

# The Lancashire Ringer

Series 2 Issue 2 – January 2017

## MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL BELLS RING OUT FOR THE OLYMPIANS



Some ringing is notable for skill and technical innovation. On other occasions it is important because it is a public statement. On Monday 17 October a quarter peal of 1344 Plain Bob Triples (53 minutes) was rung on Manchester Cathedral's bells to welcome the athletes who had represented Britain at the Olympics and Paralympic Games so successfully in Brazil, and had come to tour the city centre.

Congratulations are due to all the band, from the Manchester and Rochdale branches, who represented the Association on this very public occasion. The band was made up as follows:

1. John J Legrove
2. Malcolm Murphy
3. Keith A Simpson
4. Suzanne Helliwell
5. Ian H Jorysz
6. C Phillip Hope
7. James E Hibbert (c)
8. John M Lacy

## **BRIDES WHO ARRIVE LATE by Peter Rivet**

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of brides arriving late. By this I don't mean that they arrive five minutes late, but fifteen, thirty or even forty minutes after the time they are supposed to be at the church. Why this should be so is unclear but it may have something to with the "wedding industry" encouraging them to believe that as they have spent thousands of pounds on their special day, they can do whatever they like. Here are some of the reasons given for late arrivals at Lancaster Priory over the last few years:

- The hairdresser hadn't got enough curlers to do the hair of all the bridesmaids
- The bride couldn't get into her wedding dress
- The horses pulling the bride's carriage couldn't cope with the stone setts on the steep hill on the approach to Lancaster Castle
- The limousine hired to take the bride to the church used a SatNav system which took her to the Priory public house instead of the church.

Down the road in Morecambe they had a case some years ago of a bride who was held up because her very large and elaborate wedding dress wouldn't fit in the official car.

Some of these excuses are more credible than others. There are occasions when the difficulty is severe traffic congestion as a result of an accident, which can't readily be predicted. However a late arrival is a problem for everyone involved – clergy, choristers, caterers, hire car drivers and indeed the wedding guests. It's not just the ringers who may have other commitments elsewhere.

What should we do about it? At Registry Office weddings the position is simple: turn up late and you will miss your slot. With luck they may be able to fit you in later in the day, but you aren't allowed to hold up other people's ceremonies. A Church of Scotland minister friend of mine, now retired, says that when he had charge of a church in the Govan area of Glasgow brides were advised that if they were more than five minutes late he would be in the pub over the road, and if they were more than fifteen minutes late they would find the church locked.

There are a few churches where you will find a succession of weddings on the same day (every hour, on the hour: turn up late and you may end up being married to the wrong person) but this situation is unusual.

Sanctions are in the hands of the clergy, not the ringers or the organist. Suggestions are welcome, but it seems to me that there is a strong case for saying that if the bride is more than 20 minutes late the ringers are entitled to be paid in full and allowed to go home.

## **PULL THE OTHER ONE, IT'S GOT BELLS ON**



Thanks to ferry connections we occasionally pick up a few Manx coins in our change in NW England, especially in the Liverpool and Lancaster/Morecambe areas.

If you get a £1 one, take a close look at it. You may have one of the post 2000 "millennium bells" examples, with three small bells arranged between the island's three legged symbol. This marked the installation of the new bells at St German's Cathedral in Peel. There can't be very many bells advertised on coinage, certainly not change ringing ones.

## **FRANK ANDERTON 1941-2016**

Readers of this newsletter will mostly already have heard with regret of the death of Frank Anderton, of Blackburn St Silas. Frank made many valuable contributions to the life of the Association, including a spell as its fund raising officer. In recent years he was particularly associated with the Lunsdale Midweek Ringers. Outside his ringing activities he had a career as a civil engineer. He will be greatly missed by many.

# THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S SURVEY – A PROGRESS REPORT

## by Giles Blundell

At the end of April, when I took over as vice-president, I told you that one of the things I wanted to do was to look at what the Association is for. As a first stage towards that, I sent out a survey.

101 ringers filled in the survey: that means that more than 8% of the membership of the Association filled it in, and for all the groups of ringers I have looked at (male/female, peal ringer / not peal ringer, officer / not an officer, which branch) I have had responses from at least 5% of the people who could have done so.

