

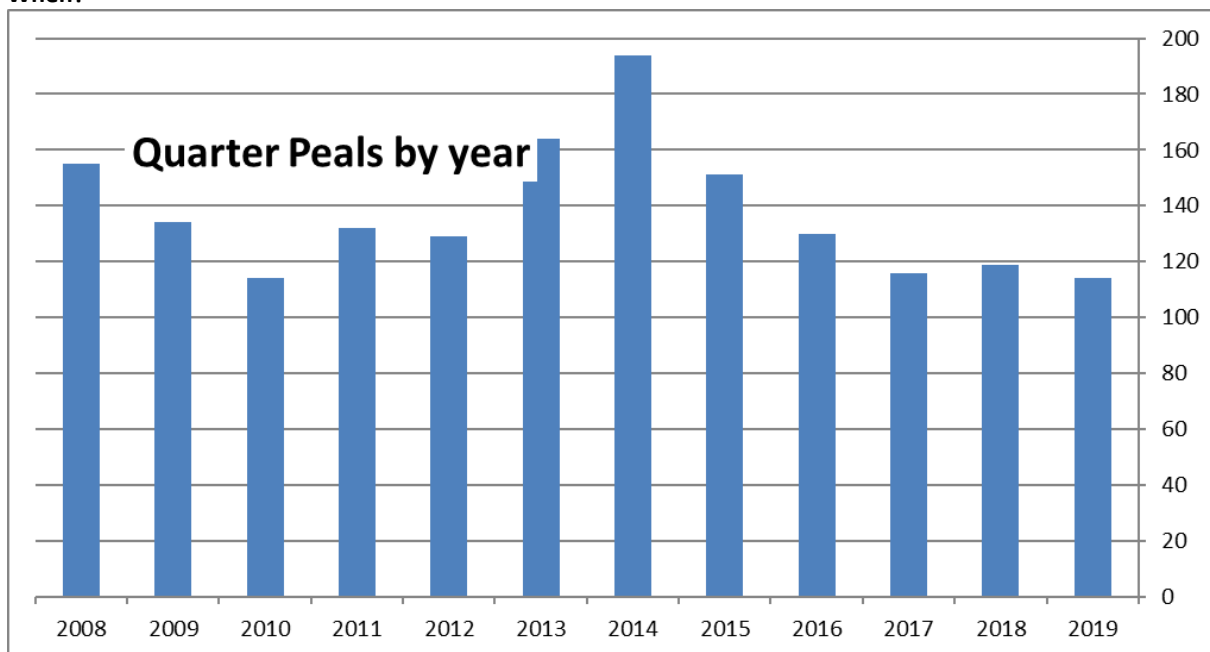
TDGR Quarter Peals 2008-2019

Introduction

This is an update to an article published in An Clogh in 2018 where I analysed 10 years of quarter peals within the county of Cornwall by a band made up of at least 50% resident members. This data has now been added to by 2018 and 2019 records.

Robert Perry and Ian Self had different criteria for handbook inclusion and as such there are quarter peals that appear in the RW, Bellboard and the handbook but not all three. Quarters not included in this analysis are those rung for the TDGR outside the county and those rung within the county with >50% non TDGR resident ringers. This second exclusion removes a number of quarters included in the handbooks (and why your personal totals may not match these!). The reasoning of this is to look at the Guild as a whole rather than the quality and quantity of visiting ringers to the County. Also included are a number of quarters rung jointly (for example with the ASCY) that fulfil the above requirements. The total number of performances included is therefore 1652.

When?



When looking at the quarter peal total year-on-year 2014 stands out as a very productive one. This a combination of a very successful time for at Bradoc who achieved 50 quarters in the year, 20 more than any other tower in any other year. Additionally, the Western branch quarter peal band were also ringing many quarters at this time. In the following years Bradoc has been seen to drop away, fewer attempts at Gulval and particularly St Buryan and at the same time the ending of the Advent weekend quarter peals organised by John Body. This brings the 2017 to 2019 totals a stable level, approximately 20 less than the totals 2009-2012.

