

## Barnes 2000, Wales!



Breaking with a 10-year tradition, Barnes ringers and friends forsook Devon and headed for South Wales this year. The advance party set out on Wednesday but we joined them on Thursday afternoon at St Mary's, Brecon where we were met by Malcolm Johns who amused us with his parting instruction: "Would the last person please release the clock hammers, turn out the light and cancel the milk."

On Friday morning at Trevethin, some hasty re-ordering of the band was necessary owing to an imminent funeral and certain people getting lost, but a quarter of Barnes Surprise Major was scored despite growing apprehension at the gradual disintegration of the second rope. Mynydd Islwyn church stands in splendid isolation; the wind howled through the ground floor ringing chamber but some good general ringing was enjoyed on this new millennium ring of eight where, quite appropriately, we managed to bring round a course of Millennium Major. Lunch was taken at Bassaleg, where the old steel ring has recently been replaced with the fine 8 from St John's, Newport. The glorious tone of these bells seems to have had a soporific effect on the band, for Cambridge suddenly disintegrated without warning after four well struck courses. The local ringer at Llantarnam, who first came to the church as curate 50 years ago, regaled us with tales of ringing there in the old days and then sat in the ringing chamber for the duration of 1320 Kent Minor. After Llanfechla, which proved challenging, and tea came the anticipated highlight of the tour: a quarter of Stedman Caters at Abergavenny. Sadly, although it settled quickly into a good rhythm, an error occurred after the second turning course and the band retired to the Hen & Chickens to drown their sorrows with a jar of Brains.

Saturday got off to a good start with a commendable quarter of Bristol Major brought round at Llanarth, despite the 7th ringer feeling decidedly unwell towards the end; we had to admire his determination. Meanwhile doubles got underway at Dingestow, after which the entire party met for general ringing at Monmouth. Considering the dignified sound and heavy feel of these bells, it was a surprise to find that the tenor is only 16 cwt. Trellech, we discovered, has seven bells: whilst some of the party enjoyed the recently installed ring of 6, others were kept occupied trying to control an ingenious model which appeared to be made from part of an old vacuum cleaner with wood and cardboard fittings. Then came Usk ... hearing well struck Bristol on this mellifluous eight, one could not help but wonder whether Abergavenny was the highlight of the tour after all. Here too, we admired the magnificent organ (formerly of Llandaff Cathedral) with its horizontal trumpets and were entertained to tea by the local ringers. We were exhorted to climb the Sugar Loaf mountain, but our schedule, like that of most ringing tours, allowed little time for sight-seeing (surprisingly, Mike Wigney didn't insist on climbing it before breakfast).

Simultaneous quarters were then scored at Tredunnoch and Llangybi before returning to Abergavenny. Dinner was a gastronomic disappointment, the menu on offer including such dubious delights as quom and 'baby' lemon sole (3 mouthfuls of flesh), but there was unscheduled entertainment to follow. The hotel had been host to a wedding party and the bride was spotted striding around in a state of agitation with her clothing in disarray. Shortly after this, the ringers found themselves in the blissful state of being locked in the bar, albeit for their own protection from irate wedding guests hammering on the doors and windows. We later learned from the harassed barman that the bridegroom had been missing for three hours, having last been seen in the company of a lady who was not his wife.

Sunday morning found us at Brecon Cathedral where Malcolm led us up to the ringing chamber (possibly the most convoluted access to a tower in the country?). After a good quarter of Grandsire Caters, some of the party took the rare opportunity of attending Mattins. The Dean's prayer for those embarking on the path of matrimony brought to mind a certain pair of newly-weds whose marriage might already be beyond salvation. After an agreeable lunch beside the Monmouth & Brecon Canal, 8-spliced was lost at Llanfeugan, a tower apparently plagued by bats. A long winding road brought us to Cwmdru. The name means dark valley; it is certainly a remote valley but, it seems, not remote enough to be beyond the earshot of complainants, so ringing here was limited. Handbells in the churchyard preceded Evensong ringing at Llantilio Pertholey. The newly appointed vicar of Llantilio Crossenny made us very welcome and Grandsire Triples went well on the light eight, being the first performance of 'not the 1288' outside England. Back in Abergavenny, the early eaters made a second visit to the Chinese restaurant, while those who get their priorities right concluded another good session in the Hen & Chicken with an enormous portion of fish and chips eaten in the hotel yard which was mercifully free of nuptial discord that evening.

On Monday, a depleted party began the homeward journey, stopping first at Chepstow. These bells, rung from the west gallery, are quiet enough without competition from the organ, but Grandsire Caters was scored against all the odds and we were grateful to the three ringers from the Forest of Dean who joined us to make up the number. Cambridge was obviously the jinxed method of the week, as we lost it again at Mathern. Having a long journey ahead, we opted for sandwiches in a local pub on the grounds of expediency; this proved to be a misjudgement when, an hour later, one of the staff returned with a loaf of sliced bread for which she had obviously scoured half of Monmouthshire. Nevertheless, after a quick sprint up the M4, we reached Kington St Michael in time to ring mixed doubles. A satisfying quarter of Plain Bob Minor at Peasemore completed the venture for this year, whereupon the six remaining participants retired to the Red Lion at Chieveley, a place not unknown to the RW editor, although unfortunately he was not close enough to join us on this occasion.

