



# LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CHANGE RINGERS

## Newsletter March 2008

### From the editor (Bethany Clague):

It is my wish to stand down from being LACR Newsletter Editor now. Having compiled the newsletter for a few years, I no longer have the time or resources to continue with it. Would anyone be willing to take over the role? The Newsletter is put together in time for the AGM, held each year in April. If anyone is interested, please contact a committee member. It has been fun compiling it each year, however it is still difficult to obtain articles from ringers. If you or your tower has anything of interest happening, please e-mail the new editor, or myself: [bethanyclague@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanyclague@hotmail.com).

All contributions are most welcome!

**New Website:**  
[www.lacr.org.uk/sodorandman](http://www.lacr.org.uk/sodorandman)

Designed by Ernie Runciman, it gives some information about the bells on the Isle of Man, (Sodor and Man Branch of LACR)

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## **From The President David Burgess:**

I have pleasure in thanking Bethany for once again agreeing to produce this newsletter, which I hope you will find of interest. I would ask you to please reflect on the objects of the Association, which have served us so well over the years.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Association are to promote the art and science of change ringing as an integral part of the Church's life and work by means of the following:

#### **1. The ringing of bells for services and other appropriate occasions in the life of the Church and community.**

At a time when some churches are having to abandon services, we need to double our efforts to ring at those services which are held. Particularly services such as Confirmation and visitations. I know that in the Liverpool Diocese the Bishops do appreciate the ringing and when ever possible go into the tower to speak to the ringers.

#### **2. The fostering of good relations with the Church and community and the furtherance of the appreciation of bells and bellringing amongst the general public.**

Good relations with the church is essential and in most cases the norm, a ringer on the PCC can have many advantages, as can an invitation to the PCC to visit the belfry. The general public do appreciate the bells being rung, and are usually aware of what happens from the television programmes of late.

#### **3. The recruitment and training of bell ringers.**

We all try our best but recruitment is in some places difficult and retention of learners not always easy. But we must continue to use whatever techniques are at our disposal, to train new ringers. To this end the LACR ringing courses both at association level and local branch level are so important and they do not all have to be on a Saturday. To branches which are fortunate enough to have university societies, please form a strong link and encourage the young when ever possible to partake in our activities, and let us also support their functions when ever possible.

#### **4. The promotion of good fellowship and cooperation amongst bellringers, including arranging ringing meetings and other Association activities.**

The LACR is spread over a wide geographical area, and activities across the whole association territory have proved difficult of late. I feel that it is important, that on occasions, the opportunity should be there for all ringers across the LACR to be able to meet, enjoy one another's company and to form friendships. Inter branch ringing meetings are a good start. The once so popular dinner dance, many organised by Celia

have not taken place for a number of years. Yet I know that a number of branches hold very successful dinners attended by “visitors” from other branches. Do you think perhaps the time has come to arrange an association wide dinner?

**5. The proper care and maintenance of bells, belfries and ringing rooms.**

I know, that the vast amount of care and maintenance of bells and belfries is carried out by the ringers, as volunteers. We are fortunate that so many people are willing to give of their time and talents to carry out this work to a very high standard. The bell foundries also offer a maintenance service and an H&S check. What can I say about ringing rooms most are very comfortable and a credit to the tower, a few are perhaps a little dusty!

**6. The support of bell restoration and installation by the provision of financial, technical and other resources.**

How fortunate we are that our predecessors envisaged the need for a fund to assist and support bell restoration. Also that over the years people have been so generous in working to maintain and increase the fund and we have received many much-appreciated legacies. For a good number of years we have been able to make grants, which have been appreciated by the receiving Churches. Roland Eccles with his small committee, have for many years been charged with the task of studying the applications and making the recommendations to the LACR committee. We do thank you Roland for all your diligence, wise advice, and look forward to the continuation.

**7. The development of awareness and conservation of items of historical and local interest associated with bells and bellringing.**

The people, who are involved in this sphere of work, provide valuable and interesting insight into how bells were hung and rung in years past and provide valuable advice as to what should be retained and what can be destroyed.

**By David Burgess**

## **Cracks in the crazy paving –** **2007 Central Council Report**

The 2007 Central Council meeting was hosted in Cheltenham (damp at that point, but not flooded) over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend by the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association.

The routine business of the meeting was handled quickly. Reports were received from committees, and most passed with little comment (though the Tower Stewardship Committee, first elected in 2006 and chaired by our own Ernie Runciman, should be praised for pointing out that there may be no long term need for their existence); the main issue at the Ringing World AGM, after the successful introduction of the option to subscribe by direct debit, was whether a less rigorous company audit regime could be used. The meeting decided to stay with the current full audit. There are cheaper options, but they give less protection to the volunteer Directors of the Ringing World.

