

# THE GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS: WOTTON BRANCH CLANGOUR NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2023

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*Deadline for articles for the next edition of Clangour (October 2023) is  
24<sup>th</sup> September to [mattandsarah.lorkin@gmail.com](mailto:mattandsarah.lorkin@gmail.com)*

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## DATES FOR THE DIARY

3<sup>rd</sup> June – Branch ringing at Horton 4pm-6pm

15<sup>th</sup> July – Branch outing to the North Cotswold branch

5<sup>th</sup> August – Branch ringing at Tortworth 4pm-6pm

2<sup>nd</sup> September – Branch Striking competition at Avening 3pm Start

21<sup>st</sup> October – Branch ringing at Coaley 4pm-6pm followed by Quiz and supper in Coaley Village Hall

11<sup>th</sup> November - Branch AGM at Berkeley

24<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Horton Lunch

## NEWS FROM...

### BERKELEY

#### TIM SOANES

We have a new learner, Daniel, who started just after Easter and is making good progress. This has also resulted in his friend Isaac, who learnt to ring pre-Covid, returning.

On Coronation Day we rang the bells between 2pm and 3pm in the afternoon. As we were joined by several Dursley ringers, who were not in the peal attempt there, we were able to ring rounds and call changes on ten. Daniel plus two of the Dursley learners were able to participate.



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(Left to right; Andrew Binstead, Helen Binstead, Anne Pope, Elizabeth Byrne, Denise Farr, Tim Soanes, Karen Litton, John Taylor, Mel Richings, Peter Yardley, Joy Bell, Frank Byrne)

## COALEY

### TERRY CHIVERS

Coronation Day proved to be a ball of fun in Coaley Tower. From 10-00 to 10-30 we rang rounds and call changes to give everyone an opportunity to participate. At 4-00 a group of us set out to ring a Quarter Peal. And to accord with our current practice we tried to tailor the ringing to the event.

The 6<sup>th</sup> of May was the coronation, and we were going to commence the Quarter Peal attempt with a 120 of King's. Also, the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 was the 34<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Gary and Helen Miles, Gary being a fairly recent recruit to the Coaley team. So, the cunning plan was that the quarter should comprise 34 methods / variations. What could possibly go wrong?

So, what is King's you may ask? It is a doubles variation based on Reverse Antelope Place with Reverse Wallflower Bobs and Reverse Grandsire Singles. The calls are made when the treble is in thirds place going out. What could be the difficulty with ringing that? We started practicing King's many weeks before the coronation date, but we really struggled and only achieved success(?) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The conductor had prepared himself a set of crib notes that he had been carrying with him for many weeks, and mostly to no avail. Come the 6<sup>th</sup> and the Quarter Peal attempt started with "Go King's" soon followed by "Rounds", then "Go again." We did achieve King's and set out to complete the 34 M/Vs. And more restarts. But we were not soft hearted. "Stand" echoed around the tower and the conductor announced that we had reached a bridge too far and revealed his cunning back-up plan. We would substitute 34 calls for the 34 M/Vs. At 5-30 "This is all" was proclaimed closely followed by "Stand." The conductor picked up his crib notes, tore them into small pieces and threw them into the air. Then regretted his action as he grovelled on the floor to pick up the pieces. But success was achieved.

Having struggled with King's at the next practice a call for reverse King's was made. This is the variation Isis; Antelope Place with Wallflower Bobs and Grandsire Singles. In the words of Tommy Cooper "Just like that." Success.



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*Birthday girl Audrey with the ringers on the day, plus Gary Miles a local ringer who had listened to the ringing.*

As hinted above, we have long tried to personalise Quarter Peals rung to mark or celebrate special events. A common approach associated with a birthday is to match the number of calls to the age of the celebrator. Occasionally this approach has resulted in the Quarter being a bit more than 1260 changes as a few more changes are added. The most recent Quarter Peal was dedicated to the wife of the conductor, but it would be indelicate to say how old the lady was, suffice to say there were 80 calls. Oh, also there was cake and drinks to follow.

Following the death of Bob Gardiner, we rang a Quarter Peal in his memory on 16<sup>th</sup> April which contained 93 calls, again one for each year of his life. Bob learnt to ring in Coaley back in the 1970's and rang a number of Quarter Peals ringing the tenor. He subsequently rang at Bisley.

