

# The Queen Mum 4 Aug 1900 - 30 Mar 2002

What follows is a small section of the ringing which took place in Kent to mark the passing of HM the Queen Mother. Hopefully everything will later be archived in the KCACR records, so that we will have a detailed account of what we in Kent did in memory of a wonderful lady. Thanks to all who replied to my request for information. All of your contributions were greatly appreciated - and I hope our visitors will be equally appreciative - Ed

## Ashford District

At **Lydd** a quarter of 1260 Doubles (4m/v including Stedman) was rung half-muffled on 9 April for the funeral. (*Nick Davies*)

Our steeplekeeper was just picking up the phone on Saturday evening 30 March, when it rang; it was me with a same thought - muffles. In view of the physical difficulties of putting the muffles on at **Frittenden** it was decided to put them on then and leave them on until after the funeral, Easter notwithstanding. This we did with the approval of the Rector and parish. We rang on Sunday morning as usual. In the evening we had planned a quarter for Easter so we still rang one of Grandsire Triples (all local band) in memory of QM. On Friday the 5th we had planned to ring a quarter of London Major for young David Sims to complete his set of the standard eight Surprise Major methods before his 14th birthday, which is a target I set for him 18 months ago. As we couldn't ring London half-muffled we changed it to Stedman and scored a very good one. On Sunday we rang as usual and on Tuesday scored another local band quarter of Grandsire Triples on the day of the funeral. This had been advertised in the village shop window by the Rector (nothing like pressure!). So in all at Frittenden, we rang three quarters plus two Sunday mornings and one practice night - all half-muffled. Seems a lot, but taking the muffles on and off our bells is such a palava one needs to be a contortionist or masochist, one or the other. So we left them on. (*David Manger*)

There was a half-muffled quarter at **Hythe** for evensong on Easter Sunday and there was general half-muffled ringing from 10.45 to 11.15 on the day of the funeral. (*Brian Butcher*)

[Brian reminds us that the QM was Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and that most of the ships supplied were crewed by nothing more or less than pirates, and that it was the Lord Warden's job to keep them in some sort of order. We wonder if she had any success with the ringers of the Cinque Ports!]

*Mark Chittenden-Pile* sent in a list of quarters rung in and around Ashford:

**Ashford**, 31 March, 1260 Grandsire Caters (for Evensong on Easter Sunday); 9 April, 1260 Plain Bob Triples (half-muffled)

**Kennington**, 6 April, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles (rung open in thanksgiving); 9 April, 1260 Plain Bob Minor (half-muffled)

**Mersham**, April 7, 1344 Plain Bob Major (half-muffled)

## Canterbury District

We rang a half-muffled quarter of Grandsire Triples at **Canterbury Cathedral** on the 9th. Bell Harry was also tolled during the funeral service and for 2 hours after the death was announced on 30 March. (*Christopher Robinson*)

At **Ospringe** the bells remained half-muffled for all ringing between HM's death and the funeral, and a half-muffled quarter was rung in her memory. **Faversham** were rung half-muffled to call changes after the service at Westminster Abbey. It was preceded at 12.55pm by the treble being tolled 101 times. (*Stuart Palin*)

At about 11.30 on the 9th, the tenor at **Chilham** was tolled fully muffled 101 times. (*Janet Godfrey - RW*)

Before the funeral service on the 9th half-muffled call changes were rung at **Hernhill**, followed by 101 whole pulls of the tenor. (*Peter Saddleton - RW*)

## Lewisham District

This evening (9 April) at St Paulinus **Crayford** we scored a well struck stately quarter of Grandsire Triples in thanksgiving for the life of the Queen Mother. We also wish to dedicate this quarter to the memory of Princess Margaret, and to mark the interring of both in the tomb of the late King George VI this evening. A half-muffled peal of Yorkshire was also rung on Saturday 6 April by a visiting band. (*Alex Britton*)

There was a peal of Love Bug Surprise Major on 6 April at **Bromley Parish Church**, rung open in thanksgiving for the life of the QM. (*Dickon Love*)

At **Biggin Hill** on 9 April we rang half-muffled rounds and call changes from 11am to 11.25am just prior to the Queen Mother's funeral, then tolled the tenor 101 times. Two of the ringers (Alex Hallinan and Marc Hanscombe) were released from school for the occasion. (*Nancy Gay*)

The band at **Hayes** met as usual for practice night on 9 April and rang half-muffled call changes and plain hunt. Then, with the arrival of a visitor from Bromley Common, we were able to ring a touch of Bob Doubles with one of our ringers unaffected. Also 11-year-old Zachary Burrows, who has recently learned to handle a bell, rang half-muffled rounds on three for the first time. (*Sue Fisher*)

