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THE RINGING WORLD



Ringling at Kendal in the nineteenth century

A three-part series by Dr John C Eisel



by John Eisel

Although a long way from established centres of change ringing, Kendal has had an interesting history. A number of performances were recorded on tablets in the ringing chamber, ranging from the first 120 on the bells in 1765 and the first known peal in 1796, to a peal rung there in 1898, as well as later performances. Transcripts of the earlier boards, albeit somewhat inaccurate, appeared in Church Bells on 15 December 1877. However, there were other peals rung on the bells during the period between 1796 and 1876 which were not so recorded, which have only been identified in recent years, and these will be discussed in the article that follows. For reference purposes, each of the first two parts has, at the end, a summary of peals discussed in the text of that part. This article is based on newspaper reports taken from my files, both for peals and other ringing-related news, which give a more personal view. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs used to illustrate this article are taken, with kind permission, from www.lakesguides.co.uk.

Introduction

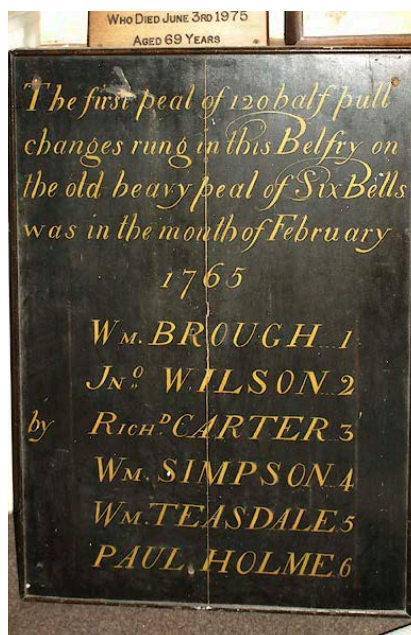
Kendal was the county town of the former county of Westmorland, now, of course no more, being absorbed into Cumbria. Lying on the most important western route north to Scotland, its history began with a Roman fort, around which a town grew up, and at the time of Domesday this was evidently prospering. A right to hold a market was granted in 1189, which guaranteed continuing prosperity. The manufacture of woollens seems to have begun with a party of weavers from the Low Countries being settled here by Edward III in 1338. This trade underpinned the economy of the town, but declined in the eighteenth century. No doubt it received a boost during the Napoleonic wars, but in 1829 White's directory of Cumberland and Westmorland, in the context of woollen manufactory and of leather tanning, noted that 'the manufacture of these articles has, of late years, greatly declined...' There was, however, a wide range of other manufactories, including a marble works, so that the town continued to prosper. The population at the time of the 1821 census was recorded as 10,455, and in 1829 it was estimated as 11,000. This compares with Hereford (where I live), which in 1831 had a population of 10,282; the economy of Hereford was based on agriculture, with little in the way of manufacturing, while Kendal's economy, based on manufacturing, was clearly in a much better state.

Having being prosperous from a very early date, it is not surprising that this is reflected in the size of the parish church of Holy Trinity.

Whereas most churches would have consisted of a nave and choir,

with an aisle on either side, Kendal church has two aisles on either side, with the western tower within the western bay of the nave, supported on three arches. Modern research shows that, when the fabric of the abbey at Furness was sold up at the Reformation, in 1537 the abbey bells were sold to the men of Kendal, and so are assumed to have replaced whatever was then in the tower at Kendal. Previously it had been thought that the great bell had been brought from Shap Abbey in about 1538, and in a 1934 booklet on the Kendal church bells, it was stated that this bell was bought by one Richard Washington. There must be some documentary evidence somewhere which gives such specific information, even if it has been misinterpreted. The latest evidence has been well discussed in these pages by Andrew White, on 3rd March 2023 (p.205). The five bells of the 1530s were recast at various times, and eventually made up to a ring of six bells

Peal-board erected to record the first 120 rung on the old ring of six bells in 1765. The phraseology makes it clear that this board was painted after the heavy ring of six bells was remodelled into a lighter ring of eight bells.



in 1695. Subsequently the tenor was recast at least twice, before the events which are detailed in the next section.

The first evidence of change ringing

Despite the title of this article, in order to set the background, we need to look at what was happening in Kendal in way of ringing in the eighteenth century. The first evidence that we have of change ringing is in the form of a peal tablet, which records the first 'peal' of 120 half-pull changes that was rung there in February 1765. At that time the bells were a heavy ring of six, with tenor of about 35cwt. Possibly the impetus for improvement came from this band, and in 1774/5 this ring was remodelled by Pack and Chapman, of the Whitechapel foundry, using the fourth and fifth bells of the ring of six as the seventh and eighth of a lighter ring of eight bells. This remodelled ring was hung by Samuel Turner, and MS site notes made by John Taylor jun., after a visit on 24th July 1891, indicate that Turner almost certainly remodelled an old frame, which was set diagonally in the tower. As a consequence of the layout, even after allowing for possible drawing of the ropes, the rope circle was most likely to have been poor, making for difficult ropesight. This ring was advertised to be opened on 10th March 1775, but no report of that opening has yet been traced.

While it is clear that, after the augmentation, change ringing continued to be developed at Kendal, we do not have any further record until that of a peal of Grandsire Triples that was rung on 12th August 1796. The only press reports of this that I have are from the London papers, the primary report probably being that which appeared in the *Star* on 22nd August 1796, which stated that it was the 'greatest number of changes ever rung at one time upon that noble peal.' There was enough detail given to indicate that it was Holt's ten-part composition that was used, but the names of the band were not given. Fortunately, these were recorded on a peal tablet, and only one of the names is common to the band that rang the 120 in 1765, that of William Simpson, who rang the fourth bell (of six) in 1765, and the sixth bell (of eight) in 1796, but evidence to be discussed in Part 3 suggests that these may have been two different persons of the same name. There is no indication of who conducted the peal, but it may well have been Nicholas Wilson, ringer of the second bell, the observation bell for Holt's ten-part composition: he was the most prominent ringer in Kendal at the time. The press reports give (incorrectly) the dedication of the church as being to St Mary, whereas it was (and is) dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

Into the nineteenth century

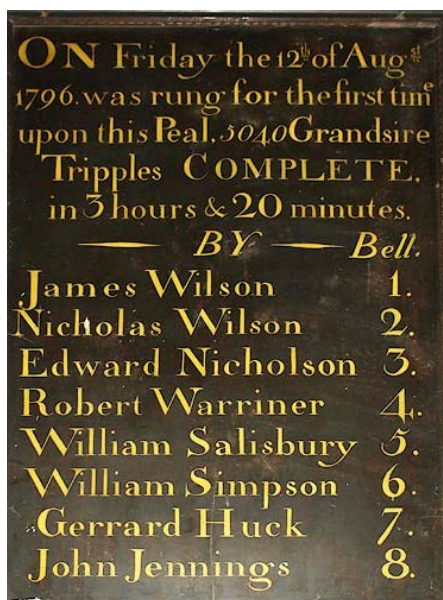
The next peal record which I have was published in the *Lancaster Gazetteer* (later *Lancaster Gazette*) on 8th May 1802.

'On Monday the 12th ult. (whilst the Mayor and his attendants were riding the boundaries) a peal was rung at St. Mary's church, in Kendal, consisting of 5040 changes, grandsire triples, complete, in three hours and twenty three minutes.'

In 1943 Edwin Jennings, who was a native of Kendal but who had moved away c.1935, published in these pages a four-part article on Kendal church and ringers. In the final part of this (*RW*1943 p.152) he stated:

'The same band also repeated this performance on Monday April 12th, 1802, in three hours and twenty-three minutes.'

