

WILLIAM LONGNEY of LONGNEY

By

John Eisel

Introduction

To the south-west of Gloucester is an area of land, bounded by the A38, and two dramatic sweeps of the River Severn. At the north-east end is Hempsted, and at the south-west is Frampton-on-Severn. There are a surprising number of rings of bells in the area, mostly rings of six, and inevitably the first known peals on most of these rings have been of Grandsire Doubles. There is one exception to this, and that is the church at Longney, where the first ring of eight bells in this area was created in 1824. Up to that time there had been a ring of six bells, made up of a bell of 1627, cast by John Pennington, and five bells of varying dates which had been cast at the Rudhall foundry. The 1715 Rudhall bell list records two bells cast for Longney, the tenor bell being one, and there was no change in the 1788 bell list. However, the 1804 bell list states that five bells had been cast for Longney, to increase the ring to six, so the augmentation to a ring of six had taken place in the interim, and this most likely took place c.1796, when the present fourth bell being reported as being dated 1798 and the present fifth and fifth bells were cast. Unfortunately the treble bell of that ring of six has been recast twice since (1833 and 1914), and currently it is not known exactly when that augmentation took place: there are no churchwardens' accounts that might help, and the only relevant entry in the vestry minutes is recorded for a parish meeting on 25 July 1792:

'We whose hand are under written do a Gree to have the treble and the Second Bells Recast.'

This is followed by the signatures of only three persons. (GRO P207 VE2/1) There are no vestry meetings recorded in 1795 and 1796, but whatever happened took longer than perhaps would have been expected, and the augmentation was not reported in the *Gloucester Journal*.

Here I need to introduce William Longney, who played a leading role in ringing at Longney in the first half of the nineteenth century and was largely instrumental in having the ring of bells there augmented to eight. There were Longneys living in near-by Arlingham as far back as 1540, and probably before: William Longney was one of this line, and he was born there on 19 February 1779, where he was christened on 7 March 1779. His sister Elizabeth was born in Arlingham in December 1780, while his sister Mary was born in Frampton-on-Severn in June 1782, implying that his parents, Walter and Susannah Longney, had moved to Frampton-on-Severn in the interim. (Walter lived in Frampton-on-Severn until his death on 30 October 1825, but was buried at Arlingham.) When William Longney married Mary Smith in the nearby village of Longney on 18 December 1800 he was also living in Frampton-on-Severn, where his first son, William junior, was born in 1802. However, he soon moved to Longney, where his daughter Sarah was born in 1804, and so began his long association with Longney bells.

It seems most likely that William Longney learnt to ring as a young man on the ring of six bells at Frampton-on-Severn, before moving to Longney. The earliest mention I have of the Longney band as such, which must surely involve William Longney, is in 1819, at the opening of the new ring of bells in the adjoining parish of Hardwicke. This ring had been augmented from four to six bells, and was opened on 5 November 1819, reported in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 25 November 1819:

‘A number of change ringers attended, and a variety of six-score peals, and several of 720 plain bob, were rung in the most complete manner by the Longney Society, Gloucester College and Crypt Youths, Upton and Haresfield Bands, &c. The Churchwarden, Mr. Marston, provided a cold collation, and plenty of good liquor was contributed by the principal inhabitants, and the day spent with the utmost harmony.’

It was not only the bells that were well oiled! (‘Upton’ was, no doubt, Upton St. Leonard’s.)

Peals at Longney

THE TWO TREBLES		
TO MARK THESE A PEAL OF EIGHT BELLS WAS CAST BY THE FOLLOWING SUBSCRIBERS A. D. 1820		
W ^m LONGNEY ONE BELL	T. M. BAILEY	20 0
25 th E. COMELINE	DIANAH BAILEY	5 0
W ^m LONGNEY JUN ^r	JOHN SMITH	1 0 0
THO ^s HAWKINS	RICH ^d SMITH	0 0 0
JOHN HAWKINS	RICH ^d SMITH JUN ^r	1 0 0
NAT ^l HAWKINS	RICH ^d WEYMAN	1 0 0
W ^m HAWKINS	HENRY WARD	1 0 0
JOHN HYETT	W ^m BULLOCK	1 0 0
RICH ^d LAND	GEORGE GABB	15 10
BENJ ⁿ LAND	JAMES ELLIS	1 0 0
THO ^s CLARKE	DAN ^l ELLIS	5 0
CHA ^s RAVENHILL	W. M. SOULE	10 6
DAN ^l MERRETT	W ^m MEADOWS	10 6
HENRY GINGELL	JOHN BROWNING	10 0
JOSEPH GINGELL	ANSELM BROWNING	10 0
JOHN BICK	THO ^s JENNINGS	10 0

