

APRIL 1992

## St. George's, Bickley

Until 1861 Bickley was part of the parish of SS. Peter & Paul, Bromley. In that year, however, the substantial residence of Bickley Park was sold and the new owner, a Mr George Wythes, set about an extensive scheme of development, including the building of a new church. So it was that St. George's church was begun in 1863 and opened for worship in 1864. The church was built of Caen stone in Victorian Gothic style, with a tower and spire measuring 175 feet at the west end. By 1906 deterioration of the stonework necessitated the rebuilding (and slight shortening) of the spire to its present height.

Enemy action during the early years of the second war caused repeated minor damage to the church which was patched up without the need for major structural repair. However, on 18th June, 1944 a flying bomb fell in the adjacent road, destroying the windows and most of the roof, and putting the church out of commission until 1946. At this time the tower contained five bells hung for chiming, the heaviest being about 14cwt. The story of the new ring of bells really starts with the tragic events of 6th April, 1989, when an electrical fault in the base of the tower caused a fire which destroyed the lower part of the tower interior (including the organ) and the nave roof and caused extensive damage to the rest of the church.

The plans to rebuild the church began immediately and the reconstruction commenced in July 1990. During the discussions about the restoration of the church, it was suggested that the old clock chime should be replaced with a new ring of bells of about the same weight, hung for full circle ringing. So it was that in the autumn of 1989 the K.C.A.C.R. bell restoration subcommittee were called in to give advice, and subsequently, in December, 1990 an order was placed with the Whitechapel Bellfoundry for a ring of six bells, with an option on another two as and when funds became available, to be hung in a new eight-bell frame. The old bells and fittings were lowered from the tower by K.C.A.C.R. members under the watchful eye of Peter Romney, the convenor of the County Bell Restoration Sub-committee.

The new bells were cast in July, 1991, attended by several members of the congregation who had travelled up to Whitechapel for the day, and were transported to the church in August. During a brief stay on the tower floor a service of hallowing was held, at which the bells were blessed and named in honour of six English saints. The next day the job of raising the bells into the tower began, and we soon received the news that they were in the tower and ready to be rung. However, the try out had to be delayed for several weeks, as the continuing building work on the tower made access to the ringing chamber impossible.

In the meantime a massive restoration project was under way in the rest of the church. The nave roof was completely rebuilt in its original style, with hammerbeam vaulting, a new concrete floor was laid, the whole building was rewired and replastered, a new organ and choir were installed in the south transept, and statues and artifacts rescued from the fire were carefully cleaned and restored. The tower, the area of the worst damage, has been completely refitted, and now contains two levels of balcony, the second of which forms the ringing chamber. Throughout the restoration the phoenix has been adopted as the symbol of the work. This mythical bird burnt itself to ashes after living for 500 years, then came to life again from the ashes with renewed youth. So it was with St. George's, Bickley that, to quote the words of the Bishop of Rochester in his address at the rededication service, "through the initial tears came the determination to rebuild a church of greater glory". Perhaps the most potent symbol of the restoration is the magnificent west window, high in the wall of the tower. It is an abstract representation of the phoenix by Alisoun Howie, a stained glass artist from north London, and forms an impressive backdrop to the ringing gallery when viewed from the body of the church.

During this period of rebuilding, members of the Lewisham District were hard at work training a band of ringers for the bells. At first teaching was done at the nearby church of The Annunciation, Chislehurst, to whom we are very grateful, but we have now moved to the bells at Bickley itself. We are also very grateful to the ringers of St. Peter & Paul, Bromley, who have made their bells available to us for additional practices, and to David Kingston for his assistance.

The culmination of the whole rebuilding and restoration project came on Saturday 21st December with the festival service of rededication, conducted by the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt. Rev. Michael Turnbull. In his address the Bishop praised the magnificence of the restored church, and gave thanks for the dedication of all those involved in the restoration work, and in particular to Father David Herbert for his spiritual guidance through a very difficult period. After the service a band of ringers representing those who had been involved in the work on the bells rang a touch of Stedman Doubles. Although none of the Bickley ringers are yet able to ring unaided, most of them did then come up and ring some rounds on their new bells, with varying amounts of help. As the congregation departed to the local school for a celebratory buffet lunch, another band of ringers who had been involved in the project rang a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor.

