

District News 2014

Fred Asprey

We are sorry to have to report the passing of **Fred Asprey** of Lenham. Fred, a former Maidstone District Secretary, passed away peacefully in his sleep on the night of Tuesday 9th/Wednesday 10th December. He had not rung regularly for a few years due to difficulty in getting up the tower stairs at Lenham.

Fred's funeral was held at Lenham Church on Tuesday 23rd December and was followed by a quarter-peal of Grandsire Triples rung by some of his many friends in celebration of his life.

Hollingbourne Barn Dance

The Barn Dance at Downswood Community Centre on 15th November, in aid of the Hollingbourne Bell Restoration Appeal, attracted around 60 people. Although not as many as the previous one in February, because of competing events elsewhere, it was still enjoyed by all those who came - and was far more comfortable for dancing. Apologies for the blurred picture (right) - the liveliness of the dancers was far more than the liveliness of your webmaster's camera phone!



Good turnout for District Striking Competitions

After the apathy of the last few years it was most encouraging that the District Striking Competitions, in their new joint format, attracted an entry of nine bands at Otham on Saturday 8th November.

Five bands entered the Call Change section with the winners being Staplehurst with an impressive 94% accuracy. Staplehurst also finished first of the four bands in the Method section with an 85% accuracy rate. Full results were as follows:



Call Change Competition

1st	Staplehurst	Rang 1st	94%
2nd	Aylesford	Rang 2nd	75%

3rd	Otham	Rang 5th	72%
4th	Leeds	Rang 4th	71%
5th	Marden	Rang 3rd	54%

Method Competition

1st	Staplehurst	Rang 1st	85%
2nd	Aylesford	Rang 2nd	79%
3rd	Leeds	Rang 4th	75%
4th	Marden	Rang 3rd	53%

The two judges were Rhian Bagshaw (Meopham) and Terry Barnard. Rhian said all the ringing was of sufficient standard to grace Sunday service ringing, and congratulated all the teams for entering.

Above is a picture of most of the two Staplehurst bands (three had to leave early so missed the celebrations!). Further pictures and a more detailed report of the day will appear in the January 2015 issue of *The Belfry*.

Barming Bells ringing again

Barming bells were put back in the tower in time to ring half muffled on Remembrance Sunday. Practice nights have now resumed on Friday from 8 pm to 9.15 pm and visitors are of course most welcome.

Annual District Meeting

The Annual District Meeting was held on Saturday, 11th October at Staplehurst. Around 22 people attended and afternoon ringing ranged from Call Changes to Grandsire Caters and Surprise Major. Numbers dropped considerably for the evening ringing, but we were still able to attempt four leads of London Major. At the Business Meeting three new members were elected, District Officers' reports received and the [District Calendar](#) for 2015 agreed.

There is only one change to the [District Committee](#) where Daniel Brady has stepped down as one of the Ringing Masters. His place is taken by Jack Velvick who steps up from being Junior Ringing Master last year to join continuing Ringing Master Richard Barclay. Click for the [draft minutes of the ADM](#).

Call Change Competition on 8th November - Important Notice

As there was no method striking competition this year, the District invites bands to enter bands into a Method ringing category of the November competition at Otham on 8th November. This will therefore serve as both Method ringing and Call Change Competitions, with the Call Change ringing taking place first.

This will necessitate the addition of the following rule to the existing rules for both Competitions:

"While the same band of ringers may ring in both Call Change and Method ringing categories and be placed, they will be limited to winning in only one category. In the case they are placed

first in both categories they forfeit the shield for the Call Change section, this is then passed to the team in second place."

This is of course to prevent a team from whitewashing everyone else, which hopefully wouldn't happen anyway, whilst still allowing bands with smaller numbers to ring.

To clarify; if ringers A, B, C, D, E, F ring in both categories they cannot win both; however if ringer F is replaced by ringer G, then they can.

Entries for both categories should be made to the [District Secretary](#) no later than one week prior to the event.

Kent win Essex Trophy - again!