The first specific mention of William Longney's name that I have comes in the record of a peal of Grandsire Triples, rung at Gloucester on 22 September 1820. This was called by Thomas Handey, and included in the band was Richard Morris, whose name appears in my article on the Marment brothers. (RW 2022, pp.806-7) It is probable that William Longney learnt his eight-bell ringing in Gloucester, and he must have wished to practise on the bells at Longney, and so it was decided to augment the bells there to a ring of eight. Two trebles were cast by John Rudhall, the smaller being paid for by subscription, while the other was the gift of William Longney himself. The donations towards the new bells are listed on a stone tablet in the tower at Longney, headed by the name of William Longney as the donor of one of the bells, and among the other donors listed was William Longney jun. who gave £2 10s. Other

names which are later recorded as ringers were John Hawkins (£2 2s.) and W.M. Soule (Sowle) (10s. 6d.). Once the bells were cast, they had to be hung, and at a special meeting held in the vestry on 30 September 1824

'We the undersign^d do agree that the Ch^hwardens of this Parish shall pay the Expense of Hanging two Treable Bells in the Tow^r of the Church'

This was followed by a list of eight signatures, beginning with a bold signature of William Longney; also signing were William Sowle and William Longney jun. Whether the churchwardens agreed with this I am unable to say, and there are no accounts that might help to see if the churchwardens did indeed pay for the hanging of the two new trebles.

The augmented ring of bells was opened at the end of December 1824. (The exact date is currently uncertain as it was not reported in the local press: implied dates for the anniversary, deduced from newspaper reports, are 26 December (*Gloucester Journal*, 31 December 1836), 29 December (*Gloucester Journal*, 9 January 1840), and 30 December (*Gloucester Journal*, 11 January 1840)). In the first few years after the augmentation there is little record of what was going on at Longney, only by inference. So, for instance, when a peal of New (Kent) Treble Bob Major was rung at St. Mary's, Cheltenham, on 16 April 1827, one of the unnamed band came from Longney, and this was likely to have been William Longney sen. When a peal of Grandsire Caters was rung at Painswick by the Painswick Youths on 5 June 1827, the report in the *Cheltenham Journal* of 11 June 1827 concluded:

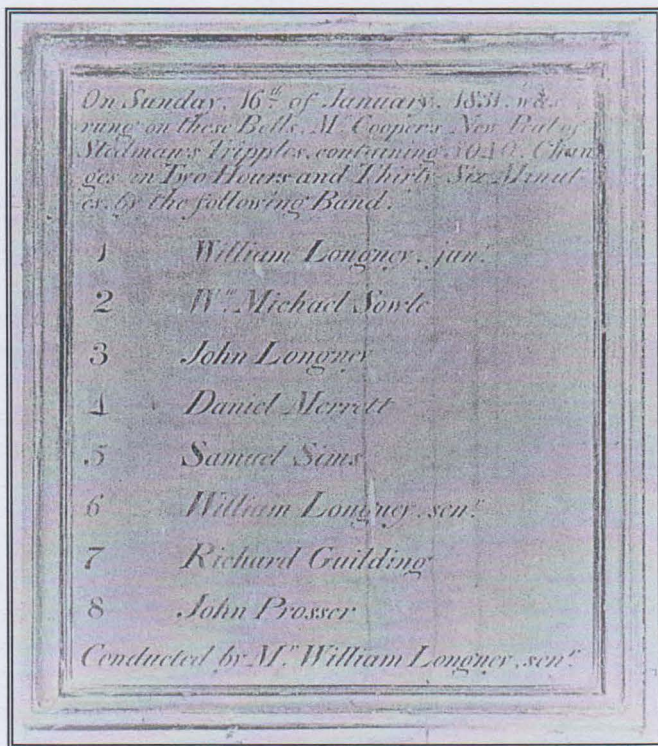
'After the above Peal was completed, the Society of Longney Youths retired to the Steeple, and struck some touches in the Stedman Principle, which they performed in a very *nate* manner.'

