



"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old". Walsall's Gordon Howell is second from right

Remembering the Society's war dead

by Lucy Smith

H. Gordon Howell

At the AGM, you will have heard me talk about Gordon Howell, a Walsall ringer and younger brother of Howard, who some of our older ringers will remember. Gordon was a glider pilot in the Second World War and died 70 years ago, on September 20th 1944, after being wounded in the Battle of Arnhem. He was aged 24 and his death was marked in Walsall by a peal, called by Howard over a year later.

World War One casualties

I spoke also of those members of our Society who died on active service in the First World War. The last time I wrote about them in the Newsletter was on the 90th anniversary of the end of the Great War, as it was called.

Now we have come to the centenary of the beginning of the war, it was thought that this anniversary would be a low key affair and that most of the commemorations would be at the end of the war, but this is not how it has turned out – everywhere there are ceremonies and stories marking this milestone in history. On the ringing front, it was suggested that, rather than having one big ceremony at the beginning and end, the death of each ringer should be marked in the place where he lived on the actual centenary date that he died. I think this is right, but that does not stop a band taking part in events if the local population want to do something different. It is an occasion when we can play a significant part.

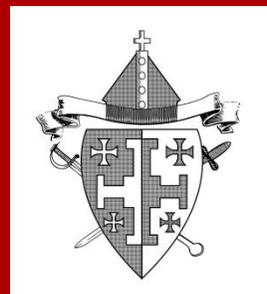
The names of those ringers who are listed in the 1913-1919 Society Reports are:

William Harry Brown of Aldridge
Howard Burton of Rushall
Bert Hand of Penn
William Jones of Wombourne
Francis John Keen of Tamworth
Herbert Pagett of West Bromwich, All Saints
John Geoffrey Rowley of Tipton
Edmund Thomas Westwood of Penkridge
Rev. Arthur Morell Pratt (Hon. Member and Vicar of St Giles, Willenhall, so probably not a ringer)
Herbert Jones of Wolverhampton, St Peter (discharged through ill health and died in 1919)

I have done some initial research into them, but I feel strongly that local knowledge is important and that bands should be left to investigate their own ringers. Tamworth ringers are finding out about Francis Keen, who was the first member to die, in February 1915; Penn ringers are investigating Bert Hand. Some suggestions how you can help:

- Look for information on the boards in your ringing room. You may have

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photos of individuals or the band at the time.

- Talk to the locals, both in church and outside, to try to find family links.
- Examine archive material for obituaries, particularly the newspapers of the time.
- Put a letter in the Parish Magazine and/or the local press.
- Look at the censuses, particularly the 1911 census, to get family details.
- Search the Web.
- View regimental records

A word of warning - ask around to see if someone else has already done this research before you spend time and effort on the same thing!

Congratulations to Jill Rogers of Barton-under-Needwood, who has researched the fallen from that village, and has already rung a bell 100 times for the first man who died. She intends to do the same for each man on the centenary of their death. and has publicised this in the local paper.

All the above is the easy work, because the names of Society casualties were recorded in the Reports.

However, only about half the towers in the Archdeaconry of Stafford show affiliated ringers in 1913/4; many of the other half, about 27 towers in number, would have had ringers, but probably not change ringers – they would have been call change ringers using cards and therefore not eligible to join the Society, even if they wanted to. It is likely that some of these ringers were killed in action. How we find out is another matter. My grandfather was one such ringer - it is family knowledge that his father taught all four of his sons to ring, but they rang at a tower which was not

Glider Pilot Wounded & Missing

First official news that Staff-Sergeant Glider Pilot Gordon Howell, of the Glider Pilot Regiment, had been posted missing was followed by an intimation that he was known to have been previously wounded, and this tends to strengthen a hope that he may have been taken prisoner. He is 24 years of age and younger son of Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Howell, of 473, Bloxwich Road, Walsall. He has a wife, to whom he was married two years ago, and who resides with her parents at 183, Shady Side, Exthorpe, Doncaster. He joined the Territorials shortly before the war, but was transferred about three years ago from the South Staffords to the Glider Pilot Regiment. He was in the school football team when he was attending North Walsall School.



S/SERGT. HOWELL

affiliated to the local ringing association because they did not qualify for membership, although my grandfather had some knowledge of Grandsire Doubles. He died in France in 1918, and his elder brother in 1915. I have sent their names and details to Alan Regin and they are included in the second Central Council Roll of Honour Book. But this information has been handed down in my family. If you are willing to investigate the names on your local memorial, you might be able to find someone who knows

about individuals or their families. It will be difficult to do this in the larger towns, where the Roll of Honour list is very long, but it could be possible in smaller villages. It would be a worthy outcome if we could find more names to add to the list.

