

The Belfry

Newsletter of the
KCACR
Maidstone District

May 2015

Issue 100

Editorial

Well, we have made it! After 33 years *The Belfry* in its present incarnation has reached its one hundredth issue. And what a bumper issue we have for our readers this time, even it is a few weeks later than planned.

First and foremost is the news of the election of Tom Barlow as a Vice-President of the KCACR, an honour only bestowed on those who have made an exceptional contribution to the Association. There is no doubt at all that Tom thoroughly deserves this recognition and on behalf of the District I would like to say publicly well done Tom and thanks for all you have done for ringing in Kent over the years.

We have something different on page 3 – a cryptic crossword with clues connected to ringing. Add to this a look back at landmark issues of *The Belfry* and all the usual items and I am sure you will agree that this issue has something for everyone.

Getting to Issue 100 has not always been easy and there have been many highs and lows. There have been many people who have contributed in many ways over the years but there has been one person who has been involved since that very first issue – your editor. In two years' time I will have been on the District Committee for 40 years and editor of *The Belfry* for thirty-five. I will also be reaching a landmark age. Accordingly I feel it is time I took a back seat in District ringing and hand over to someone with fresh ideas who can help lead the District in the 21st century.

I therefore give notice that it is my intention not to stand for re-election at the 2017 ADM. Hopefully this will give time to find someone to replace me on the District Committee and, more importantly, to lead *The Belfry* onwards towards its two hundredth issue.

The Editor



The Maidstone District congratulates

TOM BARLOW

on his election as a

Vice President of the KCACR

6th April 2015



District News

Striking Competitions

After the success of the belated 2014 combined Striking Competitions it was rather disappointing that only two bands entered the 2015 Call Change section and two plus a scratch band the Method Section. A full report is on page 4.

Winter Quarterly Meeting at Birling

The winter Quarterly District Meeting is normally well attended and this year was no exception as 34 ringers came to the first event of 2015 at Birling on Saturday, 10th January, despite the late change in timing from morning to afternoon. We were able to ring both special methods, Grandsire Triples and Lincolnshire Surprise Major, as well as Kent, Stedman, Erin, Bristol, and of course plenty of Rounds and Call Changes and some Plain Hunt. At the brief Business Meeting four new members were elected to the Association and we welcome **Ashliegh Horton** of Marden, **Selina Carter** (Boughton Monchelsea), and **Michelle Clement** and **Peter Titley** (both of Wrotham). The draft minutes of the Meeting can be found on the District website.

Our thanks to the Birling Ringers for the use of the bells and particularly to Sue Wallis who, almost single handedly, provided us with tea and biscuits.

District Practice at Barming

The first District Practice of 2015 on Saturday 14th February was a great success with 34 ringers experiencing the newly refurbished ring of six at Barming (not exactly the same 34 who went to Birling last month!). This enabled several successful attempts at both special methods - Beverley Surprise Minor and Winchendon Place Doubles - along with a variety of other methods from call changes upwards.

There was general agreement that the refurbishment has resulted in a vastly improved go of the bells and David Earl and the Barming ringers, along with bell hangers Whites of Appleton, are to be congratulated on a job well done.



Pictured above are some of our ringers trying out the newly refurbished bells, taken from down in the church.

Spring Quarterly Meeting at Bearsted

It was pleasing to see 30 ringers at Bearsted for the Spring Quarterly Meeting on Saturday 11th April. This enabled us to have several successful attempts at both the special methods, St Simon's Bob Doubles and Surfleet Surprise Minor as well as plenty of call changes and some plain hunt.

At the business meeting **Tony Winckless** of Leeds was elected to the Association as was returning member **Shona Clark** of Aylesford. Our thanks go to the Bearsted ringers for providing tea and cakes - quite a feast for mid-morning!

Around the Towers

Mereworth village Fete is to be held on Saturday 20th June, and the Trafford Ring will be there. We always have good weather for it, (fingers crossed) but last time only a few ringers turned up to ring it, although it proved very successful with the locals, and raised some good money for the church, too.

Barry Evans asks that everyone puts the date in their diaries, and come along to ring these lovely little bells. We can show the locals what bell ringing is all about, and perhaps gain a few new ringers at the same time.

During the afternoon there is a wedding at the Church, which is just across the road, so any ringers that arrive will be welcome to ring the church bells too.

Hollingbourne have an event coming up in support of their bells restoration project. MAOS (Maidstone Operatic Society) are giving a *Songs from the Shows* concert at Hollingbourne Church on Saturday 4th July at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £12 each and include light refreshments. Tickets are available from Pam Nash on 01622 880309, Fred King 01622 745891, or Nigel Baker 07778 691343.