Hearty thanks are due to Eddie Hartley for his unstinting organisation; to Jill for keeping the accounts, and to all the incumbents and tower captains whose bells we greatly enjoyed. G & T

**Redwick, Mon.** 12 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (5m): Adria Udal 1, Ian Church 2, Trisha Hawkins (most m) 3, James White 4, Edmund Hartley (C) 5, Giles Dimock 6.

**Caerleon, Mon.** 12 Jul, 1260 PB Triples: Stella Shell 1, Trisha Hawkins 2, James White 3, Edmund Hartley (C) 4, Ian Church 5, Maryanne Roach 6, Adrian Udal 7, Giles Dimock 8.

**Talgarth, Powys.** 13 Jul, 1272 London S Minor: Jill Wigney 1, Stella Shell 2, Edmund Hartley 3, Maryanne Roach 4, James White (250th Q) 5, Mike Wigney (C) 6.

**Glasbury, Powys.** 13 Jul, 1264 PB Major: Edmund Hartley 1, Adrian Udal 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Stella Shell 4, Maryanne Roach 5, Mike Wigney (C) 6, Ian Church 7, James White 8.

**Brecon, Powys (St Mary).** 13 Jul, 1260 Erin Triples: Ian Church 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Maryanne Roach 4, Adrian Udal 5, James White 6, Mike Wigney (C) 7, Giles Dimock 8. 1st in m: 1,3,4,6.

**Llanfaes, Powys.** 13 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (1p/2m): Adrian Udal (C) 1, Stella Shell 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Ian Church 4, Mike Wigney 5, Giles Dimock 6.

**Trevethin, Mon.** 14 Jul, 1250 Barnes S Major: Gill Tomlinson 1, James White 2, Jill Wigney 3, Stella Shell 4, Ian Church 5, Maryanne Roach 6, Tony Nunn 7, Mike Wigney (C) 8. 1st blows in m: 2,4,5,6,7.

**Llantarnam, Mon.** 14 Jul, 1320 Kent TB Minor: Trisha Hawkins 1, James White 2, Gill Tomlinson 3, Stella Shell 4, Mike Wigney 5, Tony Nunn (C) 6.

**Llanarth, Mon.** 15 Jul, 1280 Bristol S Major: James White 1, Jill Wigney 2, Edmund Hartley 3, Gill Tomlinson 4, Maryanne Roach 5, Adrian Udal 6, Mike Wigney (C) 7, Tony Nunn 8.

**Dingestow, Mon.** 15 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (2m): Ann Crocker 1, Monica Trow 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Ian Church 4, Mark Smith (C) 5, Stella Shell 6.

**Tredunnoch, Mon.** 15 Jul, 1260 St Clements College B Minor: Trisha Hawkins 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Adrian Udal 3, Gill Tomlinson 4, James White 5, Tony Nunn (C) 6.

**Llangybi, Mon.** 15 Jul, 1250 Spl S Major (CYNR): Ann Crocker 1, Stella Shell 2, Monica Trow 3, Ian Church 4, Maryanne Roach 5, Jill Wigney 6, Mark Smith 7, Mike Wigney 8.

**Brecon, Powys. (Cathedral)** 16 Jul, 1259 Grandsire Caters: Trisha Hawkins 1, Mike Wigney (C) 2, Stella Shell 3, Gill Tomlinson 4, Maryanne Roach 5, Edmund Hartley 6, Monica Trow 7, Ian Church 8, Tony Nunn 9, Jill Wigney 10.

**Cwmdru, Powys.** 16 Jul, 1260 Single Oxford B Minor: Trisha Hawkins 1, Monica Trow 2, Stella Shell 3, Adrian Udal 4, Ian Church 5, Mike Wigney (C) 6.

**Llantilio Crossenny, Mon.** 16 Jul, 1288 Grandsire Triples: Stella Shell 1, Mark Smith 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Jill Wigney 4, Edmund Hartley 5, Gill Tomlinson 6, Tony Nunn (C) 7, Adrian Udal 8. To honour the last day of the Incumbency of The Rev Richard Ames-Lewis as Team Rector of Barnes.

**Chepstow, Mon.** 17 Jul, 1278 Grandsire Caters: Trisha Hawkins 1, Malcolm Evans (1st caters) 2, Stella Shell 3, Gill Tomlinson 4, Jack Long 5, Jill Wigney 6, Edmund Hartley 7, Adrian Udal 8, Tony Nunn (C) 9, Allen Twyman 10.

**Kington St Michael, Wilts.** 17 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (2m): Stella Shell 1, Gill Tomlinson 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Tony Nunn 4, Edmund Hartley (C) 5, Adrian Udal 6.

**Peasemore, Berks.** 17 Jul, 1260 PB Minor: Edmund Hartley 1, Adrian Udal 2, Trisha Hawkins 3, Stella Shell 4, Gill Tomlinson 5, Tony Nunn (C) 6.

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