

Ringling Around and About in the Huntingdon District



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Editor – Phillip George



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Hunts District Ringers take part in Ringing World National Youth Contest – Saturday 6th July

Fen Tigers – Ringing Success

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Fen Tigers' in London! – by Dee Smith

On Saturday 6th July 2024, 14 of our Ely DA Young Ringers travelled down to London to participate in the RWNYC 2024. Our Bengal Tigers and Siberian Tigers teams were competing against 12 other teams in the Call Change 6-bell competition, which was held at St James, Garlickhythe (aka The Royal Jubilee Bells). Lesley Boyle and I were thrilled that they came joint 3rd (8.5/10) and joint 8th (6/10) respectively. All the hard work and determination had paid off!

After ringing the competition piece, the Fen Tigers set off on an adventure to ring at 5 other City of London Towers including the bells at the iconic St Mary Le Bow.

The results ceremony was held at St Paul's, where Great Paul was rung to celebrate the occasion. We set off home to the sound of St Paul's Bellringers, ringing Stedman Cinques across the City.

Lesley and I would like to thank ALL the Families, Tower captains and Ely Diocesan Ringers who have supported the Fen Tigers. Our special thanks, goes to the Skillings Family who gave a generous donation to the RATF in memory of Jim Skillings, part of which was used to cover the main costs of the day.

Our Ely DA Young Ringers Group welcomes ringers (of any ability) in the Ely DA who are under 18 years of age. We meet monthly at St Clement's Cambridge and bimonthly at venues around the Diocesan. Please contact rato@elyda.org.uk for more details of how to join.



Elsa sporting the Fen Tigers tee shirt



Josh showing off his RWNYC medal

Editor's note: With many congratulations to Elsa Holden (Houghton), and Josh Crutch (Great Gransden) who rang in the Bengal team. Thanks to Dee Smith and Lesley Boyle for their encouragement and support to our youngsters.

It is also particularly nice to see that Jim Skillings' legacy is being used to promote ringing amongst young ringers.

Supplementary note: At Great Gransden we had practiced the test piece for several months beforehand. Josh had been assigned to ring the treble in the competition and he called the changes during our practices. Later, we discovered that he would be in the Bengal Team and a different test piece had been composed. We quickly learned it and practiced it too. On the Sunday after the competition Josh called the composition for service ringing. PG



At Ramsey, our tradition is to ring rounds for the arrival of the bride and then to celebrate after the marriage with the best selection the band can offer, whether that be rounds and called changes or a method.

As an extra special gift to a bride from our congregation, the ringers 'join in' by scattering confetti from the ringing room as the couple enter the porch.

This happened on 27th July, and you can see the ringers in a slightly different position than when ringing and the effect for the newlyweds!



First Quarter Peal for Nigel Strong – by Caroline Stevens

In the summer months it is common to have fewer people at bell practice and on Tuesday 2nd July there were only six of us at Godmanchester. We had been encouraging Nigel to ring his first quarter peal for some time, "Am I ready?" he kept asking. "Don't know till you give it a go!" we said. Should he wait till he could plain hunt, or ring tenor behind, lots of doubts and worries; we continued with our encouragement, ring with a band who don't mind if you need to stop, there is only one way to find out



L-R: Nigel Strong, Andrew Stevens, Peter Arch, Roger Beaman, Caroline Stevens

As we gathered for practice night, this topic of conversation arose again as the next district quarter peal day was not far off, then it became apparent there may only be six of us, so we agreed to start ringing doubles with Nigel ringing tenor behind, see how it went and if anyone else turned up, then we would stop. We started with a plain course of Stedman, the method Geoff is learning and gets the 60 changes out of the way! That left 10 extents to ring to get the remaining 1200 changes, so five of Grandsire and five of Plain Bob. Occasionally we gave Nigel a nod or a name to ring over, but overall, it was not a bad bit of ringing and the delight on Nigel's face when "That's All!" was called was shown with an enormous grin

The ad hoc attempt took away the pressure and now Nigel knows he can, may there be many more.

Summer Meeting at Catworth – Saturday 20th July

We enjoyed a lovely ringing meeting at Catworth today, a steady going 15cwt six, which were rung to a variety of methods including Plain Bob, Plain Hunt, Oxford TB, Cambridge, Rounds and Call Changes, and Stedman, under the leadership of ringing masters Cathy Moulton and Andrew Smith. Over 20 ringers enjoyed the bells in this rural location, and a sumptuous tea in the church room afterwards.

