

connection



Keeping retired staff of Barclays in touch

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The Bells are ringing, for Phil and his pals

When the bells of Kirkby Malham church ring out across the Yorkshire moors, Barclays Pensioner Phil Dore is bound to be involved.

Phil Dore's house in the Yorkshire Dales looks out onto the lovely 15th century church of Kirkby Malham. The church, which has links to Oliver Cromwell, is also mentioned in the classic children's novel *The Water Babies*, by Charles Kingsley.

When the bell ringers decided to raise funds to buy another five bells to add to the three they already had, they soon realised that they would need extra bell ringers, and Phil stepped up to have a go. He says: "I had already joined the church choir and thought it would be good to try my hand at bell ringing. My wife and I went along and I was hooked immediately. That was in 2002, and I've been ringing ever since."

Phil goes on to explain that bell ringing has a language all of its own. "The bells in a church don't ring tunes," he says, "we ring what are called methods, and these are written for all types of church bells. So you could have methods written for three bells, four bells and so on, up to 12 bells.

"Each bell has a number, one, two, three and so on, and the methods are written down showing in which order the bells should be rung. It takes a



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lot of practice to get the hang of knowing when to pull your bell rope to make your bell ring at the correct time, in the correct place."

Practice is key to bell ringing, as with any hobby, and Phil goes to his church every Tuesday evening for an hour and a half to ring the bells, "Bell ringing is such a community however", he adds, "that I could go bell ringing every night in the churches around here. A friend of mine from my church even rang the bells at Canterbury Cathedral over Christmas."

The oldest bell at Kirkby Malham is a tenor bell weighing in at 17.25 cwt and has, Phil says, "the most wonderful tone". It is more than 400 years old and is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth (you'll note that the dedication omits the words 'the first', at the time she was the only Queen of that name). And, to help with further fundraising, the bell ringers have recently recorded a CD of their ringing, which they are hoping will feature at some stage on BBC Radio Four's *Bells on Sunday*.

And for a story already full of interesting facts, Phil has a couple more: "Bell ringing appears to be a particularly English pastime, with some 40,000 registered ringers. Also, there are 7,500 ringable bell towers in the world, and more than 6,500 of those are in England."

