

# ROUNDS & ABOUT

Tonbridge District Newsletter No.11 February 2024

Please send news and snippets (ringing related) to [angelaclarkbuttons@btinternet.com](mailto:angelaclarkbuttons@btinternet.com)

## TRIVIA EVENING 2024 - Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR TICKETS YET ???????  
If not, contact Hamilton Woods – places are strictly limited

[hamwoods@kent2.co.uk](mailto:hamwoods@kent2.co.uk)

Tel: 01732 463240 / 07442 128746

THE TONBRIDGE DISTRICT OF THE KCACR  
PROUDLY PRESENTS:

Draw number: 95

### the Trivia Evening



Saturday 13th April 2024  
Questions begin at 7pm sharp  
Langton Green Village Hall,  
Langton Green,  
Tonbridge Wells TN3 0JJ

ticket (including supper)  
Adults £12 Under 16s £6  
Family (2+2) £30  
Bring your own plates, cutlery,  
drinks & glasses.  
Candelbra optional!  
A pudding per table also.

Profits to KCACR Funds

### Training

#### DODGING AT SPELDHURST

Dodging at Speldhurst went well. We had a theory session to see the pattern. we also walked the pattern like line dancing. This, for me, helped to feel the rhythm. Then it was crunch time to put theory into practice ... we started with Dodging with one bell and then built it up to treble bob minimus which didn't seem too bad. With Treble bob on six (minor) we all seemed to manage going up - easier than coming down - so practise practise practise as bell handling and control is key. We were all grateful for everyone's time and patience and it was another huge leap on our ringing journey.

..... and we are going to run out of board soon!

Deb Williams



## News

### JANUARY QUARTERLY MEETING

Angela Clark

The first Saturday in every New Year is Quarterly Meeting Day in the District. Historically well attended and always fun, but we were not prepared, but delighted, with an attendance of 34 members.



From the left;\_ Charles Fuller-Rowell, Esther Haswell, Kathryn Malpass, Daniel Schaller, Otto Hall, Lucy Menard, Adie Grummett and Alexis Wylie

### CATHERINE IS 80 !!!!!

Catherine Lewis, who has been a great friend to ringing, and especially to the Tonbridge District, for more years than we can remember, was 80 in January. Tessa and Mike took some flowers to her home in Brasted, together with a card which many of us signed at the Quarterly Meeting. Catherine was delighted.

Angela Clark/Tessa Worthington



## MANY CONGRATULATIONS

Angela Clark

Dickon Love has been awarded the MBE for services to bell ringing in the New Year's Honours List. Dickon has worked tirelessly in both Kent and London in relation to rehangs, refurbishing existing rings, and introducing ringing in general. He has been a good friend to the KCACR.



## ROGER PICKARD

Ray Taylor

Those who remember Roger will be sad to learn of his death on Boxing Day. Our thoughts are with Marian, Christopher, Stella and James.

Roger and Marian Pickard were members of the KCACR and Hadlow band from 1986 until 2004, before moving to Herefordshire. They were both very active members of our band and great fun, sharing a wicked sense of humour. Marian was passionate about ringing and did not let her partial sight hold her back. It was Marian, along with Tessa Worthington, who set up the Tonbridge District 120 Club. Roger's primary interest, however, was astronomy. He was President of the British Astronomical Association from 2007-2009 and Director of the Variable Star Section of the BAA from 1999-2019. Roger was awarded the Merlin Medal and Gift in 2020 for his contribution to the advancement of astronomy. He was also annoyingly good at Bridge!

Howard Rogers has "*Fond memories of sitting in the observatory at the back of his home in Appletons and peering at incomprehensible numbers on a computer screen fed from his enormous telescope and Roger trying to explain to me how exciting they were! Somehow I've forgotten his explanation about how High-Amplitude Delta Scuti Stars were related to eclipsing cataclysmic variable ones! The ever good and liquid hospitality seems to have blurred that bit!!*"



## KENT BORDER RINGERS' OUTING – January 13th 2024 Roberta Weatherley

What do you do on a very cold dull day in the middle of January? Go on a bell ringing outing of course. This is exactly what 17 of us did on January 13<sup>th</sup>. We comprised ringers from Penshurst, Leigh, Withyham, and Cowden and are loosely known as the Kent Border Ringers.

