

## Chapter 15

### Humour, Adverts, Animals and Ringing

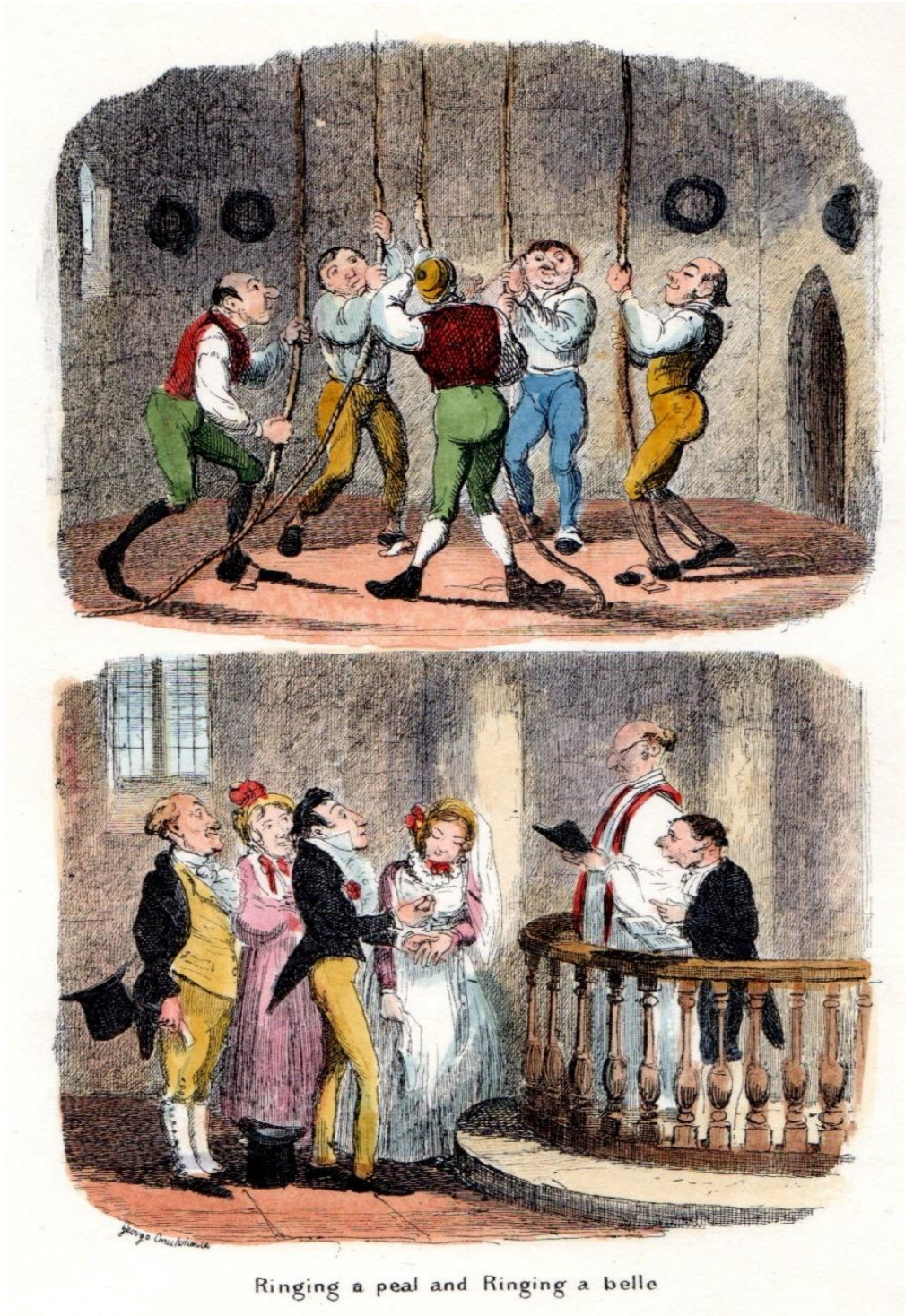
Bell ringing as a hobby is very sociable, an aspect that is possibly facilitated by visits to the pub after ringing practice. The prints which follow have been grouped under three main headings to illustrate an alternative view of ringing, in most cases by those who are not closely associated with the art. This can lead to some sketches showing inaccuracies to what happens in practice!

#### Humour

George Cruikshank (1792 to 1878) was a British caricaturist and book illustrator. His father, Isaac Cruikshank, was one of the leading caricaturists of the late 1790s and Cruikshank started his career as his father's apprentice and assistant. His older brother, Isaac Robert, also followed in the family business as a caricaturist and illustrator. He gained notoriety with his political prints that attacked the royal family and leading politicians. In 1820 he received a royal bribe of £100 for a pledge '*not to caricature His Majesty*', George IV in '*any immoral situation*'. His work included a personification of England named John Bull who was developed from about 1790.