The band referred to is that which rang the peal in 1796, and this information was derived from the report in the *Lancaster Gazetteer*, quoted above, of which Jennings had knowledge. This peal was not recorded on any peal board of which we have record and the reason the peal was published in the *Lancaster Gazetteer* was



that the *Westmorland Advertiser* did not begin publication until 1811, the *Westmorland Gazette* not until 1818, and the *Kendal Mercury* not until 1834, all of which were published in Kendal. There is also supporting evidence in a report that appeared in the *Westmorland Advertiser* on 26th June 1813; this publicised the death, at the age of 72, of Edward Nicholson, who rang the third bell in the peal in 1796, and it was stated that he ‘joined in every 5,000

changes rung here.’ This phrasing suggests more than two peals had been rung, so there may be at least one more peal to be found. There is no contemporary information on who called the peal in 1802, and who were the other members of the band, but it would be surprising if Nicholas Wilson was not in the band; he may even have called it.

There are discrepancies in the newspaper reports for these two peals, in that for both the dedication of the church was stated to be to St Mary, and not the correct Holy Trinity. There was also a delay in publishing the reports, and that for the 1796 peal seems to have only been published in the London papers — at least, only reports in the London papers have so far been found. All this suggests that the source of the newspaper reports was someone from away, who was in the habit of sending reports in to newspapers, and it would not be surprising if this was our old friend John Alfred Parnell, the ‘Gothic Traveller’. (For a discussion of Parnell, see *Essay for the Friends of the (Central Council) Library No. 20* (February 2013), and an article in these pages (*RW2020* p.854). There is also another issue in that every seventh year there was a boundary riding in Lancaster, one of which took place in 1802, and it was suggested to me that the report of the second peal could have confused Kendal with Lancaster. However, this cannot be so, because the 1802 riding at Lancaster took place on 7th June, which was Whit Monday, the day when that riding was customarily held. (*Lancaster Gazetteer*, 12th June 1802) Limited evidence shows that boundary ridings were occasionally held for Kendal parish, but not on such a regular basis as at Lancaster. It must therefore just be coincidence that ridings were held at Lancaster and Kendal in the same year, and there is no doubt that this peal was indeed rung at Kendal, as published, and should therefore be added to the Felstead database.

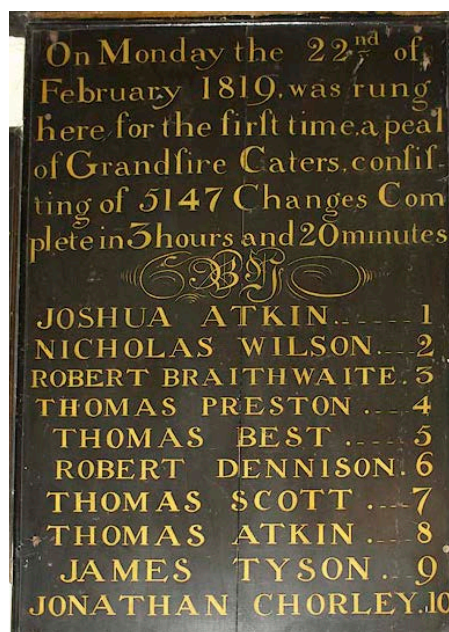
Augmentation to ten

After 1802 there is little in the way of evidence of activities of the Kendal company before the augmentation of the bells in 1816. In 1804 Thomas Mears cast a ring of six bells for Burton-in-Kendal, and on 19 January 1805 the *Lancaster Gazette* reported:

Top: The peal-board erected to record the peal of Grandsire Triples, rung in 1796.

Although not stated, it was probably conducted by Nicholas Wilson.

Right: While no conductor was recorded for the peal of Grandsire Caters rung on 22 February 1819, newspaper reports show that it was conducted by James Tyson.



‘The complete peal of seven hundred and twenty changes was lately rung, on the six musical bells, at Burton-in-Kendal, by the Kendal established company of change-ringers, with the greatest accuracy and skill.’

This may have been an opening of the bells, or just to try out the new ring.

Although nothing of the activities of this ‘established company’ has so far been traced in the next ten years, something was going on, and there was a move to augment the ring at Kendal to one of ten bells. The preface to Shipway’s *Campanalogia*, issued in 1816 with the third and final part of the book, gives a list of 53 rings of ten bells then in existence, and in a gazetteer of the various counties, under Westmorland, noted that ‘Kendal has the only peal of eight bells in the county, which are intended shortly to be augmented to ten...’. This was to be the most northerly ring of ten bells in the country. A stimulus came on 24th March 1816, when the fifth bell was broken by a defective clapper which, despite warnings, was not attended to. On 18th June 1816 the necessary sum of money to recast the fifth bell and augment the ring was finally reached, Nicholas Wilson, the noted local ringer who rang in the peal in 1796, being one of the prime movers. The order was placed with Thomas Mears, and the new bells reached Kendal by canal on 30th December 1816, were hung the next day, and were used to ring in the New Year after midnight on 31st December 1816. (*Westmorland Advertiser*, Sat. 4 January 1817; presumably at this time at least part of the Lancaster and Kendal canal was navigable, although it was not officially opened until 18th June 1819. The date for the completion of the subscription was given as 18th July 1816, but as it was stated that it was the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, 18th June must have been intended.) These new bells were hung above the others (‘hoisted’), which was likely to have made them difficult to hear, while the Taylor notes show that their ropes fell very close to that of the tenor.

Despite these difficulties, the band set to and got to grips with change ringing on the ten bells, and on 13th May 1817 achieved 1565 changes of Grandsire Caters, an advert in the *Westmorland Advertiser* on 24 May 1817 publicising this stating that this was ‘rung at the request of that truly scientific ringer, Mr. Nicholas Wilson, of this town, who afterwards gave the performers a very handsome treat.’ Nicholas Wilson did not ring in the touch. However, when the band rang two long touches of Grandsire Caters in the early hours of 1st January 1819, he rang the second, his usual bell, in each of these, and he rang that bell in a peal of 5147 Grandsire Caters on 22 February 1819. (*Westmorland Gazette* and *Westmorland Advertiser*, both 27 February 1819.) He died on 8th June 1819, after a short illness, not too long after the peal, and at the conclusion of the burial service on the bells were rung muffled. (*Westmorland Advertiser* and *Westmorland Gazette*, both 12th June 1819.) His death was sad, as he had only been married for a few months, the ceremony taking place at Kendal on 23rd January 1819, which was celebrated by what

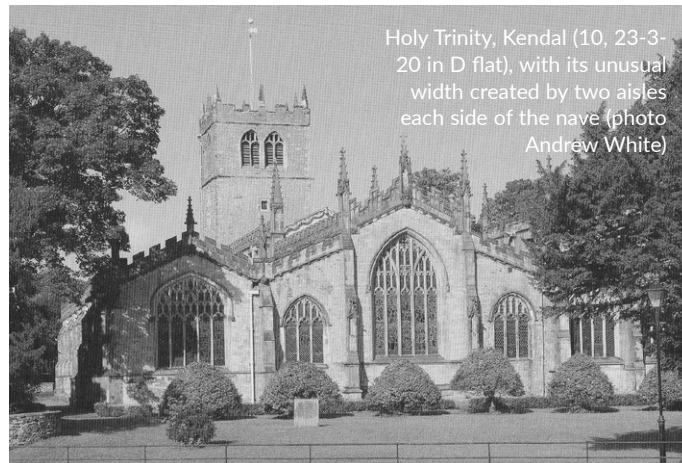
was described as ‘a merry peal on the bells’ (*Cumberland Pacquet*, 2nd February 1819). Nicholas Wilson was a watchmaker, and it is possible some examples of his work still survive. I have seen his name on the dial of at least one longcase clock of regulator type.

