

Officer's Reports 2023

Chairman & General Secretary

2023 was the first year of normal ringing and ringing related events since 2019. The Association was able to plan for a full programme of events, some of which built on new ideas from 2022 and more towers found that they were able to return to normal, albeit for some this was a new normal.

Perhaps the biggest change in the Association took place behind the scenes with the migration of our membership database to MemberMojo. This will enable the administration of membership to become easier as well as providing the Association with a more robust system. Huge thanks go to Doug Davis for managing this change.

After taking on the Association Archive, Philippa Rooke, our Librarian moved the contents into temporary storage whilst she assessed the collection and searched for a suitable location in which to store the archive. Although a few places have been suggested, the important factors are finding appropriate storage where it is easy to access the records so we are still considering options.

The first Association event of the year took place in February when the Kent Young Ringers held their annual striking competition at Stansted. All of the Districts managed to enter although two Districts had to merge their teams due to each being unable to field a full team. The standard of ringing was high, as reflected in the final scores, and a team from the Rochester District won the trophy for the first time.

The Maidstone District hosted the Annual General Meeting at Wrotham and the format was the same as in 2022. Tom Winter filled the vacant post of Publicity Officer. Jen Thomas, Dickon Love and Doug Davis stood down as Central Council Reps and their vacancies were filled by Neil Jones, Alexander Runting and Stephanie Runting. The remainder of the General Committee were happy to remain in post and were re-elected. The General Secretary expressed her wish to stand down at the next AGM in 2024.

The General Committee also called for an EGM to consider proposed changes to the wording of the Bell Restoration Fund Rules. The proposal was to make the rules less specific so that the KCACR can attract more inward funding to the BRF. Many corporations are simply not allowed to donate to something with religious or political objects.

May saw the Coronation of HM King Charles III and the Association rose to the occasion with over 180 performances in Kent being listed on Bell Board. For many ringers, this was the first coronation that they had ring for and, thanks to the Ring for the King publicity, this was the first event that some ringers had rung for. The Association also benefited from a great deal of media interest in the run up to the Coronation with features on both local radio and regional television.

Following on from the 8-Bell Competition and Festival of Ringing in 2022, the Ashford District had the task of hosting the event in 2023. The venue for the competition was Lympne and the test piece was a touch of St Clement's College Bob Major. Five Districts were able to participate, and the Canterbury District were congratulated on winning the competition. After a buffet lunch laid on for the teams and supporters, the Ashford District laid on an open afternoon with several Ashford District towers open for general ringing and it was good to see some ringers come along just for this.

July marks the annual Ringing World National Youth Contest which, this year, was in York. A team of six members of KYR took part and achieved 3rd place in the call changes category.

In September, the Association took part in the Essex Trophy 10 bell competition at Walthamstow where the team attained 3rd place. September also marked the reinstatement of the Association 6-Bell striking competition and the introduction of the call-change competition, both of which were cancelled in 2022 due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

The Canterbury hosted the competitions at Monkton where four teams entered each competition. The Canterbury District won the striking competition and Jo Horton of Sturry very kindly donated a plaque to be awarded to the winners of the call-change competition, who were Cowden.

The Memorial Service took place again in November at Rochester Cathedral but again the attendance was not as anticipated. It is hoped that the service will be at Canterbury Cathedral in 2024.

The Association has been gradually developing opportunities for those who teach ringing and have participated in the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) M1 training course. Towards the end of the year, the General Secretary instigated some training hubs which enabled ART M1 participants to be able to work with trainees to assist them with completing the M1 course and to help the trainees develop better bell handling skills. Further details of these appear on the KCACR website.

The General Committee meets four times a year and welcomes suggestions for ringing activities. They also are open for requests for grants towards training and bell restoration projects as well as other support and can also provide advice on these matters. These can be channelled via your District Representative, the Bell Restoration Officer or directly to the General Secretary.

The above is a summary of the activities in 2023, full details are on the KCACR website.

Neil Jones & J Susan Bassett

Youth Officer

- 100 young ringers aged 9 - 23 rang in their home towers around the Association to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May.
- Several youngsters have rung "firsts" in quarter peals, be it covering to P B Doubles, Treble to Doubles, Triples, Major and Cambridge Max, a working bell in Norwich Minor and even Stedman Cinques: congratulations to them all.
- Sessions for our Young Ringers have been held again at Aylesford, Headcorn, Hollingbourne and Marden. Kent MINI-Ringers have rung together at East Farleigh, Frinsted and Kemsing and joined with the KYR for festive ringing at Staplehurst.
- 21 young ringers were thrilled to be involved in the filming at Aylesford of 2 YouTube Videos commissioned by the CCCBR to promote bell ringing: "Discovering Bellringing" and the "Enjoyment of Bellringing". We hope you like the finished product as much as we do: find them on the CCCBR website as well as our own KCACR Facebook page.
- We enjoyed participating in the regional striking contest in Caterham in April and then travelled north to York for this year's national contest (RWNYC) in York, with ringing at Doncaster the following day. Our team with its two new members, one only 10 years old, acquitted themselves very well, gaining 3rd place in our Call Changes category (17 teams). A special highlight was ringing on the superb 12 at York Minster, with two of our youngsters being commended for their ringing of the tenor. Our youngest team member also strapped the tenor, and James, Callum and Ellen rang the 8, 9 and 10 to plain hunt 11 fantastically well (the KCACR Chairman managed to grab the tenor for this!). (See video on Instagram @rwyouthringing)
- A team of 6 also entered the very first KCACR Call Change Contest in Monkton in September and were very pleased to be placed third out of four teams.
- We are looking forward to yet more challenges in 2024!

Jennifer Thomas

Bell Restoration

Biddenden	Inspection.
Brabourne	Inspection and maintenance.
Broomfield	Proposal for a ringing gallery.
Egerton	Inspection and maintenance.
High Halden	Clapper repair.
Ightham	Inspection with work to be done.
Leeds	Clappers serviced and possible work to frame.
Marden	The bells have been removed and will be rehung in the original metal frame (Nicholsons).
Minster-in-Thamet	Inspection and maintenance.
Penshurst	Faculty applied for to rehang with new fittings and re-order the bells.
Ringwold	Inspection and maintenance.
Snodland	Church House Snodland was a church but after becoming redundant, it was converted to a house but retained much of the internal layout of the church. It has a tower, and the intention was to install a 7cwt ring of 6 but only the tenor was put in. Unfortunately, the access to the tower is very small and so I was unable to get to the bell. The owner is hopefully going to send me some video / pictures. The bell is supposed to be in a frame for 6. The bell is chimed twice a year at Christmas and New Year and is rung from the master bedroom ensuite shower!
Southborough	Inspection.
Stone-in-Oxney	Inspection and maintenance.
Tonbridge	May now proceed with some rehangng with new fittings.
Westgate, St James	Inspection.
Woodnesborough	Inspection.

Brian G Butcher