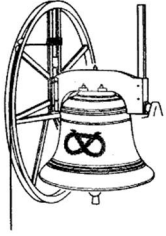
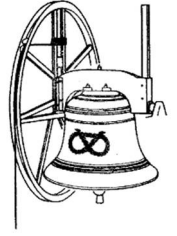


Clappertrappings



Newsletter of the North Staffordshire Association of Change Ringers
Ringing the changes across the county



www.nsacr.org.uk

Spring 2021

HELLO SPRINGTIME!



Snowdrops mark the first sign of spring, flowering ahead of daffodils and bluebells. All these flowers have bell-shaped blooms, reminding us of the beauty of bells and encouraging us to focus on the time when we'll be ringing together once more. Times are tough and we hope that this edition of ClapTraps interrupts the daily grind and brings a smile.

Does any of the following ring true with you? Living in elasticated waistbands as the COVID-kilos pile on? Longing for a hairdo (but there's worse things so you can't say that out loud)? Hellish home-schooling? Getting involved in FB posts about funniest moments in ringing (most of which appear to be losing trousers...)? Lockdown prohibits so much of what we used to take for granted and can bring loneliness and isolation. But remember: you belong to a vibrant community and just as the seemingly fragile snowdrop appears through frozen soil, so will we

emerge from this difficult time. We will be back. With bells on!

We hope you enjoy this spring edition of Clappertrappings which comes with our grateful thanks to everyone who continues to support us by contributing, in whatever small way. We really enjoy the feedback that tells us you are enjoying ClapTraps and look forward to writing about our ringing successes and achievements very soon.

Helen Thurstan and Lydia Ernest, Editors.

CENTRAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

<https://ccabr.org.uk>

We wanted to remind you that the Association will be looking for 3 CCC Reps later this year, as Jan and Tim Hine, who are currently our reps, will be resigning at the AGM. (If you think our maths is bad, it isn't, we have a vacant position currently.) Jan and Tim have served us well, and it is time for new faces from NSACR. If you would like to find out more about it, please do chat to either Tim or Jan, they would be happy to guide you and give you any background information and help.

E-BELLS FOR YOUNG RINGERS – ART/CCC INITIATIVE

Message from Simon Linford (President Central Council) and Lesley Belcher, (Chair, Association of Ringing Teachers)

As advertised in the President's Blog and the Association of Ringing Teachers' news release, the CC and ART are managing a programme of getting pairs of eBells to young ringers (under 25) at the heavily discounted price of £25 a pair. Sponsorship from The Whiting Society has already funded 26 pairs of eBells, some of which are already in the hands of young ringers. However, as expected, demand has exceeded the funding available and so we are looking for donations so that more young ringers can benefit from this innovation and develop their handbell ringing during lockdown and beyond.

If you are able to make a donation, please email lesley.belcher@bellringing.org and we will let you know where to send funds. The subsidy on one pair of eBells is about £75 but any donations will be gratefully received. Three associations have now said that that will provide the subsidy on behalf of their young ringers, and that is something that other associations might like to consider. We could match associations with those who have applied or you could advertise the offer to your young ringers directly.

Finally, some young ringers with new eBells will be looking for opportunities to ring handbells with more experienced bands. If you are interested in helping with that please let us know as it could be an extension to the Cast of 1000 initiative.

ART

Applications are open for the 2021 ART Awards. The criteria for the Learning the Ropes awards have been changed. Anyone who has been registered on the Learning the Ropes Scheme can be nominated for the LtR Contribution Award. Whilst the LtR Achievement Award is open to those who have achieved their LtR Level 5 this year PLUS anyone who has completed LtR Level 3 on the Handbells scheme.

ART AGM and Conference. The AGM is scheduled for 10:30 on Saturday 6 March 2021 and will be held via Zoom. The ART Conference is cancelled but we are hoping to co-host an online Recovery Conference later in the year – date and format to be confirmed.