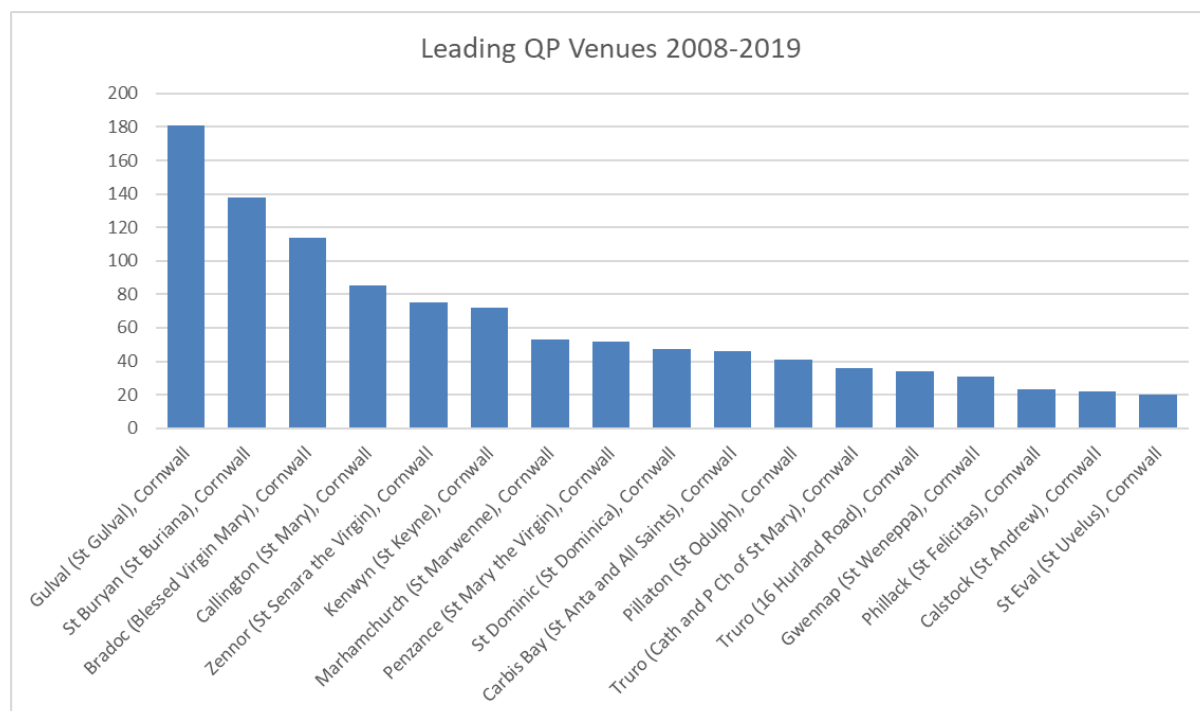
Where?

A total of 127 venues (125 churches and 2 handbell locations) were used in the last twelve years with Gulval and Bradoc the leading towers. Callington, St Buryan and Zennor all feature highly over this time. More recently Hurland Road has become a more productive venue and in 2019 became the leading quarter peal venue. The leading tower last year was Carbis Bay with 10.

Year	Total QPs	QP Venues	Leading	
2019	114	43	Hurland Road	14
2018	119	45	Carbis Bay	12
2017	116	54	Gulval	10
2016	130	48	Bradoc	12
2015	151	56	Bradoc	23
2014	194	56	Bradoc	50
2013	164	48	Bradoc	24
2012	129	44	Gulval	29
2011	132	46	Gulval	30
2010	114	53	St Buryan	11
2009	134	50	Callington	15
2008	155	64	St Buryan	21

As well as Bradoc ringing 50 quarters in 2014, over 20 quarters were rung at both St Buryan and Gulval; no venue has exceeded 20 since 2015. This was also the first (and most successful) year of the quarter peal week which added a further 18 to the count.

It is pleasing to see that despite the slight decrease in overall numbers of quarters being rung, the number of towers being using is remaining fairly constant. According to Dove there are 158 ringable towers in the Truro Diocese in Cornwall and therefore we have rung at 80% of them. A good number of those that have not had quarter peals rung are not TDGR affiliated, rings of three or 'ringing currently not permitted'.