Lucy Smith

lucy@thesmiths10.wandadoo.co.uk

The road to 1000 peals

By Stuart Hutchieson



I learnt to ring at Abbots Bromley in 1977, just after the new bells were installed. My teacher was Brian Harris and I rang my first peal on June 6th 1978. 36 years later and I'm pleased to say that I've just completed my 1000th peal.

Brian and I keep in touch and a couple of years ago we noticed that I was approaching my 1000th and he was approaching his 2000th peal. As a bit of background, I rang in Brian's 1000th peal (also at Abbots Bromley), on August 28th 1982. We decided it would be a good target to aim to synchronise our totals over the next 2 years and ring our 1000th and 2000th together. Just to make it more special, Liz was (slowly) approaching her 100th peal. Could we synchronise all three?

At the start of this year we were all fairly confident we were on target and we boldly set a date of 25th August for 'the big one'. However, as the year progressed and a number of scheduled peals were lost, things started to look a bit shaky. Brian had some time off while his wife recovered from surgery, but quickly caught up again. At the start of June I still had 12 peals to ring and in desperation I organised an attempt to ring 6 peals in a day on the Campanile bells. On the day we were only able to attempt 4 and we scored 3 – the pressure was back on.

I managed to score 4 more peals before heading off to New Zealand on holiday at the end of July. The Wellington ringers had organised a peal for us, but we failed to turn up as our plane was diverted due to bad weather – another blow. Arriving back in the UK on 12th August, this left me with less than 2 weeks to ring another 5 peals. This wasn't plain sailing as 2 attempts were lost due to clappers falling out. Thankfully Clive and Lucy volunteered for a handbell peal and a hastily arranged peal at Mavesyn Ridware on 23rd August got me back on track.

The Mavesyn peal was also Liz's 99th peal, and Brian rang his 1999th peal on the same day at Burton, Cheshire. It only remained for me to score my 999th peal on Sunday 24th August. This was in no way guaranteed as it was a longstanding booking to ring at Quex Park in Kent. A number of people delighted in telling me how difficult these bells were and how many peal attempts were lost. With this in mind, I lined up Clive and Lucy to ring an emergency handbell peal at 8 o'clock on Monday morning if required! However, despite a very long drive, the Sunday peal was successful and very enjoyable.

The band met on Monday morning together with a lot of well-wishers from Brian's family who were staying locally for the event. When we got started it was clear that nerves were going to play a part in the quality of the ringing and it was far from the most straightforward of peal attempts. However everyone was very determined to keep on track and 2 hours and 48 minutes later brought us to "That's all" and a safe conclusion. Cheers from downstairs and relief upstairs! Soon the ringing room was full with family and friends. The peal

was written in the book and everyone signed their names, numerous photos were taken and shortly we could all head off to our house for a celebration lunch.

Many of our family and friends were already there to welcome us and shortly there were nearly 50 of us including a lot of Brian's family who had travelled from as far as Portugal specially to celebrate with him. The barbecue was already cooking despite the poor weather and food and beer were brought and shared as everyone caught up with old friends and made new ones. Brian made his usual eloquent job of public speaking, thanking everyone for coming and then telling some embarrassing stories at my expense! It was a very enjoyable event and so nice to share it with so many people.

The 1000th peal

Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire St Nicholas. Monday, 25 August 2014 in 2h48 (11-1-5)

5056 Bristol Surprise Major. Composed by Donald F Morrison #3810 reversed

- 1 Brian Harris (Cheshire)
- 2 John F Mulvey
- 3 Anne E Ogden
- 4 Dawn Grundy
- 5 Elizabeth Hutchieson
- 6 Alan F Scholfield
- 7 Stuart C W Hutchieson (C)
- 8 Andrew C Ogden

2000th peal: 1
1000th peal: 7, taught to ring by 1
100th peal: 5

If this story whets your appetite for peal ringing, don't forget it's the Society's **Peal Week** on 14th-22nd February 2015. If you'd like to ring a peal ("firsts" and experienced supporters especially welcome), talk to Stuart:

shutchieson@btinternet.com

Drayton Bassett progress report

By John Mulvey



A deposit has been paid to John Taylor's to fix the price of the contract. Various other contractors have been to give estimates for additional work, such as electrics and carpentry that needs doing in the tower. The faculty application for permission to do the work is being prepared. A local Tamworth ringer is kindly preparing the plans for the scheme.