Perhaps, like William Chattell in Birmingham at a somewhat later date, the Longney band used Stedman as their first steps in ringing

changes on eight bells, and certainly the first known true peal on the bells was one of Stedman Triples rung on 16 January 1831. I know that, at the time of writing (August 2022), there is recorded on the Felstead database a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major said to have been rung at Longney on 4 April 1827, and another on 13 April 1828, but neither of these should be counted. The reference for the first peal is given as the *Cheltenham Journal*, 21 April 1827, but there was no such issue, and the correct date of the relevant issue of that newspaper was 21 April 1828; this is one of several references to the second 'peal', alleged to have been rung at Longney on 13 April 1828. However, this was disputed, and when a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major was rung at Longney on 7 March 1836, which was claimed as the first peal in the method on the bells, correspondence inevitably ensued, William Longney having the final word in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* on 24 March 1836:

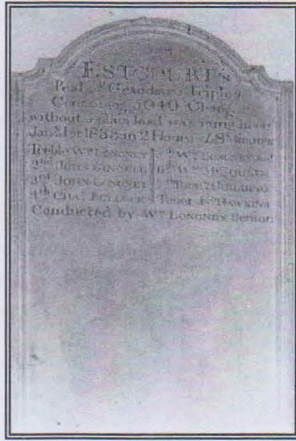
'I have seen all our Company to-day, who say that the Painswick ringers never rung any peal of any sort, in any form whatever, at this place. We all admit that the ringers have made many *attempts* to ring a peal of treble bob major here, but they produced such a jingling noise that they annoyed every old woman in the place, and even then, a peal was never brought round.'

This disputed peal was conducted by William Estcourt, who did not have a good reputation among his Birmingham contemporaries, and the statement by Longney is quite believable, so I have discounted this 'peal'. However, the reports of the 'peal' of 1828 claimed it as the first peal of treble bob on the bells, which implied that there might have been at least one earlier peal on the bells in another method. While this would not be surprising, at the time of writing no record of such a peal has been found, and the first true peal at Longney of which we currently have a record is the peal of Stedman Triples rung there on 16 January 1831. The composition was Cooper's, with 240 singles, 180 bobs, and 22 doubles, and it was conducted by William Longney, sen., who was the conductor of the society. William jun. rang the treble bell and John Longney, a younger son, rang the third bell.



The tablet recording the peal of Stedman Triples, rung at Longney on 16 January 1831

A wooden peal board records this peal, which was a remarkable achievement for a village band. In the report in the *Gloucester Journal* of 22 January 1831, which was widely copied, it was claimed as the 'first peal ever rung in this country in that intricate system.' While this is incorrect (and perhaps 'county' was intended rather than 'country'), it is still only the eleventh peal of Stedman Triples of which we have a record (not including one which was a few changes short): the first two of these were the Norwich peals of 1731, which were extremely unlikely to have been true, while the fourth in the list, at St. Mary Abbott's, Kensington on 4 December 1803, was rung using Thomas Edwards's false composition (but not flagged up as such on the Felstead database).



A stone tablet at Longney records the next peal on the bells, one of Grandsire Triples, rung on 1 January 1833, again called by William Longney, sen. The composition was by William Estcourt, without a plain lead, but as far as I am aware, the figures have not survived. No press report has so far been found. There is space on the tablet for two further peal records, but this remains unfilled. (left)

In 1833 both the third and tenor bells of the ring of eight bells were recast by John Rudhall, and in his notebook the record of the bells supplied is dated 25 September 1833. There is no indication why these bells needed to be recast, but the churchwardens accounts for 1833-4 show that John Rudhall was paid £45 18s. 1d. for his work, Mr Jacques received £5 5s. for hanging the recast bells, and there was a blacksmith's bill of £1 9s. 4. for work towards hanging the bells. (GRO P207 CW2/2). The payments are undated. Advantage was soon taken of the renovated ring, and on 23 October 1833 William Longney, sen. called Estcourt's composition again. Daniel Woods, from Norwich, took part in this later performance: he was spending some time in the area, and on 9 December 1833 he umpired the long length of 10224 Kent Treble Bob Maximus rung at home by the Painswick Youths.

