

## District Carol Service

People had obviously not got into the Christmas spirit in time for the District Carol Service at Nettlestead on 8th December. Only 20 ringers and friends attended and nine of them were from one tower. Those that came were treated to a traditional carol service with two carols being sung by a quartet (pictured right), who also gave a rendition of *We wish you a Merry Christmas* as we consumed our tea and mince pies, kindly provided by the Nettlestead ringers, and mulled wine.



## Marden win Call Change Striking Competition

Seven teams entered the Call Change Striking Competition at St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone, on 10th November - the largest entry for some years. This year's winners were Marden, with Aylesford runners up. Last year's winners, Staplehurst, came third but won the shield for the band with the most ringers not to have previously rung in a Striking Contest. The full results were:

1st	Marden	25 faults
2nd	Aylesford	33 faults
3rd	Staplehurst	41 faults
4th	St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone	50 faults
5th =	Yalding	62 faults
5th=	Chart Sutton	62 faults
5th=	Leeds	62 faults

Our thanks to Phil and Liz Barnes for judging the competition and to the ringers and friends of St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone, for hosting it.

## Annual District Meeting

The Annual District Meeting was held on Saturday, 13th October at Staplehurst. Around 25 people attended and afternoon ringing ranged from Call Changes to Stedman Caters. Unfortunately not a single person stayed for evening ringing! At the Business Meeting two new members were elected, transfer of West Peckham tower from Tonbridge to Maidstone District was agreed (although this is subject to ratification at the County AGM in April), District Officers' reports received and the [District Calendar](#) for 2013 agreed.

The [District Committee](#) shows several changes for the coming year: James Davis replaces Malcolm Hitchcock as one of the District Representatives; Terry Barnard takes James' place as one of the additional Committee members; Colin Friend also joins the Committee as an additional member; and Richard Barclay replaces Adam Brady as one of the Ringing Masters. Our thanks to the retiring Committee members for all their hard work.

## Snodland ringing again

Good news from Snodland who are now ringing again, following the installation of full drop ropes. There are six people wanting to learn to ring but Tower Captain Sue Brooks is unable to teach them all on her own. She therefore asks if anyone is able to assist her could they please contact her (details on [Snodland Tower](#) page). Practice is likely to be on Thursdays as in the past.

## County 6 bell Striking Contest

This year the District was represented in the County six-bell Striking Contest by Staplehurst who finished in a creditable third place with 40 faults, just two behind second placed Chelsfield of the

Lewisham District. The winners were Tonbridge Parish Church. For more details visit the [County website](#).

## A late summer morning at Wrotham

Around a dozen people came to the September District Practice at **Wrotham**. Ringing ranged from Call Changes to Little Bob Major and, just for something different, Bristol Minimus on the 20cwt back four!

## A very successful, if warm day at Marden

The district BBQ this year was again a great success. Around 50 people packed out first the tower at Marden, then James and Kirsten's back garden. Ringing beforehand included everything from Rounds to Surprise Major and subsequent ringing on the mini-ring included a bit of everything really.

After much food and beer had been consumed (we got through 2 barrels in short order!) a very lighthearted and silly competition ensued on the 39lb bells of the mini-ring, each band getting more outrageous. The first test piece was a fairly conservative 120 of Doubles, but after this teams seemed to attempt to gain marks for 'artistic flair', with the next band featuring such feats as taking shoes and hats off whilst ringing as well as swapping bells they were ringing. The next band (the two armed bandits) performed some double-handed called changes, and the last a 120 of Grandsire Doubles whilst playing football!

All the while this was going on we also had three sets of handbells to play with, and some people had their first attempts at change ringing on handbells, Plain Bob Minor and Major were rung as well as Kent Treble Bob Major.

Our thanks to everyone who helped on the day, and to James and Kirsten for hosting.



## Did you ring for the Diamond Jubilee?

If you rang anything special for the Jubilee, [let us know](#) and we will include it in our online list. This includes quarter-peals rung as part of the County Quarter-peal Week between 1st - 10th June and also any special touches or call changes of whatever length. The deadline for inclusion is Sunday 17th June.

It is also planned to include details in the next issue of *The Belfry* scheduled for mid July.

A list of known ringing is [available here](#).



## Quarterly Meeting at Hollingbourne

Around 15 people braved the heavy rain and cold weather to attend the Summer (?) Quarterly Meeting at Hollingbourne on Saturday 14th July. Ringing ranged from Call Changes to London Minor.

## Staplehurst win District Striking Contest

The 2012 Striking Contest was held at Chart Sutton and was judged by Jim and Rebecca Hardy from the Lewisham District. Four teams entered and this year's winners were Staplehurst with 22 faults, slightly ahead of a scratch band with 23½. In third place were All Saints' Maidstone, followed by Marden in fourth.

