

# The Belfry

Newsletter of the  
KCACR  
Maidstone District

April 2014

Issue 96

## The Future of *The Belfry*

It will not have escaped our readers' notice that publication of *The Belfry* has, over the last few years, been irregular to say the least. At its meeting just before Christmas your Committee decided that this was something which needed to be addressed, and therefore set up a sub-committee charged with the task of compiling, publishing and developing our Newsletter. It is hoped that, as well as taking some of the pressure off the Editor, the Belfry Sub-committee would bring fresh and varied ideas to our publication.

The two main topics coming out of the Sub-committee's first meeting were firstly, what would our members like to see in *The Belfry*? No doubt many people have different ideas, and we welcome them all. Secondly was the age-old problem of reprographics. Unfortunately the days when someone could run off bulk copies on the office photocopier while the boss wasn't looking have long gone and to provide just one copy to each of our towers could only realistically be achieved by commercial colour printing. Add to that the cost of postage and the cost to the District for four quarterly issues would be approaching £250 a year. The last few issues have appeared only in digital format, but some readers have made it clear that they wish to receive a hard copy (sometimes, understandably, because they do not have a computer and/or access to the internet!). Is this a good use of KCACR subscriptions or would people be willing to pay for a hard copy?

These and a number of other questions are included in the Ringers' Survey attached to this issue (see page 4 for more details). Please make every effort to complete and return the Survey. It can be done either by hard copy or online at [www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/survey](http://www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/survey), and all responses are totally anonymous.

Your response will help to shape the future of our Newsletter for some considerable time to come.

*The Editor*



**The Maidstone District**

*of*

**the Kent County Association of Change Ringers**

**extends a warm welcome to members of**

**the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers**

**as they visit our area for their Annual Meeting on the weekend of 24th - 26th May 2014**





## District News

### Call Change Striking Competition

Staplehurst added the Call Change Striking Competition shield to the Striking Competition trophy they "won" by default in July. However, once again it was rather a hollow victory with only three bands entering the latest Competition at Mereworth on 9th November - and two of those were from Staplehurst! The full results were:

1st	Staplehurst 1	23 faults
2nd	Staplehurst A	47 faults
3rd	Marden	96 faults

We had been unable to find someone from outside the District to judge the competition for us, so our newly elected District Secretary Terry Barnard kindly stood in since he was not in a participating band. This was in fact the first time he had judged a striking competition and we are grateful to him for doing so. We are grateful too to the Mereworth ringers and friends for hosting it.

### District Carol Service

This year's District Carol Service was held at East Farleigh on Saturday 14th December and was attended by about 30 members and friends. The bells were put to good use before the service, which was led by Hunton ringer Reverend David Jones and included an excellent rendering of *Do You Hear What I Hear?* by Debbie Brady, Daniel Brady and Richard Young. Mulled Wine, mince pies and other refreshments were kindly provided by the East Farleigh ringers after the service.

### Winter Quarterly at Boxley

The Winter Quarterly Meeting at Boxley on Saturday 11th January attracted 29 people, which enabled us to ring not only the two special methods but plenty of other methods from rounds to London Minor.



At the Business Meeting nine new members were elected to the Association, including five juniors. Probably the highlight of the afternoon was when four of those, together with our Junior Ringing Master and another youngster who is already a member, rang rounds together in a band (pictured below left) with an average age of under 13 years. Surely a good sign for the future of ringing in our District. Our grateful thanks go to the Boxley ringers for the use of the bells and the usual delicious tea.

### District Practices

The **first District Practice** of the year - a 12-bell practice at Benenden on Saturday, 8th February - was a great success, with 26 people in attendance despite the continuing bad weather. As a result we were able to ring Stedman Cinques, Little Bob Maximus and Royal, Bristol Major (on the light eight), Plain Hunt on 11 and of course plenty of Rounds and Call Changes. It was particularly pleasing to see some of our less experienced ringers taking the opportunity to ring on 12 for the first time - with considerable success.

Our thanks go to local ringers Rod and Karen Lebon for their hospitality and the use of the bells.

The **second District Practice** of the year was held at Yalding on the morning of Saturday, 8th March - by that time free of the floods which had made it probably the best known village in England. There was an excellent attendance of 32, once again including a good number of young ringers. Several courses of the special methods, York and Single Oxford, were rung together with a variety of ringing from rounds and call changes upwards.

To complete a very successful Saturday, the **Barn Dance** in aid of Hollingbourne bells attracted around 150 people and raised an astounding £1,750! Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves as can be seen from the picture below.



