

ROUNDS & ABOUT

Tonbridge District Newsletter No.9 – November 2023

Please send news and snippets (ringing related) to angelaclarkbuttons@btinternet.com

Business

ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING

Angela Clark

Our Annual meeting at Hadlow in October was certainly worth attending – we had cake!!! Between the ringing, which started at 4 pm, and the meeting at 6 pm, the Hadlow ringers provided tea, coffee, and a lovely selection of cakes.

The Chairman of the KCACR came along – sadly Neil Jones was not wearing his Chain of Office (presumably that only comes out on the day of the Association's BIG meeting). He remarked that we were one of the "more active" Districts, which is good to know.

Only one new member was elected – Alison Wood from Edenbridge, but an existing member joined the 120 Club – tickets still available!

The District Officers were elected for the coming year, these include Joint District Representatives at the KCACR meetings: Eric Roughley and Tessa Worthington. We also welcomed Dmitry Zhuravlev on to the committee. A full list of these folks is on the website.

Discussion took place relating to a "Social Event" and the Committee was charged with looking into the possibility of holding a Trivia Evening once more.

NOTE: NOW BOOKED TO TAKE PLACE ON 13TH APRIL AT LANGTON.

Training

SEPTEMBER TRAINING DAY

Angela Clark

Ray Taylor arranged two Training Days in September – at Speldhurst and Hadlow.

The Leader for the morning ringing at Speldhurst was Anthony Leeves who was, of course, on home ground. Our 3 students were Bob and Mahala Turnbull from Hever and Jeanette Parker from Otford. All clearly made progress and the helpers were able to contribute by ringing rounds, plain hunt and call changes – a most enjoyable Saturday morning.

The Group at Hadlow, led by Ray Taylor on their Raising and Lowering morning were much rewarded by progress made. Alison Wood (Edenbridge), Carolyne and Steve Sullivan (Shipbourne), and Katie Malpass (Tonbridge) certainly benefited. This essential part of ringing is attainable but, like everything else, needs practice.

Ray works hard to arrange the Training in our District and these events are of benefit to both students and helpers and, honestly, are good fun.

OCTOBER TRAINING DAY

Angela Clark

Emma looked after three students at Speldhurst: They practiced the ultimate in ringing – all were encouraged to turn and face the wall and ring by sound alone. It proved to be as challenging for the helpers as the students!



At Hadlow our Plain Hunt students were also well on top of Ray's encouragement – not in the least fazed by ringing Flying Dutchman which proved great fun. For those, like myself who had no idea: it is a Grandsire start, then plain hunt. It never comes round, so you merely continue ringing until someone says either "Rounds" or "Stand".

TEACHING BELL HANDLING

Ray Taylor

In the July edition of *Rounds and About* (No.7) I offered to organise an ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) course on 'Teaching Bell Handling' if there was sufficient interest. I am pleased to write that 10 ringers from the Tonbridge District and 2 from Ashford District met at St Bartholomew's, Otford on 28th October for that purpose. My thanks to Janet and Martin Whitehead for their help in making the arrangements for the course.

The course leader was Nick Brett from Rugby. Nick showed presentations on effective teaching, and videos relating to the early stages of getting a new ringer to handle a bell unaided. There were helpful practical sessions where we could pair up and practice teaching each other. A lot of emphasis was placed on observing all aspects of a new ringer's bell handling, and correcting faults that might hamper future ringing progress. The benefits of teaching in pairs or groups and taking videos (with consent!) was discussed, to provide observation from different angles or afterwards.



I have been involved in bell ringing teaching for 30 years, first as a student, then as a helper, now as a leader. I learned most as a helper, with the opportunity to listen to instructions to students and to use them to improve my own ringing! If you are interested in gaining the skills and confidence to help others to learn to ring, and are available on some Saturdays, then please let me know and come along as a helper at any of our training sessions. Helping others to succeed can be very rewarding.

Ray Taylor, Tonbridge District Training Coordinator, rayt142536@gmail.com 07973 123 323

MEMBERS' MILESTONES

Jacqui Fletcher

Ringling triumphs for our learners in Tonbridge from Jacqui Fletcher:

Dmitry Zhuravlev Covering to a touch of doubles and ringing down in peal
Debs Williams Hunting to Grandsire Doubles and Raising and lowering a bell

LIGHT BULB MOMENT?

Have you had a ringing 'light bulb moment' when something you have been struggling with has suddenly made perfect sense?

Did you hear a few words or see something that was really helpful?

We want to hear from you!!!



Recruitment

FABULOUS FILMS TO WATCH

Jen Thomas

"Just a delight". "I loved the enthusiasm". "Such a positive depiction of bellringing". "What a wonderful watch". "Superb - I have just smiled through the whole thing". "So proud of her... and them all". "Brilliant. It has a great sense of joy and achievement about it". "Very good...ideal for my recruitment bash". "Very well produced... an excellent advert for the hobby". "Great educational video". "My family loved it". "The handbells were my favourite bit".