Congratulations to the Kent County Association band who won the Essex Trophy 10-bell Striking Competition for the third consecutive year at All Saints', Maidstone on Saturday 13th September. As well as being held on our patch, the band included four of our own District ringers - well done Liz Barnes, Adam Brady, Mike Birkbeck and Graham Heath.

Back at Lenham

It was nice to be back at Lenham for a District event after a gap of quite a few years. It was a little disappointing therefore that only 17 members and friends availed themselves of the opportunity to ring on these lovely bells - many of them for the first time. Ringing ranged from Rounds (which included an eight year old learner from Marden, pictured right) up to Stedman Triples. We were also able to ring both designated special methods - Lincolnshire (successfully) and Single Oxford Triples (not so successfully).

Lenham Church was open for tea and cakes whilst we were ringing and it was particularly heartening to hear the comments of the tea ladies about how much they enjoyed hearing the bells rung, and that they missed having a local band to ring them regularly. Food for thought perhaps?



Ringling at Wrotham suspended

We are sorry to report that all ringing at Wrotham is currently suspended due to a broken wheel (pictured right).

An update will be posted here when remedial work has been completed.



Summer Quarterly at Aylesford

The Summer District Quarterly Meeting took place at Aylesford and was attended by 22 members, not bad considering quite a number of regular attenders were away. Ringing ranged from Rounds and Call Changes up to the special methods for the meeting, St Clements College Bob Triples and Superlative Surprise Major. Ringers were treated to tea and coffee during the

ringing and to excellent nibbles and cakes before the Business Meeting for which we thank Tina Bastow.

Please note that the next District event is the Practice Meeting at Lenham on September 13th from 10am - 12noon, as the District Outing has been cancelled (see below).

Latest Issue of *The Belfry* available now

The July Issue of *The Belfry* is now available by clicking [here](#).

Munching and Mini-rings at Marden

Despite the ominous weather forecasts the evening of Saturday 28th June turned out mainly fine with just one short shower for the **District BBQ**.

Following afternoon ringing at Marden tower we walked the few hundred yards to the house of one of the local ringers for a variety of burgers, sausages and chicken. Once again the Trafford Mini-ring was available and some of the younger ones in particular managed to ring quite well on it, including several who had never rung before.



Pictured above is James Davis busy preparing the food, [click](#) the picture to access the full gallery. Meanwhile our thanks go to the Marden ringers for organising and hosting the event.

Not the Striking Competition

For the second successive year the District Striking Competition was cancelled as there was only one entry. Perhaps it is time to think about the future format of Competition Ringing in the District.

However it was not a wasted afternoon as, at very short notice, the event was changed to a District Practice instead. Sixteen people turned up and call changes and the usual standard methods were rung, plus the hurriedly designated special method Woodbine Delight.

We are very grateful to Keith Foxwell and the Stansted ringers for providing some light refreshments and we are pleased that their efforts didn't go to waste!

Obituary - Jack Bishop

We are sad to have to report that Jack Bishop of Snodland died peacefully in the early hours of Friday 13th June. Jack learnt to ring at Snodland during his early teens and, apart from the years spent serving in WW2 and times when the bells were out of action, he rung almost every week

until he became too ill to do so. He will be greatly missed, both for his ringing and his endless fund of stories about his early life in Snodland.

Snodland would appreciate having a peal rung on their bells to celebrate his life; one Saturday in September would be a good time as that is when he and his Margaret would have been celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary . If anyone is interested in getting together a peal band for this could they please e-mail [Sue Brooks](mailto:Sue.Brooks) or telephone 01634 241350 to discuss possible dates.

Encouraging District Practice at Hunton

Seventeen ringers came to the District Practice at Hunton on Saturday 10th May which was quite encouraging, particularly since a number of those who regularly attend District Practices were away on their own tower outings that day. Ringing ranged from rounds and call changes up to Cambridge Surprise Minor. We had a few attempts at Double Oxford and got progressively better, the final one of which saw three people manage their first ever touch in the method. Sadly we didn't have enough to try Beverley, the other special method, but there's always later in the year!

Obituaries

We are sorry to have to report the passing of two people in our District. Firstly **Julian Simpson**, formerly of East Malling, passed away on Tuesday 15th April following a long fight against cancer. Julian had latterly been prevented from ringing by his ill health. His funeral was held at Vinters Park Crematorium on Friday 2nd May.

