

The Lancashire Ringer

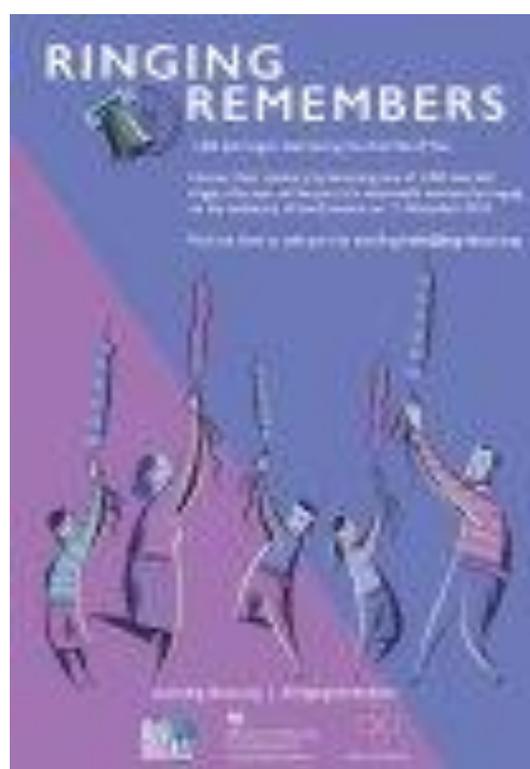
Series 2 Issue 5 – April 2018

RINGING REMEMBERS: A RECRUITMENT DRIVE

The big recruitment idea for 2018 is to sign up 1,400 additional ringers nationally, to replace those who died during the First World War. For the area covered by Lancashire Association, that equates to 70 new ringers.

The figure is an approximate one, as there were a lot of ringers who never joined this or any other ringing association. It's based on those that we know about, some of whom are commemorated with photographs in ringing rooms.

The idea follows that of recruiting ringers for the Millennium but the timescale is a bit tighter, if we are to mark the centenary of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. Clearly the huge loss of life during First World War is nothing to celebrate. Nor are the problems that followed it. But to those people who were around at the time, there was a huge relief that the fighting was over, and that is something worthy of our collective memory.



BELL RESTORATION FUND NEWS

At the LACR Committee meeting on 10 February the following grants were approved:

	Work	Total Cost incl. VAT	Grant
Blackburn Cathedral	Replace clapper bushes 1-9	£1685	£170
Bowness on Windermere	Replace all 8 clapper bushes	£1795	£180
Garstang, Churchtown	Replace gudgeons on 5th bell	£634	£65

The grant represented approximately 10% of the cost of the work in each case. If the bells in your tower need an overhaul, or you have something more ambitious planned, you are welcome to apply for a grant. Please contact Helen Rigby on 01706 847964 or helen.fwb@talktalk.net to discuss your proposal, preferably well in advance of the work being undertaken.

THE TAYLOR REVIEW

The future of English Churches and Cathedrals

The government has commissioned a report from a panel headed by Bernard Taylor on the future of English churches and cathedrals (primarily Anglican ones), and how to ensure that they are kept in good repair. They represent a very large part of our stock of historic buildings. The future of any building depends on its having a viable use. Inevitably some churches are in the wrong place for present day needs and will become redundant. Even without that, looking after them is expensive. There have been various grant aid schemes in the past. The review, which came out in December 2017, tries to find a way of putting their future on something resembling a sustainable footing.

Since the vast majority of the bells we ring are in churches, it's a subject in which we have a strong vested interest.

The report makes a number of suggestions, including the following:

- There needs to be more use of church buildings by community groups
- Two government backed funds should be set up, to support minor and major repairs
- Each Diocese should have a Community Support Advisor to help secure the wider use of buildings, and a Fabric Support Officer to advise on maintenance.

This is fine in itself, but it leaves a lot of questions unanswered. One is the relationship of the Fabric Support Officer with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, which is charged with giving advice on church maintenance to Anglican parishes. If the FSO is not an ex officio member of the DAC, they could end up giving contradictory advice.