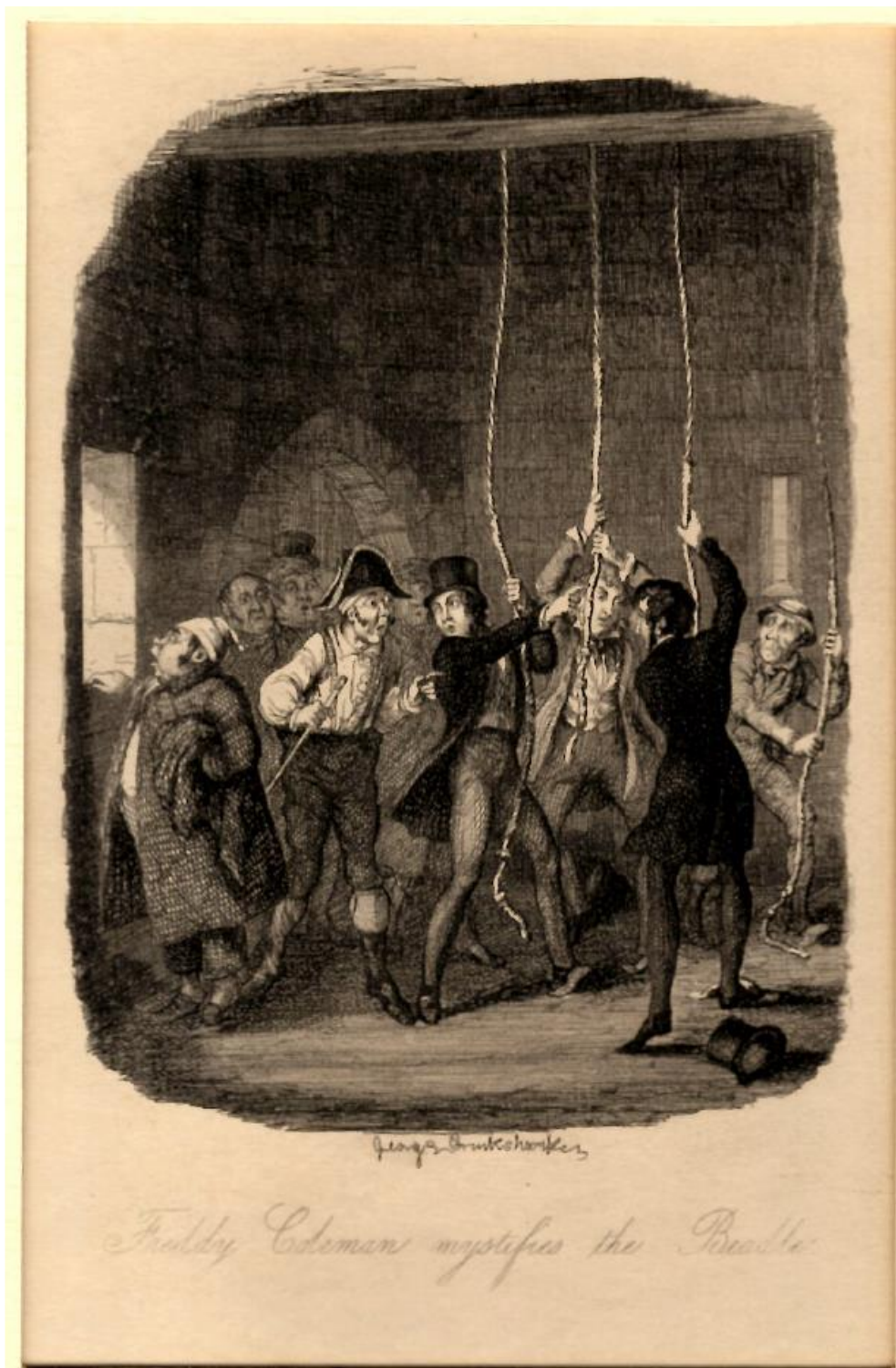


The Robbers Foiler – etching by George Cruikshank. Source not known



Ringing a Peal and Ringing a Belle taken from *The Comic Almanack*, for 1842, page B2. An illustration by George Cruikshank (8.0cm by 13.0cm)