The purpose of the day was to give our learner ringers (recruited as part of the Ring For the King campaign) experience of different bells. Bearing in mind that the home tower for most of the ringers is Penshurst (lovely bells and can be interesting to ring), discovering other bells is an education. We visited 3 towers, Brasted, Chevening and Otford.

The first difference was to be found at Brasted, where the 8 bells are hung anti clockwise. This proved to be a challenge for at least one of the more experienced ringers (me), who nearly forgot. However the learners didn't forget and ably rang call changes.

The next tower was the wonderfully light and airy Chevening, where we all had to remember to look the other way again as these 8 bells are hung clockwise. Call changes were rung and so was Grandsire Triples and Yorkshire Surprise Major.

Lunch and warmth were provided at the Bricklayer's Arms, Chipstead. As always this was a lovely opportunity to get to know other bell ringers better. Practice nights are often busy, and between trying to remember the dodges for Grandsire doubles and then berating oneself for forgetting them, there isn't always time nor the opportunity to chat to others in depth.

The last tower was Otford. A lovely ring of 6 bells, rung from the ground floor. Although it was only early afternoon the temperature and the light had begun to drop even further. However we were given an extra warm welcome to the tower by Poppy the dog. Here again rounds and call changes were rung, and so was Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire Doubles. We were given such a warm welcome at each of the Towers, so a heartfelt thanks goes out to all those who enabled our visit to take place. The visit itself was organised by Janice Byrne. These things take time and effort to organise, so a very big thankyou goes to Janice from all of us.

One thing that we can all take away from outings such as these is that every tower is different, take nothing for granted, and every single bell in the country is a character in its own right and is to be treated with care and respect



## NAUTICAL HUGO

Angela Clark and Steve Newlands

Hugo Tracey joined the Cowden Christmas outing where they visited, amongst other towers, St Olave, Hart Street (8). In the ringing chamber was an Admiral's hat (nobody knows why) and, of course, Hugo had to wear it.



## THE 120 CLUB DRAW – JANUARY 2024

6 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 draw at the Quarterly Meeting at Penshurst	1	£40	7	Jane Nielson	Chevening
	2	£30	9	Karol Leeves	Speldhurst
	3	£20	114	Louise Nightingale	Cowden

## ALASKA, THE LAST FRONTIER: BEARS, BALD EAGLES ....AND BELLS

Nick Fulford



Mount Redoubt, *Dena'ina* in Athabaskan - 3,108m  
Last erupted in 1989

We are all constantly reminded that whatever future we imagine for ourselves, life has other plans. A glance out of my window today, here in Alaska, with its views over the Cook Inlet, eagles soaring in the thermals coming off the mountains and the volcanic landmark of Mount Redoubt sizzling in the deep red glow of the sunset, I'm reminded that I have been on a very long journey these last several decades. And as if to make sure I don't ever forget, the frequent earth tremors here serve to bring me down to earth with a literal bump.

As a regular member of the Tonbridge band, and erstwhile District Ringing Master, the 70s and 80s seemed to have a regular cadence of Friday practice, Sunday ringing, weddings, district meetings and ringing outings. That same steady rhythm seemed to extend to my working life too, travelling on the 7.38 Charing Cross service every day, delivering me to my office and a job in the gas industry. But as gas became increasingly global, so did I.

My travel assignments started in the early 90s, with regular travel to Japan, Trinidad, and the US, among other places. By 2000 I had moved to Toronto Canada on what was expected to be a two-year secondment, and I haven't really stopped travelling since then.