All time limits are extended. That's for accreditations, 50 Ringing Things Gold Plus and your ART membership where you can opt to take a one-year payment holiday if you wish.

NSACR

Our website is constantly being updated, and we do hope that you are able to regularly check it out.

We have some news. We have a new Treasurer, Liz Fitzgibbon, and she is due to take over from Lisa Horrit in the next month. We would like to say thank you to Lisa for her hard work over the last 3 years on behalf of the Association; it has been much appreciated. And welcome to Liz; we're very grateful to her for picking up this important role; we look forward to hearing more from Liz.

NSACR PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021

2020

3rd April - Online meeting

1st May - Online meeting

5th June - Caverswall (6)

Afternoon ringing 3-5pm, Tea and
Quarterly Business Meeting

3rd July - Stoke (10)

Evening Ringing 7-9pm

7th August - Cheddleton (6)

Walk 11-12.30pm, Pub Lunch 12.30-
2.30pm and Ringing 2.30-4pm

4th September - Broughton (8)

Evening Ringing 7pm - 8.30pm

2nd October - Barlaston (6)

Afternoon Ringing 3pm - 5pm, Tea and
BM 5pm - 6.30pm, Evening Ringing
6.30pm-8pm

6th November - Rolleston (8)

Afternoon Ringing 2-4pm

4th or 11th December - Stafford (12)

Afternoon Ringing 3pm-5pm, Service, Tea,
AGM & BM 5pm-7.15pm, Evening Ringing
7.15pm-8.30pm

2022

8th January - Church Eaton (6)

Optional Pub Lunch 12noon - 1.30pm,
Afternoon Ringing 1.30pm - 3.30pm

5th February - Eccleshall (8)

New Members Meeting 2.30pm-3.30pm,
Afternoon Ringing 3.30pm-5pm, Tea and
Evening Ringing 5pm-7.30pm

5th March - Cheadle RC (8)

Business Mtg at 1.30pm with ringing
afterward until 4pm.

*For online meetings, see website for
further details, and keep up-to-date via
the web in case of changes to any events
and meetings.*

NSACR EVENTS

24/2/21 Ringing Room Practice

26/2/21 Online Six Bell Practice

03/03/21 Ringing Room Practice

10/03/21 Ringing Room Practice

17/03/21 Ringing Room Practice

Keep up-to-date with events online at
www.nsacr.org.uk

ART & CC SURVIVAL & RECOVERY NEWS SHEETS

Vicki Chapman (pro@cccbr.org.uk) and
Lesley Belcher, ART Chair,
(lesley.belcher@bellringing.org)

emailed the Association with the third
newssheet from the Survival and Recovery
team. This has come out of an ART &
CCCBR partnership to deliver a survival and
recovery strategy aimed at retaining and
motivating as many ringers as possible
over the winter and to help bands and
ringing societies recover when normal
ringing resumes.

***We thought it would be useful to highlight
these news sheets to our members.***

So, what is the Survival and Recovery
Newssheet? It's a one-stop shop for news
– what's happening and what we are
planning to happen – which complements
the BellBoard Virtual Hub. This latest issue
features the Survival and Recovery
Toolbox which contains a plethora of
resources, case studies and opinion pieces

for ringers, Tower Captains and Guilds and Associations.

It is a work in progress and if you think the partnership is missing something, or you have something that you think would be useful to others then please let them know.

<http://ringingteachers.org/survival-and-recovery-toolbox>

If you find the newsheet useful and interesting, then share it – the more the merrier!

TALK FROM THE TOWERS

Eccleshall, Warren Griffiths,

Tower Secretary



Does this chime with you?

Eccleshall bells were last silenced in 1948 when the old wooden frame was declared unsafe. As a child living next to the church in the early 1950s, I well remember hearing Tower Captain William Lees chiming three bells before service each Sunday. My grandmother used to sing 'three blind mice' when she heard them.

