

# The Lancashire Ringer

*Newsletter of the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers*

Series 2 Issue 13 – January 2024

## OVER KELLET'S NEW RING OF EIGHT

It isn't often that a tower goes straight from a derelict ring of three to a ring of eight, but that is what has happened in North Lancashire.

St Cuthbert's church lies a short distance to the south of the village of Over Kellet. The oldest parts of the building date from around 1200 but most of it is sixteenth century. It was restored in 1863-64 by the Lancaster architect E. G. Paley, and again by his successors in 1909. It is a grade II\* listed building.

The new bells are the former Warner eight from Church Kirk, remodelled to suit the reduced dimensions of their new tower. This has resulted in the old seventh bell becoming the tenor (9-1-24 in F#), while the treble, second and fifth are new Taylor ones. The pre-Reformation bell which formed the second of the old ring has been retained and is hung dead for chiming.

The original intention was that the bells would be installed to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. As it turned out they now commemorate both this and the coronation of King Charles III. The inscriptions on the new bells mark both occasions. The Duchy of Lancaster was one of the contributors to the cost of the project.



The work by Taylors' bellhangers was supported by local volunteers, both from the parish and from the Lancaster Branch of the LACR. The work has involved significant alterations to the interior of the tower, including the construction of a new, well designed ringing chamber overlooking the nave, but separated from it by a glass screen. There is a seat in the west window, constructed out of timber salvaged from the old bell frame, and a state of the art simulator to assist in teaching a local band. There are few houses nearby, but wisely a soundproofing system has been installed so that their occupiers will not be disturbed.

Despite a few hiccups, the bells were installed in time for Christmas, the first trial ringing taking place on the afternoon of Thursday 21 December. This meant that it was possible for an invited band to ring them for the service on Christmas Day, as promised. A series of training practices has already been held in other local towers and these will now take place at Over Kellet, so that eventually there will be a self-sufficient local band.

The completion of the project is greatly to the credit of the project team, led by Nick Ward and John Halsey, which raised the money required remarkably quickly. These bells will be an asset to the church and the community it serves for many years to come.



*Top left: casting one of the three new bells at Taylors in Loughborough  
 Top centre: Constructing the new ringing room.  
 Top right: The complete ring arrives outside the church.*



*Above, left: Two of the old bells (Abraham Smith 1664/Thomas Mears II 1824) loaded on a lorry for their journey to Loughborough. It is hoped to find them a new home through the Keltek Trust.  
 Above, right: Some of the new bells in the upper level of the two tier frame, awaiting their ropes.  
 All photographs reproduced courtesy of the Over Kellet Jubilee Bells project.*

## **RINGING COMMENTARY - A look at what has been happening in the area covered by the Lancashire Association.**

*Most of the entries below relate to quarter peals. The Lancashire Ringer doesn't publish details of all quarters; that is the role of Bellboard and the Ringing World. However those listed below are considered to be of special note. Unsurprisingly there have been a lot of Christmas ones.*

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**ACCRINGTON, St James** – A scheme is being considered for reordering the church. It includes modifications to create a new entrance at the west end, providing more direct access from the town centre, which would affect the internal layout of the tower. This could also put Accrington into the exclusive group of ringing towers with access available by means of a lift.

**BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL** rang a quarter for their Nine Lessons and Carols, on Saturday 23 December – 1260 Plain Bob Triples: Elle Buttery 1, Charlotte Ferguson 2, Ian Fowler 3, Andy Cope 4, Rob Chapman 5, Bob Moody 6, Raymond Hutchings (c) 7, Laura Robinson 8.

**BURNLEY, St Peter** also rang a quarter for their Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, on Sunday 17 December – 1269 Cambridge Surprise Minor: Pauline Campling 1, Christine Silkstone 2, Simon Woof 3, Raymond Hutchings 4, Alan Schofield 5, Andrew Sibson (c) 6.