With some spells back in Britain in the interim, by 2014 my home had become Houston, Texas, which had the major benefit of three tower bell ringing churches, Palmer Episcopal, St Paul's, and St Thomas's. Unlike the UK, with its hundreds of towers within an hour or two drive, the US ringing community is used to being spread out. The so-called Seven Towers festival, in May each year, was one way in which the Houston ringers were able to join with other "local" ringers from Dallas, Shreveport (Louisiana), Texarkana and Little Rock (Arkansas). With some ringers even chartering commuter jets to attend these events, held over a long weekend, the gatherings had a very different feel to Tonbridge district gatherings.

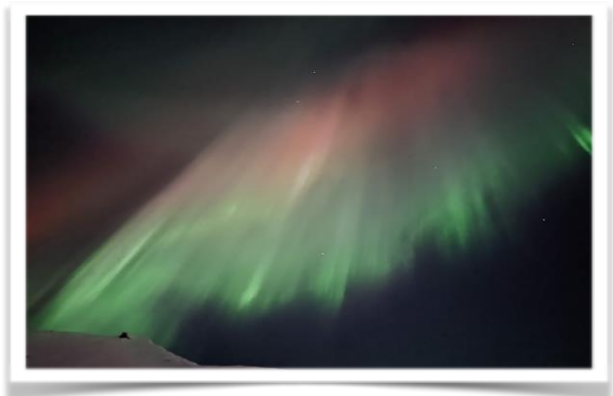
In 2016 and 2017 I was able to give some of my Houston ringing friends a glimpse into traditional English ringing culture through ringing tours, first along the River Thames, and then around the countryside of Kent and Sussex. These visits also established some long-term friendships between my ringing world of the past, in Tonbridge, and my ringing community in the "New World".

My work also enabled me to ring elsewhere in the US and overseas, with more than one opportunity to ring at the wonderful ten bell tower at the National Cathedral in Washington DC, the "new" twelve bell ring at Trinity Wall Street, in NYC, and St James Cathedral in Toronto (another impressive twelve). Further afield, I was able to ring at several towers in Perth, Western Australia, including the Swan Tower, a very contemporary looking glass structure that houses the former ring of bells from St Martin in the Fields (plus many others), and several towers elsewhere in Australia including St John's Cathedral in Brisbane and St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney,

So, bellringing has been a constant and familiar companion on my travels over the years, which has brought fellowship, fulfillment and interest on so many levels.

Now, with my most recent move to Alaska, my access to regular tower bellringing has finally been thwarted. With the nearest towers now needing a three day drive down the infamous Alaska Highway, to Vancouver, Seattle or Calgary, regular tower bell ringing is no longer an option. But I have discovered that interest in bells can take many forms. Although less well known in Britain, in the US "bell choirs" are widespread, well organized, and always willing to entertain new recruits. For the last year I have been ringing in the appropriately named "Northern Lights Ringers" group here in Anchorage, and I'm learning new skills, very much more geared around reading music, counting, and handling more than one bell at once! And instead of "Look to", "Bob" and "Single" I am learning new terms, such as LV, mart, mallet and thumb damp.

In the world of tower bellringing, I usually feel confident and relaxed. In the world of the bell choir, I am very much the novice. It makes me appreciate even more all those ringing recruits I have helped over the years who doggedly turn up week after week, slowly building the skills to fully participate, handle the bell, and graduate to methods. One day I hope to do the same!



They say taking up a new hobby later in life is good for you, so we shall see. Either way, Alaska has been everything I had hoped for and more. With breathtaking scenery at every time of year, incredible wildlife and an extraordinary, intense growing season in the summer, with almost 24 hours of daylight, offset by the cold dark nights in the winter with the most amazing auroral displays that swirl in a mesmerizing coloured cloud some 200km up in the night sky. It is a unique and fascinating place to live and work.

While I shall always miss my regular ringing opportunities in Tonbridge, and most of all the many friends I still have there, life moves on. In primary school, as my awareness of Alaska slowly formed from Ladybird books and geography lessons, I never imagined it would be my home.... but it was just one of those surprises that life has in store. If anyone is interested in experiencing a taste of the “last frontier”, just let me know!

