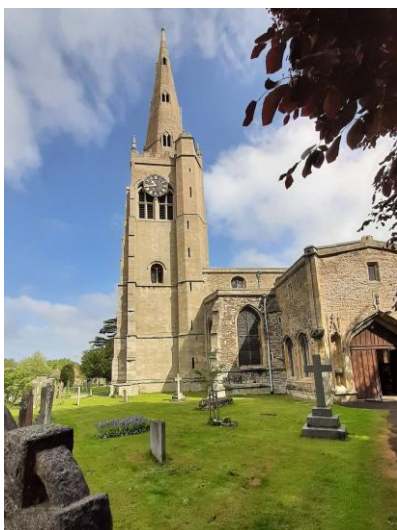


Ringling Around and About in the Huntingdon District



Issue No 29: May 2025

Editor – Phillip George



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Editorial

The 8th of May 2025 saw the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Issue No 5952 of the Ringing World was dedicated to this event and published all the ringling performances which had been submitted for this anniversary.

This included 62 peals and two half-peals. There were 7 date touches of 1945 changes, approximately 391 quarter peals and 21 eighth peals. By far the highest number of performances were of general ringling. This included method ringling and call changes and often involved all the ringers in any one tower, and in some towers open days were arranged for visitors to chime the bells. There were approximately 1798 records.

Years ago we rarely saw any reference to general ringling in the Ringing World and eighth-peals were never recorded, and probably rarely rung. The emphasis on performance ringling was either quarter peals or peals and nothing else was recognised as a particular achievement. The fact that there are so many records of this commemorative ringling reflects the dedication and excitement of ringers to be part of the church and wider community, and is a measure of the enthusiasm and achievement in ringling, at every level.

In our own district the bells were rung for the 80th anniversary in thirty-five towers. A summary can be found on **page 7** of the newsletter. There were twelve quarter peals and a lot of general ringling which included call changes, Plain Bob, Grandsire, Bastow, St Regimus, Original, Mayday, April Day and Firing.

Well done to everyone who took part.



The Association AGM - PG

On Saturday the 17th May the Hunts District were hosts to the Ely DA AGM. Whilst the striking competition was being held at Godmanchester two other towers were open for general ringing. Thanks to both Cathy Moulton, for looking after the ringing at Alconbury where about 40 ringers passed through, and at Brampton, to Andrew Smith who supervised about twenty ringers.

The short service of evensong was led by the vicar the Rev David Busk before ringers gathered for tea in the church hall next door.

Tea was sumptuous and included the usual fare of sandwiches and cake, plus scones with cream and jam, and of course lashings of tea. Our very grateful thanks to Charles Looker (T/C at Goddy) and his cheereful team of sandwich & cake makers (who were still on duty at the end of the meeting). They worked tirelessly to look after us.



During tea, handbells (left) were rung outside where courses of Bristol, Cambridge and Yorkshire were enjoyed, and I was thrilled to be able to ring in one of the touches.



After tea the results of the competition were given by judges for the day, Stef and John Warboys, (who are celebrating their 34th wedding anniversary today - applause by all present). Stef is ringing master at St Martins in the Bull Ring, Birmingham. She opened by giving very useful, interesting and constructive comments about each band, highlighting that each team rang a clean test piece. Ringing speed for each varied from a peal speed of 3hr 21 from the Cambridge District to 2hr 59 from Wisbech.

Key comments for each were: Team 1 (Ely) steady beat and continued to improve throughout. Team 2 (Cambridge) Clear determined beat with sustained accuracy and concentration throughout.



Lynn Hughes accepts the trophy on behalf of the Cambridge team

Team 3 (Hunts) Brisk ringing with good change length but with speed differences in the leading. Team 4 (Wisbech) No hesitancy but faults accumulated due to the leading. The overall comment for all bands (and bear this in mind for the future) You must maintain tight control over the band, decide on the speed you are all going to ring and eliminate minor inconsistencies.

The results are: 1st Cambridge 81%, 2nd Ely 72%, 3rd Hunts 68%, 4th Wisbech 62%.

