

Tower Talk

The newsletter for ringers using



Learning
the Ropes™

Association of Ringing Teachers / Learning the Ropes – www.learningtheropes.org

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In this issue:

Ringling for the late Queen and new King	2,3
Beginnings and Endings	4
Mourning HM the Queen in Scotland	5
A Day at a Festival	6
News from ART	6
Puzzle Corner	7
The Lucky Seven	8
New Ringers at Sampford Brett	9
The Advanced Call Change Scheme	10,11
Inaugural North West Ringing Course	12,13
Being Socially Responsible	14
I Only Went to Have a Look	14
Without a Vision	15
The LtR Masterclass	16,17
The ART Awards are back	18,19
Muffles: Practice for a Solemn Duty	20
Answers to Puzzles	20

It wasn't long ago that a group of new ringers were ringing rounds for the Platinum Jubilee at Wendron in Cornwall. Their Tower Captain Bob Woods had looked around after Covid restrictions had been lifted and didn't like what he found – very few towers had returned to anything like their level of ringing of 2019, and some towers hadn't even returned at all. With great determination and support from other local ringers, Bob set about recruiting and teaching, with the aim of having a band to ring rounds at Wendron for the Platinum Jubilee, which they achieved. See page 6 of *Tower Talk 22*:

http://www.learningtheropes.org/application/files/4416/4443/0919/Tower_Talk_22.pdf

A mere few months later, they had an even more important job to do – to ring in mourning for the death of Her Majesty, to ring in joy for the proclamation of King Charles III and then, with thousands around the country, to ring solemnly on the day of the State Funeral on September 19. So many new ringers have taken part in this important moment in history, and also have the prospect of a Coronation to ring for in May 2023. Well done to everyone who contributed during a period of time where bells provided a historic soundscape for everyone, not just in the UK but around the world. They undoubtedly will do so again in May 2023.

The Wendron band

Half-muffled call changes were rung at St Wendron on 19th September prior to the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

BellBoard records show that over twelve thousand ringers participated in similar performances.



Ringling for the late Queen and new King

This century has seen quite a few specific events or anniversaries that resulted in a lot of ringing, and often a lot of recruitment too. There was the Millennium itself, then Ringing Remembers to mark the anniversary of the end of World War I, and more recently the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

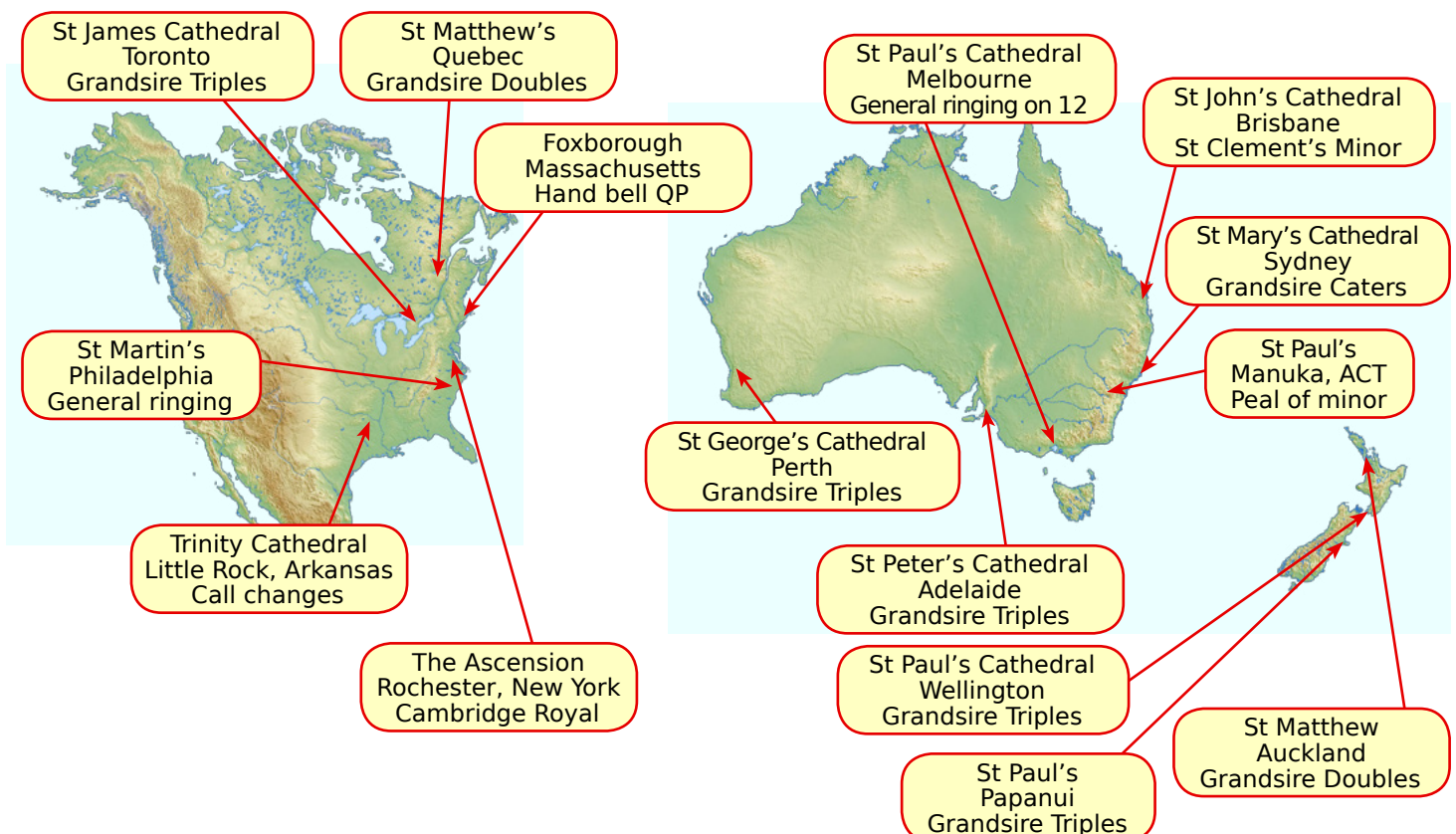
All these have been surpassed, in terms of the amount of related ringing, by the passing of Her Majesty, her funeral, and the proclamation of King Charles III.

Many of these ringing performances were sent up to BellBoard, but the quantity was so great that it was not possible for *The Ringing World* to print all of them - only quarter peals and longer performances were printed. The information displayed on this and the next page is taken, with permission, from BellBoard. More than twelve thousand ringers were named in BellBoard in the performances rung *in memoriam*.