Peggy Piers-Jones, mother of Simon Wigg, died on Friday 11th April. Although not a ringer herself, in the 1970s she regularly entertained a generation of Maidstone ringers after their peals. Her funeral was held at St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone, on Friday 2nd May.

Not so many at Marden

After such a good turn out at previous meetings so far this year it was a little disappointing that only around 20 people turned up to the Spring Quarterly District Meeting at Marden on Saturday 12th April, and not all at the same time. However there were still enough to ring both the special methods, Single Oxford Bob Triples and Bristol Surprise Major.

At the Business Meeting two new members were elected, Christine Love and Peter Jasper.

Next up is a [District Practice at Hunton](#) on Saturday 10th May.

New issue of *The Belfry* out now

The April 2014 issue of our newsletter *The Belfry* is now available online, together a hard copy version of the [Ringers' Survey](#) mentioned below. To download both please follow their respective links. Don't forget, however, that it is much easier and quicker to fill in the Survey online by clicking [here](#).

Ringers' Survey – What do you want from the Committee?

In order to plan for the future development of the District we would like to know what ringers feel the Committee should be doing for them, particularly in terms of communication. To this end we would urge as many of you as possible to complete the attached online [Ringers' Survey](#). The

survey will also be attached to the forthcoming issue of *The Belfry*, due to be published shortly. The closing date for completing the survey is 30th April. Please be assured that responses are totally anonymous and cannot be traced to any individual participant or tower.

Barming Bells being removed for refurbishment

Barming's six bells are about to be removed for complete refurbishment. The County Restoration Team are removing the bells on April 26th and the last ring will be on Easter Sunday at 9.40am. The last practice night is Friday 11th April from 8 pm to 9.15 pm as there is no ringing on Good Friday. There will also be ringing for the Palm Sunday service on 13th April at 9.40am.

Ringers flood to District Practice at Yalding

The second District Practice of the year was held at Yalding on the morning of Saturday, 8th March - by that time free of the floods which had made it probably the best known village in England. There was an excellent attendance of 32, once again including a good number of young ringers. Several courses of the special methods, York and Single Oxford, were rung together with a variety of ringing from rounds and call changes upwards.

.....and then to the Barn Dance

To complete a very successful Saturday, the Barn Dance in aid of Hollingbourne bells on the evening of Saturday 8th March attracted around 150 people. Excellent organisation by the Hollingbourne Ringers, a great band in Skinner's Rats and plenty of ale - not to mention a tasty ploughman's supper - made for a thoroughly enjoyable evening, as can be seen from the picture to the right.



12-bell Practice at Benenden a great success

The District 12-bell practice at Benenden on Saturday, 8th February was a great success, with 26 people in attendance despite the continuing bad weather. As a result we were able to ring Stedman Cinques, Little Bob Maximus and Royal, Bristol Major (on the light eight), Plain Hunt on 11 and of course plenty of Rounds and Call Changes. It was particularly pleasing to see some of our less experienced ringers taking the opportunity to ring on 12 for the first time - with considerable success.

Our thanks go to local ringers Rod and Karen Lebon for their hospitality and the use of the bells.

Winter Quarterly Meeting at Boxley

The Winter Quarterly Meeting at Boxley on Saturday 11th January attracted 29 people, which enabled us to ring not only the two special methods but plenty of other methods from rounds to London Minor.

At the Business Meeting nine new members were elected to the Association, including five juniors. Probably the highlight of the afternoon

was when four of those, together with our Junior Ringing Master and another youngster who is already a member, rang rounds together in a band (pictured right) with an average age of under 13 years. Surely a good sign for the future of ringing in our District.



[Draft Minutes](#) of the Business Meeting are now available by following the link.

Happy New Year...and welcome back

As regular visitors to this site will have noticed, updates have been sporadic to say the least. This has been as a result of technical difficulties which - with the kind help of Daniel Brady - have now hopefully been resolved. We hope to have the whole of the site updated in terms of content over the next week or so. Meanwhile thank you for your patience and have a Happy New Year.