

# THE RINGING WORLD

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CENTRAL COUNCIL  
OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS



## HYTHE, KENT

THE attractive Cinque-Ports town of Hythe, Kent, lends itself to cliché-ridden guide book descriptions: "Nestling by the sea, beneath the hills . . . with its ancient parish church overlooking . . . the roofs of the picturesque High Street. . . ." and so on. A particular charm, essentially English, is an agreeable blend of the development of various centuries. This can, of course, be seen on the grand scale in cities such as Bath, with Roman and Georgian influences. Hythe is smaller but the effect is equally pleasing, the medieval town lying parallel to the early 19th century canal.

The Royal Military Canal stretches from Seabrook near Folkestone, to Winchelsea, near Rye, and it was built, at considerable expense (£200,000) at the time of the Napoleonic invasion scare. The navvies had hardly set spade to clay when the scare diminished, but, despite this, the project was completed, together with its associated defence works, the Martello Towers. The canal was built as a means of communication and a transport system, as an easily defensible line (it is enfiladed with gun positions) and as a means of flooding Romney Marsh within 48 hours, should Boney have had the effrontery to land.

Today the canal is an amenity enjoyed by locals

and tourists alike, for walks and a haunt of wildlife. The banks were planted with elms to provide timber for rifles—these have been ravaged by disease in recent years, but replanting is in progress. Every two years the canal becomes the focus of "Hythe Entertains" week. This week sees various events and shows (including this year a tug-o'-war competition: the local ringers entered, but learnt that they are rather more proficient pulling ropes vertically than horizontally) but it was the climax, The Venetian Fete, that provided the St. Leonards ringers with an opportunity to demonstrate their art.

(Continued overleaf)

## Universities Association

## TOUR 1978

The College at Madeley, a few miles from the University of Keele provided the UA with outstandingly good accommodation during a tour marred only by rather indifferent weather. The party had fewer younger members than in previous years and but few newcomers. Sarah Herbert, from Texas, a ringing pupil of Marie Cross, greatly enjoyed her stay, and Robin Turner, on leave from Melbourne renewed his contact with the association after a lapse of many years.

A pleasing feature, splendidly planned by Richard Speed, was the cordial welcome and the valuable assistance we received from a host of local ringers. Meeting at Alrewas on August 4th we rang on the 8 bells before going to Hoar Cross with its magnificent modern church and beautiful heavy six. The eight at Abbots Bromley, transferred from a redundant church and replacing an indifferent five provided some good ringing before we reached headquarters. In the evening the six at Madeley provided an hour's pleasant ringing.

## IN SHROPSHIRE

Saturday was spent mainly in Shropshire with an itinerary that included seven towers with the six at Tong providing considerable interest. These bells in a magnificent church are rung from the chancel and with them in the tower hangs the "Great Bell of Tong", of two tons weight. An old board states specifically the limited number of occasions when this bell may be rung and when it may be chimed.

On Sunday we dispersed for service ringing between the six at Keele and the eight at Silverdale and later were the guests of Ewart and Julia Edge at a most enjoyable sherry and coffee party at their home. During the afternoon we

## HYTHE, KENT—continued

## ESSENTIALLY A CARNIVAL

The Hythe Venetian Fete is, essentially, a carnival. Tableaux are mounted on rafts and are towed by rowing boats (thank you, John Hemsley) along a stretch of some 400 yards and back. At dark there is a fireworks display before the procession is repeated, this time with the floats illuminated. The event is both spectacular and scenic and attracts about 20,000 people. This year the local ringers entered a float, as a means of enjoyment for themselves and publicity for the local association, who in fact provided financial assistance towards the modest costs.

Basic construction of the float was by Richard Birch and Brian Butcher. They built a church tower which was painted by Jane Spencer and David Miller, who, with his mother (Pat) designed and installed a splendid "stained-glass" window. In front of this our proud, if borrowed, possession—Walter Dobbies JUBIPEAL. I am spared the technical details as Alan Berry has previously written comprehensively (RW, September 2nd, 1977), but I gather that Mr. Dobbie has not been idle, having replaced the aluminium bells with a ring cast in the real thing.