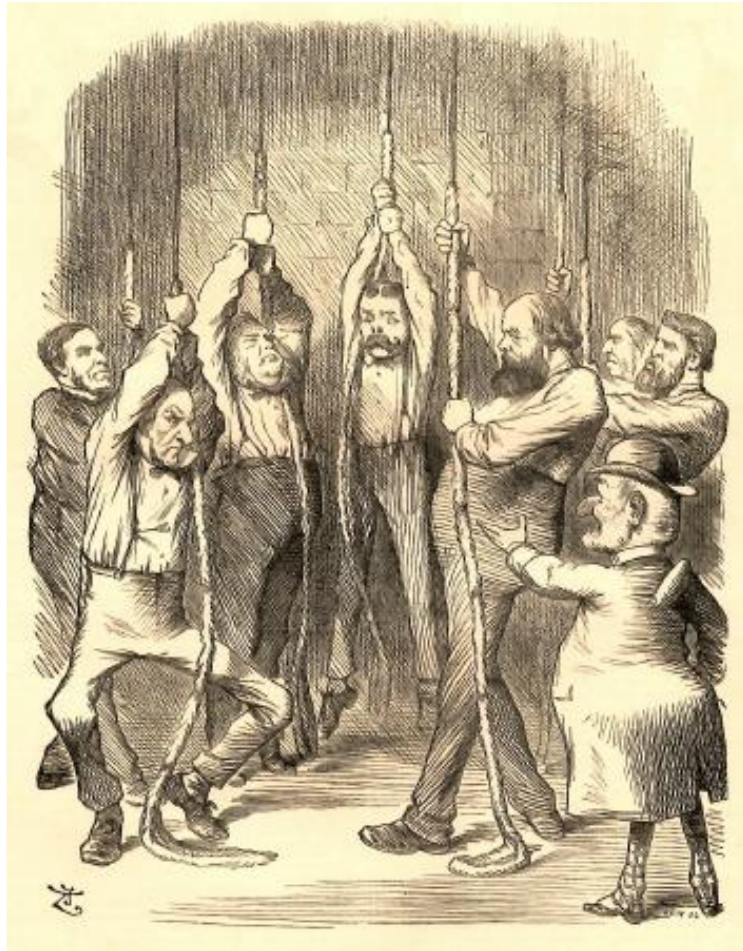


Freddy Coleman Mystifies the Beadle taken from *Frank Fairleigh or Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil*, 1850 edition page 138 or later Routledge edition page 112 (10.5cm by 14.5cm). The illustration is by George Cruikshank



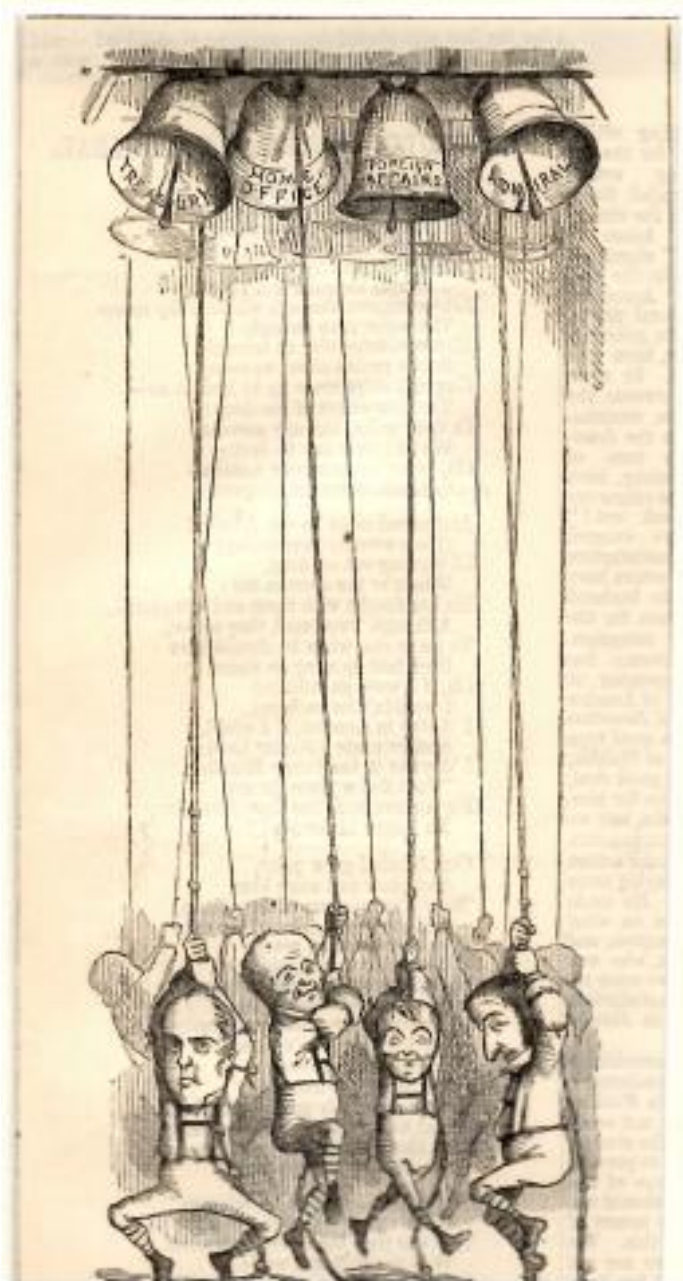
Gregory stops the Bell Ringers. Source unknown (14cm by 15cm) – similar to the Cruikshank illustration shown above

The *Punch* magazine was founded on 17 July 1841 by Henry Mayhew and wood-engraver Edenezer Landells on an initial investment of £25. It was jointly edited by Mayhew and Mark Lemon. It was subtitled *The London Charivari* in homage to Charles Philipon's French satirical humour magazine *Le Charivari*. Reflecting their satiric and humorous intent, the two editors took for their name and masthead the anarchic glove puppet, Mr. Punch, of 'Punch and Judy' - the name also referred to a joke made early on about one of the magazine's first editors that 'punch is nothing without lemon'. The term 'cartoon' to refer to comic drawings was first used in *Punch* in 1843, when designs for the new Houses of Parliament (following the destruction of most of the earlier Palace by fire in 1834) were decorated with murals and cartoons. At the time the term 'cartoon' meant a finished preliminary sketch on a large piece of cardboard, or cartone in Italian. *Punch* humorously appropriated the term to refer to its political cartoons, and the popularity of the *Punch* cartoons led to the term's widespread use.



The Chimes taken from *Punch or the London Charivari*, 24 December 1887, page 293 (16.0cm by 20.5cm).



