

Master's Annual Report: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Thank you to all of the District members for your commitment to ensuring that ringing in as many towers as possible is maintained and supported. It is a demanding challenge, but one that members are facing positively. Thank you too to the District Officers, who have ensured that the District is running really well.

We have had some glitches this year, such as the cancellation of the event on 10<sup>th</sup> August and the failure to enter a band in the County 8-bell competition, in both cases a result of commitments elsewhere interfering with people's availability. Similarly, the winning team (and the teams that came second and third!) of the District 6-bell competition were not available for the County competition, and I am grateful to Terry Barnard and the St. Michael's, Maidstone, ringers for stepping in at short notice to represent us.

A successful Tower Captain's meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> October, albeit during the ringing before the quarterly meeting. The next one will precede the quarterly at Mereworth on 11<sup>th</sup> January. The positive discussion revealed that several towers are working together in recruiting and teaching new ringers, as well as supporting one another to maintain Sunday ringing. These informal groupings provide a strong base for developing further recruitment and joint teaching opportunities. To ensure consistency and good standards in our teaching, Tower Captains welcomed the suggestion of holding an ART M1 course for the District, funded by the KCACR Training Fund. The course has been arranged for 23<sup>rd</sup> November at Yalding, and is already nearly fully booked – only one or two places still available as I write this!

The importance of safeguarding is well understood in the District, reflected by the number of towers represented at the KCACR C2 training days held this year – a much higher proportion than any other District!

I must apologize for my absence from some of the monthly meetings and practices, the result of previous commitments, such as the Ringing World Board. I am very grateful to Terry Barnard for stepping in readily to pick up the duties. I will try to do much better in 2020, if re-elected.

The August event in 2018 was very successful and useful. It would be great to have a day in August in 2020 along similar lines. Ideally, we need a small group to set it up and manage it. Please come forward if you have any ideas, and are willing to make it happen.

One of the problems that lead to dates clashing is that District meetings are spread across each month, so there are very few, if any, Saturdays available for Association events and training or recruitment days. I understand the original idea was that KCACR Officers could attend meetings in all of the Districts. The only time when this has been important is for attending Annual District meetings, when significant changes need to be discussed. It does not work! For example, this ADM is on the same day as the ADMs in the Canterbury and Lewisham Districts. I would welcome a discussion about a proposal to the AGM suggesting all Districts hold at least some of their quarterly meetings on the same day, to free up Saturdays for other events.

Which brings me to my last point, which is to thank Betsy for all her work in arranging next year's calendar of events, ensuring everyone receives notice of our meetings, agenda and minutes, and that everything is in place for our monthly gatherings, as well as keeping me on track. It is a big job, for which thank you Betsy!

## Secretary's Report 2019

Sadly, I have to report the death in June this year of Maidstone District Member Ken Sussmes. Ken came to ringing late in life in response to a call to help form a team at St Mary's Hunton. He rang regularly at Linton and with COOTS and brought the same enthusiasm to everything he did. Revd David Jones has provided a full Obituary for inclusion in the Handbook 2020.

During the period 13/10/18 to 11/10/19 we've elected 11 new members, 4 of whom are Junior members. District events continue to be well supported by ringers from 93% of active towers in the District. Attendance numbers vary, for instance a high of 40 at the DQM at Harrietsham in January to a low of 7 at the DP at Stansted in September, but normally averaging around 30. The September date however coincided with many other events taking place, including Ride+Stride and Open Church day, where many ringers had overriding commitments. I am pleased to report that visitors from other Districts attended 3 District Practices and 2 Quarterly Meetings and that the Association Youth Officer attended the April Quarterly Meeting.

The District Carol Service at Thurnham was very well attended, despite torrential rainfall. Many thanks to Margaret Plowright for her valuable assistance in the arrangements and helping on the day. Thanks also to Canon John Corbyn for taking the Service and all those providing the readings and music. We look forward to this year's Service at Loose.

Many thanks go to St Michael & All Angels Maidstone ringers for providing at short notice a team for the Association 6-bell Competition at Seal. Full details are included in Terry Barnard's Report.