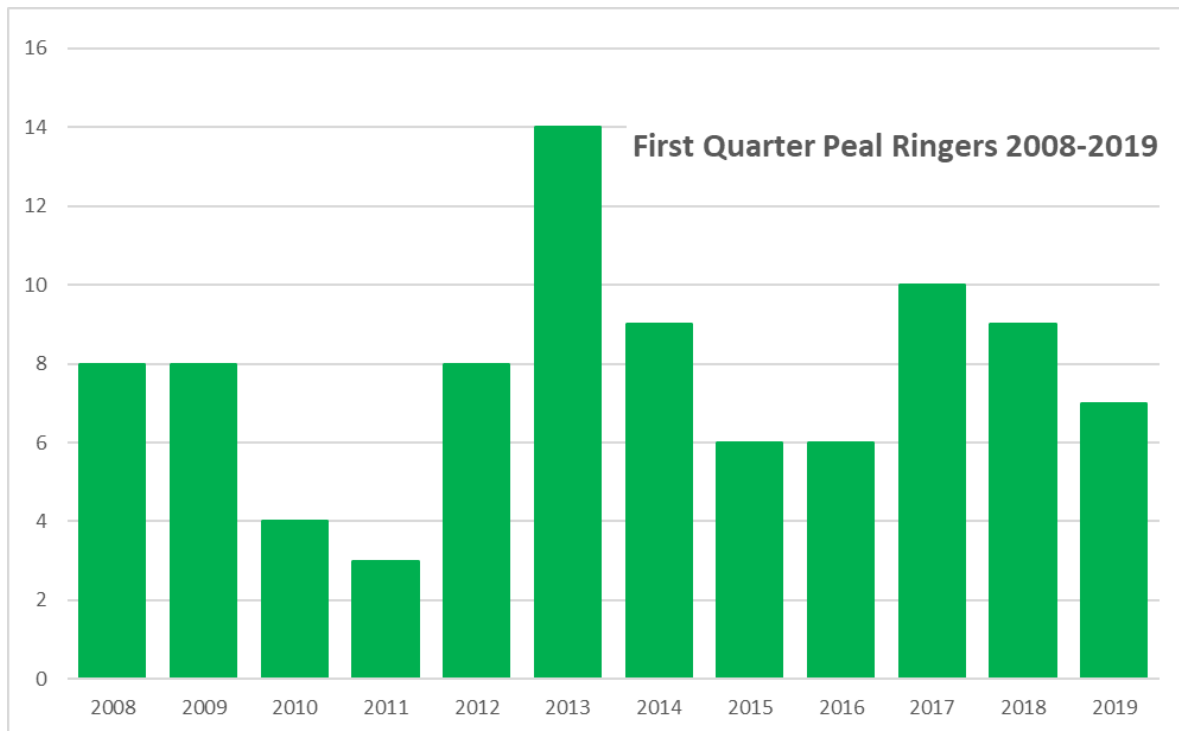
Who?

With Gulval and St Buryan leading the tower totals it is unsurprising that the leading quarter peal ringers for the Guild are members of those bands. Before 2019 Either Neil or Jane Hitchens is the leading quarter peal ringer for the Guild every year except 2016 when Sam Nankervis (34) managed to ring a four more than Jane

and Martin Spittle. Andy Smith became the leading quarter peal ringer for the guild in 2019 with Claire Sweetman (37), Norman Mattingley (36) and Sam Nankervis (34) all ahead of Neil and Jane.