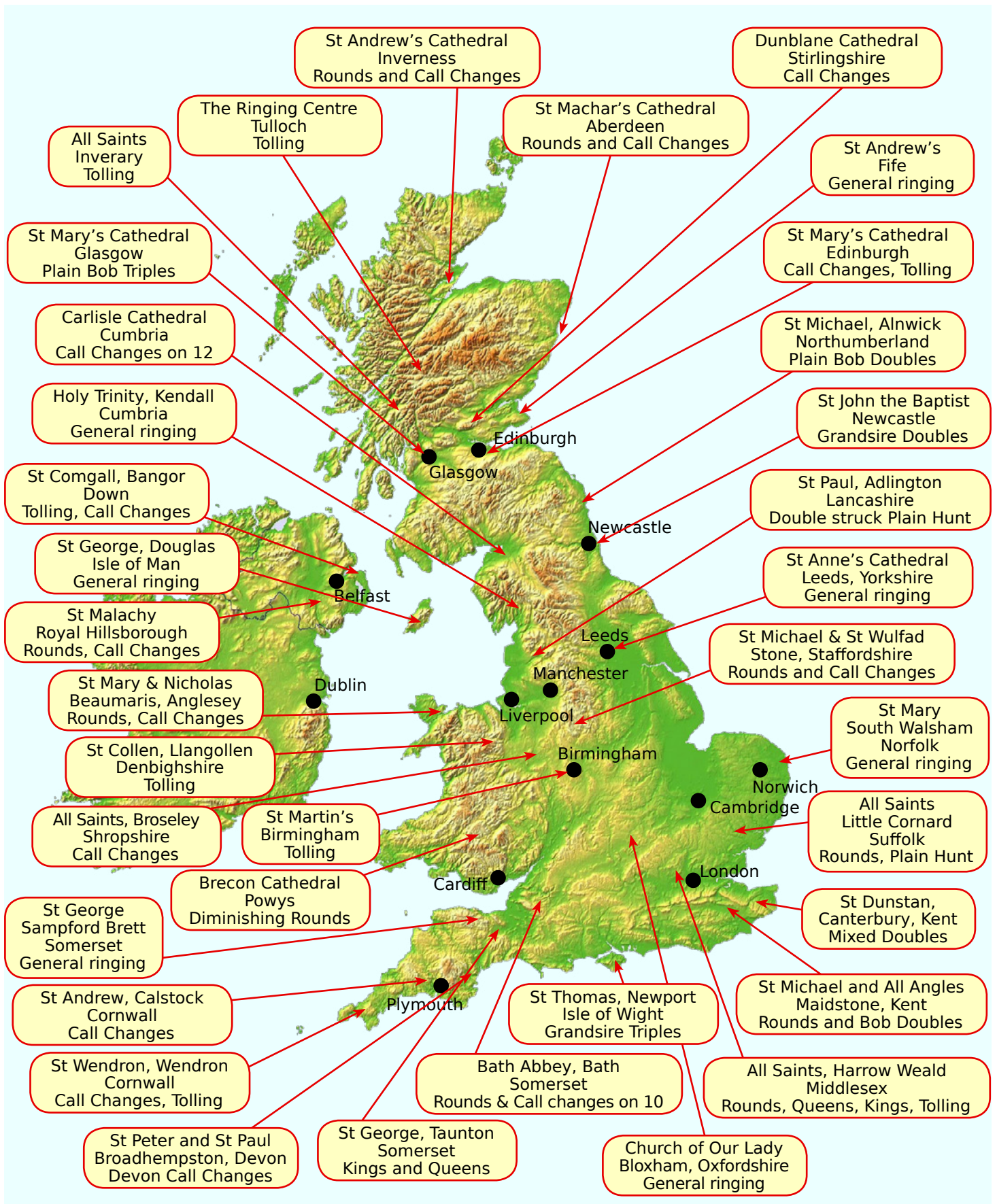
Many towers did not have enough experienced ringers to ring a quarter peal, or else chose to involve their newer members as well as their experts by ringing rounds or call changes in addition to some longer performance. Sometimes brand new learners joined in, perhaps by ringing just the backstrokes to rounds with the assistance of their teacher on the handstrokes.

The maps on this and the next page seek to acknowledge all those who chose to ring in recognition of the life and death of the late Queen, and the proclamation of Charles III as King. The numbers are so huge that it is impossible to list more than a tiny fraction. The maps show a small sample of the towers and ringing, with particular reference to towers mentioned in this edition of Tower Talk and on performances of new or less expert ringers. What they rang may have been shorter or less complex than the peals and quarters, but their desire to be involved and express their feelings through ringing was just as strong and heartfelt.

Below is a small selection of the ringing outside the UK, the majority of which was rung for ANZAB (Australia and New Zealand) or NAG (North America), but other performances include two in Trinidad and Tobago, mentioned in the article on page 5.



This page is a tribute to all who rang for the late Queen Elizabeth II and the proclamation of King Charles III. It particularly features the performances submitted to BellBoard that were of a more modest nature, and could not be printed in *The Ringing World*. With apologies to the remaining 99% of performances that are not shown on this map but are equally important, and also for the abbreviations and any errors there may be.



Beginnings and Endings

Siobhan Kewley, Dunblane Cathedral

BellBoard

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Scottish Association

Dunblane, Stirlingshire

Cathedral Church of St Blane & St Laurence

Sunday, 11 September 2022

(24-2-24 in Eb)

Call changes

Chris Frye	Siobhan Kewley
Judith Frye	Eric McNally
Molly Holmes	Magnus Peterson
Miranda Jones	Fiona Wheeler

Rung open to mark the proclamation of King Charles III

BellBoard

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Scottish Association

Dunblane, Stirlingshire

Cathedral Church of St Blane & St Laurence

Monday, 12 September 2022

(24-2-24 in Eb)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Judith Frye (C)
- 2 Molly Holmes
- 3 Stuart Bamforth
- 4 Chris Frye
- 5 Robert D McGowan
- 6 Siobhan Kewley

First inside: 2

BellBoard

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Scottish Association

Dunblane, Stirlingshire

Cathedral Church of St Blane & St Laurence

Monday, 19 September 2022

(24-2-24 in Eb)

Call changes

Stuart Bamforth	Miranda Jones
Jane Farquharson	Siobhan Kewley
Chris Frye	Eric McNally
Judith Frye	Magnus Peterson
Molly Holmes	Niki Wildman

Rung muffled prior to the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Celebration and mourning

At midday on Friday 9 September, the bells of Dunblane Cathedral rang in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The ringing was both symbolic and historic.

I followed the news from the Scottish island of Islay, where I was on holiday with my family, but once home I joined the ringing for the morning church service. I was surprised to learn my husband could hear the bells from our front door, half a mile away. I hadn't expected the muffled sound to travel that far. Having started learning to ring almost exactly a year ago, I still feel it both a privilege and daunting to be involved in ringing heard across the town. For me, these feelings are amplified when ringing for weddings and even more so during the ringing accompanying such a major national event.

On Sunday 11 September, we rang open to mark the proclamation of the accession of King Charles III.

It felt bitter-sweet, where ringing in celebration and mourning collided. It was especially poignant with the Queen's coffin, journeying from Balmoral to Edinburgh, so close by.

The next day, we tied the bells and rang a planned quarter peal with simulated sound. The timing felt strange. Nonetheless, I was delighted to complete this quarter - my first time covering.

More often than not, I've rung on six bells so the opportunity to ring on eight during this time was a silver lining. For the church service on Sunday 18 September though, we were a bit low on numbers and experienced ringers. With a last-minute decision made to ring on the middle 6, our Steeple Keepers made a quick dash up the tower. They removed half the muffle from the bell which would be the tenor for the morning. This kept with tradition and protocol.

On Monday 19 September, we joined other ringers across the country and the world. The bells of Dunblane Cathedral rang before the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The tolling sound of the tenor, open at backstroke and a stark contrast to the other muffled bells, was moving and profound. As a fairly new ringer, I could only dare allow myself to be briefly lost in the moment.

As the Second Elizabethan Era had drawn to a close, so too did the ringing protocol of Operation London Bridge. An end and a beginning.



*Autumn sun and showers
at Dunblane Cathedral*

Mourning HM Queen Elizabeth II in Scotland

There was a wide variety of ringing across Scotland, and as far away as the Caribbean, by the Scottish Association of Change Ringers to mark the death and state funeral of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III. A full list is available here:

https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/search.php?from=08%2F09%2F2022&%20to=19%2F09%2F2022&association_id=35

Alex Linton , St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh

Initially, we had planned to ring for Evensong ahead of the tower AGM, but just as we were walking up the steps, we heard the sad news. Ringing that evening consisted of us tolling a bell slowly, for two minutes each. I followed this up by participating in some half muffled ringing at St Andrew and St George West on George Street, on the day of the Queen's funeral.

