

<b>Ringling History (over-simplified) to show main changes that had transforming effects</b>					<b>R H Johnston Feb 2016</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>What happened</b>	<b>Who made it happen</b>	<b>Who benefited /disbenefited</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Who rang them</b>	<b>Ringer recruits</b>	<b>Type of ringing</b>
Dark Ages	bells installed in towers or bellcotes for chiming	Religious authorities	Parishioners	Signalling before and during religious services, warnings, civic and personal uses	Minor clergy	clergy	chiming only
Late middle ages	Bells swung chimed for celebration of Saints days (which included secular celebration) and civic celebrations (in towns). Part wheel invented.	Civic leaders and general public	Parishioners	"Carnival" celebration which in urban areas included bonfires, drinking, dancing etc	paid ringers	strong young men	Swing chiming - object to get bells as high and loud as possible
Late C15	Many towers built in towns and villages with 3 or 4 large bells installed	Parishioners	Parishioners	Expression of strength and status of the community relative to neighbouring parishes. Defence against thunderstorms	paid ringers	strong young men	Swing chiming - object to get bells as high and loud as possible
Late C16	Celebration of significant state anniversaries in place of Saints days (other celebration continues)	Queen Elizabeth	The English state, Parishioners	Promote English Nationalism, and strengthen country against Catholic threat. Religious community cohesion.	ringers paid for public and private celebrations	strong young men	High ringing below top - rounds
Late C16	Young Gentlemen take up bellringing as exercise, by end of C16 rounds rung below balance is the norm	Young Gentlemen in cities	The ringers, public gained from increase in celebration bellringing, which was generally approved of. Gentry status of performers protects long anti-social ringing.	Exercise, competition, gambling. social life	Volunteer Gentry ringers, willing to pay to ring (paid ringing continues)	Young Gentlemen	High ringing below top - rounds
C17- mid C18	Development of call changes and method ringing. City/town based ringing societies for elite ringers	Young Gentlemen in cities	The ringers, public gained from increase in celebration bellringing, which was generally approved of.	Sport, competition, gambling, drinking (NB all socially acceptable). Social life	Volunteer Gentry ringers, willing to pay to ring for sport (Paid ringing continues)	Young Gentlemen	Rounds, then call changes, method ringing in urban centres
Late C16 to mid C18	Bell fittings improved and many bell augmentations and recastings to make tuneable bells	Gentlemen ringers & supporters who spent money	All bellringers, and general public for celebration	Better installations needed for new types of call change and method ringing			

Mid C18-early C19	Increasing social division results in upper and middle classes despising popular celebration. Ringing ceases to be a sport for Gentlemen	Elite classes	No benefits to ringing as it loses elite protection. Social status of bells and ringing declines. Noise complaints start	Social distancing from common people. Reduce social nuisance from popular celebration, drunkenness, moral squalor	paid ringers for public events declining, tradesmen who rang for sport	General public - young men	Method ringing in urban centres, mainly call changes elsewhere
1840-1870	Anglican clergy status rises. Traditional multipurpose community use of church ends. Clergy remove West Gallery choirs and prevent traditional bellringing.	Clergy with agenda of moral improvement of the masses.	Moralists. Some working class ringers squeezed out of a traditional entertainment	Assert clergy control over church buildings to desecularise them. and over parishioners. Moral improvement of the masses, eliminate drinking and gambling	As above, but under pressure	General public - young men	As above, but under pressure
1870-1914	Belfry Reform: makes ringing religious. Firm clergy control of tower's ringers. Ringers church attenders & officers. Ringing before services. Method ringing boosted, at cost of poor striking. More peals (reforming clergy recreation). CC & territorial Assns promote Belfry Reform	Moralistic Clergy who learned to ring at Oxford while training in 1850s and 1860s	Clergy gain control of the tower and bells and bellringers. Religious method ringers increased at expense of traditional secular call change ringers.	Make ringing respectable in eyes of clergy, so allowing "reformed" ringing, with morally upright bellringers, to expand. Promotion of method ringing as superior form of ringing, to eliminate call change ringing and competitions. Increase number of people clergy ringers can ring peals with. Create clergy led institutions to entrench Reform.	ringers under clergy control often paid by gentry	Church members, typically young men previously choristers	more towers become method ringing towers. Striking standards often fell.
1919-1939	Backlash against Church of England in aftermath of Great War slaughter. Increasing competition from more passive entertainments. Number of ringers falls. Ringing Institutions fail to respond.	General social changes caused loss of religion and deference.	No benefits. Ringing seen narrowly religious activity - a hangover from the "Merrie England" past	Increasing distaste for institutional religion. Competition from other less demanding and more attractive activities for young people	ringers now generally volunteers. Ringing institutions still under clergy control	Church members, typically young men previously choristers	method ringing weaker because of recruitment problems