Wrotham bells are back ringing again. Having joined neighbouring Ightham for practices in recent months the Wrotham ringers have decided to continue to have joint practices at Ightham on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Mondays, and at Wrotham on the 2nd and 4th Mondays.

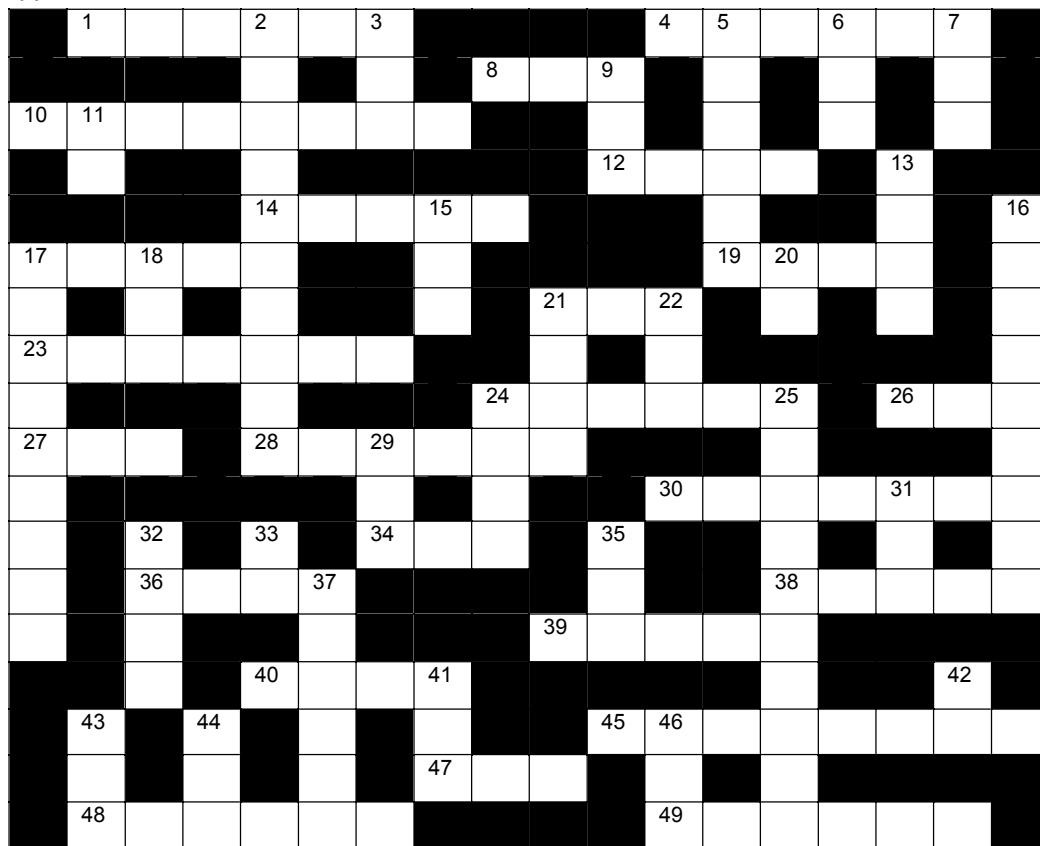
Staplehurst rang their 100th peal on the bells on 18th April. There is a report on page 5.

Finally **Jacqui Barlow** was unwell during the early spring but has now recovered. She would like to thank all her ringing friends for their concern and best wishes while she was recovering.

Ringers' Cryptic Crossword

Something special for our 100th issue! The clues and answers to the crossword below are all connected to ringing - although sometimes rather loosely. Some of the answers are quite straightforward; others are extremely cryptic.

Answers will appear in the next issue. Have fun!



Clues Across

1. Plain seven would be original at this tower (6)
4. A call halfway through a peal perhaps? (6)
8. Not completely busy, this outing transport (3)
10. Council tax on a 3-hour ring? (4,4)
12. Irish Stedman (4)
14. Sounds like the river island has a complete octave (5)
17. After three? (5)
19. Lead, course, part or tail. That's all! (4)
21. False course head, initially (3)
23. We ring twelve in as a rule (7)
24. Has to rearrange the Information Systems examination before standing the bell (4,2)
26. I do not know, but a lady ringer may curtsy instead (3)
27. Argue whether it is handstoke or backstroke when propelling the boat (3)
28. A married man cannot change the coursing order of two bells (6)
30. Reveal that the tenor is not ringing behind (7)
34. Pull with a Scottish bell rope (3)
38. Tangibly not a plain course (5)
39. A battle between two bells ringing simultaneously (5)
40. An elite ringer? They're a load of cobblers (4)
45. Method favoured by little Robert, son of a former Prime Minister, perhaps? (3,5)
47. Does it come home at the end of the lead? (3)
48. Undo the crates and you might find Stedman (6)
49. Attila comes out of One and fifty go in to make another tower (6)

