



## **An enjoyable start to Christmas**

Around 35 ringers and friends started the festive season in style at the District Carol Service at West Peckham on Saturday 10th December. Before the service the three bells (tenor 5cwt) were put to good use, with this being a new tower for most. Following the service we enjoyed the traditional mince pies and mulled wine in the Village Hall, kindly provided by the ladies of the West Peckham WI.

## **District ringers enjoy the new eight at Hollingbourne**

Around 25 members and friends took the opportunity to sample the recently augmented ring of 8 when the District Practice was held at Hollingbourne on Saturday 12th November. A good variety of ringing catered for all tastes, ranging from Rounds and Call Changes through Bob Triples and Grandsire Triples up to Stedman. Our thanks go to Nigel Baker and his ringers for hosting the Practice and for providing most welcome refreshments.

## **Annual District Meeting**

The Annual District Meeting at Staplehurst attracted 28 members, who enjoyed a variety of ringing ranging from Rounds and Call Changes (their first on ten bells for several) to Plain Hunt Royal and Cambridge Major. They also enjoyed an admirably short service followed by a magnificent tea courtesy of the local ringers.

At the Business Meeting there were several changes to the District Committee. Terry Barnard has stood down from his role as District Secretary and is replaced by Simon Davies. We are pleased that Terry will stay on the Committee as one of the joint Ringing Masters, replacing Adam Brady who also did not stand for re-election. Clive Ticehurst and Emma Tilston join the Committee as additional members. Details of the new Committee can be found on our [Committee page](#). Minutes of the Business meeting can be found [here](#).

The provisional District Programme for 2017 was presented to the Meeting and can be found on our [Calendar](#) page. Please note that most of the venues have still to be confirmed at the present time.

## **County 6-bell Striking Competition**

The County 6-bell Striking Competition was held at Farnborough on the warm, sunny morning of Saturday 24th September, with Maidstone District being represented by Staplehurst. In a close contest, considered by judges Paul Flavell and Linda Foddering to be of an extremely high standard throughout, we came 5th with 82%, as against the 91% of eventual winners Chelsfield, representing Lewisham District.

For a more detailed report, including the full results, please see the [County Website](#).

## **A useful Practice at Wrotham**

There were 26 ringers at the District Practice at Wrotham on Saturday 10th September - a very good turn out considering all the heritage events and the Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride on that day.

There were quite a few less experienced ringers so we had plenty of Rounds on the lovely ring of 8. We also rang Grandsire Triples, Plain Bob Minor and Doubles as well as Plain Hunting on both 7 and 8. We all appreciated the refreshments that were also available for the ride and striders and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

## **An enjoyable District Barbeque at Ulcombe**



Good weather added the final gloss to a most enjoyable District Barbecue in Ulcombe on Saturday 13th August. Following a spell of ringing at Ulcombe church - unfortunately cut short by the 5th rope slipping off the wheel - some 26 ringers and friends descended on James Davis' garden for a splendid afternoon and evening of food, drink, chat and more ringing, this time on Dewby's Bells, a 22lb 8 bell portable mini ring from Hooe in Sussex. The mini ring proved to be very popular (particularly with a non ringing family from Germany) with methods rung including Plain Bob Doubles, Cambridge Minor and Plain Hunt on 7. An attempt at a quarter peal sadly came to grief after 10 minutes of good ringing. Many thanks to Alan and Mary Collings for bringing their bells for us to enjoy. A picture of the event will be posted shortly.

We finished off the evening with a delicious cake to celebrate Terry and Joy Barnard's Ruby Wedding Anniversary the following day, suitably decorated with ruby red bells.

Many thanks to James for his hospitality and excellent cooking skills at the grill and to Liz Barnes for the not inconsiderable task of organising all the food purchasing and the collecting and accounting of the money.

## **New County Website**

We are pleased to announce that the new KCACR (County) website is now live! It has been completely revamped and redesigned, with a new interface, easier navigation and a host of other new features, with more planned. [Click here](#) to go there now and see for yourself.

Any comments or suggestions, or indeed to report any bugs, please drop an email to the new [webmaster](#) Doug Davis.

## **A nice morning at Nettlestead**

The summer Quarterly District Meeting again proved popular with 36 ringers at Nettlestead on Saturday 9th July. Ringing ranged from call changes to London Surprise Minor, with plenty in between. Our thanks to David and Marguerite Allen for providing refreshments.

