



The Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers



GUILD NEWS

September 2006

All Saints, Hursley - A New 12!



Arthur Mee, in his “King’s England” series, describes Hursley as “a delightful place among the trees and meadows”, a description which is just as true in 2006 as it was when written in 1939. He was less impressed by the church, stating it to be of interest only because it was rebuilt by John Keble in the nineteenth century, from the profits the latter made from “The Christian Year”. At that time the tower, a fourteenth century structure which survived the rebuilding of the rest of the church, contained eight bells. These were augmented to ten in 1989, and in August 2006 were restored and augmented further to give a 14cwt ring of twelve.

So why does a ring of bells that is only 16 years old need restoration? Well the reason for this can be found in the report of the previous augmentation that was published in the Ringing World on the 13th of October 1989.

To summarise; when the bells first became a ring of 6, in 1880, they were hung in a wooden frame made by Hooper and Stokes, and although it was strengthened by Gilletts in 1923, no further work had been carried out and it was showing increasing signs of wear during the 1990’s. In particular a thumping noise from the tenor as it was raised and the go of the 8th (which had become something of a visitors’ bell) were starting to cause real concern. As

a result the experts were called in and the firms approached were unanimous in condemning the frame and recommending replacement with a modern steel one.

It was on this basis that fund-raising was begun. Starting with an Open Day on the weekend of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2002, a sponsored walk, auction of promises and other events quickly raised a surprising amount of money, very close to the target figure of £30,000, which was met with a generous grant from the Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild BRF.

And why augment a perfectly good 10? During the fund-raising period a local

businessman made an extremely generous offer to donate 2 more bells to make the ring up to a 12. After some discussion this was accepted, and fresh plans were drawn up. Both bell-hanging firms suggested that all 12 bells would fit on one level; however there was some concern among the village community that the upper frame installed in the augmentation to 10 in 1989 would no longer be used, which might offend the people who had donated to that appeal. This concern eventually led to the PCC making the decision to use a 3 up and 9 down solution that did utilise an extended 1989 frame (hanging the 6, 7 and 8 of the 12 in the upper level).

Whitechapel were awarded the contract and cast the 2 new trebles in January 2006; luckily a few of the ringers were able to join a small party to see this exciting event. The final ringing on the 10 was a local band peal of Yorkshire Surprise Royal on the 17th of April and the bells came out the next day to be transported to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Here the tuning of the 10 bells was checked, and for several bells, improved, and the new framework made and assembled – earning a mention in the same column as Big Ben in a Daily Mail article by Roy Hattersley. The bells and new fittings, together with the frame, returned on Tuesday the 20th of June.

Despite the heat wave conditions, Neil Thomas from Whitechapel, assisted by local bell hanger and Hursley band member Martin Waldron, got the bells ready to ring by the end of August. The try-out was on Thursday 24 August by the local band and friends and the twelve were agreed to be very fine and ringer-friendly. The dedication will take place at 3pm on Saturday 21 October, and details of this will be published in due course. Until then Sunday ringing will be on the back 10, with Friday night practices on all numbers up to and including 12.

The ringers

After an augmentation the question is often asked whether the local band will cope with ringing on higher numbers. Hursley is lucky in having a very strong ten bell band, and although few members are lucky enough to live in the village, the majority come from within a catchment area of about six miles radius, and many have long standing connections with the village.

At the time of the augmentation to ten there was a competent band who quickly adapted to ten bell ringing. The first peal on the ten was Grandsire Caters, with the band containing eight local ringers plus Andrew Craddock (who subsequently joined the Hursley band) and Roy LeMarechal. Two of the local band, Brian Lovelock and Philip Belgeonne were ringing their first peal. The last peal on the ten bells was rung on Easter Monday, 2006, and the entirely local band contained Tony Smith and Michael “Mac” McTiffin, who both rang in the first peal on the ten.

Since 1989 Winchester and Portsmouth Guild reports show a large turnover of ringers, but the band has remained consistently strong, both by developing its own ringers and by attracting ringers moving to the area. Tony Smith, who has been a member of the band for many years, attributes its success to a policy of always welcoming ringers who wished to join the band, no matter how regularly they attend. This policy has also resulted in a very sociable band, and there is a regular programme of ringing and non-ringing events, including a Christmas dinner, summer barbecue, cycle and car outings and New Year’s Eve party.

The tower’s ringing records for the last fifteen years show a

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steady development both in terms of complexity of methods rung, and in personal development for many of the ringers. Hursley has a well deserved reputation for a high standard of ringing, and this is illustrated by the fact that it was with a mainly local band ringing that the first ever peal of Hursley Delight Royal in 2002, and between 2004 and 2005 seven local ringers, including 14-year-old Katie Hill, ringing their first peals of eight Spliced Surprise Royal. The light bells enable comparatively young children to learn, and a number have gone on to ring quarters and peals and become competent ringers on higher numbers. Of more recent recruits, Andrew Dodd and Rosemary Hill both rang tower bell peals at the age of 9, while Katie Hill and Stephen Thompson rang their first peals on 10 bells, and Kelly Salter called her first peal, Plain Bob Major in hand, at the age of 15.

The mid to end 1990s saw a peak in attendance numbers at practice nights and it was not uncommon to have 25-30 ringers, in a small chamber and ringing from Plain Bob Doubles up to Spliced Surprise Royal, posing quite a challenge for the Tower Captain. Hursley is fortunate in having a number of conductors and ringing masters in the band, which with regular rotation of those holding office leads to interesting variety in ringing, and occasionally in opinion! There are very few occasions when Sunday Services at All Saints are not rung for, and in addition, most of the band actively support the Winchester and Portsmouth Guild, attending events and taking part in Striking Competitions, in which Hursley achieve a high success rate. The band also provides a regular supply of District and Guild Officers, with many regularly supporting other local towers.

Preparation for the augmentation

It was probably predictable that the Hursley band would not be idle while the bells were away. Most ringers supported Sunday Service ringing at other local towers, and a programme of events was arranged to keep the band together. In order to hone the twelve bell ringing, visits were arranged to Winchester, Trowbridge and Reading and several members of the band scored their first quarters of Surprise Maximus. This has paid dividends, and the first practice on the twelve included some very competent ringing by the local band.

We are very grateful to all the towers who accommodated us during our period of homelessness and look forward to making visitors welcome at Hursley. Those who have previously attended practices at Hursley will appreciate however that they get quite crowded. If prospective visitors would phone the Tower Captain, Peter Hill on 01794 518068 in advance it would be very helpful and might save you a long journey to find no room in the tower!