But it was in motions from council representatives that there were issues that should matter to us in the Lancashire Association.

Members of the Administrative Committee (the nearest thing the Council has to an executive committee) proposed the establishment of a Ringing Foundation. In brief, this would aim to raise funds nationally and support the training of ringers – rather in the way that the millennium project supported the restoration and installation of rings of bells. This excellent motion received the support of a clear majority.

A proposal to change the basis of affiliation fees to the Central Council from being set by the number of representatives to being set by the number of members represented fell. This motion would have benefited the finances of small societies at the expense of large societies – very roughly, our affiliation fee would have increased by forty pounds a year. A speaker from another large society reckoned they could not possibly afford forty extra pounds a year and would have to disaffiliate. Many other speakers felt this argument a little foolish – but there was widespread sympathy for the view that the Verona Society in Italy affiliates out of solidarity with English change ringing – but as a large society they would see an increase in their subscription with absolutely no hope of any benefit.

Some representatives from the Kent County Association wanted the council to recognise new methods rung for the first time in a quarter peal (the current position is that for a new method on 7 or more bells, it must be rung in a peal for the ringers to have the right to name it) and felt that the way to do this would be to ask for quarter peals to abide by the same rules as peals, and so receive Council recognition. While some clearly felt that the current rules for who can name a method were fine, there were also many others who felt that Kent's aim was admirable, but their approach impractical. Yet others felt that it was not right for the Council meeting as a whole to try and resolve this issue – everything was too rushed and amendments didn't seem to be fully thought out. Again, the motion was not passed.

But most controversial of all was a motion to abolish the Redundant Bells Committee. Readers of my previous reports will know that I strongly feel that the Central Council's response to anything is to set up another committee, and that this results in a 'crazy paving' approach – as long as an issue is clearly within a committee's remit, there's no problem, but lots of matters fall down the gaps between committees. So in principle I should have supported this motion (but to my shame, I cannot now remember how I voted at the end of the debate). But picking off committees one at a time is not a solution – and it soon became clear that while some of the support for abolishing the committee was principled, from people who felt that there were too many committees, or that the Redundant Bells Committee was, itself, redundant, much of the attack (and much of the defence) was based on personal animosity. The motion, ultimately, fell, and the Redundant Bells Committee continues to operate

What did emerge is that there is widespread unease among Central Council members about how the Council operates. Most Council members (and, I think, most ringers) accept that there is a need for some sort of national body for ringers – we need to have a mouthpiece that can speak for us all to the Church or the Department for Culture or the BBC, and although the fundamentals have long been agreed, we all benefit from common standards – so we all know what is meant by ‘a peal’, and if asked if we can ring a Surprise method we will at least be answering the same question we were asked.

But if we were to invent a national body today, would it look much like the Central Council? I think not. If we were to start from scratch, we would want a body that could meet, maybe once a year to share knowledge and promote ringing to the wider world, but which between times could reliably deal with matters that arise during the year, rather than having to wait to gather an Administrative Committee of thirty four members or put everything off until an annual meeting in May. We would want a body that could look into urgent issues promptly, rather than proposing an amendment to rules, forming a new committee one May, electing members and then waiting for the following May for a first report. And we would want a body that was firmly under the control of its members, so if things somehow went off the rails one year, it would not be too long before it was brought back under control.

We need to look at reforming the Central Council – and now is the time to do it. This year, all affiliated societies are electing their representatives to serve from 2008 to 2010. We in the Lancashire Association have 5 representatives. I would like to say that as members you have been kind enough to elect me twice – but on both occasions, I have been elected unopposed.

I plan to stand again for the Central Council, and hope that enough Association members will back me for me so that I can carry on working to make the council a more effective voice for ringers. But you may feel that there is nothing wrong with the council – or you may feel that it needs to take a step back and do less. If you hold these positions, you should vote against me – and if there is no candidate with those views, then you should offer to stand and attend meetings for the next 3 years.

I firmly believe that the Central Council as it stands at the moment is failing. As members of an affiliate of the Council, it is up to us to take positive action to make our view – whatever that may be – clear.

**By Giles Blundell**

## **BARNOLDSWICK – BELL CAST**

Barnoldswick is probably the newest band in the Blackburn Branch. A group from Ghyll Church, Barnoldswick, with friends from Gisburn, visited John Taylor Bellfoundry at 1.30pm Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 to see the casting of the “Ringers’ Bell”. It is inscribed, “To commemorate 850 years of St Mary le Ghyll Church” along with names of the new band of ringers. A final push for funding to complete the augmentation to 6 or 8 bells is now taking place.

**By Christopher Whale.**

**Ed.** Sorry, Chris. Photos were included with this article, however a lack of technology on my part means I am unable to print them in this newsletter! Thanks for the article.

## The Peel Dip

Or How to attempt to kill off a new ringing master in one easy lesson.