Clues Down

2. An easy touch, whether at his country house, pied-a-terre or Spanish villa (5,5)
3. A Steeplekeeper would be mad if he didn't tighten it occasionally (3)
5. Can't ring a working bell in the churchyard (6)
6. Noise heard in the tower (3)
7. She comes the night before the peal, even if she's backwards (3)
9. Surely a sexist description of a bell (3)
11. In short, Teddy has the blue pencil at the Ringing World (2)
13. If you are, the peal probably will be too (4)
15. Tha' would be upset ringing on Ilkley Moor without one (3)
16. The value of this tower might simply be a small lake (9)
17. A seat of learning...but what you learn will be a surprise (9)
18. The ringers' duty? Not yet, thankfully! (3)
20. What the conductor might shout if the back two were transposed at the end of London (2)
21. A cockney wouldn't expect to pay a peal-fee when ringing the third (4)
22. Treble's going, she's gone...but not necessarily hers (3)
24. If you are, it might cause trouble in Belfast, but not necessarily in Stedman(4)
25. Put the little bells to bed? (4,4,2)
29. Reverse Royal? (3)
31. You will need one of these initially for your simulator (3)
32. Not the sort of rope to have for this sort of touch (4)
33. I'm there at the beginning of the meeting (2)
35. That's the best word uttered in a peal...for everyone (3)
37. What to do if you fancy Sally (6)
41. A striking description...or just plain naughty (3)
42. Sounds like you're looking at more than one (2)
43. Alphabetically it's easy to see, of course, that no bobs have been called (3)
44. Paradoxically you can do it after setting your bell (3)
46. Put most of the soil in the bearings and the bells may run better (3)

Staplehurst make it a Striking Competition double - again

Following the success of the joint Call Change and Method Striking Competition in November when nine bands entered, hopes were high for a similar - or even bigger - entry for the 2015 Striking Competition following the same format and held at Ightham on 14th March.

Alas it proved to be a false dawn as just two towers entered a band in each of the Call Change and Method sections. With one of those towers being Staplehurst, there was little challenge to their recent supremacy and they again ran out winners in both sections. This is the third successive year that Staplehurst have won both shields and this is thought to be the first time that a tower has achieved this - in the Maidstone District at least.

Runners-up in both sections were a combined Ightham/Wrotham band, who also won the trophy for the band having the most ringers not having rung in a striking competition before. Full details of the results were as follows:

Call Change Competition

1st	Staplehurst	<i>Rang 2nd</i>	88%	<i>Some uneven gaps. Tenor a little slow at backstroke, but finished strongly with few errors. Some very good ringing.</i>
2nd	Ightham/Wrotham	<i>Rang 1st</i>	78%	<i>Some uneven gaps, especially when the treble was away from the lead. One or two clashes, but generally good ringing.</i>

Method Competition

1st	Staplehurst	<i>Rang 2nd</i>	87%	<i>Good pace. Just a little uneven in places, but overall some very good ringing which was a delight to listen to.</i>
2nd	Ightham/Wrotham	<i>Rang 1st</i>	76%	<i>A little uneven with some clips and one or two trips. But some good changes in the middle of the piece.</i>
3rd	Scratch band	<i>Rang 3rd</i>	70%	<i>Good pace and some good ringing in places. But three big clashes which the band did well to recover from. A good effort.</i>

Pictured below are members of the winning bands showing off (from left to right) the Call Change shield, the Striking Competition shield and the "competition virgins" shield. On the right are some of the early arrivals making sure that they are first in the tea queue. We are extremely grateful to Richard Abnett and the Ightham ringers for hosting the event and for providing some delicious refreshments.

Because of the small entry our original judges, David and Pam Manger, were stood down as we didn't think it was fair to ask them to do a 50 mile round trip to judge just four pieces of ringing, but we thank them for agreeing to do so in the first place. As it was District Secretary Terry Barnard again judged the Competition and we are very grateful to him for doing so.



100th Peal at Staplehurst

The 100th peal was rung on Staplehurst bells on Saturday 18th April. This is a landmark for any tower but, to make it even more of an achievement, it was rung by the local band. Below is a picture of the successful band in the order in which they rang, front row left to right and back row left to right.



Full details of the peal:

Kent County Association

Staplehurst, Kent

All Saints

Saturday, 18 April 2015 in 3 hours (19–2–7 in Eb)

5000 Plain Bob Royal

Composed by Daniel W Brady

- 1 Deborah C Brady
- 2 J Susan Bassett
- 3 Adam A Brady
- 4 Christopher J Bassett
- 5 Tim Munt
- 6 David C Bassett
- 7 Richard H Bourne
- 8 Stephen P Bassett
- 9 Richard J Barclay
- 10 Daniel W Brady (C)

100th Peal on the bells.

