

The Belfry

Newsletter of the
KCACR
Maidstone District

October 2014

Issue 98

Editorial

As the 2014 ADM approaches perhaps now is a good time to take stock of what has happened in the District since the last ADM.

As far as *The Belfry* is concerned the year has seen a revival with issues being published quarterly since the last ADM. This is largely due to the formation of a Sub-Committee charged with responsibility for ideas, content and distribution and, as Editor, I have found this a great help. If anyone feels they have something to offer in this respect they are most welcome to join the Sub-Committee.

Moving to support for District events this has again been variable, with the winter events in particular being well attended but with numbers dropping off in the summer. However this is not as encouraging as it may seem, since it is the usually the same couple of dozen people from the same few towers that attend most of the events. Furthermore of those around half are Committee members who organise the events in the first place for the benefit of the rest of us. The result is that the District is in danger of becoming inward looking, contrary to the aims of our Association.

The low point of the year came with the District Striking Competition which was cancelled when only one band entered, and consequently for the first time in many years Maidstone District was not represented at the County 6-bell Contest. In an attempt to remedy this, your Committee have suggested that the Method and Call Change competitions are both held on the same morning, 14th March when there are less activities like weddings or holidays preventing ringers from being available.

However, not all is doom and gloom. The year finished with Kent winning the Essex 10-bell trophy for the third successive year with a band which included four Maidstone District ringers – an indication perhaps that there is after all enthusiasm somewhere for striking competitions?

Finally, during the year 14 new members were elected, which is an increase on the last few years, and 6 of these are Junior members, which bodes well for the future. At a time when 86 of our 223 paid up members are over 65 years of age it is important that we nurture and support our younger ringers. They are the future of our District and perhaps more importantly not only of individual towers but of the ringing exercise in general.

The Editor

District Carol Service



Addington - Saturday 13th December at 4.30pm
Ringing from 3.30pm
followed by mulled wine and mince pies



District News

Summer Quarterly at Aylesford

The **Summer District Quarterly Meeting** took place at Aylesford on Saturday 12th July and was attended by 22 members, not bad considering quite a number of regular attendees were away. Ringing ranged from Rounds and Call Changes up to the special methods for the meeting, St Clements College Bob Triples and Superlative Surprise Major. Ringers were treated to tea and coffee during the ringing and to excellent nibbles and cakes before the Business Meeting for which we thank Tina Bastow.

District Outing

For various reasons, the District Outing planned for Saturday 30th August did not take place. Apologies to those who had kept the date free.

District Practice

The September District Practice meeting was held at Lenham on Saturday 13th, the first District event to be held there for some years. It was a little disappointing therefore that only 17 members and friends availed themselves of the opportunity to ring on these lovely bells - many of them for the first time. Ringing ranged from Rounds (which included an eight year old learner from Marden, pictured below) up to Stedman Triples. We were also able to ring both designated special methods - Lincolnshire (successfully) and Single Oxford Triples (not so successfully).



Lenham Church was open for tea and cakes whilst we were ringing and it was particularly heartening to hear the comments of the tea ladies about how much they enjoyed hearing the bells rung, and that they missed having a local band to ring them regularly. Food for thought perhaps?

County 6 Bell Striking Contest

Since the District Striking Contest in June did not take place we were not represented at the County competition. For the record the winners were Chelsfield of the Lewisham District.

Essex Trophy

Congratulations to the Kent County Association band who won the Essex Trophy 10-bell Striking Competition for the third consecutive year at All Saints', Maidstone on Saturday 13th September. As well as being held on our patch, the band included four of our own District ringers - well done Liz Barnes, Adam Brady, Mike Birkbeck and Graham Heath.

Around the Towers

Barming At the time of writing Barming bells are due to return on the last Thursday of October. Whites will be on site on the Thursday and Friday and back on the following week to finish. We have cleaned the tower and are painting the metal bolts and braces on the oak frame. We are also planning to decorate the belfry.

Hollingbourne Fred King reports: There is still some way to go in raising the necessary funds, but we have been active this year in organising various events, all of which seem to have exceeded our expectations as regards the amount of money raised. After the barn dance in March we had a stall at the Hollingbourne village fete which was very successful and we also had the Trafford ring there, which created some interest. We then had a concert of 'songs from the show and light opera' at Hollingbourne church that was also very well received and attended. Our next major event is another barn dance at the Downswood Centre on 15th November, and anyone wishing to reserve tickets (probably going on sale in early October) can contact me (01622 745891 / rolandtking@aol.com). Other fund raising events are being considered at the moment, including the possibility of a jazz concert.