I recall feeling rather blank inside, as usually ringing fills me with great joy and excitement. At the same time, however, I felt a sense of duty. As bell ringers, we have a responsibility to be there to fill the streets with our music in times of national joy and in times of national mourning alike. This was the biggest honour I've had in my ringing career so far, albeit sad to ring for the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest reigning monarch.



St Mary's, Edinburgh

Martin Mellor, Inveraray, Argyll

At Inveraray, the primary school is right next door to the bell tower, where the tenor was tolled for an hour from 12 noon on the day after HM Queen Elizabeth II's death. Since it has a huge ringing chamber, we invited the children to come along and watch. All 20 children from the P5-P7 class came up the spiral staircase and were enthralled. They also got to watch the 42cwt tenor turning from the belfry observation window. One of the children was able to say that a relative of hers had helped build the tower.



Local school children witness this historic ringing

I always remember my mother telling about being called to a school assembly to hear an announcement that the King had died. And now, seventy years later another group of school children hear similar news. Who knows what they will be reporting in 2092 – a memory of hearing a tenor toll shortly after a Platinum Jubilee for a Queen, whose death was announced at school assembly. And perhaps one of this generation of school children will have been inspired to take up bellringing.

Quenton Hurst , St Andrews, Fife

It was rather surreal as an American to be a part of the mourning rituals, in this case the ringing of muffled bells, of the United Kingdom with regards to the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Perhaps the greatest surprise of all to me was that bell ringing was so ubiquitous a way of collectively commemorating this event across the United Kingdom: all corners of the nations where church bells hang, rang out in unison. Our small town of St Andrews in the corner of Fife was no exception.



The Royal Standard raised during Prince William's 2011 visit

It was my distinct and solemn honour to participate in this fine, ancient tradition passed down through the centuries with the knowledge that the patterns we rang would long echo and mark a turning point in history. For that hour on Friday 9 September, and once more on 19 September, time seemed to move a little more slowly, eerily, and contemplatively. The sound of the unmuffled tenor on the backstroke created a piercing, arresting effect, which was the perfect contrast to the warmth created by the muffles on the other bells. All rehearsals with the band were more subdued and a bit more reflective than the usual energy with which we approach ringing. Each stroke on the muffled bells reminded us of the sombre period in which we found ourselves.

A Day at a Festival

Jennifer Filby, Little Cornard, Suffolk

I was very fortunate to take part in the second *Learning the Ropes Festival* in Norwich in August.

With eight other ringers, I was a student on the 'Listen to Your Striking for that Special Occasion' course. Two tutors and three helpers showed us different techniques to help us learn to listen to the timing of the bells when ringing and to adjust our handling of the bells to produce even striking. We were given plenty of time to practise, and the teachers and helpers gave us helpful advice on improving our technique to make our striking more accurate.



Festival helpers



At the Learning the Ropes Festival held in Norwich

There was one idea I found extremely helpful – we were asked to focus on an object in front

of us, rather than looking directly at the other ropes while ringing. This forced me to listen more carefully and also to use my peripheral vision to take in the whole ringing circle.

In the afternoon we had a surprise, as we really were ringing for a special occasion! We were taken to St. Mary's Church in South Walsham (not far from Norwich) where a wedding was taking place, and we were the band of ringers to ring for it. When the bells were pulled off, all sound was completely drowned out by the enthusiastic organ playing – so much for our listening skills! The bells rang the bride out of the church, then we all had a chance to experience ringing call changes and rounds, using some of our new found skills.

A wonderful learning day was had by all.

News from ART

Achievements

Below are the numbers of certificates awarded for each Level of the Learning the Ropes Scheme between August and October 2022:

Level One	99
Level Two	40
Level Three	13
Level Four	7
Level Five	4

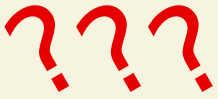
50/50 Club Draw Winners

The draw took place at Belper on Wednesday 7th September.

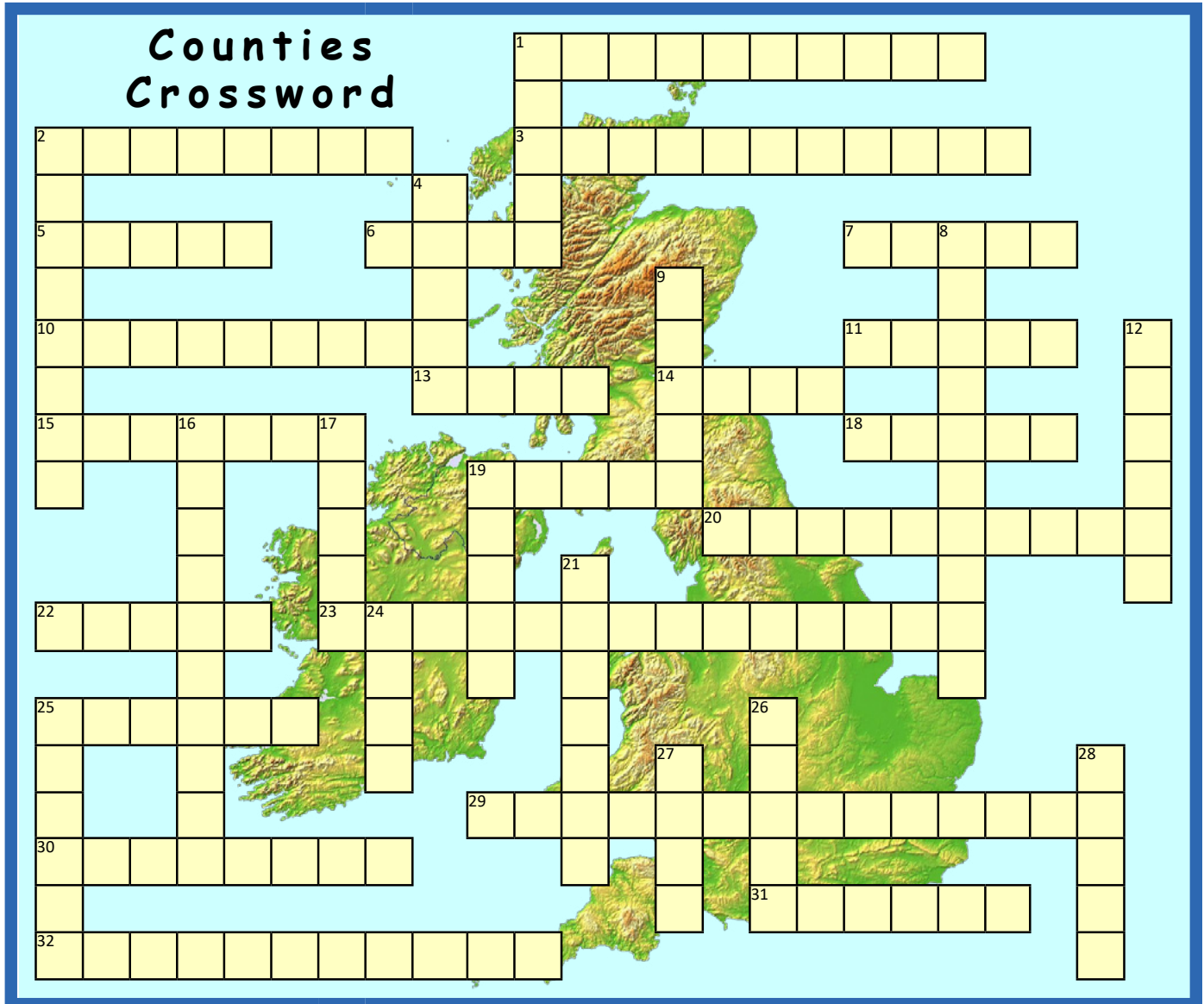
First Prize	£73.20	Gordon Gray
Second prize	£36.60	Steven Tibbetts
Third Prize	£36.60	Clare McArdle

The idea behind the 50/50 Club is very simple. You join, pay the subscription of £12 per year (can also be £3 per quarter or £1 monthly) and are given a member number. Then, over the year, half the money received goes to the organisation and half is shared out in prizes by a draw of member numbers. It's a great way of supporting the ART which as well as supporting the teaching of ringing in many different ways, produces all the logbooks and teaching materials used on the Learning the Ropes Scheme.

