

The Lancashire Ringer

Newsletter of the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers

Series 2 Issue 15 - March 2024

RINGING AT VERNET by Mary Pickstone

In September 2023 I joined a Durham University Society (DUSCR) trip to the bells at Vernet-les-Bains in the South of France for a weekend of ringing, eating, and drinking, and meeting up with university friends old and new.

The bells, a 5cwt/250kg ten, were installed in the Anglican church in Vernet in 2019 by Jeff Ladd in memory of his wife Catherine. They met as students at Durham fifty years ago and remained active members of DUSCR after leaving the University. When Jeff embarked on his plan to install the bells at Vernet where he is now a permanent resident, DUSCR and individual members of the Society contributed funding and therefore felt something of a connection to the project.



Left: l'Eglise Anglicane at Vernet. Right: inside the tower. Both photos by the author.

A visit to Vernet was mooted at the DUSCR AGM in December 2022 and by the following spring a firm plan had emerged with a date and a group of ringers committed to the trip. We converged on Vernet by various means and various routes on the weekend of 8-10 September.

Over the course of the weekend, we packed in plenty of ringing, both for ourselves and to help the local band, and scored a peal and four quarters. The experience of ringing outside the UK in a non-English speaking country was slightly strange at first, especially hearing familiar terms translated into French for the local ringers!

Thanks to Jeff Ladd and the local ringers for making it such a memorable trip and giving many of us the excuse to extend our stay and explore this lovely part of France. If you are ever in the area or wish to make a special trip to ring at Vernet, I'm sure you would be made most welcome.

Further details can be found here: <https://vernetbells.com/> .

Mary Pickstone is a ringer at Burton-in-Lonsdale, in the Lancaster Branch.

OVER KELLET – OPEN DAY AND DEDICATION SERVICE

A lot has been happening at this tower. First there was the open day on 17 February, with a string of towers available for ringing all the way from St Anne's through Broughton and Hornby to Over Kellet itself. Special thanks are due to Kirkham St Michael for making their bells available at short notice when it became apparent that it would not be possible to ring at Goosnargh. It attracted a large number of people, some of them travelling a considerable distance in order to take part, and raised almost £1000.

Then on 18 February the bells were dedicated at a special morning service by the Rt Rev Philip North, the Bishop of Blackburn. Work is in progress teaching a band.

Finally there's the quarter peals... followed by a peal, the first one at St Cuthbert's.

Friday 16 February – 1260 Plain Bob Triples: Monica Hollows 1, D. Robert Pettifor 2, Rob Chapman 3, L. Martin Daniels 4, Robin Daw 5, Simon Percy (c) 6, Ellis Hollows 7, Sheila Bloomfield 8. Rung half muffled following the memorial service of Isobel van Dijk, mother of Jane Ward, resident of the village.

Saturday 17 February – 1250 Cambridge Surprise Major: Susan Johnson 1, Simon Percy 2, Deborah Thorley 3, Kevin Mayfield 4, Simon Adams 5, Tim Jackson 6, Anne Deebank 7, Robin Daw (c) 8. First quarter of major in the tower. At the conclusion of the Open Day ringing during the dedication weekend.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION Sunday 18 February – 5152 Superlative Surprise Major, in 2h 50.
Composed by Simon A Percy

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. L Martin Daniels | 5. Jayden R Milby |
| 2. Ellis Hollows | 6. Anne E Pettifor |
| 3. Robin A Daw | 7. Simon A Percy (c) |
| 4. Nigel J Goodship | 8. Julia R Cater |

The first peal in the tower and on the remodelled bells. Rung following the dedication service.

BELL RESTORATION FUND NEWS

As of February 2024, the Lancashire Association is committed to grant funding eight schemes which are either completed or in progress, as follows:

Tower	Work	Branch	Size of grant
Barnoldswick	Augmentation	Blackburn	£6,500
Blackpool, HT South Shore	Rehanging	Fylde	£3,000
Great Mytton	Modifications	Blackburn	£500
Great Urswick	Augmentation	Furness	£11,500
Kirkham, St Michael	Soundproofing	Fylde	£3,000
Rochdale, St Chad	Replacement and augmentation	Rochdale	£21,000
Over Kellet	New ring of bells	Lancaster	£22,800
Whalley	Rehanging	Blackburn	£5,860
TOTAL			£74,160

CHILDWALL All Saints

Childwall used to be a village, until it was absorbed by the growth of Liverpool and its suburbs. It has the only surviving medieval church in the city. All Saints had assumed its present appearance around 1571. The tower contains a ring of six bells by Warners dating from 1912, with a tenor weighing 12-3-6 (650kg).



