



## February 2023

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St. Mary's church Huntingdon.  
Venue for a date touch.  
See page 3.

### Key Notes from the District Committee Meeting

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February

#### New Committee Members

At the ADM Geoff Burn expressed a wish to stand down as membership secretary, although he agreed to continue for this year. There was also a vacancy for a committee member.

Very soon after the meeting Roger Beaman offered to serve as membership secretary and Georgie Hunt volunteered to stand on the committee. After due process the committee agreed unanimously to co-opt both on to the committee.

The committee is pleased to announce this and welcomes Georgie and Roger in their respective roles.

#### Finances

The ADM discussed the general fund and the belfry repair fund accounts, neither of which are fit for purpose because we can't access them for normal transactions. Members at the ADM agreed to close the general account and open a Treasurer's Account which can be managed online. This transfer is in progress. The ADM referred the BRF account to the committee for action. Banking systems have changed since it was opened as a club account many years ago and we now can't pay into this account. As there has been no call on it from the district in the last 15 years the committee agreed unanimously to close it and transfer the balance to the Association Bell Fund. Grants for district bell and tower repairs can be made from the association fund. We will continue to collect donations at our monthly meetings but these will be paid directly to the association.

#### Communication

Daniel Stevens is forming a pan-association working group to discuss communications within the association and he also continues to develop our district website. We have various email systems in the district which are ineffective and very time consuming. Daniel is looking to create an email system linked to the website to replace the existing ones.



## Programme

The ringing programme was agreed at the ADM with some items to be confirmed. The June meeting date will be more of a social ringing event which Georgie Hunt has volunteered to organise with help from Caroline Stevens. They will also organise a social event in August. Caroline will keep members informed in her regular “Coming Up Next” briefings. Please see your tower notice boards, or your tower captain for details.

## Bookstall

The bookstall has been dormant for a long time. The committee was charged with deciding what the best course of action might be. Christian Burrell presented a comprehensive report on possible options. After discussion it was agreed to close the bookstall and transfer remaining funds to the Association Bell Fund. Remaining books to be sold off at subsequent meetings. Daniel Stevens will be asked to add a page to the website on which Christian will list titles for ringers to obtain individually.

## Business Meetings

Our next business meeting for members is at the District Practice at Spaldwick on the 18<sup>th</sup> March. If you have any items of business which you would like to raise please contact Caroline Stevens beforehand.

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## Quarter Peals – February

Fourteen quarter peals were rung in the district, six of which were by predominantly visiting bands. A couple of “feature” performances can be seen on page 3.

There was also a **720** in 3 methods rung on the 3<sup>rd</sup> at [Hemingford Abbots](#) with an interesting footnote: In Memoriam: Nicholas Herbert, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Hemingford. Having never heard of Baron Hemingford I decided to look him up! Wikipedia will tell you all about it, but in summary the peerage was created on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943 for Sir Dennis who served as Lord Lieutenant of Huntingdon and Peterborough. The present Baron Hemingford is the 4<sup>th</sup> baron, Dennis Charles Herbert.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> was the occasion for a quarter peal at [Great Gransden](#), this time arranged as a 14<sup>th</sup> birthday wish to Heather Banner, granddaughter of Phillip and Sheila George.

A handbell quarter peal of minimus was rung at [Houghton Bury](#) on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

The QP at [Spaldwick](#) on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb was rung half muffled in memory of John Woolward, Elaine’s husband, who died suddenly in December last. Elaine is the tower captain at Spaldwick.

[Houghton](#) – 22<sup>nd</sup> February saw a quarter of Cambridge Surprise Minor.

At [Godmanchester](#) on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb Grandsire Triples was rung for evensong, which attracted a lovely comment from a resident on the Godmanchester Living F/B page “Fantastic ringing from the bell team this afternoon. The sound is glorious.” 😊 Well done ringers!

[Houghton](#) 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. was a QP of spliced plain minor which was the conductor’s 1250<sup>th</sup> QP



## Feature Performances

The second district date touch of the year was rung at [Huntingdon St.Mary's](#) on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb when 2023 changes were rung in two methods. It had a backstroke start with an infill method for the first seven changes.