Find out more here: <http://www.learningtheropes.org/5050club>



Puzzle Corner



All answers are or were counties in England, Scotland or Wales. Some are abbreviated ("abbr").

Across

- 1 Rannoch Moor is in this Scottish county
- 2 England's extreme south west county
- 3 Linlithgow Palace is in this Scottish county (2 words)
- 5 This county includes a cathedral with a 12+1 bell ring whose tenor is 34-2-22 in C
- 6 This county (abbr) is a good place for a snooze!
- 7 With 24-down, has UK's most famous universities (abbr)
- 10 Most of UK's watercress is grown in this southern county
- 11 Wars of the Roses: the red rose county (abbr)
- 13 A Scottish county that is also a musical instrument
- 14 The forest of Dean is in this county (abbr)
- 15 Known for being the smallest English county
- 18 In the extreme south-east of Wales
- 19 Nuneaton is the largest town in this county (abbr)
- 20 Denby pottery comes from this English county
- 22 A Scottish county and also a type of eel
- 23 In the east of England, bordering Scotland
- 25 It has 'the Cathedral Church of Christ, Blessed Virgin Mary and St Cuthbert'
- 29 'Red ???' is a famous cheese made here

- 30 In the south west, known for its cider
- 31 Includes a cathedral with a 12-bell ring whose tenor is 30-1-10 in D
- 32 A 3-word county in the north east of England

Down

- 1 A central Welsh county bordering England
- 4 A ringing course was held here 21-24 April, and it's a breed of cattle (abbr)
- 8 Known for its beetles
- 9 A Scottish county and a cattle breed
- 12 Home of the Brighton Pavilion
- 16 Wars of the Roses: the white rose
- 17 Adjacent to 2-across and known for its call changes
- 19 There's a famous white horse here (abbr)
- 21 The most north-westerly county in England
- 24 With 7-across, has UK's most famous universities (abbr)
- 26 The last CC AGM weekend was here (abbr)
- 27 'The garden of England', in the south-east
- 28 Windsor Castle is in this county (abbr)

The Lucky Seven

Anne Tansley Thomas, Norwich, Norfolk

I am now the happy owner of a Learning the Ropes Level 5 certificate. It's taken me rather longer to get here than hoped. First COVID rather inconveniently got in the way, and then I got very distracted from the task at hand by learning Stedman instead! Experienced ringers have told me that failed quarter peals are much more memorable than the ones you achieve. So, just for the record, here are all my quarter attempts for the scheme, successful or otherwise. I hope all your quarters, both won and lost, are equally unforgettable.



The One with the Clock

Tenor to Plain Bob Doubles, 22 April 2019

I honestly didn't think it was possible to ring for over forty minutes non-stop. I rang this quarter in full sight of the clock and it seemed to go on for an eternity. Never again - I now ask for any clock to be moved.



The One that Made Two

Treble to Grandsire Doubles, 29 August 2019

Extremely chuffed with this quarter, especially sharing it with my friend and fellow learner Jude who scored her quarter on the tenor at the same time.



The One where even the Spiders were on Tenterhooks

Inside to Plain Bob Doubles, 4 October 2021

So nervous about this one that I achieved the remarkable feat of going wrong in the rounds before we had even started.



The One that Tested us

Inside to Plain Bob Minor, 8 December 2021

A verger came into the ringing room to 'check' the electric testing just when we were close to the end. Enough of a distraction to bring the quarter crashing down - there were tears.



The One with Six Conductors

Inside to St Martins, 9 February 2022

Not only did I ring this, but I conducted some of it too! A tag team effort, utterly bonkers, still can't quite believe it happened.



The Smooth One

Inside to Plain Bob Minor (again), 20 May 2022

Verger banished, quarter successfully achieved and mostly uneventful, despite slight wobble in the final lead!



The Hot One

Treble to Plain Bob Minor, 18 July 2022

Ring a quarter on one of the hottest days the UK has ever seen? No sweat! (Actually, quite a lot of sweat). Rang barefoot and so the only quarter where I got blisters on my feet and not my hands.

The band, looking surprisingly chilled after ringing lucky quarter seven on such a hot day.

From the left: Toby, Catherine, Kaeko, Belinda, Clare and Anne



Anne with her certificate



New Ringers at Sampford Brett

Jan Swan, Dunster, Somerset

Jan is an ART Teacher and the Dunster Branch Education Officer



The enlarged band at Sampford Brett

Sampford Brett is a small village in West Somerset with a population of about 270. We've got a lovely light ring of 6 at St George's church and a year ago had a band of six ringers of whom two were only able to ring occasionally.

How things have changed! Since the end of lockdown we've had ten new recruits from within the village. Two decided very quickly that ringing wasn't for them, but the other eight have stuck with it and are progressing well. Three have completed Learning the Ropes Level 1 and I expect to submit several more passes in the next few weeks. All but one rang for the late Queen's Platinum

Jubilee (some with help as they'd only had a few lessons) and all those who were available rang for her funeral. Most have started Sunday service ringing.

Interestingly all the new ringers moved into the village during the last three years. Recruitment was mainly through casual conversations but a recruitment fair for local clubs in nearby Williton also helped.

Teaching has been in two groups with our own recruits joined by three other learners from our benefice. It would have been lovely if we'd been able to offer people more than one lesson a week but with just three of us doing most of the teaching that wasn't realistic. As it was, we had to borrow some additional teachers for the first few weeks, and some had to be taught at different towers. One of the bell handling sessions has morphed into a tied practice for those who have completed or are close to completing Level 1. The next challenge will be integrating the new ringers into our main practice where ringing ranges from Bob Doubles to Surprise Minor. But I'm not complaining – it's a nice challenge to face!



Our stand at the Williton Recruitment Fair

Elizabeth Crabb: I moved to Sampford Brett in the autumn of 2021 and was immediately captivated by the sound of bells, as we live just a stone's throw from the Church. In May 2022 I had my first introduction to ringing. The teachers were incredibly patient – nothing in everyday life prepares you for bell ringing! It is a different language and a totally new skill set but the thought of the English countryside devoid of the sound of church bells egged me on. Strange terms like backstroke, handstroke, tail end and sally soon became part of my new-found vocabulary and gradually things became clearer. All the accomplished bell ringers have been so encouraging and one feels part of a special community. Ringing on the morning of the late Queen's funeral was incredibly moving and special, something which I will never forget. One makes mistakes, of course one does, but who has ever achieved any skill without mistakes?

