. Also to our other band members Helen Thorley, Tracey Jones, Simon Crow and Mike Sheeran. Not forgetting Wendy Crow who filmed our ringing and has subsequently posted some cracking footage on YouTube. Her film of Brian keeping us in order is great. The other film she has posted of the cyclists and motorcade turning onto Church Street with our bells ringing out loud is probably my favourite YouTube film of the year. In fact it may be my favourite of all time!

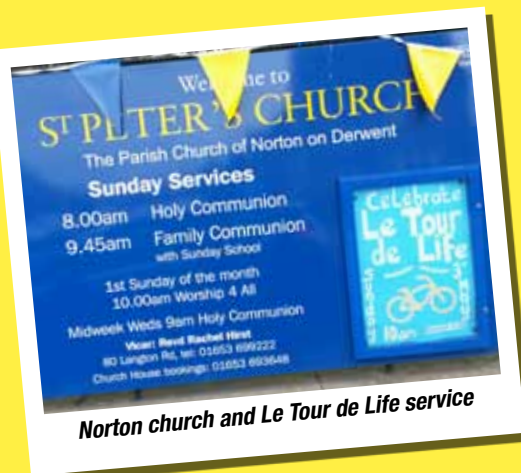
It was an eventful quarter peal. The toughest, and dare I say it the most emotional, part of it being when the helicopter was overhead, as the police sirens screamed past and as the crowds roared the cyclists onto the cobbles below us. Having spent most of the last two years writing "Tower Briefings", press releases, organising ringing and then writing a book, it was a rare opportunity to actually ring a bell. As a cycling addict it was an honour to be ringing for the riders at last.

The Tour de Yorkshire will be back again next year. At the time of writing this in early October, there is a campaign underway to make it a four day race in future. The outcome of that remains to be seen but whether three days or four, it is bound to pass close to a whole new range of wonderful churches in the YACR family. The 2016 race route will probably be announced in January or February and it will feature on TV, radio and in the papers. I will also post details on [www.bellsandbikes.com](http://www.bellsandbikes.com) and on my Bells and Bikes accounts in Facebook and Twitter. Please do get in touch so we can make a plan for next year and compile a story for the Autumn 2016 newsletter!

Over to you now.

Here are the photos and I do hope that I can interest you in that book! You know where I am!

**Rod Ismay @bellsandbikes**



**Norton church and Le Tour de Life service**



**Norton's band on race day**



**Selby Abbey ringers, courtesy of John Wright**

## Snippets from The Ringing World

### – both the advance and the decline in peal ringing.

The granddaughter of Mr J B Hutchinson of Stillingfleet near York, who died in 1980, gave a bundle of his papers to the Association some months ago, including a few back copies of the RW.

I noted in the RW edition of 16 December 1938 that 29 peals on 12, 10 and 8 bells were recorded nationally, plus 11 on 6 bells. Two of the three 12-bell peals were Stedman and the other Plain Bob. Three peals of Stedman Caters were rung and one of Cambridge Royal. Plain Bob and Grandsire predominated on 8 bells. There was one peal of Spliced Surprise Major.

Compare this with the apparent complexity of methods which are often rung these days, especially

in peals. Even 50 years ago when Gail and I started to ring as 'adult learners' methods were still 'straightforward'. In Yorkshire it was only at the really advanced towers like Bradford Cathedral that anything beyond this could be practised. At Bradford the band could ring London Royal in the early 1960s, culminating in a peal of 5-Spliced Royal in 1963, which was the first peal of 5-spliced Royal ever rung with all the bells ringing all the work of each method.

The opposite side of the coin is apparent however when we come down to the actual number of ringers participating in peals. The number fell nationally to 2531 in 2014, the lowest number since 1950. First pealers had dropped from 541 to 139 in the past 30 years and the number of first-as-conductor from 70 to 29. Further,

it is estimated that fewer than 50% of all ringers can ring any method beyond Plain Bob Doubles. (RW February 2015).

It looks like a reducing number of peal ringers and conductors are ringing increasingly complex methods in fewer peals. It's often these people who become the leaders and teachers in the Exercise. When it's noted also that the average age of ringers is rapidly increasing, it doesn't bode well for the future of ringing in general.

Any scheme to promote the recruitment and training of younger ringers must be supported.

**Editor.**

Mr Hutchinson made the model of a belfry seen in a glass case in the ringing chamber at York Minster.

**YCG won the NUA Striking Contest in Leeds in November 2015.**

**Well done.**



# A snapshot of peal ringing in the Yorkshire Association

Peal ringing has always been an important aspect of the Yorkshire Association – sometime next year the 20,000th peal will be rung for the YACR. We are fortunate to have a complete record of every one of those peals, including the compositions, all of which have been computer-proved, not something many Associations can claim. They were firstly recorded in each Annual Report, and still are of course, but thanks to the late Roger Green of Ilkley we also have a complete record on a computer database. When I took over from Maurice Calvert as Peal Secretary they were in Roger's own designed database. I have subsequently converted them to use Duco, software obtainable freely from Owen Battye, which is very easy to use and which allows a peal to be downloaded from Bellboard or Campanophile in seconds.

I thought it might be interesting to take a few samples from over the years and see how things have changed, so I'm going to look at 4 individual years, each 40 years apart, starting with 1894.

In 1894 there were 60 peals, rung in 26 different towers, plus one handbell peal. The leading tower, with 9, was Staveley, in Derbyshire(!), followed by

Armley with 8. In these peals were 184 men (but no women) the list headed by Arthur Craven (of Staveley) with 15. Notably, 128 of these rang in just one peal during the year. Arthur Craven also headed the list of 26 conductors, with 9. There were 25 different composers, many with names till familiar today including inevitably A Craven, C H Hattersley and JJ Parker. There were just 6 single methods rung – Kent TB Major (28), Plain B Major (9), Grandsire Triples (7), Double Norwich (2), Oxford TB Major (1) and Plain Bob Triples (1). The rest were of 7 Minor methods. So nothing on 10 or 12.

Moving forward to 1934, we see a small increase to 75 peals – rung in 36 towers, and 8 handbell peals. Handsworth now leads the way with 8 followed by Felkirk (5). 209 ringers rang at least one peal with William Barton (Pudsey), Arthur Gill (Wath on Dearne) and Percival Knights (Sheffield Cathedral) leading with 11 each and the late John J L Gilbert of Handsworth not far behind on 9. There are just 6 women in the list. William Barton (9) was the leading conductor, there being a total of 37 and 31 different composers headed by A Knights with 11, all different. There are 20 different single methods rung including

several of Surprise Major, Stedman Triples and Caters, 2 of Cambridge Royal with the leading method Plain Bob Major (8). Still nothing on 12.

Next we go to 1974, and as expected, a giant leap forward. 178 peals were rung that year including 6 handbell peals. There were 90 different towers, Birstwith in the lead (15), followed by Rotherham (8). 271 ringers took part (61 of whom were women), but already we can spot a trend of individuals ringing a lot more peals. The list is headed by a familiar name – Barrie Dove with 72. There were 42 conductors, with Barrie Dove conducting 69 and 42 different composers, Eric Critchley leading the field with 9. There were 46 individual methods rung with Yorkshire S Major being most popular with 15, followed by Plain Bob Major with 11 and 10 of Bristol S Major. There were 2 peals of Caters, 13 of Royal, 2 of Cinques and 4 of Maximus.

Finally, let's take a look at 2014. We have a total of 340 peals (including 42 on handbells) in 101 towers, led by Leeds St Anne with 42 and Dore with 24. 308 ringers took part (71 women). Once again the leading ringer was Barrie Dove with 149 and Robert Jordan with 94. There were 41 conductors,

Barrie Dove on 118 and James Holdsworth on 54. A total of 59 composers is headed by A G Reading, responsible for 50 of the compositions. 128 different single methods, as well as 40 peals of Spliced. The most popular methods were Bristol S Major and Spliced S Major, both with 23. There were 48 peals on ten, 26 on twelve and one on 14!

So, to conclude, we can see very clearly the progression over the

years in variety and complexity of what was rung. The increase in numbers – from 60 to 340 – is not matched by the number of ringers taking part, which went from 184 to 308. It is still an increase though – the big difference is the large number of peals rung by some individuals – 25 rang 30 or more peals and 44 rang at least 15 in 2014, whereas only Arthur Craven rang as many as 15 in 1894. The emphasis on first pealers

on 2015 to mark the 300th anniversary of the first peal has certainly produced more than usual – it will be interesting to see if this leads to any long term trend. One thing we can say for sure – there are plenty of opportunities to ring peals today, for those who want to. It was clearly much more of an event in 1894.

*Simon Reading,  
Peal Secretary*

## The Snowdon Series Books

**Diagrams.** The 2011 Edition (reprinted 2013) of Jasper Whitfield Snowdon's original work, comprising 202 methods showing their blue lines - £12.

**Ropesight.** The 1987 reprint of Jasper Snowdon's 'Introduction to The Art of Change Ringing', first published in 1879 - £7.

**Grandsire.** The 1989 reprint of J Armiger Trollope's revision in 1947 of Jasper and William Snowdon's original work, first published in 1888 - £8.

**Inspired by Bells.** Some 80 articles and poems with some photographs featuring bells, collected by Frank Foden and published in 1991 - £20.

**Campanalogia:** or the Art of Ringing Improved. Published in 1990 with a new introduction by William T Cook, this book is a facsimile copy of the original written by Fabian Stedman and published in 1677 - £22.

Copies are obtainable from John Mitchell, Manor House, Roecliffe, Boroughbridge, York, YO51 9LY.

(Postage and package included in all prices)

Please make cheques payable to 'YACR Snowdon Books'

Any enquiries to [books@jmanorhouse.co.uk](mailto:books@jmanorhouse.co.uk)

(Sorry, but there are no discounts for multiple purchases).

All surplus proceeds to the Yorkshire Association's Bell Repair Fund.



## YORK COLLEGES GUILD

The first weekend of June 2015 saw the arrival of another annual York Colleges Guild Dinner weekend which commenced with a student Quarter Peal of Minor on Friday 5th at St Lawrence's Parish Church. In the evening there was an opportunity to ring at the Spurriergate Centre followed by some friendly drinks in the Yorkshire Terrier. Saturday involved a tour of York Towers and a picnic lunch in the beautiful Museum Gardens – the sun even shone for us.

The Dinner itself was held at the Novotel and, despite the optimistically priced drinks(!), the food was amazing and many guests commented that it was "the best food at a YCG Dinner for years". This was followed by a Ceilidh band as provided by Shinjig which was great fun and enjoyed by all. Some of us "young-uns" continued the night in town AND still made it to Sunday morning service ringing the next day. Sunday brought a chance to ring at York Minster for the whole of the YCG society after more picnic-ing in Dean's Park and games of frisbee. The society's recently acquired mascot, Bob the Badger, also enjoyed the whole weekend and was a big hit with all members, past and present. He certainly earned his stripes!

