

The Belfry

Newsletter of the
KCACR
Maidstone District

October 2012

Issue 94

Editorial

Well, the second *Belfry* of 2012 has been a long time coming, but I hope our readers feel it has been worth the wait. The upside is of course that there is lots to report with the result that this issue is the biggest for some years. Your editor apologises for the delay, which has come about because he - like many others - has had a very busy summer.

And what a summer it has been for us ringers. Nationally, ringing has probably never had such a high profile as it achieved this summer. Who will forget the sight (and sound) of a ring of eight bells aboard a barge leading the Thames Pageant at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and all the TV interviews with those involved in what must count as the greatest publicity coup in the exercise's history. The County organised a very successful quarter-peal week to coincide with the Jubilee, in which many of our District ringers took part. A report appears on page 5 of this issue.

As a result many of our ringers have progressed considerably this year - no less than 15 rang their first quarter and there were many other achievements, both big and small, along the way. But above all else this summer's legacy must be the new-found enthusiasm among ringers, both locally and nationally - something we must capitalise on. There are already indications of an upturn in the number of people interested in learning to ring and we must ensure that we use this as a springboard to recruitment. This is the best opportunity we have had to recruit ringers since those heady days of the millennium, and it is likely to be some years before we get another chance, so let's make the most of it.

The Editor

District Carol Service



Nettlestead - Saturday 8th December at 4.30pm
Ringing from 3.30pm
followed by mulled wine and mince pies



District News

District Meetings Round up

Most of the District Meetings, certainly those earlier in the year, are rather old news (now there's a contradiction in terms!) so below is a resume of what has happened so far during 2012.

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

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. In the afternoon many people attempted Raising and Lowering in peal for the first time.

More than 30 people turned up at the **District Practice** on the 13cwt six at Boughton Monchelsea on Saturday 10th March, where ringing ranged from Rounds to London Minor. 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.

The **Spring Quarterly District Meeting** was held at West Malling on the morning of Saturday 14th April, with around 25 people 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.

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.

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

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!

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



Consequently Staplehurst went on to represent the District at the **County Six bell Striking Contest** at Chalk on Saturday 22nd September where they 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.

Other Events

There have been two other major ringing events during 2012, both connected with major national events. Firstly there was the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. An event of such magnitude warrants its own report, which can be found on page 5.

More recently were the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Although the "All the Bells" project received a rather cool reception from most ringers there have been reports of the odd celebratory ringing. However these were generally completely separate from All the Bells and, in at least one case, completely dissociating itself from the project.

Otham - now a Six

Well, it was a long time coming, but I think those who have rung them will think it was worth the wait. 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.

Otham church was full on the afternoon of Sunday 2nd September when a Service of Thanksgiving for the successful conclusion of the project was held. Open ringing took place both before and after the Service, with a service touch being rung by those who had helped in the project. Following the service a delicious cream tea was provided in the church

The next task is to resurrect a band to ring for Sunday Service. Tower Captain Mal Williams is training up a band on Wednesday afternoons and would welcome help from anyone who is not working and could spare an hour between 3pm and 4pm. He can be contacted on 01622 861143 or e-mail malwyn.williams@tesco.net

Snodland bells ringing again

It is also good to be able to report that, following the installation of full drop ropes, the six bells at Snodland are ringable again. 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 on 01634 241350 or e-mail suebrooks189@yahoo.com. Practice is likely to be on Thursdays as in the past.

Personalia

Moving from ringing to ringers, there is a fair amount to report since the beginning of the year - some good and some, sadly, not so good.

In Memoriam - Sheila Dobbie and David Sayers

Sadly, since our last issue we have lost two District Ringers.

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 will be greatly missed for their strong contribution to ringing in their home towers and to the District at large.

Tom & Jacqueline Barlow Celebrate 40 Years

Moving on to happier news, 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. Below, Tom and Jackie are about to cut the cake.



Personal achievements

This year has seen a plethora of major achievements by District ringers, due in part to the special ringing centred around the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. There is a report on that event on page 5 and the usual list of ringing milestones on page 4. Congratulations are due to all those mentioned (and any others that have been missed because your editor has not been notified of them), but there are a few which deserve special mention.

Firstly **Colin Friend** (Staplehurst) and **Albert Gordon** (East Malling) scored their first peal - a rite of passage for any ringer. **Richard Barclay** of Staplehurst called his first peal, albeit in Bristol for the University of Bristol Society, to a composition by our own District Chairman Daniel Brady! At the other end of the spectrum **John Keeler** conducted his 1500th peal.