Thank you everyone for this – I'm no statistician, but I think enough people have responded to be fairly certain that I've heard the voices of the Association.

I basically asked three questions:

- What the Association is for at the moment,
- What the Association should be for, and
- Which of our current objectives are the most important.

The responses tell me that the most popular views of what the Association is for are

(a) Helping to keep ringing going in the North West, and providing some contact between groups of ringers in various parts of a geographically large county.

(b) Promoting development of bell ringing and cooperation and cohesion in the bell ringing community in Lancashire

(In this report, I've tried to take similarly worded response and group them together)

More than a third of respondents explicitly said that the Association already had more or less the right objectives. Other popular things that people thought the Association should be doing in the future were

(a) Training and support

(b) Primary - Getting new bell ringers; Secondary - developing skills

- (c) 1. Recruit new YOUNG ringers,  
2. Train the above ringers PROPERLY, and  
3. Provide good opportunities to ring with good ringers

(d) Ensure that there are no silent towers in Lancashire.

(e) Provide services to the towers and branches which they cannot provide themselves: structured training programmes, technical bell advice, package of information and promotional material for use in recruitment drives etc.

When I asked which of our current objectives were most important, the results were as follows:

1. The recruitment and training of bell ringers (6.12)
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 (5.15)
3. The ringing of bells for services and other appropriate occasions in the life of the Church and community (5.09)
4. 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 (5.00)
5. The promotion of good fellowship and cooperation amongst bellringers, including arranging ringing meetings and other Association activities (4.87)
6. The proper maintenance of bells, belfries and ringing rooms (4.35)
7. The support of bell restoration and installation by the provision of financial, technical and other resources (3.94)
8. The development of awareness, and conservation, of items of historical and local interest associated with bells and bellringing (2.46).

The scoring is provided by Survey Monkey: broadly, the higher the score, the more important something is seen to be.

I have further details of these results. If anyone would really like to go into them, I have 229 pages of what people told me, which I have anonymised but will email to you on request. ([grlundell@googlemail.com](mailto:grlundell@googlemail.com))

## What happens next?

We now have a fair idea of what LACR members think the Association should be doing. The next stage is to find out what we actually are doing. So I will shortly be issuing another couple of questionnaires – one for Association and branch officers so that they can tell me about what they do, and one for the whole membership of the Association, so that they can comment on what they think the Association actually does. Once we know both what people think the Association is for, and what we are already doing, we'll then be in a position to look at whether there's anything we need to change.

---

## GOODBYE TIA! by Haley Barnett

Tia Shafee got in touch about ringing at Liverpool, St Nick's (aka Pier Head) in early March. She'd arrived in town for a six-month work placement and was ready to make a return to ringing after a bit of a hiatus. We were very glad to meet her when she turned up to practice that same week. She quickly established herself as a positive presence in the tower and a good conversation companion in the pub. While working with the not-always-easy (but rewarding) bells at Pier Head, Tia was keen to develop, and she made good progress. She was ready to take part in an unplanned quarter peal in mid-July - in lieu of practice - and proved a steady tenor. In June, she was a personable guide and able demonstration ringer for our tower tours at the St Nick's Village Fete.



The photos show Tia sitting on one of the visiting police motorbikes at the St Nick's Village Fete, and strapping the tenor during the August practice at Liverpool's other ring of 12, Liverpool Cathedral.

Tia left Liverpool on 1 September for her next placement on the Civil Service Fast Stream. She's now placed in London, where no doubt one or more towers will be glad to have her join their ranks. Her Liverpool ringing friends wish her well.



---

***Production of this newsletter has been considerably delayed; it was supposed to come out in Autumn 2017! Hopefully you will not have to wait quite so long for the next one. If you would like to contribute an article, please feel free to do so.***

## RINGING COMMENTARY

Over the last couple of months the ringing news – in so far as there is such a thing – has been dominated by two things. The first comes from other side of the Pennines. The current dispute between the Dean of York Minster and the York Minster Ringers is unfortunate on many different levels. The Dean and Chapter were not even willing to allow the ringers to ring the bells down. Rather than engage them, or ringers from another tower to do it, they called out Taylors to do the job, at no little expense.