First of Royal: 1, 6 & 7.

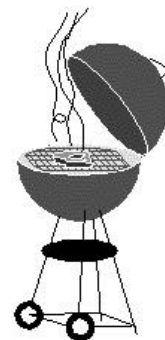
Rung by a local band.

Forthcoming Events

Well, spring is here (according to the calendar at least, if not the weather), the clocks have gone forward and hopefully we can look forward to some nice warm days in the coming months. An ideal opportunity perhaps to get out to some of the District events coming up between now and July. Remember that all our ringing events cater for all levels of ringing from Rounds and Call Changes upwards. Most also include two designated methods, one fairly basic and the other slightly more advanced, to give the keen ringer something to aspire to. However, ringing is tailored to suit those present and, provided you can handle a bell reasonably competently, you will be most welcome.

The next event is a **District Practice**, on the 15cwt eight at Linton. The date is Saturday 13th June and the time as usual will be from 10am to 12noon. The designated special methods are Cambridge Surprise Major and Single Oxford Bob Triples. The blue lines for these are on the back page of this issue and on the District website. Again there will be ample opportunity for Rounds and Call Changes and everyone is most welcome.

Just two weeks later we have the ever popular District Barbeque, on Saturday 27th June. This is currently in the planning stage so no further details are available as we go to press.



More information about this event will be available on the District website when known. Meanwhile please put the date in your diaries now and keep your fingers crossed for good weather!

This brings us to the Summer **District Quarterly Meeting** at West Malling on Saturday 11th July. Please note that, unlike previous years when this meeting has been held on a (normally warm) summer's afternoon, this year it will be a morning event and ringing on the 10¼cwt eight will be from 10am to 12noon with a break of about 30 minutes for the short business meeting. The designated special methods have still to be decided but will appear on the District website when known. Again, all are welcome, whatever your level of ringing and there will of course be plenty of rounds, call changes and Plain Hunt

It is planned to have a **District Outing** some time in August but the precise date and format this will take have yet to be decided. Further details will be in the July issue of *The Belfry* and, as ever, will also be posted on the District website.

Finally, it is proposed to hold the District 10-bell practice at Maidstone, which was cancelled due to a clash with the national VE anniversary ringing event, on a future date as yet to be decided. Due publicity will be given when details are known.

100 Issues of *The Belfry*

This being our 100th issue we thought that our readers might be interested to see what appeared in the very first issue of the current series of *The Belfry* and, for comparison, what was happening at the time of our Silver Jubilee, Golden Jubilee and 75th issues.

OUR VERY FIRST ISSUE appeared in January 1982 and was simply a double-sided single sheet, typed on an antique mechanical machine called a typewriter, and photocopied. The editor was Roy Barclay and production was in the hands of the then District Secretary John Caley.

Nevertheless a considerable amount of news was packed into those humble two sides. The Editorial in that issue for example set out the aims and objectives of the "*Maidstone District Newsletter*" and sought contributions for future issues; it also included a news round-up, details of future events - and asked for suggestions for a name!

A report of the 1981 ADM showed that proceedings took more than two hours and involved almost a complete change of District Officers. The names are quite interesting: Tom Riley (Chairman) and John Caley (Secretary) no longer ring; Nigel Baker, then one of the joint Ringing Masters, is still Tower Captain at Hollingbourne, whilst the other Ringing Master, Phil Barnes still rings at Wrotham and is also County Peal Secretary. Martin Pring, then District Rep, still rings at All Saints Maidstone and Chris Saunders, the other District Rep, has recently returned to the Committee in the same capacity. Only your Editor, Roy Barclay, has remained on the Committee for the whole 33 years.

ISSUE No 25 in March 1989 was quite a small edition - surprisingly perhaps since it was the first one for 8 months. The Editorial looked forward optimistically to the 50th issue "sometime in the mid-nineties". (Well, it wasn't far out!). It exhorted ringers to submit more contributions; people clearly took note as these days several people contribute quite regularly - and we are grateful.

Belfry Gossip congratulated three relatively unknown ringers on their first peals; their names were Michael Birkbeck, Darren Elphick and Mark Gilham! All three are now, of course, accomplished ringers, although Mark doesn't ring very much these days. Congratulations of a different kind were offered to the Editor of *The Belfry* Roy Barclay and his wife Sallyann on the birth of their first child, Richard, who is of course now a far more accomplished ringer than his dad. Maurice Fermor of East Sutton and his wife Irene had celebrated their Golden Wedding and Maurice his 80th birthday

We were sorry to have to report in Issue 25 the death of Eric Boorman, father of Nigel (then of Wateringbury and now in Sussex). Although not a ringer himself, Eric had been a staunch supporter of ringing and ringers.

