

Ringling Around and About in the Huntingdon District



Issue No 8: August 2023



Gordon Limbrick
25 Year Membership
Certificate

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Editor’s Comment - Phillip George

It’s a real pleasure for Sheila and me to go around the District visiting other practice nights. This month has seen another three towers ‘underlined’, so to speak. I wonder how many we will visit before the same towers come round again? Towers this month were Yaxley, Lt Paxton and Catworth, the latter was a visit to their practice with our ringers from Gt Gransden.

I have news from my home tower (300th quarter peal at Great Gransden) which you can read later. Also in this issue, on page 4/5, **Sheila** shares her memories of 43 years serving on the District Committee.

It’s always good to hear from other ringers, and this month **Emily Partridge** has written a short article about visiting other towers. See page 7. Please jot down your stories and send them for publication.

The physical act of ringing is a bit of a ‘raison d’etre’, sort of thing, ‘for its own sake’, and why not? But it’s not the only thing we should think about. An important part of ringing is maintenance. Not everyone can do this, but there should be someone in each tower, in conjunction with church officers, who is responsible for making sure that our bell installations are safe to use and protected from damage from external sources such as the bad weather or bird ingress. Inspection and general maintenance should be a continuous part of our responsibility in the tower and the autumn is not a bad time to do this, taking advantage of more natural light and warmer conditions.

If you need any advice, contact Geoff Burn our District and Association Bell Advisor.

Visits to Practice Nights *by PG*

Gordon Limbrick - 25 Year Membership Certificate Yaxley - Friday 4th August

Sheila and I always receive a warm welcome when we visit Yaxley. Our acquaintance with the ringers goes back many years, first when the late Bill Cook was tower captain, and then when Ray Porter took over when Bill retired in 2011.

Our visit this time was to present Gordon Limbrick with his 25-year membership certificate. Gordon was elected as a member of the Ely DA in 1997 and has been an ever-present local ringer. It was a pleasure and a joy to visit Yaxley again on Friday the 4th of August to meet up with the team and present Gordon with his certificate .

Although no longer able to climb the steps to the ringing room, Gordon remains a keen supporter of the ringers, and all had gathered before the practice so that the presentation of the certificate could be made in the church beforehand. We were able to reminisce, remembering the sumptuous ringers' teas provided by the local ringers, always a key feature of ringing meetings there. One particular memory is recorded in a photograph in the ringing room. It is of the band who rang Plain Bob Minor in 1997 which was Gordon's first quarter peal for 42 years.

We enjoyed the evening, helping with Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles (practising for a quarter peal – see back page), and 'Billies Bob', a sequence of ringing from Plain Hunt Singles, Minimus, Doubles and back again. There was lots of laughter and enthusiasm which is typical for this tower.



Graeme Annes – Membership Certificate Little Paxton – Thursday 31st August

Little Paxton church, near St Neots, has a beautiful little ring of six with a tenor of nearly 7 ½ cwt. They were rehung and augmented in 2011. Mary Parnham has been tower captain since 2018.

At the Annual District Meeting Graeme Annes was elected as a member of the Association and it was my pleasure to visit their practice to present Graeme with his membership certificate.

Sheila and I arrived at 7.00pm and we were introduced to all the ringers. The bells were raised and during the evening we helped with Plain Hunt and Grandsire Doubles. The team are very enthusiastic and under Mary's guidance several, the ringers, including Graeme, are learning to hunt the treble to Plain Hunt and Grandsire Doubles.

Thanks to the Lt Paxton ringers for welcoming us, and providing sweets and lemon cake! Scrumptious!



Quiz & Chips – District Summer Social *by PG*

Our summer social this year was a Quiz 'n' Chips evening held in All Saints Church Huntingdon, an ideal venue, on Saturday the 19th of August.

Superbly organised by Georgie Hunt and Caroline Stevens, with help from Andrew Stevens too, we enjoyed a variety of rounds (not Rounds) including a crisp tasting, and of course, one about bells!

At half time we enjoyed a fish & chips supper with our own soft drinks or wine, and in some cases a couple of pints from the pub next door! This break gave us time to complete the Dingbat round, which was quite tricky in places!

The final rounds were then completed, and PG gave a vote of thanks before Caroline presented the results, which had been ably tracked and compiled by Andrew.

The team "Invincibles" were not quite so, coming second to "The Tollers", who were pleased to show off their prizes - bags of sweets. Congratulations!

Thank you, **Georgie, Caroline and Andrew**, for your excellent organisation and hard work before, during and after the event, and thanks to all who took part - it was a super evening.

