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THE

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RINGING WORLD



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BBC Radio 4's **Bells on Sunday** is broadcast every
Sunday at 05:43 and repeated
the following Monday at 00:45.

The September towers are:

3rd Gislingham, St Mary, Suffolk

10th Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln

17th Moreton-in-Marsh, St David, Gloucs

24th Eggbuckland, St Edward, Devon

You can listen again at:

www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/bellsonsunday



Inveraray Ringing Festival at 50

Our cover image
by **Martin D Mellor**,
who also provided the
following article, shows
the Inveraray Bell Tower,
which recently hosted the
50th annual Inveraray
Ringing Festival.

The weekend got under
way on Friday 28th July
in All Saints church with a
Festival Choral Evensong
featuring the Lonan
Consort, who were touring
through the Diocese of
Argyll & The Isles.

As usual, the Ringing
Festival drew ringers from

far and wide for a challenging and enjoyable weekend. There were about 60 or 70 ringers covering a wide range of ages and origins. Jess Durham, who first attended as a teenager, has always loved the 'Finest Bells in Scotland', as a directional arrow to the Inveraray Bell Tower proclaims. Jess relishes spending three days with like-minded ringers who really want to bring out the best in everyone who takes part. "The bells sound glorious but they take no prisoners: whichever bell is rung will challenge a ringer's bell control and striking. I've been back to Inveraray many times in the last 30 years but often for a peal or a quarter, where we only ring one bell; the difference the festival brings is the chance to ring all of the different bells, with other participants willing each other on to success. It's deservedly a highlight in the ringing calendar."

Bob and Rose Hancock have been involved with the maintenance of the bells for many years, since when they lived and worked in Troon; now in Lincoln, they are not deterred by the distance from visiting Inveraray each year for the festival, the annual maintenance weekend in March, or other occasions. Bob is one of the longest supporters of the festival, having attended the second one in 1974.

The younger generation were represented this year by ringers from Inverness-shire in the north to Sussex in the south and even New Zealand (although Kiwi Dylan Thomas, currently living in London, was trumped by Rachel Aland from Brisbane as the ringer who had travelled the furthest). Dylan commented: "I always knew Inveraray had good bells, but to go up and find that amazing scenery as well really made the whole weekend into something extra special. It was a very well run festival, attracting ringers from all levels, which was excellent. Glad to meet some more of the Scottish contingent too! All in all a fab few days!"

Rachel reports: "A number of years ago I had been learning to ring in Brisbane, so I started visiting towers when in the UK for work. Arriving at Inveraray, hearing the glorious bells in this beautiful little town in this stunning landscape made quite an impression.

"The first festival I attended, I was just about capable of ringing call changes, and even that was intimidating on these large bells, especially when other people were ringing 'complicated spliced'. However, what I remember most clearly was how welcoming the Scottish ringers were. Everyone was encouraged to ring; everyone was supported and given opportunities.

"A few years later, I moved to London for work, and a visit to Scotland, and the Inveraray Ringing Festival became a much-anticipated yearly journey. Eventually, I moved back to Australia, and the road was just that bit longer. Fortuitously this year, a visit to Scotland coincided with the Ringing Festival and, again, I was able to spend time in the beautiful little town with



The Lonan Consort at Evensong (photo Martin Mellor)



The massive ringing chamber (photo Martin Mellor)

the glorious bells, and the welcome of the Scottish ringers.”

John Harrison recalled: “In 1999 I was regularly visiting Glasgow for business trips, and learned about the Festival from Glasgow ringers. I would plan business trips for the end of July and by juggling flights and timings the extra cost was minimal. The business trips ended after a few years but by then I had got the Inveraray bug so I kept going (21 times so far), but by train not plane.

“It’s a long way from Berkshire but well worth it for eight hours of ringing on majestic bells, several miles of peaceful walking in the Argyll Estate and forest in between ringing, and the camaraderie of ringers from Scotland and farther afield who go there every year. To cap it all, the food in The George is excellent and they serve the best ginger beer in the country (imported from Australia).”

Some attendees were too young to pull on the ropes, but James Blackburn and Sarah Dawson’s sons – Rupert, Oliver and Timothy – will likely be mastering the bells in future years.

The festival isn’t only about this second heaviest ten: some lighter bells were also put through their paces, with a good number of handbell ringers attending. The performances to mark the 50th anniversary were a peal of Stedman Caters by a band of Cumberlands (p.813), and a quarter of Plain Bob Major by an all-Inverness band (p. 817). The presence of handbells also meant that Maximus as well as Caters and Royal were rung over the weekend, including Kent and Bristol Maximus.

