

The Eddie Experience

Year three of the Barnes ringers in Devon saga. We were, this year, promised a more relaxed tour and quarter peal weekend, so here goes. As it happens, Alan and I do not live in Barnes (or very near to it) so we met with the rest of the group just as they were ringing down at Castle Cary, the first tower of Friday. At the next tower, Shepton Beauchamp, I rang in my first quarter of Cambridge Major inside (I was very pleased with myself). This was going to be a good weekend! So Friday continued, with ringing at towers on a route towards Bampton in Devon with another couple of quarters along the way to keep us in trim.

Saturday's schedule included nine towers with six quarters to be attempted, the first at 8.45 a.m. However the "enthusiasts" decided to start the day with a quarter on the handbells at 7.30 a.m. I started at Uffculme, a ground floor eight where the method had secretly been changed to Barnes, (unknown to Eddie who was ringing Doubles elsewhere). I stood opposite the door to the churchyard, which we had opened (or I couldn't tell you the next bit), and was able to glimpse Uffculme people doing their Saturday morning shopping, and from time to time they came and watched us. The quarter was a little shaky at first, but settled down and went at a cracking pace. It was pleasing to ring and listen to, and a first in the method by all the band. The towers on today's list were to the south of Bampton, unexplored territory to all of us except Colin who is the Guv'n'r of Broom Cottage, (the centre of the universe when it comes to Barnes Ringers in Devon). Colin had been set some homework before the tour and had arranged some excellent eating stops. Lunch was in Cullompton after we had stretched our talents to Stedman Caters and Cambridge Royal (as well as lots of plain hunting on nine) and then we went onto a couple more quarters before satisfying Alex's dream of a Devon cream tea. We can all recommend the only cream-tea shop, which also does B&B, in Berrysbridge. With two more towers to ring at and two more quarters to attempt, we were back only just in time for the carvery at the Exeter Inn.

Sunday dawned and we successfully rang a quarter before the morning service at Bampton and then rang with the local ringers just before the service. Others had gone to Morbath to ring a service quarter there. Somehow another handbell quarter was squeezed in and then it was off for drinks before lunch — accompanied by handbell ringing. The bells were put down while we ate, but after lunch and before we were due to ring at Oakford another quarter was scored. Handbell ringing occurred at intervals throughout the weekend, in fact any time there were a few moments to spare the handbells came out.

Most of the group left on Sunday but as the last bells weren't lowered until about 8.30 p.m. a few of us decided that to travel back on Monday would be less arduous. This meant of course that we could ring at yet more towers on the way home, so we did, but no quarters.

Many thanks are due to all the people involved that made the weekend such a success. All those who allowed us to ring in their towers and who made sure the church or tower was open (we had only one lockout — not bad for 25 towers in a weekend). Our thanks to Colin for making his cottage available and for doing his homework, and to Patricia who holds the purse strings and sorts out the finances involved in the weekend. To everyone on the tour for being such a friendly group of people, but mostly our thanks to Eddie for organising the towers and who should ring what and where. I'm sure at times we must sound a bit ungrateful when we swap around and complain about what we have been organised to ring, but we do appreciate the hard work and frustration that a weekend like this involves.

£10 CEM

Shepton Beauchamp, Som. 26 Jul, 1280 Cambridge S. Major: J N Ley 1, Christine E Marchbank (1st S. Major) 2, Ann F Eyles 3, Jill M Hupman 4, T J Eyles 5, D Holdridge 6, M J Wigney (150th as C) 7, A J Marchbank 8.

Broadway, Som. 26 Jul, 1260 P.B. Doubles: Amanda L M Lysons 1, Alex Bayliss (C) 2, E J R Hartley 3, T J Eyles 4, D Holdridge 5, Ann F Eyles 6.

Milverton, Som. 26 Jul, 1260 P.B. Triples: Jill M

Obituary

Alistair Neale

We all took Alistair for granted at St. Peter's, Bournemouthe. None of us knew one end of a bell from another in the belfry, let alone where to squirt oil, when our steeple-keeper left over seven years ago.

Alistair took pity on us and adopted us and the bells! That he happened to be the steeple-keeper at Christchurch Priory and a member of the band there was by the way. That he happened to be a friend of Marion's, one of our ringers, might have had something to do with his decision. Nevertheless, he performed the task of steeplekeeper, with Marion assisting, for over seven years.

We became accustomed to seeing him in his navy-blue uniform and white shirt, coming straight from the Customs and Excise job. Often he would ring with us on Sunday mornings if his shift didn't end in time for him to reach the Priory.

A reliable standard methods ringer, his ability and willingness to ring the back bells was appreciated in a tower top-heavy with women. Alistair would help out with wed-

dings, quarter peals, and feast days — he was someone we could rely on.

Each year at the annual dinner, Marion and Alistair would be there.

His phlegmatic statements we also became accustomed to. A cold and dirty job amongst the bells was no more momentous to him than helping land another cache of drugs in his Customs and Excise role.

He was punctilious with his bell inspections, demanding ropes and stays from time to time when they were needed.

We took him for granted — that is, until last year, when, at the age of 54 he was first taken ill and decided to resign.

