

# The Lancashire Ringer

*Newsletter of the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers*

Series 2 Issue 10 – August 2023

## COMPETITION TIME

Summer is a popular time for ringing competitions. June saw the most challenging one of all, the national twelve bell striking competition which this year was held at Sheffield Cathedral. As has happened so many times in the past, it was won by a band from Birmingham. The LACR was not represented on this occasion; the only team from the north west of England was that of Chester, who were knocked out in the eliminator at Melbourne (Derbyshire).

In July there was the Ringing World National Youth Competition, in York. There were two sections. One was for method ringing (the Whitechapel trophy). This was won by the Winchester & Portsmouth Youths, who came first out of the eight teams entering, but the runners up – by quite a small margin – were our very own Lancashire Lads and Lasses, also known as the 3Ls.

The winners of the Robert Lewis Trophy for call changes were a band from the Durham & Newcastle Association (your editor is quite pleased about that). Congratulations to all concerned!



**The Lancashire Lads and Lasses, or 3Ls,** are the Association's youth group, for ringers up to 19 years of age. Their practices are open to all young ringers whether or not they are members of the LACR. The intention is that they should be open to all eligible ringers within the LACR's territory. Contact details are:

3Ls Ringing Master: Graham Turner

[G.Turner@preston.gov.uk](mailto:G.Turner@preston.gov.uk)

3Ls Secretary: Monica Hollows

[lacr3ls@gmail.com](mailto:lacr3ls@gmail.com)

## THE LACR SIX AND EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITIONS 2023

This year both the 6 and 8 bell striking competitions will be hosted by the Lancaster Branch, on Saturday 7 October. Both the six and eight bell sections will be held at Morecambe, Holy Trinity.

The draw will be held at 10am with competition pieces to follow throughout the day. The rules are set out on the next page. If you would like to enter a team please contact Simon Percy [simon2percy@gmail.com](mailto:simon2percy@gmail.com) no later than Sunday 17 September. The results will be declared at Lancaster Priory, where there will be open ringing from 15:30 to 17:00. Names for tea: contact Cate Gardner on [cjguk@gmail.com](mailto:cjguk@gmail.com) (07966 689256) no later than Tuesday 3 October.

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## LACR SIX AND EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITION: RULES

- All participants in the competition must be resident members of the Association.
- The order of bands ringing will be chosen at random on the day of the competition. A band may be allocated a specific time in exceptional circumstances.
- Ringers may ring in a maximum of two teams, provided all other rules are followed.
- A team for each competition may also be entered by the Lancashire Lads and Lasses. In the instance, ringers may also ring from their home branch or tower if required.
- Two whole pulls of the treble will signal the start of the test piece following 5 minutes of practice time.

### Six Bell Competition

- Teams entering the competition should consist of regular Sunday service ringers at the represented tower. Should this not be possible, one visitor may be included.
- Winners of branch striking competitions will represent their branch. Should this not be possible, the branch may nominate a tower to represent.
- The test piece must consist of either: 120 changes of Doubles or Minor, or in the case of .Call Changes. at least 5 minutes of ringing from the first change (120 rows will be judged). There shall be two bells leading, in addition to the treble, with Queens and Tittums both being rung.

### Eight Bell Competition

- Each branch may enter one team into the competition.
- Teams entering the competition should consist of resident members from the Branch they represent. Should this not be possible, one visitor may be allowed.
- The test piece must consist of either at least 220 of Triples or Major, or in the case of Call Changes, at least 8 minutes of ringing from the first change (220 rows will be judged). There shall be five bells leading, in addition to the treble, with at least two notable changes (e.g. Queens, Tittums, Whittingtons) to be included.

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**Remember** – This competition will be judged on striking, not on the complexity of what is rung! In the six bell section, well struck Plain Bob Doubles will stand at least as good a chance of winning as Cambridge Surprise Minor.

Don't be afraid to enter a band if you have the requisite number of ringers and are confident that they won't go wrong.

## **ROLAND FERGUSON ECCLES 1930-1923**

**by Andrew Eccles**

Roland Eccles passed away peacefully at home on Monday 12 July, at the age of 93.

