



Worcester Cathedral

Guild of Bellringers

PEALS ON THE BELLS

A Summary

The full details of all peals on the bells are on the Guild website www.worcesterbells.org.uk/peals-database. These are also being written up in ornamental style in the Grand Peal Book on display in the Teaching Centre but it is a project some way off completion.

In addition a complete list of peals appears on the Felstead database site at www.cccbr.org.uk/felstead/tbid.php?tid=5668 and a list since 1985 (with full details from 2005) on the Ringing World site www.peals.co.uk.

Since the bells were cast in **1928** there have been **178** peals rung on them as at **31 December 2017**. They are the fifth heaviest ring of bells in the world, measured by the total weight of 10.5 tons, and the sixth heaviest measured just by tenor weight. They are challenging to ring well because of tower and frame movement though their magnificent sound is usually considered sufficient compensation for the effort involved! Most people finish a peal very tired no matter which bell they've rung. Prior to 1928 the central tower housed a 50-cwt twelve, cast by Taylors in 1869 to Lord Grimthorpe's specification, which were pealed just 6 times in 59 years – five on the back ten and one on the twelve.

With the (soon to be) **four** semitone bells there are more than the usual number of rings available. As well as the main twelve there are two major tens, the Harmonic Minor Ten and four rings of eight. The Minor Ten are unique to Worcester and have a very distinct sound.

The TWELVE

Cinques & Maximus

123 peals

The first peal, of Stedman Cinques, was rung on Boxing Day after the bells were cast and the first Maximus the following year when Bill Pye rang the tenor. Not until 1962 was the tenor 'turned-in' again, its fearsome reputation having been the result of loose headstock bolts.

CINQUES	64	MAXIMUS	59
Stedman	57	Cambridge	39
Grandsire	7	Yorkshire	6
		Bristol	6
		Other	8

Peal times have ranged from 3h41m – 4h12m for Cinques and 3h49m – 4h20m for Maximus.

Those who have rung 14 or more twelve-bell peals are listed below. Only 5 people have circled the tower to 12-bell peals, the next closest being David Jenkins who only requires the 11th -

Twelve		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	E	T
Mark Regan	58	16	2	4	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	6	18
Bernard Taylor	40	8	3	1	1	5	6	2	5	6	1	1	1
Jim Clatworthy	39	1	3	8	6	6	9	4	2	-	-	-	-
Chris Pickford	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	8	5	9	5
Ashley Fortey	27	1	5	3	1	1	1	-	-	3	9	-	3
Chris Kippin	23	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	3
Nick Brown	23	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	9	2
Dan Jones	19	-	1	-	1	1	-	3	5	4	1	2	1
Swaz Apter	18	4	9	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
David Jenkins	18	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	-	1
Mike Clements	17	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	1
Rick Shallcross	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	3	5	4
Alison Regan	14	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	1

The THREE TENS

	F#	E	D#	C#	B	A#	G#	F#	E	D#	C#	B
Back 10	-	-	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	E	T
Minor 10	-	2	3	4	5#	6b	7	8	9	0	E	-
Clare 10	-	2#	3	4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	E	-

THE BACK TEN

5 peals

These have not been popular for peals as they seem to be much harder to ring well than the complete twelve. The last peal on them was in 1960, and oddly several of the peals have had two men on the tenor. It would be good to score one peal of Royal just to make this table more worthwhile.....

CATERS	5	ROYAL	-
Stedman	1		
Grandsire	4		

THE HARMONIC MINOR TEN

29 peals

This melodic, haunting ring, with a tenor of 35 cwt, makes Worcester unique. One of the challenges of ringing them is the odd rope circle with 5# falling behind the 8th and outside the circle.

The first peal on them was rung in 2003 and all but one of the peals have been rung half-muffled. There are usually peal attempts for Remembrance Sunday, Good Friday and December 31st each year. Times range quite widely from 3h18m to 3h45m.