The York Colleges Guild has experienced a revival of sorts this year and we hope to continue this in September by welcoming both learners and experienced ringers alike at Freshers' Fair.



*l to r, Claire Reading, Lucy Williamson, Claire Pearson.*

## York Colleges Guild Spring Term 2014/15

The spring term of the 2014/15 academic year saw a very positive continuation of the autumn for the York Colleges Guild. Following the recruitment, active and eager participation of a number of Freshers, from both the University of York and the York St John University, a sort of 'revival' of the society has been noted by many local ringers.

This term, thanks to the organisation of our then Secretary and Ringing Master, Ryan Mills, we have already had visits to York Minster as well as Selby Abbey. The unprecedented turn out for the Minster visit made for a very enjoyable experience for all those involved; the opportunity to ring on arguably one of the best sounding peals in the world was not to be missed, with many making significant progress and some getting the chance to ring on the full 12. It was a lovely afternoon and we thank everyone who participated.

Saturday January 31st saw our trip to Selby Abbey, in conjunction with the ringers of St. Lawrence's, York, where some YCG members practise regularly. The chance of ringing at a slightly less daunting 12 bell tower was gratefully received and meant an opportunity for many to try something new. Everything from Cambridge Minor, Rounds and Called Changes on 12 as well as Plain and Little Caters was rung. The pleasant atmosphere was continued by a venture out in York for dinner upon our return.

The constant strive for Quarter Peals continues with a number of members, myself included, actually beginning to enjoy them! Indeed, a peal of some sort many be on the cards for the near future. In addition, the fast approaching AGM leads us all to look forward to the future of the society, with the prospect of a new committee and hopes for more Freshers in September.

***Lucy Williamson, YCG Secretary***



*York Colleges Guild at York Minster*

# USE OF A DRONE

## At Marske by the Sea. Is this a 'first'?

The ringers initially made a local appeal for a volunteer with a 'quadcopter' and camera to assist with identifying the state of the 110 year old louvre boards.

"We spent a day pulling old nesting material out from behind the lower levels of the louvre boards", explained Peter Sotheran, steeple-keeper at the coastal 8-bell tower. "The upper louvres are permanently sealed with sound-proof shuttering which also weather-proofs the bell chamber. Pigeons and grey squirrels have learnt that the space between the louvre boards and the shutters is an ideal nesting site. The lower sound-proofing panels are hinged to open so that the ringers can adjust the sound of the bells as a key element of a 'good neighbour' policy.

"We removed enough straw and twigs to fill a couple of wheelie bins, but we could not get behind the upper louvers which are between 60ft and 80ft above the ground. Previously we had used binoculars to get a general impression of the state of the state of the louvre. The ringers needed to investigate the volume of remaining nesting material and consider the extent of the decay to the wooden boards. Rather than spend days removing the internal shuttering or spend several thousand pounds on scaffolding, a camera drone proved to be a very cost effective alternative.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has rules that apply to the flying of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and they apply even to the miniature versions. They must not fly within 50 metres of a public highway nor within 50 metres of a building, unless the operator has 'control of the building' without permission from the CAA. There is however an exception for brief demonstration flights.

To ensure the safety of everyone, an exclusion zone was set out around the church grounds to prevent visitors accidentally straying into the area where the



*Drone in flight beside the tower*

UAV was operating. Pedestrian and vehicular access points were closed with red and white barrier tape and marshals stationed where they could intercept and advise visitors who accidentally entered grounds.

Pre-flight checks included a mechanical check of the UAV, state of the batteries and verification of a satisfactory GPS signal. The GPS signal enables the UAV to remain geostationary when hovering and also automatically guides the vehicle back to its landing base when the batteries are almost exhausted.

The weather also imposes restrictions. The UAV can fly in a light breeze however winds gusting at more than 15 mph can cause the vehicle to veer away unexpectedly. Allowance has also to be made for the 'wind sheer' caused by air moving up or across the external surface of the tower wall, especially when flying close to the building.

The initial demonstration run provided almost sufficient photographic evidence to enable the church architect to prepare a specification and

apply for a faculty. A second demonstration flight examined the north face of the tower and checked the roof tiles on the 150 year old building".

TIP for any church considering a similar exercise: Fit the camera with a standard lens rather than a 'fish-eye' or wide angle lens. The latter introduces curvilinear distortion and requires the device to

fly close to the building to get detailed photos. A standard lens enables the UAV to be flown at a safer distance away from the building and still obtain good pictures. Also, it is vital to have a video-steaming down-link to an iPad or similar device in order to see what is in the camera's field of view.

*Peter Sotheran*

## First Peals for Northallerton band (and friends)

There is a national initiative to encourage people to ring their first peal this year - the aim is to get a total of 300 "first pealers" in 2015, which is the 300th anniversary of what is thought to have been the first peal ever rung (at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich).

At Northallerton we decided this was a challenge we could accept, as we had several ringers who were capable of attempting a peal. It took until May for the first attempt, which was Grandsire Caters with Heidi Bradley and James Town ringing their first peal. Unfortunately, Sebastian Bradley was supposed to ring in this, but a shoulder injury forced him to withdraw at the last minute. He was bitterly disappointed, so we promised to re-arrange his first peal when he had recovered. Seb had also been making good progress with handbells, despite only intermittent practice in the pub on Sunday evenings and the occasional quarter peal, so we hatched a plot.

In the meantime, with Seb still unable to ring, we decided that his parents should be the next "victims", so on 4th July we rang Plain Bob Triples, with Hayley and Mark Bradley on treble and tenor respectively. Heidi also rang inside, so her first peal hadn't put her off the idea! Everyone did very well, Mark's performance being particularly notable for the fact that he is posted to Norway at present and gets very little chance to do any ringing at all.

On 15th August it was Sebastian's turn at last and time for our "cunning plan". Seb is

something of a "gentle giant", very quiet and unassuming and just gets on with things. Although he is 6ft 4ins tall, he is still only 16. He rang the trebles to a peal of Kent TB Major on handbells in the morning and then, after a couple of hours to recover, he rang the 5th to a peal of Cambridge S Major at Brompton. We are not sure if anyone has previously rung their first handbell and tower bell peal in the same day. Congratulations to Seb, who turned up for morning ringing the next day with only a couple of blisters to show for his efforts.

Next in our sights was the first peal on the new six at Thirkleby on 27th September. We persuaded Jill Gillanders to ring in this, since she had been the driving force behind the scheme and we also had Sandra Shoyer ringing inside. Although Sandra is a Felixkirk ringer, she was taught at Northallerton and still attends our practices and Sunday evening ringing. Both of them rang extremely well, despite protestations to the contrary before we started.

There is another attempt arranged for later in the year, which, if successful, will bring our total to eight first pealers. Many thanks to the ringers who turned out to supplement our local band - in particular, thanks to James Holdsworth and Peter Sanderson for conducting skills.

*Jennie Town*



# BETTER HALF A SHIELD THAN NO SHIELD AT ALL

## The Barnsley Shield Contest 2015

The Barnsley and District Society has a history of holding striking contests, in the past with large numbers of bands competing for not inconsiderable prizes.

In recent memory the contests have attracted fewer and fewer bands, the prizes have disappeared but the striving toward a high standard of striking has not diminished.

Two minor method ringing contests are held annually, The Swaine Cup in September at Hoylandswaine and the Barnsley Shield in March at a different tower each year. Traditionally contest bands have rung cartwheel, although this is not a requirement of entry and is sadly a tradition which is now beginning to fade away.

The 2015 Barnsley Shield Contest was held at Kirkthorpe near Wakefield, with three bands entering, Andrew Aspland had kindly agreed to be the judge, with the test piece of a 360 changes.

Silkstone were drawn first and rang a 360 of cartwheel Oxford treble bob, Roger Tarbatt's mixed band performed next also ringing cartwheel Oxford. Sadly the third band encountered some difficulties and rang out before the completion of the test piece.

We waited with the cups of tea and cakes kindly provided by the Kirkthorpe ringers, for the judge to appear from his secluded spot behind the church, trying not to think too much about how we had rung and who might or might not have won and feeling empathy with the third band.

Finally Andrew arrived to pronounce the results.

Silkstone 41.5 faults  
Shelley 41.5 faults

There was a moment of silence while we took in that we had a draw.

So perhaps a first in a very long tradition of contest ringing in Barnsley? No one present could recall



*L to r - Jacqui Cheeseman (Silkstone), Andrew Aspland (Judge), Roger Tarbatt.*

it ever happening before and without scouring through the ancient minute books we do not know if this has ever happened before.

But as one of the ringers said 'better half a shield than no shield at all'.

*Carolyn Charlesworth*

## The Barnsley & District Society's Contest for The Hoylandswaine Cup

The Swaine Cup Contest was held on Saturday, 12th September, judged by Alan Shelbourne. The winning band was Roger Tarbatt, (Tower Captain at Shelley) and his band.



*L to r: Graham Smith, Gordon Rigby, Derrick Moorhouse, Roger Tarbatt, Janet Rayner and Mark Everett.*

*Jean Doman*

# CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING – HULL

This year's CC Meeting in May was held in Hull, hosted by the Beverley & District Society.

Here are some of Yorkshire's CC Representatives who attended.

*L to r: Peter Kirby, Barrie Dove, Deborah Thorley (all YACR Reps), Adam Crocker (Leeds University Soc. Rep), Robert Wood (Bristol University Soc. Rep).*



# ASSOCIATION AGM



At its AGM held in its East Riding Branch on 9 May, the annual Inter-Branch striking contest was held at Market Weighton. The test piece was Grandsire Triples: seven Branches entered teams.

At the meeting itself at Norton the judges, Neil and Nicky Thomas of Norwich, presented the trophy to the winning team from the Selby Branch.

*RC*

*L to r: Andrew Aspland (Association President), Cate Ovington (from the Selby Branch, Neil and Nicky Thomas.*

# CENTRAL BRANCH OUTING TO LIVERPOOL

Doncaster to Liverpool; 100 miles and the first tower at 10.00 a.m. so an early start was called for. The M62 is slow at the best of times so better add some extra time for the journey. But where had all the roadworks gone? The M62 was a dream to drive on and some of us arrived early at Woolton, in time for coffee at the bistro down the road. So far, excellent; it set the tone for the day.

Woolton is thought by some to be the home of Eleanor Rigby of the Beatles song fame, but Paul McCartney denies that he was inspired by the tombstone in the churchyard that bears her name. The bells proved to be very loud but glorious in their tone and quite easy to ring. We got off to a good start with the usual basic methods and a bit of Yorkshire.

