

Coventry, W Mids. (Stoke S Michael) 15 Jan, 1260 Grandsire & PB Doubles: Jean Harrison 1, Rupert Cordeux 2, David Harrison 3, Matthew Glasgow 4, Ray Sheasby (C) 5, Miles Chicken 6. Rung open in thanksgiving for the life of Jonathan P Hughes. £2

Binley Woods, Warks. (The Bell Tower) 21 Jan, 1254 Grandsire Cinques: Edmund G N Smith 1, Matthew Hardy 2, Mark Davies 3, Jeanette Lord 4, Mary Lynch 5, Andrew J Middicott (C) 6, David Lynch 7, Richard Angrave 8, John Fisher 9, Clarke Walters 10, Mick Angrave 11, Sarah Tompkins 12. Rung in memory of Jonathan Hughes, to mark the first anniversary of the first quarter peal rung at his mini-ring tower. First on 12: 1 & 12, both of whom Jonathan taught and encouraged.

Coventry, W Mids. (Cathedral Church of S Michael) 28 Jan, 1280 Cambridge S Major: Ruth Border 1, Jeanette Lord 2, Claire Gardner 3, Matthew Glasgow 4, Ian Thompson 5, Geoff Pratt 6, John Fisher (C) 7, Dominic Travis 8. Rung open in celebration of the life of Jonathan Hughes.

Misc Performance

Probos, Cornwall. 12 Jan, 800+ Call Changes/Devon Peal: Eric Bannister (C) 1, Di Faulk 2, David Leswell 3, Mike Morcomb 4, Alex Bowden 5, Allen Liliynn 6, Charlie Case 7, Theo Bannister/Frank Faulk 8. Rung in memory of Jonathan Hughes of Coventry, a good friend to this tower and these ringers.

See peal reports on p.131.



Jonathan did much to support ringing in Coventry and beyond, in terms of both teaching ringers and steeplekeeping. Just one example concerns the tenor clapper at the Cathedral which broke at the top of the ball during service ringing on Sunday 27th November. Jonathan ensured that it was replaced in time to ring for the festive season and this photograph was taken the Saturday before his death

Now we are Six at Nettlestead



The new treble

We had five bells in St. Mary The Virgin at Nettlestead in Kent, which had the reputation of being a difficult ring.

In 2002 the tower captain and his wife, David and Marguerite Alien, suggested that we should consider having the bells lowered and tuned with the possibility of adding a new treble.

The wheels were in terrible condition and ran out of true by as much as six inches and as a result tended to throw the ropes off unless the rope was kept tight the whole time; quite a challenge for experienced ringers never mind our learners. The bells were out of tune, quite badly odd-struck and hung on tired old plain bearings.

Alan Hughes of Whitechapel Bell Foundry was asked to visit us and give us his opinion and advice and of course an estimate of costs involved.

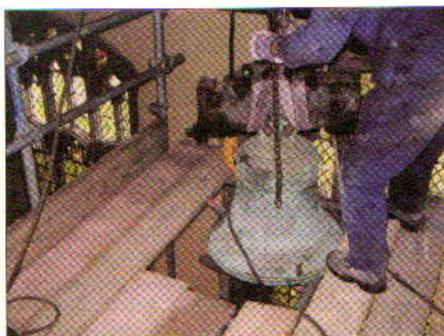
In the meantime Marguerite's Mother died and David and Marguerite decided to donate the new treble to the memory of Marguerite's Parents.

The fund raising went on apace and a number of grants were found to add to the fund and finally The Heritage Lottery Fund gave us a very good sum to make up to the £33,000 that was required.

A date was set for Monday 8th August when the bells should be delivered to Whitechapel and everything became geared up to that date.

We rang our last quarter peal on the five bells on 25th July with the help of our neighbouring towers, Wateringbury and Yalding, Marguerite rang the treble for her first quarter peal. Our final service ring was on Sunday 31st July. On the Monday morning three of us went up the tower and started to dismantle the wheels and all the fittings and bring them down into the church.

There is no lowering hatch in the tower at Nettlestead as the organ is immediately below the ringing chamber, so the bells had to be lowered through the stairway hatch into the ringing chamber and from there



The second on the scaffold

dragged across to a window into the church, on to a scaffold, and then lowered on to the church floor.

Early on the following Saturday morning Brian Butcher, the county Bell Restoration Officer, arrived with his band of assistants and, with the labouring provided by our band, the work commenced. By four o'clock the bells had been lowered to the church floor, put onto pallets and taken up to the road where they were loaded on to a trailer ready for their trip to Whitechapel.

Whilst the bells were away the tower was cleaned ready for their return. We were very lucky during this time that Hunton and Wateringbury allowed us to practice in their towers.

On 4th October we collected the retuned bells, together with the new treble, from Whitechapel and moved them into the church on the 7th.

We are very fortunate at Nettlestead that the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics share the church. On Sunday 9th October in the presence of a joint congregation, the dedication of the new treble and the blessing of the other five was conducted by the Anglican Bishop Richard Gear and the Catholic Bishop John Hines.



Leaving Whitechapel

It had been decided that the old frame was in good condition and we would be able to rehang the bells in it with their new roller bearings and new metal headstocks. There were only five pits and this left one bell with no home to hang in. Whitechapel made a steel frame which fitted over the stairway hatch, leaving us just enough room to squeeze through, in which the number three now hangs. The following Monday the bellhangers from Whitechapel, Peter and Neil, arrived and started to raise the bells back up the tower with, of course, our help again as labourers. By the end of the week all was back in place and ready for a test ring. This was a really exciting moment as no one knew how they would sound. They were a great success: so tuneful and so much easier to handle – worth all the effort, and the new treble was lovely!

Throughout the lowering and then the rehang BBC Southeast Television were filming with us, and they showed a five minute item on the local news bulletin when it was completed.

We rang our first quarter peal on the bells on Thursday 10th November with the same band as before plus Peter Mack on the tenor; his first quarter.

Everyone who has been involved with the operation is well pleased with the end result and we have a ring to be proud of "now we are six".

(concluded on p.143)