In the Quarter-peal arena there have been no less than 15 ringers achieving their first Quarter peal, and two, **Alan Phipps** (West Malling) and **Sue Bassett** (Staplehurst), called their first quarters, the latter despite having been ringing for more than 35 years! Meanwhile **Richard Young** became the latest ringer to pass the 1000 Quarter-peal mark when he rang a quarter of two minor methods at his home tower of Yalding.

However, perhaps the most notable achievement is that of **Pat Phipps** who, during the summer, rang at her 5000th different tower. Since, according to Dove's Guide, there are 7134 towers - many of which are unringable - Pat must be well on the way to visiting them all! It would be interesting to know how many miles she has covered in the process. Perhaps she could be persuaded to do an article for the next *Belfry*?

Personal Milestones

Congratulations to the following for achieving notable landmarks in their ringing career:

1st Quarter peal:	Richard Abnett Christine Backshall Andy Copas James Davis Mark Elvers Albert Gordon Jason Gower Scott Gower Elizabeth Harland Jane Higgs Jack Phur Geoff Searle James Smith Sid Watts Judy Woods
1st Quarter inside:	James Davis Jack Phur
1st Quarter as Conductor	Sue Bassett Alan Phipps
50th Quarter:	Debbie Brady
250th Quarter:	Daniel Brady
300th Quarter:	Jacqueline Barlow
1000th Quarter:	Richard Young
1600th Quarter:	Graham Heath
100th Quarter as cond:	Daniel Brady
800th Quarter as Cond:	Mike Birkbeck
1st Peal:	Colin Friend Albert Gordon
1st Peal as Conductor:	Richard Barclay
1500th Peal as conductor	John Keeler
450th Peal:	Michael Birkbeck
5000th Tower visited	Pat Phipps

Please note that this information is taken from *campanophile.co.uk* and *kcacr.org.uk*. However the only way to be certain that your achievement is included is to e-mail details to thebelfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk. Major milestones only please.

Forthcoming Events

At the time of going to press the District programme for 2013 had not been ratified by the ADM but, in the light of the venue chosen for the Winter Quarterly, it looks odds on that that one at least will be confirmed. Once ratified, full details of the 2013 programme will be posted on the Website. Meanwhile we still have two events to come before the end of the year.



Firstly, on **Saturday 10th November** we have the District **Call Change Striking Contest** which will take place on the back six at St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone. The bells will be available from 9.30am, the draw will take place at 9.45am with the competition commencing at 10am. This is the opportunity for those towers unable to raise a band for the method competition to win a trophy. As well as the winners' shield there will also be a trophy for the band with the most ringers who have never previously rung in the Competition.

Believe it or not Christmas is only ten weeks away. Take time out from Christmas shopping and get into the festive spirit by coming to the **District Carol Service** which this year will be held at Nettlestead. The date is



Saturday 8th December and the Service begins at 4.30pm, preceded by ringing. Following the Service there will be the traditional mulled wine and mince pies.

The first District event of 2013 will be the **Winter Quarterly Meeting**. Subject to ratification of the programme at the ADM it will take place on **Saturday 12th January** on the newly augmented six at Otham. There will be ringing from 3 - 4.30pm followed by tea and Quarterly Business Meeting at 4.30pm, and further ringing afterwards if required.

Keep up to date with what's happening in the Maidstone District at

www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk

Now available on your smartphone
via the QR code below



Ringling for the Diamond Jubilee

The County organised a very successful quarter-peal week to coincide with the Jubilee, in which many of our District ringers took part.

Thank you to all those who took part in any commemorative ringing for the Jubilee and congratulations to all those who rang quarters or peals in the District, especially those achieving any firsts. Below is a summary of the ringing which took place over the course of the quarter peal week. Full details of all the quarter peals can be seen at www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/pdf/quartersforsite.pdf



Notable Footnotes

<i>1st Quarter:</i>	Sid Watts, Jane Higgs, Andy Copas, Jason Gower, Elizabeth Harland, Richard Abnett
<i>1st away from cover:</i>	Scott Gower
<i>1st Inside:</i>	James Davis
<i>1st in method:</i>	Colin Friend
<i>1st Minor:</i>	Jack Phur
<i>1st Surprise Minor:</i>	Daniel Lavender

Friday, 1st June

Leeds *Quarter Peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major conducted by Daniel W Brady*

Saturday, 2nd June

Igham *Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Doubles conducted by Philip R J Barnes*