History

In May 1914, Niall Campbell became the 10th Duke of Argyll on the death of his uncle. With the title came the honorary positions of Chief of the Clan Campbell and Colonel of the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. At the end of the First World War, the Duke wanted to establish a suitable memorial to Campbells and all the dead from the surrounding Argyll parishes who had died during the conflict. He commissioned a bell tower to be attached to the All Saints Episcopal chapel in the village of Inveraray, close to the family castle.

In 1918, Campbell paid for the front four of the bells from his own funds, and then in 1920 paid for three more. By 1922, he had raised subscriptions for the remaining three bells from friends. The bells were dedicated to Celtic saints and have Latin inscriptions of uncharacteristic linguistic merit, as they were composed by John Phillimore, a friend of the Duke and Professor of Latin at Glasgow University.

The bells, tuned to the diatonic scale of C, were cast by John Taylor & Co.



Brothers Rupert, Timothy and Oliver (MM)

in Loughborough in 1920 and dispatched by road in November the following year. With a tenor weighing 41.5 cwt, these were – and remain – the second heaviest ring of ten bells in the world (after Wells Cathedral).

However, the bell tower, designed by London architects Hoare and Wheeler, had not yet been built, and for the first ten years the bells were housed in a wooden shed with a chiming keyboard, which the Duke himself often played. Work on the construction of the 126-foot bell tower started in 1921 but the whole enterprise proved to be hugely expensive, and – even with the Duke working as a labourer – was not completed until 1931, when the bells were finally hoisted into position.

The tower design had not adequately taken into account the amount of rainfall that Inveraray suffers and, through a lack of local ringers, the tower was not well maintained. Rainwater flooded in through the huge louvres and a lightning strike in November 1944 left damaged stone work and a hole in the roof. As the years passed, the floor of the ringing chamber became waterlogged and close to collapse.

Restoration in the late 1960s and 1970s

By the 1960s, the tower needed some serious TLC and was restored thanks to the efforts of the Chaddock family, who moved to St Catherines on Loch Fyne from their native Yorkshire. Bob Hancock reports that Norman Chaddock would recall it was his son John’s ringing enthusiasm that first brought him to All Saints Church and its bell tower, in 1969. Inspired by the grandeur of the bells, John had drawn together a team of ringers from Yorkshire, including Norman, to ring a peal. For this peal, John, Norman and some of their fellow ringers spent several days preparing the bells and fittings. After the successful peal, John, Norman and Norman’s wife Elsie met with Lady Glenkinglas, Secretary of All Saints Church Vestry. This initial contact led to the foundation of the Society of the Friends of Inveraray Bells, which lives on today in the form of the Inveraray Bell Tower SCIO. Norman and Elsie spent much time in Inveraray in the years that followed and finally moved to St Catherines in 1976, from where they continued to be active with both All Saints Church and the bells. Elsie died in the summer of 1987, and Norman remained in St Catherines until late 1991, when he moved to be near to his daughter, Susan.

The annual Inveraray Ringing Festival was established in 1973 by Norman Chaddock to help raise funds and to draw attention to the work needed to preserve this special ring of bells for posterity.

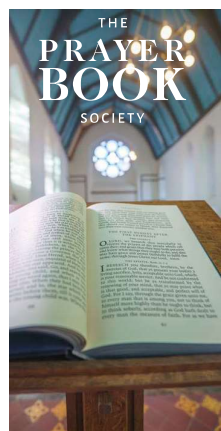
For 2023, ringing ranged from rounds to Spliced Surprise Royal via Plain Bob, Kent, Cloisters, Double Norwich Caters (always exciting!), Stedman and various Surprise Royal methods. The focus method both on the tower bells and in hand was Sgùrr a’Chaoirachain – nothing better than a method with a good Gaelic place name for these Argyllshire bells.

MARTIN D MELLOR
With thanks to Simon
Aves and Bob Hancock

*The cage where the bells
lay for 10 years (MM)*



Loch Fyne from the tower (photo Paul Jopp)



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The Beckwith Woodcarvers

by Andrew Beckwith

Part 2

After the death of my grandfather Ernest in 1952 my father Edward took over the family business of woodcarving, furniture making and the antique shop. The following year I learnt to ring after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. At the age of fifteen, I became my father's unofficial apprentice at the princely wage of two pounds per week, and learnt basic woodworking skills. After several years of stagnation where my father did little work and taught me even less, I left home and moved to Ipswich where I had secured a job as a cabinet maker with lodgings in the town.