### Obituary - Valerie Carter

We were sorry to hear that **Valerie Carter**, wife of the late Peter Carter (West Malling) and mother of Richard, Elizabeth and Jane died on the morning of Friday 7th February in Maidstone Hospital. She had not been able to ring for some years. Her funeral was held at St. Mary's, West Malling on Wednesday 26th February, when the bells were rung half muffled by a local band, and they were joined by members of the Carter family.

## Bells ring out for Charity Ring-A-Thon

Bells rang out across the Borough of Tonbridge and Malling on the weekend of 19th and 20th October 2013 as the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling, Cllr Howard Rogers, carried out a sponsored "Ring-A-Thon". Over the course of the two days the Mayor rang at all the churches with ringable bells in the borough to raise money for his two chosen charities - the Kenward Trust and Tonbridge Child Contact Centre. There are 19 churches with ringable bells in the Borough, 15 of which are in the Maidstone District.

Howard has been a bell-ringer since the age of 10 and was joined by guest ringers at each church, including Maidstone District ringers Terry and Joy Barnard who rang at 9 of the 19 towers over the two days. Ringing ranged from rounds on 3 to Surprise Major.

The Ring-A-Thon raised over £4000 through sponsorship from the Mayor's family, friends, colleagues, from guest ringers, and from the collection bucket he took with him throughout the challenge for donations from members of the public.

Howard, who rings at Hadlow, said "I was amazed by the numbers of local bell ringers who helped me achieve this ringing marathon. If it was not for their support, enthusiasm and sheer effort I would not have been able to complete the tour of the borough. Over 50 people joined me at various points, rang the bells and helped to shake our collection bucket. At the end

of the weekend we had clocked up over 12 hours of ringing, 70 miles of driving through some beautiful parts of Kent, and more importantly collected over £4000 for my charities which is a fantastic result for these very needy causes."

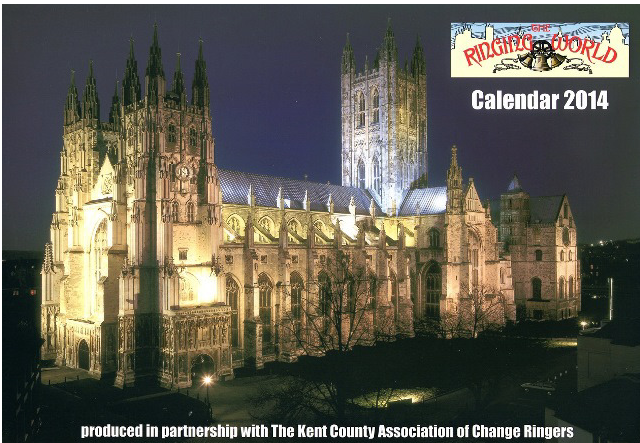
Highlights for Howard included "discovering the lovely bells at Wrotham and Aylesford, and ringing Stedman Singles on the 3 at Ditton." For Terry and Joy it was ringing with the Mayor and the happy band that made the event so memorable and fun. He said "I rang at towers I had not set foot in, rang with people I had never met before and rang new methods (for me at least) at East Malling and Tonbridge. It was a fantastic weekend, made even better because of the huge sum raised for charity."

The 19 towers, in order of ringing, were (Saturday) Wouldham, Aylesford, Ditton, Snodland, Birling, Addington, Stansted, Wrotham, Shipbourne, Tonbridge; (Sunday) Hadlow, East Peckham, Mereworth, West Peckham, Wateringbury, East Malling, West Malling, Ightham and the campanile at St Mary's Platt.

### **Terry Barnard**



*Howard ringing at East Malling*



**Calendar 2014**

produced in partnership with The Kent County Association of Change Ringers

### Ringing World Calendar 2014

**Now at half price!**

*To celebrate the Central Council holding their Annual Meeting in Kent in May, this year's Ringing World Calendar features towers from around Kent.*

*Although we are already well into 2014, copies are still available from the District Bookshop, now at the greatly reduced price of just £3.50 each.*

*To obtain a copy contact Chris Saunders on 01233 663365*

## Personal Milestones

Congratulations to the following for achieving notable landmarks in their ringing career:

<b>1st Quarter Peal:</b>	Vince Nicholls
<b>200th Quarter:</b>	Alan Phipps Tina Bastow
<b>500th Quarter:</b>	Jacqueline Barlow
<b>1900th Quarter:</b>	Michael Birkbeck

Not many achievements this time - or may be it's just that after-Christmas lull. If you have reached a major milestone in your ringing career and it's not mentioned here it might be because your editor doesn't know about it.