**HORNBY, St Margaret** similarly rang a quarter on Wednesday 20 December – 1260 Grandsire Triples: Simon Percy 1, Nigel Goodship 2, Robin Daw 3, Sheila Bloomfield 4, Rob Chapman 5, John M Preston (c) 5, Matthew Goodship 7, Andrew Kayll 8. Rung for the Carol Service.

**LANCASTER PRIORY** has continued to host a series of quarter peals, mainly rung for evensong, of which several have included “firsts”:

**Sunday 29 October 2023** - 1250

Superlative Surprise major: Andrew Kayll 1, Sam Norman 2, Sheila Bloomfield 3, Alex Gardner 4, Cate Gardner 5, Nigel Goodship 6, Jayden Milby 7, Robin Daw (c) 8. First in method:2. For Choral evensong.

**Sunday 26 November 2023** - 1280

Cambridge Surprise Major: Jo Hems 1, Andrew Kayll 2, Rob Chapman 3, Sam Norman 4, Alex Gardner 5, Cate Gardner 6, Nigel Goodship (c) 7, Robin Daw 8. First on 8 - 1. For evensong. *See picture on right.*



**Sunday 3 December 2023** – 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Merlyn Gildaley 1, Cate Gardner 2, Carolina Goodship 3, Sam Norman 4, Nigel Goodship (c) 5, Joe Shaw 6. First away from cover – 1. For evensong.

**LONGRIDGE** doesn't generally feature here as its churches have no change ringing bells, but here is a handbell quarter: **22 Redwood Drive**, Monday 25 December 2023 – 1440 Kent Treble Bob Minor: Kate Warren-White 1-2, Lucy Warren 3-4, Alan Reading (c) 5-6. Rung in memory of Shane McGowan on what would have been his 66th birthday: “And the bells were ringing out for Christmas Day”. First quarter peal in the house.

**LIVERPOOL PIER HEAD, Our Lady & St Nicholas**, was also among the towers ringing a quarter peal for their Christmas Carol service, on Sunday 17 December – 1260 Grandsire Triples: Rachel Mitchell 1, Janet Jones 2, Giles Blundell 3, Andrew Ingham 4, Matthew Warburton 5, Luke Marshall 6, Lenard Mitchell (c) 7, Adam Bennett 8.

**MIDDLETON, St Leonard** – Sunday 24 December 2024: 1260 Plain Bob Doubles – Luke Pollock 1, Deborah O'Connor 2, Duncan Vyse (c) 3, Oliver Vyse 4, David Bates 5, David Parr 6. Rung for Nine Lessons and Carols and to welcome into the world Lennard Higgins, cousin of 1.

**OVER KELLET, St Cuthbert** saw a handbell quarter in the new ringing room, before the tower bells were available, on Monday 18 December - 1376 Yorkshire Surprise Major: James Perrins 1-2, Nick Tithecott 3-4, Julia Cater 5-6, Simon Percy (c) 1-8. First Quarter in the tower.



This was followed on Tuesday 2 January by the first quarter on the newly installed bells – 1260 Grandsire Triples: Alexander Fishburn 1, Lillian Halewood 2, Stuart Newton 3, Martin Daniels 4, Ellis Hollows 5, Simon Adams 6, Simon Percy (c) 7, Nicholas Davies 8. Rung a year to the hour after the last ringing on the bells in their old home at Church Kirk, being a quarter of Grandsire Triples. The quarter was rung by the same band (*left*), ringing the same bells, with the same composition and conductor.

**SANDYLANDS, St John** recently had the fittings of their single bell (Taylor 1901, 1-2-20) overhauled. It is hung for swing chiming in a shelter above the staircase to the top of the unfinished tower (see Lancashire Ringer issue 2.11).

**STRETFORD** rang a quarter peal on Sunday 10 December - 1260 Grandsire Triples: William Routledge 1, Wendy Lee 2, Dennis Latham 3, Elspeth Stein 4, Jason Bowden-King 5, Susan Darby 6, George Lee (c) 7, Tim Calvert 8. Rung to mark the Christmas Tree Festival and Christingle Service at St Matthew's and also an 80th birthday compliment to Dennis Latham.

