

ROUNDS & ABOUT

Tonbridge District Newsletter No.22 April 2025

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

NEXT DISTRICT QUARTERLY MEETING

The next DQM will take place on 5th April – ringing 10 am to 12 noon

At EDENBRIDGE ALL WELCOME

THE DISTRICT SOCIAL EVENT WILL BE IN THE AUTUMN – DETAILS SOON

Training

MONTHLY TRAINING FOR BEGINNERS AND IMPROVERS

HAMILTON WOODS

If you are not involved in these sessions, please consider offering your help or if there is something you need help with, contact Hamilton Woods, and arrangements will be made. They take place on the third Saturday morning each month. Unfortunately there will be no Third Saturday Training Day in April.

There were two towers providing the monthly teaching in March, firstly at **SPELDHURST**

Leader	Anthony Leeves		
Students	Bob Turnbull Jeannette Parker Julia Church	Helpers:	Caroline Levy-Cooper David James Fran James Zena Seal Catherine Lewis Elaine Merrylees

... and secondly at **HADLOW**

Leader	Ray Taylor		
Students	Nick Randall Kate Malpass Deb Williams Dmitry Zhuravlev	Helpers:	Alison Parsons Howard Rogers Jane Kostelnyk Tessa Worthington Sara Waldren Mike Worthington

TRAINING IN MARCH AT HADLOW

DMITRY ZHURAVLEV

I rang my first quarter peal on Remembrance Day in 2023, covering for that first QP. After a while, I rang another one and eventually took my place on the Treble. Since then, I've been trying to get inside Plain Bob Doubles. My levels of despair have wavered between mild frustration and full-blown anxiety.

Although experienced ringers reassured me that it would all come in time, I felt I had wasted enough of it on the Tenor. I was desperate to crack it. So, I secured my place on TSTD (Third Saturday Training Day).

With a faint trace of a hangover from an ill-advised Friday night out, I arrived at Hadlow to meet my fellow students—Deb, Nick, and Katie—where we were warmly welcomed by Ray Taylor and his mighty team of helpers. When my wife asked why on earth I was spending yet another Saturday with bells instead of family, I politely explained: six people had dropped whatever they were doing, driven to Hadlow, and given up their time to help me and others improve. That kind of dedication moves me every time. People, you are amazing, talented, and generous! And yes, that exclamation mark is absolutely deserved.



And then, it happened. The click. The moment. The eureka feeling.

I have no idea why people say bellringing—campanology, to use the proper word—is like learning to ride a bicycle. No, it's not. It's like learning to ride a bicycle again, and again, and again.



Yes, I think I've grasped the circle of work, understood the principle, and then... I have to learn that bicycle all over again. Until the day they put a stone on my grave and my fellow ringers ring the half-muffled tolls.

A never-ending pursuit.

[Future Events](#)

date	event	location	details
5th April	DQM	Edenbridge	10-12 noon. Meeting 12 noon
21st April	KCACR AGM	Sevenoaks	Meeting 2pm. See brochure on KCACR website.
3rd May	Ringling	Bletchingly (10 bells)	10-12 noon
7th June	Ringling	Horsmonden TBC	10-12 noon
5th July	DQM	Cranbrook	10-12 noon. Meeting 12 noon
2nd August	Ringling	Hadlow	10-12 noon
6th Sept	Ringling	Cowden	10-12 noon
4th Oct	ADM	Chevening TBC	10-12 noon. Meeting 12 noon
1st Nov	Ringling	Lamberhurst TBC	10-12 noon
6th Dec	Christmas ringling & social	Penshurst TBC	4-6 pm. Social 6 pm

News

FIRST QUARTER PEAL - KATIE

ANGELA CLARK

Many congratulations to Katie Malpass who rang her first quarter peal (Plain Bob Doubles) at Speldhurst on 28th February, 2025.