Childwall, All Saints church

Thanks to Frank Cheetham's [Church Bells of Lancashire](#) and the work of earlier writers we know quite a lot about the history of the bells at Childwall. It is said to have had three bells cast in 1517 by Richard Seliok of Nottingham, but in the post-reformation inventory of church goods made in 1517 only two bells are mentioned. It seems that one had been sold to John Plummer of Chester to pay for repairs to the church.

By 1593 it seems that there were once again three and in 1597 one of them was recast at Congleton. The treble of these "burst" when being rung in 1660 for the coronation of King Charles II and it appears to have been recast at the Wigan foundry.

In 1680 two bells were recast by William Scott of Wigan, but his work was not considered satisfactory and the parish considered legal action against him. In the end this was not pursued, but Scott came back to recast one of the bells. By this time there were five of them. The bells remained as they were until another one cracked. The parish then approached Abraham Rudhall I of Gloucester who agreed to recast them and augment them to five in 1722. A treble was added by Abel Rudhall in 1751, and in this form the bells survived until Warners replaced them. The inscriptions on the Rudhall bells were reproduced on the new ones, using Warner rather than Rudhall lettering.

Cheetham also notes the existence of local verses about the bells in the locality, one of which reads: "Prescot for Poverty, Huyton for Pride, Childwall for ringing and singing beside."

Practice night at Childwall is listed as being Tuesday, 7:30-9:00pm, but as always it is recommended that you check beforehand to make sure that it is taking place.

CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS NEWS

Provided by the Secretary, Ernie de Legh-Runciman

The Central Council executive held a Zoom meeting on 24 January 2024. Items discussed included:

- A payment of £3,000 to YellowYoYo for the branding work they have done.
- A transfer of funds for the Touring Tour project. The total cost of this is £8,013.02.
- Sponsoring a mini-ring for the International Scout Jamboree in Chelmsford (27 July – 3 August 2024).
- Progress with setting up the Central Council AGM in Devon.
- Ringing 2030 – progress report.
- The Budget for 2024. It had already been noted that this is a deficit budget. There was a discussion on how to make the ringing exercise aware of how funds are being allocated. The Treasurer is to provide a series of articles explaining what is being done.
- Publications: A new Publications Team is in the process of being put together.
- Workgroup leads: A subgroup has been set up to review their terms of reference.
- Intangible Cultural Heritage: the executive is preparing to respond to a consultation by the Department of Culture, Media & Sport. This will include a public Zoom meeting.
- Safeguarding: A code for ringing is being circulated to all Diocesan Safeguarding Officers.

The next meeting of the Executive has been scheduled for Wednesday 24 February.

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

There's a lot of quarter peals in this issue. These are, generally speaking, a good measure of the level of activity in the areas concerned. Peals, on the other hand, often involve ringers from further away and are really a matter for the Ringing World to cover. They will also appear, in due course, in the Association Annual Report. We only include a few of special significance.

ASH BELL STAYS – There has been some correspondence on the internet recently about the quality of ash needed to make replacement bell stays. Some towers have tried North American ash (*Fraxinus americana*) instead of European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), but it seems that it's very brittle and snaps too easily, possibly because it has been kiln dried. It's also a bit lighter than the European version.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS, St James saw a quarter on Friday 9 February – 1280 Bristol Surprise Major: Cameron Pollock 1, Patrick Brooke (c) 2, Andrew Pollock 3, Clarissa Caroe 4, Alison Brooke 5, Robin Daw 6, Jayden Milby 7, Simon Percy 8. First treble to s. minor – 1. First quarter in the method – 3.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL has rung several quarters recently. **Sunday 28 January** – 1296 Double Norwich Bob Major: Alex Rhodes-Gilrane 1, Charlotte Ferguson 2, Laura Robinson 3, Alexandra Hajok 4, Rob Chapman 5, Andy Cope 6, Bob Moody 7, Raymond Hutching (c) 8. For evensong; also with the band's best wishes to Donna Hutchings, celebrating her 60th birthday today. First quarter in the method – 3. **Sunday 18 February** – 1260 Grandsire Caters: Christine Silkstone 1, Alexandra Hajok 2, Laura Robinson 3, Charlotte Ferguson 4, Nigel Spooner 5, Raymond Hutchings (c) 6, Rob Chapman 7, Andy Cope 8, Bob Moody 9, Michael Kay 10. Birthday compliment to Christine Silkstone, with compliments to Clare and David Hull on their 55th wedding anniversary.