Nick Fulford is a former and still an occasional member of the Tonbridge band.

He can be reached by email  
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## Future Delights

### **NEXT DISTRICT MEETING**

Saturday 2 March at Hever from 10 to 12.

See the last paragraph of Tail End, below – Hever is still waiting for the additional two bells but regarding learners, it ever was thus but not only young men are now being sought – young women are too – as well as anybody else who can climb some stairs, count to 6 and put their arms above their head.!

## Tail End

SENT IN BY ANTHONY LEEVES

From

### *The Bell News and Ringers' Record*

*Dec. 10, 1898*

#### OPENING OF A NEW TREBLE AT HEVER, KENT

Advent Sunday witnessed the opening of a new treble bell to the ring of five at the church of the little village of Hever, in Kent. It is the gift of M. V. Charrington, Esq., a gentleman who has done much for the church since he has resided in the village. The church was built about the year 1200, and contains some very fine brasses, and was completely restored about four years ago. The funds for this, and also for providing a new organ, were, to a great extent, forthcoming from the same source as that for the new bell, which thus forms a fitting finish to the work of restoration. There is no record as to what date bells were first placed in the tower, but it appears from an old register of the churchwardens' accounts, that previous to the year 1702 there were only four bells, as in the entries for that year appear the cost of taking down and conveying the large bell to London, and also another account for taking down and conveying to London the three smaller bells. In the following year (1703) the accounts include the amount paid to Mr. R. Phelps for casting five new bells, and the cost of bringing the new bells from London; also £12 paid to Francis Udall for hanging the bells. The tenor is about 8½ cwt. There is no record of anything more being done until the year 1887, when in commemoration of the Jubilee, the third (which was cracked) was recast, the others quarter-turned, and all rehung with new fittings and frame by Messrs. Gillett and Johnston, of Croydon. The work of casting and hanging the new bell was entrusted to Mears and Stainbank, of Whitechapel Foundry, and they fulfilled the promise to complete the work by Advent. It is of very good tone, weighing about 4½ cwt. In F sharp. It has the inscription, "My lips shall praise Thee O Lord." In response to an invitation from the local ringers, the secretary of the district of the Kent County Association (Mr. W. Latter, of Tunbridge Wells), went down on Saturday to assist at the opening. It was thought desirable to meet on Saturday evening for a short practice, as with one exception none of the local ringers had ever rung on six bells, several 6-scores of Grandsire and Stedman Doubles, and a course or two of Grandsire Minor being rung.

On Sunday morning at seven o'clock the bells were raised in peal, and for over an hour were kept going in Stedman and Grandsire Doubles and Minor. Meeting again at ten o'clock a 720 of Grandsire Minor was rung in 24 minutes. E. Seal, 1; E. Harrington, 2; W. Latter, 3; D. Webb, 4; C. Eastman, 5; F. J. Harrington (conductor), 6. This is very creditable, as four of the ringers had never rung on six bells before the previous evening, and it is the conductor's first attempt to ring a 720. The bells were again rung after the service for a short time. At two o'clock they were again set going to ring the afternoon service, when Stedman and grandsire Doubles and Minor were again rung, and again after the service. There was no dedication ceremony, but the Rector made special reference to the occasion in his sermons both morning and afternoon. At the conclusion of the ringing



Mr. Eastman, sen., on behalf of the local ringers, expressed their thanks to Mr. Latter for his kind assistance to them on this occasion, to which Mr. Latter replied, saying it had been a great pleasure to him to be present at the opening, and he hoped the ringers would make as good progress on six bells as they had done on five.

It is whispered that in the near future there may be another addition to the bells to complete the octave; if this comes to pass it is to be hoped that the young men of the village will come forward and learn good old English art of change-ringing, as it is very difficult to keep up a good band in the villages owing to ringers constantly leaving home to go out into the world. This is the case at Hever, where several of their best ringers have recently left the village, and of course others have to be taught to take their places.

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