At **Dartford**, the Vicar would not allow muffles for Easter Day, but within an hour or so of the announcement by the BBC on the Saturday, we had the tenor raised and tolled 101 blows in memory of the Great Lady's life. We applied the muffles for the Tuesday of the funeral when we rang about 40 mins of call changes half-muffled with tenor open. We raised the bells singly starting at 9.30 and rang until about 10.25 then lowered them singly. (*Deryck Jones*)

At **Eltham**, we rang with the bells half-muffled between Sunday 31 March and Tuesday 9 April, for Sundays, the AGM and a Tuesday practice. Also, ringing was specifically arranged for the Queen Mother on Monday 8 April (an attempt at a quarter that was sadly not successful) and Tuesday 9 April (45 minutes of general ringing prior to a special memorial service in the church at 8pm). (*David Holdridge*)

At **Beckenham** we rang open for Easter Sunday morning, and then 1274 Plain Bob Triples half-muffled in memory of the Queen Mother in the afternoon. The bells remained half-muffled until the funeral. (*James Hardy*)

The **Chelsfield** ringers rang a half-muffled quarter of 1260 Doubles (2m) on Sunday morning 7 April immediately before the Family Service. (*Jim Rooke*)

**Foots Cray** rang a half-muffled quarter on Wednesday 10 April for the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. (*Margaret Macey*)

**West Wickham** rang a quarter on 17 April, in memory of the Queen Mum. It was rung open by members of our regular band. (*Alys Helm*)

## Maidstone District

At **All Saints, Maidstone**, on Tuesday 9 April the tenor bell was tolled 101 times (or 202 times half-muffled) between 11am and 11.20am. After the 2 minutes silence a half muffled quarter peal was rung on the front six while the funeral service was taking place. I spoke about it on John Warnett's

phone in on Radio Kent telling him that this was going on and also giving some layman's facts about what we were doing. Interestingly he told me he was from a ringing family and when asked said it was Lewisham. [*Check out the WWI records for more info on the Warnetts of Lewisham - Ed*]. (*Pat Phipps*)

There was also a peal of Superlative rung (for the Cumberlands) half-muffled at **St Michael & All Angels, Maidstone**, on the 9th.

At **East Farleigh** a peal of 6 Spiced Surprise Major was rung on 9 April. The trap under the treble opened with a huge thud at about the halfway which surprised everyone and resulted in the treble shouting. Tom Barlow on his second in the day on the tenor was in good form as he returns to his prime following surgery. (*John Keeler*)

At **Bearsted** there was half-muffled ringing before a memorial service on the Monday evening (8th) and on the evening of the funeral we rang a half-muffled quarter of Reverse Canterbury, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles. (*Bernard Mee*)

1259 Grandsire Caters was rung open in celebration of the life of the QM on 7 April at **Leeds** (*Mark Chittenden-Pile*)

At **Wateringbury** there was a half-muffled quarter of Grandsire Doubles on the evening of 8 April. (*Justin Southwell*)

We rang 101 muffled call changes at **Yalding** on Tuesday 9 April in the evening. (*Richard Young*)

## Rochester District

At **Rochester Cathedral** on 7 April a quarter of Plain Bob Triples was rung fully muffled with the tenor open at handstroke in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother prior to the Cathedral Memorial Service. (*Neil Jones*)

At **Shorne** a peal of 7 Surprise Minor was rung half-muffled on 8 April. This was organised by Tom Barlow who spent hours on the telephone finding ringers who were not at work. A good peal was scored and we enjoyed the hospitality of John and Rosemary Whitefield afterwards in the local. The Vicar and parishioners were really pleased that Shorne was able to "do something" for her. (*John Keeler/Rosemary Whitefield*)

After much thought and discussion between members of our band, we decided to ring half-muffled last (Easter) Sunday morning at **Hoo St Werburgh**. The expected dilemma applied: Do we ring open in celebration of Easter, or half-muffled for the Queen Mother? I spoke to our vicar on Easter Sunday morning and his thinking was that we ring in celebration of Easter every year but the Queen Mother only dies once. If we ring open, it may appear that we are doing nothing different and if we do not ring at all, we feel as if we should be doing something. Hence, he agreed with us - half-muffled. (*Arthur Vidgeon*)

There was a peal of 7 Surprise Minor at **Halling** on Easter Day, rung open in thanksgiving for the life of the QM (*Dickon Love*)

At **Eastchurch** a quarter of Bob Doubles was rung half-muffled for the QM on Saturday 6 April, and the tenor was rung 101 times before the start of the funeral on 9 April. (*Sonya Gowdy*)

**Cuxton** rang a half-muffled quarter on the Tuesday evening, the day of the funeral. (*Tracey Jerome*)

**Sittingbourne** and **Meopham** both rang half-muffled quarters on Tuesday evening, the day of the funeral.

We rang a half-muffled quarter of Grandsire Triples at **Rainham** on Sunday the 14th for a special Evensong to commemorate the life of the Queen Mother. (*Dee Wraight*)

## Tonbridge District

There were quarters at **Brasted** (fully muffled, with tenor open at back) on 30 March, **Otford** (half-muffled) on 2 April, **Chiddingstone** (2) (half-muffled), **Sevenoaks** on 3 April and **Chevening** (half-muffled) on 8 April.

