

Dorothy Sayers anniversary

The year 2004 is the 70th anniversary of the original publication of *The Nine Tailors* by Dorothy L Sayers (DLS). The novel features her aristocratic sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey, in a mystery which revolves around a long length of Kent Treble Bob Major. This being so, several people, including the Public Relations Committee of the Central Council, decided that the anniversary should be marked in some way. The publishers decided that the novels of DLS should be re-published and the Dorothy L Sayers Society also wanted to mark the date.

The DLS Society decided to support a plan to hang for ringing the bells of Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire where DLS's father, the Rev Henry Sayers, was vicar and where, due to shortage of funds, the bells had only ever been hung for chiming. It was decided to ring a standard length peal (5024 changes, rather than the 15840 in the book) of Kent TB Major at Terrington at the same time as the DLS Society produced a performance called "Excited about the Bells" in the church. Bank Holiday Monday, 3 May was the chosen day as the book was re-published the previous week.

On the day, things almost never started as Richard Brown's car decided to start dumping engine oil on the road. Fortunately, Robin and Judith Rogers were persuaded to change their plans for the day and head for Norfolk. It meant a slight delay in the start, but a respectable peal was duly rung and all concerned would like to thank Robin for standing in.

On 13 June there is a lunch in Cambridge at the Graduate Centre to celebrate the 90th birthday of Dr Barbara Reynolds, president of the DLS Society and lifelong friend of DLS. This date is also the 101st anniversary of DLS's birth. Co-ordinated by Christine Northeast and Frank King, some ringing has been arranged in Cambridge and nearby on this date, to be associated with "The Great Ninetieth Luncheon", and quarter peals will be attempted in the following towers (and possibly others - further details are awaited). The approximate start times are 15:45 St Edward King and Martyr, 16:30 St Bene't, 17:15 Trumpington, 18:00 Histon. There will be display boards in St Bene't, explaining about bell ringing, and making reference to *The Nine Tailors*.

If successful, the quarter peals will all be published together in *The Ringing World*, with a note to say that they celebrate the 90th birthday of Barbara Reynolds, and the 101st anniversary of the birth of DLS, and the recent re-issue of *The Nine Tailors*. It is hoped that it will be possible to mention the ringing in any publicity about the event e.g. in the Cambridge Evening News or on local television.

Another event taking place on Sunday 13 June was a peal of 5088 Kent TB Major, with a cover bell, on the nine at All Saints Basingstoke. The peal was rung in 2hrs 51mins to a composition by Revd H Earle Bulwer, and conducted by Bernard Taylor. The novelty of this peal was that the band consisted of nine people with Taylor as their surname. These were (in order of ringing): Jennie (Backwell), Sarah (Oxford), Bernard (Worcs), Derek (Farnborough), Trevor (Cambs), Jim (Backwell), Roy (Lynn), Malcolm and Philip (Tewkesbury).

A press release from the Ely DA gives news of an exciting project in Cambridgeshire.

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Bluntisham-cum-Earith, Cambridgeshire have launched an appeal to restore the ring of eight bells for full circle ringing. They were last renovated in 1910 when the Revd Henry Sayers, father of Dorothy L, was the Rector. The church inventory taken in 1553 records three bells in the tower. In 1632 one new bell was added, cast by Miles Graye of Colchester. Two more were added in 1716 and 1717, cast by Thomas Newman. Robert Taylor cast a tenor bell in 1801 (later this bell became the seventh) from his St Neots foundry and William Dobson added a new treble in 1832.

In 1910, the state of the bells had become such that they had not been rung for sixty years, and they were removed to Taylor's in Loughborough for retuning and augmentation to eight, and were returned to be hung dead, with chiming apparatus. This was carried out under the control of the Revd Sayers, who hoped that the bells would be hung for full circle ringing one day. The restoration project is to install a new metal frame located lower in the tower and rehang the existing eight bells for ringing. This will cost in the region of £52,000 and fundraising is on going at present. Taylor's of Loughborough are going to carry out the work - in a sense they are finishing the job they started in 1910. It is hoped to commence work in August with completion by the end of this year.

For more details and photographs of the bells and tower, please see the Ely DA website.