Colin and Trudy Dale: We had not been in the village long when someone said, "Would you like to learn to ring?" We tentatively said OK, as curiosity got the better of us. We had often heard the church bells ringing, in fact they were ringing at our wedding forty odd years ago, but we had never, ever, given a thought about who or how they were ringing – they just were! So, that was the start of our journey – and what a journey! From being terrified of a rope to having childish giggles about 'pulling Sally' (I know it's really pulling THE sally), to gaining confidence and starting to feel a certain pride at joining an elite band of lovely people all doing the same thing. Progression was slow to start and thoughts of giving up crossed our minds, but the patience and encouragement from the teachers and other experienced ringers spurred us on to keep going. So, when we were asked if we would like to ring for the Queen's Jubilee we were really very proud and humbled to take part and surprised to get a certificate to say 'we were there'! We still have a long way to go but hopefully 'ringing the changes' might make sense to us one day, before our time is up, fingers crossed! So, thanks for asking "Would you like to learn to ring?"

The Advanced Call Change Scheme

Darren Swancott, Gaynor Evans, Ginette Pardoe & Jancis Baldwin

The authors are ringers at All Saints, Broseley in Shropshire.

Developing our band with the Advanced Call Changes Scheme

Our band started up in 2013. Back then we had only one teacher and several learners so even ringing rounds was a challenge. Attempts at ringing call changes generally resulted in three or four ringers shouting “Who do I follow?” while holding up their bell, which would be followed by lots of clashing and then a cry of “Stand!”

We opted to bypass call changes and ring set changes (otherwise known as jump changes), so for example, we would change straight from rounds into Queens at the next hand stroke. This had the advantage that all ringers knew who they would be following before we started ringing and it was also very good bell handling practice. The band then progressed on to plain hunt and simple method ringing without a backward glance at call changes.

Last year, however, Broseley signed up to take part in the Advanced Call Changes trial, forcing us to finally confront those dreaded call changes head on. Levels 1 and 2 of the call change scheme are almost identical to those of the original Learning the Ropes scheme. However from Level 3 onwards, the syllabus becomes very different. The emphasis is on the learner calling the changes, which is great for improving understanding of call changes and also for building up their confidence for conducting.

Ginette Pardoe, the Tower Captain says, “It’s great seeing our ringers gain confidence in calling changes themselves. I also enjoy relaxing for a few minutes on a Sunday morning and letting someone else do the calling for a while.”



The Broseley band

Learners are signed off on each bell individually to encourage them to move around the tower rather than sticking to a particular bell. This does however make progress through the scheme quite slow, as it takes time for each learner to complete each exercise from a number of different bells.

Ringing up in peal on three or more bells, on different bells, is a requirement for Level 3. This has been quite a challenge to us. We do ring up and down almost every time we ring, but some of our bells are quite tricky for even experienced ringers to handle and the exercise is very much a team effort.

It’s now just over a year since we started the trial and we are still using the Advanced Call Changes scheme. One ringer, Darren, has just obtained his Level 3 certificate and another two of our ringers are partway through the same level.

We’ve currently got quite a range of abilities at Broseley. Our original ringers can ring Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles when they get the opportunity. We’ve gained several new ringers during and since the Covid lockdown, ranging from complete beginners to plain hunters. On practice nights we try to ring something that will stretch everyone, but on Sundays we stick with call changes as it gives everyone time to concentrate on listening to the ringing.

The call change scheme has been great for improving our striking.

Band member Gaynor Evans says:

“I’m enjoying the new call change scheme – although I haven’t done very much calling myself yet. As we have a very mixed band of learners and more advanced ringers, it allows us all to participate. I’m finding that it’s making me concentrate much more on my bell handling and I now notice when to hold off from bigger bells and ring closer to smaller ones. I’m looking forward to doing some more calling when the time is right.”

Jan Baldwin, the Deputy Tower Captain explains how the scheme has helped her:



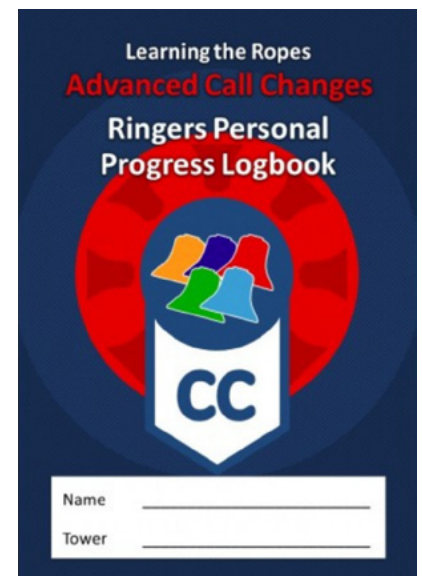
Call changes at Broseley

“When Ginette first told us she had signed us up for this I wasn’t very keen after previous attempts, but this is proving to be very different. As I struggle to ring for very long I have been stuck on level 2 for a long time so this system gives a chance for progression and a renewed interest in ringing.”

The Advanced Call Change Scheme has been invaluable in helping our band get to grips with call changes. We’ll now have new ringers coming through and learning to call changes as a matter of course which would never have happened if it wasn’t for the scheme.

Level 3 ringer Darren Swancott sums it up:

“This has been a really useful and challenging experience. I could never get my head round call changes, but calling the changes myself has really made it sink in. I would recommend every learner does this.”



Do you want to know more about Advanced Call Changes and find out how you can join and follow the scheme?

As some of the ringers at Broseley pointed out, this scheme is really useful to demystify call changes if you are struggling to understand them. Also, if moving on to quarter peal ringing is something you are not able to do, or do not want to do, then it gives you a progressive path to follow which gives you real skills.

To enrol on the scheme, buy your Ringer’s Personal Achievement Logbook, shown above, from the ART online:

<https://shop.bellringing.org/art-publications/63-ltr-advanced-call-changes-ringer-s-personal-progress-logbook.html>

and register on the SmART Ringer website, which will give you access to a large number of learning resources and a full curriculum.

The cost of the logbook is £2.50 and this price includes the issue of electronic certificates of achievement. The logbook will enable you to record your personal ringing achievements and to help you plan your future targets and objectives. Submission for certificates can only be made by an ART ringing teacher.

The Inaugural North West Ringing Course

Ten Tutors, Twenty Four Helpers, Fifty Three Students and One Admin Officer
Experiences of the Inaugural North West Ringing Course

The July edition of Tower Talk focused on ringing courses, but at that time the very first North West Ringing Course had not yet happened. In this article several of the participants, both students and helpers, share their experiences of what turned out to be a very successful addition to the annual ringing calendar. The course was held from 11th to 14th August at Myerscough College, near Preston.

Look at their website for next year's dates: <https://nwringingcourse.uk/>



Simon Linford tutored the Advanced Conducting topic



Excellent catering at Myerscough

Advanced Conducting Jayden Milby, Barrow in Furness

I didn't really know what to expect, but it was instantly clear that it was going to be a great weekend. I packed some of my college work in with my suitcase naively thinking there would be loads of spare time to get some done, how wrong was I! I was a student on the Advanced Conducting course, expertly tutored by Simon Linford and it certainly did not disappoint. I had plenty of 'lightbulb moments' as promised in Simon's President's Blog – these undoubtedly have given me a much better understanding of how methods actually work. As somebody in my group said, we were promoted from bob callers to novice conductors.

Aside from the actual teaching, there was absolutely loads to keep us occupied. I ring in a youth team (Lancashire Lads & Lasses – 3L's) and most of them were there, so we rang lots together including a quarter peal on the Charmborough Ring (mini ring) as the Cadbury Red Roses (3L's + Brumdingers) which was jointly conducted by Ellis and myself (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1535039>)

Liverpool Cathedral was last and it was definitely a highlight for many. We rang mostly rounds, and some of us rang a bob course of Grandsire Cinques with the local band as well as Plain Hunt on 9 and 11. We also got the chance to see the bells and the roof. Phenomenal!