ISSUE No 50 in May 1996 rejoiced in the fact that, despite many ups and downs, *The Belfry* had reached its Golden Jubilee issue. To mark this achievement there was a guest editorial by Revd Brian Barnes, then Rector of

Staplehurst, who took the theme of noise pollution in society. The conclusion that "most Church bells have been in position a long time and if society decides to allow development that might be disturbed by the visible, audible church that has to be dealt with" is probably more relevant now than ever!

The third in an occasional series entitled *The Personal Touch* featured Mal Williams of Otham. Asked what was his greatest ambition in ringing Mal replied that it would be to see Otham's bells augmented - a dream that eventually came true in 2012. By a sad coincidence Issue 50 also carried an obituary to Eileen Bond, tower secretary at Otham.

Another series appeared for the first time, featuring towers around the District. All Saints Maidstone was the subject and the article included some very interesting historical facts.

There was a report on a "Ones Week" which truly lived up to its name with just one "first" being rung. Meanwhile the County AGM, hosted by Lewisham District reached its lowest ebb with an overpriced lunch and no bar. Rather more successful was the District Darts Tournament which attracted no less than 11 entries, the winners being Birling for the second successive year. Alas this event has long since ceased due to lack of support.

Not all was doom and gloom in 1996 however. Yalding looked forward to a festival weekend to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the casting of their original four bells.

ISSUE 75 appeared in April 2003, by which time it was also available on-line and was thus available to most individual ringers at the click of a mouse. One of the main themes in this issue was training matters. A thought-provoking editorial looked at the learning curve in ringing and, in a separate article, Sue Bassett looked at the new District Training video *Look To and Learn* and discussed training teachers and teaching learners.

A "Top Tower" competition was launched, assessing a variety of areas that encourage good ringing opportunities including: administration within the tower, local publicity, bell maintenance, safety issues, recruitment, training and welcome of visitors. Again there was little support for this initiative and it was subsequently dropped. On a brighter note, the 120 Club celebrated its 5th birthday and is still continuing to go from strength to strength.


In 2003 Child Protection was beginning to become an important issue and Issue 75 carried an article about Guidelines on Child Protection in the Context of Bellringing. Nowadays this is of course an important facet in almost every aspect of life.

On a personal note the passing was reported of Pamela Housom, tower Secretary at Harrietsham, whilst Tom Cullingworth celebrated his 90th birthday. Achievements in April 2003 included Roland (Fred) King's first quarter of

Minor, ringing the 5th to Plain Bob at Yalding, whilst Richard Barclay took his first tentative steps in Surprise Royal.

Amongst upcoming events was the County AGM which, as this year, was hosted by our District. The venue was to be Staplehurst and a look at the ringing programme shows a remarkable similarity to this year's event at Marden. Well there's no point in re-inventing the wheel...! For a few years during the early part of this century the Striking Competition was held on a knockout basis and we looked forward to the finals between the surviving four teams in June. Alas after a promising start support for this idea waned and we reverted to the one-off contest - which still lacks support. Following the success of the previous year's District Outing, a more ambitious one was proposed for 2003 visiting Norwich with the option of an overnight stay. There is no record of whether this ever happened.

And so on to this, our centenary issue. We hope you have enjoyed the previous 99 and will continue to enjoy *The Belfry* for many years to come. Meanwhile if anyone would like a digital copy of any issue since No 50 they can obtain one by e-mailing the editor at belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk.