Both the Yorkshire Association and the Central Council have been trying to negotiate a settlement, but so far they seem to have achieved very little. None of us wish to do anything to prejudice their efforts, but if – as appears to be the case – the Minster authorities have concerns about the behaviour of one particular ringer, surely they should be dealing with that person rather than sacking the entire band? It is to be hoped that a resolution will be reached soon so that these magnificent bells can be rung again.

The other big story is the imminent closure of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which has been operating in the east End of London under its various owners since before 1570 and on its present site since 1738. No new orders are being taken and the business is to close in May this year. The immediate reason for this is the wish of the present owners to retire but the problem is, in large measure, the changing nature of the area; property values have soared and it is no longer a good place for an industrial use of this kind to operate.



The much photographed building at the front is a Listed Building and will probably find a new life as either a pub/restaurant or prestigious offices, but the modern frame shop at the back is an obvious target for developers. It is to be hoped that the skills of the people currently working at 32-34 Whitechapel Road will not be lost. Perhaps they could be taken on by an existing foundry business elsewhere in the country, which would then be able to diversify?

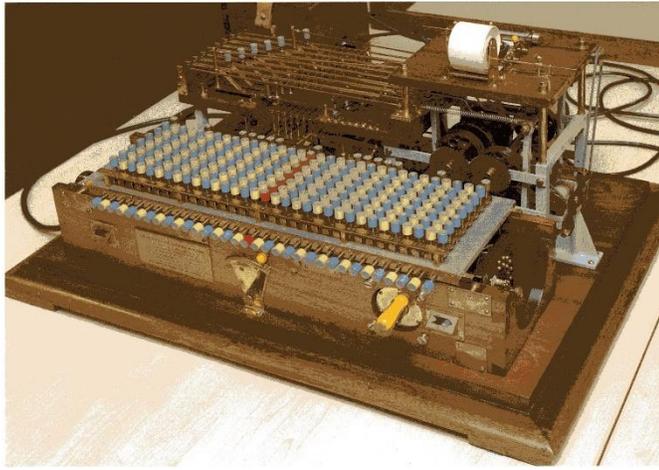
## THE WOODHOUSE RINGING MACHINE by Keith Hackney

An elderly gentleman used to sit in the front window of number 2 Highfield Villas, Sedbergh, knitting industriously. It was Mr George Fraser Woodhouse, affectionately known as “Bobby Woodhouse” because of his great interest in bell ringing and the frequent use of the term ‘bob’ major or minor etc. used in it. He was tower captain at Sedbergh for many years, and, during the War when the bells had to be silent, he continued to teach his campanology pupils with the bells tied. He watched them ringing and could remember every mistake made and told them about it in no uncertain terms. He gave all the learners pages of typewritten lists of numbers for Bob Major, Bob Minor, etc.

When a new member of the team passed his or her proficiency test, he either knitted them a pullover, the front of which bore an intricate design in relation to the bells, or made them a beautiful miniature brass bell in position in a tower with stays, rope and sally, in complete working order. During the War every minute he could spare in his busy life he spent knitting pullovers for the troops.

In 1897 Woodhouse was appointed to Sedbergh School as a Science Master. As well as being an inspirational teacher, he was also a talented inventor and engineer. He devoted much of his spare time over many years to the production of a Ringing Machine which could produce changes on a set of static hand-bells. During the course of his life, he produced eight different models, each one an improvement on its predecessor. He invented a ringing machine which could be programmed to ring plain courses and touches of even the most complex of methods. During his later years, method splicing was gaining in popularity, and so he decided to adapt his machine to ring “spliced” and thus go one step better than John Carter (Carter Ringing Machine) with whom he had been in friendly rivalry. The machine was referred to in the Ringing World (18 March 1938) as follows:

*“Mr G.F. Woodhouse’s machine grows more wonderful than ever. His latest development is the provision of a double panel, by which the mechanism for one method can be set, whilst another is being rung.*



*As a result, the machine can produce spliced method ringing. We have received from Mr. Woodhouse the diagram of a touch of nine leads, made up of Bristol, Ealing, Cambridge, Bristol, Ealing, London, Bristol, Superlative and London Surprise.”*

Bobby Woodhouse died in 1957 and bequeathed his books, his designs and his No. 8 machine to the Lancashire Association. At that time, however, although the principle on which it worked was still sound, many of its moving parts had become worn and its working was, consequently, unreliable.

