

# Ringling Around and About in the Huntingdon District



Issue No 3: March 2023



*St James Church  
Spaldwick. Venue for  
our March meeting.*

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## Editor's Comment

During the preparation of this issue of the newsletter the sad news was received that **Maurice Thurmott** had died on 24<sup>th</sup> March at the age of 92.

Maurice lived in Drighlington, Yorkshire for 50 years but moved back to Cambridgeshire in 2002 joining the Ramsey band. He was the Ely Association's first peal secretary and he enjoyed ringing handbells as well as tower bells. He has 51 peal compositions published in the CCCBR collection. He was a main contributor to the recently published history of the Ely DA.

I have received many memories about Maurice and I will include them in the April edition. If you would like to contribute please send details to me.

**The newsletter** is new this year. Its purpose is to record ringing activities around the district. I am currently undergoing experiments in best presentation formats and accessibility!!

During the 2000s I regularly published The Ringers' Rabble. This was in A5 booklet format and came out three times per year. Times have changed, most people will want to read documents online and find individual articles quickly and I will work to make it a web-base publication.

For the time being the newsletter will be accessible as a pdf document on the Ringers' Rabble Website.

**Please consider submitting an article for publication.** It can be anything related to ringing in your tower, out and about, training and learning related, maintenance, quarter peal reports etc. Share your news and please send photos too!! It would be good to fill each issue and publish every month!

Phillip George

## Ring for the King

Following recent high profile publicity events many people have come forward to try their hand at ringing. At Great Gransden we were contacted by Rose Nightingale at the Association of Ringing Teachers to ask if we could help three new ringers. We always welcome new ringers but never expect three at once.

Thankfully, we came to an arrangement with Eleanor

Cole from Caxton to teach one and we would teach the other two, a married couple.

We started teaching on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March and Siobhan and Steve have embarked on the Learning the Ropes (LTR) training scheme.

They will take part in celebratory ringing during the weekend of the 6th May. PG

## District Quarter Peal Day *by PG*

The Huntingdon district held its quarter peal day on **Saturday 4th March**. Seven quarters were arranged with seven different conductors, and all were successful.

First to go was at **Hilton** where Sharon conducted Plain Bob Doubles, only her second as conductor. **St.Neots** were ringing at the same time to Plain Bob Royal, conducted by Christian Burrell, where it was Daniel Stevens' first on 10 bells. In the afternoon **Hamerton** were first off the mark with Iain Hayden conducting a 2023 date touch of doubles and minor. **Great Gransden** rang a nice 1296 of Ipswich S Minor, followed by a quick trek over to **Hemingford Grey** for the key holder in time for a 3.30pm meet for Cambridge S. Minor, Hannah Campbell conducting. Simultaneous to this was Cambridge S Minor at **Gamlingay** with Ed Groome in charge, his first of surprise as conductor.



### St.Neots – Plain Bob Royal

Front: Phillip, Catherina, James.

Back: Christian, Ed, Andrew, Nick, Alban, Iain, Dan

The final ring of the day was in the evening, Grandsire Doubles at **Fenstanton** organised as part of the event by Andrew Stevens and marking Andrew and Caroline's wedding anniversary.

Congratulations to all the "firsts". Thanks to the towers for allowing us to use the bells, and to Christian Burrell for organising a most successful day and managing some unforeseen changes of plan.



### Hilton – Plain Bob Doubles

L-R: Roger, Sharon, Nigel, Andrew, John, Martin



### Hemingford Grey – Cambridge S Minor

L-R: Phillip, Sheila, Nick, Hannah (front), Jane, Richard



### Gt Gransden – Ipswich S Minor

Back: Angela, Christian, Ed

Front: Sheila, Catherina, Phillip



### Gamlingay – Cambridge S Minor

L-R: John, Rev Paul, Sharon, Andrew, Ed, Christian

## Committee Member Profiles

### Roger Beaman – Membership Secretary

My first involvement with bells was as a regular 'chimer' at the Abbey Church, Shrewsbury in the second half of the 1970s. The task of chiming the 8 bells for all 3 Sunday services, using an Ellacombe apparatus, was shared between myself and my elder brother, and yielded the glorious sum of £2 each per month (plus £1 for weddings). It would be another 16 years before I had my first brief experience of bell ringing, which took place at Asfordby in Leicestershire.

