

# ROUNDS & ABOUT

Tonbridge District Newsletter No.19 December 2024

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

## Training

### TRAINING – SPELDHURST 21 DECEMBER

STEVE SULLIVAN

*'Plain Bob Doubles' at SPELDHURST St Mary the Virgin. Leader - Anthony Leeves: Students - Katie Malpass, Steve Sullivan, Carolyne Sullivan and Edward Hutt with Helpers Caroline Levy-Cooper, Elaine Merrylees, Graham Edwards, Ham Woods, Tessa Worthington and Nick Byrne*

Make seconds, dodge down, four fifths, dodge up...and repeat. Easy! Well, not for us novices. Practice makes perfect, and four of us had the pleasure of attending the latest Tonbridge District training session run by Anthony Leeves and supported by six willing helpers.

All the learners were able to choose their method of attack, and all achieved progress under the watchful eye of Anthony and supportive words from the helpers.

We even had time for mince pies from Caroline and date snowballs from Tessa. In this instance we all remembered to make seconds and managed to eat four fifths of the food on offer.

By the end, Carolyne said she would try the 4 and proceeded to ring two perfect courses, Katie rang with serene calmness from the 2, and Ed also rang excellently from the 2. I was allowed to try a touch (unaffected bell of course) which I performed with a touch of incompetence.

We learners are extremely grateful to the experienced ringers who give up their time on a Saturday morning for these sessions, but also the many ringers who give advice and support whenever we enter a tower in the Tonbridge District.

## Future Events

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS TO START 2025

Date	Event	Location	Details
4 <sup>th</sup> Jan	DQM	Brenchley	10-12 noon. Meeting 12 noon
1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Ringing	Chiddingstone	10-12 noon
14-28 <sup>th</sup> Feb	QP Fortnight	Tonbridge District	Please look out for emails
1 <sup>st</sup> March	Ringing	Westerham	10-12 noon

## News

### CHRISTMAS 24 AT SPELDHURST

### VARIOUS

When the District Committee arranged the Christmas ringing at Speldhurst, they had not heard of Storm Darragh. The weather during the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> December was ghastly – very strong winds with disruption on both road and rail - therefore discussion took place whether we ought to cancel.

Bell ringers are, however, made of sterner stuff. Once it was suggested that if fewer turned up there would be more mince pies for us, naturally we went ahead, and 22 attended.

The ringing began at 4 pm and Emma Tamkin ensured that everyone rang with an emphasis on enjoyment and looking forward to Christmas.

Phil and Emma Jarvis brewed a splendid Mulled Wine which was served in the church and the mince pies (plus other delights) were welcomed by everyone.



Between Christmas and New Year, when no one seems to know what day it is, nearly 20 of us managed to gather on Saturday, the 20th of December (or so it felt!) for the Cowden and Friends Christmas Outing. We enjoyed a fantastic day of ringing, history, and good company thanks to Andy Wickenden's excellent planning.

## The Towers

### Caterham Valley

We started the day at St John the Evangelist in Caterham Valley, ringing on 8 bells (17cwt). The church, built in 1882, got its bells in 1975 when they were brought over from the closed church of St Mary the Virgin, Lambeth. Cast between 1723 and 1822 by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, they sounded lovely in their steel frame. There's also a 'Sanctus' bell, cast in 1911, which adds something extra to the tower. But we didn't touch it, no worries.



### Bletchingley

Our second stop was St Mary the Virgin in Bletchingley, a church with over 900 years of history. This tower has 10 bells (16.5cwt), and they were re-hung and updated in 1989 and 1991 by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Some of the bells date back to 1780 and sound fantastic. The ringing rules from an old local society of ringers still hang in the tower, giving us a glimpse into what ringing life was like in the past.



### Godstone

The final ringing spot was St Nicholas in Godstone, where we climbed up the stairs to ring on 8 bells (12cwt). The current bells were recast and added to in 1915 by Gillett and Johnston. The church, restored in 1872 by Sir Gilbert Scott, is full of interesting features, like the Millennium window and a chapel next door dedicated to Mabel Fanny Hunt. It's a beautiful and peaceful setting, perfect for rounding off the ringing.



## A Wonderful Day

The day ran smoothly, and even parking was manageable! Lunch at The Red Barn in Blindley Heath provided the perfect opportunity for everyone to relax and catch up. Although I didn't join, I'd been told that the food and company were excellent.

A big thank you to everyone who came along, and especially to Andy for organising the day so well. It was a brilliant way to finish the year—ringing bells, sharing stories, and enjoying time with friends.

