

Ringling Around and About in the Huntingdon District



Issue No 17: May 2024



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Ringling at St Neots during the Assoc 10-bell practice on the 31st

Headlines

- ❖ The Hunts District win the Association 8-bell inter district striking competition



Hunts District Winning Team

L-R: Owen Davis, Geoff Durrant, James Gamble, Nick Smith, Catherina Griffiths,
Peter Mackley, Caroline Stevens, Alban Foster

- ❖ Members agree at the Association AGM to increase adult membership subscriptions to £15 from 2025. Juniors remain at £5
- ❖ Association membership to be managed centrally – see page 3

Association AGM – 4th May

The Association AGM was held on Saturday the 4th of May at the Memorial Hall in Swavesey.

The afternoon had been spent by some ringers, at Over, where they competed in the inter-district 8-bell striking competition. Other ringers had visited various churches in the Ely District to ring on their way to the service in St. Andrew's church Swavesey or direct to the Memorial Hall.

Ely District ringers had prepared a sumptuous tea which was followed by the business meeting. About 50 ringers attended.

Before the meeting the results were given of the striking competition. The judge was Brian Meads from Essex. He commented on how difficult the bells are, with long and stretchy ropes making the front bells particularly tricky to handle.

In summary he said that none of the bands were outstanding but there were no major clashes in the ringing, and the faults were evenly scattered.

Team 1 (Hunts) test piece was well rung especially by the treble and tenor ringers. Team 2 (Wisbech) struggled, and the ringing was more irregular. It improved slightly. Team 3 (Ely) was similar to team 2 with a slightly better rhythm. Team 4 (Cambridge) was more uneven but there were no method mistakes.

Results. 1st Hunts 53 faults. 2nd Ely 83 faults, 3rd Wisbech 85 faults. 4th Cambridge 110 faults. All the teams rang Plain Bob Triples.

Well done to our team who received the trophy. They were: 1. Owen Davis, 2. James Gamble, 3. Catherina Griffiths, 4. Caroline Stevens, 5. Geoff Durrant, 6. Nick Smith, 7. Peter Mackley, 8, Alban Foster (C)

The main item of business meeting, which affects all members, was the proposal to convert to an online membership system. This will mean paying subscriptions directly to the Association instead of via the individual districts. A motion was proposed and carried. See page 3 for detailed information.

In connection with this, following an analysis of income over expenditure by Tom Ridgman (Chair – Admin Committee), and discussion by the General Committee a proposal was made to increase adult subscriptions from £10 to £15 with effect from 2025.

Our thanks to our hosts, the Ely District Ringers.



Bob Cox (Assoc Chairman) presents the trophy to Alban Foster

Online Membership to the Association

by Roger Beaman, Hunts District Membership Secretary

At the recent Ely Diocesan Association AGM the decision was made to go ahead with an online membership system, with the aim of this being in place by the end of this year. The software most likely to be used is an off-the-shelf commercial package 'MemberMojo', which is already being used by many clubs and organisations across the UK. It is important to note that Ely D.A. is by no means ahead of other bell ringing associations in implementing an online membership system. For instance, Essex is already using MemberMojo and Oxford are in the process of implementing a system.

At this time the most important thing we can do as a District to prepare for implementation of the new system is getting our list of member email addresses up to date. In the coming months we will also be ensuring that the information we need for each member is as accurate as possible. Hence, I have recently been chasing members for whom either we do not have an email address or the email address we have does not appear to work. Out of 201 current members we now have 192 email addresses and have identified just 7 members who are not on email (3 of whom are no longer ringing). To already have email addresses for 96% of the membership bodes well for a good implementation within our District. Going forwards, those with an email address will find it easier to communicate with the Association than those without. Those without an email address will be accommodated, but it will not be so easy for information to be passed directly to them about Association events. This is no different to the current situation for those without, but an improvement for those with. Of course, if you received this message directly then we must have a valid email address for you! But is that true for everyone in your tower?