Christine Hill



Martin Waldron and Philip Begeonne wheel one of the new bells up the church path

From the Guild Master

Since being elected Guild Master in July 2004, I have visited nearly two thirds of the Guild's towers which have regular practices as indicated in the Annual Report. With a bit of luck, I shall have visited nearly all the tower practice nights by the time my term in office ends at the 2007 AGM. I've found this to be a truly rewarding experience. It has been very interesting seeing how individual bands work. I realise that any particular practice night may not be representative of how that tower usually operates but I suspect that I've gained a pretty good impression of the state of weekly tower practices within the Guild.

I'm going to share these impressions with you.

I always telephone the tower secretary to check that there will be a practice that night. This is not to give advance warning to the band so that they can spring clean the tower, replace the ropes and augment the bells before I arrive but simply to avoid wasting time and petrol visiting a tower that has cancelled a practice (most towers cancel practices at least once a year for one reason or another). However, I am surprised at the number of times the tower secretary doesn't ask me for my name. I'm sure they don't recognise my voice because in many cases I don't think that I've even met them before. Of course, I could announce myself on the phone as the Guild Master but I feel that this might be a little intimidating and somewhat pretentious.

Although the Annual Report contains a lot of information about towers I wonder if it would be even more useful if it indicated whether the entrance to the ringing chamber was internal or external to the church. It would also be handy if the report indicated a good place to park cars although this is likely to be harder to describe. Perhaps this might be considered for future Annual Reports or the Guild's website?

I think that nearly all towers appreciate and most benefit from having visitors to their practice nights. It is rare for me to think that "there are too many ringers here tonight". I particularly appreciate a welcoming smile and something along the lines of "Hello, who are you and are you a ringer?" and occasionally followed by "Where are you from and what do you ring?".

Most visitors attend a practice in order to ring and I'm no exception. I like to be exploited in the sense that the local band might be able to tackle something that they couldn't do if I wasn't there. Lots of Plain Hunt, rounds and call changes are made interesting by trying to circle the tower on the practice night. By and large I'm impressed how well practices are run within the Guild.

Sometimes I'm asked to call a touch of something. I usually decline for a variety of reasons. First, a local ringer will be much more attuned to what is an acceptable standard of striking for the band. The decision as to whether to "stand up" some ringing is much better made by a local ringer who will be aware of the aspirations and limitations of most of the band. Second, practice nights exist for the local band to improve their skills and that includes elementary conducting. Third, a local ringer will understand the objective of that particular piece of ringing much better than a visitor.

I'm always disappointed if there isn't a visit to the pub after a practice. My instinct tells me that those towers which have a good social life together outside the tower work together cohesively inside too. I think the "post practice pint" is a significant part of the ringing experience and even if the practice itself turns out to be a disappointment, and inevitably some are better than others, a sociable hour or two in the local can more than compensate.

Finally, I would like to thank all those bands who have made Sue and me welcome in the last couple of years. In particular, and on behalf of ringers everywhere, I would like to thank those backbones of the Guild, the Tower Captains and Ringing Masters. Being a TC or RM is an important, demanding but potentially rewarding role. Without them ringing would collapse.

While I would recommend attempting to ring at all the Guild's towers, a more realistic goal for most ringers, would be to attempt to ring at every tower in your District that has a practice night in the coming year. I'm confident that if we all did that then the ringing experience for everyone would be significantly enhanced.

Andrew Craddock

Les Tremeer 1920 - 2006

Leslie Arthur Tremeer was born in Alresford, Hampshire on the 11th April, 1920, the seventh son of Charles Edwin Foster Tremeer and his wife Ada. He attended the Dean School until he was 14 years of age, when he left to work for Major Padgett at Itchen Abbas as an under-gardener. Les' father was a baker and he used to accompany his father on the bread delivery round, which was made by horse and van, through the Arle River from the bottom of the Dean to Old Alresford. That part of the river bed between The Dean and the Fulling Mill was considered to be a road. Les and his brothers and cousins spent many happy hours in the summer swimming in the river.

As a young boy, Les joined the Cubs and the Scouts in Alresford. At that time the troop was run by the Rector of Alresford Parish Church and the boys were allowed to use the swimming pool at The Rectory.

In 1933, when Les was 13, there was a fire in the Church vestry (the Vicar had knocked out his pipe into the waste paper basket and it had caused a fire). Les was always interested in what was happening and so he went up to have a look. Also there was another young man called Harold Shaw, who was a bell-ringer. As it was practice night, Harold Shaw invited Les to come up the tower and see what went on. Les took him up on his invitation and was soon taught to ring by the then Tower Captain, Mr Harry Newnham, who was also the town Station Master. Les was an apt pupil and made good progress and on 23rd September, 1937 (aged 17) he rang his first peal - the fifth to Kent Treble Bob Royal at St. Nicolas Church, North Stoneham. (The previous Saturday Les had cycled from New Alresford to East Tytherley for a quarterly meeting of the Guild and had rung his first course of Kent Treble Bob).

In those days the most common mode of transport was cycling and Les used to cycle regularly from his home in Alresford to North Stoneham for weekly practice. He used to meet up with Bill Melville, Jessie Kippin's father, who lived at King's Worthy and they would cycle down together. Les also used to cycle to Bill's home tower of Wonston for weekly practice.

The latter part of 1937 was a busy time for Les; he rang the treble to his first peal of Superlative in October, in November his first peal of Stedman - the fifth to Stedman Caters and in December his first peal of Double Norwich - on the 3rd - all at North Stoneham.

He was a very steady ringer and soon began to ring with some of the best ringers in the area, namely George Williams, Pat Cannon, Charles and Jessie Kippin, Fred Rogers. At this

time he formed a close friendship with Reg and Alice Reed and Reg's brother Harold - Reg and Harold Reed have now died, but Les was still in contact with Alice until very shortly before his death (as she said, Les was her oldest friend). Reg and Les rang many peals together and one Saturday, rode on a tandem to London to attend the Cumberland's Dinner. Sadly they got stuck in the tram lines, fell off their bike and had to borrow some trousers to attend the dinner!

By 1938 Les was beginning to try his hand at conducting and he called his first peal - Grandsire Doubles at St. Michael and All Angels, Cheriton. There were 4 first pealers in the band, among them Rev. Gerald A. Ellison, then Chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester, who subsequently became Bishop of London.

Les rang his first peal of Cambridge Major on the fourth at North Stoneham in December 1938.