Born and brought up in Lancaster, he learnt to ring at Lancaster Priory, where he was previously a chorister, in 1943 when the wartime curfew on the ringing of church bells was lifted.

He was elected a member of the Lancashire Association in 1945 and was to serve it in many capacities throughout his life. He was a member of the Sunday service band at Lancaster Priory, Holy Trinity Morecambe, Manchester Cathedral and St Matthew Stretford.

His commitment to ringing is evident from the list of roles he fulfilled: Lancaster Branch secretary for 8 years, LACR Librarian for 50 years, Manchester Branch Ringing Master for 13 years, LACR committee member for more than 40 years, LACR Vice-President for 12 years, and Life Vice President thereafter. In addition to this he was a Central Council Rep for ANZAB for 12 years and Manchester DAC Bell Adviser for 19 years.



He was, together with his wife Dorothy who passed away in 2022, responsible for the teaching of new ringers and the establishment of Sunday service bands at many churches, including Stretford, Pendleton, Didsbury, and Haughton. Roland and Dorothy were very much a couple, always together and very popular. There were many ringers present at Roland's funeral, whose lives he had touched.

Socially, Roland, together of course with Dorothy, enjoyed countless ringing outings and holidays which are fondly remembered by those taking part. In later years they were enthusiastic participants in the self-styled "geriatrics" group, meeting regularly across Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Roland was also an active handbell ringer, forming and leading a young group ringing tunes in the 1970s, and regularly meeting with friends for change ringing.

Roland moved to Manchester in 1961 with work. His whole career was spent on the railways, as a Permanent way engineer, and he developed a wealth of knowledge about the railway network in the North West and across the Pennines.

Married for almost 68 years, Roland and Dorothy brought up their six children in a happy family home full of fun and activity. The wider family, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren continue to reap the rewards of their upbringing and the example they both set. His love of family and his sense of fun and mischief never left him. He will be fondly remembered by all whose life he touched. May he rest in peace.

## METHOD OF THE MONTH: Childwall Bob Minor.

We haven't heard much from Merseyside in the Lancashire Ringer lately, so here is something to make up for it. In case you haven't been there, All Saints Childwall is in the Liverpool suburbs and has a 12cwt ring of six (Warner 1912).

The blue line may look unfamiliar, but in fact it's just a variation of St Clement's College Bob Minor. The bobs and singles work the same way, and so do compositions. Childwall doesn't appear to be rung very often, but it was tried, with some success, at a practice at Preston Minster earlier this year. If anyone rings a quarter of it, please let the editor know.



## THE CASE OF THE AMATEUR RINGER

The peal board shown on the right is in the tower of Holy Trinity church in Kendal. It dates from 1876 and records a peal of Grandsire Triples. What is surprising about it is that the ringer of the fourth bell, Mr W Akerigg, is described as an "Amateur".

It can't surely mean that the other seven ringers were professionals, in the modern sense. Or were they paid to ring the peal, while he wasn't?

It may be significant that his Christian name isn't specified. Perhaps, as with cricket in those days, Mr Akerigg was a gentleman and the others were mere players. Does anyone from Kendal, or elsewhere, know more about the background to this story?



# LANCASTER ST JOHN: TWO BELLS WITH A HISTORY

by Peter Rivet

St John's church is an impressive Georgian building, listed grade II\*, at the northern, lower end of Lancaster city centre. It became redundant in 1981 and is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. It suffered badly from flooding in 2015 but money has now been found for a restoration programme.

The main part of the building was erected in 1754-55, probably to the design of Henry Sephton. The tower was designed by Thomas Harrison and was added in 1784. We do not know what the original building had in the way of bells, but it is likely to have had a single one in a bellcote at the west end, which found a home in the new tower. If so, it was replaced in 1887 by two second hand ones now there: nos 1 and 4 of the old ring at Lancaster Priory.



Two other bells from the old Priory ring survive. One is at Ripley school, south of the city centre. The other is – reputedly – hung in the stables of Capernwray Hall, in the parish of Over Kellet. This is now occupied by an Evangelical trust, but it used to belong to the Marton family who played an important part in the installation of the Priory's eighteenth century bells.