On being a helper

David Horne, Carlisle Cathedral

Just go along to help, I thought ... easy peasy, I thought ... a good social scene, I thought...

Well the last one was quite correct, because I had an absolute ball of a time meeting lots of new ringers and quite a few friends I hadn't seen for several years. There was a positive embarrassment of things to do when not actually helping, from talks on all manner of things ringing to playing with dumb-bells, mini-rings and simulators. Myerscough College was a good venue with a great (and cheap!) pub, comfy bedrooms (for student digs anyway!) good food, excellent meeting rooms, and plenty of space in a rural location.

The organising team should be really proud of their efforts as this was the first time the course had been run, and if anything didn't quite happen as planned it just added a little amusement to proceedings. And we couldn't really blame the organisers for organising temperatures above 30°C for all four days and the consequent lethargy that set in earlier than usual!



Competitive extra-curricular activities in the evening!

Stedman Judith Horne, Carlisle Cathedral

I came away with a mug and T-shirt as souvenirs of the trip but can't help thinking there ought to be a university degree in theory and an Olympic medal in keeping right in Stedman!

What a lot of preparation work our tutor Eleanor Linford did, presenting a huge amount of information in an understandable way and adding to it as the group progressed to understanding touches. We visited five towers and two students rang in each course surrounded by helpers and a stander-behinder if needed. We rang Cloisters to get the rhythm for dodging without the distraction of "The Slow Work" (which I'm mostly okay with), and Plain Hunt on 9 to get the rhythm for caters. I had a bit of a blip the first two days and seemed to be going backwards, but I got the support I needed and day three was brilliant. Lots of advice was given, new friends were made. A thoroughly wonderful course - I'll be back next year.

Social networking

Lynne Sydes, Carlisle Cathedral

There is a great and useful social aspect to a residential course. Dawn to dusk bell talk, sitting with different people at every opportunity, asking questions about their ringing experience, towers, training, outings and enjoying telling and hearing funny anecdotes. Making connections and finding mutual friends. Living together for three days adds an easy intimacy and large print first name badges were indispensable!

But I had purpose too, to seek out fellow bell ringers to have a go at Kent on hand, or get their take on this mythical word "rhythm", or show up and join in ad hoc ringing on the mini ring and portable belfry. In the evenings there was a quiz, a questions panel and a talk in the Stumble Inn, so I felt I could just go to the bar, get a drink and find a table to join - it wasn't awkward for me at all, in fact it was entertaining to rub shoulders with the "notables" of our ringing community and laughter was hearty after the day's intense concentration. Ringing in other towers builds my ability and confidence and I have come home with many friendly contacts. Also my Stedman course created a WhatsApp group and I am already ringing online with two new friends. I left my room for 7.45am breakfast and saw it again to tumble into bed! If you don't believe me, then look at the programme on the website!

Conducting Iwan Cotgreave, Barrow in Furness

Despite the early mornings the course was fantastic! The course tutors led the teaching in such a way that no matter whether we fully grasped the new concepts or missed a few of the details, we all gained something from each session, both practical and in theory.

Being on the basic conducting course, we successfully attempted to call a quarter of Plain Bob Doubles with the 5 students in my group each calling two extents and our course tutor calling a final 60 from the tenor.

The course gave us the basic tools that we needed to progress with relative ease to the world of coursing orders in the advanced conducting course next time round. As a small bonus, I attended a Plain and Little Bob spliced optional session, which in much the same way gave us the tools to begin to call spliced methods as well as the brief introduction to putting Cambridge and St. Clements into the mix to create an even more wonderfully complex piece.

THANKS!

The best way of saying a huge thank you to all who were involved in this inaugural course is to go to print and to be read.

So thank-you for reading this!

Being Socially Responsible

Chris Rimmer, London

At my company Allianz UK, we are offered and encouraged to use a few *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) days each year. The purpose of these CSR days is for employees to take time out of their regular working days to make a positive impact in communities, for example by supporting local charities.

For a year or so now I have been using my CSR days to support local ringing in Northwest London, starting with morning service ringing at All Saints Harrow Weald followed by an eKenton training session in Ruislip.

Having learnt to ring over 15 years ago now, I'm in a good position to support learners in both handling and progressing their method ringing. In July we focused on accurate and quick call changes, rhythmic rounds on eight, and more confident plain hunting. All the learners made notable progress toward their objectives in this session, illustrated by the fact that the day after this session, the band were able to perform a polished set of call changes for the Memorial Service of a past ringer, much to the appreciation of his family.



Chris at Ruislip with Sonia (right) and Judith (left)

Everyone benefits from the arrangement too, and there is a positive impact on the company's reputation. Learners have access to insight and guidance from a more experienced ringer, and personally I can use these sessions to develop my own leadership and mentoring skills - not to mention having an enjoyable day away from my desk! ***I'd strongly encourage everyone to investigate the options that might be available in their own workplace.***

I Only Went to Have a Look

Jean Power, Harrow Weald

A mere four months ago I had no knowledge about bellringing, and certainly no idea I would ever do it, but a meet-up with a bellringing friend changed all of that. He was going to be ringing near me so I went along, thinking I might get a chance to listen - but before I knew it I was sitting in the bell-tower and something was sparked.

Soon I was being introduced to Sonia, the Ringing Master, and meeting everyone at Harrow Weald and eKenton, and my journey began...

It's been an up-and-down path as a combination of cognitive issues made it harder for me to learn new things, and a big loss of confidence in my mental and physical abilities. But the combination of lots of lessons, and everyone being supportive and non-judgemental as I've plodded along, kept me coming back.

I've kept the tears, frustration, and resolutions to quit, to my poor husband who has had to learn far more about bellringing than he ever intended so he could help me! Annoyingly, a bout of Covid stopped my learning in its tracks for 5 weeks but recently I've had multiple lessons and my confidence has leapt up. I've been solo-handling, ringing up and down unaided, changing speed and many other things that just a week ago I couldn't imagine ever being able to do.

I still can't comprehend how I'll make the leap to ringing with others, and ringing call changes, but who knows where I'll be in the next four months...



Jean with Sonia

Without a Vision...

Kev Mitchell, Walworth, London

'Without a vision, the people perish'

Kev says he's looked this up, and it's from Proverbs (chapter 29 verse 18).

"I'd love our own band of bell ringers to ring our own bells at our Easter day services, please."

That was the challenge that the Rector, Father Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, set me, Kev Mitchell, his new Tower Captain, in the autumn of 2018. Nothing too unusual about that, except there hadn't been a band at St Peter's, Walworth since the new bells had been dedicated in 2002. And records about the old set of bells, going way back, showed that regular ringing had not been heard in Walworth since before the First World War. Safe to say, there was no bellringing expertise or expectation within the parish, so the Rector's six-month timescale was a bit of a tall order.

So how do you start a brand-new band of ringers, on a set of bells that challenge even the most seasoned ringer? How do you start from scratch? There were two essential factors that made the challenge possible. Firstly, St Peter's has a fine set of bells indeed, thanks to the foresight of Roger Booth who oversaw the installation of the lightest ring of eight bells in a tower across London. Secondly, St Peter's is a thriving, diverse church with a wealth of school age children. So how did I galvanise the energies of these two assets and meet the Easter deadline? The simple answer is ART.