At **Speldhurst** there was half-muffled ringing by a visiting band on 6 April; on the 7th the bells were rung half-muffled for morning service, and on Monday the 8th there was a half-muffled quarter. (*Eric Roughley*)

**Kemsing's** tribute to QM was a quarter peal, on Easter Day, with the bells open, and at **Otford** on the morning of the funeral we rang Queen(mum)s and Tittums. (*Fraser Clift*)

There was general half-muffled ringing at **Sevenoaks** between 10am and 10.30 on the 9th.

At **Edenbridge** there was a half-muffled quarter of Grandsire Triples on Sunday the 7th. On the day of the funeral there was a half-muffled quarter of Bob Doubles in the early afternoon and an open quarter of Grandsire Triples in the evening. (*Brian Jeffrey*)



## Jubilee ringing in Kent June 2002

Following the success of the dossier of ringing doings on the website for the Queen Mum, we decided to publish similar bits and pieces for the Jubilee ringing. What we went for was the truly local stuff. A peal of 23 Spliced a.t.w. by a visiting band is not really news, but the fact that Fred, aged 73, rang his first quarter for the Jubilee is great news. The rest of Kent, and our visitors, we felt, would like to know what ringing (not just peals and quarters) was done in the towns and villages of Kent over the Jubilee weekend. The selection of items received is below, and thanks are due to all contributors.

### Ashford District

Due to a lack of ringers and (one would assume) a republican tower captain, we did nothing special for the Jubilee at **Hythe**. However we have been asked to ring a quarter for the beginning of Hythe Festival Week where our performance has been listed as a "Royal Jubilee quarter peal". We attempted a peal of Stedman Caters at the Cathedral but were only successful at a quarter. (*Brian Butcher*)

There was a peal of 5 Doubles at **Smarden** on 4 June, which included first as conductor for Tim Munt, first peal for Darren Harden and Bob Barnes, and first inside for Sheila Phyll. A first of some sort for two thirds of the band can't be bad - congratulations to all. (*Tim Munt*)

We rang a quarter of Grandsire Caters at **Ashford** on 3 June for the Golden Jubilee, and on 2 June a quarter of Grandsire Doubles was rung at **Kennington** for morning service and to celebrate the Jubilee. (*Mark Chittenden-Pile*)

### Canterbury District

The **Quex** ringers had a Jubilee camp at the Waterloo Tower over the weekend. The tower was decorated with bunting and a union flag was flown from the spire (although not from the top!). Our weekend began with a representative group of the ringers being invited to a Jubilee party and barbecue in the garden of Quex House on Friday evening. Five quarters were rung on Saturday, one on Sunday and yet another on Monday. A four course Jubilee meal was enjoyed in the porch of the

tower by the campers on Monday evening, the Master proposed the loyal toast and the evening ended with "God Save the Queen". We look forward to the Diamond Jubilee!! (*Hazel Basford*)

GIRL POWER ! **Bekesbourne** celebrated on Monday 3 June with an all-girl band of ringers. We rang some very good rounds and call changes, appropriately into Queens. (*Gill Moon*)

### Lewisham District

We rang for 15 minutes after the 10.30 service at **Hayes** on Sunday morning. We couldn't raise a quarter peal band, so we rang rounds and call changes and plain hunt, very nicely as a matter of fact. (*Sue Fisher*)

At **Crayford** we rang a quarter of Plain Bob Triples on 4 June instead of our usual practice, and there was also a quarter of Cambridge Minor at **Christ Church, Erith** on 1 June. A quarter of Grandsire Triples was unfortunately lost at **Lewisham** but a successful one of Bob Minor was scored at **Biggin Hill** also on 1 June at the start of the church Jubilee Barbecue. Another (Bob Triples) was rung at **Deptford** on Saturday morning (1 June) including a first quarter attempt for Steve Kennett who rang the tenor. (*Rupert Cheeseman*)

A quarter of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles was rung at **Biggin Hill** on 28 May, and Louise Hanscomb rang her first quarter peal at first attempt. (*Nancy Gay*)

We rang a quarter of Bob Minor at **West Wickham** on 5 June to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. (*Alys Helm*)