CATERS	22	ROYAL	7
Grandsire	16	Cambridge	3
Stedman	6	London	2
		Other	2

The leading ringers for peals on the Minor Ten are –

Minor Ten		2	3	4	5#	6b	7	8	9	0	E
Mark Regan	25	2	-	-	2	2	-	8	1	2	8
Ashley Fortey	16	1	1	1	2	-	1	2	6	2	-
James Clatworthy	15	1	2	-	5	5	1	1	-	-	-
Bernard Taylor	14	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Chris Pickford	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	4
Dan Jones	11	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	1	2	1
Nick Brown	9	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	3

THE 'CLARE' TEN

0 peals

The addition of a sharp second (dedicated to St Clare) will mean that the cathedral will soon have a new major ten using three of the semitone bells, with a tenor of 35 cwt. As with the Harmonic Minor Ten the odd rope circle of 5# and 9# falling awkwardly adds a certain challenge to ringing them. The first peal on them is scheduled for March 2018.

The FOUR Octaves

	F#	E	D#	C#	B	A#	G#	F#	E	D#	C#	B
Back 8	-	-	-	-	5	6	7	8	9	0	E	T
C#8	-	-	-	4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	E	-
Middle 8	-	2	3	4	5	6b	7	8	9	-	-	-
Front 8	1	2#	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-

THE BACK EIGHT

1 peal

These are, of course, magnificent, and with a 48cwt tenor bigger than Sherborne Abbey. They have been pealed just once, to Stedman Triples, in August 2009.

THE C # EIGHT

11 peals

These are a splendid sound with the 35 cwt 11th as the tenor. They were pealed first in 1961 and have an even more challenging rope circle than the Minor Ten, with their 4th and 6th out of position. With the 3rd and the future 2# these will become a ten – an interesting example of an augmentation within a ring!

TRIPLES	4	MAJOR	7
Stedman	2	Cambridge	4
Grandsire	2	London	2
		Plain Bob	1

The leading ringers are -

C# octave		4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	E
Mark Regan	9	2	1	-	-	1	1	3	1
Chris Pickford	7	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Bernard Taylor	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Ashley Fortey	6	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	1
James Clatworthy	5	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-

THE MIDDLE or 'E' EIGHT

9 peals

This is the 'standard' light octave within many twelve-bell rings, here with a tenor of 20 cwt. First pealed in 1960 they have not been particularly popular, perhaps because they are not a comfortable ring. Only four people have rung more than 2 peals on them.

TRIPLES	5	MAJOR	4
Stedman	1	Cambridge	2
Grandsire	4	Plain Bob	1
		Bristol	1

THE FRONT EIGHT

0 peals

The new 2# to make the 'middle' ten also has the effect of providing a front eight, with a tenor of 15cwt. They are planned to be pealed in 2018, and it will be interesting to see if they become more popular than the Middle Eight over the next few years.

The Rings of Six

No six-bell peals have been rung at the cathedral though one was organized in 2010 but not started. Diatonic rings with **five** different tenors are possible –

2#-3-4-5#-6-7 (front six of the middle ten)

3-4-5-6-7-8 (back six of front eight or front six of back ten)

4-5-6b-7-8-9 (back six of middle eight)

6-7-8-9#-0-E (back six of middle ten)

7-8-9-0-E-T (back six)

Two pentatonic sixes (1-2-3-6-8-0 of a major ten) also exist -

2#-3-4-7-9#-E

3-4-5-8-0-T

QUITE INTERESTING

Quiet Time – the longest gap between peals was nearly 19 years (1975-94). The shortest (3 days) has occurred a couple of times when there have been peals on Good Friday and Easter Monday, and also in September 2015.

Loudest Time – the most peals in a calendar year was 13 in 2015. Other ‘double figure’ years were 2007 (10), 2009 (12) and 2011 (11).

Clapper trouble – the 10th is the ‘unluckiest’ bell, having had its clapper break in three peal attempts. It has also broken during service ringing the day after a peal, after just 300 changes.