(Photos by PG and Caroline)



Team	Score	Placed
The Tollers	88.5	1
The Incincibles	84	2
No QP	82	3
Dunno	81.5	4
Hadden's Hillbillies	66.5	=5
QuizTeam Aquilera	66.5	=5



43 years of the District Committee - that long! *By Sheila George*

After standing down from the District Committee in 2015 I put some recollections down onto paper for the archives. So here goes-

Phillip and I first met at a Deanery Church Youth Club, but ringing was the hobby which was to bring us together. My first quarter peal was rung at Great Gransden in 1972 the same year we were married. In November, a quarter peal was rung at the District Committee meeting, which followed the meeting and sumptuous tea at the home of Bill Ransome at Somersham; and in the band were committee members Godfrey Jenkins, Bill Ransome, Paul Wells, Phillip, George Bonham and myself, so I must have joined the committee at the ADM earlier in the year.

At the ADM the following year (I think) I was elected BRF Treasurer to replace Harry Levens of Houghton. Harry was well known for the way he called call changes - from rounds he would call 'queens' and you were expected to know what queens was and for some it meant moving 2 places.



After several years in that post, I was promoted to District Secretary, to replace George Bonham who had been elected President. I think I only held this position for 3 years, at the same time juggling a young family. If memory serves me right Phillip was Ringing Master at the same time.

Then it was several years of just an ordinary committee member until elected Ringing Master to serve alongside Tim Griffiths. Sadly, Tim died in 2009 and I carried on alone and was the only Ringing Master for the rest of that year. At the next ADM Jez Bottley joined me, and then latter Angie Gell volunteered to take on the job when Jez stepped down.

So, what changes have there been over all those years. My memory of early ringing is with suited and waist-coated elderly gentlemen (sometimes even a jumper would be worn under the waistcoat!), who stood no messing about by the youngsters. It took a bit of getting used to some of their instructions, John Bluff from Stamford was known for his 'bobs' sounding like 'stand' and there much was sucking of teeth if you stood instead of making the bob. And no-one would dare ask that he made his calls clearer!

I can recall some young ringers being reprimanded by tower captain Fred Harwood for playing ball outside in the churchyard at Houghton!

I remember cold, dark ringing rooms, often filled with items such as the lawn mower which had to be removed before we could ring. Similarly old village/parish halls, often with outside toilets. However, ringers' teas were the highlight of the meetings with ringing before and afterwards and always a Ringers' Service at every meeting BCP style. The local incumbent would lead the service, be present at tea and would chair the meeting afterwards.

Harold Peacock used to insist that the tenor at Hemingford Abbots was rung up wrong presumably to help with its striking, but I really do not know why. (*Because he couldn't ring it up right way – PG*)

Annual Tours were a splendid day out on a bus. Two towers before lunch taken at a hotel, two more towers, then a ham salad tea before the final tower and a stop off at the pub on the way home, with a singsong on the bus after liquid refreshment. All at a cost of £1.50. Regulation changes to bus driver's hours put an end to the long day out.

During the years, often assisted by Phillip, I had a hand in several ventures:

🔔 The one-day ringing courses we used to hold at Hemingford Grey with Bridget and Michel White's excellent lunches.

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Sheila George memoirs continued from page 4

- 🔔 Special methods at the meetings, which have not always been successful.
- 🔔 Young ringers' days also at Hemingford Grey, the fore runner of the District Young Ringers practices.
- 🔔 Monthly quarter peals on the 1st Saturday. The aim being to improve our 8-bell ringing but mainly become more doubles and minor methods to include many '1sts' of some kind and latterly I tried to include the young ringers.
- 🔔 With Tim Griffiths, we introduced a more up-to-date Ringers Service based on Common Worship.
- 🔔 Quarter Peal Days for both the District and Association have been arranged as well as bands for the Striking Competitions.
- 🔔 Visits to practices with Phillip (when he was Dist Sec) to present New Members with their certificates, and Long-Standing Membership certificates.
- 🔔 Social events in our garden, one time including a walking treasure hunt around the village.

Except for illness, family holidays and special events, and the car breaking down in Caxton on the way to Godmanchester once, there have not been many meetings we have missed, the 3rd Saturday of the month always kept free for Hunts District Meeting Day.

And it all comes full circle again, with Phillip being elected President in 2023 the reinstatement of trips out to practice nights to present certificates is an ideal opportunity to get to know all the 'new' ringers in the District and renew old acquaintances.

300th Quarter Peal at Great Gransden

The first recorded quarter peal at Great Gransden was on the 29th of June 1961 and was probably organised by Leonard Jefferies, ringer of the treble. Leonard was the only resident change ringer in the tower, and this was his first quarter. The ringing was for the Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was also local ringer Frank Sherman's first QP, tenor behind to Bob Doubles. He was the then steeple keeper.

