

# **Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon Record Office**

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Accession No.

9945

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RECORDS OF THE NORTH WALES ASSOCIATION  
OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

1977-1986

This collection was created by successive Secretaries of the Gwynedd and West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association. Prior to 1977 it appears that no Branch records other than a minute book have survived, but from this date Dr Bernard Matthews, J K Randolph Ellis and Susan Ellis, who served in turn in the capacity of Hon. Sec. of the Branch, have preserved both correspondence files and associated material. JKRE also served as Hon. Sec. to the North Wales Association for a term, and the papers which reflect his many activities in this post are included in the collection. This is a largely personal collection. The official records of both the Association and the Branch remain with the current officers, although some copy minutes and account sheets are to be found in the correspondence files.

XM9945/1

BUSINESS OF THE HON. SEC. OF THE  
GWYNEDD & WEST CLWYD BRANCH  
of the North Wales Association,  
including some items of business of the  
Hon. Sec. of the Association.

XM9945/1/1

LIST of peals and quarter peals rung by  
the North Wales Association during the  
year. Also includes figures for peals  
rung for the Association since its  
inception.

1977

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XM9945/1/2

EXTRACT from *'The Ringing World'* with an article by Geoffrey Parting [of Buckley, Ringing Master of the North Wales Association] about the history of the Association.  
Photocopy.

1978

XM9945/1/3

RULES of the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers (Revision).

1978

XM9945/1/4

FILE of correspondence to Dr Bernard E Matthews, Hon. Sec. of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association. Includes unsigned minutes of Branch meetings.

1977-1978

XM9945/1/5

FILE of correspondence to Dr Bernard E Matthews, Hon. Sec. of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association. Includes unsigned copies of minutes of some meetings.

1978-1979

XM9945/1/6

FILE of correspondence to Dr Bernard E Matthews, Hon. Sec. of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association.

1979

XM9945/1/7

FILE of questionnaire returns sent to Tower Captains of all towers within the North Wales Association, in order to gain a picture of the state of ringing in each pa. Includes a statistical analysis of the responses, some correspondence and the draft proposed questionnaire.

1979-1980

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XM9945/1/8

FILE of correspondence to Bernard Matthews, Randolph Ellis and Susan Ellis, successive Hon. Secs. of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association and to RE, Hon. Sec. of the North Wales Association. Includes a copy of '*The Ringing World*', 1977, with an article about the bells of St Peter's Church, Ruthin. [By the active period of this file, Ruthin bells had been declared unringable.] Also includes information about surveys done on the bells at Llangefni, Rhuddlan and Bangor.

1979-1984

XM9945/1/9

ANNUAL ACCOUNT AND BALANCE SHEET of the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers.

1980

XM9945/1/10

MINUTES [unsigned] of the Annual General Meeting of the North Wales Association, held at St Giles' Church, Wrexham.

21 Mar 1981

XM9945/1/11

CIRCULAR LETTER: J K Randolph Ellis, Hon. Sec. of the North Wales Association to incumbents of all churches in Gwynedd and west Clwyd which have bells hung for ringing. The Association is planning to hold an open day on 23 May 1981 at which it is expected visiting ringers would pay 20p per tower, in order to raise money for the Association's Bell Restoration Fund. Asks whether it would be possible for the church tower to be open for 45 minutes between particular hours.

1981

Attached:

RULES of the Bell Restoration Fund.

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XM9945/1/12

EXTRACT from '*The Ringing World*' showing that a quarter peal was rung in Bangor [St David's Church, Glanadda] for the induction of the Rev. T E P Edwards. Photocopy.

5 Jun 1981

XM9945/1/13

CIRCULAR LETTER: J K Randolph Ellis, Hon. Sec. to all Tower Captains of the North Wales Association, reporting on the results of the recent striking competition held at Forden and announcing a one day training course for ringers at Plain Hunt level.

29 Jun 1981

Attached:

JUDGING SHEETS of the striking competition held at Forden on 20 June 1981, with score and comments by the judge, Dr Donald Marshall [Branch Ringing Master, of Bangor].