Although sound control has been installed, we are very aware that bells are new to this largely residential area, and so ringing will necessarily be restricted. Practices and service ringing is by arrangement with the District officers. At least for the time being, peal attempts will not be allowed and ringing for other visiting bands will be strictly limited. There will, however be an opportunity for everyone to have a ring on the bells at the District quarterly meeting in the summer.

The details of the bells are as follows:

1 - 4-2-14	2'4"	D#	Gabriel
2 - 5-2-13	2'6½"	C#	Hugh
3 - 6-2-22	2'8½"	B	Augustine
4 - 7-1-26	2'10"	A#	Mary Magdalene
5 - 10-1-11	3'2"	G#	Michael
6 - 14-1-9	3'6½"	F#	George

All the bells were cast by The Whitechapel Foundry, 1991.

After the service of rededication of the church the following quarter-peal was rung by members of K.C.A.C.R., who have been involved in the project to install the bells and train a band of ringers.

St. George, BICKLEY, Kent.

Saturday 21st January, 1991.

1296 CAMBRIDGE SURPRISE MINOR

- 1 - Christopher J. Munday
- 2 - Mary R. Andrews
- 3 - Alan G. Hall
- 4 - Brian G. Butcher
- 5 - Frank W. Lewis
- 6 - Andrew M.J. Young (cond)

First Quarter on the bells.

Rung to celebrate the rededication of the church of St. George.

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT OUR DISTRICT SECRETARY.

It would not surprise me at all if many people in our District were under the impression that between quarterly meetings not much goes on of an administrative nature, just so long as things "happen". If so, this could not be further from the truth. An immense amount of organising has to go on to ensure the smooth running of the District, apart from the mammoth task undertaken at present by Sonia Irwin (our District Ringing Master) in putting together all of the District's regular monthly practices. Most of this falls down to the District Secretary, Miss Mary Andrews, and we are indeed privileged to have somebody who is very willing to give of her time in doing so.

Mary (who will probably not forgive me for quoting dates!) was first elected to the post in 1959, and apart from a three year break from 1973 to 1976, has kept us on the straight and narrow ever since. Such is her wide experience that on a good number of occasions her 'wise counsel' has been sought by other District Secretaries in Kent having just been elected. Each year she has the thankless tasks of collecting subscriptions from people who have "forgotten", letter writing in the organisation of District Meetings - (not to forget 'thank you' letters to incumbents afterwards), minuting Business meetings, and looking after the District's finances, to name but a few. She is held in very high regard by many people throughout Kent and further afield. Many people will remember the presentation made to Mary at the end of her 25th year as District Secretary, at the 1987 ADM held at Greenwich.

Mary was taught to handle a bell at Bexley by Dennis Hall, brother of Alan Hall. In March this year, Mary celebrated her 40th anniversary of starting to ring. You may think that this is commendable, though not remarkable. That is until you hear that apart from her long devoted period as Lewisham District Secretary, she has for most of her ringing life been both Tower Captain and Secretary at Bexley, along with always being a dedicated member of St. Mary's, serves on Bexley's PCC (of which she is currently Secretary), has in the past held the post of District Ringing Master, in more recent years has founded and run her own commercial business, and at the same time has tended for elderly close relations at home. Throughout this time Mary has taught countless people to ring, has most recently been heavily involved in the training of the new band at Bickley, and has given much encouragement to others in the development of their method ringing.

Consequently, it probably will not come as a surprise that her close ringing friends at Bexley wanted to celebrate this anniversary of Mary's in suitable style. Preparations started well back into 1991 for what was to be a "surprise" peal (i.e. unknown by Mary until the actual day), as close as possible to the actual anniversary, the participants being either Bexley ringers or those who have had close association with Mary through ringing. There were many such people who wanted to take part, but for various reasons were unable to, so many in fact that the band was only finalised about a fortnight beforehand! The ringers eventually taking part were four from Bexley (Margaret Bellinger, Ann Saunders, Ken Medhurst, and Percy Hicks), Alex Britton (who did a great deal of his early ringing at Bexley and benefited much from Mary's teaching), Brenda Davies (who learned to ring at Bexley in the 1950's), and her husband Nicholas Davies (who is at present the KCACR County Chairman). In fact Brenda and Nicholas were married at Bexley, and it was particularly appropriate they rang. It was also Brenda's first peal for about 24 years! The peal was conducted by Association Vice-President Philip Corby, who has been a good friend of Mary's for many years.