It all started on a holiday to the Isle of Man. We had a trip to Peel for lunch in a pub on the Promenade on New Years Day 2007. One of the traditional activities in Peel on New Years Day for about 300 people on the stroke of midday is to swim out to the lifeboat moored some yards off the beach. It's all done in the name of charity, with thousands of pounds raised each year. However, one thing that was very evident on that January morning was that it was very cold.

Over a very pleasant lunch, washed down with some local Manx Ale, we discussed the Peel Dip, and it was suggested I take part in 2008, to raise money. There was a part of the conversation I don't actually remember, but I am told I readily agreed to such a venture. I must have consumed too much of the local ale!

Move forward to autumn 2007. After an eventful year, I decided on a change of life, and "emigrated" to the Isle of Man. So far it seems on of the best things I have ever done. I've got an interesting job, and some wonderful friends. The pace of life is much better than Liverpool, and the local ale is wonderful. I have been appointed ringing master for St Georges, Douglas, and am also ringing master for the Sodor and Man Branch.

However, as the autumn wore on, a nagging fact kept coming up in conversation – The Peel Dip. People kept reminding me that I said I would participate. How cold was it going to be? Could I get out of it? Would I survive? Would they need to find another new ringing master in three months? After discussion, I bit the bullet and put in an entry. I would be raising money for the bell maintenance fund at St Georges, Douglas.

Christmas and New Years Eve were good, but eventually New Years Day dawned. On the bus with my supporters on the way to Peel, to say I was having second thoughts was an understatement. However, when we got to Peel, to see everyone else who was foolish enough to go in made it easier to think about. There were a number of people in fancy dress, including a leopard and a gentleman wearing a lime green leotard that did not conceal very much. I was interviewed on Manx Radio (which I understand went out live)

As midday approached, it was time to get changed and move down the beach with every one else. There must have been a thousand people on the beach, with the participants, their supporters and the onlookers. The sand was cold. Two minutes to midday – time to take off the T shirt (and put it straight back on). We were all at the waters edge waiting for the signal. A minute's silence was held for a member of the RNLI crew tragically killed in a motor accident a few days before. The RNLI lifeboat moved in, and off when the maroon. Take a deep breath and run straight in to the water. Straight into the Irish in mid winter.

**Was it cold? No. It was \*#x>\$&+£? FREEZING.**

Time to start swimming. I made it out to the lifeboat. On the way, two members of the local constabulary passed me in full uniform, including the traditional white policeman's helmet. There were

so many people trying to climb on the lifeboat, it was listing at an alarming angle. As I was starting not to feel some of my extremities, it seemed like a good time to head for the shore. At the waters edge, I met Nigel, the Major of the Manx Salvation Army, complete with regulation Sally Army Hat.

There were dry towels waiting for me, and a flask of something hard. Everyone was full of congratulations. The changing rooms were full of very cold but ecstatic people. Everyone was talking about how far in they had been and how cold it was.

### **Did I mention how cold it was?**

To warm up, we retired to the Creek Inn for lunch and some congratulatory drinks. My small amount of fund raising raised £150, which will go towards the new ropes.

Many thanks to those who suggested the dip, and pushed and encouraged me to take part, and to those who sponsored me. Next time I take part in a traditional Manx activity, it will have to be in warmer weather. Now, someone has mentioned the World Tin Bath Championships at Castletown?!

**By Ernie Runciman** (Tower Captain of St George's, Douglas)

## **FUND RAISING CO-ORDINATOR – WHAT DOES HE DO?**

When Bethany asked me to write an article on what I do as the Association's Fund Raising Co-ordinator my first thought was "not a lot". That's true – I don't do much, it's the Association Members who find the money to buy goods and raffle tickets to boost the Bell Restoration Fund.

The idea for an Association Fund Raiser came from Anthony Helliwell in about 1995 as a means of supporting the BRF in addition to peal charges and transfers from the Association's General Fund. This extra income was thought to enable larger grants to be awarded and more projects for bell restoration or augmentation to be put in hand. Anthony agreed to be the first Fund Raising Co-ordinator and proved to be extremely successful, raising over £14,000 during his time in office.

In May 2003 Anthony stepped down and I took over, knowing that I had a very hard act to follow. Anthony had passed on to me some catalogues from companies who supply organisations like ours with saleable goods, which I studied with interest. His stock of Association Mugs had all been sold so I thought that my first task should be to order some new ones. I decided that these should be to a new design and produced a layout, which showed the 12 Association Branches in a stylised form. Needless to say, this caused some considerable difficulties for the manufacturer but in the end they produced the mugs, which are still available for sale.

