



KCACR ROCHESTER DISTRICT

Quarterly Meeting - Sat 19th July 2025, Higham

Draft Minutes

Attending:

Tim Ford (chair), Anita Perryman (secretary), Keith Tolputt, Ivo Wengraf, Rona Joiner, Florence Hamp, Alan Driver, Nevil Stonehouse, Jane Farmer, Jay Ford, Rob Still, David Ridley, Jennifer Thomas, Richard Farmer

1. Welcome & Minute's Silence & Congratulations

A minute's silence was held for Tim Wraith, who was tower captain at St Margaret's, Rainham, for over 40 years; chairman of the KCACR between 1987 and 1990 and held the post of Honorary General Secretary from 1995 until 2000.

2. Apologies for absence

Margaret Funnell, Brian Trill, Gareth Lloyd-Evans, Cathy Hall, Gill & Chris Rapley, Neil Jones, Mike and Gill Rannard, Annabel White, Joe Still, Steve Fitton, Celia Burns and the Shorne band

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last quarterly meeting, held at Rodmersham on 26th April 2025, were circulated prior to the meeting. These minutes were agreed to be correct. They were proposed by Keith Tolputt and seconded by Rona Joiner.

4. Matters arising

a. Feedback on VE day ringing

19 towers in the district linked ringing performances to the VE Day 8th May event on Bellboard.

b. Feedback on Firsts Month 2025

District Firsts Month was from 26th April to 26th May 2025. There were 18 performances associated with the event on Bellboard, achieving 35 firsts. These involved 23 individuals at 10 towers. Firsts included: many new methods, calling changes, conducting, covering, ringing down in peal, striking competition and a quarter peal. The leading first was 11 ringing Reverse Grandsire Doubles for the first time, followed by 6 ringing 60 on 3rds. The leading tower was Milton Regis with 17 firsts (beating last year's 13 at Sittingbourne), with Sittingbourne and Upchurch tied behind. The leading ringer was Chris Trafford with 6 firsts (one more than Scott Pearce last year) and then Rob Still with 3. An honourable mention should go to Jemma Philips who called changes for the first time and scored her first quarter peal. Congratulations to all who achieved firsts. Particular thanks to Chris Trafford who worked hard to make lots of these firsts happen.

c. Feedback on Conducting and Coursing Order Training Event

NJ: Seven ringers attended the recent conducting course held at Frinsted on the 31st May. The aim of the course was to try to shed some light on conducting methods and explored the role of the conductor in ringing, how to prepare for conducting a touch and practical opportunities to call prepared touches, trying to see how the coursing order changes after a call. The afternoon was really just the tip of the iceberg, in relation to conducting but hopefully gave those attending a little more insight into this aspect of ringing together with some ideas on how to develop their own role as a conductor.

JT: Oscar Brooks-Wilkins called his first quarter of minor a few weeks later.

d. **Feedback on District Outing to Bishop's Stortford**

On Saturday 14th June 18 ringers visited the towers of:

Stansted Mountfichet, who told us that it was good for them to have visitors as they are looked after by the churches conservation trust,

Bishop's Stortford, who were augmented to a 12 a few years ago, allowing us (Neil) to ring on a variety of combinations of bells,

Hatfield Heath, an easy to ring dinky 6 and lunch venue,

Sawbridgeworth, a former haunt of Cathy's, and

Old Harlow, near a very confusing roundabout with a road straight across it!

e. **ART/Ringing Hubs**

NJ: The next Association of Ringing Teachers M1 (bell handling) course in Kent is at St Laurence in Thanet on 16th August 2025 and is already fully booked! The M1 course is useful for teaching hints and tips even if you don't complete accreditation. We would like more accredited teachers (there are only four in the district). There is an M2F course at Thorley, Herts, on the 29th November, registration closes 14th November there are 5 places left. Sue Bassett will try to set up more courses for teachers if you let her know that there is interest (email: training@kcacr.org.uk).

