

PEALS

Before 1870 the cathedral tower contained a one-ton octave dating back to 1611 but they were never pealed. Most of these bells are now in the cloisters.

In an ambitious project these were replaced by a 50 cwt twelve. Cast by Taylors in **1869** to Grimthorpe's¹ specification, they were at the time the third heaviest of the 24 rings of twelve then existing. But in the nearly 60 years of their life they were pealed only **6** times of which just one was a twelve-bell peal. The general opinion seems to have been that the trebles were poor bells and the back ten were a much better ring. By 1875 there were also three semitone bells² but they were never rung to peals and may never have been rung at all.

The bells were recast in **1928** being then one of nearly 50 rings of twelve in the country. Since then **204** peals have been rung on them, as at **7 Mar 2020**. They are the eighth heaviest ring³ measured by tenor weight but the fifth heaviest in terms of the total weight of 10.5 tons. They are challenging to ring well because of tower movement though their magnificent sound is usually considered more than sufficient compensation for the effort involved.

Along with the ring of twelve there are four semitone bells – combinations of these give **five**⁴ distinct rings – the Twelve (and its subsets the Back Ten and the Back Eight), the Harmonic Minor Ten, the Clare Ten (and its subset the C# Eight), the Middle Eight and the Front Eight.

The first peal on the modern twelve was in 1928. The 6^b was first pealed in 1960, the 5[#] and 9[#] in 1961 and the 2[#] in 2018.

¹ Sir Edmund Beckett Denison (1816-1905) was not actually Lord Grimthorpe until 1886, some years later than the Worcester twelve. He is famous for his escapement mechanism used on the Westminster Clock (1851) and the design of the five chiming bells including Big Ben (1852 & 1858).

 $^{^{2}}$ The 5# was cast with the twelve in 1869 and intended for use as part of the clock chimes. The 6b and 9# were added in 1875 when the carillon was installed. It operated on all 15 bells.

³ Liverpool, Exeter, St Paul's, York, Wells, Redcliffe and Southwark have heavier tenors

⁴ There are a further two Natural Minor Tens on which no peals have been rung – see footnote under Harmonic Minor Ten section

LEADING RINGERS – TOP 20

Over 600 people have rung a peal here, with members of this group having rung 17 or more -

		1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	9	9	0	Ε	Т
			#				#			b			#				
Mark Regan	119	20	1	5	7	3	6	3	2	3	2	14	1	3	11	16	22
Bernard Taylor	84	8	1	7	5	5	3	7	11	2	10	12	1	7	2	2	1
Jim Clatworthy	74	6		6	13	8	5	9	10	5	8	4					
Ashley Fortey	73	1	1	8	4	2	2	1	1	2	3	5	1	10	20	6	6
Chris Pickford	58					3					2	1	1	12	14	20	5
Dan Jones	51	1		1	2	1	2	1	3	1	8	10	1	9	5	5	1
Nick Brown	41	1		2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	4	4	14	2
Chris Kippin	37	3		5	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	3	6	4	3
David Jenkins	38	2	1	4	6	3	2	2	2	3	2	6	1	2	1	1	1
C P Homewood	34	1		4	3	6	1	2	3	1	5	4		1	1	1	
Swaz Apter	28	4		11	4	2	4	1	1	1							
Darran Ricks	28	1		1	1	1	1	2	5	1	9	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mike Clements	25	1		2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	1
Alison Regan	25	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	3	3	2	1
Alex Byrne	26	1		3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	4	1	2	2
Rick Shallcross	22								1		3	3		1	4	6	4
Robin Hall	19	1			1			2	2			5		5	1	1	1
Tom Childs	20			1	3	1		3	2		1	2		1	2	1	2
Alan Flood	17	2		3	3	2		1			4	2					

'CIRCLING' THE TOWER

Ringing all the possible bells to a peal, or 'circling' the tower, is a relatively new phenomenon at Worcester because of the rarity of peal attempts premillennium. So the achievement of **Tom Lewis**, back in 1974, of ringing all the **twelve bells** to a peal was impressive, particularly as he took only 15 peals to do so, which was his final total. Only 6 of these were 12-bell peals and he did not ring any of the three existing semitone bells (5#, 6b and 9#).