A short drive brought us to Mossley Hill and St Barnabas, Penny Lane. Surely Paul couldn't deny that he was inspired by this place; probably not but the church is not, strictly speaking on Penny Lane at all and he wouldn't have heard the bells ring there as they were still in their former home at Waterfoot in Rossendale. The six bells from there and two from elsewhere must surely have been tuned before their installation here in 2010 as they have a quite modern sound. The ringing included three leads of Bristol and Adrian Moreton, who with Brian Sanders had arranged the day, led the ringing, ensured that enough of us could manage the necessary leads to achieve the three bob touch. It was a pity that we couldn't rise to a full course of the method but Adrian had an alternative aim in mind. There was a coffee morning in progress here and several of the party found time for cakes and drinks.

The short trip to Pierhead took us into the heart of this famous city and suddenly it really felt like the mighty place it is. The buildings around the church are grand and imposing, the Tower Building and The Royal Liver Building making an imposing pair with the not insubstantial church of Our Lady and St Nicholas looking rather small alongside them. But first to lunch and many of us chose Ma Boyles pub just outside the churchyard. The place was busy



**Adrian Moreton briefs the ringers at Pierhead.**

and service accordingly delayed but the staff got us all fed in time for the ringing. An advance party was to ring for a wedding here and a longish touch of Grandsire caters was planned in order to ensure a decent standard from our mixed range of talents. The ringing apparently earned a cheer from some of those at the pub. Twelvebell ringing is a rare treat for most of us and abilities are limited but Adrian's scheme came to fruition here. Three leads of Bristol morphs easily into Littleport Little Surprise Royal and Maximus and by dint of ringing the same lead three times, already practised at Penny Lane, at least one of us struck their first blows of surprise max. Other ringing included Plain Hunt Cinqs so that everyone who wished rang changes on the twelve. These were superb bells, perhaps the best of the day, but it was too soon to judge.

St Francis Xavier, the Catholic church in Everton, is justly renowned for its superb Taylor eight and they seemed almost to ring themselves; certainly we achieved some of our best ringing here. Yorkshire, Grandsire and Plain Bob all sounded very good and a touch of Stedman was excellent. A pity that the neglected ringing room did not match the splendid interior of this richly ornate church.

And so to the Cathedral. One approaches it with awe; it is huge and it is magnificent; both undeniably Gothic and undeniably modern; a perfect transition of style, understated in spite of

its massiveness. The inside of the ringing room has the massive scale without any real style at all. It is simply heavy and functional; a mass of steel beams, concrete ceiling and the doughnut, the raised platform that all the bells are rung from. Joining the local practice was a very wise plan as we had the guidance and support of people who know how to manage these huge bells. Most of us were happy to ring call-changes and Plain Hunt cinques but the more ambitious rang Little Bob Maximus and remarkably a touch of Stedman triples on the back eight. The sight and sound of the bells from the viewing gallery in the belfry is extraordinary. They are however strangely hard to hear in the ringing room where the strike is hard to discern through the continuous background hum. In the body of the church the bells cannot be heard at all and as we rang a concert was taking place; the R.A.F. band marking the 75th anniversary of the Battle

of Britain. Our departure from the Cathedral was made quietly as the strains of The Lark Ascending came plaintively from the band playing to a packed audience. It was a poignant moment at the end of a glorious day.

Thanks are due to all those involved in planning and running the tour, primarily to Brian Sanders and Adrian Moreton who with skill and patience enabled all who wished to do so to stretch themselves into areas that would normally not be available to them. At least one of us rang their heaviest ever bell (Cathedral 11th), some savoured Surprise Maximus for the first time and one young lad, currently ringing call changes strapped the tenor at the Cathedral. What an experience for him; and indeed for us all. This tour will take some beating next year; go for it Adrian!

**Ted Steele**

## The Harrogate Ringing Course

I was fortunate to be able to attend the Harrogate Ringing Course for the first time this year, and had a thoroughly enjoyable and instructive weekend. I thought the course, based at Ashville College, was extremely well organised. There was a good balance of theory and practice, including several trips out to a variety of towers in the surrounding area. On the Friday evening, the trainers used the first theory and practical sessions to assess our skills and then tailored subsequent sessions to meet our individual needs.

I had asked to work on Plain Bob Doubles, which I'd only recently started ringing on an inside bell, and it was great to get so much concentrated practice on one method. I'm sure the trainers and their very patient band of helpers were sick to death of dear old Bob Doubles by the end of the weekend, but it was just what I needed.

On Saturday afternoon we had a choice of activities, and I opted for a session on handbells, which was great fun – I'd no idea they were so difficult to ring! Another highlight of the weekend was ringing at Ripon Cathedral on the Saturday evening. I took the opportunity to go up into the bell chamber, wearing ear defenders, while the bells were actually ringing, which was an awe-inspiring experience.

I came away from Harrogate feeling I'd made some real progress, now much more confident about ringing a touch of Plain Bob Doubles on an inside bell. At the last session on Sunday morning I was even encouraged to have a go at a plain course of Bob Minor, which gave me a taste of things to come. I'm very grateful to everyone involved – all the organisers, trainers and helpers – for an excellent training event.

**Sue Neal**





*Photo: Some of the Darton and Tong ringers.*

## Friendships Rekindled 117 years on.

On Saturday 1st May 1897, six ringers met at All Saints' church, Darton, near Barnsley, formerly in the old West Riding of Yorkshire. The purpose of the gathering was to ring what would duly turn out to be the first peal on those bells for The Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers. The peal itself was in seven treble dodging minor methods and completed in exactly three hours. Nothing unremarkable so far perhaps; however, the interesting part begins when it is revealed that the band comprised three ringers from Tong

village, near Bradford, (including the conductor, The Reverend Charles Farrow) and three ringers from Darton.

The apparent friendship between the two sets of ringers has always intrigued me. How was it forged? While it isn't possible to be certain, it is probably likely that the respective ringers would have met and competed against each other on the contest ringing circuit, as both towers had quite prolific competition ringing bands at various times during the 19th century. As we know, there weren't many cars around at the time; a few trains perhaps, but the most likely mode of transport would have been by horse and cart. Indeed ringers' records

from Tong church bear out the latter suggestion, as they refer to the ringers travelling to towers near to Barnsley and Wakefield to take part in contests. They would take a groom along with them who would feed and tend to the horse while the ringers did their thing in the tower.

Alas, due to neglect and the enforced silence during the Second World War, both Darton and Tong bells eventually became unringable and were only heard on very rare occasions over the following half a century or so. Darton bells were eventually restored in early 1999, largely thanks to a successful bid for Millennium funding and Tong were similarly restored in the early months of 2012.

Having known the Tower Captain at Tong, Louise Connacher, for a number of years; upon my first visit there in March 2012, I mentioned about the apparent 'friendship' which had existed between the two sets of ringers and suggested that as we both had relatively new bands, it might be nice for the two sets of ringers to get together to enjoy a day of ringing sometime in the future. Louise, while being enthusiastic about the idea, quite rightly thought it sensible to wait a little while until some of her learners became more confident with their bell handling. The band at Darton has also lost a number of ringers over the past couple of years, so we have had some rebuilding to do ourselves.

On another visit to Tong earlier this year, I once again raised the subject of having a day together for our respective bands. The first date put forward proved to be unsuitable, due to the Tong ringers having wedding commitments. However, we eventually settled upon Saturday 18th October as a date when most of the ringers were available. Tong have close links with the ringers at nearby Drighlington and they were also invited to join us, along with a number of more experienced helpers who frequently attend practices at Darton.

The format for the day was suggested by Louise and so it was arranged that we would all meet at Darton for a 10.30am start. Darton are a fine complete ring of six, which were cast by Messrs Lester and Pack in 1769. They are very easy to ring and ideally suited to teaching learners. Once the visitors had got the measure of the bells, we

rang call changes, Plain Bob Doubles and Minor, Grandsire Doubles, Oxford Treble Bob Minor and made an abortive attempt at ringing the special method of the day - Double Oxford Bob Minor.

After Darton, we all made our way to The Greyhound pub in Tong village for a wonderful and very leisurely lunch together. All satisfied, we all made our way by the short walk up the road to St James' church, Tong. These bells were mostly cast by Edward Sellers II in 1730 with the later addition of a treble by Thomas Mears in 1841. They were once infamously described in the 1960s by the late Ronald H Dove, author of the original Dove's Guide, as something along the lines of being, 'tuneless, breathless and toneless'. Well, they certainly aren't now. They have a sound of their own, which is not at all unpleasant to the ear and yet they are now delightfully easy and most enjoyable to ring. Unusually for the first tower after a ringers' lunch, the ringing here was perhaps better than it had been at Darton and this time the course of Double Oxford was successfully brought round.

Next it was then off to our final destination, with the short journey to St Paul's church, Drighlington. A slightly heavier ring here and eight bells too, all cast by John Warner & Sons in 1880. This was a new ringing experience for some of the party. Grandsire and Plain Bob Triples, Plain hunting, call changes and half courses of Yorkshire and Cambridge Surprise Major were all enjoyed here.

After an hour's ringing, the bells were lowered in peal before we all met outside for a group photograph. Everyone then filed into the church for a cuppa and we were greeted by the sight of the most amazing array of cakes and buns which the local ringers had prepared. Everyone went home replete and reflected upon what had been a wonderful day for making new friends and joining in the fellowship of ringing together.

We are already talking about arranging another day of ringing together next year, so watch this space.

*Trevor C Ledger*

## THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

### Any Suggestions?

The committee will meet early in 2016 to finalise its programme of courses for 2016. This year, in addition to the residential courses at Harrogate and Storthes Hall, it has offered day courses in the following: change ringing on handbells for beginners; ringing up and down in peal; tower maintenance; tune ringing on handbells; ITTS Modules 1 and 2; and an introduction to conducting.

If you have any suggestions for courses on other topics you would like to see offered in 2016, please email the Convenor as soon as possible.

### News

Organising and running training events takes a great deal of time and effort, by a lot of people. To improve the effectiveness of training, the committee has introduced the requirement that applicants for courses should have a mentor who will confirm that they have the necessary level of skill to benefit from a particular course, and subsequently ensure that they have opportunities to continue practising what they have learnt on the course. Mentoring should not be an onerous task so, if you are asked, please agree to be a mentor and support your local ringers in this way.

In addition to organising training, the committee provides grants to support projects or activities which have an educational benefit. To ensure the committee has all the information it needs to make decisions about the award of grants, an application form has been introduced. Copies can be obtained by emailing the committee's treasurer at [stuart@raggett.org.uk](mailto:stuart@raggett.org.uk). The committee meets twice a year, so completed forms must be received by 31st August for consideration at the September meeting, and by 31st December for consideration at the next meeting..

Stuart Holtam, Convenor [stuartholtam@mac.com](mailto:stuartholtam@mac.com)

### ITTS is Changing

Since its introduction in 2012, the ART's Integrated Teacher Training Scheme has consisted of two one-day training courses: Module 1, Teaching Bell Handling; and Module 2, Teaching Elementary Change Ringing.