The hubs for learners aim to provide learners with some focused practice (and for teachers to work towards accreditation). The hubs run regular training sessions at Lamberhurst and at Milton Regis. Information about forthcoming hubs and how to book can be found at:

https://kcacr.org.uk/category/association_training/

More dates will be coming up, but they will be taking a break during August.

5. **Election/welcome of new members**

- **Bailey Sylvester** (junior) of Swanscombe, proposed by Gareth Lloyd-Evans, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Jen Thomas

Bailey is 15 and his first exposure to ringing was only last November when he chimed a bell at our recruitment / open day as part of the church's Christmas fayre. He (and his mum Teresa) have regularly attended every Monday practice at Swanscombe ever since and they also often attend the practices at Gravesend (Tuesday) and Shorne (Wednesday). Bailey is an advert for the progress that can be made when you get more than just weekly rope time. Even having me as a novice ART M1 instructor has not held him back!

He can now confidently ring up to 10 cwt, ring in rounds and safely ring down and is now ringing down in peal. Jen Thomas has taken Bailey to some Youth events and he recently covered his first Plain Hunt. Jen Thomas observed his competency in March 2025 and it was down to an admin error, as we changed Tower Captains, that he was not proposed at April's meeting.

- **Sue Clay** of Swanscombe (returning member), proposed by Gareth Lloyd-Evans, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Jen Thomas

Sue was a regular in the tower at Swanscombe for decades having been introduced to ringing by her father and a member of the KCACR from her youth until 2017 when the band dwindled and Geoff Sayer no longer chased the subscriptions. She has been practicing with us since we restarted the band in January 2023 and has recently introduced her granddaughter, Hannah, to the joys of ringing.

- **Teresa Sylvester** of Swanscombe, proposed by Gareth Lloyd-Evans, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Jen Thomas.

Teresa started regularly attending Swanscombe practices as Bailey's Mum / driver since he started ringing in December 2024. After a couple of months of just driving and watching

Bailey practice at Swanscombe, Gravesend and Shorne towers she was "gently" persuaded to have a go by Richard Farmer in March. By ringing 2 to 3 times a week she has made rapid progress and now is competently ring rounds, basic call changes and ring down.

- **Hannah Degen** of Swanscombe (junior), proposed by Gareth Lloyd-Evans, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Jen Thomas.

Hannah (17) is Sue Clay's granddaughter and started ringing in January of this year. She is very sporty (except when injured playing football) and her good hand / eye coordination has meant she has quickly progressed. Despite only ringing weekly at Swanscombe, she has made rapid progress and now competently ring rounds, basic call changes and ringing down.

The Swanscombe Band would like to thank all those that have supported the resurrection of the Swanscombe Band since January 2023 and in particular those instructors from neighbouring towers (Richard Farmer / Keith Tolputt / Jen Thomas / Ashley Chaloner) who have given up far more Monday evenings than the original '6 months' trial commitment.

- **Lizzie Bishop** of Gravesend, proposed by Keith Tolputt, seconded by Hazel Clarke, verified by Neil Jones.

Lizzie had seen an advert for bellringing in the Gravesham edition of The Net Magazine and turned up to a practice in October 2024. She is keen and progressed quickly, attending weekly tied bell practices before the main practice. She rings rounds and call changes and for Sunday service.

- **Alex Hart** of Shorne, proposed by Richard Farmer, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Rona Joiner

In September 2023 Alex and his sister were loitering in Shorne church yard on practice night. They were invited in to see what we were doing and he has attended almost every week since. Alex has made steady progress. He is an enthusiastic ringer. He rang on 6 June 2024 to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy and rings for service whenever he is available. He actively participates in tower activities ranging from ringers outings to our annual 'sherry and mince pies' practice at Christmas. He has volunteered as a clock winder, and is always ready to lend a hand whenever there is work to be done. Alex's ringing has now progressed to the point whereby he is able to control his bell and adjust his speed such that he can ring rounds competently, cover for a steady band and lower safely without assistance. We value Alex's cheerful, positive disposition and quirky personality and believe he will be an asset to the KCACR. I therefore nominate Alex Hart for membership of the KCACR as a member of the Shorne band.

