

## Barnes Weekend 2005 by River and Cove and Hoe \*

The days preceding the annual Barnes Tour saw the now customary flurry of e-mails as last-minute arrangements were put into place. We always ask the organisers if they've booked the weather and this year they undoubtedly had. On a sunny Wednesday morning the early birds met for coffee in deepest Wiltshire before opening the score sheet at Stoke Trister, while others ambled down to Yarcombe, where practice for the synchronised motor mowing championships was in full swing (just as well there was a toilet, for no corner of the churchyard escaped the gaze of a mower).

Dean Prior's claim to fame is that Robert Herrick was Rector, both before and after the Commonwealth. Nowadays the church sits uncomfortably close to the Devon Expressway, reached by a muddy single-track lane which leaves the dual carriageway abruptly. We noted that a regular commuter had been thanked for replacing the church's tattered flag; well done that man. Our exit was blocked by a large herd of Friesians with distended udders en route to the milking shed via the church car park. A couple of bovine motoring enthusiasts clearly appreciated the rarity value of a Rover 800 Coupe but did they have to drool quite so literally?

From there it was but a short hop to the Sportsman's Inn at Ivybridge, our base for the week, and the first of many cream teas (start as you mean to go on I say). Ten then made their way to St Andrew's, Plymouth. Stedman wouldn't go, so plan B was effected and a reasonable quarter of Grandsire duly scored. While most of the party took the opportunity for a welcome shower before supper, our esteemed leader returned to a sauna, having left the hot tap running earlier.

Most of Thursday was spent pottering around little villages on Dartmoor and those who hadn't yet adapted to the slower pace of life were quickly disillusioned by the odd tractor or a lorry from the quarry at Lee Moor. Sadly the 100% success rate of the first day was soon broken. Mid-afternoon we descended on Tavistock and St Eustacius' church, a

glorious ten and surely a serious contender for 'best-kept ringing chamber'? Two of us, ringing finished for the day, set out to climb a tor then suddenly realised that supper was booked at the Imperial in less than an hour and 'you know what these Devon miles are like'. We needn't have worried; the staff were friendly and laid back and there was ample time for a couple of pints first.

Friday dawned dull and cloudy. 'Typical' we muttered, contemplating a washed-out river trip, and packed our waterproofs. Travelling variously by bus, train or car, we assembled in Totnes and enjoyed some general ringing on a good old-fashioned heavy eight. The High Street is steep, narrow and one-way and one could hardly bear to look as Mike's wheelchair came hurtling down against the flow of traffic, the old demon cyclist glint in his eye. By the time we reached the quay, the sun was shining brightly; indeed after an hour or so on deck there were a few decidedly pink knees. The commentary, despite a smattering of predictable and cringe-worthy jokes, was informative (Agatha Christie lived in her boathouse during WW2 while her mansion was occupied by American officers) and we spotted a few herons, egrets and cormorants on the way to Dartmouth. A short trip in a somewhat smaller vessel took us to St Petrox, where we played 'hunt the key' and entertained the tourists.

Lunch was a swift pasty or crab sandwich before ringing at St Saviour's. Alas, Cambridge came to grief three leads from the end. Meanwhile, the other band, having toiled up the long and winding way to Townstall in the sweltering heat, threw in the towel after barely two courses of Bob Minor. At least it left time for an ice cream (although yours truly was ready to call in the Trading Standards Officer, having enquired whether the frozen confection on offer was Langage Farm or Johnny Chick's Devon Licks, both names being emblazoned across the kiosk, and been told 'Oh, it's none of those, we just took over the place' by an off-handed young woman who was unable to satisfactorily account for its provenance, though, to judge by the lack of any real flavour, it was probably something they picked up at the local cash-and-carry) before taking the ferry to Kingswear.