Here's to more outings in 2025!



**AT LEAST SOMEONE'S LISTENING.**

**TESSA WORTHINGTON**

Ringling at St.Peter's T. Wells finished for the year as we rang for their Carol service on the evening of Sun.Dec22nd. Mulled wine and mince pies helped move things along.

We had 6 present, can be more can be less, at our monthly Service ring, only achieved with the support of ringers from Cowden, Whithyham, Hever, (more recently Tonbridge whilst their bells are out) and one or two from T.Wells itself.

The bells continue to be rung, helped by the occasional bit of MOT from 2 of our helpful supporters.

Despite a distinct lack of "enthusiasm" from St.Peter's itself we are always regaled at the door by an elderly gentleman (a sort of meeter-and-greeter I suppose) who shakes our hand vigorously and seems to almost burst with joy at hearing the bells, be they well or badly rung that morning.

Such a reaction is quite unusual these days and maybe tells us that what we continue to do there falleth not on stoney ground.

Our newest recruits at St Lawrence School, Sevenoaks practised very hard in preparation for ringing unassisted for the end of term Christmas service on 19th December.

We have one 10-year-old lad in Year 6, whom we have dubbed "Senior Bellringer", as he has now been ringing for almost 18 months and is very competent in rounds and call changes.

We then have 6 girls, aged 9/10 in Year 5, who started learning at the beginning of the summer term 2024 and 4 boys, same age, who started learning in September 2024. The girls have now been ringing unassisted for 2 weeks and are learning to ring rounds together. The boys have only been ringing unassisted this week and are beginning to ring in rounds with their teachers ready to leap in if necessary! We practise by ringing one whole pull in rounds and stand, then two, three, five whole pulls, so they are aiming at keeping good control of their bells, and getting an approximation of "rounds"!

It's very exciting seeing them make such good progress and become a team.

Our sessions in the last couple of weeks before Christmas were "enhanced" by a little visitor who was very happy to be the centre of attention!

Although 3 youngsters were away ill on 19th December, we had fantastic ringing before the end of term service and again for the Christingle service on 24th December. We were very glad to have "our Flo" with us on 19th Dec, now at Secondary School, but very much part of the Seal Chart family of ringers.



120 CLUB – Last Draw of 2024

1	£20	80	Sarah Pullen	Leigh
2	£15	24	Alan Dunster	Brenchley
3	£10	47	Alan Dunster	Brenchley

## WEDDING – TONBRIDGE RINGER!!!!

ANGELA CLARK

Our very own Tonbridge ringer, Nick Fulford, married Lynsey Slavonic in Alaska on 20<sup>th</sup> December.

Nick lived for several years in Houston and met Lynsey, a musician who comes from Michigan, in the Houston tower – there are 3 rings in Houston but regrettably no bells for them to ring in Alaska.

During Nick's time in the USA the Houston ringers visited the UK, arranged by Nick, on several trips when the Tonbridge band had the pleasure of meeting Lynsey so we were all delighted to hear their wedding news.

Nick's sister, Jane, (also a ringer) was able to attend the wedding and Lynsey's parents were there to wish them well.

## TONBRIDGE – RINGING CONTINUES

ANGELA CLARK

Since our bells were packed off to Loughborough in October, Tonbridge ringers have not been idle.

We have been made very welcome at District towers and have greatly benefited by moving out of our "comfort zone".

Our ringing chamber has continued to be used – on Thursday evenings Pam and Jacqui have been organising Handbell ringing and several of the band have greatly enjoyed the experience.

The set of handbells in the tower are rather heavy and when Phil Jarvis (Hadlow) has joined them (bringing his super handbell set) he proved to be very popular.

When members of the congregation reported their disappointment at not being able to hear the bells at Christmas, our newly formed Handbell team moved into action and at Christmas services they were "rung in" by the team posted inside the West Door. This proved incredibly popular, especially with the children, who were invited to "have a go".



## Tail end (but this one is not a joke)

### CALLING DISTRICT PHOTOGRAPHERS

ANGELA CLARK

The Central Council's Historical and Archive Workgroup are appealing for photographs of the peal boards which are hanging in Ringing Chambers. They are especially asking for those in Kent.

To date, they have acquired several hundred Boards which will be added to their database. These come from all over the world and the earliest are from the eighteenth century.

If you have peal boards in your tower, please photograph them and send to [pealboards@cccbr.org.uk](mailto:pealboards@cccbr.org.uk)