- **Elizabeth Parker** of Shorne, proposed by Richard Farmer, seconded by Keith Tolputt, verified by Rona Joiner

Elizabeth and her husband came along to a Tower open event on Thursday 26 September 2024; to climb to the roof and take in the view, visit the bells and wind our ancient tower clock. They chimed bells and were eager to come back on a practice night and see what full circle ringing is all about (or too polite to decline the invitation). Elizabeth has been a regular ringer ever since. She very quickly developed bell sense and is determined to be a very good ringer. Eternally apologetic and always frustrated when she struggles to ring at the standard she sets for herself; Elizabeth actually mastered basic bell control, call changes, raising and lowering much more quickly than would normally be expected. Elizabeth rang on 8 May 2025 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day and has rung rounds and call changes for service on several occasions this year. Elizabeth spent a day up to her elbows in grease at our recent maintenance day and is a valuable member of our quiz teams, being ideally equipped to handle all of the US based questions. She has a positive disposition and is ready to try anything. I thoroughly recommend that Elizabeth be admitted to membership of the KCACR and have no hesitation in nominating her as a member of the Shorne band.

They were elected unanimously and all were welcomed to the association.

TF: These new members were actively recruited by various methods; this is a good example for us all to follow.

RF congratulates Swanscombe on their new members, who have been taught by their own recently reestablished band members.

Action: New members to complete the online application and payment.

Action: AP: Pass newly elected members details to Doug.

6. Forthcoming events

- Sat 2nd Aug: Ringing Discovery Day in Medway at St Margaret's, Rochester.

Many of you will be aware of the forthcoming Ringing Discovery Day at St Margaret's, Rochester on Saturday 2nd August. The idea behind the day is to make the public more aware of ringing and, hopefully, encourage some to take advantage of the offer of a series of teaching sessions in September and October which should be able to help them work towards being able to handle a bell safely. To enable this, we will be demonstrating change ringing on the bells at St Margaret's - a very easy going ground floor ring of 8 bells. Because the ringers are visible from inside the church, they make an ideal location for visitors to the day to be able to watch ringing in practice.

Additionally, we will be offering members of the public a chance to have a go at some backstrokes, under strict supervision, and get a feel for what ringing a bell entails. Additionally, there will be a mini-ring in the churchyard where the public can also have a go.

There are also opportunities inside the church to watch and have a go at handbells, both tune ringing and method ringing, and some light refreshments are available. Members of the public will be able to talk to ringers about what bellringing is about and we hope to raise the profile of ringing and make more people aware of what goes on when they hear bells ringing.

I have had a fantastic response from ringers offering help for the day and would like to thank all those from the District who have kindly volunteered to assist on the 2nd. Whilst I am no longer in need of much assistance on the day, please do tell people about this event in your tower, church or local community. We do have some flyers available to take away with you. Please do come along on the 2nd, if you are able to. It may help you to get ideas for promoting ringing in your own tower in the future.

- Sat 20th Sep: Cobham 3 - 4:30 pm: District practice
- Sat 27th Sep: St Margaret's, Barming: Association 6-bell striking competitions. Milton Regis will be representing the Rochester District in the morning (draw 9:45am). There is an open call change competition in the afternoon for max. 10 teams (draw 2pm).
- Sat 18th Oct: Annual District Meeting at Hoo St Werburgh 2pm
- November: Quarter Peal Month
- Sat 15th Nov: District Practice at Milton Regis (focus on St Simon's Triples and St Clement's Major)
- Sat 13th Dec: Mini Tour to London plus Brick Lane Curry

Vote of thanks goes to Higham for hosting and providing refreshments.

The meeting closed at 11.59.