

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## **Journal – mid August 2018**

by Sue Hitchcock

### Sunday

It was so hot, I opened the back door while I was making breakfast, before the church bells started. I was startled by an amazing cluster chord, which I had never noticed before. Do they always start by pulling all the ropes at once? No-one would have the strength to pull them all, so it must have been six people co-ordinating. What did it mean? Was it good or ominous? I didn't wonder for long as they soon started to ring the changes, starting with a downward scale. I checked the notes on the keyboard – F,D,E,C,Bflat,A, - no G which would have completed the scale. Why?

Later I noticed a jackdaw feather caught in a spider's web and wrote a haiku:

Jackdaw's feather caught  
in spider's gossamer web,  
spinning Autumn dreams.

### Monday

I am already missing the hour and a half of daylight from the morning and evening. We are just halfway between the solstice and the equinox – nighttime six hours at the solstice and twelve at the equinox. I shouldn't really miss the morning daylight, as I have to wear an eye mask so I don't wake up at dawn.

Tuesday

We picked some blackberries opposite the bowling green and I made a blackberry and apple pie. Before supermarkets what a boon it was that apples ripen when there are still blackberries around.

Wednesday

We travelled to London, my first time in three years – yuk, yuk! Not my hometown any more.

Thursday

Rain at last! Thunderstorm!

Friday

The wind has blown down unripe hazels and conkers, but there will be plenty more in September.

Saturday

Further research on bell ringing elucidated the cluster chord. The bells are left hanging down between sessions, but are played with the opening upwards. Each bell is mounted on a circular frame and when the rope is pulled, it swings down and rings, but the momentum completes the circuit. Therefore the ropes have to be pulled to upend the bells to start. Only in England are free bells the norm – elsewhere a carillon of twenty or more bells are played with a keyboard of sorts. The first sequence is always a downward scale – usually five or six notes. Then the changes are rung, with the person in charge calling the changes, i.e. "2 to 3" This can result in thousands of permutations. In 1767 in Debenham, Suffolk eight strong, young men rang a peal called "Bob Major" consisting of 10,080 changes and taking over six hours!

The first poem which moved me as a child had bells:-  
"High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire" by Jean Ingelow.  
It still haunts me and I live in the fear of the inevitable coastal flooding as global warming increases.