Youngest – the youngest person to ring a peal at the cathedral is Alistair Smith who was 15y1m, eclipsing the achievement of Laura Davies (16y4m).

Two-and-a half tons for Half A Ton – Bernard Taylor (2006), David Jenkins (2008) and Andrew Hartley (2014) all rang the tenor to celebrate entry into their sixth decade.

1000th peals – this personal landmark has occurred four times at the cathedral – Alan Flood (1994), Swaz Apter (2004), Steve Barton (2005) and 1000th as conductor, Bernard Taylor (2006).

Half centuries – three people have now completed 50 peals on the bells, a feat unimaginable even twenty years ago – Mark Regan (2011), Bernard Taylor (2013) and Jim Clatworthy (2015).

Ladies on the box – only two ladies have rung the tenor – Alison Regan (2006) and Claire Roulstone (2008). The first lady to ring a peal at the cathedral was Amy Thomas in 1946.

Tired ? – In 1996 David Pipe ‘turned in’ the tenor the day after doing the same thing at Southwark Cathedral – two 48cwt bells to Maximus in a weekend!

Tired ? – In 1998 Andrew Mills rang the tenor ‘behind’, in between ringing two peals elsewhere on the same day, both of which were over 10,000 changes.

Not so tired – the tenor has been ‘strapped’ (rung by two people) on 5 occasions – ‘behind’ in 1936, 1937, 1945 and 1953 – and ‘turned in’ in 1963 by Wilf Williams & Bill Theobald.

Speed – Over 40% of the 12-bell peals have been completed within an 8-minute spread – 3h47m to 3h55m – which suggests that is the optimum. That is 6m per course of Stedman Cinques and 24m per course of Cambridge Maximus.

Brothers – pairs of brothers have appeared together in peals on a number of occasions – Bill & George Pye (1929), Henry & George Fearn (1945), Ron & Jim Diserens (1958), Martin & Michael Fellows (1965), John & Michael Chilcott (1971), John & Ron Diserens (1973), Geoff & Peter Randall (1995), Richard & Michael Clements (2000), Bernard & Malcolm Taylor (2006).

Fathers & sons in the same peal – William & Tom Lewis (1930), Geoff & Gerald Hemming (1965), John & Richard Clements (1974), David & Matthew Hilling (1994), John & Michael Clements (1996), Alan & Andy Hartley (1996), Chris & Ian Povey (1999), Michael & Philip Orme (2000), Andrew & Mike Wilby (2006), Russell & Nick Brown (2012), Mark & William Regan (2015).

Fathers & daughters in the same peal – John Clements & Liz Orme (1996), Chris Kippin & Eleanor Linford (2009), Michael & Louise Palmer (2009).

Three generations – two families have 3 generations who have rung a peal at the Cathedral – the HEMMINGES, James (1928), Geoff (1935) and Gerald (1965), and the PIPES, Cecil (1962), Roderick (1966) and David (1994).

Married couples – first made an appearance with John & Amy Thomas (1946), followed by Bill & Claudia Critchley (1970), Stuart & Barbara Piper (1994), John & Stef Warboys (1996), Phillip & Liz Orme (1996), Bob & Ruth Smith (1997), James & Jennie Taylor (1998), Mark & Alison Regan (2002), John Loveless & Linda Garton (2002), Martin & Maggie Whiteley (2002), Bob & Pat Newton (2003), Ian & Wendy Campbell (2003), Paul & Ruth Curtis (2004), Phil & Gwen Rogers (2005), John & Ann White (2007), Ian & Claire Roulstone (2009), Andrew & Liz Harvey (2011), Sam & Sian Austin (2012).

Unmarried couples – in Oct 2016 Mark Regan and Bernard Taylor became the first ‘couple’ to ring 50 peals together at the Cathedral.

8 x 3 x 8 – Bernard Taylor has rung the same bell (the 8th) to peals of Triples on 3 different octaves – the middle eight, the C# eight and the back eight. (The only other bell on which this could be done is the 7th). In the future this will be possible on four octaves.