Details of Coaley Quarter Peals can be found on BellBoard.

## DURSLEY

### FRANK BYRNE

We reported in the previous issue of Clangour the sad new of Bob Grover's death in January 2023 in his 92nd year. Below is a tribute to Bob by David and Jo Turner who knew him from about the time he began to ring at Dursley in 1972:

*It's been over half a century now since I first knew Bob Grover.*

*I have always thought of him a quiet, kind, gentle person who always seemed to be there at ringing in Dursley.*



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*The early 1970's was a volatile time for ringing at Dursley. When I started ringing in late 1972 I wasn't aware of Bob, but I'm sure he was there, and probably learning to ring with the rest of the fledgling group. The trouble started when what seemed to me two Titans of the exercise clashed over - well just about anything! At the time Jack Beaney, a formal, retired teacher was trying to start a band at Dursley using his progressive teaching techniques. Another attendee to those early practices was Ron Cox who was a traditional ringer in all the senses of the meaning. The Grandsire - the blue line - and when that didn't work out lots of Cider would soon sort it!*

*I don't remember how, but Bob Grover came to the fore and became Tower Captain and somehow managed to calm things down fairly quickly.*

*There were a lot of youngsters in the band in those days and Bob was very encouraging. After a few months of learning he suggested a bunch of us should go with him in his car to something called the Association AGM. As youngsters we didn't know what that was - but there was ringing at other places beforehand. We hadn't rung elsewhere before so that was a new experience. As far as I was concerned the ringing in the morning was great fun. To my surprise Bob suggested he went to the meeting, but invited us to take his fairly new family car for a spin around the Forest of Dean - he said the meeting was likely to be rather boring. He passed me the car keys and off we went. How typically trusting of him, to trust me at 18 years old with his car and the other apprentice ringers. I'm pleased to say all went well and the car was returned safely to him. We all went for a picnic after that. A great day out thanks to Bob and the memory of which has stayed with me.*

*We did a lot of ringing in those days, especially towards the end of the week. Thursday practice night, Friday silent practice and twice on Sunday. Bob always seemed to be there. I'm sure he wasn't, as he worked shifts at Berkeley Power Station, and he must have had holidays ... but in my mind, looking back, he always seemed to be there at ringing.*

*The bells in these early days had plain bearings which were considered a bit hard going. In 1977 Bob with assistance from a couple of friends from Berkeley Power Station rehung the bells with modern ball bearings. This as can be imagined considerably improved the go. Well done, Bob!*

*The silencers on the bells were nearly always fitted by Bob before Friday practice and removed by him before Sunday. He must have done that for years, although I didn't appreciate it at the time. Typical Bob just quietly getting on with it, for the benefit of others.*

*Bob was also Branch Chairman for a couple of years in the mid 70's and then served the Branch as Management Committee Representative for many years.*

*Jo, being younger, and a newer ringer back then, admits that she doesn't remember a lot of Bob, except that he always seemed to be pleasant, kind, patient and encouraging. She remembers a gentle, 'dry' sense of humour and says she can't ever remember him losing his temper or getting angry.*

*Jo also recalls going to a Bellringers Barbecue in Bob's Garden and remembers playing skittles and enjoying the real ale on a pleasant summer's evening.*

*To both of us, even today, it seems that when we think of ringing at Dursley...Bob is always there.*



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David and Jo

### Ringling for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla 6 May 2023

Tim invited any ringers not taking part in the planned peal attempt at Dursley to join in with the ringing at Berkeley where all 10 bells were rung for the occasion. In the event, the peal attempt went down the pan and a Q.P. was rung instead.

At St. James the Great Tenor: 19.5 cwt in E-flat

On Saturday, 6 May 2023, In 50 minutes

1344 Cambridge S Major Composition: David L. Thomas

1 Janet L. Morris

2 Catherine White-Horne

3 Jane Spencer

4 John P. Cole

5 Alison Holliday

6 Michael R. Spencer

7 Andrew Ward (C)

8 Philip Pope

For the coronation of King Charles III and of Queen Camilla.

### Croome Trophy 22 April 2023

This year's competition was hosted by Bristol Rural Branch at Frenchay, Bristol. Dursley represented the Wotton Branch and we found the very light ring of 6 challenging. We were quite satisfied with our test piece, 120 Grandsire Doubles, being a significant improvement of our practice but less so with our joint 6th placing. Out of 12 possible G & B Branches only 7 managed to field a team. One of the traditionally hot contenders, Bristol City, was one of those not entering.