The first person to complete a circle of **the fifteen bells** was **Bernard Taylor** in 2007 within the space of 19 peals. Prior to 2018 the total of those who managed this was 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).

With the addition of the Sharp Second there is now a queue to complete the new 'circle' of **all sixteen bells.** The first to do so was **Bernard Taylor** in 2018 followed by **Mark Regan**, **David Jenkins** and **Ashley Fortey** in 2019. If an orderly British queue is formed of those who've rung the other 15 bells, the next claimants are Mike Clements, Nick Brown, Chris Kippin, Dan Jones, Alex Byrne & Darran Ricks.

A 'purer' or more esoteric definition of 'circling the tower' would be to ring each bell to peals on the relevant number, so 12-bell peals on the Twelve, 10-bell peals on the Minor Ten, 8-bell peals on the Front Eight, &c. For the five <u>distinct</u> rings – Twelve, Harmonic Minor Ten, Clare Ten, Middle Eight and Front Eight it would take a minimum of 48 peals to achieve this.

Within this tight definition there are surprisingly few who have rung 12-bell peals on the **Twelve**, just five, namely **Mark Regan**, **Bernard Taylor**, **Chris Kippin**, **Nick Brown** and **Mike Clements**. David Jenkins and Alex Byrne are just one bell away.

Circling the other rings is rather more difficult as there are relatively few attempts even within a packed peal calendar. Of these the Harmonic Minor Ten has the greatest number of peals, often being pealed three times a year, but it has been circled only by Bernard Taylor and Ashley Fortey, though a few others are getting close. It will be quite a while before anyone achieves it for any other of the rings.

The TWELVE

Cinques & Maximus

Stedman Cinques was the only twelve-bell peal on the old bells – **2 Jun 1914** – and also the first one on the new bells - **26 Dec 1928.** The first Maximus was 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. The most recent peal was on **7 Mar 2020**.

CINQUES		71	MAXIMUS		67
Stedman		63	Cambridge		47
Other		8	Other		20
	Fastest		Average	Slowest	
CINQUES	3h 41m		3h 53m	4h 12m	
MAXIMUS	3h 49m		4h 1m	4h 20m	

Those who have rung 12 or more twelve-bell peals are listed below.

Twelve		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Ε	Т
Mark Regan	70	19	2	6	1	2	1	2	3	2	4	7	21
Bernard Taylor	49	8	3	3	3	7	9	2	5	6	1	1	1
Jim Clatworthy	47	5	5	8	7	7	9	4	2	-	-	-	-
Ashley Fortey	39	1	6	3	1	1	1	-	-	3	15	3	5
Chris Pickford	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	8	7	12	5
Chris Kippin	28	3	5	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	2	3
Nick Brown	27	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	11	2
Dan Jones	25	1	1	-	1	1	-	4	5	6	2	3	1
David Jenkins	22	2	3	4	1	2	1	1	4	2	1	-	1
Swaz Apter	20	4	10	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mike Clements	18	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	3	1	1
C Homewood	19	1	3	1	3	1	2	4	3	1	-	-	-
Rick Shallcross	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	3	5	4
Alex Byrne	16	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	-	2	2
Robin Hall	14	1	-	1	-	2	2	-	4	1	1	1	1
Alison Regan	14	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	1
Michael Wilby	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	7	2
Alan Flood	12	2	2	3	1	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-

138 peals

The THREE TENS

	F#	Ε	D#	C#	В	A#	G#	F#	E	D#	C#	В
Back 10	-	-	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Е	Т
Minor 10	-	2	3	4	5#	6b	7	8	9	0	Е	-
Clare 10	-	2#	3	4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	Е	-

THE BACK TEN (48-02 in B)

10 peals

Five of these were on the old bells, the first on **14 Dec 1893.** All of them were rung significantly quicker, by about ¼ hour, than those on the current bells, the average being 3h31m with the first two taking only 3 ¼ hours. Two of the five peals had two men on the tenor.

The other **5** on the new bells, the first of which was **26 Dec 1935**, have averaged 3h42m with the most recent being **20 Feb 1960**. Oddly, three of these peals had two men on the tenor.

The current back ten have always had a reputation for being more difficult to ring than the twelve, whereas for the old bells it was the other way round. It would be good to score one peal of Royal on the current bells just to make this table worthwhile......