Following consultation, some of the content of Module 2 will in future be transferred to a new module called Teaching Ringing Skills. This will allow more time to be spent considering how best to improve the bell control of new ringers before they attempt to ring methods. Sometimes, insufficient thought is given to this stage and new recruits can be over-stretched, make slower progress than they otherwise would, feel a sense of failure, and be lost to ringing. The new module is designed to encourage tower captains, and others responsible for ringing training, to consider the skills which need to be developed, and suggests a range of exercises up to and including plain hunting which can help to achieve this. The aim is to encourage steady progress, and improve the retention of new ringers.

For further information, or to join an ITTS course email [stuartholtam@mac.com](mailto:stuartholtam@mac.com)

**Stuart Raggett**

## A KNARESBOROUGH WEDDING

Not content just to the bells for weddings for a few pounds of beer money, the Knaresborough band, in North Yorkshire have gone into the wedding car hire business. Although in truth, the groom was the son of Steeple Keeper, Geoff Ward, and the car was a rare vehicle owned by Tower Captain, Matt Curl. In fact, we didn't even charge for the bells or the car, and after the purchase of silk flowers to decorate the car, and the chauffeur's cap, the profit was on the negative side.



*The Knaresborough Ringing and Wedding Car Hire Company.*

*Mini Moke complete with flowers, (Back, L to R); Derrick McRobert, Angus Dodds, Clive Scott, Jenni Dodds, Eleanor McRobert, John Leech and Geoff Ward. Driver complete with cap; Matt Curl, and sitting on the front wing; Sue Hucknall.*

The car is a white Mini Moke, the iconic car of the 60s, although it is a later Portuguese model dating from 1987. The story starts with my son, Oli, and Geoff's son Simon, who have been friends since school. Since he visits my house frequently, Simon knows my car and asked me if I'd drive him and his bride, Emma, from the church to the reception. In this case it was a distance of about 300 yards so the use of a roofless car was a reasonable risk - we just took a white umbrella in case of rain. My greater concern was 'would Emma's dress fit in the Moke?' The Moke is not a big car, but with a bit of shoving and tucking, it fitted in with the groom sitting on it.

Obviously, since it was a band member who was involved in the wedding we got a full band (after Geoff promised drinks all round of course). This allowed me to drive the car, and Geoff to attend to his fatherly duties, while all eight bells rang out. There were some other aspects of the wedding that were a "first". It was the first wedding anyone could remember that the bell ringers were mentioned in the order of service!

*Matt Curl, Knaresborough*



# Cyril and Jean Toyne's Diamond Wedding Peal

Ten years after joining the Doncaster & District Society Cyril had married Jean in 1955, the delightful lady who has been his cherished wife for sixty years. We understand the pressure that ringing can put upon a non-ringing spouse but Jean has supported and encouraged Cyril through sixty of his seventy ringing years. Members of the Doncaster & District Society wanted to honour them both on the occasion of their diamond wedding; how to do it was a problem.

For Cyril's ringing anniversary we at Sprotbrough had rung a quarter peal, but a diamond wedding demanded more. We needed a peal, but concluded that this was beyond our small Society. We wanted something special and with an element of surprise. Different ideas were floated. We could settle for a quarter in one of Cyril's favourite methods; Stedman or DNCB but we have no resident conductor of sufficient expertise. A peal would require us to ask others to join us and find a guest conductor, but we would have to keep it simple and success would be far from assured. And then inspiration struck! If we can't do it ourselves let's commission an entire band and let's ask them to ring a previously unring method and name it "Toyne" to honour Cyril and Jean.



This idea took root. Helen Nicholls, who was leading the planning, has a way of making things move and shake. She knows people who know people who can ring pretty much anything and she is cheeky enough to ask for what she wants. Somehow you can't say No to Helen. Soon I was hearing that Simon Reading had agreed to help; he would devise a method and organise a band; Alan Reading would compose the peal. Over the coming weeks occasional reports emerged and we knew that the project was being moved forward on our behalf. Finally word came that a band had been assembled, a method selected and a peal was being composed. Toyne Delight Major was on the drawing board. The best date for the band was only two weeks ahead of the actual anniversary, close enough to associate with the special day; and the peal could be rung

at Sprotbrough, Cyril's home tower. The bells and ropes were checked over a couple of days before the attempt and one rope was replaced; everything was set.

At 10 a.m. on Saturday 5th July the band gathered; Cyril and Jean with Helen were present at the start and heard the bells go into changes. Ten minutes later they heard a single bell fall silent and then the others being set. A rope had broken! The bell had set itself and an intrepid ringer had to push it off the balance to lower and allow a spare rope to be fitted. There were now two new ropes, both probably rather stretchy. The weak rope had somehow escaped detection but at least it broke early on and the spare was to hand. Undaunted, a fresh start was made. The day was getting warm but the ringing room window had somehow closed itself. Outside people were sitting at a pavement café

drinking their cappuccinos and lattes, others strolled through the churchyard and everyone seemed at ease with the gentle sound of church bells drifting across from St. Mary's. Inside the church some of us sat with our fingers and everything else crossed in hope of success.

To say that Cyril and Jean were thrilled to bits by this tribute ringing would be to understate the case; they were both surprised and delighted by the special peal that was being rung just for them and which, if scored they now knew would bear their name for ever. They had known a peal was to be attempted but it was only when they arrived at the church that they learned the other details. There were one or two anxious moments, small trips made huge in our imaginations because so much was invested in this event; and it was all totally out of our control. But we knew the conductor and his band were among the very best so

we made tea, we ate biscuits, we listened and we hoped. Eventually the blessed sound of rounds was heard and we went aloft to thank a weary but satisfied band of ringers who had done for us what we were unable to tackle for ourselves. They had provided a fitting tribute to a wonderful couple who were over the moon with it all, just as they had been sixty years before on the happy day of their marriage.

We could not be more grateful to the YACR members who rang this peal at our request; "We couldn't have done it without you" has never been more sincerely or truly said. The method and composition produced some lovely music that was very well rung and Alan Reading who composed it is included in our debt of gratitude. Toyne Delight Major provides a nice uncomplicated line with triple dodges front and back while avoiding stagnation. It is a mostly right-place method,

CPS with tenors together and to my unskilled eye seems to have scope for plenty of run based music. It is within our ability to ring it ourselves and is thus an excellent choice which we commend to others.

Next year Cyril will achieve 70 years membership of the Yorkshire Association. We'd better start planning.

**Ted Steele**

Cyril joined the D&DS at Barnby Dun as a 13-year old on 28 April 1945, just before the end of WW2, paying his subscription of 7 pence (*3p – which would have bought a couple of bags of chips, with change spare – Ed*). He rang firstly on the heavy 8 at Doncaster with such luminaries as W Eric Critchley and Frank Reed and later moved to Sprotbrough. His first peal was at Campsall in 1946. Cyril rang in the quarter at Sprotbrough on the 70th anniversary of his joining the D&DS.

## White Rose Shield

### Contest for Yorkshire 12-bell bands

This annual striking contest, first set up several years ago by Steve Ollerton, was held this year at Ossett on 5 September. John Loveless and Linda Garton were the judges, listening to three courses of Little Bob Maximus.

Six teams entered - Ripon Cathedral, Wakefield Cathedral, York Minster, Leeds Minster, Stockton on Tees and a band of Yorkshire Lasses.

The band representing Stockton on Tees was the winner. It is made up of ringers from north Yorkshire, the north east and Cumbria and has entered the National 12-bell striking contest for some years. The tower is also the focus for a monthly practice for north of England members of The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths and visitors, managed by Jennie Town of Northallerton.

# The Yorkshire Tykes



*The Yorkshire Tykes team outside St Thomas, Oxford – in ringing order left to right*



*Charlotte Mitchell (York), Simon Crow (Knottingley), Emily Jones (Longwood), Dominic Firth (Idle), Luke Riley (Selby Abbey), Ewan Hull (York), Alex Riley (Selby Abbey - conductor), Andrea Pygott (Ossett) and Zoe Bennett (Oxenhope – reserve).*

On Saturday 11th July 2015 nine young ringers from towers across Yorkshire set off to Oxford to ring in the Ringing World National Youth Contest. This is a striking contest on 8 bells for young people who have to be under 19 years old on the day of the contest.

Several towers in Oxford were open for general ringing throughout the day including Christ Church Cathedral (the one with the Harry Potter staircase), Magdalen College, Lincoln College, St Aldate, St Giles and St Mary Magdalen. The contest itself was held on the back 8 bells (11cwt) of the ring of 10 at St Thomas. Teams can either ring call changes or a method, and the Yorkshire Tykes were one of only three teams (out of 19) to ring a method.

The team rang Plain Bob Triples and when everyone assembled in the Chapel at Merton College, at the end of a long day of ringing, they were delighted to be placed joint 2nd in the method category with an A- grade. This is another fantastic result for our young ringers who lost three members from last year's team due to the age rule, and had to integrate three new ringers, including Charlotte who is only 9 years old ringing the treble.

The next RWNOC will be on Saturday 2nd July 2016 in London (most likely at Garlickhythe) and the Yorkshire Tykes have already established monthly practices to prepare for next year. They now meet on the 2nd Sunday afternoon of each month and always welcome new young ringers to join them and follow in their footsteps, as the current members of the band become too old....! The practices are open to all young ringers in YACR and wherever possible they run the ringing themselves. They ring a wide variety of things from Call Changes right up to Surprise Major. The next two meetings are as follows:

**Sunday 11th October** – ringing at Tadcaster (4.00pm) and Wetherby (5.30pm) followed by fish and chips at the Wetherby Whaler.

**Sunday 8th November** – ringing at Wakefield Cathedral (4.30pm)

For further information about the Yorkshire Tykes, particularly if your tower has young ringers who wish to participate, please contact me.

*Jane Lynch*

## Association Garments

The Association has supplied garments with the logo shown for a number of years. Polo shirts are £20, sweatshirts £21, zipped hoodies £24, regular hoodies £22, microfleece full zip jackets £27, full zip fleeces £27, zipped bodywarmers £24, outdoor fleece gilets and quartered rugby shirts £27 being currently available.



You can add your tower name to any of these garments at no extra cost. Please contact Dinah Donovan at [drhymer@drhymer.karoo.co.uk](mailto:drhymer@drhymer.karoo.co.uk) or on 01482 882621 for full details and current prices.



# LIFE MEMBERS MEETING AND VE DAY MEMORIES

The annual gathering of some of the Association's Life Members took place this year on the 70th anniversary of VJ Day at Tong and Drighlington, near Bradford. About 25 Members and friends sat down to a lovely tea served by the Association's President, Andrew Aspland.



**Alec Marsh rang his first peal (inside to Plain Bob Major at Rothwell) on VE Day and his second (inside to Kent TB Major also at Rothwell) on V J Day.**

The date was very apt for one Member, **Alec Marsh**, now 88, who rang his second peal 70 years ago to the day. His first peal had been a few weeks earlier on VE Day.

Alec lived and rang at Woodlesford near Leeds in his teens and was tutored by Tom Strangeway at nearby Rothwell. A peal board there records his two Victory Peals.