The bells are . . . well . . . different. Interestingly, our so-called learners were just as good as some of the more experienced, with the result that, with the assistance of Walter and Sheila, we managed quite respectable rounds throughout, and occasionally progressed into Grandsire and Plain Bob. Our float was original (we are claiming a world record as the first ring, English-style, full-circle, on water) and illuminated. Many people watching congratulated us on our efforts but the judges saw fit to place the prizes elsewhere. Oh well! such is life, we said, trooping off for hot dogs and drinks.



Outside the Wharf Tavern, Goldstone, by the Shropshire Union Canal: (back) David Franklin, Ruth Niblett, Daphne Pollard, Shelagh Melville, Peter Niblett (part), Paul Taylor, Frank Mack, Donald Niblett, Mark Mack, David Martin, Christopher Groome, Peggy Bayles, Ted Hudson, Denis Bayles, Jeremy Cheesman, Philip Gay, Margaret Horritt, Geoffrey Horritt, Anne Dobson, Neil Dobson; (front) Elizabeth Niblett, Michael Orme, Clare Higby, Matthew Higby, Robin Turner, Richard Cheesman, Sheila Cheesman, Simon Gay.

rang at Tibberton (5), Chetwynd (6) and at Gnosall—an unusual heavy minor six.

Service ringing in the evening was at Tunstall and Wolstanton both with good eights.

The number of towers visited on Monday was curtailed to enable us to visit the fine modern pottery of Wedgwood's and there to enjoy a most instructive film, a fine museum, a most interesting demonstration unit and to purchase examples of the fine products for which this area is world renowned.

## CARS ABANDONED

For the first time ever cars were abandoned on Tuesday and the whole party, travelling by coach, visited St. Chad's, Shrewsbury (12) and after visiting Bishop's Castle we lunched at a pub-cum-brewery. After Wistanton, Stretton and Condover we returned to St. Mary's, Shrewsbury (10).

In the evening our business meeting was held at the College and, with Paul Taylor in the chair, all items were disposed of with the mixture of hilarity and efficiency customary at UA meetings. About 30 members attended, several apologies were offered and four new members elected. It was agreed to donate £2 per tower visited and thanks were expressed to all who had laboured in making the arrangements. Richard Speed was especially thanked for his efficiency and received a tangible token of appreciation. The 1979 dinner is to be held in the Sheffield area with Stephen Gullick at organiser and the 1979 tour will be based on the Kesteven Agricultural College at Caythorpe (Grantham), from July 20th to July 28th.

Wednesday was spent in Staffordshire with a variety of towers including Leek (10) but because of tower repairs Bucknall (6) was substituted for Newcastle-under-Lyme (10). In the evening a pleasant hour was spent at Leigh (6).

## RURAL TOWERS

Rural towers in Shropshire were visited on Thursday in improving weather conditions. Six 8's and one 6 were visited and a good standard of ringing (with a variety of methods) was attained. Only one missing stay but no broken ropes were encountered this year.

In pleasant weather some charming places were visited in Staffordshire on Friday and some good bells appreciated. At the impressively ornate Roman Catholic Church at Cheadle the bells (an excellent eight) were rung half-muffled in memory of Pope Paul VI.

Three towers were visited prior to dispersal on Saturday and at Malin's Lee we found a church adapted for social functions and also for normal worship. Thence to Coalbrookdale (10) and finally to picturesque Much Wenlock.

Light refreshments at the Royal Oak brought to its inevitable end yet another successful tour.—

E.H.

## HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLAND

It seems unlikely that the annual young people's cycling tour can go on getting better each year, yet this year (our fifth) we managed it again. It was bigger, better and more successful than hitherto. In all 36 cycling ringers met at Salisbury Hostel to begin a week long tour that was to take them around Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The route was to include nearly 30 towers. Besides some delightful landscape, for the first time the tour included seascape and perhaps the most exciting moment was the mass embarkation of the party on the IoW ferry at Lymington. During the three days on the island we not only rang at all its ringable towers but found time to enjoy some of its fine beaches.

Can we improve on it next year? Why not come to the Reunion to be held at Slimbridge Hostel and discuss ways in which this might be done. S.a.e. to G. Stickland at Harwicke Vicarage, Gloucester, for further details.



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