Jezz, Angie, Roger, James, Nick, Hannah, Andrew, Iain



Phillip, Sheila, Catherina

Handbell quarter peals continue. On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February at [St.Neots Parkway](#). Sheila George, Phillip George and Catherina Griffiths rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor. This was the first handbell quarter peal they had rung together and was a practice for ringing a plain course during a talk Phillip was to give to the Gransdens Society on the 21<sup>st</sup>

*(The talk was very successful – PG)*

## Progress at Holywell

At Holywell we have 4 learners who recently became EDA members. For the first time this morning all four rang together for Sunday service. (Whilst they'd all previously rung for services, they'd never all rung together for a service.) We rang very respectable rounds and call changes with the learners on bells 2-5 and more experienced ringers on treble and tenor.

The ringing was so good that two visitors from Belgium came in to watch us and video our efforts to show their friends back home. They were very impressed and commented on the "delicate technique" that we all must have developed to be able to "ring the bells like this"



L-R: Nigel (treble), Mel (2), Sarah (3), Penny (4), Ben (5) and Christian (tenor).



## Huntingdon Tower Outing – 11<sup>th</sup> February – by Melanie Farnham

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February was a bright and sunny morning and was the day of the Huntingdon Parish tower outing.

This was the first tower outing since the COVID Pandemic and saw eighteen ringers from Huntingdon and the surrounding area set off down the M11 for South Cambridgeshire. Five churches were visited throughout the day. The first tower, 'The Church of St George Thriplow' (6), was run by Daniel Stevens. Thriplow offered a unique ringing experience as the tower was in the centre of the church and the ringing circle was in the middle of the crossed aisle. All Saints Barrington (6) was next run by James Hayden, the majority of the band had not rung here before and were excited to tick it of their bucket list.



The days leading up to the outing had been very cold leaving it very cold inside the church, some found it necessary to go outside to warm up in the winter sunshine. Holy Trinity Meldreth (8) was next run by Nicholas T Smith, my ancestry home, and where I learned to ring in the late 70s under the tutelage of the late John Gipson my Godfather. Back then I was too small to ring the bigger bells and my objective today was to ring the tenor. After taking a break for a not so light lunch at the British Queen Pub in Meldreth, (thank you everyone at the BQ the food was excellent), we moved on to All Saints Melbourn (8) run by Iain Hayden, the only upstairs ring of the day. The chamber was a bit cramped, but we manage to squeeze everyone in.

The final tower of the day was St Andrews Orwell (8) run by Jez Bottley, an experienced band rang a touch of surprise something or other, unarguably the best ringing of the day. Bringing a fantastic day to a close, twelve practice regulars including partners celebrated a successful day with a curry and a bear at the Raj Poot restaurant Huntingdon. Outing 2023 Done. Here's looking forward to the next one.

## Monthly Practice Meeting at Little Paxton - Our recollections.

**by Nigel & Sylvie Strong (Godmanchester), and Georgie Hunt (Huntingdon All Sts)**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, we attended a Huntingdon district ringing practice at the attractive grade 2\* listed St James church in Little Paxton. Upon arrival I must admit to being a little apprehensive, knowing we would be in the company of some excellent ringers and being learners ourselves, a daunting prospect.



However, once inside the church we received a warm welcome and seeing some familiar faces we started to feel more relaxed.

The practice was well organised and we were given the opportunity to get to know the bells, which were a full circle of 6 and a pleasure to ring.

We received lots of friendly help and encouragement from the well supported practice, one which we both enjoyed and would recommend to anyone thinking of going.