With any online system people may have concerns about the data held about them and how it will be used. The first thing to say is that a great many organisations are using online membership without any security issues. Secondly, the system will allow members to view their information held by Ely DA and correct any mistakes. This is a very important point as currently all the information about members is held on a spreadsheet and members do not have easy access to it. Thirdly, the system being considered will allow members to make decisions regarding what information they receive from the Association. No-one wishes to 'spam' members with inappropriate emails, but I would imagine that most members would like to be kept aware of District and Association events. For those that would not, then you have the option to opt out of such emails (but we would greatly appreciate everyone being opted in for receiving reminders about their annual membership fees being due!). In summary, the new system will give you much greater control over your information held by the Association and over the flow of information to you from the Association.

Once the new system is implemented each member will receive details about how to log in securely. Please log in as soon as possible so that you can review the information about yourself and make any corrections needed. Towards the end of 2024 you will receive an email regarding the payment of subs for the coming year. The good news is that payment will be possible by credit / debit card, BACS, cheque or cash. Using a card or a BACS transfer is strongly recommended as it makes life easier for the Membership Secretary! Already Hunts District is doing well at using electronic payment as some 90% of membership fees in 2023 were paid by BACS and it is anticipated that many members will make use of online payment by card when it becomes available. Conversely, just 3 payments by cheque were made in 2023 covering 12 members and only 4 members paid by cash.

Continued on page 4

Online Membership to the Association by Roger Beaman, Hunts District Membership Secretary *continued*

Any new online system can be a challenge to implement, but Hunts District are very well placed for a smooth transition. The benefits of such a system are numerous and both members and the Association will be impacted positively. Once we are ready to go live, take a deep breath and dive into the 21st Century. Would anyone really prefer to go back to times before an online Dove and Bellboard? And how many ringers now have methods on their phones? So, why not an online membership system?

Monthly Ringing Meeting at Eynesbury – Saturday 18th May

Only twelve ringers attended this morning, but this gave plenty of opportunity for call changes and Plain Hunt on 5 and 6 bells. We also rang Eynesbury Doubles and a course of Kent TB Minor.

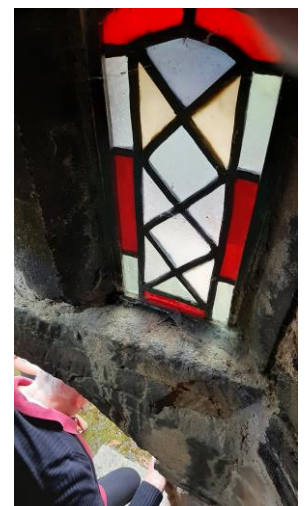
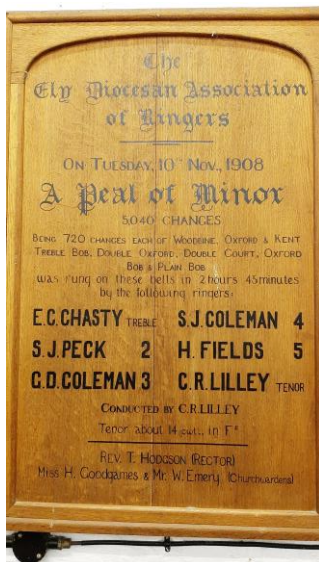
There was a lot of lively chatter between ringing in the very echoey ringing room, and Cathy Moulton, our ringing master for the meeting, kept us in order!

A notice in the ringing room records a peal of 7 methods on Tuesday the 10th of November 1908. The same band rang a similar peal at Great Gransden the following Saturday, the 14th, (the first at Gransden). This was also conducted by Charles Lilley, but they substituted the Double Oxford rung at Eynesbury for College Single rung at Gransden.

Elsewhere in the Eynesbury ringing room are certificates recording quarter peals which have been rung there in more recent years.

A brief sortie into the church afterwards revealed pew ends, some of which are 500 years old, and an 18th century pulpit.

Many thanks to Cathy for looking after us and to Catherina for meeting us today. A very enjoyable morning.