After the peal that was rung on 22nd February 1819, another peal was not rung on the full ten bells until 1898, all the others in the interim (bar one) being of Grandsire Triples. The first of these was rung on 7th May 1821, composed and conducted by Thomas Scott, who rang the observation bell. (*Westmorland Advertiser* and *Westmorland Gazette*, both 12th May 1821). There was then a gap until a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major was rung on the bells on 8th September 1834 by a band from Preston, conducted by John Chew. A critical report of this peal appeared in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 13th September 1834, which stated that the ringing went on for three hours six minutes: ‘the first hour and a half of which they rung beautifully — the other was wretched.’ On the same day a report appeared in the *Kendal*

Mercury, stating that on the previous Monday (8th September) the ringers from Preston ‘executed a peal of 5040 changes on the bells at Kendal church, in three hours and twelve minutes.’ This differs in both time and the impossible number of changes for treble bob, and the person who supplied the report was evidently not *au fait* with what was rung. Full details of the peal were published in both the *Lancaster Gazette* and *Preston Chronicle* of 4 October 1834, when it was stated that 5120 changes of Kent Treble Bob Major were rung in three hours 10 minutes. No record has yet been found of a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major rung at home by the Preston company prior to this peal at Kendal — that which was rung at Preston on 19th July 1828 was rung by a visiting company from Manchester. It is most likely therefore that there is at least another peal of Kent Treble Bob Major, rung at Preston by the local company prior to the peal at Kendal, which is yet to be found, not helped by the fact that no issues of the *Preston Chronicle* prior to 1831 are available in digitised form. However, there is little doubt that a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major was rung at Kendal in 1834, even if there are doubts about its standard, and this peal was even mentioned in the obituary of John Chew, who died in 1863. (*Preston Chronicle*, 27th June 1863)

Ringling – or lack of it – in the later 1830s

Ringling at Kendal ceased soon after the peal of Treble Bob, when there was a dispute about the amount that the ringers were paid for an annual salary, which was £16/12s in 1786; £21/12s in 1796; £25/12s in 1826; and £25/8s. in 1834. The latter was calculated at one shilling for each of eight ringers per Sunday, with other payments for special ringling days. (The payment for the number of bells being rung for service was evidently a hangover from the days before 1816.) These figures were given in a letter that appeared in the *Kendal Mercury* on 26th July 1834, which queried the amount of the church rate, and how the money was spent. Among other things, there was bad feeling in the parish about the payments to the ringers, where it was felt that this should not be paid for out of the church rate, particularly as the bells could not be heard in the



Holy Trinity, Kendal (10, 23-3-20 in D flat), with its unusual width created by two aisles each side of the nave (photo Andrew White)

outlying townships. There was also concern about the way the accounts were approved, all of which were aired in a meeting of the rate-payers of the parish on 4th August 1834. The opposition was led by Mr Robert Wilson, a local solicitor, who claimed that the legal appropriation for the church rate was for repairs and necessary ornaments, and that the bells did not come within the law (*Kendal Mercury*, 9th August 1834). Subsequently a meeting of the churchwardens took place on 22nd September 1834, where, during disorderly scenes, it was decided to pay the ringers £12 annually. This inevitably upset the ringers, and the bells were not rung for service from 28th September 1834 onwards. An attempt to circumvent this refusal was made by the churchwardens, who circulated handbills, advertising for a set of eight competent bell-ringers, presumably to be paid at the reduced rate. Inevitably this was unsuccessful, the only persons expressing interest being members of the existing band, who would only ring at the former rate of pay (*Kendal Mercury*, 11th and 25th October 1834). A proposal that the ringers be paid by subscription was not acceded to, the vicar in particular being against it, the reason being given in a letter that appeared in the *Kendal Mercury* on 8 November 1834:

‘But here comes the secret worth knowing — the authorities in and about the Church refuse to allow the bells to be rung by subscription, because they would be publicly sanctioning the “voluntary principle.”’

The bells remained silent for nine months, until 28th May 1835, reported in the *Kendal Mercury* on 30th May 1835:

‘The King’s birth-day, on Thursday, was celebrated here by the ringing of the Church bells. This was an unexpected treat to the inhabitants, who had not before heard their “pleasing chime” for nearly nine months. Yesterday morning also, the anniversary of the restoration of Charles the Second, was welcomed in with a merry peal.’

There was then something of a change in heart by the churchwardens, and on 17th October 1835 the *Kendal Mercury* reported that during the week they had been collecting subscriptions to enable the bells to be rung, reported thus in the next issue of the *Kendal Mercury*.

‘On Sunday morning last, being the 18th of October, Kendal Bells were again heard by the delighted natives of this spirited town — and no thanks to the Vicar.’

As far as can be determined this initiative was short lived, and the bells were not used again for Sunday service until 1837, the public being informed by a report in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 13th May 1837:

‘KENDAL CHURCH BELLS.—It is intended that our Church Bells shall be again put in motion to-morrow (Sunday), a circumstance which we have no doubt will be hailed with much satisfaction by all within hearing of their fine tones. The expense, we are informed, is to be met by subscription.’

Again it is not certain how long the bells continued to be rung on a Sunday, but probably not too long, and a poem called ‘The Lament of Kendal Church Bells’ was submitted for publication in the *Westmorland Gazette* (30th September 1837): unfortunately it did not appear, as it would probably have given more information on this.

It appears that it was not until 1839 that enough subscriptions were obtained to enable the bells to be rung regularly on a Sunday,



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NOTICES

Death

POYNER Mary of Whissendine, Rutland died on 26th January 2024 age 91. Her funeral will be held at 12 noon on Tuesday 13th February at Whissendine Church. Open ringing from 11:00am. Please e-mail hjpoynner@gmail.com if you plan to attend. 1110

HUNT, Richard, ringer at All Saints, Ryde, Isle of Wight, (formerly of Portsea and South Harting) died on 17th January after a short illness. Richard's funeral will be at All Saints Ryde on Tuesday 20th February at 12:30. Ringing from 11:45. All welcome. Family flowers only. paulproj@aol.com 1111

Meetings on Saturday 10th February 2024

LADIES' GUILD, SE DISTRICT Saturday, 10th February, ADM at Barming (6), Kent, 3.15 to 4.30 pm, followed by ringing until 5.30 pm. Everyone welcome. 1002

Advertising in *The Ringing World*: Line adverts (priced per word) and notices start at 20p per word. Death and funeral notices are free of charge (donations welcome). You can upgrade to 'semi display' from £10. Display adverts start at £38 for a ninth page. Options in colour or black and white.

For more details: advertising@ringingworld.co.uk
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No.	Date	Method	Time	Conductor	Composition	Comment
1	17 Aug. 1796	Grandsire Triples	3h 20m	Nich. Wilson?	Holt's ten-part	First on the bells
2	12 April 1802	Grandsire Triples	3h 23m	Nich. Wilson?	Holt's ten-part?	Not on Felstead
3	22 Feb. 1819	Grandsire Caters	3h 29m	James Tyson	W. Shipway	First on ten bells
4	7 May 1821	Grandsire Triples	3h 8m	Thomas Scott	Thomas Scott	
5	8 Sept. 1834	Kent TB Major	3h 10m	John Chew	?	First of treble bob on bells

Peals discussed in this part

the prime mover being Thompson Bindloss, Esq., the then mayor of the borough. Ringing began again on 18th August 1839 and continued until 26 February 1841, a total of 78 Sundays, as well as payments for other special ringing occasions. The subscription being almost used up, accounts were published in the *Kendal Mercury* on 13th February 1841 (in anticipation of ringing on Sundays continuing until 26th February 1841). It should be noted that payment out of the subscription fund was only made for seven bells to be rung, as the parish were obliged to ring one bell for service. The total subscription amounted to £33/5/6. and the accounts were examined and found correct by Thomas Scott, the leader of the ringers. An appeal to continue the subscription raised

£38/18/6, and the *Westmorland Gazette* of 3rd April 1841 congratulated the eleven churchwardens, whose names were listed, 'on the happy results of their exertions in favour of harmony.'