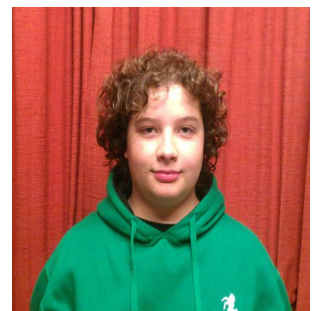
Lenham At the Ringing Roadshow Chris Mew, President of the Central Council, was approached by a lady who had recently moved to Lenham and was interested in helping to get a local band going again there. The lady in question joined us for the District Practice at Lenham the following Saturday and hopefully the District may be able to provide some kind of support there.

Otham Betsy Piercey writes: An exciting day for our Band on 25 October - we are having our first 'Mini Outing'! We shall be visiting East Sutton, Ulcombe and Harrietsham in the morning, then Boxley after a pub lunch. For some of our ringers this will be their first experience of ringing 'away from home', so it promises to be an interesting and informative day. Look out for the report on our Outing in the next issue of *The Belfry*.

Our Band are busy practising for the District Call Change Striking Competition which we are hosting on 8 November and are hoping several other Towers will enter too. There will be refreshments on offer, so please do come along and enjoy the morning with us. This will be the first time we have hosted a Competition and we look forward to meeting other ringers at this event. See page 5 for more details.

Do you have a Wednesday afternoon off and don't know what to do with it? Come along to our Practice at 3pm and join us in our endeavours!

Staplehurst Roddy Lucas, aged 13, rang his first Quarter-peal on Sunday 14th September at his first attempt. A very happy Roddy is pictured right after the quarter of Bob Doubles, to which he rang the treble.



At the other end of the spectrum the quarter was also Roy Barclay's 200th on the bells.

Marden Congratulations to the Marden ringers who rang their first Quarter as a local band for a very long time on Sunday 7th September. The quarter of Bob Doubles was the first for Sophie Harvey and also the first on an inside bell for Jane Higgs.

Wrotham We are sorry to report that all ringing at Wrotham is currently suspended due to a broken wheel. An update will be posted on the District website when remedial work has been completed.



Maidstone District 120 Club
www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk/120club

Winning numbers July - September 2014

July 2014			August 2014			September 2014		
1st Prize	(£20)	96	1st Prize	(£20)	111	1st Prize	(£20)	93
2nd Prize	(£15)	126	2nd Prize	(£15)	97	2nd Prize	(£15)	39
3rd Prize	(£10)	53	3rd Prize	(£10)	39	3rd Prize	(£10)	101
4th Prize	(£5)	116	4th Prize	(£5)	31	4th Prize	(£5)	77
<i>Drawn at the Quarterly District Meeting at Aylesford on 12th July</i>			<i>Drawn at Staplehurst Practice on 26th August</i>			<i>Drawn at the District Practice at Lenham on 13th September</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

Sue Bassett - 40 Years a ringer

To celebrate 40 (continuous) years of ringing, I have set myself the challenge of ringing 40 quarter peals in 2015 at 40 different towers, with as many different ringers as possible who have rung with me so far during my ringing "career". Would you like to ring a quarter with me in 2015? If so, please contact me by email on ringing40years@outlook.com and let me know roughly when, where and what you could ring with me. I'll then try to slot everyone into at least one quarter peal. If you are able to conduct a quarter, that would also be very helpful.

Coming from a ringing family (my grandfather, Bill Rogers, was a renowned peal ringer of his day, mother learned to ring before I was born and both sisters still ring) I suppose it was almost inevitable that I should learn to ring at some stage. At the age of 12, I remember my grandfather giving me a few backstrokes at Rotherfield when they were rung from the ground floor, but didn't take it up until my late teens in April 1975.

A young and handsome chap called Chris Bassett began teaching me to ring at Tunbridge Wells, but we also rang regularly at Wadhurst and Mayfield. When I broke a stay, he encouraged me to repair it myself - that certainly taught me to have respect for the bell and its fittings! He also taught me many other new things, including learning to drive. Enjoying shared interests and spending so much time in one another's company it was only a couple of years later that we married at Wadhurst and rang for our own wedding. As newly-weds we moved to Staplehurst and joined the band ringing on the heavy-going 8. We also taught a complete band to ring at Lamberhurst when they were rung from the ground-floor with a long draught. That was quite some challenge, being a novice ringer myself at the time. Throughout our lives we have not aspired to the dizzy heights of much peal ringing (although we have rung a few for special occasions) but concentrated on teaching others and ringing quarter peals here and there - mainly to progress our own learning and that of others. All this whilst raising our three boys who also learned to ring from an early age. We also were part of the team driving forward the rehangng and augmentation project at Staplehurst completed in 1996.