Another idea put forward is a suggestion that churches should obtain financial support from local authorities. It is difficult to see how this could happen in the present financial climate, when many County and District Councils have insufficient money to carry out their statutory duties to a good standard.

At the end of the paper is a summary of practice in some other European countries. This makes interesting reading. It includes the church tax which is levied in Germany, the funding of priests' salaries in the Czech Republic and Hungary, and the ownership of church buildings by the state in France. The latter option is dismissed rather sweepingly on page 22 as something which "could not be adopted in the UK". The report does not consider practice in Scotland, which is strange as that is precisely the arrangement which applies to several major church buildings north of the border. Dunblane Cathedral, Dunkeld Cathedral, and St Mungo's Cathedral in Glasgow, the first two of which contain rings of bells, are state owned and leased back to the Church of Scotland. A similar arrangement applies at Kirkwall Cathedral, on Orkney, where the building belongs to the local council. It may be that this isn't the right answer in England, but as an option it deserves to be taken seriously. It would at least be useful to know something about how it works in practice.

Overall this paper is a useful look at a difficult problem, but more thought needs to go into working out the right long term answer.

A LOST RING OF EIGHT ON THE ISLE OF MAN - by Peter Rivet



The church of St Thomas, pictured above, stands at the corner of Church Road and Finch Road in Douglas. It was designed by Ewan Christian and opened in 1849. Notable features include wall paintings by a Manx artist, John Millar Nicholson. It was intended to build a tall spire on top of the tower, but this never materialised, either because money for it was unavailable or because of concern about the adequacy of the foundations.

In 1852 the church was presented with a ring of eight bells, cast by Murphy of Dublin. Their weight does not appear to be recorded, but a competing quote from Taylors specified a tenor of $7\frac{1}{2}$ cwt so it is likely that the Murphy bells were of similar size.

To celebrate the installation of this, the first ring of bells on the Isle of Man, a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung by a visiting band from Liverpool. This was on 7 December 1852, in 2 hours 47 minutes, after an earlier attempt the previous day which failed when a rope broke – something one would not expect on a brand new set of bells. Although the tone of the heavier bells was considered good, there seem to have been persistent unspecified problems with the lighter ones. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why change ringing did not really gain a foothold on the island at that time.

In 1912 the Murphy bells were destroyed in a fire. Replacements were eventually cast by Taylors in 1926, with a $12\frac{3}{4}$ cwt tenor, but they are hung dead for chiming. These bells were cast to ringing weights so they could, in theory, be hung with ropes and wheels, but the future of the building is at present uncertain and as the photograph indicates the church is adjoined by relatively high buildings. Some of them are hotels, others are flats. It is unlikely that their occupiers would take kindly to prolonged ringing. Perhaps a home will one day be found for the bells in another tower.

Much of the information here is taken from R.W.M Clouston, Manx Bells (1986)

RINGS OF TWELVE

Something for collectors of statistics

Richard Smith has contributed to the Bell Historians' correspondence group a list of the lightest ring of twelve (in a church, rather than in somebody's outhouse) in any given year. The results are as follows:

Years	cwt	Tower
1681-1719	55	York Minster
1719-1722	28	London St Bride's
1722-1819	25	Cirencester
1819-1932	15	Quex Park
1932-1974	12	Surfleet
1974-1990	11	Accrington
1990-2008	8	Grundisburgh
2008-2012	8	Bitterne Park
2012-	6	Loughborough Foundry