I can currently trace no further appeals for subscriptions towards payment for ringing the bells on Sundays, but must assume that this continued to happen. There were also amateur ringers at the time of this dispute, and when Mr Robert Wilson, whitesmith, died in 1841 at the age of 74, a report in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 18th December 1841 stated that he was 'for fifty years one of the amateur ringers of the Parish Bells.'

(To be continued)

6

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Retirement at York Minster by Bob Cater

Having turned 80 just before Christmas, Gail Cater decided to cut down on ringing just a little by retiring as a formal member of the band at York Minster, marked after ringing in the New Year. This has become an annual tradition in York when a large crowd assembles around the Minster to await the bells and counts down the seconds so the ringers don't get the pull-off late.

The ringing chamber was packed and included The Dean, the Very Reverend Dominic Barrington, and Canons Vicky and Maggie and families. After ringing Gail was congratulated by the Head of Bells, Andy Blacklock, who thanked her for 13 years of service since she and Bob retired to York.

The Dean then thanked Gail, not just for her service to the Minster, but for her service to the Church as a whole by being a Sunday ringer continuously for the past 60 years. He then took the opportunity to thank all the Minster's ringers for their enthusiasm and commitment in helping the Minster proclaim its message of Mission and Worship.

The Minster clergy are no strangers in the ringing chamber; they lead prayers every Sunday morning before the pull-off which follows nine o'clock being struck on Great Peter.

After a short break from all ringing, Gail plans to ring at the Minster from time to time and to continue her Sunday Service

ringing as a band member at the York Oratory. Over the last 60 years she has been a member of the bands at Wakefield Cathedral, where she and Bob were taught to ring by the late Wilfrid Moreton, at St Mary's Warwick, at Skipton and, for nearly 30 years, at Winchester Cathedral.

Apart from occasional ringing, Gail will continue her close connection with the Minster through her stewarding duties, which she and Bob have undertaken for several years.



Photograph - l to r - Julia Cater, Bob Cater, Gail Cater, The Dean of York, Bethany Cater. Paisley Cater, also a ringer, regretfully could not be with us.

by John Eisel

We left the story of ringing at Kendal in 1841, after a successful appeal for funds had ensured the continuance of ringing for Sunday services. It is therefore not too surprising that the next report I have of a peal rung at Kendal is one of Grandsire Triples, rung on the morning of Easter Sunday, 1842 (27th March 1842), reported in the *Kendal Mercury*, *Westmorland Gazette* and *Preston Chronicle*, all on 2nd April 1842. The composition was one of Holt's, probably his 10-part, and it was called by Thomas Scott. Three of the ringers were described as 'youths,' and it was their first performance — presumably meaning their first peal. One of the ringers was George Jennings, who subsequently had a long career in the belfry at Kendal. Rather surprisingly, this peal was not recorded on a peal board, and I have only identified it in recent years.

Up to the 1840s the ringing took place on a gallery at the level of the sill of the west window of the church, behind the organ, which obscured the west window. In 1846 this gallery was removed, and a ringing chamber constructed at a higher level. This was not done solely to improve the look of the west window, but also to enable the organ to be installed beneath the west window. The report in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 5th September 1846 was careful to say:

'Upon the whole this appears to be the most suitable spot.

The height of the organ will not, we imagine, materially injure the fine effect which the restored window gives the middle aisle of the edifice, as viewed from the eastern end, and material objections existed to the erection of the organ at the side aisles or any of the ancient chapels, both of which sites had been suggested.'

According to the church website, in 1852 this organ was moved to the Bellingham chapel.

The next peal of which we have record, Grandsire Triples on the morning of Sunday 2nd December 1849, was rung from this higher level. Both reports in the local press stated that this was rung by five ringers from the junior society, and three from the senior society. It was conducted by George Jennings, of the senior society, who also conducted the next known peal on the bells, Grandsire Triples (of course), on Sunday 23rd April 1854. The reports in the *Kendal Mercury* and *Lancaster Gazette* on 29 April 1854 both state that:

'The bells were rung with admirable precision, and the changes were uniform, distinct, and clear throughout the whole peal, which produced a most delightful and harmonious effect, and exhibited our musical peal of bells to great advantage, and the skill displayed reflects the highest credit on the ringers.'

A different report in *Bell's Life in London* on 30th April 1854 stated that the composition was by E. Taylor, and it was thus the well-known 'bob-and-single' composition on the three-lead plan. That George Jennings was a capable conductor is shown by the fact that the next peal on the bells, Grandsire Triples again, which he called on Sunday 20th December 1857, was rung using Holt's Original composition.

A different conductor

When the Kendal ringers rang a peal of Grandsire Triples on 27th December 1869, it was composed and conducted by James Baxter, who was described in the *Kendal Mercury* as 'conductor of the ringers.' It is not clear whether this just refers to this particular occasion or was a more general description, possibly the latter as he again composed and conducted a peal of Grandsire Triples on 3rd January 1876. The report in the *Kendal Mercury* on 8th January 1876 states that the peal took three hours twenty minutes, that in *Church Bells* on 29th January 1876 gives three hours eight minutes, stating that this was 'the shortest time the peal has been accomplished in this tower for the last fifty years.' This is an imprecise reference to the peal rung at Kendal on 7th May 1821, which also took three hours eight minutes. The peal board put up to record the peal gave the time as three hours three minutes, which is certainly incorrect.

The background to this peal was contentious. A few years previously Mr. William Doubleday, one of the churchwardens of Kendal, was appointed Tower Warden, with control over the ringing.

There was a dispute over ringing at Christmas 1875, best told in the words of the report in the *Lancaster Gazette* of 29th January 1876:

'On Christmas Day the ringing was not satisfactory to the churchwardens, and the men were remonstrated with on the subject. On New Year's Eve they were instructed to ring a muffled peal during the last half hour of the old year, and a merry peal afterwards. These instructions were not followed, the men attempting a "long peal," of which the churchwardens did not approve, and there was another remonstrance. On the following Monday they rang a long peal without asking permission, and on the 4th instant, Mr. Doubleday, the tower warden, dismissed them.'

The 'long peal' that was attempted at New Year 1876 may well have been a peal attempt, which was rung successfully two days later, as noted above. After the dismissal of the ringers, the bells were rung with a chiming apparatus, and at the time of the report nothing had been done to resolve the dispute. It was hoped that a meeting of the churchwardens with the vicar on his return to the parish would enable some arrangement to be come to. Nothing further seems to have been reported, either because it was quickly resolved or it was quietly forgotten due to the sudden death of Mr. Doubleday. This was reported in an obituary in the *Kendal Mercury* on 25th March 1876, and where there was an oblique reference to this dispute:

'Mr. Doubleday, at the request of his coadjutors, a few years ago, undertook the responsibility of the post of Tower Warden, and during the time he has been connected with the belfry he took a great and active interest in the proper discharge of the duties connected with the proper ringing of the bells, and although little annoyances occasionally arose which caused some trouble, it must be allowed that the ringing of the bells has never been better, more regularly, or more efficiently conducted. ...