Information is gleaned from [www.campanophile.co.uk](http://www.campanophile.co.uk), [www.bb.ringingworld.co.uk](http://www.bb.ringingworld.co.uk) and [kcacr.org.uk](http://kcacr.org.uk), but the only way to be certain that your achievement is included is to e-mail details to [thebelfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk](mailto:thebelfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk). Major milestones only please.

So don't be modest - you've earned the accolade!

## Forthcoming Events

The District programme for 2014 has now been pretty much confirmed and full details are on the Website.

First up, however, is a County event. The **County AGM** this year is being hosted by the Lewisham District, at St. Mary the Virgin, Lewisham. As usual it will be held on Easter Bank Holiday Monday, 21st April, and will follow the normal format - Service at 12noon followed by lunch (pre-booking essential) and the Annual General Meeting itself at 2.30pm. Towers will be open on routes to and from Lewisham. For further details see the County website at [www.kcacr.org.uk](http://www.kcacr.org.uk).

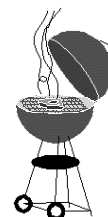
The next District event is a **District Practice at Hunton** on Saturday 10th May from 10am to 12noon. Several of those who regularly attend District Practices won't be at this one so can the rest of us please make that extra effort to support it. As usual there will be ringing to suit all levels from Rounds and Call Changes upwards, and everyone is welcome. The special methods for this Practice will be Double Oxford Bob Minor and Beverley Surprise Minor.

Then, on the late Spring Bank Holiday weekend the eyes of the ringing world will be on the Maidstone District as the County hosts the **Central Council Meeting** at the Marriott Tudor Park Hotel at Bearsted. More on this in the next issue.



The next District event is the **District Striking Contest**, on Saturday 14th June which will take place at Stansted. The bells will be available from 3.30pm, the draw will take place at 3.45pm with the competition commencing at 4pm. This competition has been poorly supported in recent years, particularly last summer when Staplehurst were the only entrants and therefore won by default. Make sure that they don't win again by ensuring that your tower enters a band! Competition rules can be found in the *Documents* section of the District website.

Two weeks later on Saturday 28th June we have the **District BBQ**, which will take place at Marden. More details to follow. We hope to once again have the Trafford Mini-ring available.



The **Summer District Quarterly Meeting** will be held at Aylesford (please note change of venue) on Saturday 12th July. Ringing will be from 10am to 12noon, followed by the Business Meeting. Special methods will be posted on the District Website but, as usual, there will be ringing to suit all levels from Rounds and Call Changes upwards.

Looking further ahead, the **District Outing** this year will be on Saturday 30th August and will be to East Kent. We hope to finish at Quex Park and to be able to join the Quex ringers for one of their summer BBQs. Further details to follow.

## Ringers' Survey – What do you want from the Committee?

In order to plan for the future development of the District we would like to know what ringers feel the Committee should be doing for them, particularly in terms of communication. To this end we would urge as many of you as possible to complete the Ringers' Survey attached to this issue of *The Belfry*. The Survey can either be printed off, completed by hand and returned to Sue Bassett, 23 Hanmer Way, Staplehurst TN12 0NR or, if you prefer, completed and submitted online by going to [www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/survey](http://www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/survey). The closing date for completing the survey is 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Please be assured that responses are totally anonymous and cannot be traced to any individual participant or tower.

In the Survey there are a number of questions relating to *The Belfry*. As mentioned in the Editorial, your response will help to shape the future of our Newsletter for the considerable time to come.

## World War 1 Centenary

The centenary of the 1914-18 war is approaching, and it will generate a lot of public attention. The government has committed £50 million to make this a major event. The Culture Secretary is chairing an expert advisory panel to oversee a 4-year programme, building a commemoration 'fitting of this significant milestone in world history'.

Other key organisations have begun to plan their response. The Royal British Legion is 'determined that the tone will be one of commemoration, not celebration; and that Centenary activities will be available to all and kept free of partisan or sectarian bias'. Churches Together in England recognises that there will be much debate about the nature of the commemoration and intends to help churches and local communities to work together. Other stakeholders include the Imperial War Museum, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the National Archives.