XM9945/1/14

FILE of correspondence to Susan Ellis, Hon. Sec. of the Gwynedd<sup>2</sup> West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association and to Randolph Ellis, Hon. Sec. of the North Wales Association. Includes apologies for absence at meetings, enquiries about availability of towers from visiting ringers, news of churches within the Association, news of special events such as peal and quarter peal attempts, ringing days and outings. Also includes newspaper cuttings re. St David's, Glanadda, Bangor.

1982-1986

XM9945/1/15

POSTER of forthcoming ringing meetings for the East Clwyd and Maelor Branch of the North Wales Association.

1985

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XM9945/1/16

ANNUAL ACCOUNT AND BALANCE SHEET of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association.

15 Feb 1986

XM9945/1/17

CIRCULAR LETTER: Cyril A Wratten, Hon. Sec. & Treas., Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to [Randolph] Ellis, Sec. North Wales Association, enclosing various items.

26 Nov 1986

Enclosed:

1. OFFICIAL REPORT of the Central Council meeting held at Reigate, 27 May 1986.

2. LETTER: John Barnes, Chairman of Bell Restoration Funds Committee of the Central Council to all Association Secretaries re. an initiative to promote the restoration of unringable bells, Nov. 1986.

3. BLANK FORMS (2) for notifying the Central council of a local society's elected representatives to it and also for applying for membership for one of the Central Council's committees.

XM9945/2

SURVEYS AND REPORTS OF BELLS, BELL FRAMES AND FITTINGS within the area of the Gwynedd & West Clwyd Branch of the North Wales Association.

XM9945/2/1

BANGOR:

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XM9945/2/1/1

21 Aug 1980

LETTER: Brian Threlfall, Towers & Belfries Committee, Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to Randolph Ellis, enclosing reports following his surveys of Bangor and Rhuddlan bells. Comments that RE's proposals re. restoration to Bangor bells should work reasonably well, but that he would prefer to use a plate top and bottom [of the bell frame] with bolts down the sides. Believes that attention to the pulleys and loose wheels would make a more dramatic improvement, although work on the frame is more important in the long run.

Enclosed:

1. COPY LETTER: BT to Rev. R G Morgan, Rhuddlan enclosing his report on Rhuddlan bells [see XM9945/2/7/1 for report]. After a few years' worth of maintenance have been made up, there is no reason why the bells should not be rung regularly. A better result would be obtained by re-hanging them, but there is no danger in continuing to ring them now. Comments adversely on the dangerous state of the access ladders.
2. COPY LETTER: BT to the Archdeacon of Bangor, enclosing his report on Bangor bells. He found nothing dangerously wrong and all the work can be undertaken by the ringers. Urges the Archdeacon to ensure that bells, "which represent a not inconsiderable capital expenditure," should receive regular maintenance. Notes that his expences are to be met by the bell ringers themselves.
3. ORIGINAL REPORT on the bell-frame of St David's Church, Glanadda, Bangor.
4. COPY REPORT as above.

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XM9945/2/2

BARMOUTH:

XM9945/2/2/1

REPORT of a survey on the bells of St John's Church, Barmouth carried out by Randolph Ellis. Includes detailed recommendations for basic restoration work that is needed to restore the bells to good ringing condition. [2 copies, original [incomplete] and photocopy].

Jun 1981

XM9945/2/2/2

LETTER: Bob [Crabbe] to Randolph [Ellis] enclosing a copy of the report on St John's bells. It is quite a good report but at present all that is suggested is out of the question. BC will be ordering new pulleys shortly. Is glad to hear RE is recovering.

15 Feb 1982

Enclosed:

1. LETTER: Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London to Mr R J C Crabbe, Barmouth [Tower Captain]. Following a visit to see the bells of SS. John & David, Barmouth, they report on the condition of the bells, frame and fittings with recommendations of various courses of action to be undertaken to improve them. Includes note of sizes, weight and pitch of the eight bells, which were installed in 1891 at a cost of £908.0s.1d., which cost was met by Mrs Perrins of Malvern.

2. ESTIMATES (2) for schemes of repair.

XM9945/2/3

THE 'CURFEW BELL', CAERNARFON:



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XM9945/2/3/1

LETTER: M W Thompson, Welsh Office. Cardiff to J K Randolph Ellis explaining that the Curfew Bell at Porth Mawr is in the care of the Welsh Office, but not their ownership. Permission should be sought from the local authority to study the bell. MWT is pleased to offer help with access but RE is to understand that they accept no liability for accident or injury that might occur in a part of the monument that is closed to the public.

