

ROUNDS & ABOUT

Tonbridge District Newsletter No.21 February 2025

Please send news and snippets (ringing related) to angelaclarkbuttons@btinternet.com

Quarter Peal Fortnight

DISTRICT QUARTER PEAL FORTNIGHT

Angela Clark

The first quarter peal within the District's fortnight took place at Speldhurst on Saturday morning, 15th February. A true "First" because it was Deb Williams' first Quarter Peal. She rang very well and Plain Bob Doubles was beautifully called by Emma Tamkin.

I assume they were not dressed like this during the ringing.

Many congratulations also to Steve Sullivan who also rang his first Quarter Peal on the same day.

Also, well done at Hever:
Logan Rich – first inside for PBD on 2nd February.
And to Ed Shamwana, again first inside on 20th February.



Future Events

Saturday 1st March 2025 District Practice, 10-12 noon at WESTERHAM
From 13.55: Kent Young Ringers Striking Competition at Otford
5th April – District Quarterly Meeting – details To Be Advised
21st April (Easter Monday) KCACR AGM at Sevenoaks Details will be issued later.

News

FEBRUARY MONTHLY PRACTICE

Angela Clark

We met at Chiddingstone on 1st February. It was cold but fine outside and "intimate" inside. The Ringing Chamber is not especially conducive for large numbers of ringers and there were 25 of us. On such occasions, the happy chatter amongst those sitting out presents something of a problem to ringers, but those ringing Yorkshire were not troubled. Emma ensured that everyone was "seen to" and much progress was made by the Plain Hunt people. They made a splendid job of Plain Hunting from Call Changes!!!

SPELDHURST RINGING OUTING

Mike Fradd

The last vestiges of storm Eowyn had faded away and the sun shone on the 14 Speldhurst ringers and friends as they drove southwards towards East Sussex for our slightly belated Christmas outing on 25th January.

We visited three very pleasant 8-bell towers, so we were able to ring our usual methods on unfamiliar bells.

At Fairwarp, our first tower, Nick Butcher's bacon rolls were sadly missed, but we made do with Emma's croissants and our own flasks of coffee.

The key holder arrived without her keys, so after a small panic from her and a little chuckle from us, she dashed home, luckily not too far away, came back and let us in.

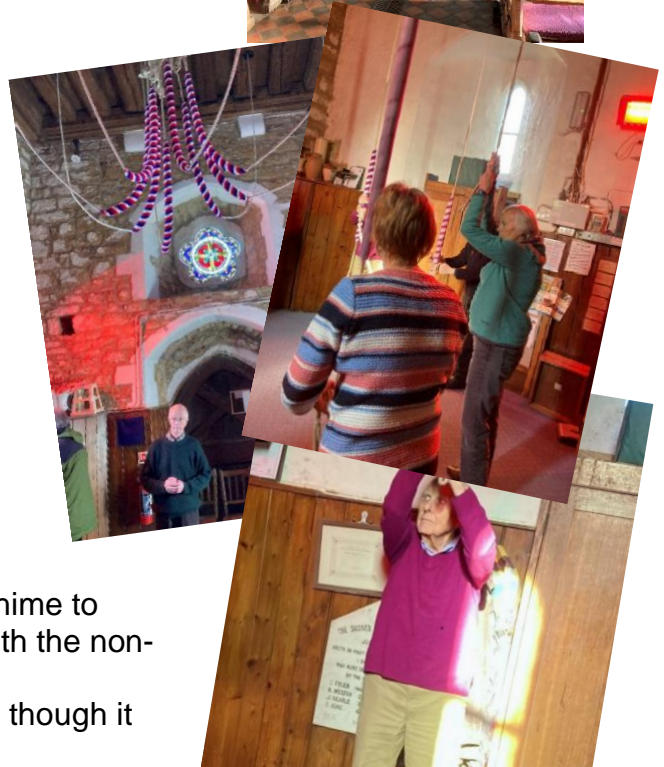
At the end of our ringing at Fairwarp, we had to stand the bells at backstroke which most of us managed to do.

We then headed off to Buxted where the most beautiful music was being played by an organist in the church. Sadly, our ringing did nothing to enhance it. The Buxted bells were quite a challenge, but we did manage some Bob Major and tried our hand at some different call changes which we found written in the tower.

Lastly, we visited Uckfield, where we heard the clock chime to prove that Speldhurst isn't the only tower in the area with the non-Westminster chime.

I was unable to find my name in the visitors book, even though it was only 50 years ago that I rang there.

Thank you, Emma for organising an enjoyable morning.



I decided to make a rope heater for St Giles, Shipbourne as we have suffered with damp and very stiff ropes for a number of years. I had been thinking about making one for a while, but the old ropes were so worn, the cold and damp hadn't had much effect to the stiffness in recent times.