CATERS	9	ROYAL	1
Grandsire	8	Plain Bob	1
Caters	1		

The leading ringers have been -

Back Ten		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Ε	Т
William Johnson	5	I	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	2
William Lewis	5	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-
George Hinton	4	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
William Powell	4	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

THE HARMONIC MINOR TEN (34-3-4 in C#)

This melodic, haunting ring⁵ makes Worcester unique⁶. One of the challenges of ringing them is the odd rope circle with 5# out of position.

For many years they were only rung for a short period on Remembrance Day so the first peal on them, **31 Dec 2003** was 75 years after the bells were installed. The most recent was on **31 Dec 2019**. All but one of the peals have been rung half-muffled. There are usually peal attempts for Good Friday, Remembrance Sunday and New Year's Eve each year, which makes them the most rung of the various semitone rings at the Cathedral.

CATERS		28	ROYAL		7
Grandsire		22	Cambridge		3
Stedman		6	Other		4
	Fast	est	Average	Slowest	t
CATERS	3h 1	8m	3h 32m	3h 45m	1
ROYAL	3h 2	8m	3h 37m	3h 45m	1

The leading ringers for peals on the Harmonic Minor Ten are –

Minor Ten		2	3	4	5#	6b	7	8	9	0	Ε
Mark Regan	31	2	1	-	4	3	-	9	1	3	8
Ashley Fortey	21	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	7	3	1
Bernard Taylor	19	4	1	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	1
James Clatworthy	16	1	3	-	5	5	1	1	-	-	-
Dan Jones	16	I	2	-	1	1	3	2	3	2	1
Chris Pickford	14	I	-	-	-	I	-	-	3	6	5
Darran Ricks	11	I	-	-	1	1	6	1	1	1	I
Craig Homewood	11	1	2	2	1	1	-	2	-	1	1
Nick Brown	9	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	3
Tom Childs	9	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	2	1

⁵ The Minor scale used is HARMONIC because the seventh note, from the bottom, is sharpened (5#). If the 5th bell was used instead this ten would be in a NATURAL minor scale, which is a major octave plus a semitone and full tone beneath. Worcester has a second Natural Minor Ten being the Front Eight plus the 9# and 10th bells, that is 1, 2#, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9#, 10. The third type of Minor scale is the MELODIC but as it has different notes going up and down it is inappropriate for change ringing.

⁶ The 2016 bells at Taunton have a 5#, 6b and 9# like Worcester but only the 6b is a ringing bell. So there is a Harmonic Minor Ten available but only on its new chiming machine.

THE CLARE TEN (34-3-4 in C#)

The 2018 addition of a sharp second means that the cathedral has a new major key version of the Harmonic Minor Ten using 2#, 6, 9# instead of 2, 6b and 9. This is almost unique⁷ to Worcester as the most common way⁸ of obtaining a major ten is to add a 'top treble' and 6b, making the 9th the tenor. As the new bell is dedicated to St Clare⁹ this middle ten is known as the 'Clare Ten'. The rope circle, is slightly odder than that of the Minor Ten because the 9# rope is somewhat out of position too.

So far they have been pealed just once, on **1 Dec 2018**.

CATERS	1	ROYAL	0
Grandsire	1		

Clare Ten		2#	3	4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	Ε
Bernard Taylor	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malcolm Taylor	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mike Clements	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
David Jenkins	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mark Regan	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Craig Homewood	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dan Jones	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Alex Byrne	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ashley Fortey	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Darran Ricks	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

So currently there are 10 'leading' ringers!

⁷ Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin has 6#, 9# and 13# semitones in addition to its ring of sixteen, which are equivalent to 2#, 5# & 9# in its back twelve, though they were never a ring of twelve, being augmented from 10 to 16 in 1999 and acquiring the 6# at that point.

⁸ Of the rings of twelve 21 have this combination. Winchester's 14 with its 8b and Perth's 16 with its 10b effectively have the same.

⁹ The only bell at the Cathedral dedicated to a female saint. The Twelve are named after the disciples - Matthias, Thaddeus, Simon (the Zealot), James (the 'Lesser', son of Alphaeus), Matthew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Philip, Andrew, John, James (the 'Greater', son of Zebedee) and Peter. The other semitones are named Paul, Mark and Luke. The Bourdon or Hour Bell, one of only 28 bells in Britain over 4 tons, is not named.