The Wotton Branch did not enter the Penn Trophy (8 bell) competition



1Team L-R: Frank Byrne; Tim Soanes; Andrew Ward; John Taylor; Lizzie Adkins; John Cole

Results:

1 St Marks, Cheltenham	3 f
=2 Tewkesbury Abbey	4 f
=2 Swindon	4 f
4 Cirencester	4.5 f



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5 Leornard Stanley, Stroud      5.5 f  
 = 6 Dursley, Wotton            6.5 f  
 = 6 Coalpit Heath, Bristol R.   6.5 f  
 8 Corsham, Chippenham        12 f  
**First Quarter Peal for Ashley**

Dursley, Gos. On front 6, Tenor: 11 cwt

On Sunday, 14 May 2023

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Ashley Pearson

2 Anne Pope

3 Andrew Binstead

4 Philip Pope

5 Elizabeth Byrne (C)

6 Helen Binstead

First attempt 1, For Choral Evensong



*Band L-R : Ashley (1), Anne (2), Philip (4); Liz (5); Helen (5); Andy (3)*



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## TORTWORTH

### FEN MARSHALL

Ringling has been a bit thin on the ground at Tortworth. We managed to ring for a combined service at the end of April and then again for a brilliant family wedding on 7<sup>th</sup> May, which we considered part of the Coronation celebrations! In both cases we have to rely on our friends from Berkeley, Cromhall and Tytherington. Thank you!

Just a word of warning to tower keepers who may rely on local supplies of timber for replacement stays. Have you considered the implications of Ash Die-back disease? There's lots of timber around at the moment but I don't know about the long term. It may be worth getting in a good supply before it becomes scarce. I have used holly in the past but it's not as good as ash. If you need to replace the sides of your Morris Traveller, you'd better get moving as well!

## 'THE BOSTON BELLE' – MARGARET HOMER NICHOLS

FRANK BYRNE

NOTE THAT THIS WAS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN 2018 BUT HAS BEEN INCLUDED AGAIN FOR INTEREST.

The following is a short extract from the memoirs of Margaret Homer Nichols concerning her six week visit to London in 1902. The visit was with her father, Dr Arthur Nichols M.D., and its purpose was for her to learn change ringing. These memoirs were collected, edited and published under the title 'Lively Days' by her daughter Alice Shurcliff in 1965. It's hoped that the verbatim record of her and her father's experiences while in London will enable us to hear their authentic voices. What we don't hear, apart from a very brief description of her first attempts to ring a plain course of Grandsire Triples, are the voices of the London ringers (all male) and their thoughts about helping teach a 22 year old, tall (6 ft) American woman to learn change ringing. It must have been a unique experience for them too.

Dr Nichols' fascination with bells began in childhood when he had heard the bells of Christ Church, Boston, MA, ringing for Sunday Service, eventually helping the sexton chime the tunes. After he graduated and during a visit to London he heard the bells of St Martin-in-the-Fields and was able to visit the ringing chamber and inspect the bells. From that time he developed a life-long ambition to introduce English style change ringing into Boston. It was not until Margaret finished school in 1898 that she was taught to handle a bell at Christ Church, Boston. Dr. Nichols' ambitions to encourage change ringing in Boston were dealt a blow when they were asked to stop practising by the church authorities due to complaints. It seems the neighbourhood around the church was changing from English immigrants to Italian who were less fond of the sound of bells unless it was for a special occasion.

In bringing his daughter to London, Dr Nichols had an additional ambition, unknown to her, for her ring a full peal. In the event and during her six weeks in London, she progressed from being unable to ring a plain course of Grandsire Triples to ringing five full peals, two in-hand and four being for the Ancient Society of College Youths (ASCY). She was the first woman to



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ring a peal of Stedman Triples in-hand and the first woman to ring a touch of Stedman Cinques at St Pauls Cathedral. Her progress must have exceeded her father's wildest dreams.

The late Mr A J Phillips writes in 1999, the year the rule was reverted, allowing women membership of the ASCY called her 'The Boston Belle'. He considered her the most remarkable woman ever to grace the ringing scene. Whatever, her achievements during such a short period are outstanding.