For once in his career the great Isambard Kingdom Brunel was thwarted when his plans to bridge the Dart were rejected. He had already built Dartmouth station (the only British station which has never seen a train, it still stands as a cafe) but had to build another on the east bank. A century and a half later, the villagers still rely on the ferries for access to local amenities. Next to the station is Kingswear church with a ring of three which, once the furniture in the vestry-cum-ringing



Left to right: Adrian Udall, Helen Mansfield, Jill and Mike Wigney, Sheila and Jeremy Cheesman, Christine Northeast, Sarah Percival, James White, Lucy Bricheno, Francis Ring-Davies, Edmund Hartley, Stella Shell, Maryanne Roach, Tony Nunn, Gill Tomlinson, Liz Stanley, Lorraine Lysons and Trisha Hawkins



chamber had been moved out of the way, provided a pleasant diversion before taking the steam train to Paignton. The church there is built of local sandstone and the newel of the staircase is so worn one wonders that it does not collapse (fortunately the steps have been re-treaded). After some wisely unambitious ringing (a sound magisterial decision), there was time for a quick pint before the bus back to Ivybridge and a barbecue at the Imperial.

Saturday arguably produced the best day's ringing, beginning with Grandsire on the fine eight at St Mary's, Plympton and ending with Pudsey at St Maurice down the road. Bristol was scored at Laira but College Bob Triples was not persisted with at Emmanuel, Compton Gifford, in order to do justice to another good ring. Tea at the latter tower came with a selection of mouth-watering fruit tarts, the tasting of which precipitated an almost unseemly scramble to snap up the few jars of jam for sale at the back of the church. The traditional Saturday evening Dinner was taken *al fresco* at the Sportsman's. Eddie and Trisha, the organisers, were heartily thanked amid reminiscences of Barnes Tours past (locked in the bar at Abergavenny, gazed upon by Her Majesty at East Raynham), but there were no silly games or supping of nightcaps into the small hours. We must be getting old.

Sunday's lunch at Noss Mayo was delayed but, sitting by that picturesque creek watching the boats go by with a pint in hand, who in their right mind would complain? The bells proved hard-going, at least to Double Norwich. (By the way, can anyone enlighten us: are Revelstoke and Noss Mayo just two names for the same village or is there more to it than that?) We wouldn't have bothered with lunch at all had we known what lay in store at Modbury: an exquisite array of home-made cakes and sandwiches - and scones with clotted cream and blackcurrant jam, now that's what I call class. For south Londoners there was a certain novelty value in ringing at Brixton. But Grandsire Minor went awry, so the remnant of the party adjourned to the pub (although why we had to enter the garden by scrambling under a pole like a troupe of incompetent limbo dancers when we could have used the gate is a mystery) before returning to Ivybridge for curry.

We were expecting a challenge at Ugborough but agreed they're really not bad for a mixolydian eight. The maxim 'keep it simple' prevailed at Kenn and Grandsire Triples at Chard after lunch made a satisfying three out of three for the final day. Perhaps in retrospect there is a pattern or a moral emerging here - only do serious ringing on alternate days? TN

\* Devon. glorious Devon.

**Stoke Trister, Som.** 13 Jul, 1260 PB Minor: Andrew Howard-Smith 1, Stella Shell 2, Sheila Cheesman 3, Andrew Harvey 4, Adrian Udall 5, Jeremy Cheesman (C) 6.

**Yarcombe, Devon.** 13 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (3m/p): Trisha Hawkins 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Gill Tomlinson 3, James White (C) 4, Tony Nunn 5, Giles Dimock 6.

**Dean Prior, Devon.** 13 Jul, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Sarah Percival 1, James White 2, Tony Nunn 3, Andrew Harvey 4, Edmund Hartley (C) 5, Phaedra Sawbridge 6.

**Plymouth, Devon.** (S Andrew), 13 Jul, 1259 Grandsire Caters: Stella Shell 1, Christine Northeast 2, Sheila Cheesman 3, Gill Tomlinson 4, Trisha Hawkins 5, Edmund Hartley 6, James White (C) 7, Jeremy Cheesman 8, Tony Nunn 9, Adrian Udall 10.