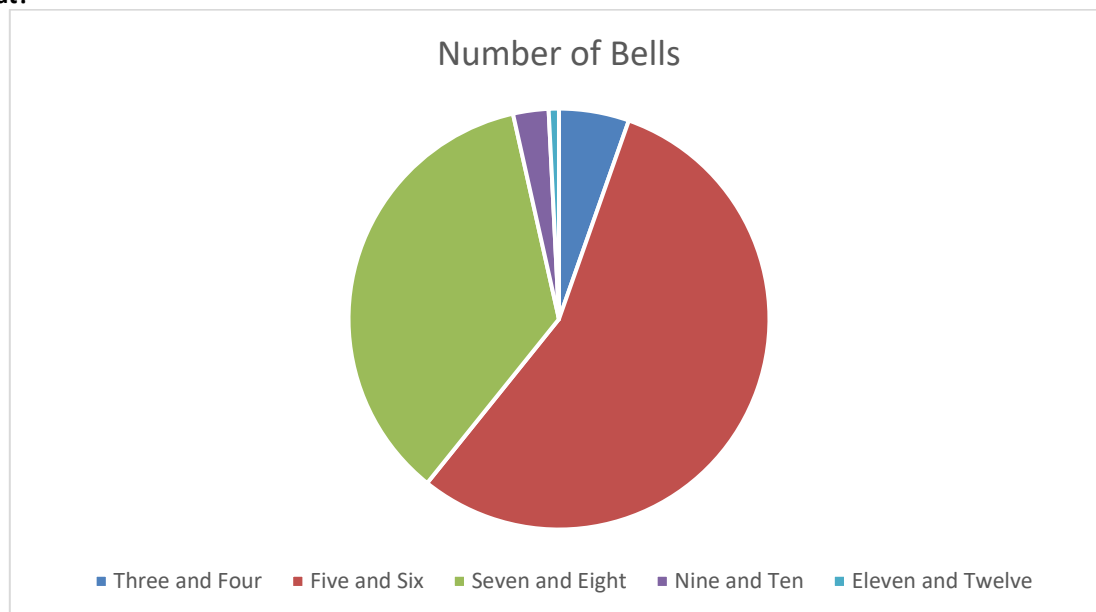
Jane Hitchens	561	Graham Baskerville	176	Jonathan Young	132
Neil Hitchens	500	Claire Sowden	172	Richard Warwick	129
Sam Nankervis	456	Phil Morse	171	Fergus M S Stracey	123
Norman Mattingley	401	Anne Body	161	Robert Perry	121
Chris Venn	375	Ruth Reeves	153	David Crocker	114
Martin Spittle	328	Robert Corney	152	Kevan Borlase	109
Debbie Spittle	302	David J Mattingley	141	Robert Pearce	107
Carolyn Howell	293	John Body	136	Don Crocker	101
Phil Tremain	215	David Ralls	136	Richard Dorrington	99
Owen Borlase	208	John Davis	133	Bryony Dorrington	98

The leading ringers for the TDGR from 2008 to 2019 are above. There were 515 different ringers involved in the 1652 quarters, a number of these (~15%) were not resident but it still reflects on a healthy proportion of the Guild ringing at least one.



There were 92 first quarter peal ringers over the analysis period and the numbers remain steady. This is perhaps a good indication of how our teaching and development remains static. The spike in 2013 was primarily the Bradoc band which went on to ring 50 the following year.

What?



There have been 3 quarters of Singles. Of the 86 quarters of Minimus, the majority of these were at Bradoc and St Winnow with many first quarters and firsts of conductor.

Over 50% of all the quarters rung have been on six bells. The majority of Doubles were a mix of methods (200) followed by Grandsire (158) and Plain Bob (119). 106 single different Minor methods were rung including all of the 'Standard 41' Surprise Minor. Only 26 Multi-method/Spliced Minor quarters have been scored. Unsurprisingly the most rung Triples methods were Grandsire (67), Stedman (28) and Plain Bob (26). Of the 458 Quarter Peals of Major, 72 different single methods were rung with Yorkshire the most popular (46). 95 Quarter Peals of Spliced Surprise Major were rung including 15-Spliced at Pillaton and four of the notoriously difficult 'Horton's Four' rung in the Western District. There were also 32 quarters of 8-Spliced spread across the whole county.