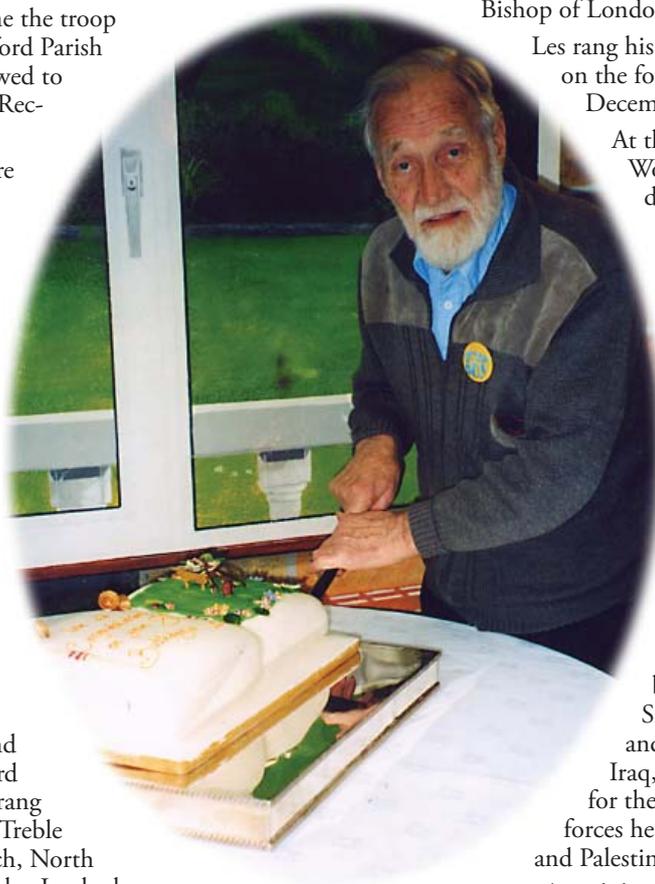
At the beginning of the Second World War, Les spent some time down the mines as a "Bevin Boy", but this affected his health and he had to spend some time in hospital recovering. In 1940 Les decided to join the Royal Air Force. All his brothers joined up, two in the Tank Corps, two in the RAF, two in the Navy and one in the Army. He was sent for initial training to Blackpool and then went up to Wick Aerodrome in the north of Scotland, before being sent abroad. In 1941 he celebrated his 21st birthday on a troop ship in Sierra Leone, en route to India and then Basra and Baghdad in Iraq, where he assembled bombers for the Russian front. Whilst in the forces he spent time in Cyprus, Syria and Palestine.

In 1941, whilst on leave, he rang his first handbell peal for the Middlesex County Association in seven methods, conducted by Alf Ballard.

On VE Day Les was travelling home to Alresford, having survived the war - sadly two of his brothers died and are buried in Alresford Churchyard - when he met Alice Reed and they spent the day celebrating in London, catching the last train home to Winchester - Les then had to walk 12 miles home to Alresford!

When Les returned home he resumed his ringing career by ringing a peal of Grandsire Triples on the fourth at New Alresford, in company with his old tower captain Harry Newnham, Nesta and Dick Smith, Bill Melville, Wilfred Andrews (Guild Master), Charles Kippin and another local ringer George Allen.

In 1947 Les rang in the first peal of London Minor for the Guild at Barton Stacey and his first peal of London Major at St. Michael's Southampton, both conducted by Charles Kippin.



In September 1951 Les went down to Abergavenny, Monmouthshire with Charles Kippin and Wilfred Andrews and met Jack Worrall and Ivor Trueman and rang in Jack's first peal of Surprise Royal - it was Cambridge and Les was ringing the seventh and Jack the eighth. This peal was the first of Royal on the bells, first peal of Cambridge Surprise in the County of Monmouth and for the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association. The next day Les rang a further peal with Jack and Ivor at Usk, Cambridge Surprise Major, being the first peal in the method on the bells. Then in March 1952 Les rang his first peal of Grandsire Cinques on the 8th, which Jack conducted, at St. Woolos Cathedral in Newport, Monmouthshire.

On 10th June, 1953 Les rang the 4th in the Coronation Peal of Grandsire Cinques at Winchester Cathedral; this was the first peal of Grandsire Cinques on the bells and by all except ringers of 2, 4, 7 and 11.

In July 1954 Les rang a peal of Plain Bob Major at New Alresford with Alan Ainsworth, then aged 18, who was doing his National Service at Aldershot and travelled to Alresford by bus (cost 5/-) - the whole trip including the guild subscription cost Alan 12/6d (in today's money approximately 62p)!

After Les was demobbed from the RAF he worked at various jobs, working for White & Etherington in Alresford making oak gates. Unfortunately some oak sap got on Les leg and a growth began to grow, which he had to have cut out at Oddstock Hospital (Salisbury) and a skin graft to repair the damage. He also worked with Jack Weaver, who rang at St. Michael's, Basingstoke and during this time lived with his brother Alan and sister-in-law Brenda at Basingstoke.

In the 1950's Les began working for the Alton Battery Company installing storage batteries in telephone exchanges, hospitals and large buildings where emergency lighting was needed. The Alton Battery Company was taken over by a succession of companies, finally finishing up with Chloride whose Head Office was in Manchester. This meant that Les had to travel England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and abroad to do his job and he only rang at Alresford at weekends when he was able to be at home. Les worked for Chloride for 25 years, taking early retirement and voluntary redundancy in 1980.

In 1958 Prisca learnt to ring at St. Michael and All Angels, Cheriton and first met Les at a practice night at New Alresford. Les shouted at her and frightened the life out of her and she little thought that 9 years later she would fall in love with him and marry him! Les could sound quite fierce when putting people right when ringing, but he was a lovely, kind, gentle man who had endless patience with learners.

Les and Prisca got to know each other better when Les was Ringing Master of the Winchester District and Prisca was Secretary. They married on 2nd December, 1967 and were happily married for nearly 39 years and have two lovely sons, Andrew and Sefton. Because of the age gap of 21 years, Les and Prisca would often smile when people who did not know them well thought they were father and daughter, or that Les' children were his grandchildren! Les was a loving husband to Prisca and a caring father to his two sons. It was a great sadness that Les died one week before Andrew got married to Esther on 5th August, 2006.

Les and Prisca lived in Alresford for 21 years and they both rang at the church of St. John the Baptist. Les was tower captain for 25 years and over that time taught and encouraged many ringers - he always had time to help people and arrange quarter peals to encourage them in their ringing.

In 1988 Les and Prisca moved to Jersey, where Prisca had been born and brought up. Her parents were elderly and

they asked Prisca and Les to come to live in Jersey to be near them during their last years. Her father died in 1993 and her mother in 1996.