**Shaugh Prior, Devon.** 14 Jul, 1500 Grandsire Doubles: Adrian Udall (C) 1, Stella Shell 2, Andrew Howard-Smith 3, Christine Northeast 4, James White 5, Giles Dimock 6.

**Sheepstor, Devon.** 14 Jul, 1296 Spiced S Minor (6m): Trisha Hawkins 1, Mike Wigney (C) 2, Sheila Cheesman 3, Jill Wigney 4, Mark Smith 5, Jeremy Cheesman 6.

**Tavistock, Devon.** 14 Jul, 1296 Little B Royal: Maryanne Roach 1, Christine Northeast 2, Sheila Cheesman 3, Jim Shepard 4, Edmund Hartley 5, Gill Tomlinson 6, Adrian Udall 7, Tony Nunn 8, Jeremy Cheesman 9, James White (C) 10.

**Plympton, Devon.** (S Mary BV) 16 Jul, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Sarah Percival 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Maryanne Roach 3, Trisha Hawkins 4, Francis Ring-Davies 5, Gill Tomlinson 6, James White (C) 7, Tony Nunn 8.

**Plymouth, Devon.** (S Mary V, Laira) 16 Jul, 1280 Bristol Major: Lucy Bricheno 1, Stella Shell 2, Sheila Cheesman 3, Mike Wigney (C) 4, Christine Northeast 5, Jeremy Cheesman 6, Mark Smith 7, Jill Wigney 8.

**Stoke Damerel, Devon.** 16 Jul, 1344 PB Major: Lorraine Lysons 1, Helen Mansfield 2, Mike Wigney 3, Stella Shell 4, Francis Ring-Davies 5, Maryanne Roach 6, Mark Smith 7, Jill Wigney (C) 8.

**Plymouth, Devon.** (Emmanuel, Compton Gifford) 16 Jul, 1302 Grandsire Triples: Sarah Percival 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Gill Tomlinson 3, Jim Shepard 4, Christine Northeast 5, James White 6, Tony Nunn (C) 7, Adrian Udall 8.

**Plympton, Devon.** (S Maurice) 16 Jul, 1250 Pudsey S Major: Stella Shell 1, Maryanne Roach 2, Francis Ring-Davies (1st in m.) 3, Mark Smith 4, Adrian Udall 5, Mike Wigney 6, Gill Tomlinson 7, Tony Nunn (C) 8.

**Cornwood, Devon.** 16 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (2m): Lucy Bricheno 1, Lorraine Lysons (1st mxd dble) 2, Helen Mansfield 3, Jim Shepard (C) 4, Jeremy Cheesman 5, Sheila Cheesman 6.

**Yealmpton, Devon.** 17 Jul, 1320 Cambridge Minor: Trisha Hawkins 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Maryanne Roach 3, Francis Ring-Davies 4, Sheila Cheesman 5, Jeremy Cheesman (C) 6.

**Modbury, Devon.** 17 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles: Sarah Percival 1, Edmund Hartley 2, Jill Wigney 3, Christine Northeast 4, Adrian Udall (C) 5, Helen Mansfield 6.

**Ugborough, Devon.** 18 Jul, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Stella Shell 1, Lucy Bricheno 2, Edmund Hartley 3, Trisha Hawkins 4, Gill Tomlinson 5, Jim Shepard (C) 6, Tony Nunn 7, Mark Smith 8.

**Kenn, Devon.** 18 Jul, 1260 Mixed Doubles (2m): Lucy Bricheno 1, Stella Shell 2, Gill Tomlinson 3, Edmund Hartley 4, Tony Nunn (C) 5, Trisha Hawkins 6.

**Chard, Som.** 18 Jul, 1288 Grandsire Triples: Trisha Hawkins 1, Stella Shell 2, Lucy Bricheno 3, Edmund Hartley 4, Jim Shepard 5, Gill Tomlinson 6, Tony Nunn (C) 7, Bernard Brown 8.