**Cyril Toyne**, Sprotbrough, now

86, was the other Member present who rang on VE Day. He rang at Doncaster.

In addition to Alec and Cyril, a few more of those present were old enough to remember at least the ending of WW2. Memories ranged from attending street parties, watching a big V being painted onto a wall which lasted for decades (**Lawrence Sheard**, Batley) to sitting on his father's shoulders watching the celebrations in Wakefield (**Robert Cater**, York).

Since an abbreviated version of this article above appeared in *The Ringing World*, other YACR members have related their own stories of what they did in VE Day:

**Arthur Rogers** was 13 years old at the end of the war. He, along with a few other lads, was taught to ring in 1944 at Elland by Frank Linfoot, when the Government allowed bells to be rung again. Arthur remembers the young band was capable of ringing rounds and call changes in time for VE Day. To let the population know the war was at last over, bells were rung all over the country. 70 years later Arthur was delighted to ring at his local Church, St John's in Easingwold.

**David Smith**, tower captain at Lindley, and long-time friend of Arthur was only seven years old in 1945 but remembers his mother sewing bits of material

to make bunting to string across the street. He doesn't recall there being a street party or anything like that, "for nobody had anything by then. The street lighting had just come on again after years of darkness, then only 40w bulbs every 100 yards. Trousers being passed down were a bit loose round the arm pits and boots and shoes had to be mended a lot with bits of belting from the mill. Studs and segs were hammered into the soles to make the leather last longer and were great for skating and making noise. If you had a bike it was like having a Rolls Royce". David started ringing when he was eleven and "it was all serious stuff".

**Eric Lord** who rings at Almondbury and Brighouse, was also a small boy in 1945. He remembers that "stirring music was played on the BBC's Home Service on the wireless. I marched round and round the settee in time to it, waving a Union Flag".

**Richard Price**, living in Thrybergh, wrote to give his apologies for the Life Members Day. He recalled his first peal on 8 January 1944, after the ban on ringing during WW2 was lifted. He writes "I cycled from Feltham across what is now Heath Row (sic) Airport to Cranford where a little six had just been hung by Mears. It was bitterly cold and the road stretched almost dead straight into a north wind. We

broke down after 40 minutes and father had to bribe Frank, my brother, and me to start again. I was 12 years old".

*Richard has gone on to ring 2589 peals by the end of 2014 - Ed*

**Jeffery Cooper** (Guiseley) also regretfully could not attend but wrote about his first attempt for a peal – "...it was in June 1953, after I had completed my National Service from 1950 to 1952, on a perfect summer's

day, extremely hot and not good for peal ringing. It was at Guiseley with a mainly local band, William Dixon, John McGlynn, Cyril Walsh, Tom Strangeway of Rothwell and conducted by John Pearson of Northowram. I was ringing the treble to Grandsire Triples.

The ringing was good all the way through and we had rung for exactly three hours when the conductor missed the call which should have brought the peal round. Certain ringers made the

air blue; they were not pleased at all. O dear! However, all was calmed down when Cyril Walsh intervened and said we had all better locate to his house and have refreshments. I kept quiet and said nothing. I was obviously disappointed, but that is what peal ringing is all about – you don't get them all".

*Jeffery scored his first peal on 12 December 1953 and has gone on to ring 877 so far, including 39 for the YACR in 2014. - Ed.*



**Life Members on VJ Day+70**

**Standing l to r: Barry Sullivan (Almondbury), Robert Pygott (Batley), Edna Sullivan (Almondbury), Lawrence Sheard (Batley), Katherine Scholfield (Wakefield), Revd Giles Galley (York), Doreen Sanderson (Huntington), Stuart Armeson (Ecclesfield), Ron Crabtree (Bradford), Andrew King (Wath Upon Dearne), Donald Hood (Headingley), Eric Robinson (Ossett), Geoffrey Johnson (Ripon).**

**Sitting l to r: Andrew Aspland (YACR President), Shirley Pygott (Batley), Alec Marsh (Pudsey), Cyril Toyne (Sprotbrough), Jennifer Armeson (Ecclesfield).**

## REMEMBERING

### Remembering YACR Members who gave their lives in The Great War

Readers will recall the national initiative to ring the bells of their local churches on the centenary of the deaths of ringers who gave their lives in WW1.

In the last Newsletter there was a list of the 66 members of the YACR who died, along with the date of their death and the church they rang at.

To the end of 1915 six ringers from the Association had given their lives. Their centenary commemoration ringing was as follows –

Sergeant John Hare of Beverley: 29 April. Several quarter peals were rung at St Mary's in Beverley.

Sergeant George Payne Hill of Whitby: 24 May. A peal was rung at Whitby.

Private Mark Melia of St Francis of Assis (RC), Holbeck, Leeds: 12 June. This church was demolished several years ago and the bells transferred to St Anne's RC Cathedral in Leeds. A peal was rung there.

Corporal Frederick William Jones of Pudsey: 10 July. Permission was not forthcoming to ring in commemoration at Pudsey, but a peal was rung at nearby Drighlington.

Corporal Tom Binns of Calverley: 26 September. A quarter peal was rung at Calverley.

Private Ernest Robert Stokell of Felixkirk: 27 September. A peal was rung at Felixkirk.

The names of all ringers in the country who died in WW1 are recorded on a Roll of Honour kept in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

The following prayer, written by Canon Paul of Ripon Cathedral, was read at the Snowdon Dinner on 17 October.

Loving God,

We remember with thanksgiving those who made the supreme sacrifice for us in a time of war. We pray for all bellringers who died that they may rejoice in your kingdom where every tear is wiped away.

Help us all to dedicate ourselves to the cause of justice and freedom and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world; for the honour of Your name through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Amen.

## ST GEORGE'S DAY, VE DAY, MAGNA CARTA & VJ

### Ringling for the St George's Day (23 April), VE Day (8 May), the Signing of Magna Carta (15 June) and the Association annual Life Members Event.

The Government and many dioceses of the Church of England requested ringing on these days this year. I asked towers and Branch secretaries to let me know their ringing and I received the following list. At some towers quarters were rung and full peals at others. Although the list covers all parts of Yorkshire, I'm sure it's not exhaustive:

**St George's Day:** Settle, Kirby Malham, Doncaster, Leeds Minster, Sheffield Cathedral, Northallerton, Elloughton, Thornaby on Tees and Kirklington.

**VE Day:** Settle, Kirby Malham, Doncaster, Leeds Minster, Sheffield Cathedral, Northallerton, Lindley, Ranmoor, Market Weighton, Barnby Dun, Sprotbrough, Conisbrough, Knottingley, Brompton, New Mill. Tadcaster, Newton Kyme, Dewsbury, Penistone, East Witton, Wortley, York Minster, Ecclesfield, Rotherham Minster, Middleton, Batley, Ilkley, Addingham, Kirkheaton, Bradford Cathedral, Huddersfield, Easingwold and Long Preston.

**800th Anniversary of the signing of the Magna by King John:** celebratory ringing took place at numerous churches across the County.

**On VJ Day** (15 August) the Association held its Life Members Day – see separate article. We were especially pleased to have Alec Marsh of Pudsey with us. Alec rang his first peal (inside to Plain Bob Major) at Rothwell on VE Day and his second peal (inside to Kent TB) there on VJ Day.

-Ed



*The patriotic band at Settle on St George's Day after ringing a quarter of Grandsire Doubles, conducted by Vera Walker.*

*L to r: Amanda Jones, George Parker, Gillian Parrington, Steven Soames, Paul Clark, Vera Walker.*



# News from Towers and Branches

## Bingley

### *Big Wilf's muffles*

Here at Bingley we have a lasting memory of the recent Ringing Roadshow. We completed the quiz and handed it in and thought no more about it, until we were ringing at Thatcham where I took a call on my mobile to say we had won a set of Big Wilf's Bell Muffles. I spoke to Wilf who said we had to measure and photograph our clappers and send him full details but he did not think the muffles would be ready before 9th November. I had no idea there was so much to know about clappers, it appears we have some of every type here at Bingley...!

We were very surprised when Wilf called early in the week of Remembrance Sunday to say he could get them to us by Friday. We quickly fixed the self-amalgamating tape suggested above and below the clapper balls (to give the muffles extra grip) and fitted the new muffles. The ringing on Remembrance Sunday sounded really good (see clip on our website) and there was no slippage of the muffles at all. We were so impressed we left them on for our practice on Tuesday 11th.

So no more fiddling with leather straps, duct tape, cable ties or string for us - we are very pleased to have won this set of bell muffles and would

recommend them to any other tower considering purchasing some. The quality of them and the service provided by Wilf is excellent.

*Jane Lynch*

## Central Branch

The Central Branch held its annual training course in February, based at Cawthorne and Barnsley. There were two groups, led by Adrian Moreton and Brian Sanders, covering Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles and Plain Bob Triples. Ten students from across the Branch attended. Lunch was at the Miller's Arms in Darton, where a short business meeting to elect new members was held.

*AM*

## Harrogate and Masham

### *Making the new Mayor*

Congratulations are due to Nigel Simms, a ringer at St Mary's Masham, who was made Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate on 18th May. He became the Mayor for the town and the surrounding areas in the District, after being deputy last year.

The ceremony took place in the magnificent setting of the Royal Hall, with plenty of civic protocol. His wife Lynn became

the Mayoress.

It will be a very busy year for both of them and we wish them every success. They will enjoy being chauffeur driven in the official car. Nigel will no doubt have to miss out on some of his ringing.

*Geoffrey Johnson.*

## Low Bentham

I'm the newest member of a fairly inexperienced but enthusiastic band of ringers at St John the Baptist, Low Bentham, where I started ringing in March 2014 – the most experienced members of the band only started ringing about 2 years ago, so we're still working hard to ring decent rounds and get to grips with simple call changes. We've had a lot of help on our practice nights from experienced ringers from other towers who have generously given up their time to train and support us – especially Gillian Parrington and Ian Boocock – but we need all the help we can get, so we were very grateful to members of the Yorkshire Association who agreed to conduct a workshop for us at Low Bentham on the morning of 2nd August, before they went gallivanting around some other towers in the Dales.

### *Our tuition workshop*

Unfortunately a few of the band, including our tower captain,

were away on holiday and, in view of the hot weather, we were hoping and praying our number 3 bell wouldn't also be taking the day off. It was one of the many glorious sunny days we enjoyed that summer, so we knew we'd be sweltering in our small and poorly ventilated ringing room. But the heat also meant it was touch and go whether our temperamental number 3 bell would perform, because it had been going on strike (or rather off strike!) during the recent heatwave. I don't understand the technicalities, but I gather it's something to do with its nylon bushes, which were causing the clapper to seize up. Sometimes it was completely silent when rung up, then it might suddenly start donging, but only when it felt like it, making it virtually impossible to strike accurately. Thankfully, once it got going it was on its best behaviour that morning, which was a big relief.