Coming up in April 2015 is our 40th anniversary of ringing together so would like to share this anniversary with as many ringers as possible who know us by ringing a series of quarter peals next year. Please get in touch.

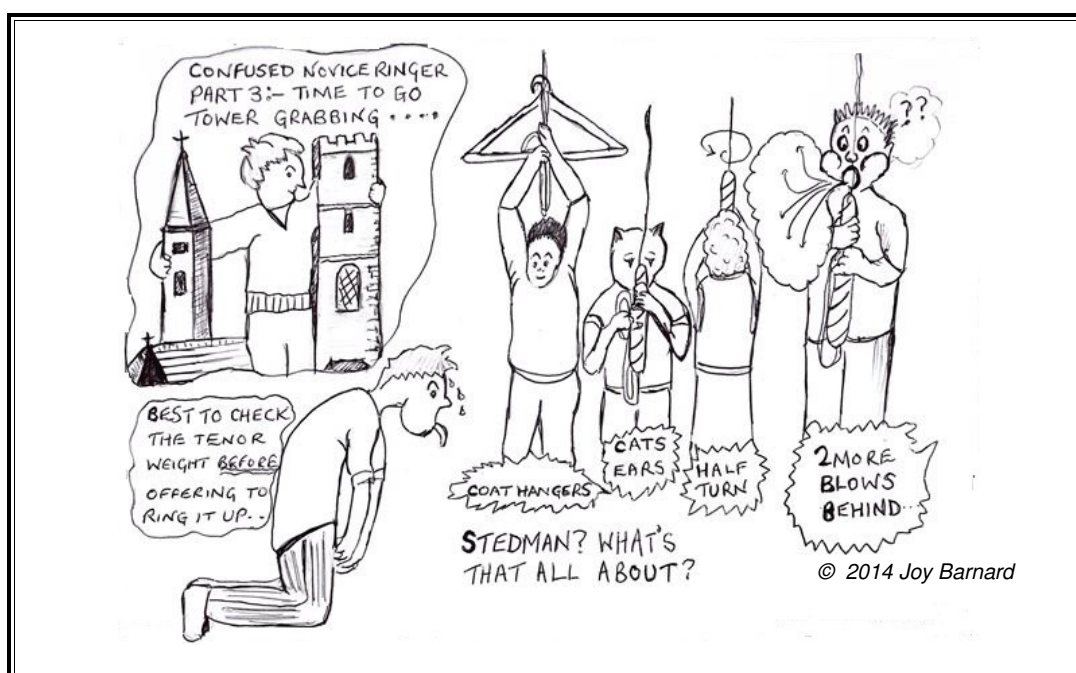
Sue Bassett

Provisional District Calendar 2015

10 January	Birling (tbc)	8 (6-3-16)	Quarterly	10am - 12noon
14 February	Barming	6 (9-3-7)	District Practice	10am - 12noon
14 March	Ightham (tbc)	6 (7-0-22)	Striking Contests	Draw 9.45am
6 April	<i>County AGM at Marden</i>			
11 April	Bearsted	6 (11-0-17)	Quarterly	10am - 12noon
9 May	Maidstone, All Saints (tbc)	10 (32-0-20)	10-bell Practice	
13 June	Linton (tbc)	8 (15-0-0)	District Practice	10am - 12noon
27 June	<i>District Barbeque</i>			
11 July	West Malling	8 (10-1-9)	Quarterly	10am - 12noon
To be decided	<i>District Outing</i>			
12 September	East Sutton (tbc)	6 (8-1-16)	District Practice	10am - 12noon
10 October	Leeds	10 (17-2-0)	ADM	3pm - 8pm
14 November	Boughton Monchelsea	6 (13-3-2)	District Practice	10am - 12noon
12 December	Broomfield	5 (4-0-0)	Carol Service	4.30pm

Please note that the above is the Committee's provisional plan for 2015 and some hosting towers have not yet been responded. Some dates and venues are therefore subject to confirmation and possible change.

Please see www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org for updates



Here is the third in the series of cartoons by Joy Barnard on The confused Novice Ringer.