Semitone man – Middle Bell Supremo Jim Clatworthy has rung a semitone bell to a peal more times than anyone (9) but hasn't rung the 9#.

Rarest bell – As the sharp 9th is only used in the C# octave only 11 people have rung it to peals, nobody having rung it more than once. The other semitone bells have been rung in over 30 peals each.

Local yokels – over a dozen members of the *current* local band have all rung a peal at the cathedral this last year (2017) – Andrew Brown, Tom Childs, Jim Clatworthy, Ashley Fortey, Alex Hajok, David Jenkins, Dan Jones, Craig Homewood, Mark Regan, Will Regan, Darran Ricks, Paul Smith and Bernard Taylor.

And in the slightly less recent past - Saskia Frisby (2015), Andrew Hartley (2014), Mark Wilson (2010), John Nicklin (2008), Steve Barton (2007), Chris Phillips (1996), Louise Hamilton-Glover (1994), Jim Wheeler (1974), John Slater (1973).

LEADING RINGERS

Over 500 people have rung a peal here, with 14 having rung more than 20 –

		1	2 #	2	3	4	5 #	5	6	6 b	7	8	9 #	9	0	E	T
Mark Regan	95	16	-	5	4	3	3	1	1	2	2	11	1	3	8	15	19
Bernard Taylor	64	8	-	6	2	3	2	5	7	2	6	10	1	7	2	2	1
James Clatworthy	60	1	-	4	10	6	4	8	10	5	8	4	-	-	-	-	-
Ashley Fortey	51	1	-	6	4	2	2	1	1	1	3	4	1	9	12	1	3
Chris Pickford	50	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	11	12	16	5
Nick Brown	37	1	-	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	4	4	12	2
Dan Jones	34	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	-	6	9	1	5	3	3	1
Chris Kippin	31	2	-	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	6	2	3
David Jenkins	26	2	-	4	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	1
Swaz Apter	26	4	-	10	4	1	3	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alison Regan	25	1	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	3	3	3	1
Mike Clements	23	1	-	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	1
Gordon Birks	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	9	8	2
Rick Shallcross	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	-	1	4	6	4

Mark Regan (27), Bernard Taylor (20) and James Clatworthy (11) are the leading conductors.

‘CIRCLING’ THE TOWER

The first person to ring all of the **twelve bells** to a peal was **Tom Lewis**, in 1974, who took 15 peals to do so, which was also his final total. Only 6 of these were 12-bell peals however and he did not ring any of the semitone bells (5#, 6b and 9#) to peals.

The first to complete a peal on **all fifteen bells** was **Bernard Taylor** in 2007 within the space of 19 peals. The total of those who have managed this is now eight, as he was followed by **Mark Regan** in 2008 (28 peals), **Alison Regan** in 2009 (21 peals), **David Jenkins** in 2013 (21 peals), **Ashley Fortey** in 2014 (32 peals), **Mike Clements** in 2015 (22 peals), **Nick Brown** in 2015 (22 peals) and **Chris Kippin** in 2017 (31 peals).

Soon there will be sixteen bells and a queue of people waiting for the new 2#!

‘FANTASY’ BAND

Creating a ‘fantasy’ band from the leading ringers list is oddly quite difficult. The back and the front bells can be manned by participants either on their favourite or second favourite bell. The choices for the middle bells are not so obvious - Jim Clatworthy should be on 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7! So not all the participants are drawn from the leading ringers list.

Not that it matters much as this band will never meet, though it is conceivable that most of them could be in the same peal. On 18 Feb 2017, entirely by chance, the peal contained all the top 8 from the Leading Ringers list.

1	Bernard Taylor (8)	7	Darran Ricks (8)
2	Swaz Apter (10)	8	Dan Jones (9)
3	James Clatworthy (10)	9	Chris Pickford (11)
4	Craig Homewood (4)	10	Ashley Fortey (12)
5	Steve Barton (4)	11	Nick Brown (12)
6	David House (5)	12	Mark Regan (19)