Landbeach Bell Ringers Worksheet 6 – Anatomy of a Quarter Peal

Here are the details of a Quarter Peal that was recently rung at All Saints' Landbeach.

> **Ely Diocesan Association**
> **Landbeach**, Cambs
> All Saints
> Sunday 4 November 2012 in 44m (11c)
> **1260 Carter Singles**
> 1 Nicholas Small (C)
> 2 Rowena Small
> 3 Barbara Le Gallez
> 4 Roger Gooding
>
> For our Patronal Festival. First QP at first attempt, within a year of starting to learn to ring: 4.
> First in method: 1,2,3.

What does this all mean?

Ely Diocesan Association - This is one of the many bell ringing groups in the U.K. and overseas. Such groups usually keep records of ringing done by their members. All the ringers who rang the quarter peal are members of this group, and they have submitted the quarter peal for inclusion in the group's records. When you can ring rounds and call changes safely, you will be invited to join the EDA.

Landbeach, Cambs // All Saints // Sunday 4 November 2012 – Where and when the quarter peal was rung. These details are of interest to historians of bell ringing.

in 44m – The time it took (m is short for minutes). Why do we care? Well, as you know, rhythm is very important in bell ringing. To get a stable rhythm, you have to ring the bells at a speed suitable for their physical characteristics. So it is interesting to see what speed the band ringing the quarter peal chose.

(11c) – The weight of the tenor bell (c = cwt = hundredweight). The hundredweight is an old-fashioned unit of measure, still used for measuring the weight of bells. It is 112 pounds, which is 8 stone, or 1/20 ton. The name comes from the "hundred" part of 112. The abbreviation is cwt, rather than hwt, because C = 100 in Roman numerals.

If you look up Landbeach in the Ely Diocesan Association handbook, you will see the weight of our tenor given as 11-2-0. This is in the format: *cwt – quarters – pounds*. A quarter is a quarter of a hundredweight. Possibly the tenor was weighed in 1929 when the bells were rehung, but the weight may just be a guess based on its size and thickness.

Exercise – I weigh 9¼ stone. Write out my weight in this format. Could there be bells of this weight?

Why do we care what the tenor weight is? Because it has a big influence on the appropriate ringing speed for the bells. Also because towers like to show off how big their bells are!

1260 – The number of changes rung. Of course you know that I should write rows, but everyone calls them changes so you might as well get used to it! They're always equal, so it doesn't really matter.

It is the number 1260 that makes this ringing be a quarter peal. What is a quarter peal? It is a piece of continuous ringing which is one quarter as long as a peal. So what is a peal? It is a piece of continuous ringing which is at least 5040 (= 4 x 1260) changes long (*but see end of next para.*).

Why 5040? Historically, a "peal" meant the extent (the number of different changes) on however many bells were involved in ringing the changes. The extent on 7 is 5040 (it's 7 factorial, written as 7!). To ring this many changes takes about 3 hours, which is just about do-able. So this became the standard minimum number of changes for a peal on 7 or fewer bells. Note: on 8 or more it's 5000.

Question – What is the extent on any number of bells? Prove it. (There is a proper mathematical proof. Hint: work it out for 3, then visualise what happens when you add one extra bell.)

Carter Singles – the name of the method we rang. Method names are a bit like botanical names, having several parts (usually three, although ours only has two).

To understand a method name, start with the last part. This is the most generalised part of the name. It tells you the number of bells that are needed to ring the method. Singles means that three bells are needed. Ringers say that the method is "on 3 bells".

Question – Look up in your One per Learner, and write out, the names for methods on 5, 7, 9 and 11 bells. What do you think the names are trying to tell us about ringing on those numbers of bells?

Question - Look up and write out the names for methods on 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 bells.

Having established the number of bells, you can skip to the first part of the name (which is all there is in this case). This is the most precise part. It tells you what blue line to look up and learn. Our method is called after the person who invented it, John Carter (1854 – 1927). Not many methods are called after people. A lot are called after places, such as Cambridge. Some have very bizarre names. See the quarter peal and peal columns of the Ringing World!

When a method name has a middle part, it tells you what sort of method it is, e.g. Bob, Surprise. This gives you extra information about how complicated it is likely to be.

1 Nicholas Small (C) – The 1 says that Nicholas rang the treble. The (C) after his name says that he was the conductor. Most pieces of ringing have a conductor – a ringer who issues any necessary instructions during the ringing. They can ring any bell – it does not have to be the treble.

2 Rowena Small // 3 Barbara Le Gallez // 4 Roger Gooding – The other ringers. But how can there be four ringers, when we were ringing a Singles method? The answer is that Roger was ringing "tenor behind". That is to say, he rang the tenor in 4ths place all throughout the quarter peal, while the front three ringers rang the method. Methods on an odd number of bells are often rung with a tenor behind, to give a regular beat.

For our Patronal Festival – Most churches are named after a Saint, who is called the church's Patron Saint. The church's Patronal Festival is celebrated on its Patron Saint's Feast Day (or the Sunday nearest to it if that is more convenient). All Saints' Day is 1 November, and our church's Patronal Festival was celebrated on Sun 4 November 2012, which is the day we rang the quarter peal. We try to time our special ringing so that it can be used to mark significant events in the church's calendar, as a thank-you to the church for letting us ring their bells.

First QP at first attempt, within a year of starting to learn to ring: 4. – A good target to aim for, but remember that people learn at different rates, so it matters not a jot if you do not achieve it.

First in method: 1,2,3. – Ringing always offers new challenges!