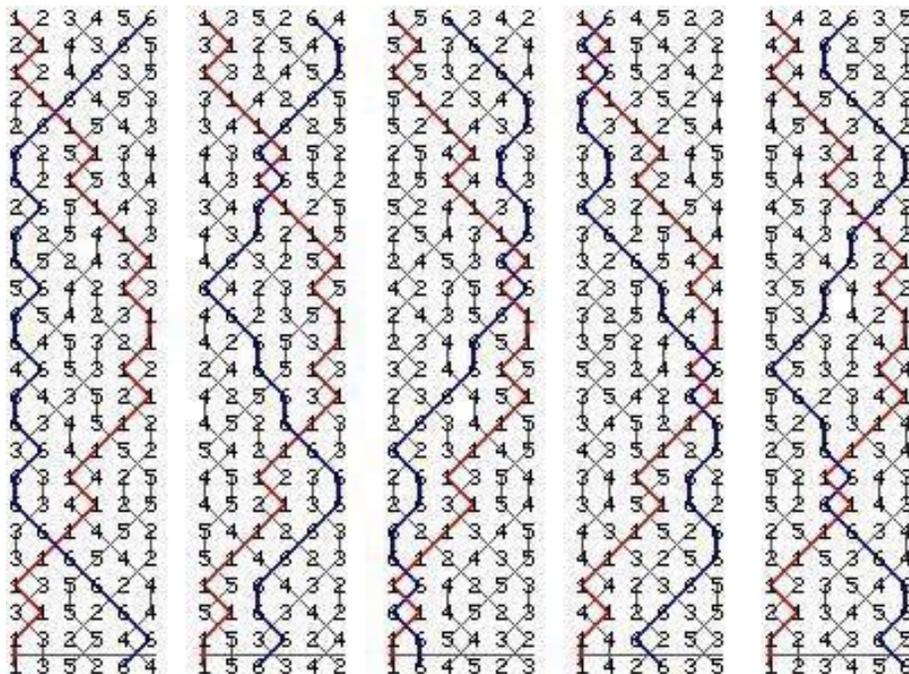
And here is a corresponding list of the heaviest twelves. It's a lot shorter, as such rings aren't installed very often. Not surprisingly, they are all in Cathedrals:

1681-1765	55	York Minster
1765-1878	51	Southwark Cathedral
1878-1922	62	London St Paul's
1922-1939	72	Exeter Cathedral
1939-	82	Liverpool Cathedral

So from 1974 to 1990 the Lancashire Association could claim the distinction of having within its territory both the heaviest and lightest rings of 12 anywhere. To win back our position we need to install a mini ring of 12 somewhere. Any offers?

METHOD OF THE MONTH - PLATINUM DELIGHT MINOR

This is a relatively exotic method which attracted a certain amount of attention in 2017, because of the Queen's seventieth wedding anniversary. Opportunities to celebrate platinum weddings don't arise very often, but we are generally living longer so it may be a useful thing to have in reserve.



If you would like to suggest a future Method of the Month for inclusion in this spot, please send it to the Editor.

EUROPEAN BELL FOUNDRIES No. 5 OLSEN NAUEN, TONSBERG, NORWAY

The Olsen Nauen bell foundry is in Tønsberg, in southern Norway, 102 km/63 miles SSW of Oslo. It is the only one in that country. It was started in 1844 by Ole Olsen and is now operated by the sixth generation of his family.



The foundry building, which is on the edge of a farm, contains a small museum of bell related items. In addition to church bells, it produces glockenspiels, ship's bells and a range of other bronze items. It has cast carillons for several places including Oslo Cathedral and Oslo City Hall. The foundry also owns a 52 bell travelling carillon, which is claimed to be the world's largest.



Your editor has not so far found a bell foundry in Sweden but here is an idea: flat pack bell frames. We could be on to something here. Perhaps IKEA could develop and market a standard design for a mini ring, which you could collect from their store in Warrington and assemble for use in your garage. They would need a suitable name for it... BLING perhaps?