*I am pleased that we were able to welcome you with help and encouragement – PG*



## District Committee Member Profiles

### **Caroline Stevens – District Secretary**



I learned to ring in around 1983, the ringing master asked if anyone in the Sunday school would like to go up the tower and see the bells. The tower was of the huge church in Great Yarmouth with 12 bells, however ringing was 3 or 4 of us on a Sunday morning and something like 30 people attending the branch practice once a month. So, I learned to treble to triples first. A few years later I moved to Norwich and joined in ringing with the university ringers as I was a similar age. They had a five bell tower and so I learned lots of doubles methods and variations. I also started ringing at Colegate where, surrounded by a band of good ringers, my method

learning rocketed. I returned to Yarmouth for two years and started a weekly practice, and then back to Norwich. There followed a period of ringing seven days a week most weeks and lots of happy memories. Interestingly during this time, I was asked to be Branch Secretary, but declined as I didn't have a car to travel around in. By the time I left Norfolk I had rung 33 peals and 255 quarters. I still remain a member of the NDAR.

In 1998 I moved to Swavesey and became a member of the Ely DA and carried on ringing regularly. Having children curtailed my ringing somewhat, although a regular babysitter allowed me to continue practice nights at Swavesey, and they were dragged along on Sundays. As a result, both our sons leaned to ring and so I have been out and about again in recent years, although sadly have forgotten lots of the methods I once knew. We changed churches in 2017 and now ring at Fenstanton on Sundays for service, and join St Ives on Mondays and Huntingdon practices on Tuesdays. I enjoy ringing quarter peals and helping learners to progress.

When I am not ringing, I run a Rainbow unit, volunteer in reception class in school, am PSO, on the PCC and help with children's work at church. I can also be found covering the school crossing patrol in March and October. I enjoy sewing and crafts when I get the time.

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## From the Archives

### 50 Years ago

The 1973 the Huntingdon District had 116 ringing members of the association (122 in 2022)

Frank Baker from Brampton was President, George Bonham was Secretary and Phillip George (Gt Gransden) was Deputy Ringing Master under Harold Peacock from Huntingdon All Sts.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> June the district striking competition was won by St. Neots 1<sup>st</sup> team and the district won the association 8-bell competition too in this year.



## THE BACK PAGE

### NOTICES & WHAT'S ON

**Ely Cathedral celebrates 1350 years.** You might like to mark this with some ringing. Perhaps a date touch? If so, you can find one [here](#) which I composed especially for the occasion. It is Plain Bob Major with a variable hunt start. Easy to call and very musical. PG.

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Watch out for Caroline's "**Coming Up Next**" briefings, here are two events for you.

**Practice Meeting. Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March at Spaldwick.** Ringing 2.30 to 4.00pm followed by light refreshments. Business meeting at 4.15pm

**10-bell Practice. St.Neots on 31<sup>st</sup> March.** 7.30 to 9.00pm. Everyone welcome, all abilities catered for.

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### Wanted! - New Association Treasurer

The Association is looking for someone to carry on the work as treasurer from Nicholas Small who wishes to stand down from office.

The Treasurer is a "Technical Officer" meaning that it requires particular skills and the person is recommended for election by the general committee. The post holder can be in office for a maximum of ten years.

If anyone would like to be considered for this role, please contact Nicholas Small on [treasurer@elyda.org](mailto:treasurer@elyda.org)

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### Wanted – Information about **New Ringers**

The association is marking its 125th anniversary in 2022/3. We would like to know how many new ringers have been recruited in the 12 months up to the 12th May 2023. The association is hoping to get to at least 125!

Please, please let Ed Groome (our rep on the RATS committee) have the details. Ed can be contacted on [edgroome@live.com](mailto:edgroome@live.com)

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### Help Please – **share information and your stories**

The new district committee encourages you to share information and stories about your towers, learners, recruitment and training, adventures. If you receive this newsletter please feel free to distribute it electronically or print a copy for posting on your tower notice board. Please share it with your ringers. I am always pleased to receive your stories for publication. You can also post information on the [Facebook](#) page or the [district website](#). Sharing news is an important part of our PR as we look forward to recruiting new ringers and training for the future wellbeing of ringing.

Phillip George – Editor (Huntingdon District President) [psg@nutbells.plus.com](mailto:psg@nutbells.plus.com)