My next attempt was to design a suitable package for some bars of chocolate. At one meeting where I was offering some items for sale a lady enquired as to why there were no Lancashire Association bookmarks available. So my chocolate labels not only became bookmarks but also a cover for some little notebooks. But in my ignorance I failed to estimate properly the numbers which might be sold in

a reasonable time, with the result that the bottom of my wardrobe houses a box with enough notebooks and bookmarks to last at least the next 20 years!! But at least the chocolate has been successful and I've had to keep re-ordering it – I can now offer a choice of dark, milk or orange flavoured.

My next faux pas came when I ran out of tea towels and had to re-order them. Anthony had commissioned a design by a local artist of one typical tower from each Branch. The original layout had been modified when the Sodor & Man Branch joined us and a special version was produced for the Association's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001. I decided that this should be the basis for the next order but some of the lettering on the print was a bit blurred so I removed it and re-typed it for the new issue and sent it back to the manufacturer. Unfortunately, I had not realised that the 2001 version had had the Lancaster Branch's tower changed from Hornby to Kirkby Lonsdale. So you can imagine my horror when I received the order to find the name "Hornby" under an illustration, which clearly wasn't the distinctive octagonal tower, it purports to be!! Oh well, as Anthony would tell you, postage stamps with an error are worth a lot more than perfect ones so perhaps these tea-towels should also be considered collectors' items.

My other forays into providing goods for sale have been the calendars, which I've been doing for the past 4 years, and marmalade. As there are 12 branches in the Association it seems right to pick a tower from each branch. As there are only 2 towers on the Isle of Man, this does mean that there is some repetition but so far as the other Branches are concerned, the main problem is getting pictures, which approximate to the right season. We've had so little snow in recent years that it's proved difficult to find suitable pictures for January and December. My marmalade, made to my "secret" recipe with a little added dash of appropriately named liquor, has also proved very popular with over 100 jars sold. I have also inherited a number of silk Association ties from Simon Meyer, one of which, to my certain knowledge, has appeared before Her Majesty the Queen!! And recently I took over the ordering of Association Polo- and sweatshirts from Ann Tester, so if you want one (with or without your Tower's name) or any of the above items, please give me a ring on 01254 664937 or e-mail me at [frankandpam@supanet.com](mailto:frankandpam@supanet.com) .

So that's about it. I try to get to as many Association events as possible. With my suitcase of "goodies" I feel a bit like Del-boy Trotter, but without the yellow Reliant van around the corner. I had set myself a target of £2000 a year for the BRF from all sources when I took on the job and I'm happy to say that so far I've managed to achieve that each year I've been doing it. But as I said at the start, it's not from me; it's from you, the members of the Association and your friends, who have raised all that money. Thank you one and all.

**By Frank Anderton (Fundraising Co-ordinator)**

## THE 2007 TEN BELL COMPETITION

If you augment your bells to ten, as Lancaster Priory did just over a year ago, what better way of showing them off is there than hosting the Association's Ten Bell Striking Competition? The only trouble was, that Lancaster doesn't have a very strong tradition of ten bell ringing. The branch has occasionally managed quarter peals of Caters, and even Royal, at Lancaster Cathedral, but these have depended on a certain amount of outside help. We have for the last couple of years held monthly ten bell practices, but a lot of the ringing on them is on eight bells. Mustering a band capable of entering a striking competition seemed a bit ambitious.

Andrew Nelson of Lancaster Priory thought otherwise. He circulated all the branch ringers likely to be capable of ringing in a ten bell band. A few were unavailable, because of other commitments, but not many of us go away on holiday in late November. With a certain amount of arm-twisting, he succeeded in putting a band together.

If you look through the reports of past ten bell competitions, you will find that almost everyone rings Grandsire Caters. The advantage of this is that you only need a relatively short touch to meet the requirements of the test piece. Nonetheless Robin Daw, as the band's conductor decided that we should go for Plain Bob. It requires a longer piece, but it's easier to ring, especially on fairly challenging heavy bells.

So we gathered together on a wet and windy afternoon of 24 November at Lancaster Priory. We were expecting five other bands but one dropped out at the last minute. As all of us were available at the start of the competition, we were asked to ring first, in effect setting the standard for the other bands to beat. Our ringing wasn't by any means perfect, but it didn't fire out, and we thought we had put in a respectable effort considering that it was a first ever Lancaster branch entry.