Hollingbourne *Quarter Peal of Grandsire Minor conducted by Julian R Lees*

Marden *Two Quarter Peals of Plain Bob Doubles conducted by James R S Sawle*

Yalding *Quarter Peal of Bourne Surprise Minor conducted by Daniel W Brady*

Sunday, 3rd June

Bearsted *Quarter Peal of Three Doubles Methods conducted by John H Wale*

Maidstone, All Saints *Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples conducted by Michael A Birkbeck*

Staplehurst *The bells were rung non-stop for 60 minutes, to mark the Queen's 60 years on the throne*

Monday, 4th June

Aylesford *Quarter Peal of Doubles in 2 Methods and One Variation conducted by Darren W Elphick*

West Malling *Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples conducted by Daniel W Brady*

Tuesday, 5th June

Leeds *Quarter Peal of Minor in Two Methods conducted by Christopher R Saunders*

Wednesday, 6th June

Maidstone, *Quarter Peal of Spliced Surprise Minor conducted by Daniel W Brady*

St. Michael & All Angels.

Mereworth *Quarter Peal of Grandsire Doubles conducted by Roy Cox*

Friday, 8th June

Hunton *Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Minor conducted by Daniel W Brady*

Leeds *Quarter Peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor conducted by Daniel W Brady*

Sunday, 10th June

Leeds *Quarter Peal of Doubles in Four Methods conducted by Christopher R Saunders*

Staplehurst *Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples conducted by Daniel W Brady*

District Barbeque

The District BBQ this year was again a great success, helped by the fact that the date chosen - 18th August - was the day on which summer fell this year! 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 two 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 while playing football!

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.

As seen below, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Our thanks to everyone who helped on the day, and to James and Kirsten for hosting.



Top left: *Cooking the food.....*

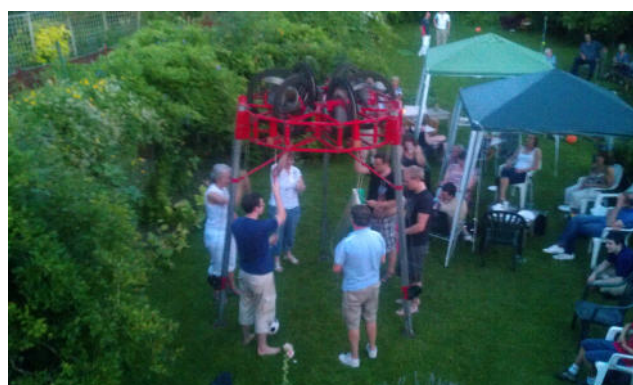
Top right: *The two armed bandits have a go on the mini ring.....*

Bottom left: *.....and eating it*



Bottom right: *.....but perhaps it's a little better to just take one bell each*

Centre: *I think boxes like that could catch on.....*





Maidstone District 120 Club
www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club

Winning numbers March - August 2012

March 2012

1st Prize (£20) 19
 2nd Prize (£15) 40
 3rd Prize (£10) 113
 4th Prize (£5) 27

Drawn at District Practice at Boughton Mon on 10th March

April 2012

1st Prize (£20) 116
 2nd Prize (£15) 32
 3rd Prize (£10) 99
 4th Prize (£5) 61

Drawn at Quarterly Meeting at West Malling on 14th April

May 2012

1st Prize (£20) 34
 2nd Prize (£15) 59
 3rd Prize (£10) 40
 4th Prize (£5) 26

Drawn at District Practice at All Saints Maidstone on 12th May

June 2012

1st Prize (£40) 96
 2nd Prize (£30) 94
 3rd Prize (£20) 80
 4th Prize (£5) 52

Drawn at Striking Contest at Chart Sutton on 9th June

July 2012

1st Prize (£20) 31
 2nd Prize (£15) 66
 3rd Prize (£10) 29
 4th Prize (£5) 69

Drawn at Quarterly Meeting at Hollingbourne on 14th July

August 2012

1st Prize (£20) 52
 2nd Prize (£15) 56
 3rd Prize (£10) 49
 4th Prize (£5) 43

Drawn at Otham Bells Thanks-giving Service on 2nd Sept

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 10th November

Call Change Contest at St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone

Draw 9.45am

An opportunity for those bands with insufficient method ringers, or those with limited experience, to win a trophy. Ringing will be on the back six of this light eight.

Saturday 8th December

District Carol Service at Nettlestead

4.30pm

Start your Christmas celebrations here! Preceded by ringing and followed by the traditional mulled wine and mince pies.

Saturday 12th January

Quarterly District Meeting at Otham

3pm

Your opportunity to sample the District's latest augmented ring of six.

**More information about District Events can be found on our website at
www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk**