

Malcolm Butcher



The Bath and Wells Association suffered a sad loss on Thursday, 9th July with the death of Malcolm Butcher, Captain of Martock.

Malcolm was due to go on an outing with the Friday Band on Friday, and members were concerned when he didn't turn up. In the evening we heard the terrible news that he had been found dead at his home.

Since Malcolm retired a few years ago, he had spent much of his spare time ringing. He helped at the Crewkerne practice every week, taught learners at Kingsbury, and rang regularly at Merriott, Ash, and Odcombe. On Sundays it was not unknown for him to dash round to two or three towers if he was needed. This was all in addition to keeping Martock bells ringing, until the devastating news that ringing must cease due to serious faults with the bells. Malcolm didn't hesitate. He launched himself into a huge project to rehang the bells. He organised fundraising, attended PCC meetings, supervised the builders, liased with the bellhangers, and arranged practices to keep his band together while the bells are away. Sadly he will not be there to see the project finished, and the bells will not be back in time for his funeral.

When he first started coming to ring with the Friday Band, he could just about manage a plain course of Stedman. We soon had him ringing touches, and then he decided that he really wanted to learn Cambridge. With the sudden need to raise thousands of pounds for Martock bells, he set himself a target. He started getting sponsors, chose a conductor, picked a band, and arranged a date to ring a Quarter Peal of Cambridge. Not too far ahead in our opinion! He then took every possible opportunity to practise the method, and by the appointed date he was more or less ready. The result was an excellent quarter, and a large sum raised towards the rehang.

Malcolm was a much loved member of the Friday Band, and he really enjoyed his ringing with us. Our Fridays often entail as much talking, eating and sightseeing as ringing, and Malcolm especially enjoyed the social side of the group. When thinking about a fitting tribute to him, it occurred to us that we should ring some Quarters, but that we should also have a special lunch in his honour. Thus we are in the process of arranging simultaneous Quarter peals so that every member of the group can take part, and then we shall all meet up at one of our favourite pubs for lunch. He'd approve of that.

Helen Beaufoy.