**GREAT URSWICK, St Mary** hasn't seen all that many quarters lately, but here is one: Sunday, 24 December 2023 – 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Clarissa Caroe 1, Rachel Hollows 2, Jayden Milby 3, Andrew Pollock 4, Iwan Cotgreave (c) 5, Cameron Pollock 6. Rung in memory of Thomas Metcalfe MBE on the third anniversary of his death.

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## SAFETY IN THE TOWER

The incident on 28 December last year, when what appeared to be a fire at the top of Blackpool Tower turned out to be an optical illusion caused by orange plastic netting blowing in the wind, had its funny side.

However a real fire in a church would be anything but funny. The towers we ring in often contain a lot of combustible material, and usually they only have only one access. The problems associated with evacuating a ringing room down a narrow spiral staircase

shouldn't be underestimated. And that's assuming you have a stone staircase rather than a wooden one... Then you get to the escape route at the bottom, which is quite possibly through the church.

Has your tower got a fire extinguisher, or any form of emergency lighting? And if there is a fire extinguisher, when was it last checked? If you are looking for a New Year resolution, this might be a good moment to have a look at it.

## OLDHAM ST MARY, A HUNDRED YEARS ON

The twelve bells at Oldham St Mary were cast by Taylors in 1922. Before then the church had a slightly lighter ring of twelve cast by Thomas Mears II in 1830. Surprisingly, the new bells were not dedicated until 1924. They have remained in this form since, except that a semitone sixth bell was added in 1978. To mark the centenary of their dedication a peal was rung, details of which are as follows:

**LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION** Saturday 2 December in 3h 19mins (35-0-4 in Db)  
3042 Cambridge Surprise Maximus – Composed by Christopher J Poole.

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Andrew R Aspland  | 7. Simon A Percy (c)   |
| 2. Ellis Hollows     | 8. Derek J Thomas      |
| 3. Jeffrey Brannan   | 9. Jonathan B Townsend |
| 4. Daniel E Hughes   | 10. Ashley B Wilson    |
| 5. Jason W Hughes    | 11. Peter L Furniss    |
| 6. Joseph E T Waters | 12. Mark A Humphreys   |

300th of Maximus – 8

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## CENTRAL COUNCIL NEWS

Provided by the Secretary, Ernie de Legh-Runciman

The 6 December 2023 meeting of the Central Council Executive included discussion on the following items:

**Affiliation Fees** – it is anticipated that the Central Council's income will increase during 2024, as a result of increased recruitment following Ring For The King.

**Branding** – Three logos and branding schemes prepared for the Central Council by YellowYoYo (YYY)\* were shown to the meeting. Several ringing societies have expressed interest in using them, and discussions are to be held on rolling them out nationally.

**International Scout Jamboree** – this is to be held in Chelmsford from 27 July to 3 August. As this is an international young persons' event, it was considered that it could be used as a Ringing 2030 outreach event for bell ringing. The Executive agreed to sponsor a mini-ring and publicity material, up to a cost of £1500.

**National Ringing Centre** – It was agreed that the Central Council will have no further direct financial involvement with this specific project. However, sponsorship may be reconsidered for a future project if a suitable funding stream is identified.

**Central Council AGM in Devon** – a venue has been booked and venues for associated activities were being investigated. A Save the Date notification will be issued early in 2024.

**Ringing 2030** – The President, Tina Stoecklin, will publish a timeline and roadmap.

**Budget 2024** – There was some concern that as prepared this was a deficit budget, which would need to draw on the Council's reserves. Further discussion is to take place on funding.