Custody of the machine passed to Gordon Thwaites of Kentmere near Kendal. During the next 5 years, he completely stripped down the machine, re-made many parts and introduced several improvements – notably an electric drive and the use of electro-magnetic relays (the original machine was operated by hand).

The present machine is a combination of G.F.Woodhouse’s ingenuity and inventive ideas and Gordon Thwaites’ understanding, skill and craftsmanship. In recognition of his work, Gordon was made an Honorary Vice President of the Lancashire Association.

Since the completion of the rebuilding, the machine has been in the care of the Association, five Trustees having been appointed to oversee the maintenance and use of the machine. During the intervening years, it has been demonstrated at various locations across the Association, though it must be acknowledged that such a machine merits a much wider audience than has previously been the case. At present, the Trustees of the machine number only four, being the Association President, Fr. Martin Daniels, the General Secretary, Mrs Beth Ingham as well as Keith Hackney and Kevin Mayfield, both of the Furness & South Lakeland Branch. The fact that another trustee is needed was discussed at the Association Committee Meeting in September. It was agreed that this vacancy should be filled at the earliest opportunity. The machine is currently housed securely in the Furness and South Lakeland Branch where, it is hoped, a permanent location can be established.

Future plans will be aimed at introducing the membership of the Association to the Woodhouse Machine as not merely a museum piece, but as a means of understanding the complexities of Change Ringing, which surely was the aim of Bobby Woodhouse himself.

---

## LACR Training Days

The Association holds two training days: a basic one in the spring and an advanced one in the autumn. Full details will be added to the LACR website and sent to all branches as soon as they are available. If you would like to be involved, either as a pupil or a helper, please contact the Education Officer: Barbara Murray – 99 Dukes Meadow, Ingol, Preston, Lancs PR2 7AU. Email: [battybarbara1@gmail.com](mailto:battybarbara1@gmail.com) – Telephone 01772 725241

---

## Ringing Events: Calendar for 2017

*This list is based primarily on the Association and Merseybells web sites, so some branches are better represented than others.*

- Sat 14 Jan Cartmel (6): 2:30-4:30pm. Refreshments available.  
Liverpool Pier Head (12): 3:00-5:00pm  
Chorley St Mary RC (8): 3:00-5:00pm.  
Leesfield (8): 3:30-5:00pm. Tea, followed by Rochdale Branch AGM at 6:00pm. Further ringing in the evening.
- Sun 15 Jan Liverpool Cathedral evensong ringing, starting 1:30pm.
- Fri 20 Jan Kirkby Lonsdale (6) 7:30-9:00pm
- Sat 21 Jan Manchester Branch AGM – venue and details to be confirmed.
- Sat 28 Jan Poulton-le-Fylde (8): 3:00-5:00pm.
- Fri 3 Feb Hornby (8): Lancaster Branch Surprise Practice 7:00-8:30pm
- Sat 11 Feb Association Committee Meeting – Rochdale Branch, at St James, East Crompton (8). Full details including ringing arrangements to follow.**  
For those ringers at the northern end of the Association an alternative ringing event has been organised by the Furness Branch: Milnthorpe (6) 2:30-3:30pm, Heversham (6) 3:30-4:30pm. Refreshments available.
- Sun 19 Feb Liverpool Cathedral evensong ringing, starting 1:30pm.
- Sat 25 Feb Lytham, St John (6): 3:00-5:00pm.
- Fri 3 Mar Hornby (8): Lancaster Branch Surprise Practice 7:00-8:30pm
- Sat 11 Mar Broughton-in-Furness (12) 2:30-4:30pm.
- Sat 25 Mar Lytham, St Cuthbert (8) 3:00-5:00pm 3:00-5:00pm.
- Sat 8 April Sedbergh (8) 2:30-4:30pm.
- Sat 22 April Churchtown (6) 3:00-5:00pm.
- Sat 29 April Association AGM – to be hosted by the Lancaster Branch. Full details to follow.**

## GEOFFREY D ARMITAGE

We have to report with regret the death on 20 December 2016 of Geoffrey Armitage, a long standing member of the Lancashire Association though he did not live in this area. He had been ill for some time.