When I learnt to ring myself, I soon found out how this was done. In the mid-1960s it was not uncommon for just Tony Whittall and me to turn out to ring for the evening service, especially in the summer when people were away. I'm sure we must have put the nearby cricketers off their stroke by chiming three bells each: one in each hand and one looped round a foot! Getting the rhythm right and keeping it going takes quite an effort, but I was younger then!

This experience came in handy when restricted to bells being 'rung' by members of one household only. I had a number of queries about the strange sounds from the belfry on a couple of Sundays, so did an explanatory piece for the Parish Magazine. It has caused some amusement among my ringing 'friends' so hope you have a laugh too!

News from Keele - Phil Gay

We had hoped to be able to ring all six bells for Christmas, and I had sent out an email to the band, but within an hour the new lockdown was announced and I had to send another one. We are fortunate that our band includes three ringers from the Mellor family, and they rang for the Christmas service. The bells have not been rung since then. Woodlands has been similar, but for a different reason. Just before Christmas Ro's wobbly wrist got worse, so we didn't ring for two months, but by the first week in February she was willing to test it, without too many ill effects.

In January we received the sad news that another Keele ringer had died. Peter Hough was a clergyman, at one time vicar of Silverdale, who lived in Keele in his retirement. He rang with us occasionally, usually when we were thin on the ground,

and always made a difference. He had learned to ring at Knutsford as a teenager and then had a gap of forty years.

The Keele band has kept in touch by email and phone calls, and Woodlands Wednesday has continued its weekly zoom sessions, which usually attract about a dozen. Michael Wilshaw has suggested a new ringing group to come into operation when we start ringing again – VERA, which is Vaccinated Elderly Ringers Association. The number of eligible people is growing quite quickly as the vaccination age moves downwards. After a number of unsuccessful attempts Woodlands Wednesday have now rung two Ringing Room quarters, both of Cambridge Minor, with slightly different bands involving eight ringers.

I have much enjoyed a number of internet talks organised by ringing associations. The St Martins Guild have a zoom talk every Wednesday evening, which is then available on their web site. Chris Pickford has done two talks for them on bell founders, and also one for the Salisbury Guild and one for the Worcestershire Association, all of which were very good. Two ringers who did their early ringing in this Association, Tony Daw and Simon Gay, have also made contributions to the St Martins Guild programme.

Stafford – Nigel Horritt

As many of you will know, Stafford bells are being replaced by those from Hanley St John and augmented to twelve. Prior to the lockdown, Hanley bells were taken down and sent to the bellhangers.



Stafford's old bells and frame were

also removed. (See ClapTraps Autumn (September) 2019: https://www.nsacr.org.uk/pdf_files/newsletter/2019_09_web_version.pdf.)

We have to say a huge thank you to so many people for assisting with the project, and the fund-raising, you all know who you are. Thank you! All grant funding has now been extended including the War Memorials Trust to later in the year which should see us through the project. This does take the pressure off the completion date. And it also means that funding is ongoing and if anyone would like to make a donation, please get in contact with Nigel, at chairman@nsacr.org.uk.

The installation of the new frame and bells has inevitably been delayed by Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns. The latest update is around headstocks. On inspection it was found that the headstocks for bells 6 and 10 (of the Hanley10) are not suitable for use. They had been designed to pull the bells very high up to enable them to fit into the tight space in their old home. The result of this is that their swing was smaller than the rest of the bells and Andrew (Nicholson) was not happy installing them like that. So, he has decided to remake these in order to give us bells that all swing the same. These will be made out of cast iron, along with the headstocks for the two new bells and the flat 6th, so they will all match.

Some of you may have seen the update on the website which talked about an Easter completion. Unfortunately, after the November lockdown, Nicholson's are behind and the current lockdown has not helped the situation with staff having to be off for various reasons, including Childcare, COVID, isolation, injuries and, sadly, family members passing away. At

one point earlier in the year all the fabricators were off work. Due to other reasons, and with parts of our project needing more work and bells to be tuned, it was decided that another project frame should be built in the workshop in the meantime. Whilst this is being done, all the other parts of our project, such as headstocks are being worked on. We have looked at the dates in more detail, considering slower production rates and as things currently stand, installation will start on **7th June 2021**.