Without the *Association of Ringing Teachers*, my task would have been overwhelming. But equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding that I gained through the *ART Teaching Module One - Bell Handling*, I embarked upon a carefully structured, monthly training schedule to get the new ringers going. But recruitment wasn't that easy.

Although St Peter's is a large congregation, there's no legacy of bellringing in living memory. So, when one secondary school child and seven primary aged children stepped forward, I was delighted!

The regular practices incrementally built upon secure teaching and learning, which was carefully provided through the sequence in ART's *Learning the Ropes*. This structured course gave me the tools to support this young band, but it was the practical expertise from another tower in the district that really cemented the outstanding quality of teaching. The success of St Peter's is due in no small part to Louise Booth, an ART expert in the locality, to whom the parish is indebted for her guidance and generous time. So together with excellent teaching, great modelling, and the fundamental progression of skills provided by ART, the Easter challenge was met with aplomb. For the first time since records began, St Peter's bells proclaimed the joy of the risen Christ, with their own band. Mission accomplished!

By the summer of 2019, the St Peter's band were not only ringing for regular Sunday services but the occasional wedding too. Nothing like a paid gig on the hottest day of the year to sharpen the band's striking further still. Excellent! Covid came and nearly went, and the band have grown up, but the original eight ringers are still ringing. The ART structured assessments continue to provide motivation and celebration within the parish and a little healthy internal competition too, as Julius Olu-Jones completed his Level 5 this year. Not content with certification, he went on to achieve his first peal at his first attempt, and ringing inside to a splice of complicated methods in celebration of ART's tenth anniversary! And all of this success is down to the fundamental structured approach to developing secure bell handling and ringing techniques through ART's wealth of resources. For sure, a vision secured with a thriving band of ringers, ready to take their new hobby into the next century, whatever that may bring.



Julius with two of his ART certificates

The LtR Masterclass

When you pass Level 5 on the Learning the Ropes scheme you are invited to take part in an annual Masterclass in Birmingham, run by some of the top ringers in the country. We have included lots of reports from this special event in Tower Talk and here is the latest set of perspectives on the most recent Masterclass from some Cumbria-based ringers, including a teacher whose pride in the success of her student shines through!



St Martin's in the Bull Ring, Birmingham
One of the three rings of 16 in the world

Chris de Cordova

Teacher

My student, Andrew Moncrief, was actually eligible to attend the LtR Masterclass in Birmingham two years ago, so it was with great anticipation that we travelled down by train. The trains were crowded and our booked seats were on another train - but still, a couple of hours later, we were in Birmingham.

That evening we enjoyed some nice six-bell ringing on an ancient set of bells at the Great Barr practice night. I was interested and impressed to see two peal boards, commemorating Mark Eccleston's first and 1000th peals - just 13 years apart! (Nice to talk with him the next day, too.)

The next day was the masterclass, impressively well organised by Stephanie Warboys, who had it all down to the minutest detail. We met in the parish hall of St Martin's in the Bull Ring for a theory session on striking. Seating was allocated in the ringing groups, with each student sitting with their allocated tutor. A listening test was first on the agenda - which according to Michael Wilby, sitting next to me, I failed! And I thought I had a good ear! Well, Michael knows - being part of the Birmingham 12 bell contest multiple-winning band! Packed lunches were picked up and we were off!

Travel across the city was also superbly organised. Two towers were visited and ringing was focused on each of the four participants of the masterclass in our group, getting ringing organised for them, and around them, with their tutor teaching and the helpers filling in. They had all been asked, together with their home teachers, what they would want to focus on, and this was catered for. Andrew worked with his tutor Alistair Cherry on ringing heavy bells with less effort.

The morning was spent at Handsworth, an eight, where the small tower was rather crowded - then St Paul's, a fabulous ten. Finally, we walked back to St Martin's for the grand finale - ringing on the 16. The call changes on 16 were done in groups of four. Bells are all numbered 1, 2, 3 or 4, and all the 4s had a different coloured sally. All bells in each four changed the same way at the same time. There were too many people to count in the tower, which is pretty big, including people on the floor in the middle - there must have been over 50!

The last ring of all had Andrew being allowed to ring the tenor for rounds. He may not have set it first time, but when he did two pulls later there was a round of applause. The beam on his face was a joy to see!

This was a marvellous opportunity for the students to ring with some of the best ringers in the country, or even the world! It was magical.

Each participant was presented with a certificate, and a very stimulating speech was made by Lesley Belcher, the chair of ART, who also thanked Steph for all her hard work in organising this wonderful event, presenting her with something nice in a bottle bag. Then we dispersed, most heading for a meal together, where good food, ale and conversation were enjoyed!

Andrew Moncrief

Whitehaven, Cumbria

30th September wasn't a good day to be travelling by train, but I had to be in Birmingham to attend the Learning the Ropes Masterclass. We got there in time to go to the practice night at Great Barr, where the ringers were very welcoming.

The next morning was the big day. We all gathered in the hall at St Martin's and were allocated our own tutors. Alistair Cherry was my tutor for the day and I got on with him well. He's a decent bloke and he was a good choice for me as a tutor.

During the day we rang at Handsworth, where the tenor is about 15 cwt and at St Paul's, Jewellery Quarter, where the tenor is 12 cwt. I worked on not putting in too much effort to ring heavier bells. At the end of the day, I managed to ring the tenor at St Martin's in the Bullring, which weighs 39 cwt.

The best things of the day were the weather was a lot better than Friday, ringing the tenor at St Martin's and receiving a 'Learning The Ropes' Masterclass Certificate.

The next day, which was Sunday, me and my dad had a day out in London, as I've never been properly before. Once we arrived in London, we went on the tube to Westminster where we took photos of Big Ben, followed by a trip on the London Eye. The views were absolutely spectacular from the top, I could see the Shard, St Paul's Cathedral and many more fabulous landmarks. We carried on sightseeing and saw St Paul's Cathedral and St Mary-le-Bow church before heading home. That journey was a lot better than our journey to Birmingham. And to all the people who will go to the next Masterclass - I hope you do very well!

Hilary Ward Carlisle Cathedral

It was awe inspiring and very humbling to be amongst ringing's 'top brass' and to see so many young people ringing at such a high level. Being in the tower witnessing the Birmingham band ringing perfectly on sixteen was amazing. The tips and support I received from my group leader, tutor and helpers will be invaluable.

Jayden Milby Dalton in Furness

It was an absolutely fantastic weekend with lots of opportunities to ring at a standard that I have never experienced before, especially on higher numbers. It was an amazing opportunity to be asked to ring in methods like Stedman Cinqes, Bristol Maximus and Little Bob Sixteen with some of the best ringers in the country. I think that everyone who attended the course has improved their ringing significantly, whether that be from ringing on 12 or handling big bells more confidently to being able to pick out their bell and strike it evenly. Thank you to all the organisers, helpers and students.

Sally Starkey Carlisle Cathedral

I really enjoyed my time at the Masterclass, watching and listening to my group ringing was awesome, and would like to thank the whole group for their patience and encouragement especially the tutors Oliver Bates and Simon Linford. I should also like to express my thanks to the organiser Stephanie Warboys and the sponsors of ART who have made this possible.



Jayden receiving his certificate



The ART Awards are back

Lesley Belcher, ART Chair



In another sign that the world of ringing is returning to normal, the ART Awards are back.

Do you know someone who's making a difference and making things happen? Then don't be shy. Say thank-you by nominating them for an award, and if they win, they'll receive a substantial cash prize to spend on a ringing related activity or product.

It doesn't matter if they are an ART Member or have never even heard of ART, anyone can apply, anyone can be nominated and anyone can win.

