

What Treaty and why Outwell?

In Outwell St. Clement's Church ringing chamber there hung a peal board - the only one and dark with age. A kind donation has enabled it to be taken away for renovation but the rector would like to know more about the peal it commemorates. The information I have so far found out is that a peal of 5040 changes was rung on 6th January 1843 in 3 hours and 15 minutes. No mention of methods, unless the board reveals any, and it was reported in the *Bell's Life of London* on 22nd January 1843. The peal was rung to commemorate the Treaty between England and China.

I have been in correspondence with Canon Felstead who couldn't enlighten me further than I already knew but told me to contact Cyril Wratten which I did and received a reply with the information above and the possible Treaty that it was rung for was that of Nanking in the Opium War signed 29th August 1842. He presumes that with the time taken for news to reach England the timing may well be right.

If this was so I wonder if there were other peals rung for the event anywhere else as Outwell seems a long way from the hub of London where this sort of news was welcomed. I know that ringers, even in those days, rang for just about everything but this is the only peal for Outwell and I wonder why it was rung for that particular reason. A. J. Pearson rang the treble and conducted and there were two Hines' in the band.

I intend to delve into local reports where possible now that the holidays are over but if any RW readers can shed further light on why a small village band (Outwell was rather smaller than now) should have rung this one peal for this one event several months afterwards I would be most grateful. It is not just for my information - the PCC and Rector are also very interested.

If only a donor could now be found to restore the bells we could celebrate next January 150 years from that one and only peal. No harm wishing!

Mr. Wratten does wonder when the treaty of Nanking broke in the British Press - any info on that?

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Trouble at Aldington

The ancient Church of St. Martin, Aldington, Kent has suffered a severe blow; the tower has been declared dangerous, which has caused closure of the church for the foreseeable future.

This is disastrous for the congregation, who now hold services in the Village Hall, and a grave disappointment to the ringers here. After many years without a regular band, due to difficult clergy, a new band was formed in 1988, when a new Rector was appointed. This band consists of some of the "old" Aldington band, some who learnt in other towers and several churchgoers who started from scratch.

Celebrations at Broadclyst

On Thursday, 26th December Mr. and Mrs. Bill Ellis celebrated 60 years of married life together. Bill, until a recent illness, was a very active and regular ringer at Broadclyst and Pinhoe for Sunday services and whenever there was Evensong at Poltimore you could always rely on him being there.

Bill was born near Tedburn St. Mary and at the age of 12 years left home to work on a farm with horses, his great love, at Poltimore, where he learnt to ring nearly 70 years ago.

At the age of about 20 years he purchased a lorry with some help from Whiteways Cider company and from there he built up a haulage business carrying anything from cider apples to the factory, cider to the pubs, coal, cattle to market and horses to and from race meetings of which he can tell many interesting stories.

Bill and Mrs. Ellis were married in Broadclyst Church and have lived in the village ever since.

A quarter peal was rung on the morning of 26th December to mark their Diamond Wedding anniversary.

R.F.

Broadclyst, Devon. 26 Dec, 1260 Grandsire Triples: J E Dallen 1, J H T Langabeer 2, D A Wills 3, Julia A Dallen 4, A P R Williams 5, R E Franklin 6, G E Retter (C) 7, C W Nicholls 8. A Diamond Wedding compliment to Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ellis.

More ups and downs of ringing

The writings of Messrs. Clayton, Fearnett and Ms. Heaton may have deeper implications than are immediately apparent. I have often been puzzled by the straps in the floor of some English ringing chambers but, of course, if we were once inverted all is made clear. Scientific evidence shows that in the past the earth's magnetic field has apparently been reversed on numerous occasions; is it possible that the magnetic field stayed put and the Northern hemisphere reversed itself? All in all there is a considerable amount of data to show that things were very different in olden times.

Mr. Fearnett's letter brushes on one or two touchy subjects, not least that of refreshment; those who drink XXXX deserve to drink it whilst upside down. Also I would suggest that Ms. Heaton can avoid the effort of digging by relocating her tower (and that of Chesterfield) over redundant coalmines. Furthermore, constructing buttresses would be a very expensive means of re-establishing towers; if interested parties were to approach the BBC there will be plenty of secondhand heavy-duty guy-wires available shortly when the Daventry radio masts are dismantled.

A final thought is that if all ringers became members of the Flat Earth Society these problems would cease to exist?

P.D.W.

This band has been very successful in that losses of ringers have been few and Service ringing has taken place without fail. The band has progressed to reasonably well-struck rounds and call changes, and courses of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles. We were just tackling bobs in Plain Bob when ringing ceased. Six of the band were elected to the K.C.A.C.R in March 1991 during a District Meeting here, making our Association membership seven in all. In the May Bank Holiday weekend three of this band took part in a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles here - first quarter for one, first inside for another.

The parish has already raised £40,000 for repairs and re-decoration of the nave, with new heating. This is a Grade 1 listed church, and the work went ahead after repeated assurances that there was no short term need for work on the tower, but we suddenly find that in the opinion of architects and structural engineers the staircase turret is in danger of falling in a high wind, as it is cracked right through. Iron ties from very early in this century have caused part of this turret to move one and a half inches out of true. The large buttresses are also disintegrating and a danger to the public. A life of 3-6 months for the tower has been suggested. This means closure of the church to ALL, with services in the Village Hall. We are faced with a bill of £70,000-£100,000 - impossible in so small a parish.

The bells are a very pleasant ring of six - tenor 13-3-11, which go well and have always been popular with visiting ringers, including quarter peelers. Unless the necessary money can be raised it is likely that these bells will never ring again. This is unthinkable for many of us, and the appeal is this: All ringers who have rung and enjoyed these bells in the past, and all who would hope to do so in the future, PLEASE send a donation to "Aldington Action Fund, c/o The Rev. L. Williams, The Rectory, Aldington, Ashford, Kent."

When the bells are ringing once again we will organise a day of ringing, with all of you invited as a Thanksgiving and a Thank You.

Popular ringers marry

In the New Year's Honours list it was announced that Rex Line, the Tower Captain of Bozeat, had been awarded the B.E.M. A wonderful wedding gift, for on that day the blessing of the marriage of Rex and his new wife Judith née Tomlinson, who originated from Bozeat, but now lives at Great Bircham in Norfolk, took place in Easton Maudit Church; the civil ceremony having taken place in Wellingborough on the last day of 1991.

For many years Rex has been a very active member of the Wellingborough Branch of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild enjoying teaching learners with remarkable success. Currently he is teaching small groups at Bozeat, Easton Maudit and Wollaston and assists whenever possible at Judith's tower - Great Bircham in Norfolk, and appears at Great Doddington practice each week, almost without fail. Until quite recently Rex was a valued Branch Committee member, holding a number of different offices, and is one of the most regular Branch Meeting attenders, always helping the less experienced ringers.

The happy couple are still debating whether to settle in Norfolk or Northamptonshire so in the meantime commute in either direction.

Celebration quarter peals have been rung at churches within the Branch and these will be recorded in the quarter peal columns. F.P.W.

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