I am, of course, totally biased, but these comments sum up my thoughts about the new YouTube videos:

1) Discovering BELLRINGING

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGuJxuCH8xw&list=PLmJrg8h0wm_qcpL89bKrMPvpDT8YEgs_2&index=1

2) Enjoyment from BELLRINGING

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjQCmBYKea8&list=PLmJrg8h0wm_qcpL89bKrMPvpDT8YEgs_2&index=2

These promotional films were commissioned by the Central Council to give a more positive and modern portrayal of bellringing. The first one is 9 minutes long and features ringing from Barbon in Cumbria, East Grinstead, Horsham, Itchingfield, Shipley, Skipton and our own Kent Young Ringers and Kent MINI-Ringers, filmed at Aylesford.

The second one is just two minutes long with a number of young and older, new and more experienced ringers commenting on the different aspects of ringing they enjoy... it really is a multi-faceted art.

The films were made by George Perrin whose very first film project (I believe) was The Craft of BELLRINGING, which featured John Eisel, our own Frank Lewis and Michael Moreton, amongst others. This was a much more in-depth exploration of ringing, lasting 47 minutes, but definitely still worth a watch once you have been "hooked" by the two new ones.

The two new videos can be found on the CCCBR YouTube channel and are designed for you to download and use as a promotional and recruitment tool for use in your own churches, villages, towns. Show them to your congregations, Scout troops, Guide companies, Women's Institute groups, Men's Fellowship.... indeed, to anyone you can possibly think of..... share, share, share!!!

From the Tonbridge District Hannah and Laura ring handbells with Adam and discuss the Young Ringers' Trophy and Florence and Matthew, along with several other youngsters say what they particularly enjoy about ringing.

News

6-BELL STRIKING COMPETITION AT MONKTON

Angela Clark

The 6-Bell Striking Competition was revived once more, having not taken place for 3 years. Two teams from our District represented us at Monkton in the Canterbury District - a fairly new ring of 6 (augmented from 4) with a tenor of about 7cwt. 4 teams entered with the test piece 240 changes of either doubles or minor and Hadlow came second, losing to Sturry by only 1%.

During the afternoon the first Call Change Competition took place. Included to promote better striking. Again, there were 4 teams and we were delighted that our very own Cowden team came 1st with 3 faults fewer than Rochester in 2nd place.



Many congratulations to both Hadlow and Cowden, we are proud of you.

COWDEN OUTING

Robin Rouse

The Cowden Bellringer's Outing this year was to the Romney Marsh area with five towers booked. First stop was St. Mary's Church, Rye where we enjoyed ringing the rather heavy eight. After about fifty minutes we all adjourned to the top of the tower to enjoy the fabulous views over the rooftops to the flat marshland and grazing sheep beyond. It was here at Rye that I first detected that there was a saboteur in our midst. As the spider was raised at the end it was apparent that someone had deliberately inserted one of the hooks under my belt. A most unseemly moment occurred!

It was thus with a feeling of wariness that I approached our next tower, All Saints, Lydd. Another ring of eight, my favourite of the day. All Saints is also known as "The Cathedral of the Marsh" due to its very long nave. The tower is also one of the tallest in the county at 132 feet. Once again, we climbed onto the roof where we saw Dungeness Power Station and the white cliffs of Folkestone.

On then to the eight bells of St Nicholas New Romney. It was an anti-clockwise ring thus the inevitable momentarily looking the wrong way occurred! Another enjoyable tower but then it was time for lunch at The Woolpack Inn Warehorne. This most attractive pub was opposite our next tower. The lunch was absolutely delicious and the service excellent but it was here that my saboteur struck again. I saw a ringer I shall not name talking to the young barmen. I ordered a glass of Sauvignon Blanc for Caroline and myself and it was only after I handed it to her that I realised I had been charged £14 a glass. I ungallantly snatched her glass from her before she could touch a drop and rushed to the bar. I was advised that a mistake had occurred and thus I was able to present to Caroline a much-deserved glass of £7 white. Honest mistake, or that smirking ringer as he enjoyed my discomfiture. What do you think??

Warehorne was a nice six and just a little heavier than the six bells in Cowden. Our last stop was at St Mildred's Tenterden, with one of the heaviest rings in Kent, weighing in at almost 28 cwt. This required two people to ring it up and a tall box to stand on.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable outing; we were blessed with fine weather. What so much added to our enjoyment was that friends from Edenbridge and other towers joined us.