John and Stef then presented the Ernie Mastin Trophy to the Cambridge team and gifts were presented to the judges as a token of appreciation. Thanks to Alban Forster for organising the judges and looking after them during the competition and also supervising each team into the tower and timekeeping their practice sessions.

The Association AGM - cont

Quarter Peal Challenges. Last year Dee Smith challenged all districts to ring as many quarter peals with 'firsts' in them. The results are: 1st Wisbech 217, 2nd Hunts 125, 3rd Ely 120, 4th Cambridger 112.

Well done to our district ringers for achieving second place, and to Ed Groome for collating all the quarter peal data. Well done all, it is a measure of enthusiasm and dedication of our ringers. (A particularly impressive performance by Wisbech - well done!)

A couple more thanks, to Caroline Stevens who was unable to be with us today, for doing all the outline planning and making sure people were in place to do things, to Charles Looker and Nigel Strong for checking out the bells and ringing them up ready for today, to Iain Hayden for conducting the home team and all our ringers who took part; and to the other teams for the competition.

It was a very enjoyable and successful afternoon, a good time to catch up with and welcome friends from other districts.



Hunts District competition band
L-R: Geoff Durrant, Ed Groome, Nick Smith, Sheila George,
Iain Hayden (cond), Catherina Griffiths, Peter Mackley, Phillip George

COMING UP NEXT!

Saturday 7th June: 10:00am - 12noon

Training Day at Ramsey

Learning Plain Hunt or Plain Bob Doubles? Come and join us for some extra practice and hints and tips.

Helpers needed too, please get in touch with Ed.

Please bring £3 in cash on the day.

Saturday 21st June: from 2pm - see Caroline's email of 1st May

Huntingdon District Ringing Festival

Teams can enter Rounds, Call Changes and Method ringing

To assist with planning and organisation, entries prior to this date are preferred.

Stating:

- Team Name
- Categories being entered (see below)
- Captain's Name, contact e-mail and phone number
- Any specific constraints regarding start time (e.g. "due to wedding commitments, a start time no earlier than 4.30pm")

Entry Fee

£2 per ringer in cash on the day.

Venue

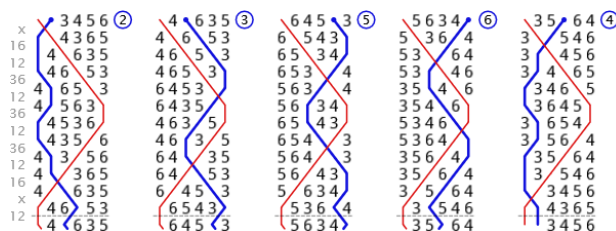
St Margaret of Antioch, Hemingford Abbots.

There are 6 bells with a tenor weight of 14cwt

District Quarter Peal Weekend 2nd -5th May

Eight quarter peals were rung from the 1st to the 5th May.

Caroline Stevens' group had a quarter peal tour on Monday the 5th and rang Grandsire Doubles at [Hemingford Abbots](#), Hempsted Bob Minor at [Holywell](#), Bob Doubles at [Somersham](#) and Badgeworth Minor at [Chatteris](#). Lunch was taken at the Green Man in Colne. The photo is of the band at Holywell, L-R: Ed Groome, Andrew Stevens, Barry Smith, Roger Beaman, Georgie Hunt and Caroline Stevens



Hempsted Bob Minor

The power of good public relations.

At [Great Gransden](#) a quarter peal was rung in the morning of Saturday the 3rd May. After about half a group from the Cambridge Ramblers came into church and many of them stood and watched us ringing. I waved from the ringing room.

They were still there when the QP came round, and I immediately went down and asked if any of them would like to come up into the ringing room. (We always take the opportunity to introduce ourselves to visitors and invite them into the tower). Word quickly got around to some who had gone outside and in the end all of them accepted the invitation. With instructions to leave bags downstairs and not to touch the ropes, about 15 or so climbed the 12 stairs.

