



Quarter Peal Day to mark the 40th anniversary of the Guild's first peal

The peal was undertaken at St Michael the Archangel, Southampton on 10th February 1979, with the quarter peal anniversary day being held on the same day forty years later. The fact that this was a Sunday made finding available towers in which to ring quarters rather more difficult and resulted in only ringing at 3 towers rather than the usual 4. As it happens, this was sufficient, especially as some had come a long distance and it would have been an extremely long day.

I arranged towers with a variety of numbers of bells, so that not everyone would have to attend for the whole day if they did not want to. This started off being successful, but we still ended up short due to unavoidable circumstances and needing to rely on non-member ringers.

My mobile phone app indicated that the first tower, Minstead, had five bells and in my preparations did not notice that it had been augmented to six, so five of us turned up to ring. However, the silver lining was that this gave one of our ringers, Martyn Thorburn, his first opportunity to ring on five with no tenor to lead off. We rang mixed doubles, but unfortunately did not achieve the quarter peal.

Minstead church was fascinating, seeming to comprise a whole series of extensions to the structure. Of note was the hollow yew tree in the church yard, enclosing a cross. Martyn had to leave after this ring and we were joined by four others for the afternoon, including two guest ringers, Imogen Sculthorp (ex RAF) and Geoff Cowling (RAF Guild).



Leaving Minstead to turn right onto the A31 was well-nigh impossible and some of us had a very pretty, although unanticipated, journey through the New Forest looking for a safe place to turn back towards Southampton. After a very slow drive into the city centre in all the traffic, with another interesting view, this time of the docks, some of us had lunch at the Red Lion pub. This is an ordinary looking building from the outside, but for those who love history it is a must see, as inside it dates back to the 1400s. Two diners had fish and chips but the size of the fish suggested more whale than cod!

We then continued the tradition of not ringing all the bells available by ringing on eight of the ten bells at St Michael's, as we had run out of available volunteers who would be able to ring Caters or Royal. Paul Wotton, who had been a member of the original peal that had taken place in this tower, successfully conducted the Grandsire Triples composition composed by Sergeant Wakley that we had not completed during the November Armistice Centenary Quarter Peal day. The ringing environment was notable for the amount of the various colours of red in the ringing chamber (sallies, mats, jumpers etc.) contrasting with Geoff Cowling's vivid yellow braces with pictures of tools and tape measures on them. Unfortunately no photo of this phenomenon was taken for posterity!

The said Geoff, being of the RAF Guild, educated me about seventh place bell in Lincolnshire being known as "The Spitfire Bell", as it swoops and dives down to "rat ta tat ta tat" on the front. No excuses for getting this the way round ever again.



Our last tower was at Eling, where suburbia ended at a charming little toll bridge and village. Because the standard of ringing during the day had not been up to our expected standard, we decided that it would be safer to abandon ringing the Lincolnshire Surprise Major and stick to a safe Plain Bob Major, conducted by Mark Robins, which was achieved.

Some of us then took a very picturesque route through the New Forest to avoid dangerous right turns onto dual carriageways, only to be faced with wooded lanes inhabited by wild ponies which moved out of the way only in their own time; they made my day.

Anna Gawley

Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers

Southampton, Hampshire

St Michael the Archangel

Sunday, 10 February 2019 in 45m (16–1–15)

1260 Grandsire Triples

Composed by Sergeant Albert Wakley in the trenches before his death as a result of WW1. This was part of the Guild's commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice.

Composed by Sergeant Albert Wakley

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 Anna Gawley | 5 Paul Wotton (C) |
| 2 Deborah Stott | 6 Graham Brown |
| 3 John Stott | 7 Mark Robins |
| 4 Geoff Cowling | 8 Imogen Sculthorp |

Rung by members of the Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers and guests as part of a quarter peal day for the 40th anniversary of the first peal rung by the Guild, which was rung at this tower. Paul Wotton, the conductor, was one of the original members of the peal band.

Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers

Eling, Hampshire

St Mary

Sunday, 10 February 2019 in 45m (11–3–4 in F#)

1280 Plain Bob Major

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Anna Gawley | 5 Geoff Cowling |
| 2 Imogen Sculthorp | 6 Paul Wotton |
| 3 Deborah Stott | 7 Graham Brown |
| 4 John Stott | 8 Mark Robins (C) |

Rung by members of the Royal Naval Guild of Bellringers and guests as part of a quarter peal day for the 40th anniversary of the first peal rung by then Guild. Paul Wotton was one of the ringers in the original peal