A four year centenary will last a long time. The Government has already listed what it considers six key dates: the declaration of war in 1914, the start of the battle of Gallipoli in 1915, the first day of the battle of the Somme and the battle of Jutland both in 1916, the battle of Passchendaele in 1917 and the 100 days from the start of the Battle of Amiens to the Armistice in 1918.

While the nation will wish to remember the heroism and sacrifice of so many during the war, there will undoubtedly be many who are uncomfortable with the focus on so many horrific events. Some will undoubtedly think that the only event worth marking is the Armistice in 1918 (though cynics call that the start of a 20 year cease-fire until the next war). What will almost certainly generate significant interest, though not on the Government's agenda, is when the carnage briefly paused at Christmas 1914 and the opposing troops played football together.

As ringers we will all hold personal views about the war and what should and should not be commemorated, but as the custodians of the nation's bells we have collective responsibility to use them in ways that enhance public sentiment at such times, whether to enhance rejoicing, to dignify mourning or to support sober reflection.

The Central Council is working with the other bodies involved in planning WW1 centenary events, to ensure that bell ringing can make a full and appropriate contribution, and we will keep ringers informed of progress, especially where there are requests for widespread national ringing.

In representing the ringing community it would help us to know the thoughts of ringers at large about the emphasis and type of ringing that you would like to contribute to this centenary.

*John Harrison (on behalf of CC PR Committee)*



*On the left is the first of what we hope will be a series of cartoons by Joy Barnard.*

*Please let us know what you think*

© 2014 Joy Barnard

## Richard Young - 50 years at Yalding

In the last issue of *The Belfry* we reported that Richard Young had recently celebrated fifty years' ringing, every one of them as a member of the Yalding band. Your Editor caught up with him recently to look back on that half a century:



**Ed:** Hi Richard. Fifty years of ringing is quite an achievement in itself. But you have spent your whole ringing career at the same tower – Yalding. Can you tell us how it first came about?

**Richard:** I have always worshipped at Yalding and wanted to ring the bells from an early age. My sister (Sue King now) rang, and her husband (Fred King) taught me as he was Captain then. They only rang call changes in those days and were not KCACR members. I don't remember any visitors so the District didn't appear to visit. I think I became Captain in 1969. Andrew Gunstone (East Farleigh Tower Captain), the then District Rep, visited Yalding and I am grateful that he did. He introduced me to method ringing and the wider world of ringing.

**Ed:** You may remember almost exactly 40 years ago teaching me to ring. The Yalding band in those days was flourishing with a group of young people taught mainly by you. How many people do you think you have taught to ring over the years?

**Richard:** That is a difficult question as it relies on my memory. I have managed to recall 79 names but there will be many more. Unfortunately, not many of them are still ringing.

**Ed:** Sadly that is true of many who learn to ring. I seem to remember that the Yalding band had a reputation in those days for having fun, mainly centred around alcohol, which didn't always go down well with some of the older generation of ringers! How have things changed over the years?

**Richard:** I suppose I have now become part of the older generation but still manage to have fun. The Yalding band has a much higher average age than then and we don't go to the pub after practice.

**Ed:** The way things are going there soon won't be any pubs to go to anyway! You must have a wealth of memories about ringing over the years. Would you care to share some with us?

**Richard:** Where do I begin? Outings... Andrew Gunstone's Easter ringing weeks, Nigel Baker's weekends, Yalding weekends, Smarden weekends. District darts competitions. Radio Kent interviews. District events – barbecues, car treasure hunts, barn dances. I will never forget the Gunstone outing in Somerset when I shared a tent with you and Len Parker. Lots of memories but I expect you will also remember losing your Cadbury's cream egg and finding it crushed under your sleeping bag when we packed up.

**Ed:** I remember it well, and I still love cream eggs! What would you say was your greatest moment at Yalding?

**Richard:** Difficult decision as there have been a few. 3rd October 1978 was one of the greatest. The bells went out of action in 1976 due to problems with the tower structure. I thought that was the end of ringing at Yalding. After lots of research a fundraising project was launched for £22,000. We did it and enjoyed it. The main event was a sponsored 25 mile walk which raised £1,000. The project involved retuning the bells and placing them in a lower chamber. Some of our ringers (including yourself) gave up 2 weeks of our holiday to help the Whitechapel bellhanger thus reducing costs. I will never forget walking down Yalding High Street for the rededication service. The bells weren't ringing of course and there was an air of expectancy. I never imagined that we could have achieved the target. A most memorable service ensued with ringers from around the county.

