

The Christmas Eve Ringers

Rob Davis

Wait on the Eve, stand by the gate
As stars glint o'erhead in the evening's late;
Can you feel the old ringers ascend up the stair
As Christmas draws near in the cold winter air?

Tom rings the Treble, and does so right well
Of the days of the Civil War he could sure tell,
He kept to his farm, scraped coin for the rent
Neither favouring King nor of Parliament.

Sue rings the Second, a young life cut short
Lived not her full days as she certainly ought;
For she fell to the cancer, aged but twenty-four
But tonight she rings true, as she did so before.

Peter's the Third; a fine ringer, well famed
Back in the days when Victoria reigned;
He taught the rest Stedman, and complex Surprise
Enhancing their skills and brought joy to their lives.

Mary rings Fourth, a bright, cheerful face;
Striking so well with her rhythm and grace;
She lies with her husband, acquainted anew
With he who was famous as one of 'the Few'.

Bert takes the Fifth, a bold farmer's boy
Who fled to the Army when none would employ;
Corporal, then Sergeant, a medal of brass;
Brought home when he fell in the fields of Arras.

Lucy rings Sixth, a quiet lady was she
Who returned to the village and found out to be
The child of the squire and his wife's serving-maid
But never her origin once was betrayed.

Bill pulls the Seventh; the blacksmith. His forge
Was old in the days of the dear old King George;
For his father, and grandfather, many could tell
Had always been found at the pull of a bell.

And who rises up to pull last on the rope?
'Tis none but Old Jim, and all there must hope
That just as a practice or service missed never,
He'll pull every Christmas from now to forever.

On dusty and faded wall-mounted Peal Board
You read of their names, their collective accord;
As their ghosts gaze at you from the graveyard and alley
Remember them well, as you reach for the sally.

Old Ringers Never Die;
They Just Fade Away.