1943-1970s	WW2 Ringing ban causes recruitment surge of bright teenagers. University societies encourage good ringing for its own sake, creating more performance ringing and leaders. Existing ringing institutions inhibit creation of a national organisation to promote and support performance ringing. By 1980, many towers find recruiting ringers hard, as other Sunday activities become more attractive, and traditional recruit sources fail.	University trained high quality method ringers raise standards, of performance ringing, and of service ringing in local towers	High level performance (i.e. surprise and above) method ringing takes off helped by universities and easier transport. Ordinary towers static or declining by end of period	Performance ringers at high level ring primarily for personal interest. Increasing distaste for institutional religion. Ringing as a religious duty still strong, but now suffers stiff competition from other Sunday activities	All ringers volunteers	Church members, typically young men previously choristers. By the end of the period other people without a church background being recruited	Method ringing widespread. Peal ringing and handbell ringing becoming more divorced from other ringing (a trend that continues into C21).
1980s-date	Steadily deteriorating age profile. Recruitment of teenagers dries up apart from ringers' children. Millennium recruitment drive captures mainly old people, making matters worse. Towers recruit anyone, without regard to motives or aptitude, making teaching method ringing futile. Number of services to ring for in decline. Ringing Institutions locked into unhelpful paradigm of religious objectives, tower focus for recruitment and training, and culture that ringer must support "local" tower. Peal and competition ringing increasingly separating from service ringing.	Existing leadership of CC and territorial associations cannot cope with these changes. History shows that a change in paradigm requires separation from existing institutional arrangements, and creation of institutions with objectives to suit Zeitgeist.	The public often hear poor ringing. Service ringing in towers is often poorly struck, and method ringing is in decline as it is too hard for late learners, but there is a reluctance to ring call changes instead, which often leads to a band collapsing when it could have continued as a call change tower. Better ringers are often frustrated, and tend to ring performances for personal reasons, and seek to develop promising performance ringing recruits by arranging peals and quarters.	Religious duty not a widely accepted motive for doing something. End of deference and duty society and rise of self-pleasing conflicts badly with an activity where the activity time is under the control of a third party. In its current form ringing is not making a recruitment offer capable of attracting in sufficient numbers the young clever and devoted recruits it needs. Training methods, always poor, waste too much learner time causing poor retention, and are ill-suited to the type of recruit who currently self-selects to learn to ring. Method ringing training must focus on carefully selected individuals rather than on creating a "local tower" band.	All ringers volunteers, aging and by 2016 mainly people over 50. It is clear that the motives of ringers are very varied, and often incompatible. The culture of different towers is very different. The most effective towers generally have ringers with same objectives and similar competence.	Mainly older people (over 50) who want a social activity, and nothing too demanding.	Method ringing declining. Many towers stopping ringing, but "local tower" focus means many of the remaining ringers give up rather than go elsewhere. Performance ringing intensifies, but largely done by retired ringers, and declining as they become less fit.