For the second successive Business Meeting we stood in remembrance of one of our members who had passed away - this time Alan Phipps of West Malling. More about a tribute to Alan can be found immediately below. District Secretary Terry Barnard gave a eulogy which is included in the draft [minutes](#) attached. Four new members were also elected to the Association.

## **A lasting tribute to the late Alan Phipps**

Following Alan's sudden death whilst on holiday in Corfu, his family and friends have been working with the Keltek Trust to do something in lasting memory of him. Please click on the link <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/alanhipps/314471> if you would like to learn more about this project and possibly make a donation.

Details can also be viewed on Keltek's website and Facebook page.

## **County 8-bell Striking Competition**

Maidstone District came fourth in the County 8-bell Striking Competition at Herne on Saturday 2nd July. The winners were Canterbury District.

## **Not so many at Chart Sutton District Practice, but still enjoyable**

We had 22 ringers attend the District Practice at Chart Sutton on Saturday 11th June. In the absence of either Ringing Master, Chairman Liz Barnes took charge. There were no designated special methods, but we rang Rounds and Call Changes for those that wanted them. We also rang Bob Doubles, Grandsire and Stedman, together with Bob Minor, Cambridge and Double Oxford.

We are very grateful to Heather Knowler and her team for making the bells available to us and for providing very welcome refreshments. Although the attendance was not quite as large as the previous two meetings, everyone enjoyed it.

Next up is a Quarterly District Meeting on the six at Nettlestead on Saturday 9th July, ringing from 10am.

## **A useful 10-bell Practice at All Saints, Maidstone**

Unfortunately our original report of the District 10-bell practice at All Saints Maidstone on Saturday 14th May suffered from a major blip in communications. Apologies for the resultant inaccuracies and hopefully the following will give a better picture of proceedings.

There were 29 signatures in the attendance book, considerably more than originally reported. We had quite a lot of less experienced ringers at this practice so we rang lots of rounds on 6 and 10 so they could get used to a very heavy ring. We also rang Bob Doubles, Grandsire Triples, Stedman Triples and Cambridge Major, and had a few goes at plain hunt on 9. Unfortunately we were unable to ring any methods on 10. Nevertheless everyone really enjoyed themselves and it was a successful practice.

## **Alan Phipps**

We are very sad to have to report that Alan Phipps of West Malling passed away whilst on holiday in Corfu. His funeral took place at Bluebell Hill Crematorium, Chatham, on Thursday 16th June. Anyone wishing to make a donation to the British Heart Foundation in Alan's memory can send it c/o Naylor's Funeral Directors, 90/92 Delce Road, Rochester ME1 2DH.

Our thoughts continue to be with his family at this difficult time.

## **Springtime at Stansted**

Well, the weather may not have been very springlike, but that didn't deter more than 50 members from attending the Quarterly District Meeting at Stansted on 9th April - thought to be the highest

attendance at any District ringing event for more than 30 years. Ringing included lots of rounds and call changes, plain hunt, Plain Bob, Grandsire, Stedman, Single Oxford and a very nicely struck touch of Cambridge. A big thank you to all who came and made it such a great success.

At an admirably short Business Meeting eight new members were elected, and Graham Heath gave a lovely eulogy for our dear friend Martin Pring. Draft minutes of the meeting, including the eulogy, can be found [here](#).

Many thanks to Keith Foxwell and all the ringers at Stansted for making us so welcome and for the use of the lovely new hall for refreshments and the Business Meeting.

## **Martin Pring**

We are sorry to have to report that Martin Pring of All Saints, Maidstone, passed away on Saturday 26th March when he sadly lost his brave battle with cancer. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time.

A Thanksgiving Service for Martin's life took place on Thursday 14th April at the Union Street Methodist Church, Maidstone, with many ringers amongst the packed congregation. May he Rest In Peace.

## **Tom Barlow is back peal ringing!**

Congratulations to Tom Barlow who, on Good Friday, rang his first peal since undergoing major heart surgery at Papworth Hospital last year. The peal of 8-spliced Surprise Major took place at Tom's home tower of St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone. It goes to show that you can't keep a good man down!