The amateur ringers rang a muffled peal as the funeral cortège proceeded to the cemetery, and in the evening the Kendal ringers rang a portion of a half-muffled peal, composed by Mr. James Baxter, of Kendal, in token of their respect and esteem for the deceased gentleman. After having rung for nearly an hour, the further progress of the peal was checked by reason of one of the mufflers becoming untied. The effect produced by the alternate loud and soft changes was very effective, and was listened to by many with much pleasure.'

It seems that a half-muffled peal (in the modern sense) was being attempted, rather ironic in view of the dispute about the peal two and a half months previously. It also suggests that the dispute had been resolved with no hard feelings on the part of the ringers. With regards to the mention of 'amateurs', this calls attention to the fact that there is in the belfry at Kendal a box, probably designed for handbells, which bears on the lid the inscription 'Kendal Amateur Bell-Ringing Society / 1876', by which time the amateur society was well enough established for its members to be able to ring for Mr. Doubleday's funeral.

Returning to the issue of the time of the peal rung on 3rd January 1876, when a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at Kendal on 13th November 1876 the *Kendal Mercury* reported that the time occupied was three hours four minutes, and that this was 'the shortest the peal has ever been rung in the Kendal belfry.' This again indicates that the time quoted for the peal on 3rd January 1876 was incorrect. This second peal in 1876 was also composed by James Baxter, and was conducted by William Baxter. The report in the *Kendal Mercury* concluded by stating that '5,040 of "grandsire triples" is the greatest number that can be rung on a peal of eight bells, the number in the Kendal loft.' This gives an indication that little, if anything, in the way of ten-bell ringing was happening at Kendal at this period. One of the ringers who took part in the peal on 13th November 1876 was W. Akerigg, who was given the title 'Mr.' in the newspaper report, and was recorded as an amateur on the peal board put up to record the peal. At the time of publication this peal, despite being recorded on a peal-board, was also not listed on the Felstead database.

I suspect that the same composition by James Baxter was used in all the peals where he was credited with the composition, and

it was very likely to have been of the three-lead type. There was another such rung at Kendal on 4th February 1879, when the report in the *Kendal Mercury* on 8th February 1879 stated that this 'is one of the longest, if not the longest, which has been rung in Kendal by a combination of the amateurs and professional ringers.' (Not quite correct, as W. Akerigg had rung in a peal in 1876.) Three of the ringers were noted as being amateurs. When a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung at Kendal on 22nd February 1879, less than three weeks later, two of the ringers participating can be identified as amateurs, which must imply that they were not part of the paid band: one was C. Fox, who conducted the peal, using Holt's ten-part composition, and he can be identified as Charles Alfred Fox. He conducted Reeves's ten-part composition of Grandsire Triples at Kendal on 10th November 1880, which is the last record I have of him ringing at Kendal, and he then moved on.

The rehangng of Kendal bells – twice!

After the departure of Charles Fox, I have nothing further for nearly ten years. The next report of the activities of the Kendal company that I have was when it visited Bowness on 25th January 1890, where a date touch of Grandsire Triples was rung. (*Westmorland Gazette*, 1st February 1890) There is also evidence that the bells were in poor ringing order at this time, which must have had an effect on the ringing. It was decided to do something about this, and they were fitted with Shaw's type of roller bearings, the work being carried out by T. Harrison and J. F. Mallaby. Reports in the *Kendal Mercury* and *Westmorland Gazette*, both of 17th May 1890, eulogised the improved 'go' of the bells, stating that a bell raised, and then pushed off the balance, took much longer to come to rest after the new bearings had been fitted. The bells were opened with a touch of 1,652 Grandsire Triples. A half peal of Grandsire Triples, taken from Taylor's composition, was rung on 7th November 1891, and a date touch of 1891 Grandsire Triples on 28th November 1891.

However, it was clear that just fitting new bearings was not the complete answer, and meanwhile (as noted in Part 1) the bells were inspected on 21st July 1891 by John Taylor jun. He found that the frame was generally in poor condition, and that the part around the pit of the tenor bell moved considerably, although there was not as much movement in the rest of the frame as might have been expected, perhaps because extra cross-braces had been added. As a consequence it was recommended that a new frame was needed, although John Taylor jun. did not visit the tower again until 12th September 1893 for some final measuring up. Messrs Taylor of Loughborough were contracted to supply a new frame and tune the bells, and this commission was completed by Easter Sunday 1894 (25th March), when the bells were reopened. A date touch of 1894 Grandsire Triples was rung on 30th May 1894, reported in *Bell News* on 16th June 1894, where it was stated that the ring was 'much improved in tone, and the "go" is everything that can be desired.'

It was not long before a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung on the newly-rehung bells, Taylor's composition on 20th December 1894, when two of the band rang their first peal. In 1897 the band began to practice Grandsire Caters, and on 22nd April 1897 rang a touch of 882 changes, the report in *Bell News* on 8th May 1897 stating:

'The last recorded touch of Caters is dated 1819, and the present company commenced practising a few weeks ago.'

On 18 November 1897 the band rang 1,080 Grandsire Caters, reported as the longest touch of Caters by all the band, and the longest recorded touch of Grandsire Caters since 1819. Then on 22nd February 1898 a peal of Grandsire Caters was rung, the band including six of the ringers who had rung in the peal in 1894. A report in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 26 February 1898 was careful to point out that this peal of Grandsire Caters was rung on the 79th



The Grandsire Caters peal band of 1898.

Back row, left to right: Jacob Baxter (3), R. Dennison (1), T. Haslam (6), B. Walker (8), W. Atkinson (7), W. Graham (2). Front row, left to right: Tyson (4), J. Braithwaite (9), J. Salmon (10), R. Everson (5).

anniversary of the only previous peal rung in the method on the bells, going on to say:

'An interesting fact in connection with the above is that two of the ringers who took part in the peal this week (Dennison and Tyson) are great grandsons of ringers of the same name who assisted at the peal in 1819.'

This is a convenient point at which to leave the band at Kendal, when ringing had reached a standard which it had not been at for almost eighty years. To round out the story we need to look at some of the ringers who were prominent in the story of ringing at Kendal, and this will be the theme of Part 3.

(To be continued)

No.	Date	Method	Time	Conductor	Composition	Comment
6	27 March 1842	Grandsire Triples	3h 12m	Thomas Scott	Holt's ten-part	
7	7 Dec. 1849	Grandsire Triples	3h 20m	Geo. Jennings	E. Taylor?	Rang 7th bell
8	23 April 1854	Grandsire Triples	3h 20m	Geo. Jennings	E. Taylor	Rang 7th (obs.) bell
9	20 Dec. 1857	Grandsire Triples	3h 20m	Geo. Jennings	Holt's original	
10	27 Dec. 1869	Grandsire Triples	3h 10m	James Baxter	James Baxter	
11	3 Jan. 1876	Grandsire Triples	3h 8m	James Baxter	James Baxter	
12	13 Nov. 1876	Grandsire Triples	3h 4m	Wm. Baxter	James Baxter	Not on Felstead. Included one 'amateur'.
13	4 Feb. 1879	Grandsire Triples	3h 12m	Jacob Baxter	James Baxter	Includes three 'amateurs'
14	22 Feb. 1879	Grandsire Triples	3h 10m	Charles A. Fox	Holt's ten-part	Includes two 'amateurs'
15	10 Nov. 1880	Grandsire Triples	3h 9min	Charles A. Fox	J. Reeves	Includes two 'amateurs'
16	20 Dec. 1894	Grandsire Triples	3h 12m	B. Dawson	E. Taylor	Three 'first peals'
17	22 Feb. 1898	Grandsire Caters	3h 31m	Brown Walker	Brown Walker	First of caters for 79 years