Typically Alistair, he checked the bells over and told us what was to be done in the future. When Melanie, one of our newest ringers, volunteered to take on the steeplekeeping, he personally instructed her, giving lots of advice and help.

He attended St. James, Pokesdown, as well as St. Peter's and Christchurch Priory. When, this summer, the doctors told him he had just a few weeks left he put his affairs calmly in order. He planned his funeral service at St. James choosing the hymns and asking his cousin Paul Tones, a Christchurch ringer, to play the organ at the service. He particularly did not want any bells to be rung half-muffled on his account — and they weren't. The church was packed on the day with many ringers and his colleagues from work paying their last respects. He lived and died a Christian in the truest sense.

We held a requiem mass at St. Peter's for him. Two quarter peals have been rung. If there are bells in heaven they'll swing more smoothly now that Alistair is there.

J. PIKE.

George Edgar Boyden

The death occurred on October 9th of Mr. George Edgar Boyden, a former ringer at St. Peter's, Colchester; he was 82.

George learnt to ring at St. Peter's before the last war and became a useful member of the local band. After the war he rang for a few years at St. Peter's and St. Leonard's, helping to revive ringing at the latter.

A rather shy, unassuming man, he never travelled about much after ringing, and only rang one peal — treble to Superlative at St. Peter's in 1937, conducted by E. P. Duffield. He was employed in the retail hardware business most of his working life in Colchester. His great love was his greenhouse and garden, which he was very fond of.

Unfortunately he suffered a bad fall in his garden several years ago and became partially disabled; however, he still managed to tend his beloved orchids.

The funeral service took place at St. Peter's on October 16th, followed by cremation. His wife pre-deceased him several years ago. Our sympathy goes out to his only child, Elizabeth, and her family.

H. J. M.

Due to a misunderstanding, the following quarter peal was mislaid and never sent for publication. Charlie Banham was a good friend, and although very late, it is the wish of the ringers that this tribute should be submitted for publication.

Kenninghall, Norfolk. 2 March 1991, 1260 P.B. Doubles: S A Turner 1, M A Turner 2, Mrs. Christine Hales 3, Miss Patricia Taylor 4, M G Avons (C) 5, R W Tansley 6. On the back six. In thanksgiving for the life of Charles Banham of Caston, Norfolk, gentleman and friend, laid to rest earlier this day.

Hupman 1, Patricia M Chapman 2, Christine E Marchbank 3, J N Ley 4, A J Marchbank 5, D Holdridge 6, M J Wigney (C) 7, M Brady 8.

Bampton, Devon (Broom Cottage). 27 Jul, 1260 P.B. Minor: Frances D Gilbert 1-2, M J Wigney (1st in hand) 3-4, A J Watkins (C) 5-6. 1st on the bells.

Uffculme, Devon. 27 Jul, 1250 Barnes S. Major: Christine E Marchbank 1, Ann F Eyles 2, Frances D Gilbert 3, Jill M Hupman 4, T J Eyles 5, M J Wigney (C) 6, A J Marchbank 7, A J Watkins 8. 1st blows in m by all.

Silverton, Devon. 27 Jul, 1250 Spl. S. Major (CYNR): J N Ley 1, E J R Hartley 2, Ann F Eyles 3, T J Eyles 4, Frances D Gilbert (1st Spl. S. Major) 5, Jill M Hupman 6, A J Watkins 7, M J Wigney (C) 8.

Bramford Speke, Devon. 27 Jul, 1260 P.B. Doubles: Alex Bayliss 1, Lorraine N Lysons (1st inside) 2, Christine E Marchbank 3, D Holdridge 4, A J Marchbank (C) 5, J C Yandle 6.

Bampton, Devon. 28 Jul, 1260 P.B. Doubles: Catherine Bonsall 1, Patricia A Chapman 2, Christine E Marchbank 3, J N Ley 4, A J Marchbank (C) 5, J C Yandle 6. For Morning Service.

Morebath, Devon. 28 Jul, 1260 P.B. Doubles: Amanda L M Lysons 1, Lorraine N Lysons 2, Jill M Hupman (350th Q) 3, M J Wigney 4, A J Watkins (C) 5, Frances D Gilbert 6. For Morning Service.

Bampton, Devon (Broom Cottage). 28 Jul, 1568 P.B. Major: Alex Bayliss (1st in hand) 1-2, Frances D Gilbert 3-4, A J Watkins (C) 5-6, M J Wigney (1st on 8 in hand) 7-8.

Oakford, Devon. 28 Jul, 1260 P.B. Minor: D Holdridge (1st in hand) 1-2, Frances D Gilbert 3-4, A J Watkins (C) 5-6.

Calverleigh, Devon. 28 Jul, 1260 St Clements Bob Minor: F Ring-Davies 1, Frances D Gilbert 2, D Holdridge 3, J N Ley (1st in m) 4, Alex Bayliss 5, A J Watkins (C) 6.

Uplowman, Devon. 28 Jul, 1260 P.B. Doubles: M J Wigney 1, Catherine Bonsall (1st inside) 2, A J Marchbank 3, Jill M Hupman 4, E J R Hartley (C) 5, Christine E Marchbank 6.

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