If you already have someone in mind, then fly over to

www.ringingteachers.org/awards

and download an application form straight away. You have until 31 December 2022 to get your nomination in, so now is the right time to start collecting quotes, photos, statistics and testimonials, to show just how good your ringing hero is.



We have a new award this year - the Len Roberts Award for the Promotion of Ringing. Think community outreach, think media, think ringing PR, think results. A timely addition to the ART Awards portfolio when we've all have been reaching out to attract recruits.

The Sarah Beacham Youth Award

Prize of £800 - sponsored by the Sarah Beacham Memorial Trust

An award for youth, school groups, and university societies who are successfully recruiting, retaining and developing young ringers. What's the ethos of the youth group, how are young ringers developed, and how is the transition from the group managed?

The Len Roberts Award for the Promotion of Ringing

Prize of £250 - sponsored by Len Roberts

For the person making a significant contribution to the promotion of ringing in their local area. What was done, what was the impact, and what were the benefits for ringing, ringers, and the local community? Was it targeted at specific groups, e.g. schools, scouts and guides, or local interest groups?

The ART Award for Excellence in the Use of Technology in Teaching

Prize of £400 - sponsored by John Taylor & Co.

An award for the use of technology to develop skills and accelerate progress. How has it been integrated into other aspects of teaching and how has it developed and evolved over time? This award is for both technology innovators and those who use technology to recruit, retain and develop ringers.



Bryn Reinstadler and Leland Kusmer who created 'Ringing Room' won the 2021 Technology award

The ART Award for Excellence in Recruitment and Retention

Prize of £400 - sponsored by AbelSim

For an individual, tower or ringing cluster that has been successful in recruiting and retaining ringers. What's worked well, what's new and what lessons can be shared with the wider ringing community?



Ruth Marshall – joint winner of the 2021 Inspiring Leadership award

The ART Award for Inspiring Leadership in Ringing

Prize of £400 - sponsored by Talent Innovations

For those who have a long-term vision for their bell ringing community, and give imaginative and inspiring leadership. What barriers and challenges have been overcome and what was made them successful? This award is looking for nominations of individual leader(s), even though they might well be working as part of a team.

The ART Learning the Ropes Achievement and Contribution Awards

Two prizes of £250 - sponsored by the Ancient Society of College Youths
Five highly commended prizes of £25 each

The ringing *achievement* award is open to those who attained LtR Level 5 on tower bells or handbells between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2022. The judges will consider the individual's ringing development in terms of quality, quantity and complexity, the timescale over which the progress has been made and the support available.

The ringer's *contribution* award is not based on ringing ability or attainment but is for contribution to the wider ringing community, for example, within a band, local area, Guild, Association or even the Central Council. For 2022, the contribution category is open to anyone who has been enrolled on the Learning the Ropes programme (on tower bells or handbells) at any level. The judges are particularly keen to see evidence of organisation, leadership, technical skills or examples of wider initiative and/or innovation.



Jayden Newton won an LtR award in 2021

What are the judges looking for?

Hopefully having convinced you that the ART Awards might be relevant to a ringer you know, what are the common themes that appear in previous years' winning applications?

Having a vision or passion and making it happen: however big or small, making things happen is what leadership is all about, even if you don't call it that.

Trying out new things: some of which work and some of which don't. If we don't move with the times ringing will not flourish, so tell us about the risks taken and the way plans evolved.

Getting young people ringing: over-turning all those misconceptions that exist about children seeing ringing as "uncool" and giving up at the first hurdle.

If you recognise and identify with any of these themes, why not consider applying for yourself or a ringer you know? There will be an ART Award that's just right for your ringing hero.

Muffles: Practice for a Solemn Duty

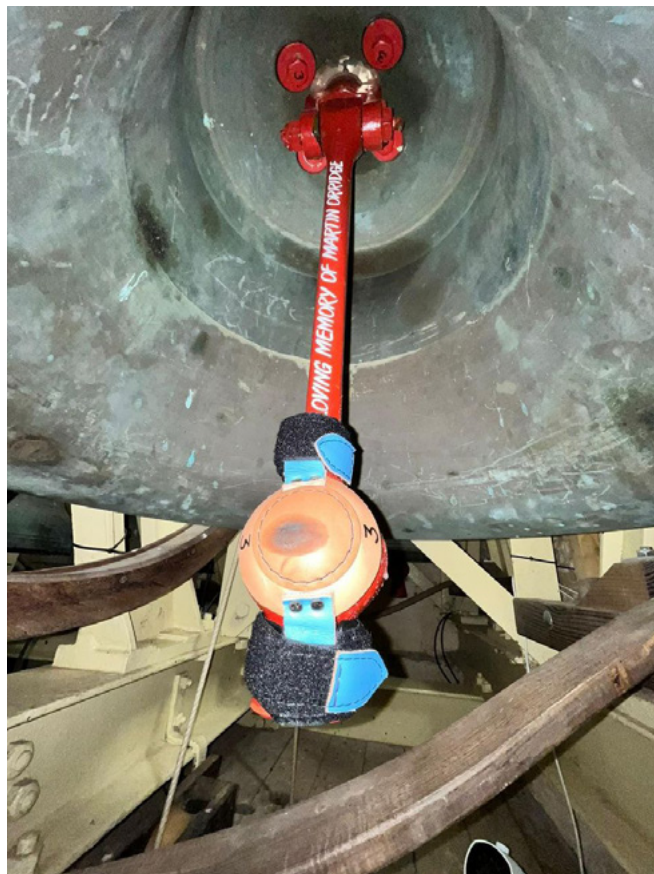
Jennie Pease, Dorset

After signing up for *50 Ringing Things* in May, I went to Lytchett Matravers in Poole, to fit some muffles under the supervision of my son, Jack.

Once I had been shown a couple of times how to fit and remove them, I had a few goes. My first attempt saw the Velcro straps move when wiggled, but I soon got the hang of it and duly took a photo to post onto the *50 Ringing Things* Facebook page. Little did I know I would soon be fitting muffles for real.

On 8th September, Buckingham Palace announced the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Others were available in the day to fit muffles at Lytchett (my home tower), but my son asked if I would go with him and another band member to fit muffles at St. James', Kingston. They have a fine ring of ten, so there was plenty of practice to be had.

Work commitments had prevented me from ringing on the afternoon of Friday 16th September with the rest of our band, but I was grateful to have the privilege to ring to mark the occasion of The Queen's funeral, as well as to 'go behind the scenes' and get the bells ready for this solemn occasion.



Muffle fitted!

Answers to Puzzles

Here's the solution to the puzzle on page 7.

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Across | | 29 | Leicestershire |
| 1 | Perthshire | 30 | Somerset |
| 2 | Cornwall | 31 | Surrey |
| 3 | West Lothian | 32 | Tyne and Wear |
| 5 | Essex | | |
| 6 | Beds | | |
| 7 | Cambs | | |
| 10 | Hampshire | | |
| 12 | Yorks | | |
| 13 | Fife | | |
| 14 | Glos | | |
| 15 | Rutland | | |
| 18 | Gwent | | |
| 19 | Warks | | |
| 20 | Derbyshire | | |
| 22 | Moray | | |
| 23 | Northumberland | | |
| 25 | Durham | | |
| | | Down | |
| | | 1 | Powys |
| | | 4 | Heref |
| | | 8 | Merseyside |
| | | 9 | Angus |
| | | 12 | Sussex |
| | | 16 | Lancashire |
| | | 17 | Devon |
| | | 21 | Cumbria |
| | | 24 | Oxon |
| | | 26 | Notts |
| | | 27 | Kent |
| | | 28 | Berks |