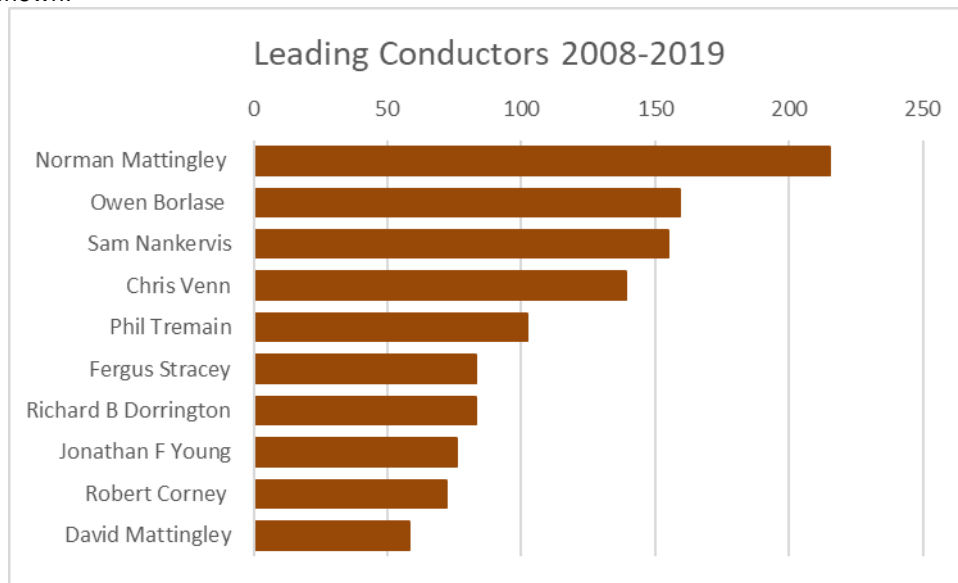
On ten bells (45 in total) the most popular method is Grandsire Caters (18) followed by Cambridge Royal (6). When this report was first written in 2018 there had been only 28 quarter peals on 10 in the previous 10 years. This increase is primarily due to the relocation of the Gulval quarter peal band to Carbis Bay. Significant progress has been made by that band including firsts of Superlative No 2., Pudsey, Rutland and London No. 3 Surprise for the Guild with a resident band. With the augmentation of Truro Cathedral in 2011 we now have a twelve and there have been 13 quarter peals on the twelve including three of Surprise Maximus, one of which made up of an entirely Cornish based band. With the nearest twelve bell tower being Crediton and the lack of higher number experience within the county it is not surprising these numbers are low. However with the added interest in the regional 12-bell striking competition further ringing on 12 has occurred and including an attempt of Stedman Cinques in 2019 with an all resident band (and with John Pladdys).

How?

The leading conductors reflect the same pattern and leading ringers and towers. Norman Mattingley (2008, 10, 11 and 13) and Chris Venn (2012 & 14) from the Gulval and St Buryan quarter peal bands with Richard Dorrington leading in 2015 & 16 (shared with Sam Nankervis) during the period Bradoc was particularly productive. The leading conductor for 2017 was Phil Tremain and 2018 and 2019 Jonathan Young.

The conducting was shared between 21 and 30 people each year with each conductor averaging between 4.5 (2017) and 6.1 (2009) quarters. Essentially the conducting was shared more evenly in 2017 than 2009. Possibly one concern is that in 2019 only 21 people shared the conducting and during the last twelve years there have only been 14 firsts as conductor, just over one a year.

Although the number of different conductors is remaining constant it is perhaps an area of concern that new conductors are not emerging. This can be further demonstrated when the leading conductors for the last 10 years are shown:



There have been 79 different conductors of the 1652 quarter peals in the TDGR but the ten names above account for 69% of all quarter peals. Fergus has never been a resident member of the TDGR and David left the county in 2013.

There are no ladies featured in the top 10. In fact the leading lady conductors are Sue Shadrick and Carolyn Howell with 7 each and of all of these quarter peals in this period only 43 were conducted by ladies- just 2.6%. This is an increase of 12 from 2017 so some progress is being made, but probably not enough. There were ~11,000 bells being rung in quarter peals in the analysis, almost exactly a third were rung by ladies, so we expect to see somewhere in the region of 500-550 quarters conducted by ladies if the conducting balance was the same as the ringing balance. Of course this is not a regional phenomenon and the Central Council have recently set up a group looking at the inequality in lady conductors.

Conclusion

As a Guild and a County we have some unique characteristics. Geographically we are cut off with our nearest 10 and 12 bell centre of ringing in Exeter. We are a 'Guild of Ringers' with a number of Cornish towers not affiliated to us. The strong call change tradition means that whilst bells are being rung, records of what and by whom may not be kept.

We ring so few peals that this will never be a true indicator of the ongoing health of the Guild; a similar analysis would reveal a lot of Stedman with a majority of ringers from outside the county.

We have a steady number of first quarter peal ringers but the progression to conducting seems non-existent and this is an area where we may need to develop. Relying on the same people is a safe way to score your quarter but sometimes they might not be available.

So whilst our quarter peal numbers may be per ringer less than other Guilds, for example the Southwell and Nottingham Guild ring approximately the same number of quarters as us but with only two thirds the membership, we can see that over the last ten years TDGR has been pretty consistent.

The slight downward trend seen from 2015 has now stabilised and is more indicative of a spike returning to a baseline than a continual decline, although approximately 20 less than before. The numbers between years are only as much as a poor run of losses, a few quarter peal days or a band starting to ring an additional quarter a month.

Jonathan Young, August 2020