Les and Prisca settled into the ringing scene in Jersey and joined the band at St. Johns, Les becoming tower captain. Les enjoyed ringing again with Jack Worrall who now lived in Jersey and was ringing at St. Marks. The standard of ringing was very good and Les really enjoyed being able to ring quarter peals and peals in a range of Surprise Minor and Major methods. He also enjoyed the District Meetings when he travelled to Guernsey and Alderney and the Guild AGM when he met up with other ringers he had known over the years. Les served the Guild as Winchester District Secretary and at a later date, Ringing Master.

Les' other great interest was his gardening and he loved growing plants from cuttings which he took great delight in giving to others. When he lived in Alresford, he always kept Prisca and the boys supplied with fruit and vegetables, and also prepared all the vegetables for cooking. He could often be found pottering in his shed or relaxing in his summer house. If, as they very occasionally did, things got too hot in the kitchen, he would take refuge in his garden shed! He also used to make home made wine - one year he made some cider just before he came on holiday to Jersey. When he returned home to "Winkles Patch" he found that a good many of the bottles had exploded in the heat - goodness knows what the neighbours must have thought.

Whilst Prisca and Sefton were on holiday in summer 2005, in Canada and America, Les became unwell and for the next year was in and out of hospital. He spent the last few months of his life being nursed at home, which is where he wanted to be. During this time, he was always considerate and grateful for all that was done for him and never ever complained. A gentle, humble man, who very rarely said a bad word about anyone, Les had a very dry sense of humour and would sometimes come out with some really funny wisecracks

Les will be greatly missed by all who had the good fortune to have known him.

Geoff Dodd Writes

I am probably one of the few guild members, who can still remember Les Tremeer in his heyday back in the early days of the 50s and I rang several peals with him around that time, mostly at New Alresford.

I was able to furnish him with the details of the Coronation Peal at Winchester Cathedral in 1953 after his move to Jersey, and received a lovely letter back. He in his turn was able to loan me a photograph taken in Old Alresford Belfry around 1947 with myself Les and George Williams seated together carrying on a conversation. Later this had been printed in the Ringing World.

I was pleased to meet up with him and Prisca when visiting Jersey some 10 years or more ago and enjoyed drinking with them in the pub after the St Johns practice and being invited back to their bungalow at Gorey the next day, when I was able to go through his peal book with him. The Winchester peal was missing, so I was able to send him the details when I got home.

We rang a quarter peal of Stedman Doubles at Micheldever just before their move, which I was pleased to record as it was with mainly local ringers from that area. Always helpful with beginners, he left his mark at New Alresford, a real Christian gentleman, who it was an honour to know. To Prisca and other members of the family we send our condolences.

25 Enjoyable Years

It seems only the other day when I became a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, but when I looked in my old diaries I found it was 1980. The then Bishop of Winchester, John Taylor asked me to join the Advisory Committee to represent the Winchester Diocese as Bell Adviser to succeed Canon Felstead.

As most ringers know this Committee exists primarily to advise the Chancellor of the Diocese as to the suitability of any proposed alteration or addition to a Church of England place of worship and whether or not a Faculty should be issued. Even in the 1970s this group was thought of as a body to avoid and have little dealings with. With the passage of time, a change of Archdeacons and Chancellor and a more forward looking attitude on both the Committee's and Churchwardens' part, things changed and most incumbents and church councils consult the Committee as soon as any church project is thought about. This, in turn, has led to much less contention about all aspects of church repair and maintenance which, of course, includes bells, and relatively few cases are troublesome. Both Archdeacons take great interest in the care of parishes especially the fabric of the church and its contents. For all people who are connected with the parishes and church buildings it is prudent to remember William Morris's adage – "staving off decay by daily care". Long gone are the days of autocratic parsons and self-important churchwardens. Because of my experience with building projects, setting out of lettering, a love of the Church and its buildings, some knowledge of organs and little about ringing I would usually put 'my five eggs' into the discussions on many church schemes seemingly without disastrous consequences. Most differences of opinions and any dissension in the Committee arose from cases where taste and personal wishes were concerned, particularly with stained glass, commemorative plaques and churchyard memorials but we always spoke as one when advising the Chancellor.

Pipe organs and bells are usually the two most expensive items in a church inventory and as both are a form of machinery they must be regularly maintained. Bell installations to which access is difficult, particularly ones, twos, and threes which are chimed, and exposed bellcots with a long internal ladder at the west end to a small trap door all suffer this fate of poor maintenance. Churchwardens and Vicars do not like tall ladders not to mention architects although there are exceptions. The replacement of a poor pipe organ by an electronic one is often requested with the P.C.C. greatly influenced by the large difference in cost and also the space liberated if the pipe organ is taken out. These instruments have improved enormously in the last 50 years or so and I have to admit being fooled on more than one occasion but even now they have a limited life.

I think the D.A.C. members have a greater appreciation of real bells rung by real ringers than a pipe organ played by a real organist. When the sound of pipes is recorded or sampled and replayed it is often difficult to tell if it is the real thing but recorded bells to me always sound dreadful.

Very few really contentious bell schemes seem to have arisen

with most of the problems relating to tuning and dated frames by the conservationists. I remember there was a problem at Sparsholt where the dated frame was thought by some as worthy of reuse and it was Archdeacon Alec Knight (who became Dean of Lincoln) who saved the day with some support from me. Romsey has another frame problem which is still not fully resolved. The majority of bell cases were quite minor and did not need much discussion and of limited interest to change ringers. I found it difficult although sensible to recommend that a once full-circle ring of three be converted to swing chiming e.g. Martyr Worthy, Bullington, Stoke Charity, Wield and West Tisted.

Visiting churches I always found fascinating; a 50 foot ladder up to Sway bellcot to look at the hemi-spherical bells; tubular bells at Rownhams and some unusual wheels at Shipton Bellinger. Two churches in Bournemouth proved worthy of a climb. The first was a postwar (1953) brick building, Holy Epiphany just off Castle Lane, which was built with war reparation money from the bombed-out Holy Rood Church in Southampton. Here there is a late Gillett and Johnson steel frame for eight with just the tenor (about 1 ton) hung for ringing. At St. Ambrose, Westcliffe Road (1898) another large single bell is hung for ringing in the corner of a heavy timber frame. A 'new' churchwarden in each case saw the potential and asked advice but when approximate costs were mentioned all thoughts of augmentation vanished.