Five were elected and welcomed as members of the Association: Ann Brittain and Fiona McGregor - Buckden, Emma Hunt and Harry Palmer - Ramsey, and Elsa Holden - Houghton. Elsa is a junior member who took part in the national young ringers striking competition two weeks ago.

Emma and Harry were presented with their certificates.

Our thanks go to Geoff Burn and the local ringers for providing a lovely tea, and to [Caroline Stevens](#) for making arrangements for the meeting.



Harry and Emma with their certificates



Also at Catworth – Caroline makes a visit to present a membership certificate.

It was a huge delight to make a return visit to Catworth practice night on the 25th July to present Mark Sharpe with his membership certificate. This is usually Phillip's job, but I was very happy to step in on his practice night whilst I am also free. The atmosphere was fun and welcoming and it was a joy to join in. Thank you Catworth Clangers.

Welcome to the Association Mark and also to our facebook group.



Mark receives his certificate from Caroline Stevens, District Secretary

Rededication of Alconbury Bells by Mark George

On Sunday July 14th Alconbury Church hosted a moving service attended by 110 people including many bell ringers to rededicate the recently restored bells.

The service was led by the Right Reverent Dagmar Winter, Bishop of Huntingdon and acting Bishop of Ely along with the Reverend Fiona Brampton.

The history of the bells and the fund-raising project to restore them was told by Churchwarden Jane Adams and Caroline Lewis, representing the Friends of Alconbury Church, after which the Church Choir sang "Ding Dong Merrily on High" – very appropriate words despite being more than a little out of season!

A bell rope and a stay were presented to the Bishop during the dedicating of the bells and bell ringing-themed hymns were sung by the congregation.



Following the service, delicious scones and fizz were enjoyed by all thanks to The Friends of Alconbury Church and the PCC.

The 6 bells of Alconbury church were last rung properly in the 1960's but after two generous bequests by local residents Gladys Childs and Frank Huffman they were removed in 2022, restored by Taylor's of Loughborough and re installed in October 2023. Taylor's had supplied four of the bells back in 1876, so it was fitting that they were once again involved in the restoration of these bells once more.

Prior to the service, a Quarter Peal of 1260 Grandsire Doubles was successfully rung by Susan Groom, Caroline Stevens, Andrew Stevens, Geoff Burns, Iain Hayden (C) and Mark George (this was his first quarter peal).

This was the first Quarter Peal to be rung at Alconbury for over 50 years and was much appreciated by those listening all over the village with the sound travelling as far as Alconbury Weston.

Alconbury now has an enthusiastic band of around 15 learner bell ringers led by Tower Captain Mark George and assisted on training evenings by Iain Hayden and various other local experts.

Many of the new ringers were able to take part in some general ringing before the ceremony and were very pleased to see their names on Bellboard!



Local ringers took part in the service ringing



The quarter peal band
L-R Susan Groom, Caroline Stevens, Andrew Stevens,
Geoff Burn, Iain Hayden, Mark George

Performance Ringing in the District during July summary by PG

Ten quarter peals have been rung in the District during July.

The month started with a handbell quarter peal of minimus at **Houghton Bury**. This was a 1296 in 8 methods. Another, in 3 methods was rung on the 22nd. Iain Hayden and Sally Mew often meet to rattle off a quarter peal and they usually take about 27 minutes.

A low turnout for a practice at **Godmanchester** on the 2nd gave the opportunity for Nigel Strong to ring his first quarter peal, which is reported on page 3 of this issue. Congratulation Nigel.

On the 3rd there was a mixed HD and other ringers team at **Caxton** ringing Plain Bob Minor. I believe there was to be two attempted but one came to grief.

1260 Grandsire Triples was rung at **Hemingford Grey** on the 5th to wish the Fen Tigers good luck at RWNYS in London on the 6th.

A special quarter was rung at **Alconbury** on Sunday the 14th, being the first on the bells since re-hanging. The footnote reads: The first quarter peal at Alconbury for over 50 years, Following two decades of fund-raising fetes and events and two generous bequests, the bells were removed then refurbished by Taylors in 2022, re-hung by them in 2023 and now rededicated by Bishop Dagmar in a moving service attended by 110 people, including many bell ringers. Rung before the re-dedication service.