By this time I was an experienced ringer and quickly became involved in Suffolk Guild activities and peal ringing. At twenty-three I became the youngest General Secretary and Treasurer the Suffolk Guild had ever had and worked alongside George Pipe, who had been elected ringing master in the same year. George and Diana, with their young family, had recently returned to Suffolk after their seven years in Australia. Suffolk ringing in the early sixties was at a low ebb and George and I threw ourselves into building up the Guild by encouraging teaching, visiting all district meetings, giving talks, running week-end courses for tutors as well as arranging peal attempts. I started a band at Ashbocking and probably taught most of the children in the village over several years. Our Monday evening practice often had seventeen or so in attendance, with well over half of school age.

Visiting one of my students' homes, I met one parent and



*Above: Organ Case, Snape, Suffolk (1994)
Left: Clock tower Glasshampton monastery, Worcestershire (1975)*



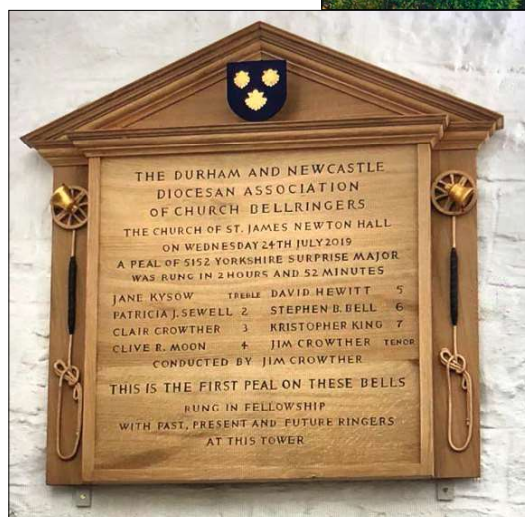
together we formed a partnership and opened an antique shop in central Ipswich where we had a successful business for several years. My partner attended auctions for our stock and I ran the shop and did the necessary furniture restoration.

I am an artisan by temperament and antique dealing was not for me. Although far from orthodox in my spirituality I resolved to test my vocation to the religious life with the Anglican Society of St Francis at their mother house near Sherborne. Part of my novitiate training was spent at Glasshampton Monastery near Stourport in Worcestershire, a late Georgian stable block adapted for religious purposes. Practical work involved rebuilding a timber and lead clock-tower on the apex of the main entrance. But heresies won out and after two years I withdrew from the novitiate and returned to antique furniture restoration at the home my mother and sister shared in Ipswich. I had left the clock-tower uncompleted but three years later the community paid me to return and finish the job. It still stands proud over the former principal entrance.

Some years later, after divorce, I returned to Coggeshall and did several creative jobs with an organ-building friend. Prominent among them was the casework for an organ my colleague was building at Snape in Suffolk.

In the early nineties the Coggeshall ringing band was strengthening and one year our local team won the final in the Essex Six Bell striking competition. Augmentation of the octave was contemplated, aided, no doubt, by generous quantities of Greene King IPA at the Coggeshall Conservative Club after practice night! Through the auspices of David Kelley and Heywood Mills we acquired a 25 cwt, 1925 Taylor bell from St Barnabas, Penny Lane, in Liverpool, made famous by the song of that name by The Beatles, and were soon in 'top-and-tail' augmentation mode.

I made the additional wheels, pulleys, tenor box, spider and finally a classical board recording the first peal on the ten, Grandsire Caters. The side wings depict elements of the patron saint, St Peter-ad-Vincula (in



Left: First peal board, Newton Hall, Hexham (2019). Middle: Augmentation peal board, Coggeshall (2001). Right: Elliott memorial peal board, Kelvedon (2023)



Organ screen with angels, Coggeshall (2009)

chains). I suspect it was one of the largest DIY augmentations, the entire cost provided by the ringers from the wedding fees, along with a grant from the Essex Association.

Coggeshall church was partly destroyed by German bombing in 1940 with rebuilding in 1955–56. A new tower rehousing the former octave and the large organ facing into the nave. After a 30-year absence from Coggeshall I was surprised to see that no casework had been provided for the organ. I offered to make carved screenwork when renovation on the instrument was next undertaken, as a gift to my native parish church. In 2009 a new organ screen was dedicated – fifty years after the instrument was re-installed, following the rebuilding of the church. The angels on top of the screen are almost 30 feet above the nave floor!