I was particularly pleased in 1991 when the 3 at Compton were rehung and I 'won' the battle with the Council for Care of Churches to have them tuned. All are quite old bells, like the contents of many a Hampshire turret, and were extremely out of tune. They are not wonderful now but at least somewhere near a diatonic scale. Sydmonton, near Newbury, as you know, is a Victorian church on the lawn of Sydmonton Court, the home of Andrew Lloyd-Webber. I regret the part I played in this saga as it resulted in the loss of a ring of six. The church had been redundant for some time and Lloyd Webber had the Nave converted to a recording studio and was not at all interested in the bells. There was no access through the vaulting below the ringing chamber so the bells were broken up in-situ and taken, piece-by-piece, down the helical stair but at least the metal was used by the foundry to cast other bells which would be used. Fair Oak had a clapper from the single bell in the western bellcot fly out and embed itself in the church yard. The last case I shall mention is St. Matthew's, Otterbourne (2 bells 1838 in a small western turret) who wanted electronic bells from loud speakers on the south porch roof. To most ringers electronic bells are an anathema, not encouraged by English Heritage or the C.C.C. although not banned either. I think I was successful in rejecting this and the Chancellor and my successor, Philip Watts, both agree with me as I hope readers do as well.

My quarter of a century as Adviser has been a wonderful and extremely enjoyable time for me and I give Philip all my best wishes. I am sure he will always put forward the W and P point of view vigorously.

Graham Grant

Of Boats and Bellinging

(The Diary of a Trip to the Channel Islands)

Monday 10th July.

Following on from last year's successful sailing trip to the Channel Islands Ringing Festival, Roy LeMarechal and Bill Harris arranged another visit this year. So it was that Bill and Roy with Andrew and Rachel Byford met up again at Lymington yacht marina. After unsuccessfully lobbying to get on last year's trip Rhiannon Matthews joined this time. The crew was completed by Edd Colliss. He was offered a place because he missed grabbing Alderney last year due to fog. Bill's yacht, Tania, set sail in the evening and anchored up in the shelter of Hurst Castle, ready for an early start next day.

Tuesday 11th July

It's a 12 hour crossing to Alderney and Bill obviously wanted to get there in time for tea. Unfortunately this meant raising anchor and setting off at 04:45! Nevertheless, just over 12 hours later we sailed into Braye Harbour and moored up. The crossing was either quite pleasant, not too bad or a bit bouncy, depending on who you asked. Rhi, having her first long distance sailing trip, stayed above deck for the whole trip but, surprisingly, seasoned sailor Rachel felt a bit squiffy too.

That evening Roy cooked up a curry with all the trimmings and the first dip was made into his 5 gallons of home brewed beer and 1 gallon of "Chateau LeMarechal" red wine. After that it was time for the first trip ashore although "The Moorings" at the harbour edge was as far as the crew got.

Wednesday 12th July

The crew were ashore again by 10:00 and headed for St Anne's church. A brief detour was made via Ann Wheeler's house to pick up her car which she very kindly lent for the day. Roy was a little surprised by the instructions that came with the car, "don't lock it, don't park on a hill unless in gear and never, NEVER take the key out of the ignition"! However, the 1984 Nissan Bluebird worked fine and, as Ann pointed out, where would anybody take the car if the stole it? Alderney is only 1.5 miles across by 3.5 miles long.



The intrepid crew of Tania

A good peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung on the fine Taylor six although Rhi rather shredded her hands on the rough rope she had. Afterwards, thanks to the forward planning of local ringer Andrew Montgomery, lunch was served at The Georgian. This was followed by a guided tour around the island, courtesy of another Alderney ringer, John Mackey. At 1700 it was back to the tower for a practice with the local ringers. A visit to some more of the island pubs rounded off the day.

Thursday 13th July

After breakfast and lunch on Tania, a leisurely start was made for Guernsey. The dodgy passage through Alderney's rough water, "The Swinge", failed to give any cause for concern and it was a pleasant 4 hour sail to St Peter Port where we then joined the queue of boats waiting to get into the inner harbour. The evening was spent at the Town Church practice ringing anything from rounds and call changes to Cambridge and Superlative S Major. This was followed by a visit next door to "The Albion". The pub and church could probably claim some sort of proximity record, being just 2 feet apart!

Friday 14th July

The crew had a free day today and spent it on boat maintenance, exploring St Peter Port and visiting Herm. In the evening it was more ringing. Richard Pearson from St Peters had arranged a quarter of Bristol at Town Church. This was successful, enabling him to ring his first quarter in the method. The sensible half of the crew then stayed to watch part of the harbour festival where some loonies dressed as assorted aviators and birds jumped off a high platform into the harbour! The other half was carried off to the St Peters practice. This was very good with ringing up to Bristol S Major, Stedman Caters and Cambridge S Royal. Pauline Bartlett's 15 year old daughter Suzie was attempting a good impression of a "stropky teenager" but, as Roy pointed out to her afterwards, she had a long way to go to catch up with his 13 year old daughter, Stephanie.

Saturday 15th July

Phil LeConte and Pauline arrived at the harbour and transported the crew to St Peters for an attempt for a peal of Cambridge S Royal. Rhi looked like she was wearing gloves after she wrapped a roll of Micropore tape around her still shredded fingers. However it worked and her hands survived to ring the peal. The visitors were joined by 4 local ringers - Pauline, Phil, Richard and Phil Lenfestey, the last 3 ringing their first peal of Surprise Royal. After the peal it was off to Pauline's for a BBQ and some trampoline practice with lessons from Phil LeConte's daughter, Bianca.

The carefully arranged plans started to come unstuck now, due entirely to the uncertainties of the weather. Despite brilliant sunshine during most of the trip, the wind had shifted round to the north east and had been blowing at force 6 for several days. As a result, Bill decided that Tania was NOT sailing home anytime soon. So, after the BBQ, Rachel and Andrew went off to catch the overnight ferry to Portsmouth. The rest spent another night on Tania.

Sunday 16th July

The last day started off with ringing for service at Town Church. The last few hours were then spent exploring more of St Peter Port (hint - don't be next to Castle Cornet at 12:00. The midday cannon is very loud and could make you drop your ice-cream.) Bill waved goodbye to the rest of the crew then returned to Tania (where he stayed for another eleven days!). Roy, Edd and Rhi caught the Blue Islands Trislander flight to Bournemouth. A bonus for those who liked bouncy little planes was that it flew home via Jersey, thus giving an extra take-off and landing!

Thanks are due to all the Alderney and Guernsey ringers who went out of their way to make the crew so welcome during the all too brief stay on the islands. Also to Bill and Roy for organising it and to Tania for being home for a week.