The Longney company was evident of considerable ability, but seems to have concentrated on odd-bell methods, and when the Cheltenham Society rang a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major at Longney on 7 March 1836, the report in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 10 March claimed it as the first in the method on the bells. A week later a correspondent pointed out that a peal in the method was said to have been rung at Longney in April 1828, conducted by William Estcourt. This provoked the response by William Longney that I have quoted above.

On 26 December 1836 the Longney company met to celebrate the twelfth anniversary of the bells being augmented to a ring of eight, and rang a peal of Stedman Triples, the second by the company. Again the composition was by Henry Cooper, but this time it was conducted by Isaac Gaze, from Newent. The report in the *Gloucester Journal* of 31 December 1836, copied almost verbatim in the *Hereford Journal* of 4 January 1837 does not list the names of the ringers, so we do not know which members of the Longney family rang. (This peal was first identified from the report in the *Hereford Journal*, which implies that the peal was rung on 2 January 1837, but identifying the primary report enables this to be corrected.)

Outings and openings

On 1 January 1834 the Longney company had an excursion to St Briavel's, where a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung. In 1830 the central tower of the church there had been replaced with a new tower over the church porch, where the existing bells and frame were installed. Two more bells were provided by subscription and cast by John Rudhall to make a ring of eight bells, and the augmented ring was opened on 24 October 1831. I have no reports of this opening, and having nothing else on this ring until the report of the peal which appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* of 11 January 1834. The composition used was Taylor's—better known in Birmingham as 'Old Ben's', after Ben Pugh, who is understood to have produced it first—and the bells were rattled round in two hours thirty-five minutes. The report concluded:

'The ringers afterwards dined together at the Plough inn, with many of the respectable inhabitants, and afterwards amused the company by performing in the sweetest and most scientific manner, a number of good courses and tunes on a set of excellently-toned hand-bells.'

To travel to and from St. Briavel's, in the Forest of Dean, the company would most likely have crossed the Severn by the ferry from Arlingham to Newnham, rather than the alternative ferry at Framilode.

When a new ring of six bells was provided for Longdon, Worcestershire, in 1835, William Longney and his band were invited to open the bells. This took place on 21 September 1835 and the first 'peal' (720) on the bells was rung by that company. The ringing was followed by a dinner at the Plough. Longney ringers were not entirely happy with the bells, and on 5 October 1835 William Longney returned with Charles Coates and his men to carry out alterations, probably to the clappering. It seems that William Longney was counted as an expert on all things to do with church bells. (*RW* 1992, pp. 1231-3)

It is certain that the Longney company was well-known in the wider area, and in 1837, when Tewkesbury Abbey bells were rehung in a new frame, it was one of the three companies which rang at the opening of the bells on 16 October in that year. The Longney company opened the proceedings by ringing a touch of Stedman 'Trebles' (what else!), then the Cheltenham Society rang a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major, followed by the Painswick Youths who rang 'several excellent touches of Stedman Trebles.' (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 October 1837)

A dispute with the vicar of Longney

We now come to the episode by which the name of William Longney came into almost national prominence. On 7 May 1835 the Rev. P.C. Guise, rector of Craike, Yorkshire, vicar of Longney and perpetual curate of Elmore, died at his rectory in Yorkshire. (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 May 1835 etc.) He was succeeded as vicar of Longney and perpetual curate of Elmore by the Rev. Joseph Daniel, who held these positions until his death on 4 January 1865. Unlike his predecessor, who had used the offices of the Rev. John Newport as a curate to run the parish, the Rev. Mr. Daniel lived in the parish and evidently took a closer interest in what went on. It seems that William Longney had disputed the right of the vicar to control when the bells were rung, and had caused them to be rung when the vicar had refused permission, even going as far as causing a duplicate key to be made to gain access. In order to establish his control, the vicar

took William Longney to the ecclesiastical court in Gloucester, but when the case came to trial on 14 May 1839, before Dr. Maddy, the Chancellor of the diocese, William Longney admitted that he was in the wrong, was admonished, and condemned to pay the costs of the vicar's suit. The report in the *Hereford Journal* of 29 May concluded:

'Mr. Bonnor said, Mr. Daniel was very desirous to live in terms of amity with his parishioners, for he conceived that a cordial feeling and assistance on their part was essential to him in the performance of his duty as minister. With regard to the ringing of the bells, he only wished to preserve his rights and those of his successor, and did not desire to throw any impediment in the way of the ringers if they would only ask his permission and acknowledge his right.—Dr. Maddy said he was aware Mr. Longney was a very distinguished ringer, and he had no doubt Mr. Daniel would not prevent him indulging his favourite pastime.—Mr. Matthews remarked that the Longney ringers ranked next to the celebrated Cumberland youths, and he added that the lord of the manor was very anxious that the old English amusement should be continued in the parish.'

The latter remark about the lord of the manor is curious, and possibly not accurate, as the lordship of the manor of Longney was held by the Henry Smith Charity, which was a major landowner in the parish. (*Gloucester Journal*, Sat. 25 Nov. 1882) Possibly it was the trustees of the charity that were supportive. Whatever may have been the situation, it is clear that there was much sympathy with William Longney: this court case was widely reported, if only in outline, and to the short report in the *Leicestershire Mercury* of 6 July 1839 the editor of that newspaper added:

'We hope the time will speedily arrive, when the bells of churches,—associated as they are with the recollections of centuries gone by, and destined to speak to generations yet to come, will be delivered from the thralldom of the hierarchy, and oftener gladden, with their rich music, the hearts of all who love to listen to the sound.— *Ed. L.M.*'

This sympathy extended to more practical help, a subscription was got up to cover the costs of the court case, and at a meeting on 30 December 1839 William Longney was presented with a handsome silver tankard, together with a purse of sovereigns as a contribution towards the expenses he incurred in the Ecclesiastical Court. A long report of this meeting appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* on 11 January 1840, which concluded by pointing out that the day of this meeting was the fifteenth anniversary of the opening of the ring of eight bells. This report was printed as a broadsheet, a copy of which is in the Osborn MSS.

Ringing at Longney resumes

This court case seems to have caused ringing at Longney to be suspended for some while, and it was not until the wedding of Queen Victoria on 8 February 1840 that this was resumed, as recounted in the *Gloucester Journal* a week later:

‘On Monday last, the day of her Majesty’s marriage, the celebrated ringers of this village met together, and continued to ring and fire their beautiful peal of bells during nearly the whole of the day; and the sound of this favourite music was the more exhilarating from its having been so long suspended.’

In the evening a dinner was held at the house of Richard Greening, who managed a brick-works for William Longney, and a convivial evening was spent by all. Not only that, but the report continued:

‘Nor were the poor women forgotten: the principal inhabitants joined in a subscription and invited all the old women in the neighbourhood to the house of Mr. Longney, at the Manor Farm, to partake of tea, &c. After tea, Mr. Longney regaled his numerous visitors with capital ale, cider, &c. which with the exuberance of their loyalty induced the good dames to strike up a dance, which was kept up with much spirit and joyfulness.’

The mind boggles! Here it should be said that because of the local importance of Manor Farm, it was usually called Longney Farm.

After this William Longney and his local band continued to play a prominent role in the ringing activities in the area. On 10 June 1840 the bells of Moreton Valence were opened after being augmented to a ring of six, and several local companies of ringers were invited to ring them for the first time. It is not surprising to read that:

'The Longney ringers first took the ropes, and rung the first peal in their favourite system—Stedman's principle. After that they rung several six-scores, and 720 changes, being the extent of changes that can be rung on six bells.'

Then the Stonehouse company rang several six-scores, and the Elmore company rang what were described as 'some very good peals.' There was the inevitable dinner, to which more than 40 persons sat down, followed by a number of appropriate toasts.