There was a quarter of Cambridge Minor at **Beckenham** (1st S Minor for Rhiannon Meredith), 44 minutes of callchanges at **Dartford**, a peal of 5 S Minor at **Downe**, a quarter of Bob Doubles at **Foots Cray**, a peal of Cambridge Minor at **Penge** and a peal of 7 S Minor at **Sidcup**. (*Lewisham District list*)

At **Chelsfield** there was a local band peal of 4 Minor methods on Saturday 1 June and also a local band quarter of Grandsire/Plain Bob Doubles on Sunday 9 June. These involved a total of ten different Chelsfield ringers. Five Chelsfield ringers also participated in a quarter of Grandsire Caters at Greenwich on Thursday 6 June and I believe that there was also a quarter of Grandsire 9 there on Tuesday 4 June. (*Nick Wilkins*)

On 1 June **Horton Kirby** (with a little help from Frank Rogers of Eynsford) rang 60 changes on thirds (twice). This followed the village's late May Fayre and during the children's tea party! Many people commented that the bells sounded lovely - slowly getting there! With such perfect weather it was a good day. (*David Crowhurst*)

### Maidstone District

A peal of 7 Surprise Minor (conducted by Phil Barnes) was rung at **Barming** on 4 June and another (conducted by John Keeler) was rung at **Stansted** on 1 June, both to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. The Stansted peal was the first of Minor on the bells. (*Dickon Love*)

### Rochester District

A peal of Grandsire Caters was rung prior to the Loyal Service at **Rochester Cathedral** on 1 June by members of the Rochester District. This included his first on 10 for Chris Funnell. (*Neil Jones*)

**Eastchurch** celebrated the Golden Jubilee on the Sunday following the morning service with some plain hunt and call changes rung by the local ringers. A special peal is planned for Sunday pm when we will be having a Jubilee Flowers weekend. (*Sonya Gowdy*)

There was a peal of Yorkshire at **Rainham** on Sunday 2 June for the Golden Jubilee, conducted by Dee Wraight. Ringers from three Districts of KCACR were involved. (*Diana Wraight*)

At **Stockbury** we rang for our Jubilee Celebration Service at 6.30. No quarter peals I am afraid but good well struck Plain Bob. (*Richard Bushell*)

## Tonbridge District

The Tonbridge District had arranged a quarter peal fortnight to coincide with the Jubilee, and quite a few people rang auspicious quarters during the celebrations. Quarters were rung at **Otford** (Grandsire Doubles -1st for Colin Fleetwood), **Chevening** (Bob Doubles), **Brasted** (Bob Doubles -1st for Luke Thomas, aged 12) and **Westerham** (Bob Doubles - first on treble for Janice Bailey). Grandsire Doubles at **Cowden** was the first in the method for tower captain Caroline Levy-Cooper. There was a quarter of Bob Major at **Edenbridge**, which included his first Major inside for Alex Staff and Bob Dunn's first of Major. There was a quarter of Grandsire Doubles at **Hawkhurst**, and another at **Penshurst**, which was Alan Broad's first. At **Speldhurst** and **Sevenoaks** there were quarters of Grandsire Triples (plus an hour of general ringing on the evening of the 1st at Sevenoaks), while **Tunbridge Wells** rang 2 Doubles methods, which was Mick Harris's first inside.

There was a peal at **Edenbridge** on 4 June, where they successfully emulated the feat of 25 years previously, of ringing a peal of Grandsire Triples for the Queen's Jubilee by an all local band. No fewer than five of the band had been taught to ring by the conductor, Brian Jeffrey. For three of these, Alex Staff, Susan Hollyman and Ian Henderson (aged 72), this was their first peal. There were also peals at **Hadlow** (Little Bob Major) and **Shipbourne** (Grandsire & Plain Bob Doubles). This latter was a first as conductor for Marian Pickard and a first peal for Roger Pickard - congratulations to both.

Two other performances merit mention: at **Cowden** on 27 May there was a performance of "60 on thirds" - Devon callchanges - wonder if this is a first for the District. We knew Brian Jeffrey could call Holt's Original, but this is something else! Also, we learn from the local newspaper that "Beginning at 7pm on 3 June the bells of [Hever] echoed out over the village to summon everyone for the night's celebrations. The bells were then used to announce the start of a spectacular firework display [at the Castle] and the lighting of Hever's beacon at 10.30pm".

**Kemsing**: not a lot - we'll do better next time (June 2003 - the Coronation Jubilee). We rang on Monday 3 June for about twenty minutes, for the Jubilee and as a send-off for those taking part in the Jubilee Walk from Kemsing to Woodlands. (*Fraser Clift*)

A quarter of Bob Doubles was run on 3 June at **Leigh**, and this was a first inside for Denise Stewart. (*RW*)

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