Her peals were rung with some of the finest ringers of the day; William and Earnest Pye, Challis F Winney, Bertrum Prewett among others. Such strong bands would have provided a secure framework, but these ringers would also have demanded an adequate performance even from a novice.

In 1902, discouraged by the lack of ringing opportunity in Boston, Dr Nichols announced that he would take his daughter to London where he announced, '*the more they ring, the better they like it*'. Also, he had faith that his daughter was '*made of ringing stuff*'. Despite her father's faith, Margaret was less enthusiastic. She was a talented tennis player (twice New England Ladies Champion) and didn't relish missing a summer of tennis. However, her memoirs record that she was swept along by her father's confidence and on 2 July 1902 they boarded the SS New England and set sail for London, Margaret was 22 years of age. Once in London her father lost no time in notifying his ringing friends that his young, hopeful, daughter was in London and all set to learn to ring.

Her account of attempts to ring a plain course of Grandsire Triples is described in her first visit to a practice:

*'The first belfry we climbed was in the tower of St Matthew's, Bethnal Green, in the Whitechapel region, famous for its crooks and poverty. Much out of breath after climbing the circular stone stairs leading up to the ringing chamber, I was introduced to the ringers, who had already gathered. Matthew Wood, a well-known ringer of over 60, was the conductor. He asked me if I would like to have a go at the bells and which bell I preferred. I spoke for the third and then set to work to raise her. I knew that was the best way to get the feel of a bell and learn the exact place to grasp the tufting. After four or five minutes of hard pulling my bell was raised and set, but the rope was too long. I was so much taller than the average ringer that I nearly always had to have the rope shortened. This was quite necessary as otherwise the tail of the rope flapped in my face.*

*Ringling is exercise and the day was warm. Before starting each ringer removed his coat and dickey and rolled up his sleeves. All I could do was roll up my sleeves and hope my shirt tails would not rise above my skirt band. After the bells were set, each ringer rose on his toes, reached high up on the tufting and pulled slightly on the rope. The conductor shouted 'here goes Grandsire'. The treble ringer shouted 'she's going, gone'. We all pulled off our bells at what we judged to be the correct interval to produce an even scale.*

*In contrast to our ringing at the Church of the Advent in Boston these bells rang with perfect precision. Mine was the only bell out of place and I soon corrected that. When the conductor*



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*judged bells were running smoothly, there came the exciting moment when he shouted, 'Go,' and we started the changes. For a while I kept my place, but my experience in change ringing was almost zero. The bells rang in very rapid succession, all seven striking in one revolution of the tenor. It was difficult to pick out the bell I should follow as my rope sight was poor. There were times too, in the excitement, when I lost control of my bell and it rang sooner than I intended. To the other ringers this plain course of Grandsire Triples was child's play. On my part it took every bit of concentration and every muscle I possessed. The ringers all kept an eye on me and tried to help me. Suddenly the ringers of Number Five took one hand recklessly off the rope and beckoned to me. How was I to know that this was his way of telling me that he and I were dodging? The would-be helpful coaching, shouting at me in cockney bell-ringing vernacular drowned by the noise of the bells, was completely unintelligible to me. .... Fortunately a less excitable ringer stood behind me and his directions really helped. It is a breach of etiquette to stop ringing till the conductor gives the command. I simply could not say, 'I am lost, let's start again'. At last he called 'stand' and without the least difficulty all bells were set except mine, Number Three. We tried again and again. Each time we got a little further before the conductor called, 'stand'. After while Mr Wood said to me in his most polite cockney, 'I 'ope you don't moind if I swear at you, Miss, but I eye 'nt used to ringing with a loidy'. By that time no amount of swearing could have deterred me from ringing.*

*We came home hot and tired but my father was pleased with my performance and I was determined to master the art of change ringing. Invitations to ring were received, and daily Papa and I would start off by train or bus to some remote church on the outskirts of London.'*

Margaret's subsequent progress must have impressed the ringing fraternity and was reported on several occasions in Bell News. All of Margaret's peals and failures, including handbells, were observed by her father who sat through them including two handbell peals rung on the same day, the second being a spontaneous attempt after they had had tea. Margaret was elected a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths (ASCY) in 1902 and for which Society she rang 4 of her 5 peals including two in-hand.