HAPPY ? BIRTHDAY ANN

RAY TAYLOR

Our band assembled at Chevening, mostly with knocking knees, to attempt a quarter peal of London Surprise Major. After 45 minutes and 'that's all' we were able to relax enough to attempt a variation of 'happy birthday' on the tower bells, to add even more stress to the day. Here's what we attempted 43412, 43421, 413567, 56878. I am ashamed to admit that some of us didn't manage to set our bells at backstroke, but we were encouraged on leaving the tower to learn that Jane Nielson had asked Ann if it was someone's birthday!



Left to Right: Fran & Dave James, Lucy Harvey, Tessa Worthington, Ray Taylor, Anthony Leeves, Ann (birthday girl) & Stan Jenner

DISTRICT RINGING FOR MARCH

RAY TAYLOR

Emma Tamkin decided to have a day off from leading the March District Practice at Westerham, some feeble excuse about it being her birthday! Nonetheless, there was a good turn out and it was a great opportunity for everyone to chat with welcome hot drinks and biscuits provided by the Westerham ringers, and there was some ringing too!

Further notes from Angela: There was an attendance of 26 ringers which is an excellent result considering this ground floor ring are far from easy. Our thanks to Ray for looking after the ringing.

Wall to wall sunshine provided the backdrop to a fabulous afternoon with:

- 24 youngsters aged 10 - 23
- 4 District teams from the Canterbury, Lewisham, Rochester and Tonbridge Districts plus one "scratch" band made up of youngsters who represent the Association in other contests
- 15 accompanying adults
- 4 towers to ring at during the afternoon (an interesting logistical challenge for the organiser!!!). The young ringers rang at 2 towers (taken from Ightham, Kemsing and Seal Chart) as well as ringing their test piece at Otford
- 1 judge
- A delicious tea in the hall at St Bartholomew's Church, Otford

The District teams all rang Call Changes and the "scratch" band was challenged to ring a method, so they chose P B Doubles

This was a great afternoon with a very high standard of ringing from our youngsters as shown in the results:

1st place:	93%	Canterbury
2nd place:	88%	Rochester
3rd place:	87%	Tonbridge
4th place:	85%	Scratch band
5th place:	73%	Lewisham

Many thanks to:

Emma and Phil Jarvis who acted as stewards for the afternoon
Stan Jenner who presented all teams with their certificates and the winning team with the Trophy
Adam Moore, for judging the contest so efficiently, while getting steadily colder in a corner in the churchyard
ALL the young ringers for taking part.

A few extra facts:

The youngest ringer was 10 years old and rang the treble for the Canterbury District. He only started learning to ring last summer.

The youngest tenor ringer was 11 years old and rang for the Tonbridge District.

The oldest ringer was 23 years old and rang for the Lewisham District.

The Canterbury team had the highest average age: 18 years 5 months.

The Tonbridge team had the lowest average age: 13 years 10 months, with all ringers aged 18 years and under.





Photos:

Stan presenting the Trophy to the youngest member of the winning team (Canterbury)

Stan about to present the certificates to the Tonbridge District teams

Whole group, including some parents

PENSHURST BELLS

At long last the day came (Monday 17th March), when work started to remove Penshurst's lovely bells. Much fundraising and discussion had taken place to enable the work, and here they were, the men from Matthew Higby & Co Ltd. Getting the equipment into the belfry, it took 2 days, and on the Wednesday work started to remove the Tenor.

The problem was that the trapdoor wasn't quite the right size to make this an easy process, so the Tenor had to be tilted to get it through. However, it was out at last.

After that, on the Thursday, the Treble, Two, Three, Four and the Five (our most venerable bell), were brought down. Friday was tidying up day, and the remaining 2 bells will be removed on Wednesday the 26th. I have to make an admission here. I was away for all of this and so I am really looking forward to seeing a bell being removed.