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

Winning numbers March - April 2015

March 2015

1st Prize (£20)	107
2nd Prize (£15)	111
3rd Prize (£10)	102
4th Prize (£5)	112

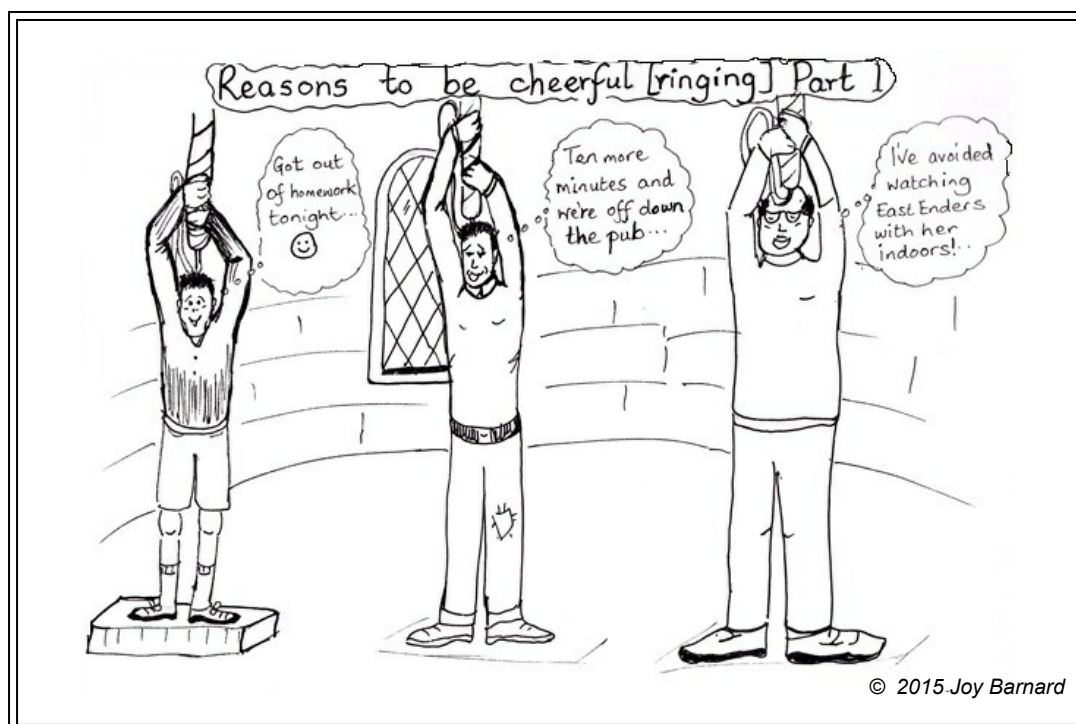
Drawn at the District Striking Competitions at Ightham on 14th March

April 2015

1st Prize (£20)	63
2nd Prize (£15)	43
3rd Prize (£10)	6
4th Prize (£5)	5

Drawn at Quarterly Meeting at Bearsted on 11th April

The 120 Club draw is made monthly from March to December inclusive. Winning numbers appear in "The Belfry" and also on the District website at www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club



Here is the latest in the series of cartoons by Joy Barnard

True or what....!



I'm confused.....

Then let our

Jargon Buster

Help you!

Can you imagine ringing in handcuffs? It is done, and not necessarily by the National Guild of Police Ringers. While you ponder that one, let's have a look at some other common, and not so common, bellringing terms in the latest of our jargon buster series.

Belfry: (Strictly) bell chamber, but sometimes incorrectly used to refer to the ringing chamber. Also the title of the Maidstone District's Quarterly Newsletter.

Blue line: A diagram showing the path of a bell through a method. It can be formed by joining successive positions of one bell when the rows are written under one another. Some publications use a different convention and draw the blue line rotated through 90°, i.e. running from left to right, rather than top to bottom. With this convention, up and down on the page correspond to up and down in the row.

Pivot position: The lead end about which point the work is symmetrical, a point of symmetry in the blue line.

Bob course: A touch containing all bobs and no plain leads.

Cartwheel: Closed lead ringing.

College Youths: The Ancient Society of College Youths. One of two very old ringing organisations (see next entry for the other one) not tied to any specific area or group of ringers. Prior to 1998 membership was restricted to males only.

Cumberlands: The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths. The other of two very old non-territorial ringing organisations mentioned above. Unlike the College Youths, membership has never been restricted by sex.

CRU: Abbreviation for Combination roll up. (Usually in Major) a row ending with any two of 4,5,6 followed by 78 (e.g. 4678).

Exercise, The: Collective word for the ringing fraternity. Originated in the 17th century when young gentry rang bells for exercise.

Extent: The maximum number of different rows on any number of bells, and hence the maximum number of changes that can be made without repeating any rows. Mathematically, this number is calculated as the factorial of the number of bells. The factorial of 4 is $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 = 24$, of 5 is $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 = 120$, etc.

Firing: Bells are fired by ringing them almost simultaneously in ascending sequence, i.e. (rounds backwards). In some places this is traditional after a wedding or other celebration and was recently done at the service at Westminster Abbey commemorating the 70th anniversary of VE Day.

Fish tail: Work resembling a fish's tail, i.e. two points preceded and followed by hunting in opposite directions.

What then are **Handcuffs**? In fact they are a teaching aid sometimes used to help correct bad handling involving excessive sideways movement of the arms. A loop of rope is twisted into figure of eight, and a hand passed through each loop. This makes it impossible to move the hands far apart. Sounds rather cruel to me, and a little dangerous should anything go wrong!

Please note that most of the above definitions are either taken or based on the book "A Dictionary of Campanology" by David W Struckett (published 1985). If there is ringing terminology which you don't understand e-mail belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk and we will include the answer in the next issue.