Her first peal attempt resulted in failure, she records it thus:

*'When I was considered sufficiently proficient in change ringing, arrangements were made for me to try for my first peal with the College Youths. We met at six o'clock at St. Mary's Acton and by 6:15 the bells were going well and we started to ring a peal of Grandsire Triples. All went well for about two hours. Then a little excitement occurred and the conductor called 'stand'. He had discovered that that two bells had exchanged places, and presumably anxiety about my bell had caused the mix-up. Heated argument followed, as is customary, and each ringer was positive the fault was not his. Gloom prevailed and we all went home after arranging to meet again at the same tower the following week.'*

Interesting that Margaret attributes the mix up to anxiety over her, she's yet to learn the art of belfrymanship where you never admit to any fault. Before the re-run of the failed peal she had another attempt which was successful. Dr Nichols' account of this peal:

*'At 6:20 P.M., the ringers having got together, the bells were raised and the ringers assigned to their posts by Mr. Brighton, who was to act as conductor. To Margaret was given the Third Bell. The ringers of the two trebles, Pratt\* and Eden, struck me as very young but I was*



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*told the former had rung in more than sixty successful peals of the method about to be tried, while the second was a skilled conductor. (\* Dr Nichols has misheard, it was 'Prewett, not Prat, and Bertrum Prewett was an accomplished ringer and conductor).*

*As the only privileged spectator in the tower, I held the watch while the tower doors were securely bolted to keep out any intrusive stragglers. Of course Margaret was a very uncertain quantity and was sure to be a constant source of anxiety to the others, who had never seen a woman ring and were naturally doubtful as to her powers of endurance and her capacity for retaining a level head and acting promptly in the emergencies sure to arise. And her position, an inexperienced ringer among performers of the highest repute, all strangers to her, was embarrassing, for the slightest fumble or hesitation would be instantly noted and the loud call necessary to set her aright might disconcert her and lead to hopeless confusion. One of the brothers Pye was put therefore on her left at number four to pilot her through the difficult places. The chances of success were further lessened by the fact that the method to be rung, Stedman, was the one in which she was least proficient. The start off was far from reassuring, and two successive attempts ended within a few moments in a hopeless tangle, which led the conductor to suggest after the bells had been stopped, 'Perhaps, Miss, you would prefer to try 'Grandsire (a less intricate method)'. Margaret, not disposed to give in, appealed for one more trial, a request which amused and pleased the men, and accordingly at 6:29 the leader having shouted 'Go it again,' the bells swung off into changes, and the compass being gradually gauged and improved the striking soon became perfect, while the sequence of changes with increased interval after each sixteenth stroke became as regular as the notes of a music box. Margaret's good striking imparted an air of confidence to the men who no longer thought it necessary to watch her movements while she settled down into steady, quiet work, nothing being heard but the even music of the belfry, the rise and fall of the ropes, and the occasional bob-call of the conductor. Thus things ran smoothly along with only an occasional error of interval or in one instance the omitting of a bob-call, instantly observed and corrected by some of the men who, as well as the conductor, kept count of the course ends, when, all at once, the ringer Number Two, who was apparently engrossed in Margaret's work with the friendly notion of easing her dodging, failed to grasp his tufting at handstroke, his bell having cast the rope, and his bell thus unchecked at a critical moment, rolled over, rebounded against the stop stay and going wild caused the greatest confusion and dismay, for the peal was now within three fourths of an hour of its completion. Great excitement at once ensued amongst the men, for this vexatious accident seemed irremediable and with any ordinary band extrication from this maze would have been out of the question. Not so easily baffled, however, were these old ringers. Holding up their bells while the delinquent ringer, springing for his rope, brought his bell to its proper position and indicated that he was all right for the next change, the shouting of the ringers heard above the clashing of the bells signified to each one just what was to be done in this emergency. Meanwhile Margaret kept a level head and maintained her count, and to my surprise and relief on the following change the correct sequence was resumed and for the remaining three-quarters of an hour the ringing was most excellent. ....*

*Margaret came out of this prolonged effort in better condition than I supposed possible. She was certainly overheated for the ringing chamber was imperfectly ventilated and the night was close; her hands had developed eight large blisters .....*

Details of her first peal, (all peal details have been taken from Bell News):

### **The Middlesex County Association**



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On Thursday August 14, 1902 in 2 hours and fifty-nine minutes