Horace L. Marley

District Chairman Bags Her Man!

On the morning of Saturday 19th August, eight district members met at Hurstbourne Priors to attempt a quarter of Grandsire Triples to celebrate the marriage later that day of Barbara Townsend, who is Chairman of the Andover District, and Nigel Long. After one false start and then a miscall by your scribe the objective was eventually achieved in very good style – and with plenty of music along the way!

As if by divine command the menacing shower clouds parted as guests began arriving at the wedding service which took place at Andover Baptist Church and was attended by a capacity congregation. The bride, who is a worshipper and member of the Technical Team at this church, wore a magnificent cream and deep red dress and the groom looked resplendent in his morning suit. Barbara's daughter Becky, in her role as bridesmaid, wore a dress that was beautifully coordinated with that of the bride. The hymns were sung with gusto and the minister gave an entertaining address of analogies during which he referred to Barbara's romantic side: she had published a timely wedding message to Nigel in the previous day's local newspaper!

In the absence of any 'real' bells at the church, five of the quarter peal band had, at Barbara's request, reassembled in order to ring handbells. The quintet rang rounds and 'crosses' on ten as the happy couple emerged from the church to the strains of The Arrival of The Queen of Sheba (does one detect a touch of ironic humour here?). Nigel had no pre-knowledge of this 'touch' and was pleasantly surprised. Barbara looked on knowingly and thanked us for our efforts. The band was recorded by the head of the Technical Team, and whilst the band rang Plain Hunt on eight a CD of the previous piece of ringing was presented to us. The previous weeks of rehearsal by the band had certainly paid off!

The wedding party assembled on the green next to the church in bright sunshine for the obligatory photo shoot before Barbara and Nigel departed for the reception at The Red Lion in nearby Clanville. Even the wedding car matched Barbara's dress!



Hurstbourne Priors, Hants. 19 Aug, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Joanna Knight 1, Liz Thornton 2, Sarah Barnes 3, Mike Goss 4, Andrew Channon 5, Mike Winterbourne 6, Chris Caryer (C) 7, Simon Lipscombe 8. Rung to celebrate the marriage of Barbara Townsend (Andover District Chairman) and Nigel Long that took place later this day.

Chris Caryer



Winchester Victorious in 10-Bell

The results of the Inter District 10-bell competition held on Saturday 2nd September at Whitchurch judged by Paul Flavell and Robin Leale

Result	District	Score
1st	Winchester	65.3%
2nd	Andover	60.6%
3rd	Alton & Petersfield	56.9%

Left - the winning team

Ring Forth

Believe it or not but my interest in the Forth programming language was reawakened by an item on Radio 3's Late Junction early this year. Unannounced came the sound of 16 handbells ringing rounds, then "Go Kent" after a few minutes' impeccable ringing with the Treble in 3-4 "Oxford" followed by "Bob" and "That's all". My first thought was "How do they do that?" – a single lead. In the dim and distant past I recollected reading about the various methods of combining Kent & Oxford TB. There were these terms "Worcester Variation", "Granta Variation", "Ilkeston Variation". What had I just heard? What were the lead end transpositions of these method changes with/without bobs? Hard work by hand, could I use my computer?

My earliest dabbings with ringing problems on a computer date back to the late 1960's. At work I was engaged at the time with trying to analyse large quantities of data which had been generated by a wizzy new test system. Our tame statistician told me I should learn Fortran so I did as he said, got a manual and learned how to program the company's ICL 1905. This was a huge beast that occupied a large air conditioned room with its light grey cabinets housing magnetic core memory and spinning tape decks. Fortunately the tester could output data on punched paper tape which could be read by the computer. The learning effort had paid dividends.

This success got me thinking about peal proving. I had learned from "Surprise Methods"¹ how to prove peals in one method by hand. That was pretty laborious and spliced was even more so. Jim Taylor of Bristol had published some details of SiRiL (Simple Ringing Language) which got me started. (Andrew Craddock subsequently produced microSiRiL for the BBC Model B.) Now although this was a big mainframe its memory was 'only' 192kB (the PC that I am typing this on has 2,000,000kB!) so I concluded that I had better learn Assembly Language so that bit manipulation would be more efficient and I minimised storage use.

In 1984 I bought my first home computer a Commodore 64. The version of Basic that was built into it did not lend itself terribly well to the solution of ringing problems. However, software piracy was almost as rife then as it is today; the Dutch seemed particularly adept at it and through one of my Philips colleagues I "acquired" an implementation of Forth. Ever keen to try something new I bought a slim volume by Leo Brodie² and explored the language. Very soon I came to the conclusion that Forth lent itself very well to modelling

ringing and constructed peal proving programs.

It is not appropriate here to go into the details but essentially Forth consists of a dictionary of words which "do things". New words can be defined in terms of those existing so although the basic language may appear a little cryptic the program can soon become quite readable. These new words can be tested by typing them in from the keyboard and then incorporated into program which can be compiled and run.

What, you ask, has this to do with Late Junction? Well, having delved into "History and Art"³ I learned how a couple of these variations were constructed. My mind then went back 20 years and I wondered whether there was a Forth implementation for the PC. Indeed there is, and at least one is very nice indeed with the added advantage of being free. Win32Forth is a public domain, ANS compatible, Forth language application development system. Visit <http://www.win32forth.org/> for details.

Example 1 is a Forth program which in 22 lines of code generates and prints to the screen 720 Cambridge Surprise Minor. I contend that this is pretty compact. A large part

```
empty ( removes user definitions from dictionary )
create row 6 cells allot ( row becomes an array of 6 cells )
:bell 1- cells row + ; ( defines a new word bell, if bell=3 puts 3rds place bell on the stack and so on )
:rounds 6 0 do | l | row l cells + ! loop ; ( I hope the word is self-explanatory )
:printrow cr 6 0 do | l | bell @ .loop ; ( outputs a new line and then contents of row )
:s12 1 bell @ 2 bell @ 1 bell ! 2 bell ! ; ( defines new word s12 which swaps the bells in 12 )
:s23 2 bell @ 3 bell @ 2 bell ! 3 bell ! ;
:s34 3 bell @ 4 bell @ 3 bell ! 4 bell ! ;
:s45 4 bell @ 5 bell @ 4 bell ! 5 bell ! ;
:s56 5 bell @ 6 bell @ 5 bell ! 6 bell ! ;
:x s12 s34 s56 printrow ; ( guess what this does! )
:p36 s12 s45 printrow ; ( performs swaps necessary for places in 36 then outputs row )
:p14 s23 s56 printrow ;
:p12 s34 s56 printrow ;
:p56 s12 s34 printrow ;
:cambridge x p36 x p14 x p12 x p36 x p14 x p56 x p14 x p36 x p12 x p14 x p36 x ;
:cambridgepl cambridge p12 ;
:cambridgebob cambridge p14 ;
:wh cambridgepl cambridgepl cambridgebob cambridgepl cambridgebob ;
:w cambridgepl cambridgepl cambridgebob cambridgepl cambridgepl ;
:part wh w ;
rounds printrow part part part
```

Example 1

is reusable, creating additional place definitions such as 16 or 34 and combining them into different methods is trivial and I hope that from the example that it is self-evident that programming a multi-method peal is fairly straightforward.

If you are interested but "not a programmer" why not try it as I did? You will have some fun on those dark winter evenings when you don't go ringing. Win32Forth download is at <http://sourceforge.net/projects/win32forth>. The source file for the example is available at <http://www.wp-ringers.org.uk/forth> together with the building blocks for exploring Kent & Oxford T B Major and the definitions for Glasgow S Major. If anyone would like further explanation I don't claim to be an expert Forth programmer but will help if I can, email david@wp-ringers.org.uk.

David Forder

1 Surprise Methods for Six and Eight Bells by Charles D. P. Davies 1927

2 Starting Forth: An Introduction to the Forth Language and Operating System for Beginners and Professionals by Leo Brodie. Sadly long out of print and neither Hampshire nor Southampton Libraries have a copy. Second-hand copies seem to be available from Amazon in the US for less than \$13 but shipping might take a while. There is an online "translation" at <http://home.iae.nl/users/mhx/sf.html>.

3 The History & Art of Change Ringing by Ernest Morris

Avington Bellringers v The Rector

Earlier this year Ruth and I paid our monthly visit to the Winchester Record Office. The lecture that month was not well attended, being a substitute for that advertised, relating to the removal of all forms of "Popery" from churches in Hampshire following the Reformation, i.e. the time when the ringing of church bells for Sunday services was banned by the Injunction of 1547 and the Act of Parliament in 1643. Instead, Sarah Lewin, one of the staff, gave us examples of material to be found in church records about Hampshire village life. One of these was, in 1805, the prosecution of the Vicar of Avington who had, from his pulpit, insulted the bellringers with intemperate and insulting language.

That afternoon, in the Search Room, I applied for access to the original document.

Proceedings of Winchester Consistory Court (Document 21M65C9/141 in Winchester Record Office)

This is a folder containing VERY fragile, original parchments, written in ink with quill pen, being two copies of the order, and single copies of the serving of the order, depositions from the various bellringers, record of the evidence, and the original details of the punishment (very torn)

Order issued on 7th December 1804 against John Hayward, clerk, Rector of Avington in the County of Southampton and Diocese of Winchester to appear before John Sturges, Clerk, Doctor of Law, Vicar General and Official Principal of the Right Reverend Father in God Brownlow, by divine permission Lord Bishop of Winchester.

To appear at the Consistory Court of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Winchester, on Friday the eighteenth day of January next [i.e. 1805] between the hours of ten and eleven of the Clock of the forenoon, then and there to answer certain Positions, Articles or Interrogations concerning the welfare of his Soul and Correction of his Manners, and especially for Quareling, Chiding and Brawling in the Parish Church of Avington aforesaid, to the great Danger of his Soul and to the pernicious example of all others.

Added in darker ink - "John Hayward thrice called but did not appear"

Part of the evidence hand-written by John Sturges but lacking the punctuation one would expect from a Doctor of Law!

...said John Hayward then being in the Pulpit of the said Church did there and then in an angry and pafionate manner and before several credible witnefses say "There is Thomas Penton, William Pink, Benjamin Goodwin, John Parsons, John Bushall and Richard Atkinson you all crept into the church like a set of pilfering thieves as you are" words with many others of like nature and import you the said John Hayward did utter and pronounce.

According to the depositions from the bellringers named in the outburst, who presumably were unable to read and write, the attack on them occurred while they were ringing on 16th November 1804. The final outcome was that John Hayward was suspended from the administration of his office for one Sunday (7th July 1805), paid costs to the ringers of £10-11-10, and had his punishment read out to his congregation.

In a way Revd. John Hayward must be having the last laugh. The 11 cwt. ring was cast by Pack and Chapman in 1771 and detailed on page 68 of "Hampshire Church Bells". In 1960 the Team Ministry of Itchen Valley finally took action over the bells of St. Mary, Avington. Five remained in a dangerous condition in the belfry and were sold to the bell founders. The sixth had been smashed by "unknown forces" during the war period, the pieces standing in the porch had been a great temptation to "collectors" The ringers were never affiliated to the Guild but tower details first appear in the nineteenth Guild Report (for 1899), giving the diameter of the tenor as 40¼ ins. The twenty-fifth Guild Report (for 1905), speci-

fies, as was the custom before the Second World War, that one reached it via the nearest railway station, Itchen Abbas, one mile distant. Interesting variations between the Reports specify, in the twentieth that the station is ½ min. away! In the twenty-first it is 5 min. away. In the twenty-second and twenty-fourth it has a tenor of 40¼ cwt. ! (The Report for 1903 contains no details of towers; only the proposed, revolutionary 18 new rules) Avington's derelict and unringable state was first mentioned in the seventy-second Guild Report in 1951.

This article was inspired by the hard work of Mr. P.A.G. Watts, until recently convenor of the Belfry Stewardship Committee. Phil's investigations have produced the following information about the bells of St. Mary's, Avington:-

1909 The bells are rung by the Tichborne band to Grandsire, Stedman and Plain Bob. From "50 years ago column" of "The Hampshire Chronicle" for early 1959. Also mentioned in "The Ringing World" of 23rd December 1960, page 850.

1920 Bells 2 and 3 noted as cracked on page 68 of "Hampshire Church Bells" by Rev. W.E. Colchester, Rector of St. Maurice, Winchester.

Undated. Bells 1, 2, and 3 noted as "cracked through inferior ringing" in the R.W. article listed above.

1960 Whitechapel Bell Foundry inspect the derelict ring prior to breaking up the bells in the tower and removal to the foundry.

Derek Jackson - August 2006

Augmentation Plans at Selborne

The current 8 cwt ring of six bells has an interesting history. In 1735, when the original three bells were taken down and cast into four, a local gentleman Sir Simeon Stuart of Hartley Mauditt paid for a fifth bell to mark his daughter's birthday. But before they were all re-hung in the tower, the new bell was placed upside down in Church Meadow and filled with punch for the consumption of the villagers! In 1979, the five bells were again re-hung and augmented to six, this time in a modern steel frame which was conveniently drilled for the addition of two bells at a later date! In recent years the band has gone from strength to strength, and we are now in the fortunate position not only to have enough ringers to ring eight bells, but to have the enthusiasm to raise the £20,000 required!

