

## FROM PART ONE

The years before World War I were good ones for the Guild: bellringing got onto the agenda at the Diocesan Conference in 1907, and at the Annual General Meeting at Ottery that year there were 160 members present to have their photograph taken in Lord Coleridge's grounds. It was stated when a presentation was made to G.F. Molineux in 1913 that in the fourteen years of his secretaryship the membership had risen from 192 performing members to 380. Ladies had now attained full status as performing members, and there were all-female bands at St Petrock's, Exeter and Clyst Hydon. One unusual development was the Exeter Ringers' Cycling Club, which from 1904 to 1912 formed a kind of 'Flying Squad' of change-ringing missionaries in the county. The Club's first tour visited the area South of South Molton, staying the night at Rackenford where they were ringing for Sunday morning at 6.45! The Club (which often called itself the Exeter Ringers' Cycling Club Branch although it was never officially such) was mainly based on the St. David's band and led by Frank Davey and John Richards: by all accounts the ringing was of a high standard and their work was well regarded in the county, for they constantly report good relations with local ringers after they had been ringing in call-change country. In 1906 at their home tower of St. David's they rang the first non-conducted peal for the Guild, Holt's 10 part, and they performed first peals on the bells at Dartmouth and Berry Pomeroy as well as the first on the 'Stafford Eight' at the Cathedral. By 1912 the cycling boom was over, but the names of Frank Davey, John Richards, Tom Laver, James Moss and Julius and Adolphus Snow were notable ones in the Guild for many years after, and in the early 1950's the tall dignified figure, gold watch-chain, pince-nez glasses and drooping moustache of Arthur W. Searle were still familiar in the Exeter ringing scene, the last survivor of these Edwardian heroes.

## FROM PART TWO

John Longridge (1948-2005) had learnt to ring in Dorset as a boy and came to Exeter in the late sixties as a student at St Luke's College, where he founded a ringing society which later became the Exeter Colleges Guild. Using St Mark's as a base – he was tower captain there for twelve years – he organized regular quarter-peals (he rang over seventeen hundred in all) which gently moved the city ringers out of a repertoire of not much more than simple methods to ringing Spliced Surprise Major, and in so doing laid the foundations for further advances in the 1980s. His vision in ringing quarter-peals, whether on Sundays at St Mark's, Heavitree and the Cathedral, on quarter-peal outings, or on "John's week" in the summer, and his ability as a conductor, meant that the learners he taught got plenty of extended practice, and were enthused to attempt more advanced methods. Many a visiting ringer would look bemused when straying members of the band cried out "John, John! I'm lost!" and his conducting ability was such that he would instantly put them right. As a result, St Mark's became recognized as the tower to go to on Wednesday evenings if one wanted to progress in method-ringing, and ringers from a wide area of Devon would be made welcome and included in the quarter-peal bands. Furthermore, his skills in the technical side of composition and conducting, combined with his increasing interest in printing, resulted in a series of ringing publications, starting with *Conducting and Coursing Order* [1975] and *Composition 500* [1979], all of which have remained popular.

## FROM PART THREE

It is well known that while an undergraduate Maitland Kelly steered the local ringers at Kelly through three 120s of Grandsire Doubles on 21 January 1865, the first Devon band to do this. As a boy, Kelly had been taught to handle a bell by Francis F Yole, who with his brothers John and Edwin, was later to ring in that famous touch. *Church Bells* records that Kelly learnt to ring rounds at Kelly, and that when he was in his twenties 'Colonel Trelawny, his brother-in-law, first inspired him with a wish to learn half-pull ringing. Aided by his sister, and with the assistance of a set of handbells and Hubbard's '*Campanology*', he set to work at Grandsire Doubles'. The Central Council biography however states that he began his ringing career in 1864 in Oxford, and certainly one recent graduate destined for holy orders was ringing with the Oxford ringers at the time – F.E. Robinson. Kelly matriculated at Oxford in 1861, aged 18; he took his BA in 1869 and received his MA in the same year, and Eisel says this is because he left University College without a degree and returned to remedy this by attending a private hall of the university. It seems clear, nonetheless that while at Kelly he received assistance from Banister, and co-operation from the Calstock band. In a letter to *Church Bells*, he records how difficult it was at Kelly to find ringers who would ring for Sunday

morning services, although the ringers, 'who could ring Grandsire Doubles well', would often be available for the afternoon service. He rang his first peal on 13 September 1866, Grandsire Triples at Lewisham called by Banister; according to *Bell's Life in London* all the band were members of the ASCY – Kelly had been elected in 1864 – but the peal is not recorded in the Society peal book.