The FOUR Octaves

	F#	Ε	D#	C#	В	A#	G#	F#	E	D#	C#	В
Back 8	-	-	-	-	5	6	7	8	9	0	Е	Т
C#8	-	-	-	4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	Е	-
Middle 8	-	2	3	4	5	6b	7	8	9	-	-	-
Front 8	1	2#	3	4	5	6	7	8	-	-	-	-

THE BACK EIGHT (48-0-2 in B)

2 peals

These are heavier (and a lot better) than Sherborne Abbey¹⁰ and have been pealed just twice, on **15 Aug 2009** and **5 Oct 2019**. Despite their weight they 'fit' together much better as a ring than any of the other octaves and deserve to be rung a bit more often. However the challenge of doing so is beyond many bands.

TRIPLES	1	MAJOR	1
Stedman	1	23-Spliced Surprise atw	1

Back 8		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Ashley Fortey	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Bernard Taylor	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Mark Regan	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

¹⁰ Sherborne Abbey has the heaviest ring of eight bells. There are, of course, back eights within the rings at Liverpool, Exeter, St Paul's, York, Wells, Redcliffe and Southwark, so this octave is the eighth heaviest in the world. Some of these, but not all, have been pealed.

THE C SHARP EIGHT (34-3-4 in C#)

Worcester is unique¹¹ among twelve-bell towers in having a major octave with its 11th as the tenor. They were pealed first on **10 Jun 1961**, and had an even more challenging rope circle than the Minor Ten until the 9# roping was moved in 2018. Arguably they are harder to ring well than the back eight because they do not quite 'fit' together – recent work has made them somewhat easier, with the 9# in particular having a more appropriate swing time. However they do sound magnificent, which may be why more peals have been rung on them than on the lighter Middle Eight.

With the 2018 addition of the 2# and the use of the 3^{rd} these have become a ten – an unusual example of an augmentation within a ring – so it is likely that they will be less rung as an octave in future. Last pealed **29 Feb 2020**.

TRIPLES	4	MAJOR	7
Stedman	2	Cambridge	4
Grandsire	2	London	2
		Spliced Surprise (23m atw)	1
		Plain Bob	1

C# octave		4	5#	6	7	8	9#	0	E
Mark Regan	10	2	2	-	-	1	1	3	1
Bernard Taylor	7	1	1	2	1	1	1	-	-
Ashley Fortey	7	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	2
Chris Pickford	7	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
James Clatworthy	6	1	-	1	3	1	-	-	-
Dan Jones	5	-	-	1	-	2	1	1	-
Nick Brown	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	-

¹¹ See earlier footnotes about Taunton which has the same, but the 5# and 9# are chiming bells only, and Christ Church, Dublin with its 9# and 13#.

THE MIDDLE EIGHT (20-0-6 in E)

This is the standard light octave within over 50 twelve-bell rings, but curiously at Worcester they were not pealed for over thirty years after installation, the first one being on **7 May 1960.** This was the first time that any of the semitone¹² bells, in either the old ring or the new one, had been rung to a peal.

The octave has not been particularly popular, perhaps because it was not a comfortable ring - the recent work on the bells has changed that but no peal has been rung on them since **24 Dec 2016**.

TRIPLES	5	MAJOR	4
Stedman	1	Cambridge	2
Grandsire	4	Other	2

Middle 8		2	3	4	5	6b	7	8	9
David Beacham	4	I	-	-	-	-	З	1	-
Bernard Taylor	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Tom Lewis	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
John Nicklin	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
John Stanier	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

 $^{^{12}}$ It is unlikely that the semitones for the old ring were hung for ringing. Though the new ones are, anecdotal evidence suggests that for many years only the 6b routinely had a rope on it! For some reason the local tradition has been to refer to the three semitones as 'flats' not 'sharps' – 4b, 6b and 8b. This is misleading because the bells should be named after the bell they replace in the twelve (5# replaces the 5th, 4b does not replace the 4th) and also because musically they are actually sharps – the C# octave has an E# and B# in it, just as the front eight in F# has an E# in it. The 6b is genuinely a flat, as the 6th is an A# and the 6b is an A.