County AGM 2015

County AGMs come and go, but this year's was something special (apart of course from the fact that our District organised it!). Firstly the highlight of the day was the election of Tom Barlow as a Vice-president of the KCACR - an honour only bestowed in recognition of outstanding service to the Association. In introducing the motion District Secretary Terry Barnard said *"We in the Maidstone District are concerned that very few of the Association Vice Presidents are ringers or those who had served the exercise of change ringing. With this in mind we would like to propose a new Vice President. This person has served the Association loyally over many, many years, serving as Tower Captain, District Chairman, and for 3 years as the County Chairman. They have rung 2,414 peals - 2,007 of which have been for the Kent County Association. They have rung peals with 1,048 different ringers, some of whom are here today. They continue to provide help to those less able and to inspire those with whom they ring. And I call on the youngest and newest member of Maidstone District - Miss Ashleigh Horton - to read the citation."* Whereupon in a very moving moment young Ashleigh said *"Ladies and Gentlemen, we propose Mr Thomas Barlow of St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone, to be Vice President"*. Retiring Chairman Mike Little then presented Tom with his certificate to a standing ovation.

And it didn't end there. The new County Chairman is our own Daniel Brady who was elected by a majority vote. At 26 years of age Daniel is probably the youngest ever to chair the Association and, with some progressive ideas, we can look forward to some interesting times during his triennium.

The only other changes of officership are Treasurer, where Margaret Funnell pops back out of retirement to take on the thankless task of Treasurer, and Handbook Editor, where Tim Munt steps into Graham Coker's shoes. The vacant position on the "extra three" is filled by Caroline Stockmann.



(Right) a justly proud Tom showing off his certificate whilst (left) Daniel receives his chain of office from outgoing chairman Mike Little.



As usual towers were open on various routes to and from Marden. Open ringing commenced at Marden at 11.00 am, culminating in a wonderful sounding service touch of Stedman Triples by an invited band organised by District Ringing Master Richard Barclay. The service itself was taken by Canon David Grimwood, with the intercessions read by Daniel and Debbie Brady, the readings by Roy Barclay and Doug Davies and the names of those ringers who had passed away since the last AGM remembered by Revd Stanley Evans.

Following the service, everyone moved on to the Memorial Hall and enjoyed a lovely three-course meal organised by the West End Tavern nearly next door. The meeting began at around 2.45pm, with 108 members in attendance. Amongst the business transacted was the adoption of the amended Association rules (albeit with a couple of minor adjustments to satisfy the odd objection), the presentation of certificates to eight members marking their 50 years' membership of the Association - alas none from our District - and of course the election of Tom Barlow as a Vice-President.

All in all a very successful day, for which thanks must go to The Maidstone District Committee for organising the event, and in particular the Marden ringers who shouldered the responsibility of most of the domestic arrangements including liaising with the West End Tavern and the Marden Social Club on the provision of the lunch and beer respectively and, of course, for that most important job of running the bar at very reasonable prices. Thanks also to Marden Church for allowing us to hold the service there and to all the other churches who made their bells available for ringing during the day. Thanks to the Trustees of the Marden Memorial Hall for use of the hall for the Meeting and last but not least to the West End Tavern for providing a good meal at a reasonable price and with excellent service.

To make the day complete, when your editor arrived home he had received an e-mail from Jacqui Barlow saying that Vice-President Tom would like to thank the Maidstone District for setting the ball rolling. Apparently he was "still overwhelmed but very chuffed" and at Jacqui's wish I am passing this on to the District.

Bobble hats and beer

Picture the scene. A cold, dreary afternoon in winter. A group of friends gather to celebrate a couple of birthdays. The alcohol was free flowing and the food was spectacular. We started to review all that we had achieved during the year. For some of us, the highlight had been taking part in a mud run. A 12 km run interrupted by 20 army assault course obstacles. It was tough, painful at times but strangely satisfying. Some mad fools within the group jokingly suggested we do it all again in April at the Hop Farm.

This time, however, we would do it as a team and raise money for a worthy local cause. We chose the bell fund at All Saints, Hollingbourne as they had sportingly posed for the 2015 village calendar.

One of our merry band just happens to be the Events Manager for the Elite pub group, of which the Dirty Habit in Hollingbourne is part. The pub's management team were approached and agreed to co-ordinate the fundraising.

So, we signed on the dotted line and paid our entry fees. At this point, we started to panic as no two Dirty Dozen courses are alike. So how were we going to train for this challenge? All we had to go by were a few hints on how to tackle the obstacles on their website.



Race day arrived. Although the sun was out, it was extremely cold due to a strong northerly wind blowing across the course. We wore our fundraising t-shirts with pride. Nothing was going to stop us from completing this course. Muddy streams, a scramble under barbed wire, ditches, monkey bars (under which was a deep pool of icy water), a log carry, walls and ladders all safely negotiated. After approximately 3 hours we had completed the course.

Once we had crossed the finishing line we were presented with bobble hats and beers.

Later on in the afternoon back at the Dirty Habit, we compared bruises and grazes, aches and pains whilst reliving the experience.

To date, the amount raised is approximately £1000.