Needless to say, Mary is nobody's fool, and realised what was going on, especially when there was a big urge to practise Double Norwich Court Bob Major (the chosen method for the peal, it being one of Mary's favourites) at Bexley on Thursday practice nights!

The peal was duly scored (details of which are given) and was of a high standard throughout. Fortunately, Mary was able to be present to hear the final half hour or so. Afterwards the peal band was entertained by Mary at her house with afternoon refreshments, Mary having already hosted a party on the Friday night for Bexley ringers past and present, and having received a presentation from the Bexley PCC in honour of her long and dedicated devotion to the church. Later on the Sunday evening Mary attended a celebration dinner held by some of the Bexley ringers, and she entered to the sound on tape of "her" peal which had been rung earlier in the day.

And so ended a weekend that Mary will probably not forget in a hurry.

Mary, you have always given much for ringing in Kent, and we are all very appreciative of your efforts. Long may you continue.

Kent County Association of Change Ringers

**ST.MARY THE VIRGIN, BEXLEY.**  
Sunday 8th March 1992

5024 Double Norwich Court Bob Major  
rung in 2 hours 36 minutes  
to a composition by E.Barnett (Sen)

- 1 Brenda M Davies
- 2 Margaret E Bellinger
- 3 Nicholas J Davies
- 4 Kenneth Medhurst
- 5 Alexander J Britton
- 6 Ann M Saunders
- 7 Percy W Hicks
- 8 Philip A Corby (Conductor)

Rung in honour of Mary Andrews, on achieving 40 years of ringing at this church.

SPECIAL METHODS AND FURTHER DETAILS

11th April	Quarterly Meeting Crayford Little Court Minor Painswick Surprise Major Please note that ringing starts at 3.30pm and not 3.00pm as advertised	Crayford	3.30pm Ringing
20th April	County AGM Service 12.00 Lunch in village hall followed by meeting Ringing details and lunch bookings from GP Cottle 34 Wentworth Drive Cliffe Woods Rochester NE3 8UL (enclose a SAE)	Meopham, Rochester district	
25th April	Surprise Practice (London and Bristol)	Deptford	10.00am
4th May	Car Treasure Hunt Start 2.00pm Details from David and Jacki Mack - 081 464 3518	Farnborough Church car park	2.00pm
9th May	Evening Practice (Foots Cray Doubles)	Ash	7.00pm
16th May	Surprise Practice (London, Bristol and Glasgow)	Chislehurst, Annunciation	10.00am
30th May	10 bell Practice (Cambridge and Yorkshire Royal)	Beckenham	7.00pm
13th June*	Evening Practice (Erith Little Bob)	Shoreham	7.00pm
20th June	Surprise Practice (Sandiacre and Carlisle)	Chelsfield	10.00am
27th June	County 8 bell competition	Canterbury District	
11th July	Quarterly Meeting	Bickley	3.00pm Ringing 4.30pm Service
18th July	Surprise Practice	Eynsford	10.00am
31st August	District Open Day	All towers	
12th September	Evening Practice	CC Erith	7.00pm
19th September*	Surprise Practice	Chislehurst, St Nicholas	10.00am
26th September	County 6 bell striking Competition District Centenary Service and Tea	TBA Lewisham	5.00pm Service
10th October	ADM	Bromley Parish Church	3.00pm Ringing 4.30pm Service
17th October	Surprise Practice	St John, Erith	10.00am
31st October	County Dinner	Dartford, Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	6.30 for 7.00pm
7th November	Call Change Competition	Eltham	
14th November	Evening Practice	Hayes	7.00pm
21st November	10 bell Practice	Greenwich	10.00am
5th December*	Surprise Practice	Bromley Common	10.00am
12th December	Raising and Lowering Competition Carol Service	Bexley	