So, it's a bit later than we originally and optimistically predicted, but we're still looking forward to celebrating in style with the new bells - hopefully this summer.

Kidsgrove – Christine Sherratt

I can say that I hope everyone has managed to survive the Covid and the lockdown. We are sad that Ray Ballard has now left the area to live in Peterborough. He will be missed and was very supportive to ourselves as well as Tunstall and Church Lawton. For many years he has been with us at Practices and Sunday ringing. His peal ringing, with which many of us may have shared, never detracted from his Sunday ringing and attendance at practices. He will be much missed when the return to ringing takes place. Also our band will have lost Neil Harper, who is on the move to the north.

With that in mind, no doubt everyone is wondering how many Sunday bands will be left intact. Probably there will many who have kept methods in their head through Ringing Room, but the muscles for pulling the bells in church will be somewhat depleted. Maybe someone has a few tips for suitable exercises to keep the muscles going. We have some weights which we swing up and down along with

calling out plain bob but whether this will help in the long run, we don't know. At least it gives us a laugh!! It is easier to keep the legs going with lots of walks, which we have in great variety, here where we live, weather permitting.

We look forward to the future with arms at the ready for our second vaccination, hoping that churches and ringers, are not so enamoured of Zoom that the doors remain shut for too long. With good health to all. Christine Sherratt and K Peter Jones.

(Ed: Some useful tips on the CCRB/ART recovery site for exercising and keeping in shape for ringing - earlier article applies)

Dilhorne – Jackie Kent, TC

It's not so much about what we've done, because we have been like many other bands, doing nothing! Well, nothing in the bell ringing department. But we are planning! At Dilhorne, this year we are celebrating our bells; 75 years of the Treble and 225 years of the other 5 bells! We would like to have a real treat, with an open tower, a mix of ringers from across the Association, aimed at around Harvest Festival time. Our working title is "Festival of Bells" and if anyone has any ideas, we'd love to hear them.



A snowy All Saints Church in Dilhorne, on a very wintery day in January 2021

Article in the RW 18/25 December/1 January 2021

Reproduced by Clappertrappings with the kind permission of Dave Towell, Abbots Bromley (Lichfield & Walsall

Some Experiences of a Handbell Novice

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown, the sound of change ringing hasn't been entirely absent in the Lichfield & Walsall Archdeaconries and in particular in Abbots Bromley.

Over the last couple of years, we've been developing of our novice ringers and they're becoming confident at plain hunt & plain bob, meaning we could move on from call changes and now ring changes on Sunday mornings. Things were looking positive. Then at the end of March, Covid-19 struck and we were locked down and unable to enter the tower.



Dave in action

Those who know him will know that our tower captain was going to miss ringing opportunities and he needed an alternative

challenge – so decided to teach me to ring handbells. And I was daft / brave enough to accept the other half of that challenge.

To be honest though, I like a challenge and with its myriad of opportunities that is what makes ringing so fulfilling. There have been so many to work up to, including simply learning method ringing, my first quarter of Bob Doubles, first peal of Triples or first of Surprise, 12-bell ringing, and on, and on.

My handbell ringing up to now however was pretty unpromising. I'd attempted it at a society new members' meeting a few years ago and found I couldn't dissociate the two sides of my brain to make two

bells work independently. I'd done a bit of tune ringing with some Christmas carols and I'd had a memorable physical demonstration of plain hunt, with six ringers each holding a bell and taking steps to the left or to the right. A start then, but really a complete beginner.