The ringers immediately went into 'host mode' and the room was full of chatter about how we ring and how bells work etc. After a while we rang some call changes to Queens and back to give them some ringing room experience. They were, to a person, impressed, several saying that it had made their day.

The most important things coming out of this were that a former ringer said he wanted to return, and another person said they would like to take it up.

Now, the exercise may never see them again, but you never know when chance meetings will generate interest, even if its just giving people a new experience.

My thanks to the ringers for helping, and for a jolly nice quarter peal. L-R: Sheila Prest, Sheila George, Catherina Griffiths, Dave Griffiths, Phillip George, David Prest



There were also quarter peals a [Gamlingay](#) on the 1st which was of Plain Bob Doubles, at [Woodston](#) where they rang Grandsire Doubles and at [Kimbolton](#) which was also of Plain Bob Doubles.

Ringling at Conington – *by Roger Beaman*

I had the privilege this afternoon to ring with a band at Conington church (the one near Yaxley) for a local VE-Day celebration. Conington was the site of RAF Glatton during WW2 and it was from this base that many USAF aircrew departed on bombing missions, with far too many not returning.

The church is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and can be visited by prior arrangement. It has a substantial tower, with 6 bells, but ringing the bells is hard work primarily due to a lack of upkeep.

Looking on Bellboard, the previous performance at All Saints was 48 changes of Plain Bob Minimus in September 2021 and it is highly unlikely that any maintenance or ringing has taken place in the last three and a half years. The upstairs ringing chamber is extremely light and spacious, due to a very large west window and a very high ceiling.

Control of the bells is not helped by the lack of any rope guides, despite the considerable drop from the ceiling. The belfry was inspected prior to ringing, and ringing up told us what we needed to know about the 'go', which wasn't happy news! We did contemplate ringing a Quarter of Bob Minor, but having promised the locals a Quarter sense intervened, and we rang Bob Doubles.

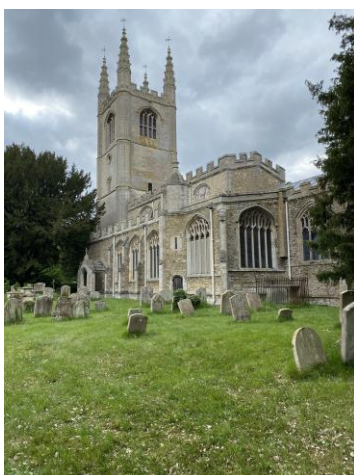
The ringing chamber is remarkably insulated from the sound of the bells, so I honestly can't comment on how the Quarter sounded, but the lady who locked up as we departed was very happy with the result (she wasn't a ringer.....). And as a minor additional detail, it's an anticlockwise ring - which was the least of the issues that we had to deal with while ringing.

On a sombre note, is this potentially the future of many towers? A redundant church, with no one caring for the bells, which are only rung every few years and hence become almost unringable. The recent CCCBR discussions brought into very sharp focus.

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1848514>

We were successful, but I wouldn't describe it as a satisfying experience. 'Challenging' is a much better description.

If you are seeking a tower where the 'go' is not good, the ropes are thin and with a long draught, the layout is anticlockwise and hardly in a circle, and it is all but impossible to hear the bells.....Conington All Saints might be just what you are looking for!



Conington All Saints Church



The light and airy ringing room



View into the church

400 Years of Church Bells at Holywell – *by Roger Beaman*

Yesterday we held an event at Holywell church as part of this year's celebration of 400 years of church bells at Holywell. Prior to the event I had no idea how many would turn up to listen to me and see a demonstration of ringing. I did wonder if the number of local ringers would outnumber the attendees. As it was, my concerns were unfounded and about 50 people were entertained by an overview of the history of the bells at Holywell, a description of what is involved in bell ringing, a demonstration of ringing, a trip up the tower to see the bells for those who don't mind cobwebs, and wine, nibbles and friendly chat to round off the day. I even threw in a short rendition of 'Ode to joy' on the Ellacombe chimes, once everyone was back down the tower.

A very successful afternoon and we even gained another ringer!