Of the St John's bells the treble is by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester, while the tenor is a later recasting by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London. Their inscriptions are given in Cheetham's Church Bells of Lancashire as:

1 I WAS BOUGHT BY SUBSCRIPTION A (bell) R 1747	33"	C#/Db
2 C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON RECAST BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION REVD I. TURNER MA VICAR ABRAM SEWARD CHURCHWARDEN 1846	36"	A

The ringing room is behind the organ and is quite spacious. Had the parish ever been minded to acquire a ring of bells, the tower could quite comfortably have taken a ring of six or even eight.

There is also a clock, which strikes on the tenor bell when it is in operation. It was supplied by Bell & Atkinson of Lancaster. Although they were local clockmakers they did not make turret clocks. Ray Clayton has identified this one as being by Joyce of Whitchurch, which is confirmed by the maker's name on part of the frame.

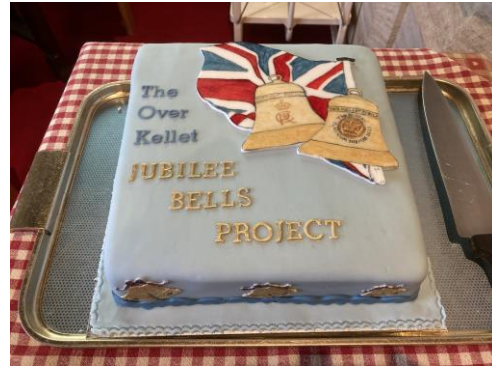
At present the fittings of both bells are in poor condition and their bearings have seized up; they are sounded by "clocking", with ropes attached to the clappers. However, it is hoped that they can eventually revert to swing chiming as was intended when they were installed. Lancaster Priory ringers have donated a pair of good quality second hand ropes to assist with this.

## **RINGING COMMENTARY:** A look at some of the ringing related things that have been happening over the last couple of months.

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**IN THE BLACKBURN DIOCESE**, a couple of quarters marked the installation of the Right Reverend Philip North as the tenth Bishop of Blackburn on Saturday 24 June. Blackburn Cathedral rang one of Stedman Doubles, while Lancaster Priory (on 25 June) rang Pudsey.

**OVER KELLET**, where St Cuthbert's church is acquiring a new ring of eight based on the ones from Church Kirk, held an open day on 24 June. This was primarily for the benefit of people living in the village, especially those interested in learning to ring. Attractions on offer included a bell with full ringing fittings for people to try out, held aloft on a JCB lent by Wallings UK, who supply tractors and agricultural machinery and are based on the opposite side of the road from the church. Taylors are expected to start work on installing the new bells on 4 September.



*Cake baked specially for the occasion by Marilyn Whinfield; photo by Simon Percy.*

The new bells needed to replace three of those from Church Kirk are due to be cast on 31 August. The new vicar at Over Kellet is due to take office at the beginning of November, so the PCC are anxious to have the bells available for ringing in time for his arrival.

**ST GERMAN'S CATHEDRAL, PEEL** is undergoing a programme of repairs with effect from Monday 7 August. Because of this, ringing has been suspended; the bells are not expected to be available again until Easter next year. This leaves the Sodor & Man branch of the Association with, for the time being, just one ringable tower, in Douglas.



church prior to their installation in the tower (*see the photo on the left, courtesy of the project's Facebook website*). This is a major project which involves cleaning up the back four bells and adding six new ones, giving the Fylde branch a second ring of 10.

**LIVERPOOL** has been chosen as the venue of the next Diocesan Bell Advisers' conference, on Wednesday 11 October. Ernie de Legh-Runciman, in his Central Council of Church Bell Ringers capacity, has already been there on one of his visits from the Isle of Man helping to set it up. These meetings used to take place on an annual basis – the last one was in Oxford, in 2019 – but like so many other things they were suspended as a consequence of the Covid pandemic.