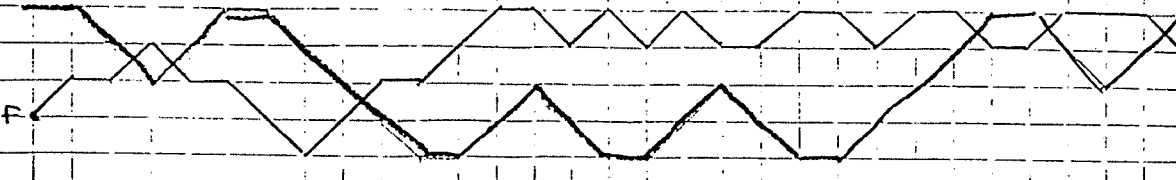
\* To be confirmed

**PLEASE CAN ALL ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER BE TO ANDREW YOUNG  
BY SATURDAY 27 JUNE AT THE LATEST!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THANK YOU**

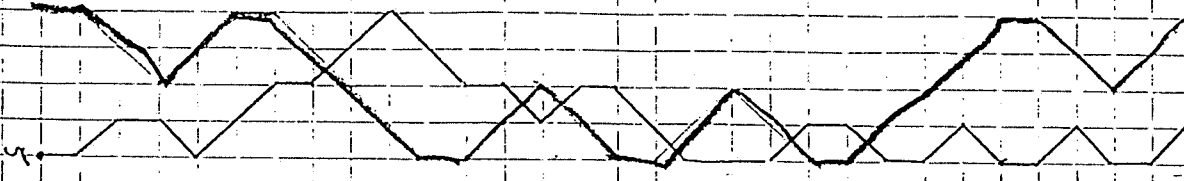
CARLISLE



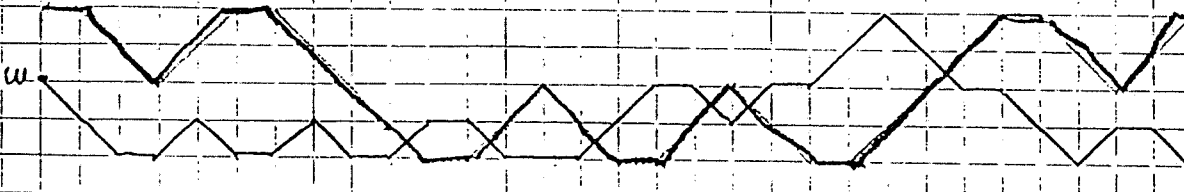
③ 3 4 5



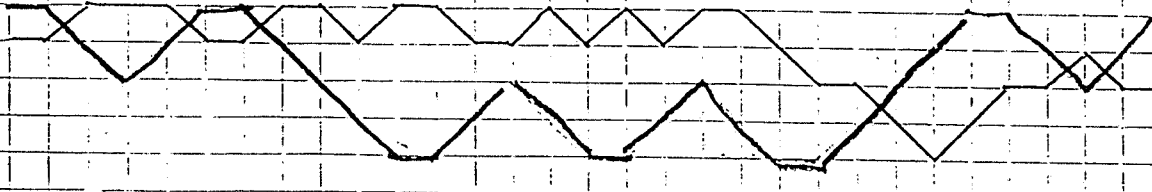
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2 3 4 5