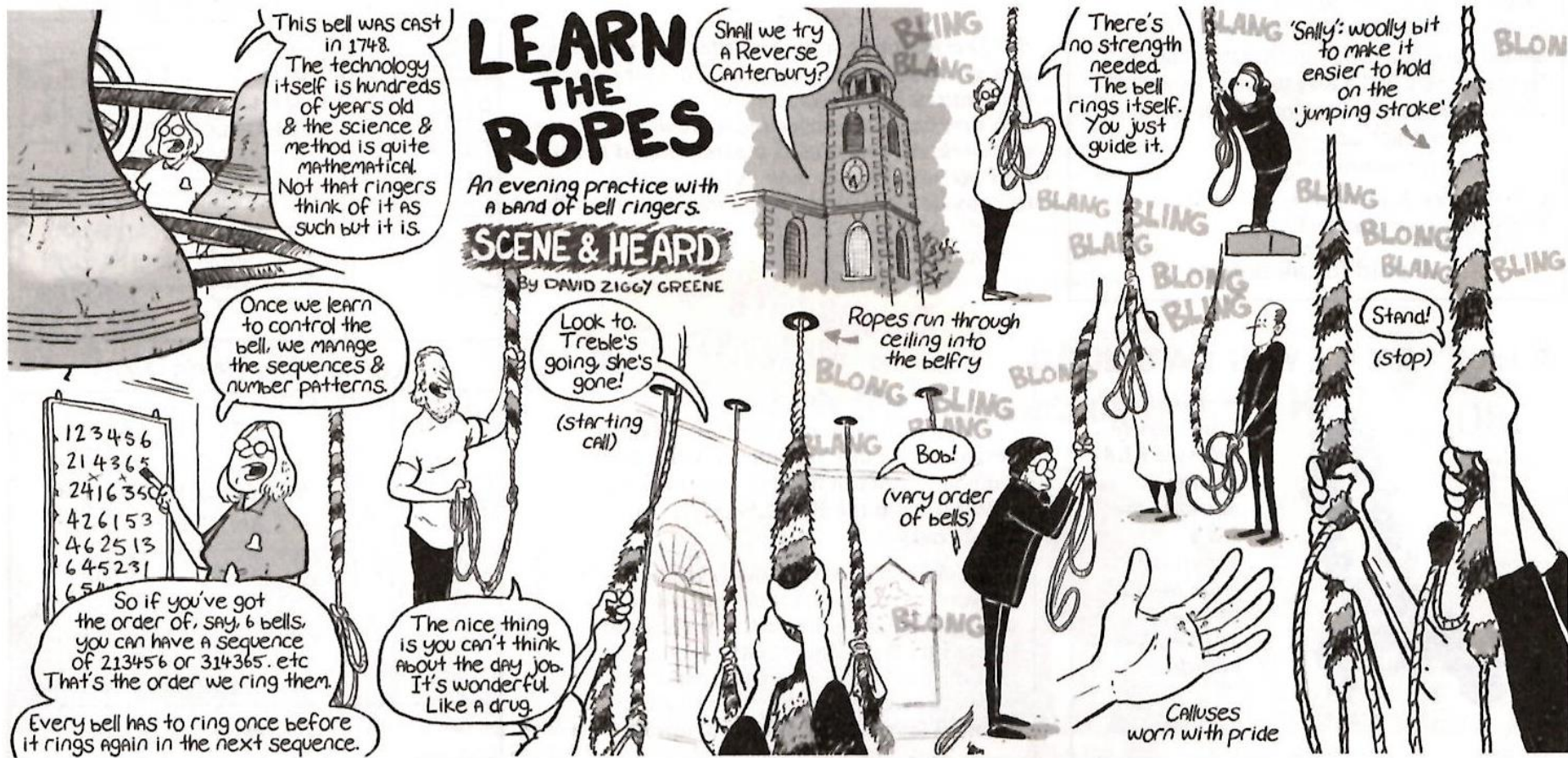


Ringing the New Year in at St Stephen's (source unknown, but political satire from circ. 1866 possibly taken from *Punch*) (18.0cm by 9.0cm)



Christmas Party 'Such a pity the visiting bell ringers can't be at the party' taken from *Punch*, 2 November 1953, page 34 (17.5cm by 22.0cm)