**ST ANNE'S ON SEA (Heyhouses)** have already had their new bells on display in the

**ACCRINGTON ST JAMES** saw an unusual method rung to an LACR peal on 18 July: 5040 Zone Point Delight Royal, conducted by Peter Randall. We don't often cover peals in these newsletters but this is something out of the ordinary. As it needs a tower with at least ten bells (and the blue line would take up an awful lot of space) it probably isn't suitable material for a future Method of the Month, but congratulations to all concerned. The same tower, on Sunday 23 July was the setting for a peal of 5088 Yorkshire Surprise by the St James Society for St James' Day, rung by eight ringers all of whom were called James. This is claimed to be the first ever "James" peal. It was conducted by James Perrins, using a composition by James Clatworthy.

**THE RING O'BELLS PUB** at Lathom, near Ormskirk, which was closed with the intention of redeveloping its site with housing, is to reopen under new ownership after this was refused planning permission. The building dates back to around 1830 and appears originally to be associated with the building of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. This ought to be great news for thirsty ringers, but where? The reason for the name is uncertain. The closest tower is Parbold, over two miles away, and the bells there were only installed in 1908.

**HEYWOOD ST LUKE**, in the Rochdale branch, has an American flag which is understood to have given to the church by a visiting handbell group from Canada in the late 1970s. It is said to have been flown at the White House but the rest of the story seems to have been lost in the mists of time. Can anyone provide more information?

**LANCASTER PRIORY** sees its fair share of ceremonial occasions and one of them took place on Friday 16 June, with a service for the new High Sheriff of Lancashire, David Taylor CBE DL. It was marked with general ringing rather than a quarter peal, but this included both Grandsire and Stedman Triples.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY** for tower grabbers: "Don't give up. Normally it is the last key on the ring which opens the door." – Paulo Coelho (born 1947).

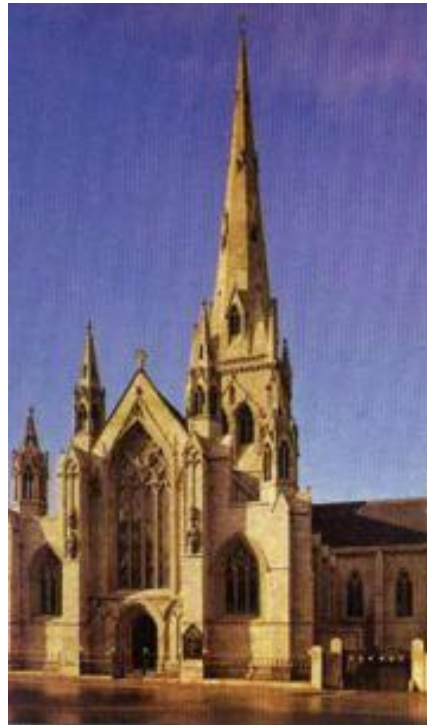
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## **SALFORD CATHEDRAL**

Of the various enquiries received by those who run the Lancashire Association's Bell Restoration Fund over the last few years, one of the most intriguing was from Salford Roman Catholic Cathedral.

It's an imposing building of 1844-48, with a large tower and spire. Some of its details are said to be based on those found at Howden Minster in East Yorkshire. At the moment it only has a single 17 cwt bell, cast by Mears & Stainbank in 1903.

Current indications are that it's unlikely to become the home of a ring of bells any time soon, as such an installation would involve constructing an additional floor to create a ringing room. Still, the tower is substantial enough, and it would appear to be technically feasible.



## **RINGING RESOURCES**

It's often useful to find out what other ringing Guilds and Associations are doing, so that we can benefit from their ideas. The Leicester Diocesan Guild have set up a Rope Store. The idea is that towers which have taken delivery of new ropes can pass on old serviceable ones to less well resourced ones, to keep the bells ringable.

There's a lot to be said for this. The idea could be extended to take in other redundant items. As well as ropes there are redundant stays and sliders from bells which have been rehung. What you can do with broken stays is another topic entirely, but there are situations where they can be recycled into something useful. In the 1990s repairs to the three bells at Bolton-le-Sands were carried out using three old sliders from Lancaster Cathedral bells, and old ropes from Lancaster Priory.

