

Officer's Reports 2024

Chairman & General Secretary

After the return to normality in 2023, 2024 was a year where we settled back into a routine programme of events. The Association is very lucky to have an extremely successful young ringers group, the Kent Young Ringers, and the first event on the Association's calendar was the KYR Inter-District 6-Bell Striking Contest held at Chalk. Five Districts were represented at the contest and the team from the Ashford District were presented with the winner's trophy by Margaret Funnell, one of our Vice-Presidents.

The AGM took place at St Margaret's, Rainham. The service was led by the Rev'd Jonathan Jennings, Assistant Priest at St Margaret's, assisted by the Rev'd David Ridley who also gave the address.

At the meeting, Sue Bassett stood down as Honorary General Secretary and was thanked for her work over the last 6 years. Joanne Pohl was elected as the new Honorary General Secretary and welcomed on to the General Committee. There were no further changes to the Committee.

We were delighted to confer the position of Vice-President on three members: Anthony Leeves, who has done great work on developing and maintaining our record of quarter peals rung in the Association; Hazel Basford, whose research into members who perished in the First World War is now commemorated in a Memorial Book held at Canterbury Cathedral; and Jennifer Thomas, who has been the driving force behind our successful Kent Young Ringers for a number of years.

The Association 8-Bell contest took place in June at the Waterloo Tower in Quex Park. The test piece was Canterbury Pleasure Bob Triples and five Districts took part. The contest was judged by Paul and Kate Flavell from Kingston-upon-Thames and they declared that the Canterbury District were the winners.

July marked the Ringing World National Youth Contest which was held in London this year. We were able to enter a team of 8 young ringers for the first time since 2019 and our team performed exceptionally well, attaining 3rd place out of 17 teams that rang in the 8-bell call-change category.

The Association entered the Essex Trophy competition again this year, which is held in September and open to associations in the home counties. The 10-bell competition is hosted by a different association each year and the Guildford Diocesan Guild had the honour of hosting us at St Martin's, Epsom to ring a touch of Little Bob Royal. Despite our best efforts in a very close competition, we only managed to attain 5th place.

September also saw the Association 6-bell Competitions which were held at St George's, Beckenham. Four Districts entered the 6-bell Inter-District Method Competition and congratulations go to the Canterbury District and the band of St Stephen's, Canterbury on winning. The Call-Change Competition saw 6 teams enter although sadly one had to withdraw from the contest at short notice. The remaining five teams each rang the test piece of 10 minutes of call-changes and congratulations go to the Bredgar band on winning the event. Both of the contests were judged by Simon and Cathy Dixon from the Peterborough Diocesan Guild.

In November, over 50 members gathered together to join other members of the congregation at Canterbury Cathedral for Choral Evensong attended by the KCACR. Many took the opportunity to also ring at the Cathedral prior to the service as well as enjoying a range of delicious refreshments. The Association's latest library acquisitions, namely the ringing records of the late David Cawley and Vernon Benning were also available to view. These personal records included many personal touches such as the heraldry doodled and detailed notes in David's books and the postcards and photos in Vernon's, many dating back to the 1940s and 1950s.

During the year, we lost several members of the Association, including Mary Andrews, long-standing District Secretary of the Lewisham District; David Manger, Vice-President and twice Chairman of the Association and the Rev'd David Cawley, bell historian and authority on the history of the church bells in Kent.

We also congratulate Dickon Love on being awarded the MBE in the 2024 New Year's Honours.

The Association has continued to develop opportunities for those who teach ringing and have participated in the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) M1 training course and the Training Hubs continue to enable ART M1 participants to be able to work with trainees in order to assist them with completing the M1 course and to help the trainees develop better bell handling skills.

There are more ART training courses being arranged in 2025 as the Association continues to support this initiative. 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 2025, full details are on the KCACR website.

Neil Jones & Joanne Pohl

Youth Officer

We have a very exciting group of youngsters who are gaining oodles of ringing experience in the Association. Approximately 55 under 18's and 12/15 18 - 24's ring regularly in their own towers. A good number come regularly to the practices arranged specifically for our MINI-Ringers and Young Ringers, when exams and other activities allow. We now also have a monthly dedicated Triples Practice.

A number of youngsters have rung quarter peals and Oscar finished off the year with his first peal: Plain Bob Major.

Young Ringers in the Tonbridge District rang for a wedding and for a funeral.

In 2024 we entered teams in three contests as well as our Kent Young Ringers' Inter-District Contest. The team from the Ashford District was thrilled to regain the trophy. In April we travelled to Hertfordshire to participate in the South East Contest; in July we participated in the RWNKY in London and in September we were again able to field a team in the Kent County Association Call Change Contest. Our youngsters really did justice to themselves, being especially pleased with being placed 3rd in the national contest in London.

This year 3 of our young ringers starred in one of Cathy Booth's "Fun with Bells" Podcast; Jen, Neil and Steph Runting featured as leaders of the KYR two months later.

Happy ringing!

Jennifer Thomas

Bell Restoration

Ash-next-Sandwich	Frame painted and new flooring installed under bells with some other minor works.
Biddenden	Some ongoing work.
Boxley	Some works carried out, awaiting permission to install a rope guide.
Broadstairs	Adjustment to electro-solenoid.
Canterbury, All Saints	Inspection of single bell.
Egerton	Advice.
Kilndown	New rope fitted. For those that remember the vertical ladder, you will be pleased to hear that access is now by stairs and a heavy trap door.
Little Chart	The church is now disused and a watch is being kept as to what might happen to the bells. Ideas of putting them into Westwell have been suggested by the tower is not very strong there.
Penshurst	Hoping to get the bells out in January but there has been a delay in getting the faculty.
Stanford	Single bell to be re-roped.
Shipbourne	New pulley sheaves to be fitted locally ex KCACR.
Snargate	Re-roping of the 3 swing chiming bells.
Stockbury	Site meeting and inspection with the DAC Secretary rep. Things were starting up here with the possible installation of a treble in the spare pit. Awaiting report from Matthew Higby. The 2 nd bell has cracked which has slowed things down a bit
Tonbridge	Bells have been removed by Taylors with KCACR assistance. Rehang in January 2025.
Tunstall	Pulley sheaves replaced.
Upchurch	Some remedial work being done.
West Peckham	A rope guide has been installed.

Brian G Butcher