Ringers like to try out a newly augmented ring of bells, and on 7 July 1840 the Crypt Youths, from Gloucester, had their summer excursion to the Castle Tavern, some seven miles from Gloucester on the banks of the Gloucester and Berkeley canal, where dinner was taken at three. This was close to Moreton Valence and the report in the *Gloucester Journal* on 11 July went on to say:

'The church bells of Moreton Valence rang some merry peals on the occasion, and during the afternoon the meeting was highly entertained by the ringers of Gloucester, Longney, &c. ringing some admirable changes on their favourite hand-bells: several excellent songs were sung, and after spending a very happy and convivial meeting the society separated.'

On 29 December 1840 an anniversary celebration feast was held at the house of Richard Greening, where the Longney Society was joined by visitors from places including Gloucester, Cheltenham,

Prestbury, Hartpury, and Arlingham. There was ringing until three o'clock, when the company sat down to dinner, with many toasts and change-ringing on handbells. At six o'clock a chosen eight left the festivities and rang a peal of Grandsire Triples, conducted by Isaac Gaze: half the band, including William Longney, sen., were of the Longney company. After the band rejoined the festivities, these were kept up until a late hour. On 5 January 1841, exactly a week later, the junior society of Longney ringers rang Taylor's composition of Grandsire Triples, conducted by William Longney. The band was not listed in the report in the *Gloucester Journal* of 9 January 1841, so we do not know the names of these junior ringers.

It is clear that the ringers in the area kept in touch with each other, and when the Crypt Youths celebrated their anniversary on Easter Monday 1841, William Longney, sen. was present at the dinner at the Dial Inn and Original Ringers' House in Gloucester. The *Gloucester Journal* of 17 April 1841 reported that, after the usual numerous toasts and songs

'the members of the society, assisted by Mr. Wm. Longney, sen. of Longney, rang some most excellent and correct changes on their hand-bells in a very scientific and musical style, which added much to the harmony of the meeting.'

In 1841/2 the bells at Rendcomb were augmented from a ring of three bells to one of six, the new bells being cast at the Gloucester foundry and hung by 'Mr. Jacques, junior', the new bells being presented by Sir John Wright Guise, an older brother of the former vicar of Longney. A plaque on the new bell frame states that this was 'FINISHED DECEMBER 21ST 1841'. Two of the new bells are dated 1841, while the treble is dated 1842, so perhaps the new treble was not satisfactory, and had to be replaced. On 2 March 1842 a band from Elmore rang the opening peal, which consisted of 42 different six-scores, method not stated, but undoubtedly Grandsire Doubles. One of the band was Richard Guilding, who also rang with the Longney company, and the peal was called by Daniel Guilding from the treble. In the *Gloucester Journal* it was noted that the ringers were all tenants of Sir John Guise, who lived at Rendcomb Park, but

also owned property in Elmore. On this occasion the ringing was umpired by William Longney, sen. (It is worth noting that while the Guise family sold Rendcomb Park in 1863, subsequent to which the house was rebuilt, Elmore Court and estate is still owned by the Guise family, which has been in possession for some 750 years.)

In 1843 the bells at Newent were restored. The treble bell had fallen some time before, and the other bells were in a poor state of repair, so the treble was recast in Gloucester and the bells were rehung by Isaac Gaze, at that time living in Gloucester. The bells were opened on 15 September 1843, and the festivities were reported in the *Hereford Times* on 23 September.

'The Newent ringers commenced "pealing" about 8 o'clock in the morning and rung till 11, when that well-known veteran ringer, Mr. Longney, from Longney (curious coincidence of names), arrived with his friends, and rung till the afternoon. "The Crypt youths," from Gloucester, then had "a set to," and these wound up the day's ringing at the church.'

The ringing was followed by the inevitable dinner with multiple toasts.

The death of William Longney, sen.

William Longney sen. died in November 1845, after an illness of a few months' duration. According to the *Gloucester Journal* of 8 November 1845 he died on 2 November, but a different date is given in a letter written on 6 December 1845 by John Hopkins, from Birmingham, to E. J. Osborn in London.