At the end of the competition we had a hot pot supper to look forward to, followed by the judges' report. Jeff and Catherine Ladd from the Yorkshire Association (which we were told, rather to our surprise, doesn't have an inter-branch ten bell competition) were quite complimentary about the standard of ringing. However, they noted that some bands found it difficult to settle on the right speed. Having marked each entry for faults they converted the results to a percentage; the team with the highest grade was therefore the winner. They also calculated the peal speed for each entry. The results were as follows:

Place	Branch	Method	Peal Speed	Marks
1	<b>Preston</b>	<b>Grandsire Caters</b>	<b>3:26</b>	<b>75%</b>
2	<b>Wigan</b>	<b>Grandsire Caters</b>	<b>3:11</b>	<b>68%</b>
3	<b>Blackburn</b>	<b>Grandsire Caters</b>	<b>3:25</b>	<b>64%</b>
4	<b>Lancaster</b>	<b>Plain Bob Caters</b>	<b>3:38</b>	<b>56%</b>
5	<b>Furness</b>	<b>Grandsire Caters</b>	<b>3:26</b>	<b>53%</b>

So Lancaster didn't come last! It's nothing to brag about but you could say that we came fourth not out of five, but of twelve branches. So how about next year? The 2008 competition is to be held on 29 November at Newton-le-Willows.....

**By Peter Rivet.**

## **EAST MEETS WEST**

One of the more unusual ringing events in the Lancaster Branch took place in April last year when a group of Christian and Moslem women, who had earlier been to see a mosque in Bolton, visited Lancaster Priory. Their tour of the church included a brief concert by the choir and finished with a trip up the tower. A short explanatory talk was followed by a demonstration of change ringing (Grandsire Doubles and Call Changes) on the front six bells. A couple of the visitors had a go at bell handling as well!!

**By Peter Rivet**

## **BELLS IN EDINBURGH**

Following his work on the church bells of the Manchester Diocese, John Greenhough, a member of the Lancashire Association who is currently working north of the border, has turned his attention to Edinburgh. The results of his work to date can be found on a website set up for the purpose:

<http://www.geocities.com/jogreenh/Edinburgh-bells.html>

There are very few rings of bells in the Scottish Capital, but they include the recently restored 1788 Whitechapel bells at the church of St Andrew & St George, which were the first set of change ringing bells to be installed in Scotland. There are several chimes to be recorded, including a very prominent one by Warners at St George's West in the city's West End, and a large number of single bells which have not previously been investigated.

Of the sets of bells, which have been lost, the most interesting is undoubtedly the chime of 23, which used to hang in the tower of St Giles Cathedral. These were cast in the city by John Meikle in 1698-99, and were the first carillon of tune playing bells anywhere in Britain. There are some other surviving examples of bells cast in the city, including a couple at George Heriot's school and a single one at Corstorphine in the western suburbs.

**By Peter Rivet.**

## **Coping with External Pressures**

Church bell ringers are under a number of external pressures that can have great influence on the management of bell towers. These pressures include child protection, health and safety, fire risk assessment and insurance. However, with care, most of these factors can be managed, and even used to the bell ringer's advantage.

The Tower Stewardship Committee of the Central Council has been set up to monitor the development of these external factors and help ringers and tower management authorities on how to manage them.

The management of most of these external factors is usually vested in the owners of the building. In the case of the Church of England, this is usually the Vicar, Church Wardens and PCC. However, these functions are often delegated to a specific church member. Most parishes now have a dedicated child protection officer (sometimes called a young persons co-ordinator or similar). Usually, the church treasurer is responsible for insurance matters, and more and more, it is common practice for a health and safety officer to be appointed. These "managers" are usually very well meaning, and have the best intentions of the church at heart. However, they may well not know, or understand how bell towers work, or even know who the ringers are at their church.

Hence it is worth ringers ensuring that their interests are looked after. Ringers should be aware of what external pressure may affect the tower, and maintain a dialogue with the appropriate person responsible for the church policy in each area. Rather than have the church impose a policy on the bell tower, why not develop a joint policy that encompasses the whole church? The church insurance company – often the EIG – is keen to see this sort of interface between church and ringers.

However it must be understood, as in the general spirit of health and safety, the appointment of an official to look after a specific area does not excuse anyone else from having any responsibility. Even, for example, if the tower captain is not the church's health and safety officer, he still has a degree of responsibility, for anyone entering the area s/he has responsibility for, even when the place is unattended. Why unattended? Just think of the consequences of leaving bells up in an unlocked tower.

Don't be put off by the above. Risks can be managed. Assessments can be performed. Insurances can be put into place. CRB checks can be made.

The Tower Stewardship Committee has compiled leaflets covering the following areas that offer advice on how to manage these external pressures. They cover the following areas:-

- 1 Tower Management
- 2 Child Protection in Towers
- 3 Church Law in Relation to Bells
- 4 Fire Risk Assessment
- 5 Insurance and Ringing
- 6 Tower Safety and Risk Assessment

These leaflets can be found on the Central Council web site at:-

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/tsc>

These leaflets have been published on the Internet, in electronic form, mainly so that updates can be easily done when new and updated information is available. As the Tower Stewardship Committee has an ongoing mandate to monitor both existing and new rules and laws to see how they impact on bell ringers, we have decided to use this form of publication to ensure that the most up to date information is readily available. If you are a tower captain without Internet access, do see if there is someone in your tower or church who can access them for you.