Fortunately, Stuart & Liz Hutchieson live only just across the street from me, on a tee-junction (and it's a fairly quiet street) so on a Wednesday at the beginning of April, handbells 5&6 were proffered and we took up station outdoors in the largest and safest imaginable circle with one of us each on the three footways around the junction and we attempted plain hunt on 6. V-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y. Also, first error was that I didn't know which was hand and which was backstroke – and I had guessed wrongly. To be honest I can't recall how it went, but it must have been OK as on the Sunday morning at 9:30 we reconvened for half a dozen plain courses before our vicar Simon's improvised lock down service – 2 verses of Morning has Broken played on the flugel horn from the church porch door. And thus began our Sunday morning routine for several weeks – handbells at 9:30, hymn on flugel horn at 9:45 and non-ringing zoom meeting over coffee with fellow band members from 10am.

The following week involved putting in the dodges and attempting a plain course. Bob Minor was the method. As Liz explained; "For most of the plain course, bells 5 & 6 course together, so whatever one does, the other does the same two blows later. There's just the difficult bit where one bell makes 2nds place and the other dodges and runs out". Which is great. IF of course you can remember which one is supposed to ring first and you don't cross over. Then on our 2nd Sunday

performance it nearly all came to grief. An unexpected hazard of ringing in the street even in lockdown is that we nearly got run over by a white van. But we did still have the presence of mind to take a step backwards and complete our two plain courses.

After another Sunday on the footway we then spent a few weeks ringing around the tree in the front garden – still at a safe distance. By now we were putting in the bobs and aiming for a “120”. This was getting tough now. Moving out of the plain course meant that instead of my 5&6 bells crossing over that the lead or back of the course, sometimes they would cross over in 2-3, 4-5 or in 3-4. We had a few random names for the two bell positions – there was the fairly obvious “coursing”, but also “parallel dodge”, “opposites” and the frankly bizarre “kiss & cross”. It’s very easy to go wrong or lose track, so a quick call of “opposites” (or whatever) from the conductor is a handy way to recover and get back in to place. It also helped to learn and understand the calls so that you can prepare for the impact of a bob. We’ve been ringing WHWH (wrong and home), which means calls come when the 6th (tenor) is in its home position of 6^{ths} (dodging 5/6 down) or its wrong position of 5^{ths} (dodging 5/6 up). Hopefully you can tell that means the 6th is never affected, which was one thing less to worry about.

Nevertheless, learning the 120 was tough and involved quite a lot of time on Abel and ringing along to that. Publication of Mobil for my android phone also came along at the right time (as did my new phone). Mentally rehearsing the course while out on my bike also helped, though it’s quite hard to concentrate for long periods when on 2 wheels and either the mental ringing or the bike would usually

crash after a couple of courses. But still, the dodge into the opposites (3-4) position and the bob out of it seemed to flummox me more often than not. No-one ever said that handbells are easy.

By mid-June we’d migrated from the front garden to the garage – with the door open, which gave both social distance, shelter and at long last the opportunity to sit down (up to now, rather like Bob Smith’s early attempts, we’d been ringing standing up). Being west facing, it was surprisingly welcoming in the evening sun and a couple of bottles of beer made it a surprisingly convivial lock-down alternative pub. We’d also by now worked up to 360, then the extent of 720 and now ready to attempt the first quarter peal. Of course, our neighbours were by now getting used to our Wednesday & Sunday eccentric activities and we could sense when they had stopped to listen to our performance. Which of course was most off putting and we crashed out – or at least I did. Nevertheless, the following Sunday evening saw our first successful - if slightly staggering – quarter peal.

Come July and COVID-19 relaxations meant that we could return to the tower for Sunday morning ringing, albeit only four at a time and no more than 15 minutes, so our handbells in the street came to an end. But midweek evening practice in the garage continued.



Then came the bombshell – our conductor Stuart’s aim was to get me to ringing a peal before the end of lockdown. And COVID-19 restrictions were gradually being relaxed, so a deadline was looming! A couple more reinforcing quarters followed and then at the end of August came P-Day. We went for the peal. Surprisingly, apart from a couple of stumbles, I actually enjoyed it and could listen to the music. But not relax too much as that would lead to going wrong and disaster. It wasn’t the fasted handbell peal but we made it, even though we (I if I’m honest) only just got through the troublesome 5th extent.