Peals discussed in this part

No. 5887, 23 February 2024

THE

RINGING WORLD





On the cover

Our cover image this week was kindly provided by **Kevin Mayfield**, Tower Captain at Holy Trinity Kendal, courtesy of the parish office. Illustrating the third and last part of John Eisel's history of ringing there in the nineteenth century, it depicts the former sign for the Ring of Bells inn (called the Ring o' Bells since the 1870s). The sign has been restored on at least a couple of occasions, most recently about 40 years ago. A comparison with the image opposite page 309 in Ernest Morris's *History and Art of*

Change Ringing gives an indication of the extent of the overpainting, a tankard by the jug having disappeared. Although said by Morris to have been painted by William Fothergill in 1828 the story of this inn sign is told in the *Kendal Mercury* on 30th June 1877, where it is stated that it was painted by **Jack Fothergill** 'who, at the time, had a considerable reputation in the district as a sign and other painter.' There seems no reason to doubt this, and the artist may thus be identified with John Fothergill, painter, of Kendal, who died in February 1823, 'Jack' being a familiar form of 'John'. (*Westmorland Gazette*, 1st March 1823)

John Eisel suggests that since the sign shows ten ringers, it must have been painted between 1817 and 1823, and may well depict the Grandsire Caters peal band of 1819. The sign was disposed of when John Reade (Reed), the landlord of the Ring of Bells who commissioned it, left Kendal, as a consequence of which Reade's effects were sold up. It was said that Reade left Kendal in 1830, but there is some doubt as to the accuracy of this date, as the Ring of Bells was advertised to be let in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 16th July 1825, when John 'Reed' was the tenant, and Reade could not be traced there at a later date. When White's directory of Cumberland and Westmorland was published in 1829 the tenant of the Ring of Bells was William Braithwaite.

At the end of the second part of his series (p.157), John Eisel had been discussing a peal of Grandsire Caters rung at Kendal in 1898, on the 79th anniversary of an 1819 performance, the only previous peal rung there in the method. It included the great grandsons of two of the original peal ringers, who shared their forebears' names. In part three, starting on page 175, the article elaborates on what is known of the prominent ringers of Kendal around that time.



The same ten bells hang in the tower today, and they are rung every week for Sunday service. The regular weekly practice on a Wednesday evening is well attended by locals and of course, being in the Lake District, also popular with tourists in the summer. Ringing times are publicised on the LACR and the church websites, and visitors are always welcome.

Kendal appears to have recovered well post-pandemic. Tower Captain Kevin Mayfield was "surprised and pleased" that they came back with "no issues" after the various lockdowns, and the team were all keen and cooperative to ring (often on a rota) as much as allowed by the guidelines until normal patterns finally resumed.



And the pub? The Ring O' Bells is one of only two pubs in England to be on consecrated ground. Built in 1741 with the stated aim of providing refreshment to church wardens and the bellringers, it stands alongside Kendal Parish Church. It is still the ringers' pub, of course, supports two local micro-breweries and has won local CAMRA awards. The listed building displays a modern version of the sign today, but not modern enough – it still features ten men!

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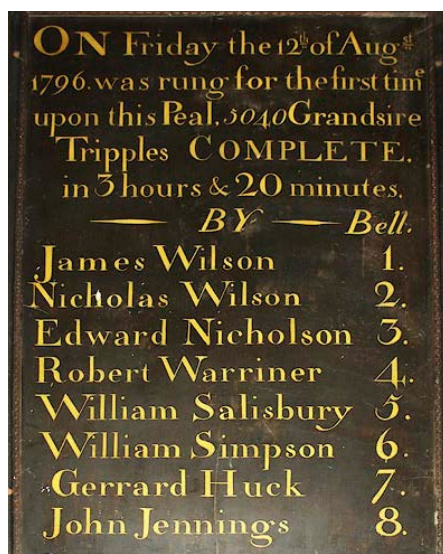
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by John Eisel



The Ringers

From obituaries reported in the local press, we have an unusual amount of information about the members of the band who rang the peal of Grandsire Triples in 1796, listed below in the order in which they stood to ring.

James Wilson died in 1810 at the age of 63. An obituary in the *Carlisle Journal* on 10th November 1810 (with similar obituaries elsewhere) tells us that he was a woolcomber, and that he had been a member of the society at Kendal for more than 40 years, for 30 of which he was the leader. This went on to say: ‘One of the oldest change ringers was selected to ring at a set pull, during the service at the grave side, the bell the deceased rang, which had a very impressive and solemn effect.’

It was the treble bell that James Wilson rang, and this shows that the ringers generally rang the same bell.

Nicholas Wilson, probably the brother of James Wilson, was the driving force behind the augmentation of the bells to a ring of ten, and took part in the first peal of Grandsire Caters on 22 February 1819. He died on 8th June 1819, aged 69; he had married again only a few months previously, tying the knot on 23rd January (*Cumberland Pacquet*, 2nd February 1819). He was a watchmaker by trade, and was highly regarded by his fellow townsmen. The bells were rung muffled after the funeral service, commented on in the obituary in the *Westmorland Advertiser* and *Westmorland Gazette*, both of 12 June 1819: ‘This tribute of respect was with great propriety paid to the memory of one who had been a scientific change ringer, and to whom this town is indebted for a peal which ranks amongst the most complete and musical in the Kingdom.’

Edward Nicholson, regular ringer of the third bell, died on 11th June 1813, at the age

of 72. He had been a ringer for 45 years, and his obituary in the *Westmorland Advertiser* on 26 June 1813 stated that he had ‘joined in every 5,000 changes rung here’: I have discussed the implications of this statement previously. At his funeral the bells were rung muffled, and during the committal the third bell was rung at a set pull. Afterwards the bells were unmuffled and a touch of Grandsire Triples was rung, ‘and singular as it may appear, the seventh bell-clapper broke close by the ball at the very last change of the peal.’

When **Robert Warriner** died in 1823 at the age of 85, the *Westmorland Advertiser* of 15th February 1823 reported that he had begun his ringing career on the old heavy ring of six bells i.e. before 1774, and that he followed the art until 1817, ‘when he resigned his situation, after ringing in the first peal of ten...’ There is slight problem with this. On 13 May 1817 the Kendal company rang a touch of 1565 Grandsire Caters ‘for the first time upon the peal of ten bells’, and this was publicised by an advert in the *Westmorland Advertiser* on 24 May 1817. The ringer of the sixth bell was given as John War[r]iner, on whom I have no other information, and this would thus seem to be a mistake for Robert Warriner. On 16th February 1823 the Kendal company rang a muffled touch of 1386 Grandsire Triples to the memory of Robert Warriner, composed and conducted by Thomas Scott.

William Salisbury rang the fifth bell (of ten) in the touch of Grandsire Caters in 1817. It is therefore surprising that he did not ring in a touch of 1997 Grandsire Caters rung at Kendal on the afternoon of New Year’s Day, 1819, particularly as he had composed it. Also that he did not take part in the peal of Grandsire Caters rung on 22nd February 1819, although the reports in the both the *Westmorland Advertiser* and *Westmorland Gazette* of 27th February 1819 stated: ‘To William Salisbury, who was present, the Ringers were under much obligation, for his attention and inspection throughout the Peal.’

No report of his death has so far been found in the local press, but age or infirmity was probably the reason that he did not ring in the peal of Grandsire Caters.

The only name that is common to the 120 of half-pull changes rung in 1765 and the peal rung in 1796 is that of **William Simpson**. A person of this name died on 9th December 1802, the *Lancaster Gazetteer* of 18th December 1802 reporting that he was ‘much and deservedly respected.’ However, there was nothing to identify him as one of the ringers, although his age was given as 47, similar to that of other members of the 1796 band; this was too young to have rung in the 120 in 1765 and it is therefore possible that there were two ringers of the same name.