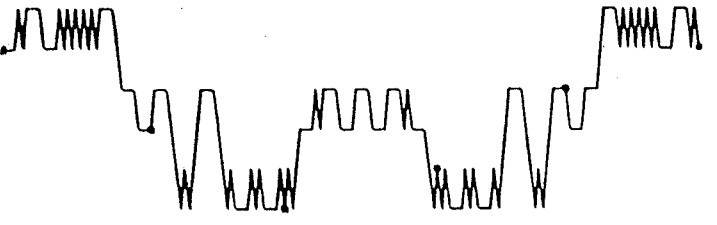


2 3 4 5



FOOTIS  
 CRAY  
 DOUBLES

SANDIACRE



42 Crayford  
Little Court

1	2	3	4	5	6	(2)
2	1	4	3	6	5	
2	4	1	6	3	5	
4	2	6	1	5	3	
4	6	2	1	3	5	
6	4	1	8	5	3	
6	1	4	5	2	3	
1	6	5	4	3	2	(6)
1	5	6	3	4	2	
5	1	3	6	2	4	
5	3	1	2	6	4	
3	5	2	1	4	6	
3	2	5	1	6	4	
2	3	1	5	4	6	
2	1	3	4	5	6	
1	2	4	3	6	5	
1	4	2	6	3	5	(3)
4	1	6	2	5	3	
4	6	1	5	2	3	
6	4	5	1	3	2	
6	5	4	1	2	3	
5	6	1	4	3	2	
5	1	6	3	4	2	
1	5	3	6	2	4	
1	3	5	2	6	4	(4)
3	1	2	5	4	6	
3	2	1	4	5	6	
2	3	4	1	6	5	
2	4	3	1	5	6	
4	2	1	3	6	5	
4	1	2	6	3	5	
1	4	6	2	5	3	
1	6	4	5	2	3	(5)
6	1	5	4	3	2	
6	5	1	3	4	2	
5	6	3	1	2	4	
5	3	6	1	4	2	
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1	3	2	5	4	6	
1	2	3	4	5	6	

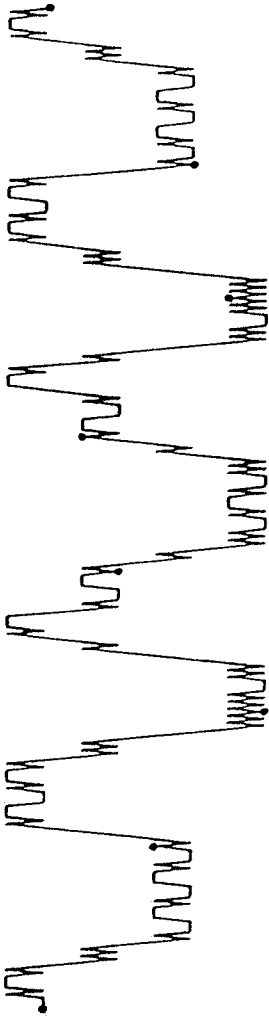
Bob

3	1	5	2	6	4
1	3	2	5	4	6
1	2	3	5	6	4
2	1	5	3	4	6

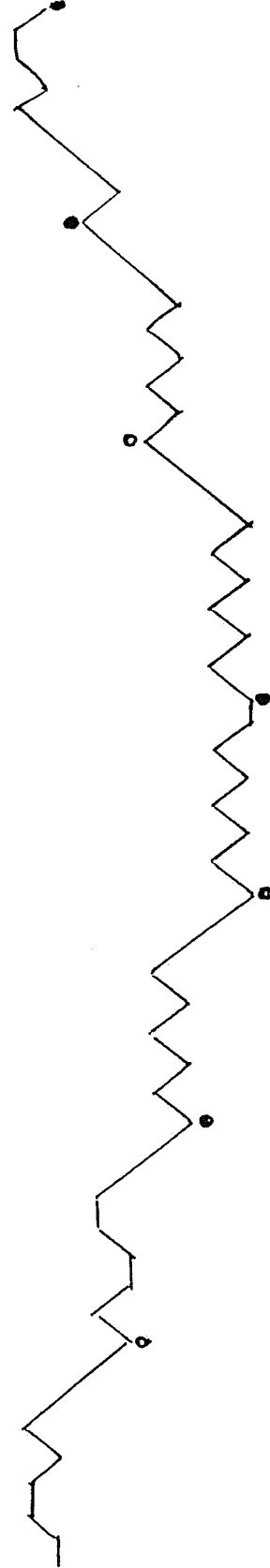
Single

3	1	5	2	6	4
1	3	2	5	4	6
1	2	3	5	4	6
2	1	5	3	6	4

PAINSWICK



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



2nd.

3rd

5th

7th

8th

6th

4th

Erith Little Bob.