## **County Annual General Meeting**

The County AGM, hosted by the Rochester District at Tunstall, was very well attended, with around 70 people having lunch before the meeting, and the same again joining the meeting. The meeting itself took around one hour and there was little on the agenda that caused much discussion. The majority of officer posts were nominated for before the meeting and went through unopposed. There were no nominations for Training Officer, Publicity Officer as well as one Central Council position and one extra committee member. Caroline Stockmann and Phil Barnes stepped up and have filled the positions of Publicity and Central Council Rep respectively. This leaves the committee short of two members, including the very important position of Training Officer. Notably, amongst the officer positions voted on, the new role of Youth Officer was filled by Alex Fishburn who has over the last year been running Youth events. Several members were presented with 50 year service certificates, and Derek Chatfield of Whitstable was presented with one for 70 years' service.

## **New name on the Call Change Striking Competition shield**

The District Striking and Call Change Competition took place on Saturday 12th March, on a lovely mild spring day. Many of the 42 ringers spent their time in East Sutton churchyard amongst the large array of daffodils whilst waiting their turn to ring. The competition attracted no less than nine bands - a very good entry for these days.

We have a new name on the Call Change shield this year. Congratulations to the combined Suttons band who won their first ever District Striking Competition with an impressive accuracy rate of 93.4% . Staplehurst once again finished first of the three teams taking part in the Method Competition with an 88.3% accuracy. Particular congratulations must however go to the two bands representing Lenham, most of whom have only learnt to ring in the last 18 months. Lenham therefore deservedly won the shield for the band having the most ringers never to have previously rung in a striking competition. Full results were as follows:

### *Call Change Competition*

1st	The Suttons	Rang 4th	93.4%
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2nd	Marden	Rang 1st	89.5%
3rd	Staplehurst	Rang 3rd	88.9%
4th	Wrotham	Rang 2nd	88.2%
5th	Lenham 1	Rang 6th	81.7%
6th	Lenham A	Rang 5th	58.3%

***Method Competition***

1st	Staplehurst	Rang 1st	88.3%
2nd	Marden	Rang 3rd	69.2%
3rd	Wrotham	Rang 2nd	57.2%

Our judge this year was once again our District Secretary, Terry Barnard, to whom we offer our thanks. His comments on each band, together with photographs of the winning bands, can be found [here](#). Thanks also to the East Sutton ringers for the use of their bells and for providing a full-scale ringers' tea (even though it was a morning event!).

## **District Practice at Mereworth**

The number of ringers nationally may be declining, but there was no evidence of that at the District Practice at Mereworth on Saturday 13th February. There was once again an impressive attendance of 35 ringers including two from Philadelphia. We were able to successfully ring both special methods - Primrose Surprise Minor (twice) and Single Oxford Minor as well as plenty of Rounds, Call Changes and Plain Hunt. It was particularly pleasing to see beginners from Mereworth, Otham and Lenham making good progress.

Our thanks go to the local ringers for providing refreshments and also to our two Ringing Masters, Adam and Jack, both of whom had to come by public transport. Now there's dedication for you!

## **County Surprise Practice proves popular**

The second County Surprise practice took place at Leeds on 30th January and was well attended, with 23 ringers taking part and coming from pretty much every District in the County. Most of the Standard 8 Surprise Major were rung during the course of the morning, with the exception of Rutland and London - they were, however included in a great touch of 8-spliced that rounded off the morning. There were quite a few attempts at Cambridge to cater for those that had specifically come to practice it, as well as a couple of attempts at Bristol for the same reason. Half a course of Cambridge Royal was also attempted.

The next practice will be held on 30th April, at a venue to be confirmed.

## **Latest issue of *The Belfry* available now**

The January 2016 issue of our District Newsletter *The Belfry* is now available on line [here](#). To join the mailing list to receive each issue by e-mail as soon as it is published just e-mail [belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk](mailto:belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk).

## **Quarterly District Meeting**

The winter Quarterly District Meeting is always well attended and this year was no exception. Despite the wet and windy weather, and the fact that the venue was one of the most easterly in the District, well over 30 ringers attended the meeting at Harrietsham on Saturday afternoon, 9th January. Most of the ringing was at the more basic end of the scale, which gave the less experienced ringers plenty of practice. However there was also some Plain Bob Major and an attempt at Cambridge.

Our thanks go to the Harrietsham ringers for use of the bells and particularly to the ladies for the tea. Minutes of the meeting, together with the closing accounts for 2015, may be found [here](#).