

John Barrowman learns to handle a bell

The BBC was the principal broadcasting partner of the Pageant and they wanted coverage of the bells on the boat with a talented celebrity not only presenting the coverage, but ideally ‘having a go’. We went to great lengths to allow both a presenter and cameraman on the boat as, despite being one of the largest boats in the pageant, it is a cargo vessel and therefore legally restricted to only 12 passengers. The celebrity in question was John Barrowman, and I devoted two evenings (with Richard Smith) teaching him to handle a bell at St Magnus, in front of TV cameras which wanted to capture his experience. John ranks as one of the most talented people I have ever taught, and he picked it up very quickly. I can see how he managed to excel in his career with his enormous focus, understanding, rhythm and co-ordination. He was quickly capably ringing a bell by himself, although never got to the stage of controlling it in rounds with other ringers. The intention was to have a few more evening practices, but some last minute changes to his schedule did not permit these. He did attend the try out at Edenbridge (and rang) but his next practice wasn’t until we arrived on the barge on Pageant Day.



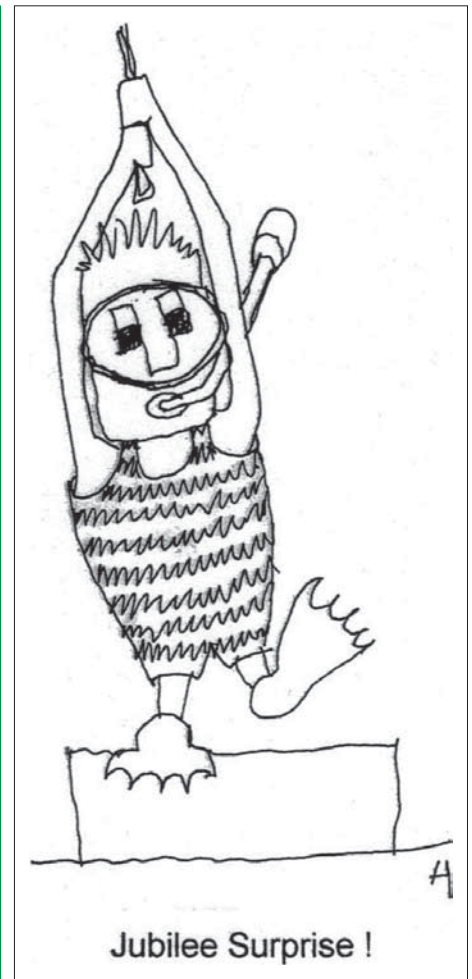
John Barrowman receiving bell handling lessons from Dickon Love (Photo: Neil Thomas)

John was with us all day on Pageant Day, and proved to be highly entertaining and great company. Alas, instead of showing the story of his learning to ring followed by an interview with the ringers on the boat and live coverage of the bells actually being rung, the BBC only afforded a minute of air time for the whole event. The camera kept rolling the entire afternoon, even when John had a go at backstrokes with me working the handstrokes

in the Pool of London, but alas, none of this was ever aired on TV.

I don’t think John will ever take up ringing, but he clearly valued the opportunity to have a go, and he even brought his husband Scott to the practice at Edenbridge. He spoke very highly of the experience in interviews afterwards, and showed ringers and ringing respect throughout his association with us.

DICKON R. LOVE



Jubilee quarter at Thatcham



Left to right Ben (C) 7, Jo 4, Tony 3, Angela 1, Howard 8, Mike 6, Sue 2 and Mark 5

Thatcham, Berks. 3 Jun, 1260 Diamond B Triples: Angela Brown 1, Mrs A D Smith 2, Anthony D Smith 3, Joanne A Pocock 4, Mark D Robins 5, Michael Hurst 6, Ben Waller (C) 7, Howard McCarthy 8. Rung to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the ringing specially arranged to coincide with the ringing from the Royal Belfry leading the Thames Pageant. 1st in m by the band. **£BD**

SUE SMITH

Quarter peal forms are available (free) from the RW Office, Andover. Send a stamped/addressed (9" x 4") envelope now.



Actor John Barrowman with the Royal Jubilee Bellringers (l-r): Jennifer Earis, Stephen Coaker, Robin Hall, Stephen Penney, Richard Smith, John Barrowman, David Macey, Dickon Love, Fr David Gibbons and David House (Photo: BBC Cameraman)