THE FRONT EIGHT (14-3-26 in F#)

The installation of the new Sharp Second¹³ to make the Clare Ten had the bonus effect of providing a front eight. These are a bright, sparkling ring and were pealed for the first time on **20 Jan 2019** and most recently **22 Dec 2019**. It will be interesting to see if they become more popular than the Middle Eight over the next decade. As is normal for such an octave at the front end of a heavy twelve the peal times are rather slower than the tenor weight would lead one to expect.

TRIPLES	0	MAJOR	3
		Spliced Surprise	1
		Bristol	2

Front 8		1	2#	3	4	5	6	7	8
Jim Clatworthy	3	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Mark Regan	3	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bernard Taylor	3	1	-	1	-	1	I	1	1
David Jenkins	3	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	_
Daniel Jones	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-

¹³ Worcester is one of only five towers having both a 2# and a 6b - the others are Buckfast Abbey, Hull, Dublin (S Patrick's) and Winchester. In the last case the 1992 augmentation to 14 means the bells are now 4# and 8b.

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 and the 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 and 3-4-5-8-0-T

Rings of Five

Occasionally there is (pub) talk of a peal on the front five, as the obvious lightest choice for a major key (tenor 8-2-19 in B). There are also all the back fives of the sixes making a total of six!

QUITE INTERESTING

Just William – this seems to have been a very popular name in the early part of the 20th century as no fewer than 12 different ringers with the name rang in the six peals on the old bells – Powell, Pudge, Johnson, Bradford, Stone, Cotton, Page, Jones, Short, Fisher, Lewis and Edgington.

Old & New – 11 ringers rang in peals on both the 1869 bells and the 1928 bells

Quiet Time – arguably the longest time without peals was the 23 years from the installation of the twelve in 1870 to the first peal on them in 1893. Between the second and third peals (1894-1910) there were 15½ years. In the modern era the longest gap between peals has been the 18½ years (1975-94) when the tower was being restored.

Loud Time – Peal ringing at the cathedral has become much more of a routine affair in the last two decades. As recently as 2002 the normal annual total was 2 or 3, now it is often double figures. The 50^{th} peal at the cathedral was not achieved until the end of 1998, the 100^{th} just ten years later, the 150^{th} in 2014 and the 200th in 2019.

The most peals rung in a calendar year was 13 in 2015, the same number as the entire 1990's. 12 were achieved in 2009 and 2019, and 11 in each of 2011, 2017 and 2018. The shortest gap between peals (3 days) has occurred several times when there have been peals on Good Friday and Easter Monday, and also in September 2015.

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 & Phillip Orme (2000), Andrew & Mike Wilby (2006), Russell & Nick Brown (2012), Mark & William Regan (2015), David & Ewan Hull (2018).

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 HEMMINGS, James (1928), Geoff (1935) and Gerald (1965), and the PIPES, Cecil (1962), Roderick (1966) and David (1994).

Clapper trouble – the 10th is the 'unluckiest' bell, having had its clapper break in three peal attempts. It has also broken during service ringing after just 300 changes, the day after a peal (rather better luck!) Although not mentioned as occurring in peal attempts the tenor clapper is recorded as breaking in Jun 1973, Nov 1974, Oct 1975, Feb 1981 and Apr 1983 (five times in 11 years) and again in 2002 and 2004 which led to the installation of the innovative Wheeler wooden-shafted clapper in May 2005.

Youngest – the youngest person to ring a peal at the cathedral is Alistair Smith who was 15y1m, eclipsing the achievement of Laura Davies (16y4m). Recently Ewan Hull rang one, when aged 15y9m.

Oldest – research so far suggests that Neil Bennett, at 77y9m in Sep 2016, is the oldest person to have rung a peal at the cathedral. Other known septuagenarians have been – Chris Kippin (75y7m in Sep 2019), James George (75y5m in May 1929), Alan Ainsworth (74y2m in 2009), Rick Shallcross (71y4m in Jan 2017). There are possibly a few more.

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).

Centurion – Mark Regan has achieved the unique feat of ringing 100 peals on the cathedral bells. One fifth of these have been on the tenor!

Half centuries – six people have now completed 50 peals on the bells, a feat unimaginable even twenty years ago – Mark Regan (2011), Bernard Taylor (2013), Jim Clatworthy (2015), Ashley Fortey (2017), Chris Pickford (2017), and Dan Jones (2020).