**Workgroup Leads** – Discussions on appointments are in progress.

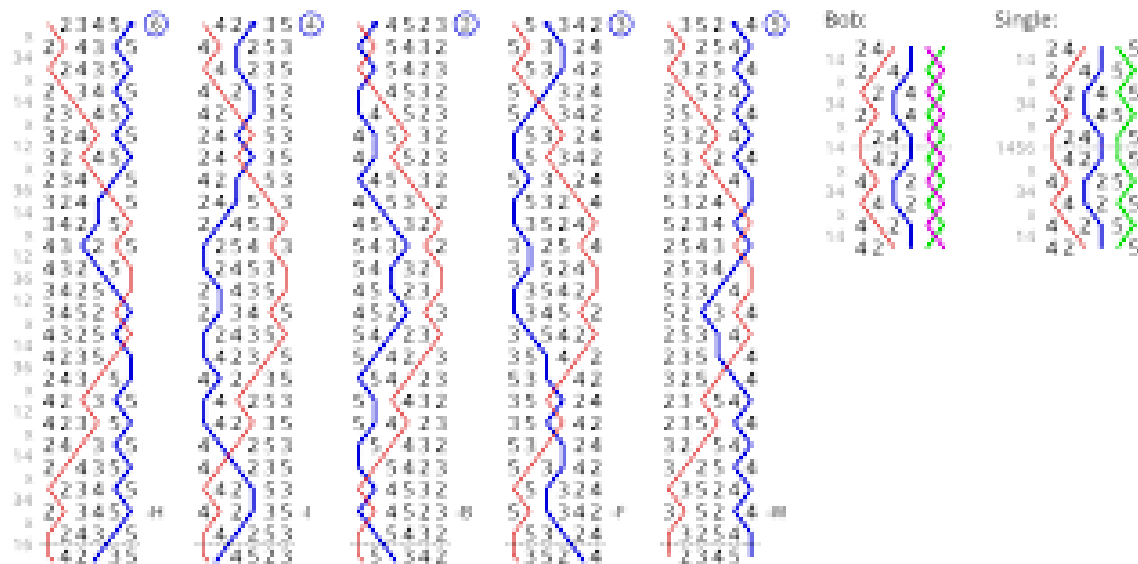
**Publications Team** – The President will include an appeal for new Publications Team members in her next blog.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 24 January 2024.

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\* According to its web site YellowYoYo is an award winning design and marketing agency based in Milton Keynes. Its list of clients include various organisations in Buckinghamshire and some nationally known firms like Daewoo Cars, IBM and Wickes.

## METHOD OF THE MONTH – WARKWORTH SURPRISE MINOR



Warkworth is a village in Northumberland, not far from Alnwick. It has a fine castle, but the church, despite having a reasonably substantial tower, has only two bells. So why does it have a Surprise Minor method named after it?

The reason is probably associated with the band at St Paul's Whitley Bay, further down the coast. The band there rang a lot of new methods during the early years of the twentieth century and gave them local names. A great deal of this was due to members of the Gofton family, who were local builders and, in several cases, ringers. They were responsible in 1912 for having Whitley Bay bells recast and augmented from six to eight.

**PRESTON PATRICK**, St Gregory is a church of 1852-3 by Sharpe & Paley of Lancaster, replacing an earlier one on the same site. It is in the Carlisle Diocese, but linked with Kirkby Lonsdale so it would be in the Lancaster branch if it had a ring of bells – but it doesn't. All it has is a single bell of 1879, and a most peculiar one. It is long waisted, after the manner of very early medieval bells. The founders were Cox & Sons of Newcastle. This firm's only other known bells are three similar ones of 1878 at Warden in Northumberland, which are currently unringable.

The reason for its unusual shape is unknown. A possible explanation is that at Warden, where the church tower is an eleventh century one, there was a medieval bell that was cracked and the church asked for replacements; Cox & Sons therefore used it as a pattern for the new ones.



*Preston Patrick's bell: Photo by Anne Pettifor*

## TUBULAR BELLS: A different sort of sound by Peter Rivet

A few months ago, I was asked to have a look at a chime of tubular bells. This is something that doesn't often come the way of a Diocesan Bell Adviser, so I had to do some research. I was also given some useful advice from the Leeds and York Dioceses, based on their experience.

Tubular church bells (as opposed to those used in orchestras, which date from c.1840) were invented by John Harrington, around 1882. They were made and marketed by Harrington Latham & Co of Coventry from then until the early 1920s when they ceased production.