'Respecting the News from Cheltenham about Farmer Longney &c, as you desired in your last. But wanting to go there myself with other friends on their Anniversary (Novr. 5th) Accordingly We went. We arrived there by 8 A.M. but had not been there more than one Hour when the Mournful News arrived that Mr Longney Died that same Morning,

which put a damp on Ringing in Cheltem. We only rang one short touch for the whole day.'

The meeting of the Cheltenham Society on 5 November 1845 was reported in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 13 November 1845, so that date is accurate, and the error must have been in the message that was received. The register at Longney records that William Longney was buried on 7 November 1845 and, rather ironically, the Rev. J. Daniels officiated at the funeral.

William Longney's death was marked with muffled ringing at Cheltenham, reported in the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* of 15 November 1845:

'The Cheltenham ringers rang a muffled peal yesterday week, at St. Mary's Church, as a token of their respect for the late Farmer Longney.'

Evidently this must have been on a different occasion to the anniversary meeting. This was not the only muffled ringing in memory of Farmer Longney, but the news of his death seemed to take some time to spread, and it was not until Saturday 10 January 1846 that the following report appeared in the *Oxford Chronicle*.

'On Tuesday evening last a muffled peal was rung on Christ Church bells, by amateurs of this city. We understand it was a tribute of respect to William Longney, Esq. of Longney Hall, Gloucestershire, deceased, who was a great patron of the Campanic art. We also hear the same mark of respect has been paid by various companies of change ringers in the principal towns in England.'

William Longney had made his will on 1 September 1845, and it is clear that he was of substantial means. In his will he made provision for his wife, two sons and two daughters. At the time of William sen.'s death William jun., was farming at Drews, owned by his father, and this was bequeathed to him. He was also bequeathed an orchard, but had to pay out two hundred pounds to each of his two sisters, and

take over the mortgage on the land. John Longney received the live- and dead-stock on Longney Farm, as well as the household furniture, provided he paid £200 to his step-mother within six months of his father's death, and he continued to farm at Longney Farm, although there is no mention of the ownership of the farm in the will, which is likely to have been tenanted. William received the brick-yard, with the stock and appurtenances, while Harriet, William's widow, was bequeathed two properties and a blacksmith's shop—remarkably, the latter included a steam engine—as well as another property where her son John Kemett, by a previous marriage, was living.

After William Longney, sen.

John Longney continued to farm at Longney Farm, and in 1861 the census recorded that he was resident at 'The Cross or Manor House Farm', that he was farming 230 acres, and employing six men and two boys, so he was in a good way of business.

The death of William Longney sen. must have been a devastating loss to the local community in general and the ringers in particular. It may be significant that the band from Longney was not recorded as being present of the opening of the new ring of bells at nearby Coaley, on 1 January 1846. The new ring had been cast by Mears of Gloucester in 1845, and hung by John Jacques. The opening was reported in the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* on 3 January 1846, and the only bands recorded as being present were those from Elmore, Dursley, and Gloucester.

From this point on, although change ringing continued at Longney, there was little reported of it, and then only by inference. In 1849 a ring of six bells was cast for the village of Brockworth by Taylor and Sons of Loughborough (notable for the single canons on the bells being decorated with busts of different subjects) and the bells were hung by William Savory, of Painswick. The usual opening was held on 11 December 1849:

'At an early hour in the morning the societies of ringers and visitors from Gloucester and the neighbouring parishes,

arrived in great numbers, and at ten o'clock the Longney ringers were requested to ascend the belfry, and commence the business of the day; and, having "rose" the bells, rang some merry peals, in their well-known style, until eleven o'clock, when Divine service commenced, ...'

The lengthy report in the *Gloucester Journal* of 15 December 1849 goes on to detail the extensive celebrations.

I have nothing further until 15 August 1864, when a mixed band from Stroud, Painswick, Cheltenham and Woodchester rang a peal of Stedman Triples on the bells at Longney. A short report of the peal appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* on 20 August 1864, and more information can be found in the longer report that appeared in the *Stroud Journal* on the same day, which went on to say:

'The ringers and friends then retired to the New Inn, where dinner was provided for them, and after doing ample justice to it, they returned to the tower, with some members of the Longney company, and rang some very good touches of Steadman and Grandsire triples. The whole of the ringers then visited Mr. Longney's, and were regaled with some good old Longney perry. They then broke up and returned to their respective homes, delighted with their day's excursion.'