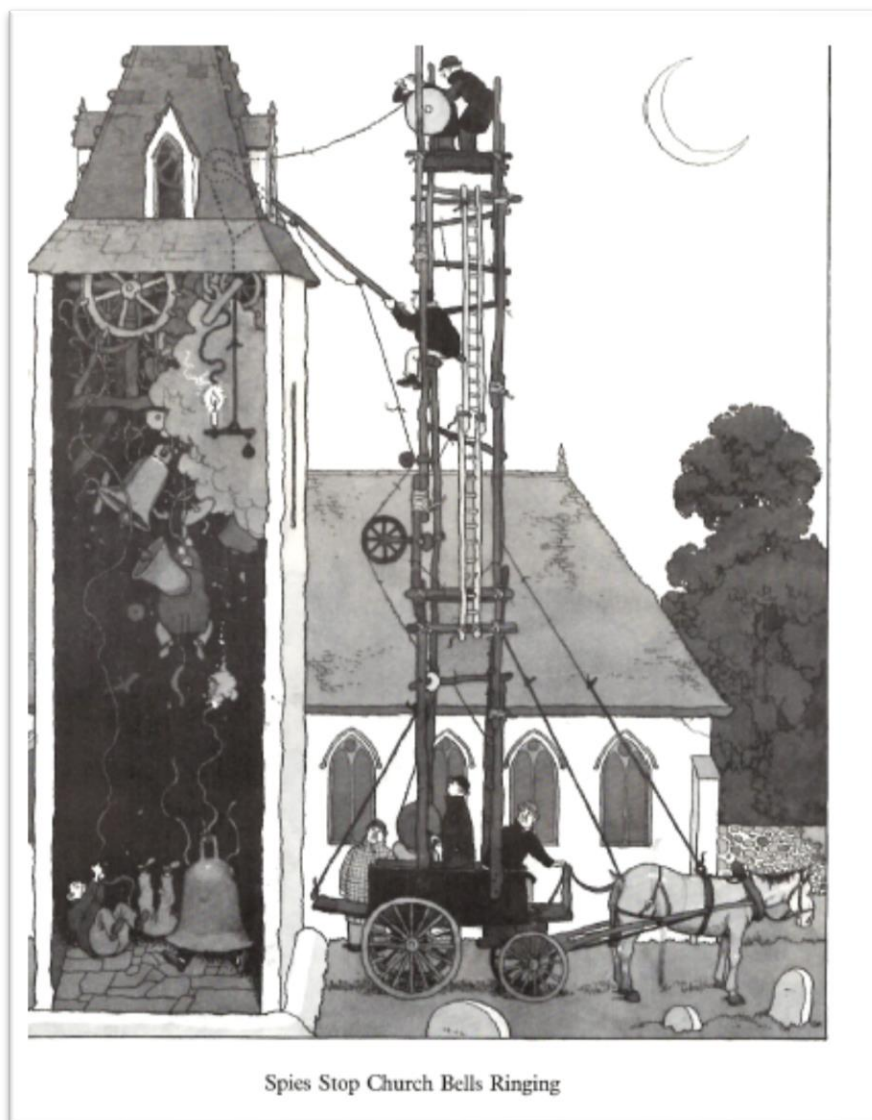


Cartoon taken from *Private Eye*, 21 February to 5 March 2020, page 23, Issue 1516 (18.8cm by 9.0cm) - it was printed following a visit to Bermondsey practice night by the cartoonist and features Louise Booth and other local ringers



William Heath Robinson (1872 to 1944) was an English cartoonist, illustrator and artist, best known for drawings of whimsically elaborate machines to achieve simple objectives. He was born into a family of artists in an area of London known as Stroud Green, located in Finsbury Park, London. His father Thomas Robinson and brothers all worked as illustrators.

In the UK, the term 'Heath Robinson' entered the popular language during the 1914–1918 First World War as a description of any unnecessarily complex and implausible contrivance. The term a 'Heath Robinson contraption' is perhaps more often used in relation to temporary fixes using ingenuity and whatever is to hand. Its continuing popularity was undoubtedly linked to Britain's shortages and the need to 'make do and mend' during the 1939-1946 Second World War.



Spies Stop Church Bells Ringing - a W Heath Robinson cartoon, presumably from the 1940s. Source unknown but shown as page 68 (18.0cm by 24.0cm)

## Advertisements

Adverts and humour are often closely associated, the humor being used to promote the product on display.

(i) *Schweppes*



There are three examples known of this advert 'How many Schewepping Days to Christmas' which appeared in 1953 – (i) *Punch*, 2 November 1953 (18.5cm by 24.0cm), (ii) *Illustrated London News*, Christmas Number 1953, page iv (22.6cm by 29.8cm), and (iii) simply headed 'Illustrated' most probably *Illustrated London News*, 5 December 1953 (22.6cm by 30.8cm – that is longer in length than the second example)



Schweppes is a Swiss beverage brand that is sold around the world. It includes a variety of non-alcoholic fizzy drinks and mixers. In the late eighteenth century, Johann Jacob Schweppe developed a process to manufacture carbonated mineral water based on the discoveries of Joseph Priestly. He founded the Schweppes Company in Geneva in 1783, but in 1792 moved to London to develop the business there. During the 1920s and 1930s, the artist William Barribal created a range of posters for Schweppes. By 1945 the advertising agency S.T.Garland Advertising Service Ltd., had invented the word '*Schweppervescence*' which was first used the following year. Thereafter it was used extensively in advertisements produced by Garlands who sold copyright of this word to the Schweppes Company for £150 five years later when they relinquished the account. A campaign in the 1950s and 1960s featured a real-life veteran British naval officer named Commander Whitehead who described the product's bubbly flavour as evanescence. Another campaign, voiced by British actor William Franklyn, used '*Schhh... You know who*', after the sound of the gas escaping as one opens the bottle.