Nor do I have any further record of **Gerrard Huck** participating in change

ringing. This was an unusual name, and he may well be the person whose death on 8th June 1812 was reported in the *Lancaster Gazette* on 13 June 1812: ‘On Monday last, at the advanced age of 84, Mr. Gerrard Huck, many years keeper of the inn, at Highborrow Bridge, between Kendal and Shap.’

High Borrow Bridge is about eight miles from Kendal. Until further information is found, this identification must remain as speculative; it may be that he had a son of the same name, but if so, he has not yet been identified. Other interesting details of the life of Gerrard Huck can be found in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 25 November 1865.

On the other hand, we can be sure that **John Jennings**, who banged the drum in the 1796 peal, was the person of that name who was sexton of the parish. He died on 28th November 1835, at the age of 72, and a long and eulogistic obituary appeared in the *Kendal Mercury* a week later.

‘On Saturday last, at his house in Kirkland, John Jennings, aged 72, who, for a period of more than 60 years, either as assistant or principal, has been Sexton at Kendal parish church — we believe as principal for 46 years. He could boast of having known at our Church since he first became “attached to it,” four vicars, ten curates, four clerks, four organists, and four vergers. At length he, who had been so long familiar with “Death’s doings,” himself was called upon to obey the summons of the grim king, and some “friendly hand” had “to do that for him which he had done for thousands.” His remains were conveyed to their last abode on Wednesday, when a muffled peal of melancholy music was toll’d for one who had often told the self-same ringers to perform a similar mark of respect at the obsequies of many a “loyal townsman” and “lady fair,” who have trod the path of “dusky death” before him. The deceased was a very civil, steady, and well-beloved man in his office, and was much respected by the parishioners at large.’

Edwin Jennings, whose name has been mentioned in connection with his four-part article that appeared in the *Ringling World* in 1943, was of the same family.

I give below the approximate ages of the band when the peal was rung in 1796, and what is striking about these is that they were not young men. It will need more work to establish the age of William Salisbury and to confirm the presumptions about William Simpson, but the ages suggests that this peal band was based on a company that had been established shortly after the bells were rehung and augmented in 1774/5.

James Wilson (49), William Salisbury (?), Nicholas Wilson (46) William Simpson (41?), Edward Nicholson (55), Gerard Huck (68?), Robert Warriner (58) John Jennings (33)

Other notable ringers at Kendal

When Nicholas Wilson married in 1819, he was described as the 'scientific leader' of the ringers. After his death the leader probably became **Thomas Scott**, who I understand was a nephew of John Jennings. Scott became a ringer in the early years of the century, and in 1819 was already an established member of the band when he rang in the peal of Grandsire Caters, although that was conducted by James Tyson. Thomas Scott was described as 'leader' when he conducted a peal of Grandsire Triples in 1821, which had been composed by himself. By trade he was a fish-hook maker, in a good way of business, and so of good social standing. It was not therefore surprising that in 1841 he was the person chosen to examine the subscription account for Sunday ringing. When he died in 1849 at the age of 58 it was stated that he had been a member of the Kendal Society for 45 years, so had started to learn to ring at a young age. It was appropriate that on 29th April 1849 the local band rang a muffled touch of 1848 Grandsire Triples in his memory, which had been composed by him and rung the previous year. (*Westmorland Gazette*, 5th May 1849, *Kendal Mercury*, 1st May 1848.) It is worth noting that his son George was also a ringer, and involved in the family business, but unfortunately George Scott died in 1837 at the age of 24. Edwin Jennings has this to say of him (RW 1943, 152): 'He had an only son, George, who died in the prime of life, and during his lifetime he collected a large collection of books and early files of the local newspapers. These were purchased by Alderman Fisher and presented to the Kendal Literary and Scientific Society, and afterwards placed in the borough library. Among these early newspapers were the first files of the Kendal newspapers.'

It is clear that Edwin Jennings, in compiling his MS, had searched these files.

Although not stated to be such, the position of leader seems to have been taken over from Thomas Scott by **George Jennings**, a great-nephew of John Jennings, who was later stated (almost certainly incorrectly) to have taught him to ring. George Jennings was born in Kendal in September 1817, where he was christened on 28th September 1817; his parents were John Jennings and Jane Huck, the latter likely to be related to Gerrard Huck. However, the accuracy of the claim about George Jennings' tuition must be disputed. On 20th June 1877 the Kendal company rang for the anniversary of the Queen's coronation, and the report in the *Kendal Mercury* three days later noted that 'the same day heralded in the fortieth year during which the present conductor, George Jennings, has been a ringer.' This implies that he began to learn to ring on 20th June 1838, well after his great uncle's death in 1835. His first recorded performance of which I am aware was the peal of Grandsire Triples that was rung in 1842, conducted by Thomas Scott. George Jennings rang the seventh bell, which became his regular station. He was a competent conductor of Grandsire Triples, and called peals of it in 1849, 1854, and 1857, the latter using Holt's Original.

There was another ringer called George Jennings, with recorded performances between 1850 and 1873, and to distinguish between the two he was usually denoted as 'jun', while the older George was 'sen.' Despite the inference, this was not father and son, but probably uncle and nephew. It was most likely that it was the younger George who was involved in two disputes in the ringing chamber in 1870 between George Jennings and William Hal[]head that ended up in the Petty Sessions, reported in the *Kendal Mercury* on 29 October 1870 and 24 December 1870. As they do not directly relate to ringing we will quickly gloss over these!

When the older George Jennings died in 1905, his obituary in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 15th July 1905 stated that he had been a ringer at Kendal parish church for more than 50 years, implying that he was still ringing in the late 1880s. The long obituary contains a number of inaccuracies, but was correct in stating that he was the last of the ringers that, before 1846, rang in the old ringing loft.

Another prominent member of the band in the second half of the nineteenth century was **James Baxter**, one of four brothers who rang at Kendal. He was christened at Kendal on 18th May 1828. At the time of the 1851 census he was recorded as a hand-loom weaver, but he was later a porter on the L&NWRW Co., and then kept a refreshment house. The first mention I have of him ringing was in 1856, when he took part in some muffled Grandsire Triples, rung in memory of

William Bousfield, who had been tenor ringer at Kendal and had married the third daughter of John Jennings, the sexton. James Baxter's first peal was that of Grandsire Triples, on 20th December 1857, when George Jennings called Holt's Original. Then on 1st January 1858 James Baxter called a date touch of Grandsire Triples. When he called a peal of Grandsire Triples on 27th December 1869 he was called the 'conductor of the ringers', although it is not sure whether this just referred to that peal, or was of wider application. The last reference I have is for a date touch of Grandsire Triples, composed and conducted by him on 21st January 1878, and he seems to have dropped out of ringing at about this time. He died on 3rd September 1898.