10 Sep 1980

XM9945/2/3/2

REPORT of a survey of The Curfew Bell hanging at Porth Mawr, Stryd Mawr, Caernarfon, carried out by Randolph Ellis [at the request of Chris Pickford of Bedford, for inclusion in his survey of British bells]. [2 copies]

9 Apr 1981

Enclosed:  
DRAFT NOTES.

XM9945/2/4

CLYNNOG FAWR:

XM9945/2/4/1

REPORT on the bells of St Beuno's Church, Clynnog Fawr by Randolph Ellis, with recommendations for procedures to be undertaken in order to bring the bells back into usable condition.

30 Apr 1981

Enclosed:  
DRAFT NOTEBOOK.

XM9945/2/4/2

LETTER: Idris Thomas, Y Rheithordy, Trefor to [Randolph] Ellis, responding to the report on Clynnog bells. Asks whether RE would be prepared to carry out the work on the bells himself and hopes that the Association would make full use of them thereafter.

19 Aug 1981

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M9945/2/5

DENBIGH:

M9945/2/5/1

REPORT on the bells, bell frame, fittings and foundation beams at St Mary's Church, Denbigh, carried out by Randolph Ellis. Notes that these bells are unique in that they appear to have never been rung since their hanging. Gives advice on restoration measures that would need to be carried out in order to have a ringing peal and offers the assistance of the Association.

10 Jun 1983

Enclosed:  
DRAFT NOTES.

M9945/2/6

LLANGEFNI:

M9945/2/6/1

REPORT of a survey of the bells and fittings of [St Cyngar's Church], Llangefni, carried out by Randolph and Susan Ellis. [This was done at the request of Chris Pickford of Bedford, for inclusion in his survey of British bells.]

26 Mar 1981

Attached:  
RUBBING of W Blews' Gothic lettering [supplied by CP].

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XM9945/2/6/2

Class Mark:

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[1981]

DRAFT LETTER: [Randolph Ellis to the Bell Rescue Fund of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers]. RE was recently asked to survey the bells at Llangefni pa. church on behalf of Chris Pickford of Bedford, who was writing an article on the bell-founder William Blews. As a matter of courtesy he sent a copy of his survey of these delapidated bells to the Rector. The Rector then asked him to carry out a further, more detailed survey, giving a report of work that would need to be done to restore the bells. RE was invited to address the PCC: he told them that although the bells were of a type intended to be rung full-circle, they had been 'clocked' [had the clapper swung against the sound bow with the bell in the 'down' position] for over 100 years, and that this had caused much damage. At a subsequent PCC meeting, a quote from Eayre & Smith of £4000 for restoration work was discussed. It was felt this was a lot of money to spend on bells in such poor condition. The Rector intended to approach the Bell Rescue Fund in order to enquire about the possibility of acquiring a redundant light six. He had already contacted Dean Thurlow of Gloucester and received much encouragement. RE asks [the Bell Rescue Fund] to give as much support as they can and also to supply him with general information about the work of the Fund since he believes it is likely another tower might shortly consider the acquisition of a redundant ring of 6 or 8.

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XM9945/2/6/3

COPY LETTER: Gilbert Thurlow, Dean of Gloucester to Rev. R Ll Owen, Llangefni [copy sent by GT to Randolph Ellis]. Thanks R Ll O for enclosing RE's report and recommendations re. St Cyngar's bells. Enthuses about the scheme to have the three bells rehung with space included in the frame for three more bells "if ever donors might come forward to give them - perhaps as memorials to departed members of the family and so on - thus the church would build up eventually to a lovely little light ring of six bells." It doesn't matter if there are no ringers in Llangefni now, as people will come forward to learn. Recommends that a small but experienced bell-hanger be engaged to carry out the work and that fund-raising be left to "some friendly enthusiast... and appoint a small forward looking sub-committee to back him." Appeals for money for bells often attracts support from outsiders, especially as it means work for craftsmen. Advises that R J Cooles, Hon. Sec. of the "Rescue Fund" be approached for help for new bells. Wishes success with this "inspiring scheme."