**QUARTERLY MEETING, CRAYFORD - SATURDAY 11th APRIL, 1992**

Ringing from            3:30 (note change of time)

Service                    4:30

Followed by tea and meeting

**Names for tea to Anne Gough (0322 525859) by previous Wednesday, please.**

**DARTFORD QUIZ NIGHT**

On Saturday 25th January around 80 people gathered in the Church Hall of Holy Trinity, Dartford, for a quiz night to raise funds for the bells. A large amount of work is required to get the tenor back into ringing order whilst work is being carried out on the clappers and fittings of all eight bells in this historic church. Altogether eight teams took part, representing most of the local towers. The competition was quite fierce throughout the evening, with questions ranging from the very easy (doesn't everyone know the other name for the Bank of England?) to the fiendishly difficult (who *did* invent the zip fastener?). In the end it was a race to the finish with the ringers from Foots Cray pipping Erith into 2nd place by 2½ points.

Our thanks must go to Alex Britton for organising the event, Marion Wansbury, Esther Corea and Margaret Britton for providing tea, and last but by no means least, to the question-mistress, Margaret Britton, who kept us all on the straight and narrow.

Diana Young.

**Postscript**

We would like to thank everyone who came to the quiz night to raise money for the repair work which must be carried out on our bells. In all £160 was raised towards the work.

The Ringers of Holy Trinity, Dartford.

**KENT COUNTY TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE**

There will be a 'Listening Workshop' on the morning of Saturday 9 May. Anyone interested should contact Andrew Young before Easter.

The major event for this year will be on Saturday 14th November, probably around Leeds. It will follow on from the very worthwhile day on teaching bell handling which was held last November.

Catherine Lewis (Training committee convener)

Andrew Young

Following the very successful Plain Bob Doubles training day (See 'This Months Recipe') I hope to organise another similar event in the autumn. Details will be sent out when I have recovered from organising this one!

Andrew Young



## THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

### *Melange des cloches*

Ingredients : 28 ringers who want to know more about Plain Bob Doubles.  
16-20 ringers who already know all about Plain Bob Doubles.  
3 ringers who already know all about Plain Bob Doubles and have loud voices.  
1 guest 'big-wig' from another District.

Method : Plain Bob Doubles

- [1] Take all the ingredients and divide them into three equal portions and place each portion in a tower with at least six bells (Bexley, Chelsfield and St. Mary Cray work very well)
- [2] Allow all the ingredients to mix for about 15 minutes, then cook the learners gently by coaxing them through plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles.  
**WARNING** - Do not allow them to overcook (signified by a blank expression and steam coming out of the ears)
- [3] Depending how lumpy the mixture looks (or sounds) after an hour or so, you may like to add a sprinkling of bobs.
- [4] After 90 minutes remove from the heat, combine the three portions, transfer them to a warmed Church Hall (e.g. St. Mary Cray), and stuff with coffee and sandwiches.
- [5] During this period, more information should be gently infused into the mixture by the guest 'big-wig' (Catherine Lewis from the Tonbridge District).
- [6] Follow this by a light grilling from the organiser to ensure that no one is stewing too much, then divide the mixture into three portions again.
- [7] Distribute the three portions between three more towers (Eynsford, Farningham and Ash) and continue cooking for a further 2 hours until well glazed (but still alive).
- [8] The learners should then be stood to cool for a few minutes in the ringing chamber whilst questions are answered, before being returned to their home towers to see how much has sunk in - the proof of the pudding is in the eating!!

Bon appetite!

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those without whom this recipe will not work:

The incumbents, ringers and tower captains at the towers visited; St. Mary Cray ringers for providing tea and coffee during the lunch interval; Catherine Lewis for giving up her day to come and help us and last but by no means least all the helpers.

Andrew Young

## DISTRICT 6-BELL COMPETITION

The District held its 6-bell method striking contest this year at Biggin Hill on Saturday 14th March. Nine teams entered this year, giving the judges, Emma Cundiff and Fr. David Gibbons from the Rochester District, quite a daunting task as they retired to take up position in the vestry on what turned out to be a very grey and chilly day. The start was delayed a little by a slight problem with the draw, but this having been settled to the greater or lesser satisfaction of all, the first team set off. The judges' job was made more daunting by the fact that the bells at Biggin Hill are only 6cwt and so there was the potential for some very fast ringing. After all the bands had completed their test piece there was general ringing while the judges came to deliver their judgement. This period of ringing turned out to be rather extended since they were unable to separate the first five teams. There was nothing for it but for the judges to play back the recordings of the test pieces and to remark them more rigorously than before. Finally a conclusion was reached, with the results being as follows :

- 1 - Eynsford "D"; 2 - Lewisham; 3 - Erith; 4 - Chelsfield;
- 5 - Greenwich; 6 - Bexley; 7 - West Wickham; 8 - Eynsford "F";
- 9 - Foots Cray.