RINGING CALENDAR a list of forthcoming events

Fri 6 April Hornby, Lancaster Branch 7:00-78:30pm Surprise practice.
Sat 7 April – Barnoldswick St Mary-le-Ghyll, Blackburn Branch (6) 3:00-8:00pm. Also **Standish**, Wigan Branch (8) 3:30-5:00pm. Own arrangements for tea.
Tue 10 April – Rainhill, Liverpool Branch (6) 7:30-9:00pm
Sat 14 April – Dent, Furness Branch (6) 2:30-4:30 followed by refreshments; **Samlesbury**, Preston Branch (8) 3:00-5:00pm
Sat 21 April – Brookfield Unitarian, Manchester Branch (8) 10:30-12noon; **Lytham St John**, Fylde Branch (6) 3:00-5:00pm. Also **Liverpool Cathedral**, Liverpool Branch (12) 6:00-7:30pm
Mon 23 April Wigan, Wigan Branch (10) 7:30-9:00pm Ten bell practice.
Sat 28 April – Lancashire Association AGM, Liverpool Branch. Full details of the ringing arrangements to follow. The meeting itself will be at **Liverpool Pier Head**, Our Lady & St Nicholas (12)
Fri 4 May Hornby, Lancaster Branch 7:00-78:30pm Surprise practice.
Sat 5 May - Whalley (8) 3-5pm and **Clitheroe** (8) 6:30-8:00pm, Blackburn Branch.
Sat 12 May – Tarleton, Preston Branch (8) 3:00-5:00pm. Also **Wigan Branch outing** to the Pennine Valleys – contact the Branch Secretary for details.
Sat 19 May – Stretford, Manchester Branch (8) 10:30am-12:00noon. **St Anne’s**, Fylde Branch (8) 3:00-5:00pm
Mon 21 May – Lancaster Priory, Lancaster Branch (10) 7:30-9:00pm
Sat 26 May-Mon 28 May – Central Council of Church Bell Ringers meeting at Lancaster University. This will feature events open to all ringers, including an opportunity to ring on the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry – see <http://www.nsacr.org.uk/LDMB/> .
Mon 28 May – Wigan, Wigan Branch (10) 7:30-9:00pm. Ten bell practice.
Fri 1 June Hornby, Lancaster Branch 7:00-78:30pm Surprise practice.
Sat 2 June Aughton St Michael (6) 3:30-5:00pm and **Halsall** (8). Includes Wigan Branch striking competition as well as general ringing.
Sat 9 June Blackburn Cathedral, Blackburn Branch (10) 10:45am – 12:15pm. Ten bell practice; ringing is expected to cater for all standards, from rounds and call changes to Surprise Royal. Also **Leyland Moss Side** (6) Preston Branch Striking Competition – times to be confirmed.
Sat 16 June Salford Sacred Trinity, Manchester Branch (8) 10:30am – 1:00pm.
Sat 23 June Singleton, Fylde Branch (6) 3:00-5:00pm
Mon 25 June Wigan, Wigan Branch 7:30-9:00pm. Ten bell practice.
Fri 6 July Hornby, Lancaster Branch 7:00-78:30pm Surprise practice.
Sat 7 July Blackburn St Jude, Blackburn Branch (8) 3:00-5:00 and 6:30-8:00pm. Also Wigan Branch meeting at **Hindley** (8) 3:30 – 8:00pm and **Poolstock** (8) 6:30-8:00pm.
Sat 14 July Chorley St Lawrence, Preston Branch (8) – times to be confirmed.
Wed 18 July – Cockerham, Lancaster Branch (6) 7:30-9:00pm
Sat 18 Aug – Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancaster Branch (6) 3:00-4:00pm followed by **Barbon** (6) 4:30-5:30 and **Sedbergh** (8) Furness Branch 6:00-7:00pm (8)
Mon 23 July Wigan, Wigan Branch (10) Ten bell practice.
Sat 28 July Ansdell, Fylde Branch (8) 4:00-6:00pm
Sat 4 Aug Downham (5) 1:00pm – 2:30pm, **Gisburn** (6) 3:00-5:00pm and **Bolton-by-Bowland** (6) 6:30-8:00pm. Blackburn Branch meeting. Also **Aughton Christ Church**, Wigan Branch (8) 6:30-8:00pm
Sat 11 Aug Brindle, Preston Branch (6) – times to be confirmed.
Sat 18 Aug Kirkham Willows, Fylde Branch (6) 3:00-5:00pm
Mon 27 Aug Wigan, Wigan Branch (10) Ten bell practice.
Sat 6 Oct – Association Striking Competitions, Bolton Branch: 6 bell: **Blackrod**, 8 bell, **Horwich**
Sat 24 Nov – Association 10 bell Competition: Kirkham.

LATE NEWS

JOHN PARTINGTON of St Luke’s Heywood, passed away 31/3/2018 aged 83 in North Manchester General Hospital after a short illness. He was a ringer for over 60 years of both church and handbells and taught hundreds to ring. He will be sadly missed by many.