22 Jun 1981

Appended:

NOTE added by GT on copy to RE suggesting a whip round for two new bells to be named "Charles Prince of Wales" and "Diana Princess of Wales." Is sure RE would get them, and "you might get the 'baby' - the new treble - in due course!"

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XM9945/2/6/4

COPY LETTER: R J Cooles, [member of the Redundant Bells Committee of the Central Council] to Rev. R Ll Owen, Llangefni re. St Cyngar's bells. Notes that the three existing bells are historic and it would be both unlikely and undesirable that these should be traded in as scrap metal to offset the cost of acquiring a new ring of six. It is highly unlikely that a light six will become available, since these rarely become redundant; heavy sixes, and even more so, eights, on the other hand, are far more readily available. Suggests that it might be possible to acquire three individual bells from different sources. Since the three existing bells are in tune with each other, they could possibly form the back three of a ring of six with a tenor of about 7 cwt. Suggests that quotations be obtained from the different bell foundries re. what can be done with the existing bells. The Redundant Bells Committee would then see what could be done to obtain three other bells from elsewhere in the country.

06 Aug 1981

XM9945/2/6/5

LETTER: Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London to J K Randolph Ellis replying to a letter of enquiry re. the bells of St Cyngar's Church, Llangefni. Notes that the bells were cast by Blews, whose bells are generally of poor tone. Gives probable costs of five alternate schemes for augmentation of the three bells to a ring of 6, as proposed by RE.

27 Aug 1981

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XM9945/2/6/6

LETTER: Chris [Pickford], Bedford to Randolph [Ellis] replying to an enquiry about the donors of Llangefni bells. There is no information in the bell founder's records; suggests the parish records might give some indication whether the bells had ever been recast. CP is of the opinion that although Blews' bells are rare, enough survive for there to be no veto on a pa. taking whatever action they chose. Does not think they could ever form the basis of a good ring of six and believes that recasting would be the best option.

2 Sep 1981

XM9945/2/6/7

DRAFT LETTER: [Randolph Ellis] to [Rev R Ll Owen, Llangefni] thanking him for a telephone call with the good news that the PCC has decided to engage Eayre & Smith to carry out the restoration work on St Cyngar's bells. Suggests that an application for a grant should be made to the Trustees of the North Wales Association's Bell Restoration Fund. It would be an advantage if R Ll O were to mention his willingness to have a band of bell ringers taught the art of change ringing, and also the possibility of augmentation to six bells at a future date. Grants are made for work actually undertaken and are usually in the region of 10% of the total cost.

[1982]

XM9945/2/6/8

BUNDLE OF PAPERS re. the restoration of the bells of Llangefni Parish Church. Includes quotations and estimates for proposed schemes of work to be carried out by Eayre & Smith Ltd., bellhangers & engineers, Derby, and a letter of application by Rev R Ll Owen, Rector of Llangefni, for a grant from the North Wales Association to help with the cost of repairs.  
3 items.

1981-1982

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XM9945/2/7

RHUDDLAN:

XM9945/2/7/1

REPORT on the tower, bellframe, fittings and bells of the church of St Mary, Rhuddlan by B D Threlfall, MA, CEng., MICE, FFB. Includes recommendations of future work to be carried out to ensure the bells are kept ringable. [See XM9945/2/1/1 for copy of letter which accompanied this report].

Aug 1980

XM9945/2/8

RUTHIN:

XM9945/2/8/1

DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT laying out options for maintaining full circle bell ringing at St Peter's Church, Ruthin. Includes quotations from bell founders for carrying out a variety of schemes involving the scrapping of some bells and the re-hanging of others, in order to preserve a ring of reduced weight.

[1985]

[This document was created in response to the application of Ruthin PCC for a Faculty to remove their bells, melt them down and use the money thus obtained to install an electronic chiming device. This proposal was opposed vigorously by officers of the North Wales Association, supported by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.]