There’s no doubt that it’s been a challenge, but a very satisfying one. I think it’s improved my ringing too as I’m better able to do all those things we are encouraged to do on tower bells, such as listening for the treble leading (time to dodge or bob), trying to keep an eye on the treble, understanding the bob calls, the interaction between two bells and - above all else - listening.

As it turns out though, we need not have panicked as come October we were into tier 2 restrictions and then back into another lockdown. We’re now in tier 3 so still pretty constrained. And it looks like lockdown is going to carry on until the spring.

What next? Who knows? But there is a huge repertoire out there to aim for. Actually, since originally writing this for the Lichfield & Walsall autumn newsletter, we’ve moved on to a quarter of St Clements Minor and currently attempting Kent Treble Bob Minor. On the relaxation from second lockdown to tier 3 at the beginning of December, when Sunday services resumed, we attempted a few plain courses of Kent in a rainy churchyard

to welcome the arriving congregation. It’s not the same as a summoning on tower bells, but it raised some smiles.

I can recommend having a go on handbells to anyone. I thought it would be impossible at the beginning, but with great teachers it’s been an enjoyable success for all of us. It’s kept us working on method ringing and is so much more satisfying than the call changes on four that we were allowed in the tower over the summer. With that plus regular Sunday visits to our cake-away coffee shop at the edge of the village, our band has held it together so far and are looking forward to a return to normality before too long.

Patience, encouragement & support from my teachers Stuart & Liz Hutchieson, plus words of encouragement from fellow band members and society members including Steve Askew, Clive & Lucy Smith, Geoff & Linda Pick and Paul & Ruth Jopp have all been very much appreciated.

Oh, and during all that, the following clue appeared in the Guardian’s cryptic crossword: Can you get it?

One’s rung Robert, not yet eighteen (3,5)

100 CLUB

The Association runs the 100 Club to raise funds for the Bell Restoration Fund. The way it works is that members pay a subscription of £12 and are entered into 5 draws through the year. There are four prize draws, usually at business meetings, and one Superdraw at the Association’s AGM. If fully subscribed the first prize will be £50 at the prize draws and £100 at the super draw.

Joining, and so helping to support the Bell Restoration Fund, is simple. Just click the

download an enrolment form from our website, print a copy, fill it in and return the form to the 100 Club Organiser.

Winners for February 2021 – congrats!

- 1st Steve Askey – Unattached
- 2nd Jackie Kent – Dilhorne
- 3rd Sue Wildman – Dilhorne
- 4th Lee Cooke - Rolleston

Lichfield & Walsall Archdeaconries Society of Change Ringers

Searching around on other Associations and Guilds websites to see how they are getting on in Lockdown, helped us to discover that at the Lichfield & Walsall Archdeaconries Society of Change Ringers New Members meeting, Stuart Hutchieson gave a presentation of the history of Staffordshire bells, which I thought you may find interesting. I've given you a snippet below, but you can download the slides: [History of Staffordshire bells - Stuart Hutchieson presentation \(lwascr.org.uk\)](http://lwascr.org.uk)

Oldest bells remaining in ringing peals

- Blithfield – 4, 5 and 6/6 were cast in c.1500 in Nottingham/Leicester (left)
- Lapley - 6/8 was cast in 1565 in Leicester (centre)
- Yoxall - 3/6 is 16th century cast in Nottingham (right)



- Pipe Ridware 2/2 c1200
- Croxall single bell c1330-40
- Lapley sanctus c1360
- Farewell 1/3 14th century
- Weston under Lizard 1/3 and 2/3 14th century
- Pipe Ridware 1/2 c1400
- Rugeley (RC) 2/2 c1480
- Harlaston 2/3 15th century
- Harnstall Ridware 3/4 c1500
- Stafford (St Chad) 1/2 c1500
- Lichfield Cathedral sanctus c1500



With thanks from us to Stuart for allowing us to reprint the above information and image

