

Bellringers Report

As I look back over the last year, we had quite an active year and several successes.

In 2015 we rang for 10 weddings, two more than 2014. We also increased the wedding fee from £150 to £160 in line with the association average (and Ticknall). No peals were rung on the bells in 2015 but we had 8 quarter peals, up from 4 the previous year. Jenny Halliday rang her first quarter peal in September.

The first event of the year was the Melbourne village quiz, and once again we entered two teams, the "Four Tenors" (Maurice, Pam, Robert and David) and "Broken Stays" (Duncan, Lucy, Mary and Beth Anderson). The Four Tenors reached the quarter finals and Broken Stays reached the final, just being pipped to the post by St. Michael's Players. A tremendous achievement by both teams.

Twenty two ringers and friends enjoyed spring-like sunny weather on the annual trip to Lundy in February. The bells were in use every day. Extreme knitting was this year's craze which involved night excursions to knit by torchlight in beach caves and at the top of the Old Light. (It probably won't be very popular in 2016 if enough people watched Agatha Christie's 'And Then There were None' in the Christmas period!).

We had our first curry night at Zeerah's in Melbourne, kindly organised by Lucy and Duncan. This was a great success and we all had a very enjoyable evening.

This year we entered the DDA striking contest. It was the first time Melbourne had entered teams in over 15 years. Our two call changes teams both made the finals at Denby, and we were placed 1st and 3rd. Christian's team came back with the cup that sits proudly in the Church vestry. We even made the Village voice as well!

In May we rang to commemorate the 70th anniversary of VE Day and again we had our photo in the Village Voice.

The Festival Weekend provided the opportunity for us to open our doors once more to the community and demonstrate the joys of bell ringing. The Wombel made a welcome return and thanks to Jenny Halliday for creating the splendid display boards. Two children who came are now learning at Ticknall. I have already booked the Wombel for the 2016 Festival Weekend (17th-18th September).

Maurice organised another successful ringing outing in September, this time to the Kettering and Market Harborough area. We had a warm and sunny day, which helped make a very enjoyable trip for all concerned. Several of us had a lovely lunch in the atmospheric Blitz Café. We ended the day with a pleasant walk around Foxton Locks and evening meal together.

This year the bellringers were asked to run a stall at the church Autumn Fair in November. We had a quiz which was put together by Christian, Rachael and Jenny. We received compliments for coming up with something different, and we even had our photo in the Village Voice again.

Ruth did a splendid job organising our Christmas meal, this time at the Melbourne Tea Rooms. It was good that some of the ringers from Ticknall were able to join us, and a good time was had by all. The evening rounded with a selection of stories and poems.

The Tuesday practice nights have continued to be well attended this year, by both our own team and also with regular visitors. We have rung a mixture of methods and our plain hunting has improved significantly. By the end of 2015, Melbourne had 20 members of the Derby Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers, although sadly Avril and Charlotte have decided to "hang up their ropes" and are no longer ringing with us.

We have rung the bells for all the main Sunday morning and evening services and on most occasions we had 10 or 12 ringers. Jenny and Katie also started to ring at the beginning of the Sunday ringing as well.

We rang in the New Year again and this year and again we had our photo in the Village Voice.

This year we had more interaction with the Ticknall ringers, and it has been good that they have been able to join us for practices and some Sunday service ringing. Our own ringers have gained from the extra practices at Ticknall, and the easier Ticknall bells has helped Jenny, Katie, Fiona and other ringers progress over the year.

I should like to thank Maurice, Christian and Rachael for their continued support as deputies, to Christian and Duncan for their Steeple Keeper work, and Phil for looking after our finances and admin. Finally, last but not least, thank you to all the ringers, whose support and dedication has made the ringing and associated activities successful throughout the year.

Nigel Coupe, Ringing Master

Steeple Keeper's Report

There isn't too much to report for 2015. We have had three ropes that have worn through below the sally, I have hand spliced new tail ends on and they are in the box as spares. We currently have no new spares, but four or five decent recycled spares and a couple more that are usable but a bit rough.

I will continue to monitor the situation, but at some point in the next year or two we may need to think about some replacements. Rough costs are:

- £150 + VAT for new polyester rope
- £85 + VAT to have new sally and tail end spliced onto existing top end
- £35 + VAT to have new tail ends machine spliced into existing rope

When we do get new ropes I would suggest trying one with a Dyneema top ends on the tenor and possible the eleventh. These are a new product but strong and very low stretch, good for bigger bells with long ropes.

Taylor's undertook an inspection on 12th June 2015 (£145 + VAT). They checked the installation and reported all was generally in good order. Two recommendations resulting were:

1. Clappers of bells 7 and 10 could do with being re-bushed in the near future, approximately £135 + VAT each if we take the clappers out, transport them to Loughborough and re-fit them.
2. There was some evidence of grease creeping through the bearings of the 10th. I don't think this is a real problem at the moment, I will continue to monitor (as recommended).

In the spring I would like to spend an afternoon giving the tower a good clean out. It would be good to get a small team of volunteers willing to help, as it is a much quicker job with a few hands. A Sunday afternoon, before evening service might be a good time.

Muffles are fine, although the tenor could do with a new strap at some point.

The simulator is available for silent practice, and there are now some rubber inner tubes which can be used to silence the bells more quickly if required.

The dumbbell has been used a bit, but is still a little tricky to ring. It has had a repair made to the slider assembly and a new stay. There is a spare stay for the dumbbell. There is one other spare stay which fits the little bells.

Not directly related to the bells, but part of the steeple keepers tasks is to look after the flag. The old flag disintegrated in November. A new one has been purchased, with the cost kindly met by Duncan.

Christian Peckham, Steeplekeeper