*(ii) UK Car manufacturers*

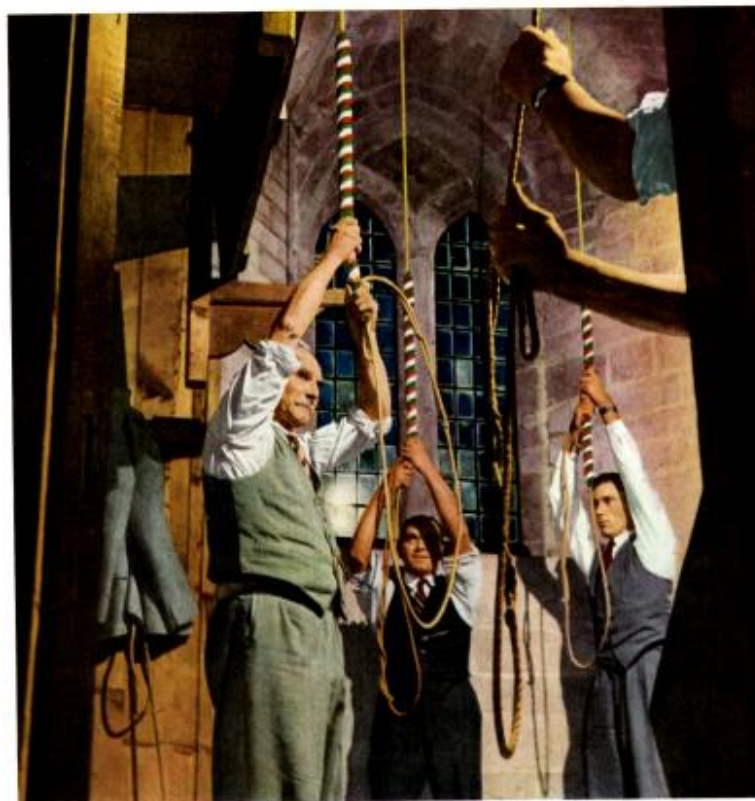
In 1847 both William Hillman and George Singer were born in Lewisham in south east London. They both learnt to ring and by 1867 were sufficiently able as ringers to be elected to the Ancient Society of College Youths. At the age of 14 they were apprenticed to the Greenwich marine engineering firm of John Penn & Sons, and appear to have been kept busy finding time only to ring a single peal for the Society at their home tower in February 1867. A couple of doors away from the Hillman home lived James Starley, who initially worked as a gardener for John Penn, but who was to become a founder member of the emerging bicycle industry.

Both William and George left London in 1869, having been enticed by James Starley to work in the Midlands for the Coventry Machinists Company manufacturing sewing machines and velocipedes (early bicycles better known as bone shakers). The Singer sewing machine should not be confused with this enterprise, having been invented by Isaac Merritt Singer in 1851. In 1870 Hillman patented the Penny Farthing bicycle with William Starley (possibly a relative of James Starley).

George Singer was also innovative and left the company in 1875 to set up his own business. This new venture led to the first mass produced bicycle, a ground breaking machine which unfortunately was not a commercial success, but which has set the pattern for most bicycle production since. Singer patented the curving of the front forks of a bicycle as an aid to steering. At the beginning of the 1900s he turned his sights towards the development of the internal combustion engine. Early motorised vehicles were modifications of bicycles, tricycles and carriages previously pulled by horses. By 1905 these machines had evolved into the first four wheeled car. This drew Singer to design the world's first light weight car, the

Singer Ten. After seeing how good these cars were, a young apprentice at Singer, Billy Rootes, left to set up in business on his own. He initially bought fifty Singer Tens with money he got from selling his part-time chicken farm, and his company became the Rootes motoring empire. This group was to subsume the early Sunbeam, Talbot, Humber, Hillman and ironically Singer car companies.

William Hillman followed a similar path founding the Hillman-Coatalen Motor Car Company in 1907. He was a less prolific manufacturer, producing only around 50 vehicles a year prior to the First World War. One innovation special to Hillman cars was the use of a radiator to cool the engine, which first appeared in 1908. Unfortunately neither Hillman nor Singer appear to have maintain their ringing after leaving London.



*All that's best in Britain...*

*The evening practice is nearly over . . . . . tomorrow is Christmas Day and once again the bells will peal out their age-old message of Peace, of Goodwill and of Faith renewed . . . . . The bellringers slowly walk home and as each parts with a cheerful 'Merry Christmas!' he senses the deep peace pervading this frosty, starlit night . . . . the same peace which we of the Standard Motor Company wish all owners and prospective owners of our products in the year to come.*