WOMEN IN RINGING

Helen Thurstan

Have you read the articles in Ringing World by Linda Garton on Women's Peals? She apparently undertook the writing of one article for RW in the autumn and has not stopped researching and writing on the topic since then. I found the articles compelling, simply because at the start of the 20th Century, women did not have the vote, they were seen very much as the 'weaker sex' even though the Suffragette Movement was in full swing, and perhaps it should have been clear that change had to happen. Regardless, the disparity between men and women's positions in society was still very pronounced and it was obvious what the men thought of the "little women" ringing when you read some of the comments of the time; where the women had to prove themselves equal to men, that they had to show that they did not need the assistance of men in ringing. Then there were the difficulties of getting to Towers; unmarried women would have had to be chaperoned and travel wasn't as easy as it is today, married women probably could not attend without their husbands.

Linda was invited to speak to Leicester Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (LDG). Since lockdown, they have had talks over Zoom on Monday evenings, both ringing and non-ringing related. I would recommend watching the one on Women's Peals if you can find an hour or so to spare. Follow this link and look for LDG Monday Talks; you will find the range of talks:

<https://leicesterldg.org.uk/joomla2/>

Linda talked about a poem, which she gave snippets of in the talk. I'd love to have all

of it. This is all I have so I'm sharing it with you:

THE ISHAM PEAL, MAY 1922

A bet, chocolate, romance and a rubber bus

It was a lovely day in August on a hill near Symonds Yat

That two well-known ringers were strolling, having a friendly chat.

Now the subject was on ringing and the lady said: "I'll bet

Before the end of twenty-two a Ladies Peal we'll get."

The Bus man said "That's wicked, so a lesson I will teach

I'll take a pound of bacca to a pound of chocolate each."

John Tapley 1933-2020

Obituary by Warren Griffiths, Eccleshall Tower Secretary, January 2021

John died on 16th December after a short illness. He will be remembered by many people in the Eccleshall area, particularly through his connections to the farming fraternity and his years working for F.H. Burgess Ltd. in Eccleshall.

In retirement he drove a mobile library van for the County Council, volunteered at Greenhall Nursery, regularly took part in Eccleshall Open Gardens and in 2003 joined Holy Trinity's bell ringers at the age of 70! He was taught by Tony Whittall and made steady progress. Pam Lockett, who learnt to ring the following year remembers how kind and helpful he was, having just gone through the process himself. He always said how he wished he'd started when he was younger.



Nevertheless, John soon became one of our 'stalwarts', ringing call changes and the tenor behind. His first quarter on 8 bells was in November 2006. Not content with this, John went on to learn to plain hunt, and rang his first quarter peal on the treble in January 2009. The following year he took part in the quarter

peal to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the casting of our six heaviest bells by Abraham Rudhall in 1710.

On Sunday 2nd June 2013, the ringers presented him with a signed card when he arrived to ring on the morning of his eightieth birthday. This happened to be the 60th Anniversary of the Coronation and a celebratory quarter peal was rung later that day. The eightieth birthday took precedence in the footnotes!

By 2015 various ailments left John feeling unable to continue ringing. He remained in touch, both locally and as a member of the North Staffs Association of Change Ringers. He soon



complained if we forgot to deliver a copy of Clappertrappings! His practical help was still regularly in demand when a new stay was needed! We still miss him in the Ringing Room but his wood working skills remain on display in the lovely octagonal storage box he made to stand in the centre of the rope circle. We plan to add a

commemorative plaque to it as soon as we can. Among his many other talents, John was quite the home movie maker. He leaves us with a fine legacy of ringing mementos. I have received many expressions of sadness from his fellow ringers, summed up I think by this one comment: "I'm so sorry to hear about John - a lovely chap all round"!

Let's hope it won't be too long before we can ring a quarter peal on our tower bells in his memory.

Des Bridgwood 1954-2001

Regrettably, we announce the death of Desmond Bridgwood of Stoke on Tuesday, 19th January, aged 67 of Covid-19.