Personal Milestones

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

1st Quarter-peal:	Sophie Harvey Roddy Lucas Diane Mitchell
1st Quarter inside:	Jane Higgs
1st Quarter as Conductor:	Terry Barnard
75th Quarter:	Paul Bastow
1st local band Quarter for a long time:	Marden Ringers
200th Peal on All Saints Maidstone bells:	Mike Birkbeck
600th Peal on All Saints Maidstone bells:	John Keeler
200th Quarter on Staplehurst bells:	Roy Barclay

Information is gleaned from www.campanophile.co.uk , www.bb.ringingworld.co.uk and 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. Major milestones only please.

Forthcoming Events

We are now well into autumn. The evenings are rapidly drawing in and those long hot days of summer are already but a distant memory. But don't get too downhearted because this is the ideal time to get involved in the various District events coming up between now and the end of the year.



First up is the **District Call Change and Method Striking Contest** which will be held on Saturday 8th November at Otham - the first time this tower has ever hosted a competition. The bells will be available from 9.30am, the draw will take place at 9.45am with the competition commencing at 10am.

As there was no method striking competition this year, the District invites bands to enter bands into a Method ringing category of the November competition at Otham on 8th November. This will therefore serve as both Method ringing and Call Change Competitions, with the Call Change ringing taking place first.

This will necessitate the addition of the following rule to the existing rules for both Competitions:

"While the same band of ringers may ring in both Call Change and Method ringing categories and be placed, they will be limited to winning in only one category. In the case they are placed first in both categories they forfeit the shield for the Call Change section, this is then passed to the team in second place."

This is of course to prevent a team from whitewashing everyone else, which hopefully wouldn't happen anyway, whilst still allowing bands with smaller numbers to ring. To clarify: if ringers A, B, C, D, E, F ring in both categories they cannot win both; however if ringer F is replaced by ringer G, then they can.

Entries for both categories should be made to the District Secretary no later than one week prior to the event. Competition rules can be found in the *Documents* section of the District website.

Believe it or not Christmas is less than eleven weeks away, and before we know it we will be surrounded by all the commercial trappings of the festive season. Why not take time out from Christmas shopping and get into the



festive spirit by coming to the **District Carol Service** which this year will be held at Addington on **Saturday 14th December**. The Service begins at 4.30pm, hopefully preceded by ringing. Following the Service there will be the traditional mulled wine and mince pies.

The first event of 2015 will be the **Quarterly Meeting** on Saturday 10th January. The provisional venue is Birling (8 bells - 6¾ cwt) but this has still to be confirmed.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor

I thought you might like to hear how we have solved the problem of a low turn-out at practice nights at my home tower of St Lawrence, Mereworth, in beautiful Kent. We practice on a Tuesday evening, and we have perhaps three or four regular ringers.

Just two miles along the road is the Parish church of St John the Baptist, Wateringbury. They have a similar problem, although not quite so bad, and they also practice on a Tuesday.

We now ring alternately at the two churches - this means that our bells at Mereworth, recently rehung, can once more be heard ringing good Doubles methods, and the ringers at Wateringbury now know that they will have a full complement of ringers.

I wonder if there are any other towers that would benefit from a similar arrangement?

Barry Evans

The Apprentice Bell Ringer: Learning the Ropes

by Claire Morton

What is happening? It's all gone horribly wrong. The rope is twirling around wildly like a lasso and I'm halfway out of the door! Thankfully Alan is as cool as a cucumber and skilfully bringing the bell back under control. Phew! That was interesting ... and scary ... and I've made myself look a right lemon. Alan is laughing as I edge my way back into the room. Am I sure I want to be doing this? Bell ringing is not as easy as it is made to look.

There are three main bits to ringing the bell, namely the handstroke (pulling the rope down), the backstroke (both arms are taken in the air by the bell, before you pull it back down) and catching the sally (the stripy bit). Learning each component individually was the focus of my next few lessons. Firstly, Alan imparted two golden rules – don't look up and never let go of the rope unless told to do so. It's very tempting to look up as watching the ropes disappear up through the ceiling and come back down again is quite fascinating for a short while (especially for Emily who particularly likes the shadows they make on the wall). However, you soon get a crick in your neck and someone pointed out that in some towers, you may also get pigeon poo or dust in your eye. Yuck! With that thought in mind, I didn't look up again! On with the lessons.