**Ed:** ...and one you would sooner forget?

**Richard:** Teaching you? Only joking!

**Ed:** Many a true word is spoken in jest! What would you say was your greatest achievement in ringing?

**Richard:** The all-Yalding peal of Plain Bob Doubles (probably the first peal by a local band) was the greatest closely followed by my peal of 8 spliced major.

**Ed:** I believe you have been involved in another aspect of Yalding Church life for even longer than ringing?

**Richard:** Yes. I have been singing in Yalding choir for nearly 55 years. Lots of memories there too!

**Ed:** People could be forgiven for thinking that you've spent all your spare time for the last 50 years ringing and singing at Yalding, but I believe you do have other interests?

**Richard:** Indeed I do.... I play squash, sing with the Kent Chamber Choir, enjoy walking, and regularly participate in some local am dram.

**Ed:** Finally, where do you see your future, and that of the Yalding band that you have nurtured for so long, in years to come?

**Richard:** Who knows?

**Ed:** Thanks very much for talking to us Richard. Mine's a pint if you're offering.....



**Maidstone District 120 Club**  
[www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club](http://www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club)

**Winning numbers November - December 2013 and March 2014**

<b>November 2013</b>			<b>December 2013</b>			<b>March 2014</b>		
1st Prize	(£20)	79	1st Prize	(£40)	48	1st Prize	(£20)	8
2nd Prize	(£15)	80	2nd Prize	(£30)	57	2nd Prize	(£15)	3
3rd Prize	(£10)	43	3rd Prize	(£20)	30	3rd Prize	(£10)	115
4th Prize	(£5)	67	4th Prize	(£5)	1	4th Prize	(£5)	102
<i>Drawn at the Call Change Contest at Mereworth on 9th November</i>			<i>Drawn at the District Carol Service at East Farleigh on 12th October</i>			<i>Drawn at the Quarterly District Meeting at Yalding on 8th March</i>		

*The 120 Club draw is made monthly from March to December inclusive. Winning numbers appear in "The Belfry" and also on the District website at [www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club](http://www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club)*

## Young Ringers' Practice 2014

On the 25<sup>th</sup> January this year, we had a third very successful young ringers practice hosted at St Mary's Ashford with a good show of young ringers under the age of 25 (roughly 20), and run by Dean Jeffries, a home ringer at Ashford. The number of young ringers was very encouraging, and the quality of the ringing overall was very good indeed, with the ringing ranging from some very well struck called changes on all ten, to some Erin Doubles and a plain course of Plain Bob Major at the end of the practice.



Refreshments were provided up the tower between rings, which provided the opportunity to socialise with each other and helped to produce a very casual and friendly event and managed to kill some nerves too! Orange juice, soft drinks and biscuits all disappeared quite quickly as we all built up an appetite from ringing,

then after a very enjoyable practice a few of us were shown to the roof of the tower which proved to be a first for some. Some of us then proceeded to the arcade just down the road, and then pizza before a train home.

A notable achievement was that it was the first time some ringers had rung outside of their home tower, which proved to be a nerve racking but enjoyable experience!

Many thanks to Mark Chittenden-Pile for allowing us the use of the tower, to Dean for running the practice very well, and to the more experienced ringers (who may have been a tad older than 25), without whom the day would not have been possible.

**Jack Velvick**  
**Junior Ringing Master**

### Forthcoming Events

**Easter Monday 21st April**      **County AGM at Lewisham**      **2.30pm**  
*Preceded by Service at 12noon and lunch (pre-booking essential). Full details on the County website*

**Saturday 10th May**      **District Practice at Hunton**      **10am - 12noon**  
*A six bell practice at this delightful country church. Ringing to suit all levels from Call Changes upwards.*

**Saturday 14th June**      **District Striking Competition at Stansted**      **Draw 3.45pm**  
*Bells available for practice from 3.30pm. Competition commences at 4pm*

**Saturday 28th June**      **District BBQ**      **Time tbc**  
*The main social event of the summer and always good fun! Details still to be finalised so check the website for the latest update.*

**Saturday 12th July**      **Quarterly Meeting at Aylesford**      **10am - 12noon**  
*Ringing to suit all levels from Call Changes upwards. Business Meeting follows at 12noon. (Please note change of venue from Birling).*

**Saturday 30th August**      **District Outing to East Kent**      **All Day**  
*A change of venue this year. More details later, so put the date in your diary now!*

**More information about District Events can be found on our own website at**  
**[www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk](http://www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk)**