Our thanks go to Emma and David for being our judges, Pam Campbell for providing copious amounts of tea and biscuits throughout the afternoon and the vicar and ringers of Biggin Hill for allowing us to use their bells.

Diana Young

## **BARN DANCE**

This year's District barn dance was held, as in previous years, at Christ Church hall in Erith with music provided by the Whizard Wheeze band. Over 100 people met to enjoy an evening of 'good clean fun' with most people joining the dancing and everyone tucking into the marvellous food provided by Sonia and her helpers. After tea the raffle was drawn with various members of the assembled company winning bottles of something, then a few announcements were made including the engagement of Stephen Young and Ruth Bedford. Stephen, being the brother of the district chairman, is known to a number of district members and I am sure everyone will join me in wishing them a hearty congratulations.

Our thanks go to Alex Britton for organising the venue, band, tickets etc. and to Sonia Irwin and her team for providing such a wonderful spread, all washed down with copious amounts of home brew. As well as being great fun the evening raised £200 for the centenary fund.

Diana Young

## 1992 DISTRICT BARN DANCE

Just a short note to say a big "thank you" to everyone who supported this year's Barn Dance in any way at all, i.e. the large amount of support given to the catering side of things mainly by the Lewisham/Greenwich ringers (who's names are too numerous to mention), and particularly those of you who bought tickets. About 140 people were present, mostly ringers, but many having brought along non-ringing friends. The event has raised approximately £200 for the District's Centenary Fund.

Having now organised this event for three consecutive years (indeed from its inception), both of us feel that it is time we give it a rest. With the same people at the helm it will otherwise run the risk of becoming stale, despite the many favourable comments both of us have had after each event. We feel it is now time that if this event should go on, the organisation should be taken on by others. It is a worthwhile event to continue with, but we would both like to be able to participate more fully, instead of (for example) being stuck on the door or in the kitchen for most of the evening.

Hopefully this will be a discussion point at the Quarterly meetings at Crayford in April or at Bickley in July.

Once again, we are very grateful for all the support we have been given from various quarters over the past three years, and we wish whoever might take on this project all the very best, to whom we are quite willing to give advice if requested.

Alex Britton and Sonia Irwin.

ASSOCIATION'S LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE

I have received a copy of the listing of the Association's Library and Archive. This will be available for inspection at all the Quarterly Meetings this year. Any member who wishes to purchase a copy, cost £5.88 (inc. V.A.T.) should write to the Honorary Librarian, Mrs. Hazel Basford at "Cliveden", 1 Edge End Road, Broadstairs, CT10 2AH, to whom cheques should be made payable.

New items are always being sought for the Library and Archive to expand the collection and a new edition will be produced in two years' time. In the meantime an annual appendix of new material will be issued.

Mary Andrews

CENTENARY YEAR

With reference to the details printed in the last Newsletter of meetings held since the District was formed, members might like to note the following amendments:

Ash-by-Wrotham

add 24 July 1982

Cudham

23 7.1948 should read 23.7.1949.

Woolwich

delete 22.10.1958.

RECRUITING

Does your tower have difficulty in getting new ringers, or have you plenty of recruits? If you would like to share your experiences, please contact me and we will arrange for a small group of us to get together over a cup of tea/coffee in St. Mary's, Bexley, Ringing Room one Saturday morning.

If we had one K.C.A. member for every bell in the 30 towers in the District we should have 201 members, and that would not be sufficient to guarantee ringing each Sunday. At present there are only 164 practising members. Either some towers are not ringing for even one service each Sunday, or some ringers are doing a considerable amount of overtime!

MARY ANDREWS

Jon Fox and Janet Costidell of Lewisham are to be married at St Mary the Virgin, Hayes on Saturday 6th June at 3.00pm. All ringers and friends are very welcome to the service and for ringing afterwards.

Also belated 21st birthday compliments are due to Janet for the 29th March.