How difficult can it be to pull on a piece of rope and make a bell go ding? Not that difficult to be honest. How difficult is it to pull on a piece of rope with just the right amount of force and repeat it consistently, while maintaining control of the bell? Nigh impossible when you start out! Thankfully, for the neighbours, the clapper on the bell is tied, so no noise is audible outside of the bell chamber. Many an hour was spent trying to perfect handstroke or backstroke with a long straight pull; and then just as I thought I was making progress came the fun and games of trying to catch the sally.

Alan was very good at explaining the mechanics of what was happening with the bell and the effect that my over enthusiastic pull or contrasting weedy effort was having on the bell. Occasionally this was only too obvious when the rope appeared to gain a momentum of all its own and the bell made it clear who was in control (and that definitely was not me!). The effort of concentrating on what I was doing was mentally exhausting as I tried and tried to get it right. Alan reassured me that the only way was practice, practice and more practice, so that eventually the subconscious brain would instinctively know what had to be done.

For me, the concentration required to catch the sally was immense and to begin with Alan wanted me to catch it just once. Hands by my sides, I waited nervously, not quite knowing when or how I was going to catch this stripy thing that was whizzing past unnervingly close to my nose. Deep breath and off it went and catch. I got it! I was so pleased with myself. Next came the trickier bit of catching it in the right place – not too early and not too late. Timing was everything and this was not something that could be easily taught but had to be learned by trial and error.

Patiently, Alan guided me through these initial stages before I attempted to put it all together. Not knowing which bit to worry about first, I pulled too hard on the handstroke, was lifted up onto the tips of my toes at the height of backstroke and caught the sally far too early as I panicked about whether I would miss it. Not a great start, but at least I wasn't dangling from the rope eight feet off the ground.

Monday night practice nights were a welcome distraction from the fairly intense one to one lessons. They are an opportunity to observe how it should be done, try out different bells and to see the arts of method-ringing and call changes in practice. There are hundreds of different methods varying in complexity and the number of bells involved. 'Plain hunting', 'Bob doubles', 'Stedman', touches of this and that; it's all a foreign language to me. Nick mentioned they ought to try a 'Reverse Canterbury'. It was all beginning to sound like a game of Mornington Crescent to me! There were knowing laughs from the Radio 4 listeners among the ringers and reassurance that one day it would all make sense.

At home, Emily's interest in the bells continues with great enthusiasm. She has watched and watched a DVD lent to me by Nick, titled "*The Craft of Bellringing*". Emily has delighted in showing this DVD to anyone who will sit still long enough, including her friends (aged 3-4years), one of whom was heard to protest "*I think this is a bit grown-up for me!*" I've made bell towers out of toilet rolls and drawn countless pictures of bells and towers. Instead of "*The wheels on the bus go round and round ...*" we now have to sing "*The wheel on the bell goes round and round ...*". Emily's bell anatomy is second to none. She knows exactly what a 'gudgeon' is (one of her favourite words) and all about stays and sliders.

In a few months' time the New Year will be upon us and minds will be turned to New Year resolutions. Why not think about Bell ringing? The Learning to Ring book, which I was given when I started, sums it up perfectly:

"It is a wonderful blend of sport, music, exercise, friendship, a challenge to your wits and skill, wonderful satisfaction when you get it right, and a service to the Church."

Claire Morton

In the next issue - *Episode 3: Putting it all together*

Christmas is coming! The perfect present for the ringer in your life.....or for yourself!

**KCACR Clothing
with embroidered logo**



Colours, sizes and prices March 2014

T shirts (R180M) £15.50

XS: As below, but not Convoy grey

S, M, L, XL, 2XL: Azure blue, Black, Bottle green, Bright red (more orange), Bright royal, Burgundy, Classic red (more "blue"), Convoy grey, French navy, Light oxford, Pure gold, Purple, Sky, White, Winter emerald, Yellow

3XL and 4XL: Black, Bottle green, Bright royal, French navy, White

Short sleeve polo shirts (539M) £17.50

XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL: Black, Bottle green, Bright red, Bright royal, Burgundy, Classic red, French navy, Light oxford, Pure gold, Purple, Sky, White, Winter emerald, Yellow

3XL, 4XL: Black, Bottle green, Bright royal, Classic red, French navy, Light oxford, White

5XL, 6XL: Bright royal, French navy, White

Classic sweatshirts (762M) £21.00

XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL: Black, Bottle green, Bright red, Bright royal, Burgundy, Classic red, Light oxford, French navy, Purple, Sky, Winter emerald.