I am grateful to the Master and Members of the Committee for their help and to the Association Webmaster for his advice on IT issues. Thanks go to my predecessor, Dr Emma Tilston, for handing the Secretaryship on to me in such good order and for her generous help and advice. I would also like to thank the church authorities and correspondents at the towers where events took place and the ringers and members of the congregations for hosting and providing us with excellent refreshments.

A full programme of events has been planned for 2020/21.

Betsy Piercey

I would like to start by thanking Sue Bassett for her hard work over the past 5 years in this post and for all her help in settling me into the role.

In order to maximise the use of modern internet banking I opened a new Club Society's account with Lloyd's Bank and this has enabled me to have an immediate check on the state of the account at any time. Collecting the new year Subs was greatly eased and I would like to thank all Tower secretaries for their help in ensuring we were able to make prompt payment to the Association Treasurer.

## **Membership**

We have welcomed 9 new members this year to date of which 4 are juniors, and Richard and Sylvia Birch have transferred from the Canterbury District. Our total membership for this year has dropped slightly from the previous year but as at the end of September we have 253 members made up of:

103 adults paying £1015  
79 seniors paying £395  
34 seniors with 25+ years payments  
13 juniors paying £65  
20 life members  
4 associate members paying £13

with a total subscription income of **£1488**.

Could members note that, following the decisions made at the Association AGM at Easter, there will no longer be a reduction in subscription rates for any seniors under the age of 80, so **all** adults (other than existing Life Members) will need to pay the new full subscription of **£15** with juniors (under 18) paying £7.50. Members aged 80 or more are not required to pay. It will be interesting to see what effect, if any, this has on our overall membership and subscription income.

## **Bell Restoration Fund**

Generous donations to the Association's BRF, totalling £1417.15, have been received from several towers and with unclaimed 120 Club prizes from previous years (£50) and the sale of Centenary Goblets (£35) we have contributed **£1502.15** to this cause.

Following the doubling of the price (and prizes) of the District's **120 Club**, 110 shares were sold this year and the proceeds, once the remaining prizes for the year have been paid out, will be at least a further **£1021** to the Bell Restoration Fund. Thank you to Mal Williams for all his efforts on this and I am extremely grateful for all those who have enabled me to pay out their winnings directly by bank transfer.

## **Training Fund**

We continue to collect donations at the monthly district events in the 'black box' which has been split between the hosting church and the Association Training Fund. So far this year we have donated **£99.65** to the Training Fund. Several of our members have benefited from attending subsidised courses run by the Association of Ringing Teachers.

Liz Barnes  
District Treasurer and Membership Secretary

29th September 2019

## **Ringling Master's Report 2019**

For this year we've seen mostly encouraging attendances at district events. Of necessity a lot of the ringing at these events has been rounds and call changes to cater for our less experienced ringers. But we have also rung more advanced methods, up to surprise major.

As with last year we purposely did not set any special methods as this has allowed each practice to cater better to those in attendance. It also meant that there was more time to devote to individual requests when any were forthcoming.

East Malling hosted the Maidstone District 6-bell Striking Competition on a beautiful sunny morning on 9 March. There were two rounds with six teams entering for the call change round and four teams entering the method striking round. East Malling were worthy winners of the call change competition. Staplehurst surprised us by ringing Cambridge Surprise Minor for their test piece and rang it so well they fully deserved to re-take the striking competition trophy. Marden won the trophy for the 'Most Improved Band'. Our thanks go to Sue Payne and all the East Malling helpers for hosting the event.

Unfortunately it did not prove possible to organise a summer event this year. And similarly it was not possible to enter a District team for the Association 8-bell competition. This was rather indicative of a worrying trend for the District during the summer period as the District Practice at Stansted on 14 September was attended by only 7 people. Two of those were local ringers and four were District officials. Stansted now has the dubious honour of having the most attendees at a District event – over 50 in April 2016 - and the least with just 7.

The Tonbridge District hosted the Association 6-bell competition on 28 September at Seal. The District's striking competition winners, Staplehurst were unable to field a team because it clashed with Richard Barclay's wedding. Similarly, the runners-up, All Saints Maidstone could not take part. Thankfully the band at St Michael and All Angels Maidstone stepped into the breach to represent the District. The test piece that was rung was 240 plain bob doubles, and the judges remarked that we used the practice time well to practice the start, the tenor was very consistent, and the ringing got better throughout. The competition was won by the Canterbury District, with Tonbridge second and Maidstone a very creditable third.