Pictured right is the youngest member of the Staplehurst band collecting the winners' shield from the judges.



## Some sad news

It is with great sadness that we have to report the deaths of two members of our District.

Firstly **Sheila Dobbie**, wife of the late Walter Dobbie, passed away on Monday 28th May in Maidstone Hospital. In the last few years Sheila had been teaching local women's groups the art of hand bell ringing. West Peckham church was packed for Sheila's funeral on Wednesday June 6th, at which the three bells were rung half muffled.

Secondly **David Sayers**, for several years Tower Captain at Boughton Monchelsea, passed away on Wednesday 23rd May after suffering what is suspected to have been a heart attack. Both ringers will be greatly missed for their strong contribution to ringing in their home towers and to the District at large.

## District Practice at All Saints Maidstone

Another successful District Practice was held on Saturday 12th May, this time on the beautiful 32cwt ten at All Saints, Maidstone. Twenty-four people attended and enjoyed ringing ranging from Rounds to Cambridge and Yorkshire Royal. Given the weight of the bells the standard of ringing was quite reasonable, particularly by those less experienced in ringing on heavy bells.



## Spring Quarterly Meeting

The Spring quarterly this year was held at West Malling, around 25 people were in attendance for both the pre-meeting ringing and the meeting itself. The ringing ranged from Rounds and Call Changes to Superlative Surprise Major. Notably we also rang a few courses of Titanic Triples, quite fitting as it was the 100th Anniversary of the Titanic sinking. The meeting was relatively short, however, it did include the election of three new members, two of whom were at the meeting. One item that was raised under AOB was performing a new wedding fee survey, if people would like to participate they should fill out this [form](#) and return to [Daniel Brady](#). The data will then be collated and redistributed out to those taking part.

## Tom & Jacqueline Barlow Celebrate 40 Years!



On Easter Sunday an afternoon quarter peal of Ruby Delight Major was rung on the back eight at All Saints' Maidstone, to celebrate Tom and Jacky's 40th Wedding Anniversary. After a successful and very pleasant quarter peal the band enjoyed some Bubbly and a wonderful cake made by Mike. [Click here to see a video clip of the quarter peal.](#)



**Maidstone, Kent**

**All Saints**

**Sunday 8 April 2012 in 49 mins (32-0-20)**

**1250 Ruby Delight Major**

**1 Graham D Heath**

**2 Jacqueline M Barlow**

**3 Kath E White**

**4 Adam A Brady**

**5 Thomas M Barlow**

**6 Daniel W Brady**

**7 Michael A Birkbeck (c)**

**8 David W Grimwood**

***Rung on the back eight for Choral Evensong on Easter Day and also in celebration of the occasion of Tom and Jacqui Barlow's Ruby Wedding Anniversary.***

## **Otham's new six installed**

On the afternoon of Wednesday 4th April Otham's augmented ring of six rang out for the first time. The back three are the original three, the 2nd and 3rd are Keltek bells (given by the KCACR) and the treble is a new casting by Taylors. For a video of the tryout [click here](#) (on Facebook: duration 1:36).

## **A spring morning at Boughton Monchelsea**

More than 30 people turned up at the District Practice on the 13cwt six at **Boughton Monchelsea** on Saturday 10th March. It was somewhat reminiscent of the old days, with people waiting their turn to ring, others enjoying tea and biscuits (kindly provided by the local ringers) or standing outside the church enjoying the magnificent views across the Weald and the antics of the young deer in the neighbouring park. Ringing ranged from Rounds to London Minor, and the first [120 Club](#) draw of 2012 took place. See panel on the right for the winners.



## Raising & Lowering Day proves popular

The Raising & Lowering Training Day on Saturday 11th February was a massive success, with more than 20 people attending. The morning session saw up to four people at once learning the skills of raising and lowering individual bells, each under the supervision of an experienced ringer. One such learner together with his mentor are pictured right. In the afternoon many people attempted Raising and Lowering in peal for the first time.



Anyone who attended is welcome to let the District Committee have feedback on the event by completing the attached [survey](#). It should only take a couple of minutes and is completely anonymous.

## Winter Quarterly Meeting

The Quarterly District Meeting was held at Ightham on Saturday 14th January. Both the business meeting and the Tower Captains' meeting which preceded it were incredibly short and the only thing of interest to report was the election of four new members (including one returning member which is always good to see). Minutes of both meetings will be posted on our *Documents* page when available.

The ringing was generally good, with lots of practice of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles for people, and Cambridge, Norwich and London Minor were also rung (individually, not spliced - that would be a little ambitious!).

The picture on the right shows ringing in progress in the gallery ringing room, whilst others await their turn in the church below. Our thanks go to the Ightham ringers for the use of the bells and for providing the usual delicious tea.