Why not print them out, and get together with members of your PCC (or equivalent) to produce the appropriate assessment, before one is imposed on you.

Part of the work of the Tower Stewardship Committee also involves contact and negotiations with outside organisations. Our negotiations with EIG have resulted in very competitive quotations for public liability insurance being offered to Central Council-affiliated societies, based on the number of members. Details were published on P419 on the RW 27th April 2007

For further information, and help, please contact:-

**Ernie Runciman**  
**Chairman, Tower Stewardship Committee**

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## Peel Bell History

TALK GIVEN DURING THE SERVICE CELEBRATING THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF THE RE-CASTING AND RE-HANGING OF THE BELLS IN ST GERMAN'S CATHEDRAL

When this church was opened for worship in August 1884 the peal of eight bells had already been installed in the tower having been cast by Warners of London in 1883. The Tenor weight was 8 ¼ cwt. The tower walls are three feet thick which considerably reduces the size of the bell chamber – it's only 11 feet square.

Having bells in the tower was all very well but people to ring them were needed. Help came in the person of Charles Henry Hattersley, a visitor from Sheffield, who arrived in June 1884 and took on the task of teaching a band. There are no records of the names of any of these ringers but there appears to have been an active band from 1884 to 1907. A contemporary report says, "they could ring Bob Major as well as any band".

The new church was eventually dedicated to St German. However, almost 20 years later, disaster struck. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1903 a mighty storm hit Peel. The west window of the church was blown in and the wind lifted the roof off the nave. Part of the roof fell inwards, bringing the upper part of the wall with it, resulting in severe damage to the west gable. An architect from Liverpool carried out an inspection and reported that there were cracks in the tower, but he did not consider that they were structurally serious. Repairs were carried out by Ambrose Kelly (Canon Kelly's grandfather) and the church reopened on 7<sup>th</sup> July – only 5 months after the storm. This was remarkable considering the estimated cost of £2000 had to be raised. But in 1905 the Annual Vestry Meeting reported that "the work is complete and the debt is wiped out".

Again, all was well for a few years until, in December 1906, a surveyor's report stated that the tower and spire were in a dangerous condition due to the subsidence of the foundations. Initially, the spire was demolished and the stones numbered and stored in the churchyard, leaving the tower alone. The bells were removed and stored. It was in 1909 that plans were submitted for a new tower and spire. The architect had condemned the tower and suggested that it be taken down and rebuilt.

In July 1913 building work restarted, again being carried out by Ambrose Kelly under the supervision of the architect. The work was completed the following year, but the plans were modified and the tower was capped as it is today. The spire was never rebuilt and the stones lay in the churchyard until quite recently when they were removed to be used for repairs elsewhere on the Island.

In the meantime, the bells were still in storage and it was not until 1915 that the Vicar and Wardens considered the replacement of the bells and clock. At this time also, for reasons not recorded, it was decided to have the two trebles recast. This was done by Warners in 1916. John Smith & Sons of Derby were asked to replace the clock and they advised that this should wait until the recast trebles were in position. In 1917 Warners came over to tune the remaining bells and rehang the complete peal. Including a fought-for discount the cost came to £74.

With the intervention of the Great War, there were not enough local men to ring the newly hung bells and, for a time, they were rung mainly by volunteers from the internment camp at Knockaloe. Although, during the war, the ringing of church bells was forbidden in Britain except to warn of invasion, there is evidence that the bells of St German were heard in the summer of 1917. On 18<sup>th</sup>

November 1918, the Armistice was celebrated with street parades and church services and a relay of volunteers kept the bells ringing all day long.

When the bells were back in place in 1917, Smiths of Derby gave a quote of £87 to replace the clock. However, when they were requested to come and do the work in April 1918, they replied to the effect that they were short-handed and had to concentrate their efforts on government work and that, when they were in a position to do the work, the cost would have to be re-estimated owing to the great increase in wages and the cost of materials.

This was **not** good news. Parishioners were becoming impatient. They had been paying for continuing building work for 14 years and were still without their church clock; a lot of working people relied on it, very few of them being able to afford a watch. In 1921 it was agreed that an estimate from the local clockmaker, Mr Kee, for the replacement of the clock be accepted. More pertinently, they also agreed to his recommendation that the chimes should be fixed and, therefore, the bells would not be able to swing. Probably due to his having no experience of towers with full-circle ringing **and** a chiming clock, he gave a choice of bellringing **or** a clock, but not both. By this time, ringing had again ceased as the bell frame, made from unseasoned oak, had started to warp and wedges had been inserted between the frame and the wall – now generally agreed to be a dangerous practice. The clock was duly installed which involved fixing hammers to strike the outside of the bells, the wheels on the two upper bells were cut away to allow for maintenance of the clock.