BURNLEY, St Peter saw a quarter on Sunday 11 February, rung on the front six: 1320 York Surprise Minor: Christine Silkstone 1, Alan Schofield 2, Jane Owen 3, Simon Woof 4, Brian Owen 5, Andrew Sibson (c) 6. Rung following the morning Eucharist service, presided over by the Archbishop of York, marking Racial Justice Sunday.

CLITHEROE, St Mary Magdalene, Monday 12 February – 1260 Plain Bob Minor: James Robinson 1, Carrie Rawlinson 2, Pauline Campling, 4Ian Benson 4, George Campling 5, Andrew Rawlinson (c) 6.

GARSTANG (Churchtown), St Helen (*right*) in the Preston branch produced a quarter in a less commonly rung method on Sunday 28 January – 1320 Bedford Surprise Minor: Joe Shaw 1, Charlotte Ferguson 2, Laura Robinson 3, Andy Cope 4, Bob Moody (c) 5, Rob Chapman 6. Remembering on this day in 1986 the US space shuttle Challenger, which exploded 73 seconds after liftoff from Florida, killing all seven aboard. First blows in method for all the band. See also **Method of the Month**.



KENDAL was the subject of an interesting pair of articles by John Eisel in the Ringing World in February, covering the history of ringing at Holy Trinity church during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was, as he points out, quite a long way from other established centres of change ringing at that time but it had an enterprising band. The first full peal on them, of Grandsire Triples, was rung in 1796. They took full advantage of the bells being augmented to ten in 1816, with a peal of Grandsire Caters rung in 1819.

LACR 150 – The Lancashire Association will celebrate its 150th birthday on 10 June 2026. Discussions are already taking place about what we should do to mark the occasion. One idea is a major bell project and several possible locations are being discussed for it.

LANCASTER CATHEDRAL rang a quarter peal on Sunday 4 February – 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Alice Rogan 1, Joshua Holland 2, Nicola Fletcher 3, Joe Shaw 4, Chris Fletcher (c) 5, Chris Toume 6. First quarter in Lancaster, deferred from the branch quarter peal day due to illness and squeezed in before his Big Holiday – 1. Rung in the absence of Steve Harrison, who is [was then] still “hors de combat”.

LANCASTER PRIORY continued their series of quarter peals, again on Sunday 4 February – 1260 Plain Bob Minor: Merlyn Gilldaley 1, Jim Currin 2, Cate Gardner 3, Andrew Kayll 4, Nigel Goodship 5, Sam Norman (c) 6. For evensong. First minor - 1. Another followed on Thursday 8 February – 1260 Doubles (Stedman, Grandsire, Plain Bob, St Simon's, St Martin's): Jo Hems 1, Robin Daw (c) 2, Cate Gardner 3, Jamie Ross 4, Sam Norman 5, Alex Gardner 6. 20th birthday to Ben Curwen, nephew of 2.

LIVERPOOL Our Lady & St Nicholas, Pier Head also rang a quarter on Sunday 4 February – 1259 Grandsire Caters: John Hyden 1, Mark Humphreys 2, David Jones 3, Harry Stephenson 4, Giles Blundell 5, Lillian Halewood 6, John Willasey (c) 7, Nichols Willasey 8, Robin Daw 9, Matthew Warburton 10. For evensong; rung in celebration of the lives of Elizabeth Cosnett, formerly a churchwarden and ringer at this tower and of Will Harrison of Oxton.



"How about we ring a peal of Plain Bob Minimus, with Alice on the treble?"

MIDDLETON, St Leonard contributed a quarter peal on Thursday 8 February – 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor: Oliver Vyse 1, Alyson Blanchard 2, Christine Silkstone 3, Andrew Webster 4, Taylor Wright 5, Duncan Vyse (c) 6. In memory of David C Allen, former ringer at St John's Blackpool, whose funeral took place on 7 February at St Paul's Norden in Rochdale. First quarter of Treble Bob – 1.

STRETFORD St Matthew Monday 19 February – 1272 Kent TB Minor: Dennis Latham 1, Beth Ingham 2, Wendy Lee 3, Tim Calvert 4, George Lee (c) 5, Jason Bowden-King 6 First Treble Bob inside – 2.

WALTON-LE-DALE St Leonard 15 February – 1344 Plain Bob Major: Elizabeth Turner 1, Sheila Bloomfield 2, L Martin Daniels 3, Graham Turner 4, Jayden Milby 5, Robin Daw 6, James Turner 7, Simon Percy 8. To celebrate the birth of Thomas Michael Dickinson, on 28 January 2024 at 10:54am weighing 8lb5oz. Grandson of 1 and 4, nephew of 7. In anticipation of the Over Kellet Open day. 50th quarter – 5.