The anticlockwise tower at New Romney

TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR CLEANING

Caroline Stockmann

Saturday 2 September saw the Sevenoaks team come together, under the premise of 'many hands make light work'. The intended Spring clean had become an autumn clean, but in fact we'd not done a deep clean in the tower for many years. We had a mother and daughter team of Rachel and Hannah doing the 'heavy lifting' in terms of the tower steps, top to bottom, where lots of debris and rubble had gathered and it needed to be done twice over with brush and pan. Back-breaking work, but the result was worth it I think the team would say. Jane, one of our new ringers took on the cobwebs in the stairwell, supporting Rachel and Hannah. Shirley had done some 'pre-work' on the table drawer contents and books etc with Michael, as she couldn't make the date but wanted to contribute, and found an opportunity when we had sufficient other helpers at a learners' practice. And Michael, Isabel, Caroline and Caroline (with Jane's help pre-spiderweb activity) took everything off the walls and a careful process ensued with walls being cleaned top to bottom and the various pictures etc cleaned in the middle before being placed in the first section of the tower which had been cleaned.

It sounds simple, perhaps even tedious? - but it needed some thought and some corrections along the way, notably at one point when we found dust from above coming down on cleaned items, due to some miscommunication. There was also some feeling at another point that we didn't need to go any further in terms of washing the walls, but our one gentleman in the group was not having any of that! - and the result impressed all of us ladies in the end. The walls are not perfect, as they really need mould treatment and a whitewash, but the difference is quite remarkable.

The key thing in all this, which on reading probably doesn't sound that new or exciting, is that it was very much a team effort, with everyone playing their part. It took 7 of us 3.5 hours from beginning to end, with some prep work from Michael who arranged all the cleaning materials. Now no one dares drop a sweet wrapper on the ringing chamber floor, for fear of one of us swooping down on them to put it in its proper place! And some of us have developed a strange habit of picking up any small piece of detritus found on the tower stairs as we ascend or descend...

Our ringing chamber now looks so much fresher, and cared for, and hopefully this article might encourage you to come along and see for yourselves - and at the same time ring with us on our lovely-sounding 8. We meet most Mondays, a little before 8pm for our learners then full practice from 8-9.30, with a trip to the Anchor afterwards for those interested in such things, and we also ring 10.20-11am and 5.25-6pm on Sundays. All welcome!



DANCING AT PENSHURST

Angela Clark

The Penshurst ringers were delighted to be acknowledged in the Order of Service at the wedding of Christina and James on a lovely sunny September afternoon. Also listed were Rev. Lisa, the choir, and the organist. We were intrigued by an instruction to guests, also in the Leaflet: “to dance at the reception like no one is watching when Chrissy will lead the Macarena.”

Myself and Hamilton had no idea how to do the Macarena so it was just as well we were not invited to the reception at Penshurst Place, but Kate and Caroline knew instantly how it is performed and gave us a demonstration in the churchyard. If, one day, someone invites me to dance the Macarena, I’m ready.

WEDDINGS – WHO NEEDS THE CAPTAIN?

Angela Clark

We assembled to ring for a wedding at Penshurst on a very hot day in September. We expected to be organised by Janice but were greeted by her daughter, Laura, who explained she had been instructed to “go out and earn some money”. The wedding ringing was excellent and Laura was thanked for her calling. She responded “who needs Janice?” That girl will go far!!!

Later the delightful Rector, Lisa, who came to thank us for our ringing, demonstrated how to keep cool – she lifted her heavy cassock revealing her shorts underneath.

120 CLUB

Ray Taylor

Our target is to sell a minimum of 120 shares each year but there is no upper limit on the number of shares that can be sold and entered into draws. Every £10 share sold generates funds for The Kent County Association of Change Ringers to keep ringing active throughout Kent. 122 shares were sold prior to the first draw of the 2023/24 season so we had a bonus prize this year. Please contact me for details if you would like to support bell ringing in Kent through the Tonbridge District 120 Club.

Ray Taylor, rayt142536@gmail.com

7th October 2023 draw at the District Annual Meeting at Hadlow	1	£40	78	Bobbie Fairclough	Otford
	2	£30	53	Emma Tamkin	Speldhurst
	3	£20	51	Lamberhurst Ringers	Lamberhurst
	bonus	£9	108	Catherine Lewis	Brasted

Future delights

QUARTER PEAL AND RINGING TRIUMPHS FORTNIGHT

1st –14th November. Now's the time to do a quarter or two you've been meaning to do and also record something achieved – by any of us.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Please come along to Lamberhurst on 2nd December 1600-1800 for Mulled Wine and Mince Pies. Join us for ringing and some handbells.

JANUARY QUARTERLY MEETING

6th January 2024 – 1000-1200 PENSHURST See you there.

...and FOR YOUR 2024 DIARY

TRIVIA EVENING – Saturday, 13th April 2024 at Langton Green Village Hall

Tail end

SQUIRRELS WERE RELIGIOUS

Collected by Anthony Leeves

The Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide

The Episcopalians tried a much more unique path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol poisoning. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do.

But the Catholic church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR
MEMBERS FROM ANGELA AND THE
COMMITTEE**