made by THE STANDARD MOTOR CO. LTD., COVENTRY, ENGLAND

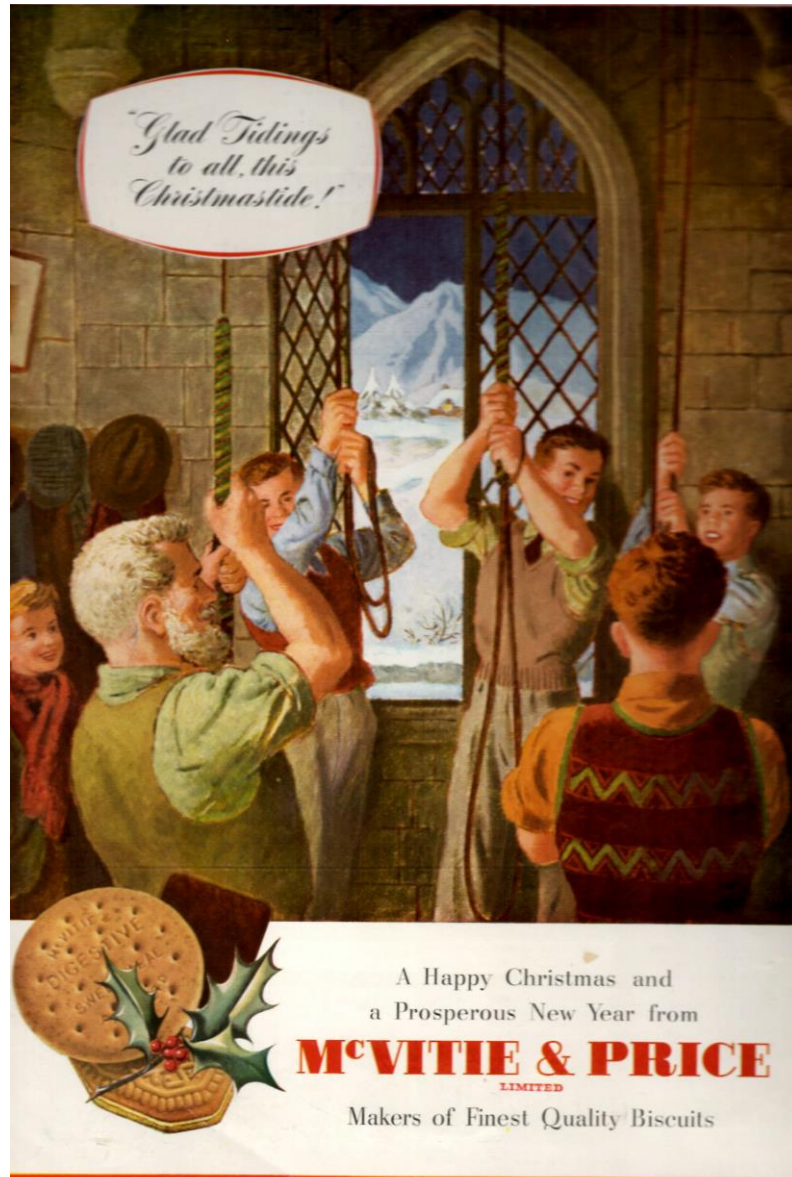


Advert for another famous British manufacturing band Standard Triumph Cars and Commercial Vehicles. Taken from various editions including *Country Life* 1952, page 129 (20.0cm by 20.5cm); *The Illustrated London News*, Christmas Number 1952, page 46 (22.5cm by 23.0cm)



(iii) *McVitie & Price*

Robert McVitie established a biscuit factory on Rose Street, Edinburgh in 1830. McVitie was joined in 1875 by Charles Price to create McVitie & Price. It is the best-selling biscuit manufacturer in the UK producing chocolate Digestives, Hobnobs, Rich Tea and Jaffa Cakes. They hold a Royal Warrant from the Queen.



Christmas advert for biscuits taken from *The Field*, November 1952 (23.5cm by 33.5cm).

McVitie & Price's first major biscuit was the Digestive created in 1892 by a new young employee at the company named Alexander Grant. The biscuit was given its name because it was thought that its high baking soda content served as an aid to food digestion. Grant was later to become managing director of the company. In 1923 he was the main benefactor in the establishing the National Library of Scotland giving an endowment of £100,000. Grant donated a further £100,000 in 1928 to assist with the building of the

National Library premises on George IV Bridge in Edinburgh. In 1924 Ramsay MacDonald, prime minister of Britain's new Labour Government, admitted that Grant had given him a Daimler car and £30 000 of shares in the McVitie and Price company. Grant had been MacDonald's childhood friend, and shortly afterwards received a baronetcy from the Prime Minister. The affair, regarded by many as corruption, severely shook the government of the day.

The chocolate topped wheat Digestive was created in 1925. Over 71 million packets of them are eaten in the UK each year, equating to 52 biscuits per second. Hobnobs were launched in 1985 and a milk chocolate variant followed in 1987. Launched in 1927, Jaffa Cakes were ranked the best-selling cake or biscuit in the UK in 2012.