Following a move to Holywell-cum-Needingworth I restarted my bell ringing learning process in 2000 and rang my first Quarter in 2005 (Plain Bob Major at St Ives) and my first peal in 2011. I became Tower Captain at Holywell at the start of 2013, replacing Sid Brown who had done the task for more years than many could remember. One of the jobs I have done as Holywell Tower Captain is to refurbish the Ellacombe apparatus and I was pleased to chime during lockdown, when general ringing was not possible.

Having found over the years that being in gainful employment greatly restricted my opportunities for

ringing Quarters, I took early retirement last year and took pity on Geoff Burn at the last ADM. Hence, I am now Membership Secretary for Hunts District of Ely D.A. and am looking forward to tracking down late payers.

I am also looking forward to having all members paying promptly by BACS at the start of the year as it's always good to have a challenging goal.



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### Christian Burrell – Ringing Master

I learned to ring as a teenager, around 25 years ago, at Haxey in North Lincolnshire (a heavy ring of 6 bells). I first rang in the Cambridge area when at university and after a few years living and ringing in Oxford I then returned to Cambridge. Since 2017 I've lived in the Huntingdon District and I became a district ringing master at the ADM in 2020.

I've always found ringing to be a great hobby and, once you have achieved a basic level of competence, you can go anywhere in the country and join in with the locals -- usually being welcomed with open arms. That's been particularly true in this district: I moved to St Ives knowing no-one in the area, but soon had a large group of bell ringing friends. Thank you!

People are attracted to bell ringing for many different reasons. As a mathematician-turned-computer-programmer I'm particularly interested in the theoretical side, especially methods and compositions which is probably why I enjoy ringing in this district: we ring a wide variety of different things.

In order for bell ringing to thrive in the future I believe strongly that we need to recruit and provide high quality training to anyone who is interested in our unique, historical and very special interest. Different people appreciate different sides of our hobby, and everyone learns differently -- so I'd like to urge you all to give us (the committee) continual feedback on what you feel is working, what is not working, and what you'd like to see us do in the future.



## Quarter Peals during March

As well as the excellent success of the seven quarter peals rung earlier in the month there have been nine others reported on BellBoard. Most of them have been by ringers from outside the district.

Janet Garnet (Over) organises quarter peals every month and often ventures into our district when several of our local ringers take part.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> – **Hemingford Grey**. 1260 Plain Bob Triples. Cond: Janet Garnet

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March – **Caxton**. 1260 Mixed Doubles (4m) jointly conducted

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March – **Caxton**. Double Oxford Bob Minor Cond: Janet Garnet. This was a get well compliment to Sally Beaman (Holywell)

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March – **Bluntisham**. Plain Bob Triples Cond: Janet Garnet. This was in memory of Jon Reed (Ely) who died on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Jon was a regular ringer in the Hunts District. He was part of my QP group and between March 2014 and February 2020 we rang 51 quarters together. *PG*

The Golden Oldies group (originally set up by Michael White) organises a couple of quarters every month.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March – **Gamlingay**. Humber Ferry Surprise Major Cond: Alistair Donaldson

A quarter peal Grandsire Doubles at **Elton** on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> was credited to the Hereford Diocesan Guild in memory of Geoffrey Franklin Mee.

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> there was another handbell QP of Plain Bob Minor at **Nutbells, Lt Gransden**.

**Holywell** featured on 23<sup>rd</sup> with a Ladies' Guild quarter of Cambridge, conducted by Janet Garnet, commemorating the lives of John Woolward and Dave Garnet.

A evensong quarter of PB Triples at **Godmanchester** on the 26<sup>th</sup> was in memoriam Maurice Thurmott, honorary member of the association who died on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>. *(Well done Melanie, first on treble on 8 bells.)*

## Feature Performance

Once again the band at **Huntingdon St Mary** takes a prime spot with another date touch.

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1603484>

This time it was a 1350 Plain Bob Major composed by Phillip George. It was composed and rung for the 1350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Ely Cathedral which is celebrated this year.

To obtain 1350 rows required an additional six rows. The composition starts with the 6<sup>th</sup> bell in the hunt, which needs a bit of focus for the first three leads until the treble is put back into the hunt with an "extreme" call (notation 34). The composition can be found here.

<https://complib.org/composition/106741>



Iain, Nick, Roger, Christian, Ed, Jez, Andrew, Angie  
Well done ringers at Huntingdon St Mary's

Comment from one of the ringers afterwards "I do believe it was faultless but a relief to transition to something more familiar." (after the variable hunt section)

## From the Archives Source – *The Ringers Rabble spring 2003*

**Huntingdon All Saints**. On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2003 the bells were taken to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry to be re-tuned as part of the restoration project. This included re-hanging on ball bearings. Tim Griffiths helped with the dismantling of the bells and the project was part funded by the association bell fund.