It is not absolutely certain which Mr. Longney was visited, but John Longney died in 1862, and his widow Elizabeth continued to farm Manor (Longney) Farm, and unless it was a younger generation of the family, it was most likely William Longney jun.'s farm that was visited; he was in a good way of business, and Kelly's directory of 1863 records him as a farmer, brick-maker and barge-owner. He died on 15 February 1879, and a notice of his death appeared a week later in the *Gloucester Journal*: unfortunately in this no mention was made of his ringing career.

This lack of reports of ringing at Longney suggests that things were not going well, and when a touch of Grandsire Triples was rung at Longney on 1 December 1887 the report in *Bell News* stated:

'It is twelve years since a touch of Triples was rung on the bell in which local ringers took part.'

This touch was conducted by Lionel Longney, from Croome D'Abitot, grandson of William jun., also an A. Longney took part, probably Arthur Longney, Lionel's brother. Lionel Longney seems to have been spending time in Longney at this period, with several touches in December 1887 being reported in *Bell News*, including, on 9 December 1887, a touch of 336 Grandsire Triples, conducted by him, stated to be the longest touch by all except himself and one other of the band. Lionel Longney had an interesting career, which is better dealt with in a separate article.

Later history of the famous tankard

This is a convenient place to leave the story of ringing at Longney, with things improving, at least for a while, but it leaves open the question of what happened to the tankard presented to William Longney in 1839. We can assume that the purse of sovereigns was probably spent fairly quickly, if only to clear the costs of the court case, but the tankard and scroll (which I take to be a copy of the broadsheet which reprinted the report of the presentation from the *Gloucester Journal*) remained, and were passed down through the family to the William Longney of the next generation. However, at present it is not possible to be sure of the exact progression. In 1950 they were in the hands of William [Albert] Longney of Sedgeberrow (d.1986), who was descended from John Longney. This later William Longney's photograph appeared in the *Tewkesbury Register* on 13 May 1950, and the accompanying text told the story of the tankard.

'Probably one of the most interesting heirlooms in the district is a silver cup and framed scroll now in the possession of Mr. W. Longney, of Sedgeberrow, after being handed down to each William in the Longney family over a period of more than a hundred years. Imagine a company of loyal friends seated round a table at the house of the late Mr. Richard Greening, partaking of a dinner and supping the famous russet cider for which the parish of Longney, near

Gloucester, is reputed, from a silver cup which had just been presented to the late Mr. William Longney as a token of esteem for an act of defiance.'



The newspaper report went on to describe the court case. As mentioned earlier in this article, Richard Greening managed a brickworks for William Longney sen.: Greening died in 1842, but the brickworks appears to have been still in production when it was bequeathed to William Longney jun. From the full report of the anniversary meeting that took place at the end of December 1841 we know that Richard Greening lived at a house called the Tolsey—probably what is now called Tolsey House—but the brickworks has yet to be located: there is no tithe map available to help.

I then lose sight of the tankard and scroll until it appeared in an auction in Kent in 1996. Notice of this was given in the *Ringling World* on 23 February 1996, and the auction took place five days later. It was subsequently reported that the tankard—with London hallmarks for 1774 so second-hand when presented to William Longney—was bought by Lionel Longney, tower captain at Longney, William Longney's sixth generation descendant through John Longney, so the tankard and scroll returned to Longney. (RW 1996, p.344) Tower captain Lionel Longney died a few years ago, and it is to be hoped that the tankard remains with the family. There is one

final link between the two Lionel Longneys, other than the family connection. Chris Pickford was told an amusing story by the late David Beacham of Worcester. When David remarked on the Lionel connected with Worcester, the tower captain said that at his baptism his parents had brought him to church not knowing what to call him. They spotted Lionel's name on a board in the belfry and that was the name their son was given. The peal board is still there, and records a peal of Grandsire Doubles, rung at Longney on 22 May 1888, conducted by the earlier Lionel Longney. This was of 42 different 120s, the usual calling in the area, popularised by Isaac Gaze.

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