The repair and refurbishment work will include altering the relationship between the height of the bearing and the crown staple and the pivot for the clapper. This should aid the ease of bell handling. For us ringers the most obvious improvement will be the new ropes. Those of you who have rung the 2 at Penshurst will know how bouncy it is. In the words of one of the men "it is like trying to ring a bell with knicker elastic"

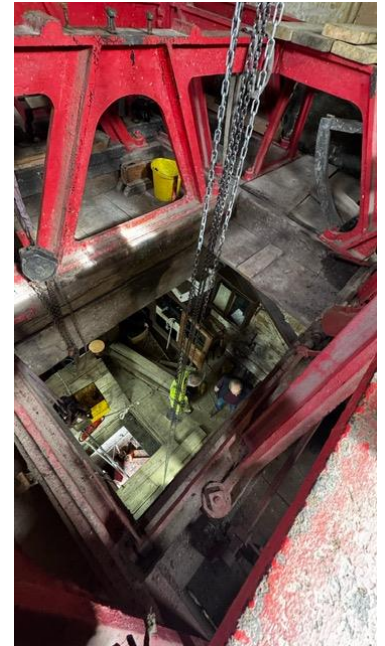
ROBERTA WEATHERLEY



At the moment the 6 bells which are down are sitting on the floor in Penshurst Church. They are utterly majestic. We have had many visitors coming to see them and people are astounded to discover that one was cast in 1370 (the 5), another in 1619 (the Tenor), the 3 in 1701 and the rest in the 1800s. It's been a great opportunity to talk to people about bellringing.

Whilst spending time in the Church I have been reflecting on the work of these bells. They, and their mechanisms are wonderful pieces of engineering. As they sit, waiting to be removed, I can feel their presence, inanimate objects they may be but they have voices and characters. Seeing them still and silent reminds me of other times that they have been silent, through world wars and, most recently, during covid, the start of lockdown almost 5 years ago to the day work started.

We are very much looking forward to the day when we can ring them again, and bring them back to life. However, how are they going to be removed from the Church and loaded onto the lorry I hear you ask. Well...you'll just have to wait for my next instalment.



TONBRIDGE BELLS

ANGELA CLARK

Our bells went off to Taylors in Loughborough on 14th October. We have missed them and, importantly, many of the congregation have asked after them and told us how much they too are missing their welcome sound.

Our grateful thanks to towers in the District who have welcomed our ringers to their practice nights and Sunday service ringing whilst we have been bell less.

But now the bells are back!!! Albeit, the tenor has apparently been on a diet and now weighs in at 17.3.13. They were lined up on display in the church during the weekend of 21/22 March much to the delight of those attending the services.

We have a while to wait yet. Tonbridge is one of the towers open for ringing on Easter Monday at 5 pm for 45 minutes, following the AGM at Sevenoaks, so, fingers crossed.



Taylors had our tenor on the test-rig (with its wooden clapper shaft) and can be seen by control/clicking on <https://qr.live/1L9zOqT> or using the QR Code, here.



120 CLUB DRAW

The draw for the 120 Club was held at Westerham draw on 1st March with the following winners:

1	£20	97	Janice Byrne	Penshurst
2	£15	2	Tessa Worthington	Unattached
3	£10	51	Lamberhurst Bellringers	Lamberhurst

Tail end

CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL, NZ

God moves in the most mysterious of ways.

Feb.22nd 2011 saw a devastating earthquake of 6.3 magnitude hit Christchurch New Zealand, killing 185 people and destroying many city centre buildings. The beautiful Anglican Cathedral, built in the late 1800s by the "First Four Ships" forefathers soon after their arrival, was mostly destroyed, as was the spire and the 13 bells fell to earth.

Fast forward 14years and the Cathedral is still in ruins, surrounded by boarding, sitting right in the middle of Christchurch main square. The bells have been to the U.K and back, refurbished but are going nowhere. After years of legal wrangling over whether to rebuild or leave as a memorial garden, the millions of dollars spent has reached its limit and the government has called a halt to the whole project.

A cardboard cathedral was constructed sometime after the earthquake - a most ingenious Japanese design made of cardboard and shipping containers - and is most impressive. However, a freestanding tower nearby to house the bells has also come to nothing.

All in all, it is a sad state of affairs and I think the answer would be to do what Coventry did with their destroyed Cathedral. I do hope a solution is found before too long. I have a very soft spot for Christchurch Cathedral as it was in the belfry 46yrs ago that a romance began between myself and a handsome, bearded geophysicist, visiting from Australia; and as the saying goes- I chased him till he caught me.

TESSA WORTHINGTON