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 seven occasions – 'behind' in 1893, 1894, 1936, 1937, 1945 and 1953 – and 'turned in' in 1963 by Wilf Williams & Bill Theobald.

Speed – The optimum speed for 12-bell peals, judging by the average and the spread of data is about 6 mins per course of Stedman Cinques and a little over 25 mins per course of Cambridge Maximus. The fastest peals of both occurred in the same year, 2006 - 3h41 and 3h48m.

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), Simon & Eleanor Linford (2018).

Unmarried couples – in Oct 2016 Mark Regan and Bernard Taylor became the first 'couple' to ring 50 peals together at the Cathedral. Mark has since achieved the same 'status' with Jim Clatworthy, Ashley Fortey and Chris Pickford.

Four eights on the same bell – Bernard Taylor has rung both the 7th and the 8th to peals on all four different octaves in which they appear – the front eight, middle eight, the C# eight and the back eight.

 $6^{th} \times 2 \times David$ – David Bagley has only rung 2 peals here, but with the odd distinction of ringing the same bell twice (the 6^{th}) but from two different pits. Several others can claim the same thing but not in just 2 peals. The 6^{th} and 6b

were swapped in 2002-3. The only person to have rung the 6b in both its pits is David Jenkins¹⁴ (though John Slater and Michael Clements could still do so).

Semitone Man – Middle Bell Supremo Jim Clatworthy has rung semitone bells to more peals than anyone (10) but hasn't rung the 9# or the 2#.

Conductors – Mark Regan (33), Bernard Taylor (26), Jim Clatworthy (11), Darran Ricks (11), Sid Holt (8) and Alex Byrne (7) head the list.

Rarest bell – The semitones are obviously rung less often than the main twelve, and because the 2# was installed in Feb 2018 it has so far been pealed just four times. Otherwise the 9# has the lowest peal total (13), with no-one having rung it more than once. Both the 5# and 6^b have been rung in over 40 peals.

Most heard bells – The 7th and 8th appear in all the combinations so they are the most used bells, and as the quarter chimes strike on 7-8-9-T these two are also the most heard. The third most popular is surprisingly the 4th, just beating the 10^{th} and 11^{th} .

Local yokels – ten of the Top Twenty Leading Ringers on the bells are in the *current* local band - Alex Byrne, Tom Childs, Jim Clatworthy, Ashley Fortey, Craig Homewood, David Jenkins, Dan Jones, Mark Regan, Darran Ricks and Bernard Taylor.

¹⁴ If the 6b gets moved as part of a plan to improve the rope circle, David could have the unique distinction of ringing the same bell from three different parts of the frame.

PEAL SPEEDS

As ringers seem quite interested in the speed of ringing here is some analysis of the **138 Twelve-Bell Peals** rung on the bells. CPM = changes per minute.

PEALS 1914-2020			
Number	Stage	Av Time	СРМ
71	CINQUES	3h 53m	21.586
67	MAXIMUS	4h 1m	20.897
138	all	3h 57m	21.252

The tenor had a revolutionary wooden-shafted clapper installed in 2005. Contrary to popular opinion peal times have actually risen but only slightly. (Analysis of 136 peals, omitting 1914 and 2020 peals.)

PEALS 1914-2005 (metal clapper)								
Number	Stage	Av Time	CPM					
30	CINQUES	3h 51m	21.718					
22	MAXIMUS	4h 2m	20.851					
52	all	3h 56m	21.351					
PEALS 2005-2019 (wooden clapper)							
Number	Stage	Av Time	CPM					
40	CINQUES	3h 54m	21.487					
44	MAXIMUS	4h 1m	20.920					
84	all	3h 58m	21.190					

The tenor clapper had a replacement ball in early 2011 which was significantly larger than the original. This seems to have slowed Maximus peals down a little.