Those of us who were able to attend benefited from a very enjoyable and instructive session. Our visiting experts, led by Jane Lynch and Neil Murray, very patiently gave us some helpful handling tips and a lesson on call changes. We took it in turns to ring in with them, trying out different bells and also having a go at calling the changes while sitting out (I'm afraid none of us felt equal to doing that while we were actually ringing – that's something we're going to have to work on!). Jane and Neil and their fellow ringers were very encouraging and I was especially grateful for the advice they gave

about leading on the treble and for being given the opportunity to have a go at this.

### *Ringing at other towers*

I must admit, I was very nervous about visiting the other towers, but when Jane and Neil said we would be welcome to join them, I decided to take the plunge and tag along – and I'm so glad I did. After the workshop at Low Bentham, next stop was All Saints at Burton-in-Lonsdale. Here, a climb up what seemed like an endless spiral staircase led us to a spacious ringing room and I was reassured to see one or two familiar faces from practice sessions I've attended at Settle and Giggleswick. My main memory of this tower is that the bells were deafening, in sharp contrast to our bells at Low Bentham, which people often complain are very quiet and difficult to hear.

I'm afraid I skipped the visit to the tower at Settle in order to go home and walk my dogs. I joined up with the tour at St Oswald's, Horton-in-Ribblesdale – the village and its beautiful old church were buzzing, and not just with bell ringers, because St Oswald's Festival was also in full swing. Gillian Parrington, Horton's tower captain, had prepared refreshments for us and I discovered she can't spend all her spare time ringing bells because she also makes a mean carrot cake. It was my first visit to Gillian's tower, which has recently been enhanced by two new bells and I felt very privileged to have a go on this lovely ring of six.

A drive along narrow, winding roads through stunning Dales scenery brought us to the final tower of the day at St Michael the Archangel, Kirkby Malham, a large church with a fine ring of eight bells. Tower captain George Parker gave us a warm welcome and his tower gets the prize for the most luxurious ringing room I've seen so far. Set up high at the back of the building, a plain glass screen is all that divides it from the body of the church – this gives ringers a great view of the nave but might be a bit disconcerting if you suffer from vertigo! I was particularly impressed to discover that some of the bells could be seen in action, thanks to a camera in the bell tower relaying pictures to a little monitor in the ringing chamber.

At all the towers, the organisers made sure everyone had a good ring, interspersing bouts of rounds and call changes with some complicated methods (well, they looked and sounded very difficult to me!) for the more proficient ringers. I'm still at the stage where I feel I need a bit of looking after, particularly when ringing bells I'm not familiar with, but I felt in very safe hands, surrounded by reassuring, encouraging and friendly ringers.

I feel fortunate to have had the chance to visit all these towers and have a go at ringing several different bells in the company of experts – it was great fun, I met some lovely people and it boosted my confidence no end. If there are any other novices out there feeling hesitant about

taking part in such a tour, I'd strongly advise you to give it a go if you get the opportunity – just give the organisers an honest idea of your level of ability and let them know if you're a bit anxious. It's a great way to meet other ringers and start broadening your ringing experience.

I'm sure Jane, Neil and Co must have been exhausted by the end of what was a long and extremely hot day and I'd like to thank them for organising such an excellent tour.

**Sue Neal**

## St Mary's Church, Mirfield



For some time the 10 bells at Mirfield have needed attention. After an inspection of the tower the ringers were told the tower itself had to be restored and it would be costly. It is 144 years since Mirfield's bells were installed by Taylors Foundry, in a tower designed by architect Sir George Gilbert Scott.

The bellringers at St Mary's have raised £65,000 of the predicted £88,000 needed to fund the required restoration and recasting work. A grant from

English Heritage will fund the restoration of the tower itself, and a private donation from a local family has been received.

Easter Day was last service ring at St Mary's before work commences. Taylors collected the bells in April, recast the front six and retuned the back four. It is anticipated the bells will be reinstalled towards the end of the year. A feature of Mirfield's bells is their Yorkshire ends.

## Northallerton

### First Peals

There is a national initiative to encourage people to ring their first peal this year - the aim is to get a total of 300 "first pealers", since 2015 is the 300th anniversary of what is thought to have been the first peal ever rung (at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich). At Northallerton we decided this was a challenge we could accept as we had several ringers who were capable of attempting a peal, so we started arranging something.

It took until May for the first attempt, which was Grandsire Caters with Heidi Bradley and James Town ringing their first peal. Unfortunately, Sebastian Bradley was supposed to ring in this, but a shoulder injury forced him to withdraw at the last minute. He was bitterly disappointed, so we promised to re-arrange his first peal when he had recovered. Seb had also been making good progress with handbells, despite only intermittent practice in the pub

on Sunday evenings and the occasional quarter peal, so we hatched a plot.

In the meantime, with Seb still unable to ring, we decided that his parents should be the next "victims", so on 4th July we rang Plain Bob Triples, with Hayley and Mark Bradley on treble and tenor respectively. Heidi also rang inside, so her first peal hadn't put her off the idea! Everyone did very well, Mark's performance being particularly notable for the fact that he is posted to Norway at present and gets very little chance to do any ringing at all.

On 15th August it was Sebastian's turn at last and time for our "cunning plan". Seb is something of a "gentle giant", very quiet and unassuming and just gets on with things. Although he is 6ft 4ins tall, he is still only 16. He rang the trebles to a peal of Kent TB Major on handbells in the morning and then, after a couple of hours to recover, he rang the 5th to a peal of Cambridge S Major at Brompton. We are not sure if anyone has previously rung their first handbell and tower bell peal in the same day. Congratulations to Seb, who turned up for morning ringing the next day with only a couple of blisters to show for his efforts.

There are still one or two to go in our project, so there may be more news soon.

**Jennie Town**

## Rawmarsh

After almost 30 years without a regular band, a new group of recruits are learning to handle bells – under the tutelage of Ian Bennett, Stuart Armeson, Peter and Elaine Scott and Chris Bennett (no relation). At the same time, the framework has been stripped and repainted.

Ian has been interviewed by local press and Andy Crane at BBC Radio Sheffield. Stagecoach Rawmarsh and Wetherspoon's Rhinoceros pub, Rotherham, have been involved in fundraising for sound control, new ropes, frame painting and refurbishment of ringing chamber.

A beer festival in St. Mary's Church Hall in July, with beer supplied by Acorn and other local breweries including our bell ringing Head Brewer at Welbeck Abbey Brewery.

We are proud of the commitment shown by Steve and Ros Gardiner, Mark and Sue Utley, Rachel Mullins, Suzy Smith, Anthea Longmore, Chloe Parkin, Keith Severn and Ian Disley.

### Comments from a Rawmarsh "Newbie".

I don't know about you but I didn't expect a new hobby like bell ringing would lead to beer festivals, curry nights and writing articles for a bell ringer's magazine. But then again I hadn't anticipated meeting the likes of Ian and Louise, who clearly are determined to make this new venture successful.

After contacting Ian via e-mail

the next thing I know I'm grovelling about under the bells painting the supporting framework. If you want to know what colour we used all you have to do is look at my cap, overalls, boots and glasses. As for Ian at times he looked like a post box.

These are the same bells that my father-in-law (Albert Firth) and his brother Arthur rang, when they were young men, before World War II and 5 years in Egypt (for Albert) changed things. Uncle Arthur helped keep the steel flowing in a reserved occupation and went on bell ringing with a transfer to what is now Rotherham Minster. His Bell Ringers record book is retained in the chamber. The Last date in the book is 1955. The last time he rang bells was in 1956 at the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers at York Minster the day before his sudden death at his work.

Can you imagine my surprise when one of the first new ringers I met and for the first time was Arthur's granddaughter (but "there you go" that's bell ringing). You meet all sorts. I think that is one of the things your hobby has over others: it's open to all comers and all ages.

Getting on with the training stuff 1. It's not easy 2. Getting into the habit of sitting with both feet on the floor. 3. Who says "It's like riding a bike" 4. I'm struggling with the Terminology and 5. It's not the sort of thing you can practice at home. As a group it seems we are "making progress", "it's coming

together", "it'll be good", "don't sit with your feet crossed".

I think it is a "good" job our bells are stopped from ringing till we get sound control fitted.

Joking aside it is good to be in from the start of what is a new tower not only for us Newbies but also our neighbours who will not have heard their bells ringing for (is it

**Keith Severn**

## Ripon Cathedral Outing

On 11th July, the "extended family" of Ripon Cathedral ringers and friends ventured north for its annual outing. A bright and warm day saw us heading to Newcastle upon Tyne; the well-planned itinerary meant that some of us travelled by train and Metro while a few preferred to drive. Most of us managed the whole day, although some came late, some left early and some only managed the towers on either side of lunch! Each tower had a different ringer running it, and every tower had a variety of touches. Rounds and call changes were rung at every tower – this was an outing that catered for everyone!

Our first tower was S Mary, Heworth – across the road from the Metro station – a 6cwt six, with a very short draft that had taller ringers hitting the ceiling at backstroke. The design of the ringing room meant that two ringers had to stand on the trap door over the stairs to ring. We



found the bells a bit tricky, but were pleased with our efforts, the best ringing being a course of London Minor. We got warm here – and that was to be true throughout the day!

We caught the Metro to South Shields for our next tower – dedicated to S Hilda. The Church, a fine Georgian one, was worth a look before we headed to the ringing room. A very pleasant 10cwt eight enabled us to ring Stedman Triples, Plain Bob Triples and Superlative. Two of our number had already identified The Custom House as suitable for lunch, and a large group of us took over a portion of the cafe for a leisurely hour or so.

We then caught the ferry to North Shields using our Metro tickets. There are two staircases on the ferry, one labelled Steerage, the other Posh people. We dithered over which to use! Once we had disembarked, a twenty minute walk to Christ Church dispelled any after-lunch sleepiness. There are 10 bells at Christ Church, with the tenor weighing 16cwt. Our best efforts here were Grandsire Caters and a fine half-course of Yorkshire Royal.

We were then back on the Metro, heading for Newcastle upon Tyne. We rang first on the 11cwt eight at S John. When the bells are struck well, they are very rewarding. In a hot ringing room, we rang a good touch of Stedman Triples at “a cracking pace” and some Plain Bob Major. We then walked round the corner to the

impressive Cathedral, dedicated to S Nicholas. The twelve, at 37cwt, are much heavier than most of us are used to and the “back-enders” worked hard. We opened the door onto the roof to try to keep ourselves cool. We rang on all twelve, but also made use of the flat 6th and the light treble for other combinations. As weariness on a warm day set in, Rounds and Call Changes on the twelve was a popular touch. Grandsire Caters on the light ten proved to be very musical, and Stedman Triples on the back eight was majestic.

We dispersed, some back to Heworth where cars were parked, some to Central Station to catch trains southwards, some remaining in the city for a meal.

Our thanks to Robert Wood who organised the day – all the planning meant that we had a most successful time.