At the Church of St Matthew Upper Clapton

**A peal of 5040 Stedman Triples** 5040 Changes

Thurstons Four-Part Tenor 14 cwt

Bertram Prewett	Treble	Isaac G Shade	5
Hubert Eden*	2	Alfred Brighton	6
Miss Margaret H Nichols*	3	Ernest Pye	7
William Pye	4	Arthur T King	8

Conducted by A W Brighton

First peal \*

### **A note in Bell News**

*The Peal at Upper Clapton. This, the first peal of Miss Margaret H. Nichols, of Boston, U.S.A., after a comparatively brief study of the method, is almost unique in the annals of the Exercise.' It is not often that a peal of Stedman Triples is rung as a first peal in any circumstances, but when a young lady comes triumphantly through the ordeal, it speaks volumes for her ability, and stamps her as no ordinary ringer. The peal was rung practically without a hitch, save for the slipping wheel of the rope of the 2nd bell. It was William Pye's birthday, his brother-ringers wishing him many happy returns of the day.*

Margaret notes:

*As far as I have been able to discover, I have the honor of being the first citizen of The United States to ring any kind of peal, and just missed being the first woman.*

This was the first of 4 peals Margaret rang in 4 days. The others are:

### **The Ancient Society of College Youths**

On Sunday August 17 1902, in two hours and thirty minutes

At the residence of Mr C F Winney, 13 Harbledown Road, Fulham S.W.

On handbells retained in hand

**A peal of Grandsire Triples** 5040 Changes

Thurstans 4 part

George N Price	1-2	Challis F Winney	5-6
Herbert P Harman	3-4	Miss Margaret H Nichols	7-8

Conducted by George N Price

Umpires Joseph Barry and William E Moss. Witness Dr Arthur N Nichols

The conductor has now called this peal from each pair of bells, being only the third person to attain this end.

### **The Ancient Society of College Youths**

On Sunday August 17 1902, in two hours and twenty-six minutes

At the residence of Mr C F Winney, 13 Harbledown Road, Fulham S.W.

On handbells retained in hand

**A peal of Stedman Triples** 5040 Changes

Thurstans 4 part



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George N Price 1-2                      Challis F Winney 5-6  
Herbert Harman 3-4                    Miss Margaret H Nichols 7-8

Conducted by Challis F Winney

Umpires Joseph Barry and William E Moss. Witness Dr Arthur N Nichols

Every six-end was ticked off from manuscript by the umpires of this peal

Note in the Bell News

*It is worthy of note that Miss Nichols is the first lady ringer to score a peal of Stedman Triples double-handed .... All the foregoing ringing was witnessed by Dr. Nichols. During her visit to London Miss Nichols has been a regular attendant at the meetings of the St. Mary Abbots (Kensington) ringers. The band wish through the medium of this paper to return thanks to Mr. Hughes for very kindly lending his handbells, and to Mr. Joseph Barry, of the Royal Society of Cumberland Youths, and Mr. William E. Moss, of the Ancient Society of College Youths for acting as umpires to both peals.*

Margaret's reflections on ringing two handbell peals in one day:

*One Sunday afternoon we met at Mr Winney's home in Fulham to try for a peal on handbells. I chose the easiest bells, 7 and 8, and in two and one half hours we scored a peal of Grandsire Triples with excellent striking. Mr. Winney's mother and sister served me a hearty tea with ham and bread and butter after which Mr Winney suggested we try for a peal of Stedman. We all accepted with alacrity and tapped off a second peal in another two and a half hours, after which my father, who had sat silently umpiring both peals said 'Please don't suggest any more ringing tonight.' For once he had reached the limit of his power of enjoyment. The ringing of two handbell peals in a day was considered a feat and Mr Hughes, the owner of the handbells on which we had performed, very generously presented me with the bells, a set of 10 with an exceptionally fine tone.*

### **The Ancient Society of College Youths**

On Monday August 18, 1902 in two hours and fifty-six minutes

At the church of St Mary, Acton

**A peal of Grandsire Triples, 5040 changes**

Holts Original Tenor 14 cwt

George Bush	Treble	Arthur Cutmore	5
William E Garrard	2	William E Judd	6
Miss Margaret H Nichols	3	Challis F Winney	7
Albert V Selby	4	John T Kentish	8

This peal was arranged on August 11 but was unfortunately lost after ringing 1900 changes and was Miss Nichols first attempt at a peal.