WHALLEY, St Mary – This year sees the centenary of the casting of the present bells at Whalley by Taylors. They are due for an overhaul. The church is hoping to have them rehung, and also to install a sound control system.

LEVENS BELLS by Peter Rivet

Here are some of the quirkiest bells to be found in the Furness Branch.

The church of St John the Evangelist in Levens was designed by George Webster of Kendal, an architect better known for his country houses. It was built in 1826-28. It has a small tower with a spire, containing a single bell hung for chiming. This was cast by Joseph Winder, also of Kendal, who was a local iron founder. It is at present his only known church bell.



From our point of view, what Levens is really notable for is the set of three steel bells which are hung dead in the churchyard. They are on display in a shelter which has been described as a “Japanese shed”. They were cast by Naylor Vickers of Sheffield in 1868-69 and originally hung at Milnthorpe before they were displaced by the present Taylor six. They were brought to Levens in 1912 by the Rev Sidney Swann, the then Vicar, as part of a programme of improvements to Levens church.



Sidney Ernest Swann (1890–1976) was born in Sulby on the Isle of Man. He had an interesting career which included rowing for Great Britain in the 1912 Olympics and later in life, a term of office as Vicar of St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol. He admits in his autobiography that the tone of the three steel bells was poor (they were apparently used for a time as flowerpots) but states that after they were hung in their present home, and arranged so that they could be struck with a wooden mallet, their sound was greatly improved...

Anyone fancy chiming Plain Bob Singles?

SODOR & MAN BRANCH: PROGRESS AT PEEL by Penny Thursfield

Works continue in the Cathedral at Peel and progress is being made. There is now a flat floor with ramped access in the Choir and level access to the Chapel. Work in progress includes underfloor heating; terracotta tiles have been laid, awaiting limestone flags. However there is still much to be done.

We hope to be using the Cathedral again for services some time in May and this is when the ringers will be able to access the tower regularly again. We are looking forward to it. To add to the excitement we are hoping to ring for a wedding on 26 June when one of our ringers, Sinead, will marry Charlie. Sinead is a ministerial intern and I imagine the Cathedral community will be there, so we will need to get some practice in!

I will contact the LACR webmaster as soon as we have a firm date for our return so that visitors who would like to ring with us know when the tower will be open.

THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION LIBRARY

based on a report presented to the LACR Committee by George Lee

The Association Library (the Derek Ogden Memorial Library) is situated in the tower of Manchester cathedral, but the available space in the tower is very limited. The bound copies of the Ringing World which form part of it are currently held separately in the gallery of the nearby church of Sacred Trinity, Salford but the incumbent has asked that they should be removed as the church wishes to use the space for other purposes.

The librarian regularly receives enquiries about LACR members, towers, bells and peals which require perusal of the annual reports and peal books, but no enquiries have been received in recent years which require reference to the Ringing World. A difficulty is that the LACR's collection of them is incomplete. We do not have those from the first year of publication, 1911 and we do not have the years 1925-1930.

All editions of the Ringing World from 1911 to 1970, along with those of its predecessors Church Bells (1870-1906), Bell News (1881-1915) Campanology (1886-1897) and The Bellringer (1907) can now be viewed on the Central Council web site and copies can be downloaded by anyone for personal use free of charge at <https://ccbr.org.uk/resources/library/online-publications/>. Copies of some 250 antiquarian books on bells can also be viewed free of charge on the website of the Whiting Society: <https://www.whitingsociety.org.uk/old-ringing-books/old-books-menu.html>. These include F. H. Cheetham's Church Bells of Lancashire which covers most of the territory now covered by the Association.

Because of this it was agreed at the February meeting of the LACR committee to dispose of the back numbers of the Ringing World. Anyone interested in acquiring all or some of it should contact the Librarian, George Lee – kglee@doctors.org.uk.

Please note that copies of a DVD containing scanned copies of all annual reports up to 2019 are still available to LACR members to purchase at a cost of £10 each (including p+p/delivery).

This is likely to be useful to members who wish to research the history of ringing at their own or neighbouring towers.



UNIVERSITY SOCIETY PEALS AND QUARTERS

Student societies operate independently of the Lancashire Association, but it is good to see them thriving. Here are some recent performances by those within our territory:

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES:

LIVERPOOL ST Mary, Walton-on-the-Hill Friday 16 February – 1260 Grandsire Triples: Paul Hunter 1, Peter Robson 2, Martyn Bristow 3, Daniel Hughes 4, Peter Furniss 5, Ben Kivi 6, David Thomas (c) 7, Lenard Mitchell 8. On Dinner Weekend.