Great Gransden's Visit to Ramsey – 21st May

In the last couple of years Great Gransden ringers have arranged 'practice exchanges' with towers in the local area. Last year they were with Catworth ringers and Aston in Herts (where we have a contact).

This year part 1 of our first exchange was on Tuesday 22nd May when seven of us ventured towards the north of the district to Ramsey. It was a dreary, wet drive but we received a very warm welcome from Cathy Moulton as we stepped into the ringing room.

There were twenty ringers in all, including some regular visitors from March whilst their tower is restored. During the evening we rang Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Kent T.B. and Stedman.

This was a pre-arranged visit and it was lovely to meet up with ringing friends. The lively chatter between rings was infectious and 9.00pm came around all too quickly, the practice ending in a super ring down in peal led by Dianne Mackley.

The sweet tin is constantly open and was almost emptied by the end of the evening and Mel had brought in some free range eggs from her chickens, who Cathy said had been "hard at it!"

I always enjoy a visit to Ramsey and Gransden ringers are looking forward to a reciprocal visit in the summer. A video summarising our visit can be found [here](#).



Scan the QR code to view the video

Catworth Clangers Outing – 20th April, by Geoff Burn

On 20th April, the Catworth Clangers' Spring Tour visited towers in Cotterstock, Fotheringhay, Nassington and Alwalton, with their lovely bells.

We rang call changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob, Grandsire and Stedman. Many thanks to Iain Hayden and Jo Lerpiniere for joining our outing and guiding us when necessary!

The tour ended at The Red Lion, Warmington where we were joined by partners for refreshments and a convivial evening meal.



A Quarter Peal of Stedman Doubles by PG

From the 1st of January 2023 to the 14th of May 2024 19,994 quarter peals were rung on tower bells. (data from BellBoard). Out of all those performances only 139 were of Stedman Doubles. This represents 0.69% of the total.

Statistically, this doesn't necessarily say anything about Stedman but it might be an indicator as to how difficult it is to score a quarter peal of doubles in the principle. I have certainly found it to be so!

Before lockdown Sheila and I, together with Catherina Griffiths, Naomi Laredo and Jon Reed were trying to score a quarter with David Armitstead (late of Somersham). We made several attempts but never got very far with any of them. Sadly, David died before we could score one and then Jon passed away just before Covid. It was unfinished business and certainly something which the remaining band wanted to achieve.

Gradually, after lockdown, ringing began to return and once again we formed a regular quarter peal band, this time including Tom Ridgman and Becca Glazier, deciding to meet monthly if possible. Our first quarter peals were in Plain Minor methods and the subject of Stedman was raised during our apres-ring coffee break!

Sheila and I had already attempted two of S5 with daughter Rebecca and her husband Mark. These attempts were at Kirby Muxloe in Leicestershire but failed due either to method mistakes or a miscall by the conductor. The Leicestershire band eventually succeeded without us, aided by a different 'calling' strategy.

Our local pre-Covid attempts failed for the same reasons, but I thought that to help reduce the risk I would change my calling strategy too. All my previous attempts at calling were from from the 5th when I tried to call 10 different extents. The new plan was to call singles between myself, ringing the treble, and each of the other bells, and one affecting 4 & 5, then repeat with a plain course to finish.

We selected a light six, in this case Holywell, and set off on our first attempt. Surprisingly, when we started it seemed that no-one knew the method let alone how to ring a touch, and the ringing was quickly stopped. There were a couple of starts like this, and it seemed that a quarter peal was going to be a non-starter! However, having decided that it would be worth just practising we set off again, having purged our minds of confusion, and settled down into a nice piece of ringing.



There were a couple of minor trips en-route but luckily everyone was determined to succeed. Half-way through, thinks, "Could we actually get this?". I encouraged the band to remain focussed, and said to myself "Keep ringing steadily, don't think of success, but concentrate blow by blow". Two extents to go, "Wow!, there's a chance – just keep hold of it". The final course – many a quarter peal has been lost here, but everyone stepped up to the mark and it came round in 43 minutes.