The DAC bell advisor has inspected the tower and bells and has submitted a report. This has resulted in the DAC requesting that a structural survey be carried out on the tower to see whether it is strong enough to stand additional bells. An engineer, who is also a ringer, has been asked to carry out the task. This means an additional cost to the scheme of around £1,000

Local villagers have been very supportive of the project. A local joiner and his friend have promised to install the new ringing room floor and open up traps in the floors, free of charge. A lady, who has expressed an interest in learning to ring, is the editor of the "Village Voice" in the Tamworth Herald and keeps placing snippets

in this newspaper. As a result of this, I was contacted by a reporter and a half page article appeared in the Tamworth Herald about the project. This has resulted in a promise of a donation of at least £500. Also, a lady in the village asked her friends for donations to the bell appeal instead of presents for her 50th birthday. I have just received £300, gift aided from her.

I have met with the Deputy Head from the village primary school. She has agreed that years 5/6 from the school will carry out a history/geography project on Drayton now and 100 years ago in Autumn Term 2015. This will link in with the wish to provide a new bell in memory of the six men from the village who gave their lives in World War One.

It has also been agreed that the school will record the bell project and perhaps visit the bell foundry.

A local man contacted me and said he would run a quiz evening for the appeal in the village club, details of which I circulated to you a while ago. Although there were only 40 names with a week to go, in the end the event was packed out. Ten teams took part with over 70 present. The bell ringing exercise was represented solely by 17 ringers and friends from Tamworth. This was an extremely enjoyable event, refreshments being provided, without cost to the event, by local ladies. Local people, businesses and the Tamworth ringers provided prizes for a raffle. At the end of the night around

£700 had been raised for the appeal.

I have already heard from ringers from a nearby Society tower who wish to donate a sum of money to the project. Similar offers from other towers would be extremely welcome.

Drayton Bassett Bells Appeal

A project to augment St. Peter's church bells from four to six, commemorating the centenary of the First World War. There are many ways to get involved: make a donation, volunteer to learn the art of bell ringing, or offer your labour to the project to help keep costs down. This blog tells the story of the project and keeps readers informed of progress.

Contact the appeal
 John Mulvey
 56 Upper Gungate
 Tamworth
 B79 8AA
 Tel: 07760 367570
 Email: mjohn1@ntlworld.com

Wednesday, 3 December 2014

Appeal Launch in New Year

It has been decided that the official launch of the bell appeal will now be in the New Year. The appeal leaflet is now ready for printing in the next few weeks.

Some people have already come forward to help with the distribution of the leaflet to all houses and businesses in the parish. Anyone else who would be willing to help is invited to contact me.

Posted by John Mulvey at 3:52:14. No comments:

Saturday, 22 November 2014

Quiz Night Huge Success



St. Peter's Church, Drayton Bassett

Get in touch online

Name

Email *

Message *

Follow progress with the project on the blog:

draytonbassettappeal.blogspot.co.uk

For more information, or to make a donation, contact:

Mr J F Mulvey
56 Upper Gungate,
Tamworth, B79 8AA
Tel: 07760 367570
mjohn1@ntlworld.com

Diary dates

Please make a note of the following events, coming up (full details on the website):

- ✓ 20th December, Christmas meeting, Pelsall
- ✓ 17th Jan, New members' meeting, Alrewas
- ✓ 31st Jan, Stedman practice, Bloxwich
- ✓ 14th Feb, Skittles evening
- ✓ February 2015 Challenge Month
- ✓ 1st - 8th Feb, Quarter Peal Week
- ✓ 14th - 22nd Feb, Peal Week



Happy Advent and Christmas

The Society wishes all its members and friends a very Happy Advent and Christmas season and a successful ringing New Year!



Wanted for the website and newsletter:

- Peal and quarter peal announcements
- Short stories & anecdotes
- Behind the Louvres histories etc.

Send to newsletter@lwascr.org.uk, or complete the online form at: <http://qurl.com/lb8gq>

100 Club Update

Lucky winners of the 100 Club draw at the Cannock meeting were:

- ❖ 1st David Large, Great Barr
- ❖ 2nd Marjorie Clive, Great Barr
- ❖ 3rd David Everett
- ❖ 4th Dennis Clive, Great Barr



If you'd like to try your luck and help raise money for the Bell Restoration Fund, please contact Linda Pick: lindapick@totalise.co.uk or download an application form