Fifth Peal\*:

### **The Ancient Society of College Youths**

On Saturday August 23, 1902 in 2 hours and fifty-nine minutes

At the Church of St George-the-Martyr, Southwark

**A peal of 5040 Stedman Triples 5040 Changes**



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Thurston's Four-Part Tenor 16cwt 3 qrs 7 lbs

Challis F Winney	Treble	Thomas Langdon	5
Edward P O'Meara	2	Herbert P Harman	6
Miss Margaret H Nichols	3	Thomas H Taffender	7
Samuel E Joyce	4	Herbert Langdon	8

Conducted by Challis F Winney

Dr Arthur Nichols M.D. sat in the tower during the whole time, and was most delighted at the success of his daughter in change-ringing.

As well as ringing five peals, the Bell News reported that Margaret was the first woman to ring on 12 bells and the first to ring a touch of Stedman Cinques at St Pauls Cathedral. She and her father also visited Painswick, Gloucestershire where they were welcomed by the local ringers. Apparently the local parishioners came into the belfry, intrigued to witness a woman ring their bells.

\* The late Mr A. J. Phillips records that a peal tablet was erected to commemorate this fifth peal and is the only College Youth peal tablet he knows of that contains the name of a woman in the band.

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At the end of Margaret Homer Nichols', chapter 'Ringing in England' she records an account of the very unusual circumstances under which the first peal ever to be rung outside the UK came to take place. The peal was in Philadelphia, USA in 1850, of Grandsire Triples in which the tenor ringer had to be relieved of his rope after 2 hours ringing because, having only one leg to stand on, he became too tired to stand for longer. This fact has been substantiated. Margaret records that in 1844 P. T. Barnham had been so impressed by the Lancashire Bell Ringers that he offered them a trip to the US if they posed as Swiss bellringers. Five of these ringers rang in the 1850 peal with 4 other ex-pat Englishmen making up the band of nine. Barnham's wish that they be titled Swiss Bellringers seems not to have been adopted. That the peal was rung only by Englishmen is subject to uncertainty due to the possibility that some of the ex-pat ringers might have become naturalised American citizens but this cannot be substantiated. A letter in Bell News (in 1883?) from C. Rahill, one of the two last remaining ringers of this peal, insists that the band was, '*an Englishmen's peal through and through.*' Whatever the fact, all the ringers had begun life as English and had learned bellringing in England.

Margaret returned to Boston after her six week visit to London and resumed her pre-London life. She helped her father promote ringing in Boston including establishing ringing on handbells. She married in 1905 to Arthur Shurcliff and had six children. She died in 1959 and her memoir 'Lively Days' was compiled, published and so titled by her daughter, Alice Shurcliff, in 1965. Margaret's intended title was 'Sporting Days'.



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## WOTTON BRANCH OFFICERS

<b>Chairman</b>	Chris Cooper
<b>Ringing Master</b>	James Joynson
<b>Assistant Ringing Master</b>	Vacant
<b>Secretary</b>	Sarah Lorkin
<b>Treasurer</b>	Gill Carey
<b>Clangour Editor</b>	Sarah Lorkin
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Terry Chivers
<b>Management Committee Rep</b>	Chris Cooper

## REGULAR PRACTICES

### Monday

Chipping Sodbury	19:30-21:15	Antony Gay
Cromhall	19:30-21:00	Sue Wray
Stone	19:30-21:00	Jeremy Sargent
Yate (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> only)	By arrangement	Barrie Fletcher

### Tuesday

Wotton-under-Edge	19:30-21:00	Adrian Davis
Upper Cam	19:30-21:00	Alex Reeves

### Wednesday

Berkeley	19:30-21:00	Tim Soanes
Coaley	19:30-21:00	Terry Chivers
Horton	19:30-21:00	Rex Isaac
Hawkesbury	18:30-20:00	Colin Dixon

### Thursday

Dursley	19:30-21:00	Elizabeth Byrne
Tortworth	By arrangement	Fen Marshall
Stinchcombe	19:30-21:00	James Joynson
Wickwar	19:15-21:00	Peter Juniper

### Friday

North Nibley	19:30-21:00	James Joynson
Slimbridge	19:30-21:00	Huvin Thompson



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