It may be easier to operate this sort of thing on a branch basis but if it were to be organised for the Association as a whole much more material would be available. Is anyone out there with the right amount of storage space who would be willing to set it up?

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*And now for something completely different...*

### **USEFUL AIDS TO RINGING THAT HAVEN'T YET BEEN INVENTED** **An occasional series by Steve Palmer**

#### **No. 1 – The rope length adjuster**

The rope length adjuster eliminates the need for short bellringers to stand on a box and for tall bellringers to take a loop or tie a knot.

The adjuster comprises a shaft with a pulley at each end. Beside each pulley is a ring. The rope passes through the first ring, around the opposite pulley, back around the first pulley, then out through the opposite ring. The shaft is in two pieces; the end of one piece is threaded and screws into a captive nut on the end of the other piece which is hollow. Turning the nut adjusts the length of the shaft. Lengthening the shaft shortens the rope.

Also in the shaft is a telescopic section containing a spring. Every time the rope is pulled and the spring extends the movement drives a generator that charges a battery. The battery operates a motor that turns the nut. It is controlled by a switch on the casing that encloses the whole thing.

The pitch of the screw thread and the speed of the motor results in the rope length being adjusted at approximately 2cm per second.

The typical length of a sally provides a wide range of heights at which it can be grasped and it is the length of the tail that causes problems. The rope length adjuster is therefore probably most useful just below the sally. It can be fitted above the sally if the band prefers. Where it is out of reach from the floor the switch on the casing is replaced by a remote control.



## Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Guild - Alton & Petersfield District

### FUNDRAISING “TOWER OPEN DAY”

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Come and enjoy a day out in the beautiful Hampshire countryside!**

With 24 Towers situated in the South Downs National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ringing in the Alton & Petersfield District is a special treat!

- ✓ Recently augmented, restored and rarely available Towers!
- ✓ Refreshments (bacon rolls/lunches/afternoon tea) served throughout the day.
- ✓ All Towers manned with local ringers, so ringing can always take place on the full set of bells.
- ✓ Prize for anyone who manages to ring at all 24 Towers during the day!

Share the day with non-ringing friends, who can enjoy shopping in the lovely market towns of Alton or Petersfield, visiting Jane Austen’s house at Chawton or The Wakes Museum (Gilbert White’s house) at Selborne.....or even a trip on the Watercress Line Steam Railway!

**This Fundraising Open Day is being held to support the efforts to re-hang the bells at nearby Ropley, where a devastating fire destroyed the church and bell tower in 2014. Fundraising to re-hang the bells is still ongoing after nearly 10 years.....so if you only support one Tower Open Day this year, make it this one!**

09:00	Bentley	6 bells, 12-3-18 (GF)	R, T	
09:25	Froyle	6 bells, 10-2-18		
09:50	Binsted	6 bells, 12-3-18 (GF)		
10:15	Holybourne	8 bells, 6-3-16 (GF)	R, T	New peal of bells 2009
10:40	Alton, St Lawrence	8 bells, 18-1-20		
11:05	Alton, All Saints	6 bells, 6-0-4		New peal of bells 2006
11:30	Bentworth	6 bells, 7-0-27 (GF)		
11:55	Chawton	6 bells, 6-0-26	R, T	New peal of bells 2009
13:00	East Tisted	3 bells, 7cwt (GF)		Rare, subject to restoration July ‘23
13:20	Newton Valence	6 bells, 9-3-7 (GF)		Restored & augmented June 2022
13:45	Selborne	8 bells, 8-3-8 (GF)	R, T	Augmented 2007
14:10	Blackmoor	6 bells, 8-0-1		
14:35	Bramshott	6 bells, 11-1-20 (GF)		
15:00	Liss, St Mary	8 bells, 12-1-26	R, T	
15:25	Liss, St Peter	6 bells, 7-3-26 (GF)		Rarely available
15:50	Hawkey	8 bells, 8-1-25	R, T	Restored; new bells May ‘23
16:15	Steep	6 bells, 6-0-13		
16:40	Froxfield (High Cross)	6 bells, 5-1-23		
17:05	Privett	8 bells, 12-0-15		Redundant church
17:30	West Meon	8 bells, 12-2-2		Future ringing to be restricted
17:50	Warnford	6 bells, 12-2-10 (GF)		
18:15	East Meon	10 bells, 18-0-12	T	
18:45	Buriton	6 bells, 8-2-6	R, T	
19:00	Petersfield	8 bells, 15½ cwt T		