Charles Alfred Fox, who was briefly resident in Kendal, was an interesting ringer and competent conductor. He was christened at St. Paul's, Stayly, Cheshire, on 9th February 1840, and his early ringing was done at Holy Trinity church, Castle Hall, Stalybridge. He moved to Earlsheaton in the early 1860s, then had some sort of connection with Ossett, but in the late 1860s was living in Dewsbury. In 1872 he was the joint conductor of the 'peal' of 16,608 Kent Treble Bob Major rung at Earlsheaton. (For a discussion of this peal and why it cannot stand, see my article *The Earlsheaton Affair* in *RW* 16 June 2006, p.567) The only time that Fox's name appears in the annual reports of the Yorkshire Association (founded 1875) was under Dewsbury, for the year 1876/7. When a new ring of bells was installed in Barrow-in-Furness, it was opened on 25th July 1877 by the Dewsbury band, including Fox, when touches of Kent Treble Bob Major were rung, conducted by Charles Fox, with a peal rung later in the day. (*Barrow Herald* of 28 July 1877). After visiting Kendal in January 1878, Fox subsequently moved there, where it seems that he was an inspector of works. (*Barnsley Chronicle*, 8 January 1887) In earlier censuses he was recorded as a mason. While at Kendal he called peals of Grandsire Triples on 22nd February 1879 and 10th November 1880. In both of those peals there were amateurs reported as taking part, including Fox in that category. He moved on after the latter peal, and I cannot trace his whereabouts at the time of the 1881 census, but somewhere about this time he moved back to Dewsbury, and he was one of the Dewsbury company which opened the ring of bells at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, on 18th April 1883, after two bells had been recast and the ring rehung by J. Taylor and Co. (*Bell News*, 28 April 1883) When Fox rang in a peal at Coleorton on 23rd August 1883, conducted by J.W. Taylor jun., he was inferred to be then from Loughborough, and he was still there in December 1884. (*Church Bells*, 12 December 1884). However, as far as I can tell, after that his name disappears from ringing circles, and his death in Dewsbury early in 1901 went unremarked in *Bell News*.

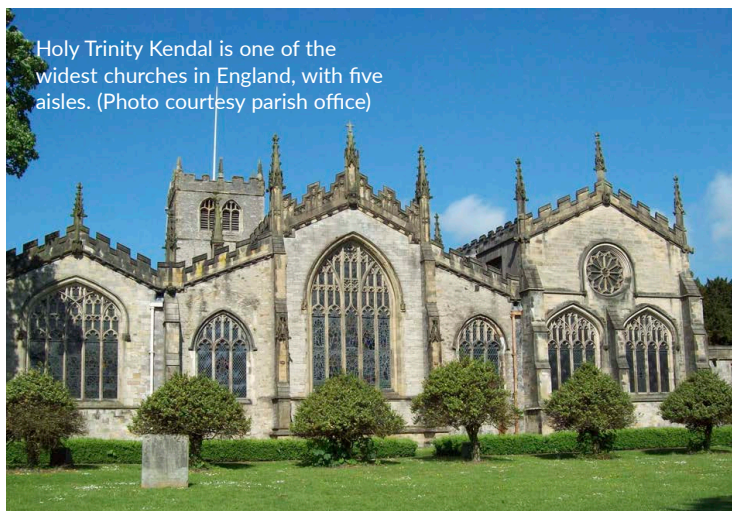
With the revival of ringing at Kendal in the 1890s, after the bells received attention, some of the credit must go to **John Braithwaite**, who began to ring at Kendal about 1863 and whose first recorded performance was 720 Grandsire Minor on 16th October 1867. This was composed and conducted by the Rev. W.G. Rigden, curate, and recorded on a peal-board, where it was claimed as the first time a 'peal' of Grandsire Minor had been rung in the steeple. That was not true, as such a 720 was rung on the bells on 11th December 1825. (*Westmorland Gazette*, 17 December 1825) John Braithwaite's first peal of Grandsire Triples was rung on 27th December 1869, and then he became a regular member of the band. After the rehanging of the bells in 1894 he took part in the peal of Grandsire Triples rung in that year, and in the peal of Grandsire Caters in 1898. On 4th January 1898 the Kendal company celebrated the silver wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite by ringing a date touch of 1898 Grandsire Caters, the longest touch by the company since 1819. The report in *Bell News* of 22 January 1898 concluded: 'He is known as a very safe ringer and conductor, and as an instructor leaves nothing to be desired, his patience and perseverance being unbounded, whilst he is esteemed and respected by all.'

John Braithwaite continued to ring at Kendal, and Jennings tells that he was presented with a gold medal by the mayor for nearly 60 years service as a ringer, which must have been in the early 1920s.

Postscript

Although there was the occasional dispute, the continuity of the change-ringing band at Kendal during the nineteenth century is remarkable. As far as can be determined, most of the ringers came from Kendal itself, with little in the way of help from outside. One exception was Joshua

Atkin, who rang at Lancaster at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and came to Kendal in about 1815. He was the treble ringer in the peal of Grandsire Caters in 1819, which was his regular bell. There is also the possibility that Thomas Best, who also rang in that peal, came from elsewhere. He died from cholera at his brother's house in Liverpool, on 29th August 1834, aged 43: his death was marked at Kendal by the ringers performing 1,008 changes of Grandsire Triples on 31 August 1834, charmingly reported as 'grand siccators' in the *Kendal Mercury* on 6th September 1843; there were only eight names listed, so it must have been



Holy Trinity Kendal is one of the widest churches in England, with five aisles. (Photo courtesy parish office)

Triples. This report also said that the ringers were 'under obligations for kindly instructing them.' This suggests that he may have come from Liverpool, but so far I have not found any reports of ringing there which include his name. Then there was, of course, Charles Fox who was temporarily resident in Kendal for the purpose of work, who made some slight impact during his time there. Currently, these are the only ringers identified who came, or might have come, from outside the parish, and this is itself remarkable.

The activities discussed above were inevitably of interest to Edwin Jennings, who I have mentioned above, so much so that in the 1930s he produced a MS which discussed the peals rung in Kendal up to that time, and giving some details of the ringers. This is still in the possession of the ringers, and while most of the information in this article has come from newspaper reports, certain details have been checked against that MS. A version of this MS was printed by a local firm in 1934, and this was also used to cross-check what I had written. Inevitably there are a few minor differences, which I have not flagged up, and I have used my own interpretations, justifying these by quoting contemporary sources.

Acknowledgements

A number of persons have helped in supplying information for this article, which was sparked off by articles in this publication. I had initial discussion with Andrew White, and then the librarian of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society supplied scans of the relevant articles from that society's transactions. Kevin Mayfield, tower captain at Kendal, has been most helpful in sending me scans of various pages from the Jennings MS, and checking information for me from that MS. He also provided me with scans of a booklet on Kendal tower and bells, written by Wilson, Jennings, and Fussell and published in 1934, mentioned above. This booklet was a summary of the Jennings MS. I was glad to be able to reciprocate by helping to complete the tower peal book.

Chris Pickford very kindly provided me with scans of the relevant pages of J.W. Taylor's notebook, which records the state of the belfry in the 1890s, also scans of the relevant parts of the Saunders MS from Sherborne, which gives details of the bells at Kendal, and transcripts of some of the peal-boards. Also Alan Glover has checked the annual guild and association reports in the Central Council Library in an effort to track the movements of Charles Fox. Finally, most of the photographs used to illustrate this article are taken, by the kind permission of Jean Norgate, from the website www.lakesguides.co.uk: the

exceptions are the image of the inn sign on the cover of this issue, kindly sourced by Kevin Mayfield, courtesy of Kendal parish office, who also provided the picture of the church itself on this page.

The Ladies Guild, SE District

ADM by Barbara Randall

The Annual District Meeting of the South Eastern District of the Ladies' Guild was held on Saturday 10th February at the church of St Margaret of Antioch in Barming, a village on the outskirts of Maidstone. We met for lunch at a nearby pub and then made our way to the church. The dull, drizzly February day was brightened by the sight of snowdrops in the churchyard.

We began with a minute's silence in memory of Mary Andrews, a loyal member of the Ladies' Guild who had died recently. The meeting then progressed quickly, under the chairmanship of Helen Webb, dealing with the re-election of all the officers and agreeing the dates and locations for our forthcoming meetings. We then enjoyed ringing the delightful six bells (9-0-8 in G) that had been restored in 2014. The ringing included rounds and call changes, Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob Doubles and Stedman Doubles.

Our thanks go to the local people for the use of their church and bells, also to Isabel Pearce for organising the meeting.



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