Leonard paved the way in what could be called the 'modern era' of ringing in Great Gransden, introducing change ringing to the tower with help from other influential ringers in the Hunts District.

It would be eleven years and 12 quarters later before a local ringer would conduct one, also of Bob Doubles. This one celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Ely DA. Many quarters have been dedicated to special occasions, births, birthdays, marriages and in memory of local ringers - Leonard included. Royal events have also been included, not least for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and our new King.

On the 1st of January 1994 we rang the first date touch, a tradition which continued for the next 26 years (we lost one attempt) finally completing 25 New Years Day date touches in 2020.

In total, 233 ringers have taken part in the quarter peals. Sheila and I have both rung 263 and third in the league table is Catherina Griffiths with 100. The method most rung (84) is Plain Bob Doubles, then Plain Bob Minor (44) and Cambridge S Minor (39). Overall, 37 different methods/multi method have been rung

The 300th, rung on Saturday 12th August was a very well struck composition of four-spliced plain minor. Rebecca and Mark Banner (daughter and son in law) came over from Ratby and Catherina Griffiths and Dave Griffiths from St Neots made up the band, here pictured after successful completion. A part of the ringing can be heard [here](#) on my YouTube channel, @nutbells9031.

We are looking forward to many more quarters and hope to be able to add further social history to our tower.



Committee Member Profiles

Daniel Stevens – Central Council Representative & District Webmaster



I started ringing at Swavesey when I was nine. Once I was older, I was able to go to other practices in the area. This included the EDA young ringers where I competed in four Ringing World National Youth Competitions, London in 2016, Birmingham in 2017, London in 2018 and Liverpool in 2019. I now help out at the young ringers' events to help get more young ringers ringing together.

In 2020 I became CCCBR rep for the Huntingdon District and attended my first two council meetings online. Now that covid is over the meetings are now back in person. Outside of the Association, I am also a member of Young Change Ringers Association.

I work as an outdoor activity instructor. This job can mean that I am away from the Cambridgeshire area, but I still try and ring wherever I am. In what space/time I have left I help with scouting as a district trustee for Cromwell District Scouts and I am a member of Cromwell Network scouts. I was lucky enough to go to America in 2019 as a part of the Cambridgeshire contingent to the World Scout Jamboree.

Andrew Smith – Ringing Master

I grew up and spent many years living in Berkhamsted where I heard the bells week in week out but I was always busy singing in the choir or playing the organ and never gave ringing a second thought.

In 2002, shortly after moving to Gamlingay, John Boocock persuaded me to give ringing a try. It had not been long since the bells were rehung and augmented to eight and there was an enthusiastic band with several learners. Rounds, call changes and plain hunt were the order the day with the more experienced learners attempting Bob doubles. All practices were of course followed by the customary visit to the pub. I had not appreciated how long it would take to learn to ring, and never imagined that 20 years later there would still be much to learn. It seemed to take an age to get as far as ringing Bob doubles with any degree of confidence.

Once I had more or less mastered it I started going to the Hemingford Grey practices in addition to Gamlingay, and before long I was ringing Bob triples and major. In 2007 I rang my first quarter peal on the treble to Bob major at Bluntisham. Later that year I rang my first quarter inside to Bob Triples at Gamlingay. In 2012 I rang my one and only peal, the first at Gamlingay on eight bells. I have enjoyed ringing outings and have organised one or two, including one which included Berkhamsted where I had the chance to ring the bells that I had only listened to for so many years.

I have been coming to district meetings and events for at least 15 years now, and in 2016 I became one of the ringing masters. We had a very busy programme of meetings and learners' practices lined up for 2020 and this was sadly cut short, so it has been pleasing to see things gradually returning to normal.



Treble Bob Minor Practice Meeting at Brampton *by PG*

Well! What a wet one! As Storm Antoni breezes through dumping a lot of rain on us, fifteen met at Brampton this morning for a Treble Bob Practice.

I remembered there were fifteen because Paul Hutchinson pointed out the same number of sallies. "How is that?" I asked, there are six bells and eight dumbbells" (for the SIM). He then pointed out the green and yellow sally for the service bell!



Anyway, ringing commenced in the charge of Andrew Smith, our ringing master, and he kept us busy for a couple of hours practising Kent and Oxford, and the special method of Woodbine. The latter is not a treble bob method (It's a 4ths place delight method) but is Kent/Oxford below the treble so has similarities.

These methods are not rung very often in our district, and it was a good opportunity to learn where the pitfalls are, and they serve as a good grounding for other more advanced TB based methods.