On Saturday afternoon, June 21st we will be holding our annual Patronal Festival and well dressing. This year's theme is 400 years of bells and there is also a service on the Friday evening. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

Following the service a note of thanks was posted on the benefice Facebook page:

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us today for the Meridian Benefice Gathering. Special thanks to Roger for his truly inspirational talk about Church Bells—a beautiful reminder of their history, meaning, and the way they continue to call us together in faith and fellowship.

Ringling in community, tradition, and spirit – what a blessing!

Roger also reported how much Rev Valmor Pimenta supports bell ringing at Holywell. Roger says, “We might not have gained many new ringers from the event, but we have gained a lot of goodwill from the congregation and the wider local community.”



Roger demonstrates how a church bell works

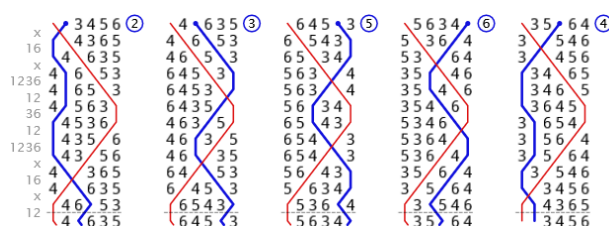


Villagers watch Geoff Durrant as he rings a bell



Participants in Roger's Plain Hunt demonstration

Method of the month – Lakesend Bob Minor. Rung at Holywell on the 21st



Alconbury		Rounds
Bluntisham	1272	Bourne Surprise Minor
Brington		General Ringing
Catworth		General Ringing
Chatteris	1260	Badgeworth Bob Minor
Conington	1260	Plain Bob Doubles
Ellington		General Ringing
Elton		Rounds, Call Changes, P Hunt
Fenstanton		Call Changes
Gamlingay	1320	Doubles (2m)
Gamlingay	80	Grandsire Doubles
Godmanchester		Call Changes
Grafham		General Ringing
Great Gidding		General Ringing
Great Gransden		Call Changes and Firing
Hemingford Abbots	1260	Grandsire Doubles
Hemingford Grey		Rounds
Hilton	720	Cambridge Surprise Minor
Holywell	1320	Cambridge Surprise Minor
Holywell	1260	Hempsted Bob Minor
Keyston		General Ringing
Kimbolton	1260	Plain Bob Doubles
Leighton		
Bromswold		General Ringing
Little Paxton		General Ringing
Molesworth		General Ringing
Molesworth	1260	St Remigius Place Singles
Old Fletton	1260	Doubles (3m/v)
Somersham	1260	Plain Bob Doubles
Somersham		Rounds and Call Changes
St Ives		General Ringing
St Neots		General Ringing
Stanground	240	Plain Bob Minimus
Warboys		Call changes
Winwick		General Ringing
Woodditton		Call Changes and Plain Hunt