All Towers open for one hour from the time shown, with timings strictly adhered to. All Towers manned with local ringers to enable ringing on all the bells each time during the hour slot 😊

(GF = Ground Floor ringing room, T = toilets, R= refreshments)

\*\*\*\* **EARLY BIRD DAY TICKETS** \*\*\*\*

**£18 in advance**

Available from Rachael Barber ([rachaelbarber40@gmail.com](mailto:rachaelbarber40@gmail.com), 07714 325 059, 24 Rushfield Road, Liss, Hants GU33 7LW). Early Bird Day tickets provide access to all 24 open towers.

\*\*\*\* **TICKETS ON THE DAY** \*\*\*\*

£2 per Tower, or DAY TICKETS £20 (available from the Stewards at any Tower).

Any changes will be listed/notified on the Guild Website (<https://www.wpbells.org/open-day-for-ropley/>)

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

### **Thu 10 – Sun 13 Aug: North West Ringing Course, Myerscough College.**

Sat 26 Aug	Fyl	Lytham, St Cuth	General ringing	3:00-5:00
Fri 1 Sep	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 2 Sep	Bla	Oswaldtwistle	Branch meeting	tbc
Wed 6 Sep	Ros	Haslingden	General ringing	7:30-9:00
Thu 7 Sep	Bla	Chorley RC	Branch practice	7:45-9:00
Sat 9 Sep	Fur	Brathay	Branch meeting	2:30-4:30
	Liv	Venue tbc	Association Committee Meeting	
	Pre	Croston	Branch practice	3:30-5:00
Thu 5 Oct	Pre	Chorley RC	Branch practice	7:45-9:00
Fri 6 Oct	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:30
Sat 7 Oct	Fur	Ulverston	Branch meeting	2:30-4:30
Sat 7 Oct	Lan	Morecambe	6 and 8 bell striking competitions	
			See the notice on the front page of this newsletter.	
Sat 21 Oct	Lan		Branch outing, joint with the Western branch of the Yorkshire Association, to towers on the Lancs/Yorks border – details to follow.	
Thu 2 Nov	Pre	Chorley RC	Branch practice	7:45-9:00
Fri 3 Nov	Lan	Hornby	Advanced practice	7:00-8:00
Sat 11 Nov	Pre	Walton-le-Dale	Branch practice	3:30-5:00
Sat 2 Dec	Bla	Whalley	Branch meeting	tbc
Thu 7 Dec	Pre	Chorley RC	Branch practice	7:45-9:00
Sat 9 Dec	Pre	Samlesbury	Branch practice	3:30-5:00

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**Ringling for students in Liverpool** - LUSCR welcomes students and staff from institutions including the University of Chester, Edge Hill University, Liverpool University, Liverpool Hope University, the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

**... and in Manchester:** Who are we? A bunch of MUGS a.k.a a drinking society with a serious bell ringing problem. No really – who are we? A group of students and staff from the universities in Manchester, including local ringers and a four foot stuffed giraffe. Where do we meet? Sacred Trinity in Salford is our “base” tower and we ring 7:30-8:30. We also support other local towers such as Holy Innocents in Fallowfield and the Cathedral in the city centre. What do we ring? Anything from rounds and call changes up to really complicated stuff like spliced Surprise Major and Plain Bob Doubles. Any more questions? Email [MUGR@hotmail.com](mailto:MUGR@hotmail.com)

**Lancaster** (Lancaster and Cumbria Universities) and **Preston** (UCLAN) also welcome student ringers, any standard, at local towers: Lancaster Priory, Lancaster RC Cathedral, Preston Minster.