Remembered by Ray Daw, Stoke Minster

The Rector of Stoke Minster rang to say that he had been asked to conduct a funeral in February for someone who used to be a bell ringer at Stoke? He told me the deceased's name was Desmond Bridgwood. I said: "That'll be 'Our Des!'

Des was one of life's characters! He was a real "Stokie" and an ardent Stoke City fan. Very sadly, he died in Stoke hospital on Tuesday 19 January aged 67.

Des came to a Stoke practice out of the blue, one night in 1982 and said he would like to "ring the bells". It was a different way to get involved, I must admit. Nevertheless, he said he was very keen to learn, and so he proved. His determination carried him on through rounds and call changes, with both myself and Geoff Burton teaching him. Eventually he mastered ringing plain hunt and then inside to Plain Bob from Minor to Royal.

Des told us he lived with his widowed mother in Blurton and was a crane driver at a local foundry till he had a fall which put him off work; he was then laid off.

At that time, Geoff Burton was the local organiser for a Government scheme to find work for the unemployed and he found Des a job as a painter on various church renovation schemes including St Mary's, Bucknall. Making use of his new-found skills, Des helped Geoff paint the bell frame at Stoke. Des also helped me change the clutch on my car while I had it jacked up on my driveway! In that respect, we knew Des to be a kind, helpful person.

Through the 1980's, Des was a regular ringer at Stoke on Sundays and Tuesdays. His first QP was treble to PBCaters in February 1983. In all, Des rang 59 Qtrs at Stoke. His favourite bell was No 6, for PB Major or Royal. He also rang the tenor



to cover for Triples and Caters. He almost circled the tower for quarters (only missing out on Nos 2

and 5). Des's last quarter was in August 1990 - tenor for Gr Tr. Sometime after, he had to give up ringing and driving due to continuing health problems. His mother, and brother Michael, both pre-deceased him. His niece and remaining family will miss him greatly.

Ray Daw tolled the tenor at Stoke Minster for Des's funeral on 11th February (at 1.30pm) as the coffin came from the hearse to the West door and again as it left the Church.

Elizabeth Day – 1939-2021

We regret to report the death of Elizabeth Day of Stafford on Tuesday 19th January. Elizabeth learned to ring in East Anglia, ringing her first peal in 1956. After a gap of around 20 years, which included a move to Stafford, Elizabeth took up ringing again. She enjoyed peals and had a total of over 250, many rung on tour with Kevin



Price's band.

Elizabeth also lived in Cornwall for a decade, where she rung 100 quarters at

St Buryan. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.



If you think that our magnificent cooking guru, Margaret Carnall, just whips open a recipe book and submits a recipe for us to try, think again! She trials measurements and ingredients, and then tests the results on her family. (This time it was lucky granddaughter trialling the ClapTraps specialities.) Anyway, enough with the chat, enjoy this special recipe from Margaret!

LEMON DRIZZLE SIMNEL SLICES

Ingredients

165g butter
120g caster sugar
1 large lemon zest and juice
2 large eggs
150g plain flour
1 ½ tsp baking powder
75g ground almonds
35ml milk
75g dried cranberries or any dried fruit you like
200g marzipan
50g icing sugar



Method

Heat oven to 170°, 160° fan
Line a baking tin 20cm X 30cm

Beat butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy, add the lemon zest, beat in the eggs one at a time, then slowly add the flour and baking powder, mixing all the time add the ground almonds milk and cranberries.

Spread half of the batter into the tin, level, grate half the marzipan over the batter spreading as even as possible. Then cover with the other half of the batter, level the top evenly. Bake in the centre of the oven for approximately 20 – 30 minutes, until a skewer comes out clean.

Mix the lemon juice with 50g caster sugar, pour over the cake while still warm. Leave in the tin to cool.

Mix the icing sugar with a little lemon juice and zig zag over the cake when cool.

Roll the remaining marzipan into small balls. Slice up the cake and top with the marzipan balls. Enjoy!