Wind-back to end 2023 and the quality of our 6 ropes was rapidly failing us, so we dug into our finances and managed to scrape together to buy some new ones. These arrived in October 2024 and it was great to ring with some new ropes, but O 'Boy did they suddenly make us remember how much the tower at Shipbourne suffers from damp and cold! We've had a few leaks as well recently, so that didn't help either.

Ok – so ringing with stiff ropes is nothing new and many towers have this to a greater or lesser extent. Experienced ringers often have to cope with it, although it makes rope handling more difficult. This is especially true for beginners and as we are currently blessed with 4 new learners, this was the push I needed to get on with it.

Next problem, what and how. I searched the internet, and found a couple of designs, although I was a little surprised at how little there is. Of the 2 designs that I did find, one had little detail, while the other appeared to have a design that meant maintenance would be more difficult.

I sketched out what I thought would work and bought a few items, such as the 100mm diameter soil pipe that holds the ropes in place. The other parts were just a bulb holder, 40-watt bulb, some wiring, a sheet of plywood and a timer. These are all readily available and would cost about £80 for materials. Each of the 2 base plates are 820mm wide and was a bit of guess work, but I wanted to make sure that it wouldn't easily fall over. The length of the tube is 1.8metres and was limited by how high I could reach when the tube was attached to the base. This allowed for as much rope to be heated and dried as possible.

The whole thing should be easily achievable to make in a day, although the bit I found the most fiddly, was fitting the wire mesh into the tube. This is there to stop the tail end of the ropes touching the bulb and is an essential part to remove the possible fire risk. You are also strongly advised to get the unit electrically tested and added to the annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT).

Storage – It lives in the middle of our ringing chamber while in use and gets moved to the side when we are ringing (otherwise it obstructs each person's view of whoever is ringing opposite you – not ideal !!). In the summer months, we may just move it to the side, or dismantle it, as we have a fairly small ringing chamber. I designed it with this in mind, as the tube detaches, leaving just the base that can be more easily stored in a corner. It could do with painting, as it is still with the "just built" look. I brought it up the tower to test it out and it's been there ever since.



We, at Tonbridge, had heard talk that Taylor's Bell Foundry, with whom we had contracted to refurbish and rehang the bells and ancillary equipment, weren't necessarily the best in tuning bells. – true or not, we didn't know. On our visit to Taylor's before work began Gavin Knight engaged a consultant versed in tuning bells to act on our behalf.

Tuning is now done and the consultant reported:

"9 February 2025

Retuning of bells at St Peter & Paul, Tonbridge, Kent – update after tuning

On 7 February 2025 I visited Taylor's bell foundry in Loughborough to inspect the retuned bells for Tonbridge and measure their partial frequencies. I am pleased to say that the retuning has been successful. The bells have been tuned together as a peal for the first time, and the worst tuning anomalies in the older bells have been improved. The bells will sound more musical once they have been rehung in the tower.

Improvements after tuning include:

- *The pitches of the bells, indicated by the nominals, have been tuned to the musical scale. Previously, the 4th was very sharp and the treble, second, fifth and seventh a little sharp*
- *The hums of the oldest bells (4th, 5th and 6th) which were previously quite sharp have been tuned much closer to the octave*
- *The fundamental of the treble, which was previously sharp, has been tuned to the octave.*

The hums of all the bells remain a little sharp but are now more uniform across the peal.

Dr W. A. Hibbert MA MSc PhD"



And if you would like to hear what they now sound like, then control/click on

<https://qr.live/1L9zOp1>

or use the QR Code below:
open your phone camera, point it at the Code,
tap the message which comes up – and
enjoy!



Retuned Tonbridge Bells at Taylor's Bell Foundry

Not so fortunate with East Peckham bells

EAST PECKHAM BELLS – NO RINGING

For the delights of the visiting ringers attending the KCACR AGM on Easter Monday it was intended that one of the towers to be open was East Peckham. Unfortunately, Mike Stuttard reports that the Churches Conservation Trust has ordered a suspension of ringing there following a rather negative recent architect's report.

No ringing there at the moment.”

120 CLUB DRAW FOR FEBRUARY – Lucky Winners

1	£20	23	Alan Dunster	Brenchley
2	£15	81	Sarah Pullen	Leigh
3	£10	20	David James	Leigh

[Tail End](#)

RINGING IN COOL CONDITIONS

Hamilton Woods

Seeing the Speldhurst quarter peal band all kitted out with their cold-weather gear I wondered if they had been ringing at the North Pole. They might not have rung at the North Pole but I've rung at the South Pole – nearly, – well, if you stretch it a bit. Actually, it was at Grytviken on South Georgia. 2 bells with Rounds & Call Changes being the order of the day.