Despite having returned to my roots I became increasingly despondent over excessive development and congested roads in Essex as its population spread because of its proximity to London. I had lived thirty years of my life in rural Suffolk and in Franciscan country friaries so I resolved to move to a more remote area where I could continue to ply my family craft. An ex-Franciscan friend introduced me to beautiful north Northumberland and the Scottish Borders where I have rejoiced and done much creative work over the past twenty-two years. Ringing at Berwick town hall, Hexham Abbey, and Bamburgh parish church have brought me creative opportunities in these towers. I have designed and made carved peal boards for

Hexham Abbey, Bampton in Cumbria, and Newton Hall in Northumberland.

My experience and skills were again sought after the recent installation of the ten bells at St Michael's Alnwick. For the new ringing room I have restored two former bell wheels and added coat hooks, made an oak spider, an oak belfry table with decagonal top housing the Durham and Newcastle Association archive, designed and made a carved board for the first peal on the bells, and made a commemorative board in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate her seventy-year reign. The tower has given a huge boost to ringing in mid Northumberland with much teaching of new ringers of all ages and enhanced opportunities for advanced method ringing of good standard.

Now in my 84th year, I am very fortunate to be both ringing and woodworking. A few years ago I made a large sign board for our new micro-brewery at nearby Etal village. It is named Cheviot Brewery and its various ales have names associated with the hills and locality. I also made a sign for their tap bar and I think they gradually rewarded me with beer! I have just completed a large carved sign board for my son's practice rifle range on his small farm in Suffolk.

Earlier this year I designed and made a memorial peal board for the tower captain's mother Jenny Elliott at Kelvedon where I learned to ring seventy years ago. I have designed and am just about to start making a first peal board for Tanfield in Durham after their augmentation to ten.

We may be entering an age of artificial intelligence but some of us still value a personally hand-made artefact using the beautiful resource of wood. This provision by nature is surely among life's many gifts and I am indeed privileged to create tangible recordings of our art and science for present and future generations of ringers to enjoy. Like my grandfather, I have found that retirement for craftsmen is not an option!



Queen Elizabeth II memorial, Alnwick (2023)

50 Years Ago in *The Ringing World*

7th September 1973 Selected by the Editor

Inveraray Week, 1973

Dear Sir,—May I through your columns thank those ringers who contributed to the success of Inveraray Bell Tower's contribution to the above, in particular the nucleus of ringers who made themselves available throughout the week, ensuring ringing for casual visitors, and Elsie and Norman Chaddock for helping to receive 1,200 visitors (including 50 ringers) to the tower.

In spite of some restraint necessary to preserve good relations with the local community the bells were available for an hour each morning and evening, and all visiting ringers appear to be well satisfied with the arrangements.

Visiting ringers from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Sussex, Somerset, Westmorland, Angus, Argyll and other counties enjoyed our lovely bells and on their visit to my home I was pleased for them to appreciate other Argyll attractions and superlatives – our rhododendrons, and the highest tree in Scotland (140 feet plus).

I am informed by Norman Chaddock, who organised the ringing, that the ringing was of a high standard, including call changes, Plain, Little, Treble Bob and Surprise Royal, Grandsire and Stedman Caters. In addition to these methods on eight bells, Double Norwich, Cambridge, Yorkshire, London and Bristol Surprise Major were rung, also five-spliced Surprise Major and raising and lowering in peal.

It is hoped to repeat the opportunity for similar enjoyable ringing and conviviality in 1974, leading to a further reduction in our £4,000 debt on the tower.

ANNE NOBLE,
Chairman

when did you last do it?

Reduce the risks of fire

Fires can and do break out in churches so ringers should consider how they minimise the risks of a fire breaking out or reduce its severity. The tower itself may act as a chimney so church buildings may be especially vulnerable. Fire prevention measures in churches vary significantly and should be considered by the church authorities, but ringers should check the areas they use. More information is available here:

<https://runningatower.cccbr.org.uk/docs/healthsafety/fireprevention/>

Tips include having an up-to-date 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) notice and ensuring all alarms are audible and visible while the bells are being rung. Emergency arrangements should also be in place, and ideally practiced.

<https://runningatower.cccbr.org.uk/docs/emergency/>

From the Stewardship and Management
Workgroup of the Central Council