Mark George, tower captain, rang the tenor and this was his first quarter peal. Congratulations, Mark.

At **Great Gransden** we had been asked to ring for a funeral of a local resident and supporter of the bells, Maurice Cain. The family requested that the bells be rung 'open' with the tenor tolled for 5 minutes as the cortege left the church. We rang Plain Bob Doubles and it was my 250 quarter on the bells as conductor.

Handbell quarters are occasionally rung at **Nutbells in Lt Gransden**, and one of Plain Bob Minor was successful on Monday the 29th. The trio comprises Naomi Laredo, Sheila George and myself.



The monthly quarter at **Godmanchester** for evensong on the 28th was of Quedgeley Surprise Major. This was a first in method for all except the ringer of the 7th. The team was: 1 Sharon Williams 2 Hannah Campbell 3 S Caroline M Stevens 4 Peter Rogers 5 Jo Lerpiniere 6 Nicholas T Smith 7 Andrew J Stevens 8 Iain Hayden. Well done, all.

Performance of the Month

The 'Goddy' quarter of Quedgeley was going to be performance of the month at one stage but was pipped at the post by a quarter of Treble Bob Singles at **Molesworth** on the 30th, because this was 12 year-old Eleanor Burstall's first quarter peal attempt.

1260 Treble Bob Singles (1m)

1 Geoff Burn (C)

2 Eleanor Burstall

3 Susan Groom

First quarter peal at the first attempt - 2, aged 12 years

Arranged by the conductor to celebrate the life of his cousin,

Paul Squires, a larger than life character, who sadly died earlier today in

Woy Woy, NSW, Australia. R.I.P.

Congratulations Eleanor.



Stop Press! Congratulations to Roger Beaman – 1st Cambridge S. as conductor at Wilburton on the 31st.

Houghton and Holywell Training Evening – by Roger Beaman

On Tuesday 16th July some 16 ringers from Bluntisham, Holywell and Houghton gathered together for an evening basic theory session led by Geoff Durrant.

The group included the vicar of Bluntisham, Colne and Holywell the Rev Valmor Pimenta and his wife Thais. It is wonderful to have an incumbent who is so supportive of ringing in the Benefice and by the end of the evening Thais was keen to also start ringing.



The Rev Valmor talking with some of the Holywell band

The event was hosted by Geoff and his wife Mary-Clare in their garden Barn (note to anyone seeking accommodation in the Bluntisham area – look for The Barn on Airbnb and you will not be disappointed), which proved to be an excellent venue for such a large group.

Geoff began with a little bit of ringing and personal history before we took a look at the basics of call changes and simple methods, along with the nomenclature used when hunting or ringing method on 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and more bells. The more experienced ringers were able to chip in with comments and suggestions, but the emphasis was on learning through interaction.

Refreshments were provided during the evening, and everyone had a very enjoyable time. The evening ended on the subject of numbers, which is the basis of so much ringing, with Geoff entertaining us with a few card tricks he knows. I think this left us more puzzled than any of the ringing theory!



Our youngest attendee, Elsa, talking with Nigel Woodward, Mel Duncan and Sally Mew



Discussions over refreshments

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Workshop - How to Learn Methods by Ed Groome

In the midst of all the current sporting events and other goings on this summer, it was great this afternoon to hold our second District Training Day of this year in Bluntisham.

We began with some social time, sharing some laughs and recent life updates over tea, coffee, and biscuits of course!

We then dove into the session, which kicked off with some speed dating - learners were paired with teachers, and moved pairs every 10 minutes, giving them opportunities to get different perspectives and advice on the learning process and various aspects of ringing, including learning new methods.

Caroline then delivered a very useful theory session focused on place bells, place notations, and bobs.

It also would not have been a ringing event without some practical elements, so we ended with some ringing in the church, offering learners the opportunity to put some of what we had discussed that afternoon into practice - we were able to ring some rounds, plain hunt, and plain bob doubles, and progress was made by all.



Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this event and to Bluntisham for hosting us. I look forward to seeing everyone again soon.



Forthcoming Events – See Caroline's **Coming Up Next** flyer.

Contact information for District Officers

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