Most of us rang all three methods and a moderate result was gleaned from the 13 1/2 cwt anti-clockwise six. We had a very enjoyable morning with a bit of inter-ringing banter and a lots of support from stand-behinders!

Thank you, Andrew, for looking after us and to the Brampton ringers for allowing us to visit this morning.

Dive Into Different Towers *by Emily Partridge*

Many years ago, I learned to ring at Chatteris under the care of Sue Marsden and Colin Johnson. The bells at Ramsey had been restored and that was actually my 'home' tower. I struggled with handling but persevered and have rung whenever possible since then.

Being homeless for a year and then moving to Peterborough meant that I was a bit of an itinerant ringer, but having finally settled in a house at Woodston, I thought "Whoopee, Woodston's a challenge", only to find they were no longer rung regularly.

Not being able to drive meant that I was somewhat stuck. However, a good friend, Andy Ferris, decided to scoop me up on a Thursday night and transport me to Stanground where I was made very welcome.

Another week on a Friday night Andy took me to Yaxley and I was helped tremendously by seeing Sheila and Phillip George there.

It is not always easy to visit another tower, especially if you don't think that you will know anyone and are still in the early learning phase of method ringing, but ringers are welcoming and helpful, so to anyone who is hesitating, I would say, "Go, and you will find out that you will enjoy ringing different bells with different people."

Thanks, Emily, for sending your story. I was so pleased to receive it and hope that others will do likewise. It's great to have different contributors. PG

From the Archives – Bell News 25th July 1885 – The Ely Diocesan Guild

There will be a District Meeting of the above Association at Sudbury on Saturday July 11th.

The Great Eastern Railway Company have kindly promised to issue return tickets at a fare and a quarter to members of the Association on producing their membership cards.

All members proposing to attend should at once write and inform the Hon. Sec. of their intentions, stating the station from which they propose to travel.

THE BACK PAGE

Jim Skillings – an announcement from Kevin Skillings

We're very sorry to let you know that Jim Skillings passed away on Monday 14th August, peacefully, and amongst his family. He was recovering from a series of strokes over the past few months. He was so looking forward to going home, but a final stroke proved too much.

Jim has been a bell ringer in the Huntingdon District since 1976, first based at Godmanchester and then Warboys. He was so sad to have to stop ringing about four years ago, when age began to catch up with him. Ringing has been a major part of his amazing life for more than 40 years, and he was thrilled to have a peal rung in his honour for his birthday last November, and share drinks, jokes and memories with the band afterwards.

We will let you know funeral details when they're available. Jim's family will be glad to see you there if you're able to join them.

Update

A memorial service will be held at Warboys church on Thursday 21st September at midday followed by refreshments in the church.

Bryan Bunting – formerly of Winwick

I am sorry to report that Bryan Bunting died on the 3rd of August. Long-standing members may remember Bryan, formerly the tower captain of Winwick. He became a member in 1982 and moved to Lincolnshire around 1998 where he rang at Kirton in Holland.

Significant Quarter Peals of the Month

3rd. **Gamlingay**. 1260 PB Minor. Birthday compliment to Cass Boocock

4th. **Fenstanton**. 1296 Netherseale S.Minor. To welcome Sally Beaman home from hospital

11th. **Holywell**. 1272 Allendale S.Minor. To welcome Rowan Sorabjee, grandson of Nick Smith

14th **Great Gransden**. 1300 Spliced Plain Minor (4m). 300th on the bells

14th **Lt Gransden, Nutbells**. 1350 Plain Minor (2m). 1350th anniversary of the founding of Ely Cathedral

15th. **Hemingford Grey**. 1260 Grandsire Triples. 80th birthday compliment to Bridget White

18th **Hilton**. 1272 Cunecaster S.M. In thanksgiving for the life of Jim Skillings

27th **Yaxley**. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles. 1st QP as cond. for Graham Hill and a Golden Wedding Anniversary compliment for Ray and Irene Porter. Ray is tower captain at Yaxley.

It's been an exciting month with several firsts in methods. Birthday and birth compliments abound, and we welcome home Sally Beaman from hospital. A band seems to be meeting regularly Is it working through the standard 41 surprise minor methods?

"Coming Up Next" see Caroline's leaflet and emails.

Saturday 2nd September. 8-bell practice at **Godmanchester** 10.00 – 12.00 noon

Saturday 16th September. District Practice at **Buckden** 3.00 – 4.30pm

Friday 29th September. Association 10-bell practice at **St Neots** 7.30 – 9.00pm

Saturday 30th September. Association Training Day in the **Wisbech District** (Details circulated by email)

Please come to our district ringing events – meet new ringers, experience different bells.