3XL, 4XL: Bottle green, Bright royal and French navy

Full/Quarter zip fleece (870M/874M) £29.00/£28.50

XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL: Black, Bottle green, Bright royal, Burgundy, Classic red, Convoy grey, French navy

3XL, 4XL: in full zip only

Other things

Note on reds: Bright red is more "orange" and Classic red is more "blue".

Up-to-date information, plus colour "swatches" and details of District clothing salespeople are available on www.kcacr.org.uk/clothing.

Children's sizes, women's sizes (more fitted and usually less suitable for ringing) and other items are in the catalogue, one of which is held in every District.



I'm confused.....

Then let our

Jargon Buster

Help you!

Many years ago, not long after I started ringing, I ventured out to a neighbouring tower where the repertoire was somewhat wider than my local tower. My abiding memory of that evening was of the conductor shouting out such phrases as "Turn me from behind", "with me", "over me now" and "up the back". I wondered what on earth I had come into. I soon discovered of course that these were just some of the many esoteric phrases which form part of ringing talk.

Realising that many ringers, even the more experienced, sometimes come across words and phrases the meaning of which they haven't the foggiest, we thought it would be a good idea to include a regular column in *The Belfry* to help make things a little clearer.

Basic

Hunting: The process of moving one place at a time up or down; or both alternately in which case two blows are made whilst leading or lying behind.

Place: The repetition of a blow in one position in a row i.e. where a bell does not move its position for two or more consecutive blows. Also known as "making a place".

Blow: A single stroke struck on one bell. It can be either "handstroke" or "backstroke".

Dodge: An interruption to a hunting path which is immediately resumed after stepping back one place.

Coursing Order: The sequential order of the working bells in a method as they come to each piece of work.

Working bell: A bell involved in the method being rung (i.e. not covering behind).

Cover: To remain in the last position whilst all the other bells are changing in a method, also known as "tenor behind".

Method: A specific pattern of changes forming the basic instruction for change ringing.

Change: The production of one row from the previous one, by the interchanging of selected pairs of adjacent bells.

More Experienced

Observation bell: A working bell, the position of which is used to place the calls and usually performs the same work in each part of the composition.

Fixed bell: A bell which appears in the same position at course heads or part ends in a composition (usually in addition to an observation bell).

Place notation: A shorthand description of the structure of a method by listing the places that are made at each successive change. Changes where no places are made are indicated by "x" or "- m".

Turning Course: A course in a composition containing calls which rearrange the back bells (e.g. from the tittums position to the Home position or vice versa).

And finally, the two mentioned in the last issue:

Q Set A group of rows representing leads or courses which are exclusively related to each other as being all produced by a bob or all by a plain lead etc. (I'm sure you all really wanted to know that...!)

Surprise A class of method in which the treble performs treble bob hunting and there is an interior place at every cross section.

Please note that the above definitions are either taken from or based on the book "A Dictionary of Campanology" by David W Struckett (published 1985). If there is ringing terminology which you don't understand e-mail belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk and we will include the answer in the next issue.

Hollingbourne Bells Restoration



BARN DANCE



Downswood Community Centre ME15 8XG

Saturday 15th November at 7pm

Dancing to Skinners' Rats

Tickets £10 (including Ploughman's Supper) ~ Licensed Bar

Available from Pam 01622-880309, Fred 01622-745891 or Nigel 01795-420170 / 07778691343

The next issue of

The Belfry

is scheduled for publication at the
January Quarterly Meeting

Copy deadline is Saturday 13th December 2014

Articles for publication in the next issue
should be e-mailed to the Editor at
belfry@kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk

*Please limit articles to one side
of A4 if possible*

Keep up to date with what's
happening in the Maidstone District at

www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk

Now available on your smartphone
via the QR code below



Forthcoming Events

Saturday 11th October	Annual District Meeting at Staplehurst	3pm - 8pm
<i>Ringling 3pm - 4.30pm. Service 4.30pm Tea and Business Meeting 5.30pm, followed by evening ringing until approximately 8pm</i>		
Saturday 8th November	Striking Competitions at Otham	Draw 9.45am
<i>Combined Call Change and Method Competition - see article on page 5</i>		
Saturday 13th December	Carol Service at Addington	4.30pm
<i>Ringling before the Service and the traditional mulled wine and mince pies afterwards</i>		
Saturday 10th January 2015	Quarterly Meeting at Birling (tbc)	10am - 12noon
<i>Venue still to be confirmed</i>		

***More information about District Events can be found on our own website at
www.kcacr-maidstone-district.org.uk***