I have enjoyed being your Ringing Master for a third year, and hope that all District events are well attended and are enjoyable and fun.

**Terry Barnard**

## **Communications Officer's Report 2019**

Following from Simon's and Doug's effort and big changes last year, with the move from the association website to the district website, this year has been largely care taking activities: posting news, events, meeting agendas and minutes and updating tower contact details and posting the 120 Club draw results! In addition to the shared Google calendar we now cross post events to BellBoard to increase our audience. I am happy to stand again as Communications Officer for the coming year.

Mark Elvers

## Youth Co-ordinator Report 2019

The Maidstone District provided the venues for the majority of the monthly KYR practices and MINI-Ringers practices in 2018/2019. These were mainly: Aylesford, Hollingbourne, Marden and East Farleigh. Thanks to all the towers who have hosted KYRs for your support & encouragement which is greatly appreciated. Once again Jen Thomas has done a fantastic job at organising a very full and enjoyable programme for KYRs and MINI-Ringers.

The Maidstone District has had 2-3 Young Ringers along with a couple of MINI-Ringers attend the monthly practices when they can. They also attend other events when able to and over the last year this has included the following:

- Weekend trip to The New Forest, April 2019. Two Young Ringers from the Maidstone District attended this trip and thoroughly enjoyed it! There was lots of ringing at different churches on different bells. Handbells were also rung. One great achievement for all the Young Ringers on this weekend was to ring rounds and call changes and also Plain Hunt on 10 & 12.
- RWNYC (Ringing World National Youth Contest) Liverpool July 2019. One Young Ringer from the Maidstone District was part of the Kent team which participated in this contest and went on to come 2<sup>nd</sup> overall out of 24 teams and brought home the Ringing World Editor's Trophy Award for Excellence ! Well done team Kent!
- 200 years of bells at The Waterloo Tower, Quex Park. Young ringers were invited to ring on the bells at Quex Park for an afternoon to celebrate the above event. One member of the Maidstone District attended and joined in with ringing, BBQ and even rang a quarter Peal.

Quarter Peals. A couple of Young Ringers in our district have rung their first Quarter Peals during 2019.

Victoria Higgs ( Marden) has rung 2 quarter peals to date, her first was with a band consisting of other Kent Young Ringers. Well done and let's double that next year!??

Callum Clark ( Aylesford) rang his first quarter peal in January 2019 and to date has rung a total of 14. One of these, again, was with a band consisting of other Kent Young Ringers. His latest achievement was first inside to a quarter peal of P B Doubles. Well done. What will you achieve in 2020!??

### **So, What's next????**

The next event for KYRs is the Inter-District Striking Competition on 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Sturry, Canterbury from 1.30pm. If any young ringer would like to participate in this competition (Call Changes) then please get in touch with your District Youth Co-ordinator, Shona Clark.

## 2019/2020

One Young Ringer from The Maidstone District is attending the ART training course, module 1.

A Seminar on calling touches and quarter peals is being held for Young Ringers during October half term.

Again, The Maidstone District is providing venues for a reasonable proportion of the 2019/2020 KYR & MINI- Ringers programme, being central in the County and easily accessible by various transport routes. It is planned to increase membership and to this end a newly designed poster has been distributed to all towers in the Maidstone District – Have you got your copy???? If you would like further copies of the recruitment poster or the KYR Calendar of events please contact the Maidstone District Secretary who will be pleased to forward them to you.

Lastly a big “ THANK YOU” to all the towers who have supported KYR and MINI- Ringers, your support is greatly appreciated. Please encourage any Young Ringers at your tower between the age of 11-18 to get in touch with me so they can join in with all the great activities that are available!! I’m hoping over the next year to get around as many towers on their practice nights to introduce myself and meet any Young Ringers you have and help out if required.

Shona Clark – Maidstone District Youth Co-Ordinator.

4<sup>th</sup> October 2019