

**THE BARNETTS  
OF CRAYFORD, KENT**



Father and son, Edwin J and Edwin A.

**Unlike Quasimodo—the famous bell-ringing French hunchback—the Barnett family, of Crayford, have not been driven mad by the sound of bells, or even deaf through the noise.**

This was a comment by a reporter of the 'Kentish Times' when he interviewed Mr Edwin J Barnett recently. The heading was "Bellringing runs in the Family" and extracts from the article are given here:

In fact they like the sound. And have proved so over the years at S Paulinus' Church, Crayford, where five generations of the family have become bellringers.

The Barnetts' campanology tradition began at the church at the end of the last century when the family moved to Crayford from Monmouth. The then head of the family, Mr Edwin Barnett—a keen bellringer—became a member of the team and established the tradition which began in 1889 and still flourishes today.

He was responsible for installing the present floor in the belfry in 1911, for introducing his son to the world of bellringing, and for starting another family tradition—naming Barnett boys Edwin—which lasted for three generations.

His son, Edwin J, aged 91, of Kings Close, Crayford, began bellringing at the age of nine and is still ringing today.

January 22 saw a double celebration for Edwin J at S Paulinus'. He was presented with a cheque for £10 from the Kent Association for 80 years' membership at a special ceremony which also celebrated the centenary of the present S Paulinus' bells.

It was a proud moment for the man who was captain of the S Paulinus' change-ringing team from 1932 to 1955 and who taught himself to handle a bell.

His son, Edwin A, Iron Mill Lane, Crayford, took over as captain from his father in 1955.

Edwin A learnt the intricacies of bellringing at S Paulinus', he is president of the Central Council and took charge of the ringing at the RAF church of S Clement Dane, London, in 1958.

Edwin A is also vice-president and formerly chairman of the Kent CA and met his wife, Olive, through S Paulinus'.

**30 YEARS**

Olive is a member of the Central Council and was formerly president of the Ladies Guild and has been a bellringer for 30 years.

Edwin A and Olive's only daughter, Jean, was also introduced to bellringing at S Paulinus', and was a keen ringer before leaving England for Australia.

She married a ringer, and their daughter, Kersti Woolford (10), the fifth generation in the family, completed the chain by taking part in a quarter peal at S Paulinus' last year, while on a visit to this country from Australia.

Mr Barnett senior rings only occasionally now, but intends ringing several times this year to celebrate the Queen's silver jubilee.

"I wouldn't miss that for anything. I've rung at every royal occasion since the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria and I rang to celebrate the relief of Ladysmith and Mafeking during the Boer War," he said.

**ANECDOTES**

After all this time ringing bells, the two Barnetts have some amusing and interesting stories and anecdotes to tell of their experiences.

Edwin senior remembers being allowed from school to go to S Paulinus' during lessons, if the church sexton was busy, to toll the passing bell for services.

"For this the sexton gave me two-pence, but more often than not he gave me nothing. But what I did not realise was that he got a shilling for tolling the bell and I only two-pence at the most. That really aggrieved me," he said.

His son, Edwin junior, recalls going to a church in Eynsford, Kent, to ring a bell with a group from S Paulinus'.

While the keener members of the party busied themselves testing the bells, one old ringer made his way to the local pub for some liquid refreshments.

When the bellringing was done he was joined by the others in the pub, who were rather surprised to find him already there.

"I asked him if he had heard any of the ringing and he replied, 'no thanks, I've got a pint on the window'," Edwin junior said.

One thing's for sure. The bells of Crayford which have been alive with the ringing of the Barnett family for more than 80 years will keep ringing for some time yet.

**5000 SPLICED MAXIMUS**

by D.E. SIBSON

	M	W	H	
23456				
42356			-	CYCLCYC
62453	2			LLLCYL
34256	-	-		LLY
25346		-	-	CLCYLYCLCY
32546			-	LYL
24536		2		YLYCYLYCYCYLYLYL
53246		-	-	CLCYCLCYLY
42635	-	-		LCL
(34625)	-			CCLCYLCYC
(23645)	-			CYCLYCC
56342	-		-	YYLCYCLC
26435	-	2	-	LYCLLL
43265		-	-	LYL
62534	-	-		LCL
45236	-	-	-	LYL
23456			-	LYL

Contains 1488 Cambridge, 1536 Yorkshire and 1976 Cantuar Alliance (L).

One of the earliest peals of Grandsire Major was rung on July 30, 1792, at SS. Peter and Paul's Church, Aston. It was also, probably, the longest in the method at that time, viz., 7552, but it was surpassed about 18 months later by an 8000 at St. John's, Deritend, Birmingham.



A photograph by Christopher Dalton of the inscription on the tenor bell of the Spetsbury (Dorset) ring. See letter on p184.

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Published by The Ringing World for the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and printed by Seven Corners Press Ltd., Guildford. Registered at The Post Office for transmission as a newspaper