LIVERPOOL, Our Lady & St Nicholas Pier Head Saturday 17 February - 5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal (3 hours 13 mins): Matthew Woods 1, Daniel Jarvis 2, Victoria Wilby 3, Martin Bright 4, Daniel Hughes 5, David Thomas 6, Mark Humphreys 7, Lenard Mitchell 8, Peter Furniss 9, Paul Tiebout 10. For the Dinner Day. First peal on 10 – 1.

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITIES:

SALFORD Sacred Trinity Tuesday 13 February – 1260 Plain Bob Triples: Eleanor Wood 1, Philp Chandler 2, Sacha Jones 3, James Hibbert 4, Stephen Aldridge 5, Iain Scott 6, Rebecca Davey (c) 7, Freja Steinke 8. First inside – 3. For pancake day.

FALLOWFIELD Holy Innocents Friday 23 February – 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Anna Nash 1, Hannah Baker 2, Eleanor Wood 3, Amber Cusick (c) 4, Freija Steinke 5, Sacha Jones 6. First on treble – 1. *See photo on the right.*



SCALING NEW HEIGHTS AT ACCRINGTON ST JAMES

The light ring of twelve at Accrington is a popular venue for peals in unusual methods. One of them was rung at the beginning of last month; congratulations to all concerned.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION – Tuesday 6 February: 5040 A’Chailleach Delight Royal, in 2h 50.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. James E Andrews | 6. Peter H Gardner |
| 2. Raymond A Hutchings | 7. Jeffrey Brannan |
| 3. Roger S Riley | 8. Peter C Randall (c) |
| 4. Jane Owen | 9. Brian J Owen |
| 5. Derek J Thomas | 10. Peter L Furness |

600th peal together – 2,8.

A’Chailleach (*right*), not to be confused with Beinn na Caillach on Skye, is a notable Munro summit (3051ft/929m) in the Monadhliath mountains, north of Newtonmore on the A9 road and the Perth-Inverness railway line (*see picture*). The name translates as “the old woman”. So far as is known nobody has yet attempted to ring the method on handbells on the summit, but there’s always a first time.



RINGING MUG OF THE MONTH

It's intended to promote a type of beer, but if you want a ringing mug which makes a statement, they don't come much more in-your-face than this one. Details of where to get it are here: [Bell Ringer 11 oz Ceramic Mug Bell Ringer Mug | CafePress](#)



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.

Min 4 Mar	Bla	Waddington	Ribble Val practice	7:30-9:00
Sat 9 Mar	Fur	Barrow-in-Furness	Branch practice	2:30-4:30
Note: there are extra attractions with this meeting including information on the Barrow Wombel (details in a future newsletter). Details ringing@barrowbells.org.uk .				
	Liv	Sefton	Branch practice	7:30-9:00
	Pre	Broughton	Branch practice	3:30-5:00
Mon 11 Mar	Bla	Clitheroe	Ribble Val practice	7:30-9:00
Sat 16 Mar	Lan	Low Bentham	Branch practice/ meeting	10:30-11:00 12:00-1:00
	Liv	Liverpool Penny La St Barnabas	Training Day - Rounds to Plain Hunt	10:00-11:00
Tue 19 Mar	Bla	Whalley	Ribble Val practice	7:30-9:00
Mon 3 Apr	Bla	Gisburn	Ribble Val practice	7:30-9:00
Fri 5 Apr	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 13 Apr	LACR Goosnargh, Bilsborrow, Broughton			9:00-4:00
	Training day on ropesight			
	Contact nickharrop@btinternet.com for details			
	Fur	Dalton-in-Furness	Branch practice	2:30-4:30
	Liv	Rainhill St Bart	Branch practice and quarterly meeting	9:30 onwards
	Pre	Higher Walton	Branch practice	3:30-5:00
Sat 20 Apr	Lan	Ringing trip in the Liverpool area		
Sat 27 Apr	LACR Annual General Meeting, Manchester branch: Pendleton			
	Other towers will be open during the day. Details to follow.			
Fri 3 May	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 11 May	Lan	Pilling	Preliminary six bell striking competitions	9:45-2:00
	Liv	Tuebrook		
Sat 18 May	Lan	Cockerham	Branch practice/ meeting	6:15-7:15 7:30-8:30
	Lan	Pilling		
Fri 7 June	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 8 June	Liv	Garston	Branch practice	7:30-9:00
Sat 5 Oct	LACR Final of the association six bell striking competition.			