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XM9945/2/8/2

LETTER: John Barnes, Chairman of Bell Restoration Funds Committee, Central Council to Leonard Colley, 11 Wilmington, Marton, Welshpool [subsequently forwarded to Randolph Ellis] re. Ruthin bells. JB fears that there appear to be no Trusts sympathetic to appeals from religious bodies listed in North Wales. He suggests that an application be made to the Manifold Trust, although this has stated that it wishes to support projects in England and Scotland. Encloses various guides and leaflets which he hopes will be helpful and stresses that the Committee will do all it can to try and ensure that Ruthin bells remain hung for full circle ringing. The Gloucester & Bristol Association had a similar problem at Stinchcombe: suggests LC obtains details of their successful case.

12 Mar 1985

Annexed:

1. LIST of Charitable Trusts disposed to consider applications for money for the restoration of church bells.
2. GROUNDS OF OBJECTION to a Faculty re. Stinchcombe bells, made by the Venerable Walter Thomas Wardle, Archdeacon of Gloucester.
3. REPORT of proceedings in the Consistory Court, Gloucester re. Stinchcombe PCC's petition to replace its bells with an electronic chime. Includes partial report of the Chancellor's judgement. [2 copies, not quite identical].

XM9945/2/9

SURVEY OF CHURCH BELLS IN GWYNEDD AND CLWYD by Chris Pickford of Bedford.



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XM9945/2/9/1

NOTES by Christopher J Pickford on bells in Gwynedd and Clwyd churches, visited by him as part of a widescale survey. Includes descriptions of inscriptions, weights, access and fittings to bells of St Mary's, St Peblig's and Christ Church, Caernarfon; the Cathedral and St James', Bangor; Beaumaris, Amlwch, Llanedwen, Pentraeth and Holyhead pa. churches; St Twrog's, Llandwrog and St Michael's, Llanrug.

c1981

XM9945/3

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL

XM9945/3/1

COPY LETTER: J K Randolph Ellis, Hon. Sec. of the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers to The Deanery, St Asaph. Following a resolution at a recent Association meeting, JKRE initiates a dialogue with the Dean and Chapter on the subject of installing a ringing peal in the Cathedral. Gives a resume of recent developments and projects to promote ringing which have been carried out, including restoration work at St John's, Barmouth, St Cyngar's, Llangefni, St Mary's, Rhuddlan, St Deiniol's, Hawarden and St Llonio's, Llandinam. Work at Rhuddlan is described in some detail, showing the involvement of Brian Threlfall, Chairman of the Towers and Belfries Committee of the Central Council, in conducting a structural survey of the church tower. BT also recently advised the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough Cathedral, as a result of which ten redundant bells from Leicester are being re-hung there.

20 Feb 1984

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XM9945/3/1  
Contd.

Wales is unusual in having so few cathedrals with bells hung for change ringing. The North Wales Association would like to encourage the Dean and Chapter of St Asaph to consider installing "proper" bells; they offer support, financial help and information about charitable trusts dedicated to this sort of project.

20 Feb 1984

XM9945/3/2

COPY LETTER: J K Randolph Ellis, Hon. Sec. of the North Wales Association to the Very Rev C R Renowden MA, Cathedral Office, High Street, St Asaph, re. a proposal to hang bells in the tower of St Asaph Cathedral, which is shortly to be placed before Chapter. Gives information about ways in which the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers would be able to assist, including advice on technical matters, fund-raising and the matching of redundant bells to vacant towers.

31 May 1984

XM9945/4

MISCELLANEOUS:

XM9945/4/1

TYPESCRIPT of a talk on bells and bell-ringing given by Randolph Ellis to members of Bangor University's Mathematics Club.

[1980]

Enclosed:

1. DIAGRAM showing parts of a bell responsible for producing nominal, quint, tierce and prime notes.
2. NOTES on the intensity of sound energy.

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XM9945/4/2

FILE OF DIAGRAMS of newly constructed bellringing methods by J K Randolph Ellis. Includes the 'blue line', first lead expressed numerically, lead ends and place notation for Surprise, Treble Bob and Delight Major methods.

1980-1981

XM9945/4/3

FILE OF PAPERS associated with the creation of new methods. Includes diagrams and notation for new methods, working notes, correspondence with other bell ringers interested in new methods and print-outs (2) of all rung Surprise methods from the Central Council's database, to the end of 1975.

1980-1981