And so, the bells and their fittings gradually corroded in the moist Island air and dust and sand blew in to cover everything. The jackdaws also added to the mess with their nest-building in the louvres.

This situation continued, with the addition of an Ellacombe Frame so that wedding bells and service ringing were possible until 1997. A rope was attached to one bell for use as a tolling bell, accessible from the porch.

Enquiries were made in the early 1980s and again in 1992 to see whether the re-hanging of the bells for full-circle ringing was feasible. Although estimates were obtained, no action was taken mainly due to lack of money.

And then, along came Sam Ferris .....

Enquiries showed that there were several ringers on the Island, unknown to each other, and, eventually, in January 1996 an informal meeting was arranged to discuss the possibility of restoration. The meeting was attended by ten people of whom seven were ringers. So it was decided to set up a Charitable Trust, which might attract some large donations and might also be eligible for grants. After much time and effort searching for the right people to be trustees, The Manx Church Bells Restoration Trust was formed in August 1996 under the patronage of the then Lieutenant Governor Sir Timothy Daunt.

The Trustees had several meetings and it was decided to treat the bell restoration as a Millennium Project. In order to have a band of ringers trained for January 2000 the old bells would have to be removed by October 1998 and the new ring installed by April 1999 at the latest. A scheme called "Ringing in 2000" meant that towers all over Britain were aiming to restore old bells or install new ones, so there was a lot of competition for a slot in the Bell Founders' schedules.

Estimates were obtained and the one from Taylor's of Loughborough was deemed the better bet. In order to qualify for Zero VAT the order would have to be placed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 1996. At the time, the Trust had £169 in the bank. The trustees took a leap of faith and placed a provisional order, one of the Trustees making a loan of £1000 for the deposit.

Donations were invited both in cash and kind, as the cost of £55,000 odd did not include transport and building materials or extra labour. There was also a suggestion that some may like to hold fund-raising events.

Grants were promised from the Manifold Trust and the Lancashire Association of Church Bell Ringers. The Isle of Man Government contributed a substantial sum, considering the bells to be a Millennium project for the whole Island.

Gradually, money started to come in and by mid-March 1997 there was £11,000 in the kitty. By the end of June 1997 the fund held £39,000 with a further £11,000 promised and donors had come forward for all eight bells. This meant that the provisional order to Taylor's could be confirmed. It had been decided by the Vicar & Wardens that they would prefer to have the original bells melted down and recast rather and Taylor's agreed to this proposal.

On 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1997, Taylor's bell hanger, Rod Walker, assisted by volunteers, removed the bells from the tower. The transport from Peel to Loughborough and back was given free of charge by several local companies.

The new bells were cast on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1997 and a party of 14 people from the Island flew to Birmingham and went to the foundry to witness the event. During the casting, the names of both the original and the new donors were cast on opposite sides of each bell. A saint's name was added to each bell and the date of casting was recorded on the Tenor. During the following weeks the new bells would be finished, tuned and polished. The new ring would be slightly heavier with the Tenor weighing 9 ½ cwt.

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1998 the new bells with their frame and fittings came home and were lined up outside the Cathedral to be photographed. They were then taken inside and placed in a row in front of the font. (I believe there was some concern as to whether the floor would take the weight of nearly 2 tons of bell metal – but, thankfully, it did. They built well in the 1880s!). At the Service of Blessing on 3<sup>rd</sup> February Bishop Noel blessed and anointed each bell and named it after a Celtic saint.

Rod Walker, the bell hanger, had already installed the frame in the tower and the day after the service of blessing, again with the help of the unflagging volunteers, he began moving the bells up into the frame. A test ring was held to check that all was in order before his departure. (This ringing apparently stopped a rugby match, as the players were so surprised to hear the bells!). Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> February ringing for morning service took place for the first time in over 80 years. This was only a year after fund-raising was begun, a truly wonderful achievement. By the end of 1998 the fund had reached £93,000, more than enough to cover the extra costs involved in the re-ordering of the tower and the installation of a state-of-the-art electric clock.

In August 1998, a Service of Dedication was held and when the Bishop commanded, "Let all the bells ring out!" eight very nervous new ringers (with minders) pulled off and rounds were heard. Very ragged rounds, I might add; I, for one, had only had four lessons. All these ringers were chosen because they lived in or near Peel. After the service there was open ringing for the more experienced Island ringers and the many visiting ringers. (And, by the way, there will be open ringing tonight after this service.) Sam Ferris was appointed the first Tower Captain. 10 people had expressed an interest in learning and, with the help of the resident experienced ringers and visitors from across, training continued apace. In late March 1998, Jeff Kershaw and Helen Rigby from the Lancashire Association visited Peel at their own expense to train ringers and teach beginners. This was very useful and helped the experienced ringers who would be teaching bell handling. Most of the teaching was done by Geoff and Mary Riglar assisted by Sam Ferris, Trudy Haddouche, and Teri Monks. Some stays had to be replaced with alarming regularity! However, steady progress was made and we, and

St George's in Douglas, have continued to enjoy a hobby that is also an English tradition handed on through the generations.