**Anne Wood.**

## Selby & District Branch Activities

Since March 2015 when the new Branch officers were elected, Selby Branch has held practices at approximately monthly intervals, except during the summer holidays. These have been on weekday evenings either on a Monday when no tower in the branch practises or on the normal practice night for the tower being used. The practices have alternated between Bob Doubles practices for learners and more

advanced practices of surprise methods and Stedman with some being on 10 and 12 bells. All these practices have been well-supported and progress has been made by many members who were unable to get the opportunity to ring these methods at their own towers. It is felt by the committee that these weekday practices are more suited to the needs of branch members than those held on Saturdays, although the December meeting will be on a Saturday when there will also be a Christmas carol service. This pattern of practices will therefore continue in 2016.

The branch has been delighted to perform well in YACR striking competitions. In May, much to the surprise of the band, the branch team won the 8 bell competition at Market Weighton, beating several much larger branches which usually win this competition. In September, a band from Selby Abbey, missing several of its more experienced ringers and having won the branch striking competition earlier in the month, were placed in equal second place in the YACR Sunday Service Competition. Clearly ringing standards in the branch are improving and the new Ringing Master, Alex Riley from Selby Abbey, is to be congratulated on these achievements.

**Chris Cooper, Chairman,  
Selby & District Branch**

## Sharow

The re-juvenating of the Sharow band has resulted in ringers from four different towers getting together which has increased opportunities for our learning. It is allowing ringers to move on and ring with a more reliable band and have people extra to stand behind.

Boroughbridge ringers have visited Kirklington and vice versa. Jim Harken attended the Harrogate Course to learn how to ring Bob Doubles and now has the opportunity to practise it when, in the past, at Kirklington we would have struggled to raise a band. Thank you to all those who are supporting this ringing. It is beneficial when towers can come together to share their experienced ringers, so helping each other along. It would be good to hear of any other towers that share some practices.

**Janet.**

## Sheffield & District Bells, Balcony and Bees!

Each year the Sheffield Branch programme includes an “out of Branch” meeting, where we travel beyond our normal boundary to visit towers in a neighbouring Branch or Association. On Saturday 25 April we headed east to the Doncaster & District Society towers at Harworth and Bawtry, both rings of six bells. The ingenious arrangement at Harworth demonstrates that it is sometimes possible to shoehorn a ringing balcony accessed from

a straight staircase into the footprint of a small tower.

At Bawtry there is apparently a swarm of bees living behind the clock case in the ringing chamber, and we were asked to sign a disclaimer waiving our right to hold the church responsible if we were stung! In the event the bees were either on holiday elsewhere or not interested in us, and we escaped unmolested. Sixteen members attended representing a handful of the Sheffield Branch towers, with a few of us finishing the afternoon at the Ship Inn a few hundred yards from Bawtry church. We didn't see any bees there either!

**Chris Bennett**

## Skipton

### A Royal Celebration



The Skipton bells pealed out for a special anniversary on 8th February.

Malcolm Harker has been a regular member of the Skipton bellringers since Digby Burton taught him bell handling 47 years ago. Something went right, because after his very first bell handling session, he joined

the rest of the band and rang rounds!

On 5th February 1955, Malcolm married Maureen in Holy Trinity Church. We have rung celebratory quarters for their Ruby and Golden Wedding Anniversaries and so it was a great joy to ring another in the series to honour their Diamond Wedding.

**Maureen and Malcolm  
pictured earlier with their  
card from the Queen.**

## Thirkleby

### A new ring of six

Thirkleby, near Thirsk, now has six bells installed: the old bells form the back three, the treble bell was kindly donated by the Keltek Trust and the remaining two bells have been newly cast, one of them generously donated by the Yorkshire Association. The bells sound very nice and handle well. They are a ground floor ring, rung around the font, with a beautiful stained glass window in the ringing “room”.

The driving force behind the scheme has been Jill Gillanders, Thirkleby churchwarden and a ringer. The frame was designed and made by John Hallett with assistance from Jim Sheldrake; the wheels were made by David Town. The working party comprised these three plus John Groom, who assisted the bell-hanger from Whitechapel Foundry to install the frame and hang the bells.

Thanks go to Jimmy Hill, local farmer, who allowed the use of his farm buildings for the frame construction and also transported both frame and bells from there to the church.

The bells were dedicated on 7th July by the Rt Revd Paul Ferguson, Bishop of Whitty.

*Jennie Town*

## West Tanfield

### *Ringling for the recent Royal Birth*

The announcement of the birth of Princess Charlotte came around at 11.00 am on 2nd May. The bells had been left up ready in anticipation the previous Sunday so when the ringers assembled at the church at 11.30 they started ringing immediately. The tower was probably one of the first in the country to ring out in celebration.

The ringers were Christopher and Gillian Bourne-Arton, Stef and Nicola Bennet, Brenda Raw, Judith Parkinson and Geoffrey Johnson. The same band of ringers rang the bells for Prince George's birth in 2013. Three of the ringers also rang for the birth of Prince William in 1982.

*G.W. Johnson.*

## Wortley

It only seems like yesterday, yet it is just short of two years when a small, but determined, group of bell ringers decided that the eight-bell, 100+ year old ring at Wortley, sadly suffering

ever worsening wear and tear in recent years, deserved a makeover to ensure they would ring out for another 100+ years. For such a small community the target figure of £45,000 did seem daunting but several concerts, coffee mornings and open tower events later we have achieved our fundraising target, got Faculty approval and the bells will be removed in September to go to Taylors Foundry, returning hopefully in time to ring out anew for Christmas.

In truth this feat would not have been achieved if it had not been for the remarkable support we enjoyed from the villagers and businesses in Wortley, and for a significant grant that we obtained from Viridor Credits. Luck was on our side with our Viridor application as to be awarded funding from the Landfill Credits scheme you have to be within ten miles of a landfill site. Wortley is within that distance from the Parkwood landfill, but it closed in February this year, so applications in this area are no longer valid. We got ours in with about a month to spare!

The support from what is a small, yet closely-knit village community was also remarkable. The Wortley Arms, Wortley Men's Club, Post Office and Farm Shop all supported us through donating the proceeds of events, selling a bell ringers' beer, hosting our tins and donating raffle prizes. It is a reminder, if one were needed, that church bells are not just there for the

enjoyment of bell ringers, but are a vocal part of community life. For some of our elderly residents who can no longer get to church the sound of the bells connects them with the service. For others they provide a pleasant backdrop to a cup of tea at the Countess tearooms on a Sunday morning. As bell ringers we look forward to welcoming visitors to our tower to enjoy the new Wortley ringing experience in a few months.

*Janet Curran*

## Barnby Dun

88 years old Russell Stephenson celebrated 60 years as a ringer at Barnby Dun (near Doncaster) at the start of 2015, when he rang in his celebratory quarter.

### **Barnby Dun, South Yorks**

Sunday, 11 January 2015:  
1260 Plain Bob Minor

1 Tim Cutts, 2 Jay Downes,  
3 Marian Thomas, 4 Russell Stephenson,  
5 Jim Hirst, 6 Nathan Fisher (C)

Rung to congratulate Russell Stephenson aged 88 on 60 years of service as a ringer at Barnby Dun church.

Congratulations!

*Helen Nichols*

# OBITUARIES

## David Appleton

David was born in Co. Durham and learned to ring at Lanchester.

In 1966 he moved to Bingley to work for the Bradford & Bingley Building Society and joined the band at All Saints, Bingley.

David joined the YACR in 1970 and became a Life Member in 2010. To mark the occasion he was resented with a certificate and trophy at the Western Branch AGM. He rang seven peals for the Association.

Over the years David held many positions in Bingley tower, including being the ringer of the Pancake Bell on Shrove Tuesday, and also Tower Webmaster.

Although David's final illness made it progressively more difficult to climb the belfry stairs and ring he did contrive to visit the belfry when he would watch, listen and entertain the band with pearls of wisdom.

Sadly, David died on 20 January 2015 thus ending a connection with Bingley tower almost spanning fifty years.

## Tony Boughton – Bridlington Priory

It is with great sadness that we have to report the transfer of one of our ringers to the "Great Belfry in the Sky", aged 70.

Tony joined the Bridlington Priory ringing team in 1995 and joined YACR as a full member in 1997. He was a very popular member of our team and eager to help when anything needed doing, so in 1998 he was elected Tower Keeper. Taking his role very seriously, he kept the Bells and Tower in pristine condition and was always on hand when someone needed to be in the Tower for servicing and maintenance work.

In 2005 he was elected Tower Captain and carried out that role diligently as he always did with everything else that he undertook. He led by example in his faithful attendance at Sunday Services, Weddings, Practice night and on any special occasion when the bells were requested to be rung. Sadly, he had to refrain from ringing in 2012 due to his hip not allowing him to climb up to the Ringing Room. Nevertheless, he came up on Sunday morning, before ringing, to see if we were OK and have a chat. We all hoped, as he did, that he would carry on ringing when he had his new hip.

However, he had to have major heart surgery before the hip could be replaced and after returning home for a couple of weeks was re-admitted to hospital.

We all offer our condolences to Jane and the family and keep them in our prayers and assure them that Tony will never be forgotten in the Bridlington Priory Ringing Room.

*Roger Fozzard*

## Dennis Chapman

Dennis learnt to ring on the glorious Taylor octave at St. George's, Doncaster, one of only a handful of eight-bell towers with a tenor bell weighing over 30cwt. He was somewhat nonplussed in recent years to find out that, in fact, it weighed only 29½ cwt. He would say "It was like being clean bowled!"



When big enough he joined the predominantly male band, learning, via Eric Critchley, blue lines of up to 35 Surprise Major methods. Bell ringing in Yorkshire benefited from the input of the Chapman and Sanderson families, and on Sunday 22nd February eight members of his “Yorkshire family” rang a quarter peal in his memory, conducted by Peter Sanderson and using a composition by Dennis.

In 1949 Denis had passed the test of scoring a 720 unaided to become a member of the Yorkshire Association, and would later become a member of many other Guilds and Associations, including the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths. In the 1980s he and the “ex-pats” in Hampshire used to gather for their annual peal for the YACR (including my wife, our daughter, myself and the late Simon Burnett of Haworth – Ed).

Dennis married Betty at St. Mary, Handsworth, Sheffield in 1957, where she had learned to ring. By then he had already commenced work with the C.E.G.B. in Canterbury. In 1966 the family moved to Thornbury in Bristol where they became involved in fund raising for the re-hanging of the eight bells. Their last move, in September 1974, brought them to Marchwood, near Southampton, where Dennis had been promoted as Administrative Officer at the local Power Station. They became members of the fairly recently re-hung ring of 6, later 8, at Eling.

