

125 in 2005

Updated 10 December 2005

KCACR CELEBRATES ITS 125TH BIRTHDAY

We celebrated our 125th birthday in 2005 (**125 in 2005**, geddit), and this section of the KCACR site contains news of events that happened. There are quite a few photos of the luncheon on 14 May available - click [here](#) to see yourself in glorious Technicolor.

We start off with a bit of history . . .



How it all began

Back at the end of the nineteenth century ringers were a pretty unsavoury bunch and there was a general move to improve things across the entire country - the so-called Belfry Reform movement. Many county and diocesan ringing associations were set up in the 1880s and 1890s, more often than not at the instigation of the clergy, and the KCACR was no exception.

Our association was formed at a meeting held at Canterbury Cathedral on Whit Tuesday, 18 May 1880, attended by about 150 ringers from all over the county. The meeting was convened by the Rev Reginald Bridges

Knatchbull-Hugesson (picture on left). At this meeting a resolution, proposed by the Bishop of Dover, "That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that an Association for the cultivation of change ringing be formed in this county", was carried unanimously. About a dozen bands were admitted to membership on that date, one of the founder members being Edward S Ruck, who remained a member for over 86 years.

The Rev K-H became the first General Secretary, a post he held for nine years, until he left the area. At this time he handled all the work of the association (there were by then over 520 members), but on his departure the KCACR was divided into five Districts: Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and Tonbridge. The Lewisham District was not formed until a couple of years later, in 1892.

The Rev K-H was succeeded by the Rev E W Carpenter who remained in office for only two years and was in turn followed by Rev Canon F J O Helmore, who remained in office until ill-health forced him to retire in 1929, just a year before the Golden Jubilee year. Among the many things the Association owes to his foresight are the Belfry Repairs (now Bell Restoration) Fund, which he started in 1895, and the Benevolent Fund. This latter ceased to exist as a separate fund in 1970, but from 1912 onwards used to

assist necessitous or aged members before (and occasionally after) the coming of the Welfare State.

Golden Jubilee

At the Jubilee meeting of the KCACR at Canterbury in 1930, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had preached at the festival service in the Cathedral, presented the Canon with a cheque, a case of pipes [they were the good old days! - Ed] and an illuminated address recording members' appreciation of his services to the Association. Over 400 people attended the service, making this one of the largest assemblies of ringers ever seen at a gathering of this kind.

Another record was set on 15 May 1930 when a peal of 26 Spliced Surprise Minor was rung at Lamberhurst to commemorate the Jubilee. This was conducted by Albert Relfe, and was at the time the greatest number of Surprise methods ever rung to a peal - and it was accomplished by a **local** band!

Centenary

Our hundredth anniversary was again celebrated at Canterbury Cathedral, on 17 May 1980, when no fewer than 700 people gathered in the quire and, as *The Ringing World* put it, "sang the hymns . . . with

the fervour and enjoyment that only bellringers know how".

The service over, the entire congregation assembled for a photograph. This episode caused (according to the *RWagain*) "much fun, with high spirits certainly coming to the fore" [**the mind boggles - Ed**]. A reception for over 250 was held in the Westgate Hall, and included the Mayor and Mayoress of Canterbury, together with sundry bishops and archdeacons. The tickets for the lunch were just £2.60 - but that was 25 years ago.

There were also goodies for sale back in '80 - they called it Centenary-ware (or even bell-mania), and the KCACR Report for that year tells us that they sold 219 mugs, 135 goblets and 114 model bells. It's an interesting reflection on our changing lifestyle when we learn too that they flogged 122 ties and no fewer than 48 ASH TRAYS!

Also, according to the report that year "many" peals were rung to mark the event, but "footnotes to this effect have been omitted from my report", said the Hon Peal Sec. Why this should have been so and who removed them we can't tell, but it means that we can't bring you the relevant statistic you were all looking for.

**125 in
2005**

Once again we headed to Canterbury for our 125th birthday party, and some pictures of the luncheon appear below. The focal point of the celebrations was a wonderful service in the Quire of the Cathedral, led by a choir of ringers ably conducted by Craig Huxley. The address was given by the Rt Rev David Say, formerly Bishop of Rochester and a Vice President of the Association. Now 91 years young, his message from the pulpit was as strong and compelling as ever.

The service was followed by a group photograph taken outside the Cathedral, in the same manner as those taken for the 50th and centenary celebrations in 1930 and 1980 (more details below). Lunch and speeches followed, after which time was well spent renewing old acquaintances and reminiscing.

***Thanks to David Manger
for the Canterbury
writeup***

THE 125 IN 2005 LUNCHEON

Click on the small image to see a larger version, then click on the <back> button on your browser to return to the thumbnails again. Once on the large version of the piccy you may right click and choose to save it on your own computer.





THE GROUP PHOTO

The group photo is now available - click [here](#) to have a preview. If you hover your mouse over the bottom right-hand corner you'll get an option to display a rather larger version - though exact results will depend on your system.

These colour photos (size approx 5' x 48') are available from Jo Horton, 20 Hudson Close, Sturry, Canterbury CT2 0TX. The price is £15 unmounted, and cheques should be made payable to Jo.

PEALS AND QUARTERS

There were two peals rung: Grandsire Triples at Tenderden on 7 May and Stedman Cinques at Canterbury Cathedral on 14 May, both conducted by Richard Edwards.

In addition quarters were rung at: Ashford (Bob Caters), Birchington (Quex Park) (11 Doubles), Brabourne (Grandsire Triples), Canterbury (Cathedral) (Grandsire Cinques), Chartham (Bob Doubles), Erith (Christ Church) (Grandsire Doubles), Frittenden (Medway S Major), Gillingham (2 Doubles), Godmersham (3 Doubles), Great Chart (Little Bob Major), Hadlow (Bob Minor), Hawkhurst (Grandsire Doubles), High Halden (Morpeth S Minor), Hothfield (Bob Doubles), Hythe (Grandsire Caters), Kennington (Bob Doubles), Lyminge (Rutland S Major), Smarden (2 Doubles), Speldhurst (Bob Minor), Stone-in-Oxney (Bob Doubles), Stowting (Bob Minor), Sturry (Bob Minor), Tenderden (London S Major), Thanington (Bob Doubles), Wittersham (Bob Doubles).



The band who rang the quarter at the Cathedral prior to the luncheon

[Webmaster's thanks to David Manager for his writeup in the RW of 29 July - the above was all shamelessly nicked from that source.]

MEMORABILIA STUFF



Shown above are the memorabilia items produced by the KCACR to commemorate our 125th anniversary.

The glass tankard is £5, the mug is £3 and the ballpoint is a mere 25p - but several Districts are selling them off at reduced prices now.

All three items are now available from a District bookstall near you.



Some Joker from the Tonbridge District models the tankard.