Alex Diviney	Eric Young	Michael Matthews
Alex Dyer	Eva Gardiner	Nicci Jones
Alistair Donaldson	Gavin Simpson	Nicholas Leigh-Smith
Andrew B Smith	Geoff Burn	Nigel G Woodward
Andrew Christie	Geoff Grayton	Nigel Strong
Andrew Ferris	George Bonham	Oliver Probert
Andrew J Stevens	Georgie Hunt	Owen Garnell
Andy Egan	Graeme Anness	Pam Longland
Angela Whiteway	Graeme Withey	Paul Seward
Angie Gell	Graham Barnes	Peter Arch
Angus Campbell	Graham Hall	Peter Mackley
Ann Abraham	Iain A Hayden	Peter N Mackley
Annemarie Adams	Iain Hayden	Peter Wylie
Barbara Bigsby	Ian Gillman	Philip D Bailey
Barbara D'Silva	Ian Hamilton	Phillip S George
Barry K Smith	Ian Larter	Rebecca Glazier
Benjamin Keen	J Richard Hough	Revd Paul Hutchinson
Bernie Clapp	Jacqueline Ozcan	Rhyan Probert
Bill Garner	James Gamble	Richard Holness
Carol Mee	James Stronach	Rod Deaval
Caroline Burstall	Jane K A Hough	Roderick Johnstone
Caroline Louth	Jane Robinson	Roger Beaman
Caroline Windsor	Jane Webb	Rosie Greaves
Catherina E Griffiths	Janet A Butler	Roy Snow
Catherine Keen	Jerome Jarrett	S Caroline M Stevens
Cathy Stronach	John Bacon	Sarah Gray
Charles Looker	John Coppendale	Sharon Williams
Charlie Sharpe	Joseph P D Booker	Sheila J George
Charlotte Gamble	Josh Crutch	Sheila Prest
Chris D'Silva	Josie Charter	Simon Kershaw
Chris Edis	Kate Abrahams	Simon Leaver
Chrissie Roberts-Lewis	Katherine Probert	Simon Page
Christopher T Winch	Kathleen Greaves	Stephanie Ellington
Clare O'Callaghan	Keith Page	Steve Cox
Clive Jones	Lesley H M Boyle	Steven Harrell
Clive Jones	Leslie Gabriolek	Sue Matthews
Daniel J Stevens	Lewis Abbott	Susan Bates
Dave Robinson	Linda Page	Susan Groom
David J Griffiths	Louisa Egan	Susan L Hall
David Prest	Lynn George	Tessa Adams
Diana Street	Marina Warner	Timothy J Leigh
Diana Thomas	Mark Sharpe	Tom Salkield
Edith Robinson	Martin Williams	Tricia Williams
Edward B Groome	Mary Hall	Trish Appleton
Edwin Hall	Mary Parnham	Trish Rowland
Elaine Woolward	Melanie Farnham	
Eleanor Burstall	Mervyn Greaves	
Emily Harris		
Emma Jarrett		
Erasmus Egan		



Alconbury ringers celebrating their ringing for VE80

The listed names are those taken from records on BellBoard for ringing at towers in the Hunts District. Some ringers are resident in other districts. Editor cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data.

THE BACK PAGE

Performance Ringing During May

In addition to the VE80 ringing and our quarter peal weekend at the beginning of the month the following quarter peals have been rung during May.

First out of the blocks was a handbell quarter of minimus in 6 methods at **Houghton Bury**. The duo team of Iain Hayden and Sally Mew scored a further two quarters during the month, one in 8 methods on the 13th, and the other on the 22nd, also in 8 methods. On the 13th Plain Bob Major was scored at **Hemingford Grey**, which was a first inside of PB8 for Becca Glazier (Thriplow). At **Old Fletton** Silver Wedding Doubles was rung for Kay and Simon Fitch at Castor.

Lakesend Bob Minor was rung at **Holywell** on the 21st; a substitute tower because Buckden bells were unavailable due to a visit by a swarm of bees! Also on the 21st **Caxton** hosted Mixed Doubles in 2 methods.

It is pleasing to see **St Neots** feature in the quarter peal records. On Sunday 25th Plain Bob doubles was rung, which was a first quarter for James Stronach on the tenor.

The monthly quarter peal at **Godmanchester** for Evensong was Grandsire Triples.



Hemingford Gray team on the 13th



Monthly quarter at Goddy on the 25th



St Neots team on the 25th

Three further quarter peals were rung in district towers on the last day of the month. Philip Bailey of the Ely district arranged a quarter peal day to include ringing at **Catworth** (Grandsire Doubles), **Alconbury** (Cambridge Surprise Minor) and **Yaxley** (11 doubles methods). They were all rung in memory of Philip's father Derrick Bailey.

Appeal for News Articles

Thank you to those who have contributed this month, the articles are very much appreciated and give an interesting insight into activities in the district. Ringing is community oriented, amongst individual groups and between ringers in other towers. It is interested to know what is happening elsewhere in the district as this keeps us in touch with one another, helping us to promote ringing and secure its longevity.

Photographs will be published only where the Editor is satisfied that consent has been obtained from someone who has legal responsibility for the child or vulnerable adult.

Contact information for the District Committee

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Membership Secretary – Roger Beaman

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