Geoffrey had a considerable interest in, and knowledge of, old and interesting bells; which was admirable. He was best known for his ability to put unringable bells into working order, a very useful skill, though the tactics he employed to achieve were sometimes open to criticism. He was not particularly concerned with the views of such people as architects, structural engineers and Diocesan Advisory Committees. Despite this, he operated for some years as a professional clock repairer and bellhanger, based at Husbands Bosworth in Leicestershire.

To his wife and family we offer our sympathy.

Your editor particularly remembers a ringing holiday in North Wales in 1975. We had some spare time in the vicinity of Denbigh, where the tower housed – and still houses - a 14cwt ring of eight which had been unringable since the 1930s. Geoffrey and some friends persuaded a church official to give them access to the tower. He did some patching up work which included drilling eight holes in a floor which had been added since the bells went out of use. He produced eight bell ropes which he just happened to have in the back of his car, and we were able to grab them... though in fact we only rang seven of the bells. The fourth kept on trying to climb out of the frame. But the tower is ticked off in my copy of Dove's Guide.

Denbigh bells are still listed in Dove as unringable.

## METHOD OF THE MONTH – BANANA DOUBLES

12345 This is taken partly from an article in  
21354 the Ringing World. But it's none  
21534 the worse for that. It's newish (first  
12543 rung March 2009), interesting, and  
12453 different. The sharp eyed will see  
21435 that Banana Doubles, like Stedman,  
24135 has no hunting treble so it's a principle  
42153 rather than a method. It's also double,  
41253 like Superlative, so there is less blue  
14235 (or should it be yellow?) line to learn.  
14325

41352 Shown here is the plain course. To  
41532 produce 120 changes requires a rather  
14523 complex composition with both half  
15423 lead and lead end calls.

51432

54132 Philip Earis has produced a five  
45123 part composition, as follows:

45213

54231 **120 Banana Doubles**

54321

45312 ½ 1 1½ 2 2½ 3 12345

43512 -----

34521 - - - 54213

35421

53412 5 part

53142

35124 Method: 3.2.3.2.3.4.3.4

35214 Bob = 2; half-lead bob = 4

53241

52341 This principle was discovered in an  
52341 attempt to identify all the possible  
25314 ways of ringing doubles without any  
23514 bell striking more than once in  
32541 the same place. It's easy to see  
32451 why Philip Earis describes Banana  
23415 Doubles as "the pick of the bunch".

23145 But the composition required for an  
32154 extent means it's easy to slip up.

31254 It might be more fruitful to do the  
13245 plain course before trying to peal it

12345 (*that's enough banana jokes – Ed*).

This is a bit more complicated than most  
Doubles methods. As with the previous Method  
of the Month, if any Lancashire Association  
band is inclined to attempt the challenge of  
ringing it, we would like to know how they get  
on! Send in details for the next issue of the  
Lancashire Ringer – especially if you get as far  
as attempting a quarter.

## EUROPEAN BELL FOUNDRIES - 2

In recent years the continental foundry which has  
exported the most bells to the UK is that of  
Eijsbouts. They are based at Asten, a small town  
to the east of Eindhoven in the Netherlands.  
Like Gillett and Johnston, they started life in the  
late nineteenth century as clockmakers. From  
1893 they started to supply chiming bells, which  
were cast for them by both Taylors and Gilletts.  
In 1947, after the Second World War, they set up  
as bellfounders on their own account. Their  
specialty is chiming bells and carillons, but they  
have cast a number of change ringing bells too,  
including some within the Lancashire  
Association's territory – complete rings at  
Halewood, St Nicholas and Rainhill, St Ann, and  
the treble at Barbon. Their tuning and external  
finish are both of a very high standard.

The photos show the arrival in Paris of some  
bells the firm cast for Notre Dame Cathedral - a  
very impressive pair of publicity shots. It will be  
seen that like most foundries outside the UK,  
Eijsbouts normally still provide traditional  
canons for their bells, rather than a flat top.