**St. Neots**. A fire started by an arsonist was thankfully discovered before serious damage was caused. The perpetrator broke into the church via the tower west door. It was started in a bookcase and the acrid after-smell could be detected 50 feet up in the ringing room. The fire destroyed all the hymn books.

**Great Gransden**. The 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive New Years Day date touch was rung in 2003. Spliced plain minor.

## Practice Meeting at Spaldwick – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March

It had been raining in the morning and we were hoping for dryer weather in the afternoon when we visited [Spaldwick](#) for our monthly practice meeting. Although the rain had cleared the grey skies persisted but we were given a very warm welcome by local ringers Jane Wiggins (Tower Captain) and Elaine Woolward.

Attendance was strong from the outset and it was good to see ringers from all parts of the district. Twenty eight ringers were there from over twelve towers in the district, Yaxley in the north to Gamlingay in the south plus several from the central Huntingdon belt as well as another nearby tower, Catworth.



Andrew Smith looked after the ringing for everyone, a busy job mustering people between ringing room and church to ring the next piece. The special methods were Single Oxford Bob Minor and Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Bob Doubles but many other things were rung giving everyone good opportunity on this ground floor ring.

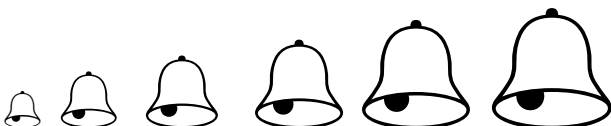


Tea and biscuits were provided after the ringing before the business meeting during which we were given up to date status on district membership of the association, development of the website, a financial update and a report from Geoff Burn, district and association bell advisor. Roger Beaman and Georgie Hunt were welcomed as co-opted members of the district committee, Roger as our new membership secretary and Georgie who is helping with planning social events.

Five new members were elected: Celia Walker from Buckden, Louise West and David Cowan from Covington, Josh Crutch (junior member) from Gt Gransden and Bryan Kitchen from Gt Staughton.

Many grateful thanks go to the local ringers and helpers for looking after us and to the vicar, Rev Philip Howson, for allowing us to ring.

We are looking forward to our next meeting which will be on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April at [St Neots](#) 10.30am to 12.00noon. Everyone is welcome.



# THE BACK PAGE

## Learning the Ropes – Level 1 Achievement

This is Josh, he rings at Great Gransden and has just passed his level 1 in the Learning the Ropes scheme.

At the end of December 2022 We were contacted by Rose Nightingale from the Association of Ringing Teachers who asked if we could help teach a 9 year old who lived in the area. We got in touch with his parents who said that he was very interested in bells.

We had several email exchanges and agreed on a date for them to visit the tower on one of our practice nights. There was no doubt about Josh's interest and we arranged a series of ten initial lessons for him each for one hour on a Wednesday evening.

The first lesson was a visit to see the bells (and clock) and to chime the bells – all of them. We then started on ringing up (no coils) until he was ringing backstroke. Thereafter, the training followed our usual pattern, following the Learning the Ropes guidance but being flexible in approach and having attention to detail. It soon became clear that Josh was going to make good progress and this was in part due to his interest in watching YouTube videos of ringing.

Teaching Josh has been very exciting and rewarding, his interest and enthusiasm are second to none and he is working hard to achieve good bell control.



He is ringing basic call changes and is learning to lead and can ring up and down with confidence.

Lesson ten has come and gone and we are now working on Level 2. We are using Wednesday evenings to practice bell control skills such as dodges and place making, and we are using the SIM to practice listening skills.

We were pleased to be able to award Josh with his level 1 certificate on 16<sup>th</sup> March during our practice and he is pictured here in the ringing room at Great Gransden. *PG*

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## Membership Subscriptions

At the time of writing only three subscriptions are outstanding for 2023 membership. Thank you everyone for being prompt with payment.

The Association has a membership certificate. These will be presented to all new members elected from 1<sup>st</sup> January this year.

Watch out for Caroline's "**Coming Up Next**" briefings

District practice at **St.Neots – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am to 12 noon**. All abilities catered for, everyone welcome. Great opportunity to ring on ten bells, the heaviest ring in the district at 29cwt.

**Coronation Weekend 6<sup>th</sup> May** – please report details of your ringing to be included in the May issue.

**Maurice Thurmott** † 1930 – 2023 R.I.P. *More to be published in the April newsletter.*