Thanks to everyone for hard work, determination and some lovely ringing. Well worthwhile, and now I like Stedman a little more!

Performance Ringing in District Towers During May

It has been a very quiet month in the District on the 'performance ringing' front. Perhaps as we get into spring and early summer people have other things on their minds!

The first quarter peal was on the 3rd of May when a 1320 of Norwich was rung at Hemingford Grey. This was predominantly an Ely District band but included Sharon Williams and Sally Mew.

Catworth featured next on the 7th, a welcome tower to the performance ringing list, when the local band rang Sixty on Thirds call changes conducted by Geoff Burn. The footnote reads: "Rung to celebrate the licensing and Installation of The Revd. Philip Howson as Priest-in-Charge of West Leightonstone Benefice by The Bishop of Huntingdon & Acting Bishop of Ely, The Rt. Revd. Dr. Dagmar Winter and The Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, The Ven. Richard Harlow". Well done to the band and welcome to the Rev Philip Howson.

The Stedman at Holywell on the 14th is reported in detail on page 6. I think I have bragging rights on this one so have chosen it as feature performance of the month.

A group of ringers from outside our area take a holiday each year on the Intrepid Annual Canal Boat Tour. This year they dipped their toes in the waters of our region on the 17th visiting Old Fletton for a quarter of May Day Doubles. They rang eleven QPs in towers along the River Nene in Northants.

Back in our district also on the 17th Bluntisham were rung to a 1344 of Plain Bob Major by predominantly an Ely District band.

I was very pleased to see the (monthly) quarter peal at Godmanchester for evensong on the 26th. It was Grandsire Triples this time, conducted by Iain Hayden. Having just seen the announcement that ringing has been officially stopped at both Huntingdon towers, ringing at Goddy, being a close neighbour which shares some ringers with the other towers, is even more poignant, and I hope that practices and the monthly quarter peal will continue.

Midweek quarter peals are very popular, and another was rung at Holywell on Thursday the 29th. This was of Grandsire Doubles, by mostly a resident District team with Becca Glazier conducting, remembering her father who would have been 96 on this day.

Association 10-Bell Practice at St Neots – Friday 31st May



The last day of the month and the last event to be reported for May is the Association 10-bell practice held in our district at St Neots. Generally held on the 5th Fridays these are really worthwhile. They are an excellent opportunity to ring on ten bells and it doesn't matter if you can only ring Rounds or call changes, you will be made welcome.

This time there were only fourteen ringers, maybe the half term had an influence on attendance. Nevertheless, we had an excellent evening.

We started with an excellent ring up in peal of the front six, almost to West Country standard, something all ringers should aspire to! The back bells were then raised in pairs,

Ringing included Rounds and Call Changes, Plain Hunt on 9 and 10, and touches of Grandsire Caters.

These practices are great for experience of ringing on ten, and the 12-bell practices at GSM in Cambridge are also an excellent opportunities.

THE BACK PAGE

John Marlow

We have sadly learnt of the death of John Marlow, a former ringer at St Ives. He died peacefully at home on May 7th, aged 91 years. John also rang regularly with the bands at Holywell, Houghton and Fenstanton many years ago.

50 Years Membership - Long Service Certificates

During the Association AGM on the 4th of May, Michael and Bridget White were presented with certificates marking their 50 years as members of the Association. We extend our hearty congratulations to them both.



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

Saturday the 15th of June Ringing Festival at Gamlingay

Informal striking competition for all ringers, Rounds, Call Changes and Method ringing
Refreshments and Quiz, Hndbells
Tea and results at 5pm in the Church Hall
Entry fee £3.00 (cash)

Saturday 29th June 6.30pm to 8.00pm Association 12 bell practice at GSM

Saturday the 6th of July Training Day – How to learn methods. Details to follow

Contact information for District Officers

President – Phillip George

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Membership Secretary – Roger Beaman

Ringing Masters. Andrew Smith and Cathy Moulton

Training Officer – Ed Groome

Webmaster – Daniel Stevens

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