There are few eight bell towers in our District that are easy to ring or readily available for District Practices, so we hope that augmentation will not only benefit the local band's eight bell ringing, but the District's too. Last year a Faculty for the work was sought and granted, and now the hard work of fundraising begins! Many of you reading this will have been involved in fundraising projects similar to ours, where the generosity of the ringing community has made a significant impact.

We very much hope this will be the case as we seek to reach our goal, and would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to contribute in any way to our Augmentation Fund. Further information, offers of help or donations should be directed to Selborne's Tower Captain, Rachael Barber at 24 Rushfield Road, Liss, GU33 7LW, cheques made payable please to 'Selborne Augmentation Fund'.

Rachael Barber

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My First Three Years of Ringing

When I first learned to ring, it was thanks to the rector, as I was an altar server for him for six years. He came up to me, one Sunday morning and said that he had arranged to meet with the tower captain and teacher on the Wednesday. We saw the bells and talked to the teacher about the safety aspects of ringing. In August 2003 I was having my first ringing lesson.

I went on to learn both backstroke and handstroke, and then to put them both together. I then rang for my first Sunday service and wedding. After that, I rang the tenor behind for doubles methods, and learned how to plain hunt. Geoff asked me if I would ring the tenor for a quarter peal for Mike Goss, whose wedding anniversary it was. We rang Grandsire Doubles, and Bob Doubles.

I now ring inside for a lot of doubles methods and am learning Grandsire Triples at Highclere, as well as learning Kent Minor on the two. I have rung the tenor and treble for seven quarter peals now, and more recently, on the 19th of August, I rang the tenor at Hurstbourne Priors for the wedding of Barbara Townsend.

I hope soon to get a quarter peal on an inside bell. I have been on three of Geoff's ringing trips and have rung rounds and call changes on 12, 14 and 16 bells.

I ring at three practices a week. Whitchurch, or Kingsclere on a Monday, Highclere on a Tuesday and my home tower Burghclere on a Wednesday. On Sundays, I ring at Burghclere at 9 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. then to Kingsclere, 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and occasionally at Wolverton 10.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and enjoy every minute.

I have attended an education day, "Ringing up and down in Peal", and also enjoyed attending mid-monthly practices on a Wednesday, when I got the chance.

Simon Lipscombe, aged 16, Burghclere

Handbell Enthusiast Celebrates Silver Wedding

On Sunday, 3rd September five old friends gathered at the home of Katharine and Graham Firman to ring handbells to mark Bill Croft's 25th wedding anniversary. In spite of some initial apprehension on the part of the organiser the conductor successfully guided us through a peal of Grandsire Caters, the tenors ringer showing us he had not lost his sense of touch after an absence of 4 years.

A Little Bit More Isle Of Wight History!

Sunday 23rd July 2006
Ken Cottage, Upper Lane, Brighstone, Isle of Wight
5040 Plain Bob Minor (1hr 56mins)

1-2 David A Weir
3-4 Susan A Mansfield
5-6 Stephen P Noyes (c)

First in hand (but not double-handed): 1-2 First minor in hand as conductor, and first in hand for 25 years: 5-6 First in hand by Isle of Wight District First in hand in the County First on the bells

This was our first peal attempt so we decided to go for something we knew we could ring. The peal started at a nice steady pace and a good rhythm. However, after 5 extents it gradually increased in tempo to what I imagine is the speed most handbell peals are rung at! I think we all just wanted it to be over as it was quite a hot day! The ringing was excellent throughout, with hardly any errors, apart from Sue clashing her bells together not once but three times. It certainly woke everyone up. We celebrated our success afterwards by having a pint of Steve's wonderful homemade Elderflower Champagne.

Sue Mansfield

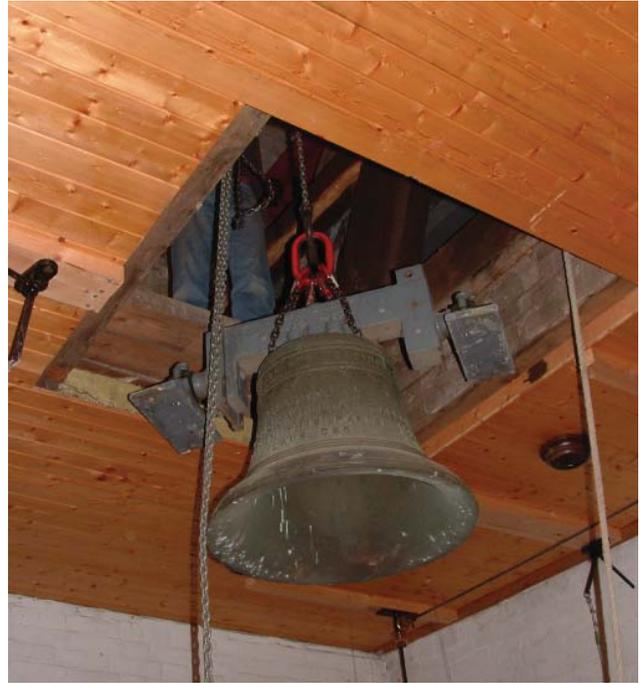
Afterwards we sat down to tea and reminisced about old times. Incidentally Bill had called Katharine's first handbell peal in 1970 when she was still Katharine Maundrell and a member of the Winchester Cathedral band and the Croft family lived in Southampton.

The Winchester & Portsmouth DG
Maidenhead, Berks, 7 Laburnham Rd.
5021 Grandsire Caters

1-2 John S Croft 5-6 William S Croft (C)
3-4 Graham G Firman 7-8 Katharine J Firman
9-10 James S Croft
Comp. A M Tyler

A Silver Wedding Compliment to the Conductor.

Rover



Clockwise from above. The band who rang the last peal on the 10 at Hursley. One of the Hursley bells coming out. The successful Guernsey peal band



Guild News is published twice a year. Its aim is to improve communication between ringers in all parts of our widespread Guild and to communicate the fun of ringing generally. It is distributed free via District Secretaries to all towers in the Guild. Additional copies are available from the editor for £1.

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Please send material for publication to the editor. Most articles will cover ringing and social activities in the Guild which might be of general appeal to all ringers, accompanying photographs are most welcome and will be returned. The editor reserves the right to edit as necessary.

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