PEALS 2005-11 (wooden clapper v.1)								
Number	Stage	Av Time	СРМ					
15	CINQUES	3h 54m	21.465					
15	MAXIMUS	3h 58m	21.147					
30 all		3h 57m	21.306					
PEALS 2011-19 (wo	ooden clapper v.2)							
Number	Stage	Av Time	CPM					
25	CINQUES	3h 53m	21.500					
29	MAXIMUS	4h 2m	20.802					
54	all	3h 59m	21.125					

PEAL BOARDS



There are 12 peal boards in the ringing room and 3 in the Teaching Centre which show the details of the following 17 peals (two of the boards contain more than one peal) -

14 Dec 1893	5093	Grandsire Caters	First peal at the cathedral
10 Dec 1894	5057	Grandsire Caters	
20 May 1910	5040	Grandsire Caters	In memoriam Edward VII
2 Jun 1914	5019	Stedman Cinques	First peal on the twelve
23 Aug 1919	5000	Plain Bob Royal	
11 Dec 1920	5003	Grandsire Caters	
26 Dec 1928	5007	Stedman Cinques	First peal on the recast twelve
29 Nov 1934	5037	Grandsire Cinques	
28 Jan 1936	5003	Grandsire Caters	In memoriam George V
9 May 1945	5057	Grandsire Caters	Victory in Europe
3 Jun 1953	5021	Grandsire Caters	Coronation of Elizabeth II
4 Apr 1994	5015	Grandsire Cinques	Tower Restoration
4 Aug 2000	5100	Stedman Cinques	100 th birthday of Queen Mother
29 Apr 2011	5040	Cambridge Maximus	Royal Wedding
11 Jul 2012	5019	Stedman Cinques	Visit of HM Queen Elizabeth II
27 Oct 2012	5007	Stedman Cinques	In memory of Alison Regan
11 Nov 2018	5039	Grandsire Caters	Armistice Centenary

PEAL BOOK

A Grand Peal Book was given to the Guild in 2015 by Steve & Joyce Barton, within which Clare Griffiths (of Exeter) is providing hand-crafted illustrated details of each peal. Below is a sample –



This is very much a long term project - so far peals up to No.92 (31 Dec 2007) have been written up. It will take Clare about five years to catch up with what has been rung, but as we are likely to keep ringing ten or so a year¹⁵ while she is doing this, the book will not be up to date until 2028. It is displayed in the Teaching Centre in a purpose-built cabinet.

¹⁵ Though if we stay under coronavirus 'lockdown' or restrictions for a long period no peals will be rung and the book will not be on display so she might make some serious inroads into this estimate!

THE REEVES HANDBELLS

In 1893 Harvey Reeves (1841-1911), a native of Worcester and Editor of 'The Bell News' (from 1881 to his death) presented the ringers with a set of 31 Shaw handbells which are stored in a wooden box in the ringing room. This marked the creation of the 'Worcester Cathedral Guild of Voluntary Bell Ringers' which later became the 'Worcester Cathedral Guild of Change Ringers' and today is the 'Worcester Cathedral Guild of Bellringers'.

The set's largest bell is 19F with 2 ½ octaves above it, running up to 1D. The various semitone bells give two octaves in Bb and two octaves in C.

The most useful change-ringing bells are the diatonic thirteen, tenor 15C, which together with a Bb semitone give a light ten, tenor 11G. These, plus the F#, were re-handled and refurbished by Whitechapel Bellfoundry in 1998-99 and are shown in red. The bottom four bells are also in good condition but the others have poor handles and need some attention to be of any use.

They are arranged in the box as below, starting with the 19F at the back left and running up in note alternately right then left $\,$ -

\rightarrow			F	G	Α	Bb	В		
		F	E	Eb	D	C#	С		\leftarrow
\rightarrow		F#	G	G#	Α	Bb	В	С	
	G#	G	F#	F	E	Eb	D	C#	÷
\rightarrow		Α	Bb	В	С	D			

Some research is needed to find out what peals have been rung on them. Four were definitely rung at Spring Lane in 2013 but there may be more. It is believed they have not been pealed at the cathedral. A few quarter peals were rung in 2014-15.

<u>Notes</u>

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. As a preparation for this Jim Clatworthy cross-referenced the details with their publication in *Bell News* and *The Ringing World*. A complete <u>list</u> 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) exists on the Ringing World site www.peals.co.uk.

The peals database is PABS's Pealbook program. To place a file on the WCG website worcesterbells.co.uk it is 'exported' from the program as a .csv file with the Format choices TABLES = Full and INCLUDE = Tabs. It should be sent to <u>richard@enrichdesign.co.uk</u>

Bernard Taylor