They don't sound quite like normal bells, but whatever we may think of them musically, there are limited circumstances where they offer certain advantages. Like any other set of chimes, they require only one person to play them. They are cheaper than conventional bells, they don't involve any stresses on the building, and they can fit into tall thin spaces where change ringing bells could not be accommodated. The tower at Formby, St Peter (*illustrated right*) is an example. They are also somewhat quieter than ordinary bells. On sites next to noise sensitive premises like hospitals that could be useful.

They are cast from bronze, similar in composition to bell metal, and are hung vertically, often in an A-frame as shown in the advertisement below. They are played with hammers from something very similar to an Ellacombe frame.

How many such sets do we have in the area covered by the Lancashire Association? Discounting a couple of single tubes, at Altcar in Liverpool and Levenshulme in Manchester, the answer appears to be eleven. There was at one time a chime of eight at St Peter & St Paul (RC) in Bolton, but this church is closed and they no longer exist. The extant chimes can conveniently be listed by Church of England Diocese:

### Carlisle

Finsthwaite, St Peter	10
Holme, Holy Trinity	6

### Blackburn

Carnforth, Christ Church	8
Fleetwood, St Peter	8
Wrea Green, St Nicholas	8

### Liverpool

Formby, St Peter	8
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**HARRINGTON'S  
PATENT TUBULAR BELLS**

Have proved an **Extraordinary Success.**  
Richer in tone and decidedly more musical than ordinary bells.  
Over 100 Sets have been now erected. \* Can be chimed as ordinary bells  
by one person. Very effective in connection with Turret Clocks.  
Patented all over the World.

PROSPECTUS AND REFERENCES ON APPLICATION.

Patentees and Sole Manufacturers—  
**HARRINGTON, LATHAM & CO.**  
COVENTRY, ENGLAND.  
London Show Rooms—39 F, FULHAM ROAD, S.W.  
U.S.A. Patents controlled by WALKER, H. DURFER & Co., Providence, R.I.

## Manchester

Blackley, St Peter	13
Royton, St Paul	8
Westleigh, St Peter	8

## Sodor & Man

Bride, St Bridget	8
Lezayre, Holy Trinity	6

There used to be a further chime of ten tubular bells on the Isle of Man at St George's Douglas before the present bells were installed. Its subsequent fate is at present unknown.

So far as maintenance is concerned, one bellhanger based in the south of England commented recently that while restoring tubular bells isn't particularly complicated, it is labour intensive. In some circumstances they can be overhauled in the tower (this has been done with a couple of installations in the York Diocese) but if no local contractor is available, or the work involves sandblasting them to improve their tone, it is best done in a specialist workshop.

If you want to replace your tubes with real bells, there is a small second hand market for them. The tower of the Anglican church of St Alban in Copenhagen (right), which was completed in 1887, would look at home somewhere in Northamptonshire, but it was considered insufficiently robust for ringing bells. Instead it was given a set of eight tubes supplied by Harrington, Latham & Co. They were augmented to fifteen as recently as 2013 using redundant ones from Holy Trinity Oswestry. Another set was exported a few years ago to a church in Australia.



From our point of view as change ringers, tubular bells may seem a distinctly dull alternative to normal ones. However there was at least one church in the 1970s (St Cuthbert's Durham) where the incumbent was a ringer and used them to teach members of his congregation the rudiments of change ringing. One of his learners later graduated to tower bells and went on to join the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths.

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## RINGING MUG OF THE MONTH

If you fancy learning a method over a cup of tea or coffee, this option is now available.

A range of Doubles methods is available including Plain Bob, Reverse Canterbury, Grandsire, St Simon's, Robin Place, St Martin's, St James, St Hugh... There are Triples option available too, including Stedman (*illustrated on the right*) and they don't just include the most obvious ones.

For details see [Bell Ringing Mug Coffee Mugs for Sale | Redbubble](#)

The price currently quoted is £9.14 plus postage.





## ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH, DOUGLAS

### Another unfinished tower

We covered quite a lot of unfinished church towers in the Lancashire Ringer last year. Here is another one, on the Isle of Man, by a different but just as distinguished architect, John Loughborough Pearson (1817-1897). His best known work is Truro Cathedral. This was to be one of his last designs.

St Matthew's church stands on the North Quay in Douglas. It replaced an earlier, more modest building on a different site in the town's Buttermarket.

Above is the tower as it was intended to be when it was designed in 1895 and below what was actually built. The church was completed after Pearson's death with a saddleback roof in place of the bell stage and spire originally intended.

There is one bell, which is described by Ranald Clouston in his Manx Bells (1986) as being just over 21 inches in diameter. This suggests a weight of around 2cwt (100kg). He says that it is uninscribed and has the appearance of having been cast in the 18th century by a founder with limited experience of producing church bells. There are three moulding wires on the thickest part of the soundbow, which is odd as this is where one expects the hammer for a clock to strike. In addition the cast in crown staple has been positioned ninety degrees out in relation to the canons.

It is possible – though at present there is no firm evidence for it – that this bell is one of the few cast on the Isle of Man. Between 1803 and 1964 there was a foundry business operated by the Gelling family on the South Quay in Douglas and a couple of bells on the island bear their names.



S. MATTHEW'S CHURCH,  
Showing Architect's Design for the Tower.



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## TOWER MAINTENANCE COURSE

**Saturday, 10th February 2024 - St Mary's Nottingham 1:15pm**

Are you involved in steeple keeping or the maintenance of your tower bells? On the afternoon of Saturday, 10th February Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust is running a FREE bell maintenance course at St Mary's Church, Nottingham. The day will include talks from members of the Taylor's team as well as a chance to explore the bells. It's quite a long way from Lancashire, but if you are interested in taking part, please email [chrissie@belltrust.co.uk](mailto:chrissie@belltrust.co.uk) and they will contact you with further details.

## Ringling Events: Dates for your Diary

*Some of the events listed below are subject to confirmation. If in doubt, check. Not all branches have supplied information for this list. All the events listed are open to visiting ringers unless otherwise stated.*

*If you would like to include something in a future issue, please let the editor know.*

*Apologies are due to the Liverpool branch – some of the details of dates, places and times in the last newsletter were incorrect or incomplete. Hopefully this list is more accurate.*

Sat 27 Jan	Liv	Liverpool, St Barnabas Penny Lane	Training day Ringing up and down. NB Advance booking essential	10:00-1:00
Sat 10 Feb	Fur	Millom	Branch practice	2:30-3:30
	Liv	Bootle	Branch practice	7:30-9:00
Sat 17 Feb	Lan	Over Kellet	Ringing open day. Details to follow.	
<b>Sat 24 Feb</b>	<b>Bol</b>	<b>LACR Committee meeting, Bolton branch</b> <b>Venue and further details to follow.</b>		
Fri 1 Mar	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 9 Mar	Fur	Barrow-in-Furness	Branch practice	2:30-3:30
	Liv	Sefton	Branch practice	7:30-9:00
Sat 16 Mar	Lan	Low Bentham Burton-in-Lonsdale	Branch meeting	10:30-11:00 12:00-1:00
Fri 5 Apr	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 13 Apr	Fur	Dalton-in-Furness	Branch practice	2:30-4:30
	Liv	Rainhill St Bart	Branch practice and quarterly meeting	9:30 onwards
Sat 20 Apr	Lan	Ringing trip in the Liverpool area		
<b>Sat 27 Apr</b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>LACR Annual General Meeting, Manchester branch</b> Details to follow.		
Fri 3 May	Lan	Hornby	Advance practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 11 May	Liv	Tuebrook	Branch six bell striking competition	9:45-2:00
Sat 18 May	Lan	Cockerham Pilling	Branch practice	6:15-7:15 7:30-8:30
Fri 7 June	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 8 June	Liv	Garston	Branch practice	7:30-9:00

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Views expressed are those of contributors and are not necessarily those of the Lancashire Association.

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