

Over 1300 performances for the Queen's 90th birthday

The public loves to hear ringing at times of national rejoicing and ringers are invariably willing to satisfy that desire. When major events are approaching the Central Council identifies relevant government or other public bodies and talks to them to help ensure that nationwide ringing will fit well within the context of other public commemorations. It then promotes a co-ordinated programme of ringing within the ringing community, to create a coherent overall picture that will gain national media attention (and also enable local ringing publicity to be set within the context of national coverage). Obviously there needs to be some flexibility for bands to fit in with local constraints and expectations, a fact not always appreciated by non-ringing bodies.

The major event of 2016 was the Queen's 90th birthday. Early dialogue with the powers that be established that the main focus would not be on her real birthday (21 April) but on the weekend of her official birthday (11 June) – the day of 'Trooping the Colour'. It soon emerged that there would also be an enormous 'Patrons Lunch' in London the following day (12 June), with many smaller events at the same time around the country, and that ringers would be asked particularly to ring during the lunch. Ringers were encouraged to use the official logos as part of their publicity. (The Council sought approval for a derived version of the logo incorporating a ringing theme but this wasn't approved.)

We can now look back and see how ringers responded, so how did it turn out? BellBoard makes it fairly easy to extract some useful statistics so let's start with them,

355 performances are linked to the event '*The Queen's (actual) Birthday* – Thursday 21 April'. Over 60% of these were rung on the day itself and most of the others were within a few days. A few were up to a week before and or two weeks after. (One was reported as 21 May 2015 – presumably a typo based on the submission date). See Table 1.

Table 1: Performances linked to the real birthday

Date rung	Number rung
Thursday 14 April	1
Saturday 16 April	2
Sunday 17 April	10
Monday 18 April	3
Tuesday 19 April	4
Wednesday 20 April	19
Thursday 21 April	221
Friday 22 April	17
Sunday 23 April	29
Monday 24 April	29
Tuesday 25 April	7
Wednesday 26 April	5
Thursday 27 April	2
Saturday 30 April	3
Sunday 1 May	1
Tuesday 3 May	2
Thursday 5 May	1
Total	355



Table 2: Performances linked to the official birthday

Date rung	Number rung
Thursday 21 April	4
Wednesday 25 May	1
Friday 3 June	1
Sunday 5 June	4
Monday 6 June	3
Tuesday 7 June	2
Wednesday 8 June	7
Thursday 9 June	4
Friday 10 June	21
Saturday 11 June	119
Sunday 12 June	222
Monday 13 June	3
Tuesday 14 June	2
Wednesday 15 June	3
Thursday 16 June	3
Friday 17 June	1
Saturday 18 June	1
Sunday 19 June	1
Monday 20 June	3
Thursday 23 June	1
Sunday 3 July	1
Monday 4 July	1
Total	408

386 performances are linked to the event '*The Queen's Official Birthday*' (Saturday 11 June) and 22 performances are linked to the related event '*Patron's Lunch*' (12 June), a total of 408 performances. Over 80% of these were rung on either Saturday or Sunday 11-12 June. Most of the others were within a week either way but some were up to three weeks and four were on the real birthday in April). See Table 2.

There were more performances for the official celebrations than the real birthday, but not by a large margin. Clearly many ringers felt it important to ring for the Queen's real birthday despite the plans of officialdom.

But there is more to the story than these 763 linked performances. Not everyone uses BellBoard's facility to link performances with events (see panel on back page) so searching footnotes can provide more clues about how much ringing there was.

Searching performances during April, May and June for either '90th' or 'Queen' produced around 1330 hits. Some of these may be unrelated, for example someone else being 90 or something with 'Queen' in its name, but it's not practical to check them all to find out how many.

Searching footnotes for '90' (rather than '90th') produced 44 hits. 10 had the odd phrase '90 birthday' and 3 were peals in new methods that had '90' in the place notation.

This search also found Coventry DG's initiative to ring 90 quarters in 90 different towers, which the Guild's July Newsletter reports a resounding success with 95 quarters in 92 towers, many containing firsts. Did any other societies have a similar initiative?

Performances were split: 16% peals, 72% quarters and 12% short touches. This is a higher ratio of quarters to peals than for ringing performances in general (four and a half times compared with two and a half times). The fact that one in eight reported performances were short touches reflects the trend to ring and publish them for special events. Many of the short performances were 90s and ten were call changes.

Despite some uncertainty over the exact total it seems fair to assume that well over 1300 performances were rung for the royal event. That's only slightly fewer than for the Diamond Jubilee, which had over 1500 performances, and far more than for the Olympics, which had somewhat over 400.

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(on behalf of CC PR Committee)