Over the next 30 years, Dennis continued to ring peals and quarter peals, being regarded as a safe pair of hands round the back end. His total of peals was 702. Over the past year or two, with Betty needing more care, apart from practice nights at Eling, his ringing has been limited to some quarter peals on the light 10 installed in a house near Romsey. On Friday 6th February, in the midst of a quarter peal of Stedman Caters, his favourite method, he set his bell, sat down and left us.

## Brian E Moorhouse.

It is with regret that we record the death of Brian E. Moorhouse of Pannal, Harrogate on 1st January 2015 following a stroke at the age of 83 years.

Brian learned to ring at Lindley, Huddersfield and rang his first peal which was Plain Bob Major at Lindley on 15 April 1950. He subsequently went to College and employment in the South of England and his ringing lapsed for a time.

Brian returned to Yorkshire and renewed his membership of the Yorkshire Association in 1967 ringing peals of Kent Major, 4x minor methods at Collingham and Bob Major at Wetherby where he became a member of the band.

He was a very faithful member of the Wetherby band until retiring last year but continued to visit socially on practice nights right until the last.

Not a great enthusiast for peal ringing Brian nevertheless rang over 30 peals in a variety of methods and loved to hear the bells tapping : “tick tock like a clock” he used to say.

A peal of Bristol Surprise was rung in his memory at Wetherby on 10th January followed by a quarter peal by the local band on the following practice night both of which to be published.

We thank God for Brian E Moorhouse, his faithfulness and loyalty and readiness to help and encourage others and our deepest sympathy is expressed to his family.

R.I.P.

## Jo Moreton 1933-2015

It is said that behind every great man there is a great woman. Jo's was her own life, but it was a life dominated by her marriage to Wilf, and of her love and care for him in sickness and in health. And if he did great things, it was only possible because Jo was there in support.

Jo Roper was born in Banbury, Oxfordshire in November 1933. Her father Leslie was a customs officer working in Sudan, which was effectively a British colony at the time. Her mother Madeline was left at home to look after three girls – Jo was the youngest. Jo, aged three, and her mother travelled to Sudan to see her father, whilst her sisters were at boarding school. Soon Jo was also sent to the same school – Ashford School for Girls in Kent – at the tender age of four. The outbreak of World War Two soon after caused the school to be evacuated to Exeter, and her father to be stranded in Sudan for the duration. On leaving school (she was in the first year to take ‘A’ levels), she studied Dairying at Reading University, where in addition to her studies she took up two new pastimes – sailing and ringing. I don't know much about sailing, for although she clearly enjoyed it – she often talked about sailing across Milford Haven in a regatta – it never featured again. Ringing however was a different story.

If pushed, I will claim to be a third generation ringer, but that's not really the case, as Jo learnt to ring before her father (and my father learnt to ring long before either of them). On returning to Adderbury, the family home, she announced she had learnt to ring, at which point her father joined the band at St Mary's. He later became tower captain, and taught lots of youngsters to ring – some who went on to great things. But Jo learnt first. It was almost inevitable she would join the Universities Association, and go on their summer tours. Marie Cross was a major influence on both Jo and her father, and Marie was also instrumental in arranging for Jo to meet Wilf (at the UA tour in Rugby in 1955). They were married at Adderbury three years later.

After University, Jo trained as a teacher, and had jobs in Hull and Wakefield before I arrived. Ralph and Frances followed. Around this time Wilf was setting records ( 130 Minor in hand, 1961, 42 Surprise Royal in 1965), becoming secretary of YACR (1964), starting the Hereford Ringing Course (1963) , as well as running the ringing at Wakefield (and overseeing an augmentation), and teaching all day for a living. Jo had her hands full! Wilf could never have achieved as much as he did without Jo running the home.

Once Frances was old enough, Jo resumed her teaching career – working in a secondary school to start with, but soon migrating to primary teaching. She was made redundant in 1979, and never worked again. It was already clear that Wilf was not well, and for the next 25 years she devoted much of her time to looking after him.

Given the prolific rate at which certain members of the family have rung peals, Jo had a modest 19 peals to her name. But it was 'one that got away' she remembered most – a false peal of Grandsire Caters at Whitby! She had so much more to fill her time than ringing peals. Amongst the crafts to which she turned her hand were knitting, sewing, pottery, carpentry, lace making, lapidary, card making and above all gardening.

Jo never held office in the Yorkshire Association or at Wakefield Cathedral. Generally, she was a happy foot soldier, backing her husband in all he did. But one area with which she did get involved was the Hereford Ringing Course. She didn't attend any of the early courses – too busy looking after us – but in 1975 when Frances was in a handbell group, she began her time with the course. Initially looking after accommodation, then adding the bookstall, and finally becoming secretary in 1999 (the programme initially said Wilf was the secretary, but we all know it was really Jo). In that time she only missed three – twice for courses of chemotherapy (in 93 and 13) and finally this year, when she was in Wakefield Hospice suffering from acute Leukaemia. I think it was typical that she held on until the course was over, and had been given a detailed report of all that had happened. She died on Wednesday 15th April, three days after the course had finished, with Frances at her bedside.

Her funeral was held at Wakefield Cathedral on 30th April. Seven of her family rang in a touch of Grandsire Cinques before the service, which was attended by ringers from all over the country.

May she rest in peace.

*Adrian Moreton*

**John Siddle - Filey**

John learned to ring in Bradford Cathedral at the end of WW2, as they were very short of ringers. Rumour has it, though, that it wasn't just the ringing which attracted him – apparently there was a girl about his age called Mary who started ringing at the same time, and after ringing for evensong they used to sit in a pew at the back of the church holding hands. His first peal was at Bradford Cathedral on Boxing Day 1947, when he rang the 2nd to Grandsire Caters. He always denied any knowledge of peal numbers 2 (the 3rd in Plain Bob Royal in March 1948) and 3 (the treble to Double Norwich Court Bob Major in August 1951).

Whilst he was in the army based on Salisbury Plain we think he rang at St. Thomas's in Salisbury. Subsequently, whilst he was at university in Sheffield he was an honorary verger at the Cathedral, although it's not clear if he actually rang there. After this he gave up ringing for many years, until some time after he moved to Filey in the early 1990s. He rejoined the Yorkshire Association in 1993 and rang two further peals in 2000 and 2005. He must hold the record for the longest time between his 3rd and 4th peals – nearly 50 years! We don't know how many quarter peals he rang, but it must be well over 50, mostly at Filey for Sunday evening service. He was always up for a good ringing outing and particularly enjoyed the Bristol weekends organised by Simon Percy, including the Derbyshire one!

But it's not for peals, or quarter peals, or tower-grabbing that John will be remembered – his contribution to local ringing since moving to Filey will be his lasting legacy. In the last 24 years he's kept the band at Filey going, helped regularly at other local towers including Bridlington, Scarborough, Flamborough and latterly Helmsley and held almost every position on the committee of the Scarborough and District Branch, including Chairman, secretary and ringing master. He was also drafted in to complete the certificates for our annual striking competition, so practically every tower in the Branch has an example of John's fine calligraphy. All of these duties were carried out with typical John efficiency, attention to detail, empathy with less experienced ringers and above all patience and good humour. He was a hard act to follow for those of us who had to when he finally said enough was enough and refused to succumb to more arm-twisting to stay on.

John was also a firm advocate of that other bellringers' habit of retiring to the pub for a well-earned drink after ringing. In fact, so keen was he on this, that there was usually a bottle of home-brew in the ringing chamber for those of us who couldn't wait! We miss him.

**Neil Spencer, Beckwithshaw**

Neil, who sadly died last year, was a quiet and unassuming man – and dependable! Neil used to walk 30 minutes to church for practice and Sunday Service (and back again) come rain, hail, sleet or snow – he'd even chime just one bell if no-one else was there.

Neil started ringing at the Millennium and although he never progressed far in method ringing was regarded as the rock of the band. He used to give the reading at the annual bellringing Service around the New Year.

Away from ringing, Neil was quite a character – he had a deep interest in the classics, especially Ancient Egypt, was a part-time worker at Harrogate Museum – and also a volunteer worker at 'Paperworks' – a Harrogate charity for those with learning disabilities.

Neil is sadly missed by all those who knew him.

**Derek Wagstaff - Tickhill**

Derek was the tower captain at Tickhill (near Doncaster) and died very suddenly on Boxing Day aged 74 . Derek learnt to ring at Tickhill in the 1980s but gave up to pursue some of his other hobbies. He spent his working life as a conductor on British Rail trains and had many funny stories to tell.

Around 2004 when there was no longer any ringing at the Tickhill, he decided to take over the maintenance of the bells and ring a single bell on Sundays for service. Slowly over the next ten years he with some outside help, he built up an enthusiastic call change band: the current band includes several teenagers. Derek has taught at least 10 people how to ring , including his wife Jean.

Although Derek's own ringing skills never progressed far beyond plain hunting, he was a patient teacher, always cheerful and well liked. He will be greatly missed in the Doncaster area. We hope that ringing at Tickhill will be able to continue without him.

*Marian Thomas*


**Ted Hudson fondly remembered...**

- It all started with a brass plaque found at the bottom of a drawer and it has led me to an unmarked grave in St John's churchyard in Sharow. I had previously asked local ringers for any information about Edward Hudson, or Ted as he was known. Many thanks to everyone who got in touch, especially Jennie Town and Robin Brown.
- My request has thrown up a number of facts. One is that he is buried in an unmarked grave in Sharow churchyard. It does seem a shame that someone who gave so much to the church and to bell ringing does not have a headstone. As Jennie put it "The plaque shouldn't be lost as it has historical connection with the YACR." I am hoping to put together a short piece, to go with the original plaque, on display in St John's bell tower, but I wonder whether we should be marking his grave in some way? The plaque, and the now defunct bench it was on, were given in thanks to Ted by the Branch in recognition of his work for over 40 years.
- The plaque reads:  
*Presented to Edward Hudson on his retirement as secretary of the Northern Branch of the Yorkshire Association of Bellringers. 1934 – 1974.*
- The tenor bell at Hutton Rugby church, installed in 1982, is dedicated to him, after a country wide appeal, in recognition for his services to the Yorkshire Association. It seems right and proper that we should at the very least make sure his presence in St John's graveyard is acknowledged.
- By all accounts he was a real character, much quoted as only ever riding a bicycle!
- I think it would be a lovely gesture if the local Branch raised some funds to have Ted's name put onto the headstone too.

*Bridget Connor*

**Our cover picture is from St Martin, Coney Street, York.**





# *2016 Dates for your diary*

## **6 February**

General Meeting, York Branch

## **5 March**

General Committee Meeting & Meeting of BRF Trustees,  
Sherburn in Elmet

## **March/April**

The weekend Harrogate Residential Course

## **7 May**

AGM & Inter-Branch Striking Contest, Central Branch

## **July**

The weekend Storthes Hall Residential Course

## **August**

Life Members Event

## **17 September**

General Meeting & Final of Sunday Service bands striking contest

## **September**

Striking contest for Yorkshire 12-bell bands

## **October/November**

Snowdon celebratory event