#### (iv) Animals

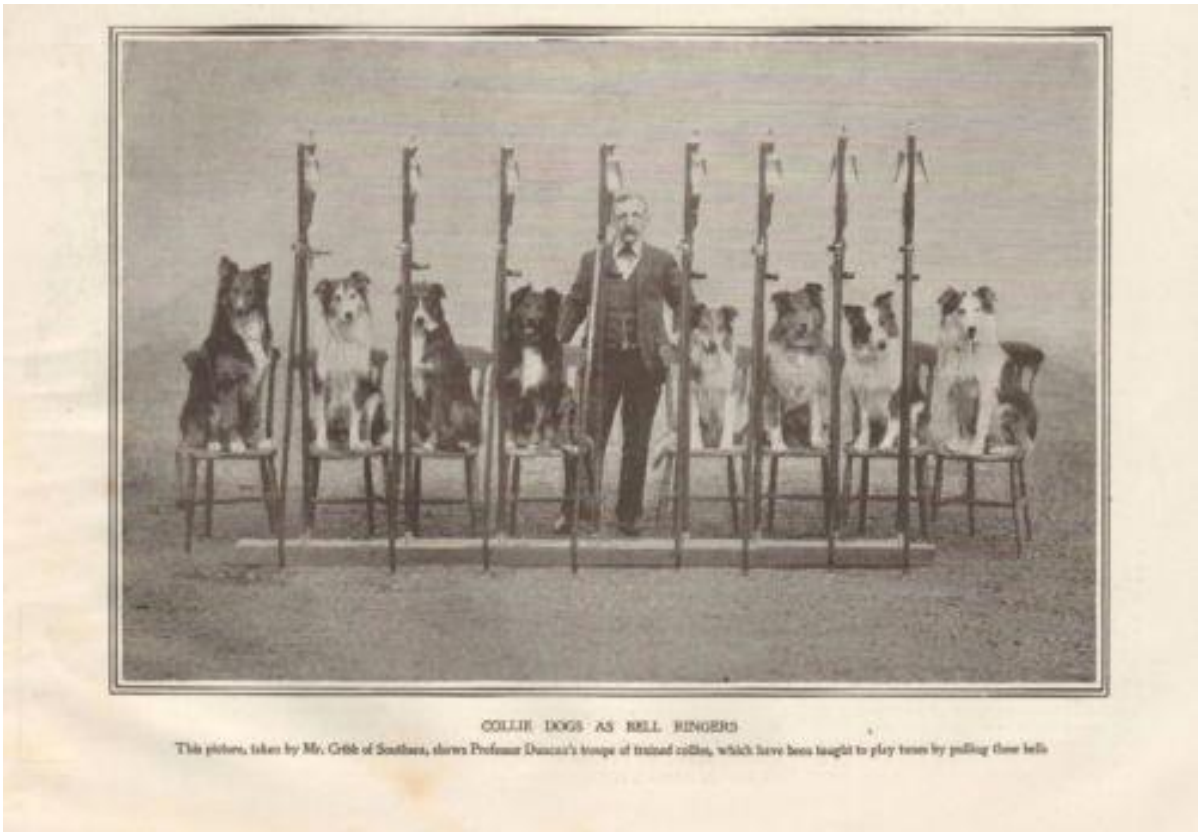
The British love of animals has inevitably resulted in postcards, special occasion cards and other prints featuring ringers. A common theme is to replace the ringers with animals. This can lead to some humorous slogans being attached to some examples.

In the book *Musical Handbells* by Bill Butler (ISBN 186077 118 1) there is mention of George Stockham, a respected London hand bell founder and ringer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that his dog which accompanied him everywhere, even into the belfry when he was ringing, would sit quietly in the corner up to the point when 'That's all' was called. At the call the dog would state barking furiously knowing the ringing would soon be finished.



A Christmas card showing dogs in appropriate attire. It has led some commentators commenting that the 'ringing society has gone to the dogs'! Original source unknown





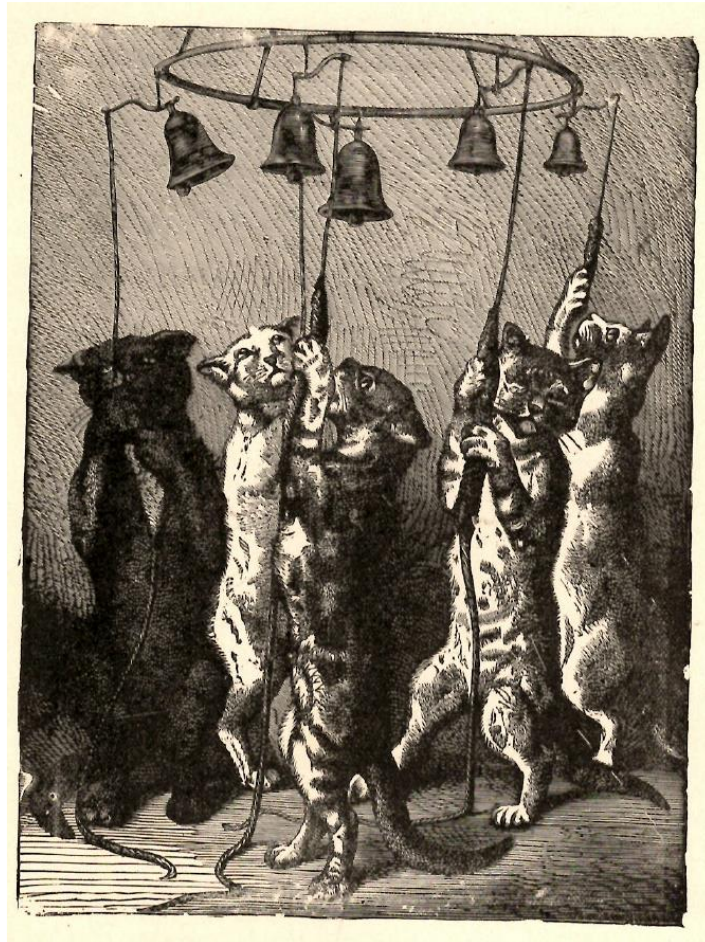
COLLIE DOGS AS BELL RINGERS

This picture, taken by Mr. Critch of Southern, shows Professor Duncan's troupe of trained collies, which have been taught to play tunes by pulling these bells

Collie Dogs as Bell Ringers - Professor Duncan's Troupe, taken from *The Graphic*, 1901 (28.0cm by 18.0cm)



Taken from a Christmas card – source unknown



Print featuring cats. Source unknown (12.5cm by 16.5cm)



Card featuring foxes. Source unknown





A Christmas card featuring owls - source unknown



Taken from the Witney & Woodstock Branch, Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