As the last ten years have passed we have reached some milestones:

On Easter Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1998 the bells were rung for their first wedding.

On 19<sup>th</sup> June 1999 the first quarter peal was rung by a mixture of Island and visiting ringers.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 16 ringers rang in the Millennium – 2 years and 11 months since the start of fund-raising.

The first full Peal was on the " back six", 5040 changes of Plain Bob Minor, rung on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2001, to celebrate Tynwald Week and in thanks to Geoff and Mary Riglar wishing them well as they moved away from the Island.

The first full Peal on all eight bells was 5040 changes of Plain Bob Triples, rung on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2004 celebrating the installation the previous January of Bishop Graeme Knowles. Seven members of this band were Island residents; only the conductor was a visitor. 4 were ringing their first peal and one ringing her first peal inside.

We owe a debt of gratitude to many people: the trustees of the Manx Church Bells Restoration Trust who set the ball rolling, those who responded so magnificently to the initial fundraising appeal, the volunteers who provided practical help preparing the tower and transporting the bells to and from the Island, the people who took on the task of teaching new ringers. Most of all we thank Sam Ferris without whose enthusiasm and physical hard work the re-casting of the bells would never have happened.

### **M I Warrilow (Tower Captain)**

Before this service a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Major was rung in 48 minutes and dedicated to the occasion.

**Peel**, Isle of Man, St German

Tuesday, 12 February 2008 in 48 min

### **1344 Plain Bob Major**

1. John A W Bayliss
2. Mary Riglar
3. Ernest W Runciman
4. Timothy A Mann
5. Annette Thackray
6. Marion Lawrence
7. Howard C Goss
8. Geoff Riglar ©

First quarter inside in the method Marion Lawrence. Rung to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the re-hanging the bells in the Cathedral Church of St German

## LACR Raffle 2007 - Prize List

<u>Prize No</u>	<u>Prize</u>	<u>Name/Tel No</u>	<u>Tower</u>
1	£200	Irene Jones	Westhoughton
2	£100	Tony Smethurst	Heywood
3	£50	M. Wise	Kendal
4	Champagne	Jeff Roundell	Oswaldtwistle
5	Churches & Cathedrals book	Catherine Rogers	Blackburn, St Silas
6	Malt Whisky	Richard Palmer	Preston
7	Malt Whisky	Peter Burgess	Rainford
8	£15 M&S Voucher	D Armer	Cockerham
9	£15 W H Smith card	John Henry	Rainford
10	Bell's Whisky	J Sherry	Kendal
11	Whisky	Robin Newsome	Garston
12	Candles	Gillian Henry	Rainford
13	Steve Coleman book	R Morley	Brindle
14	£10 M&S Voucher	Jean Stelfox	Rainhill, St Ann
15	£10 Tesco card	Angela Page	Penwortham
16	Sauvignon Blanc	Stephen Harrison	Lancaster Cathedral
17	Red Wine	Roger Harrowclod	Huyton
18	Manx Kippers	Jeff Roundell	Oswaldtwistle
19	Fridge Magnets	D Deaville	Coppull
20	Quality Street	Neil McGarry	Lytham, St John
21	Quality Street	8 - BL1 6DF	Bolton, St Peter
22	Bath Bombs	Robin Daw	Silverdale
23	Liquorice Allsorts	Terry Hemming	Farnworth
24	Cosmetics	Neil McGarry	Lytham, St John
25	Stationery Box	D Crossley	Haslingden
26	Jigsaw	D Hudson	Lancaster Priory
27	Chocolate Biscuits	John Pye	Lancaster Cathedral
28	Cosmetics	John Porter	Bispham
29	Soaps	K Land	Peel, I o M
30	Chocolates	John Porter	Bispham
31	Chocolates	Ian Taylor	Ulverston
32	Chocolates	Stephen Harrison	Lancaster Cathedral
33	Hand/Body Wash	Adrian West	Whalley
34	Sponge Bag	Sheila Bartley	Todmorden, St Mary
35	Bottle Stoppers	Karen Taylor	Morecambe
36	Santa Sack	John & Chris	Gisburn
37	Chocolate Biscuits	Jane Creer	Douglas, I o M
38	Chocolate Biscuits	R Ellison	Wigan, Poolstock
39	Toiletries	Eleanor Poston	Prestwich
40	Ladies' Handkerchiefs	Tracey	Tarleton
41	Blackboard & Chalk	Digby Burton	Skipton
42	Red Wine	Barbara Murray	Preston