Raising money to refurbish or increase the number of bells in your tower is a huge task. As we are all members of the Maidstone District KCACR, we should try to support each other when the need arises. If you have a good idea for raising funds to help a church keep its bells in a ringable condition, don't just leave it as a throw away thought, make it happen.

Paul Bastow (Aylesford)



The next issue of
The Belfry
is scheduled for publication in July

Copy deadline is Saturday 4th July 2015

Articles for publication in the next issue
should be e-mailed to the Editor at
belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk

*Please limit articles to one side
of A4 if possible*

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

www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk

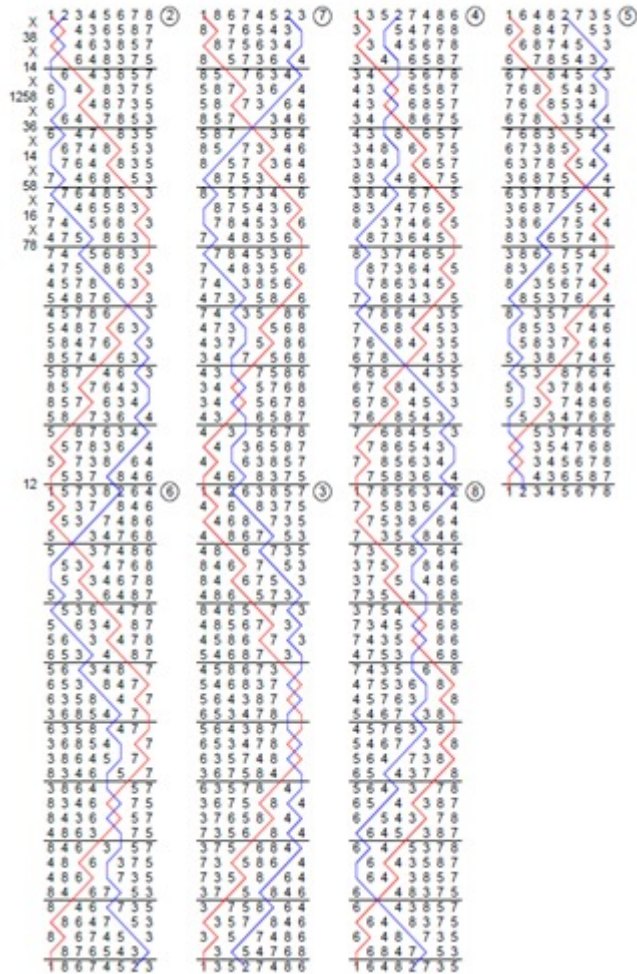
Also available on your smartphone
via the QR code below



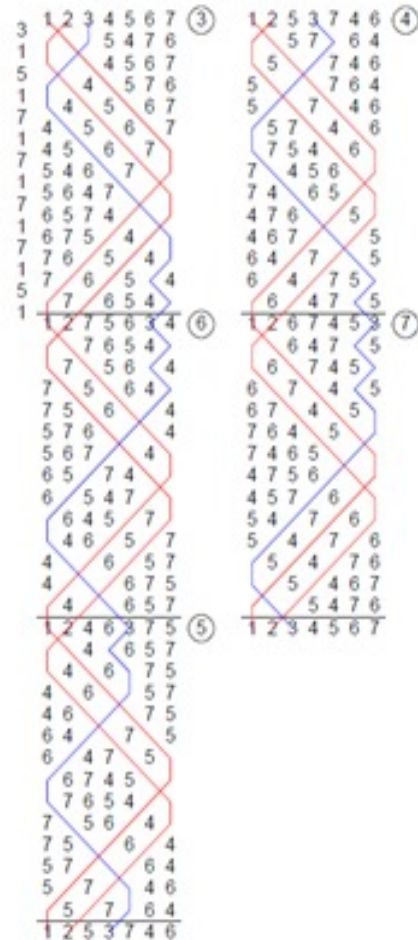
Blue Lines for Special Methods

In future we plan to include the Blue Line for designated special methods at District Meetings in *The Belfry* as well as on the District website. Below are the methods for the Practice Meeting at Linton on Saturday 9th June.

Cambridge Surprise Major



Single Oxford Bob Triples



Forthcoming Events

- | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Saturday 13th June | District Practice at Linton | 10am - 12noon |
| <i>A summer Saturday morning at this 15cwt eight. Ringing for all abilities. All welcome</i> | | |
| Saturday 27th June | District Barbeque (venue tbc) | Timing tbc |
| <i>Venue still to be confirmed.</i> | | |
| Saturday 11th July | Quarterly Meeting at West Malling | 10am - 12noon |
| <i>There will be a break midway through for the Business Meeting.</i> | | |
| Date to be decided | District Outing | All Day |
| <i>Still at planning stage. More details in our next issue</i> | | |

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