



Kelvedon is newest Octave in District



The saga of the re-hanging and augmentation of the bells of St Mary's Church, Kelvedon is finally over. The project was first mooted in the early 1960's, but did not go ahead: we have a quote from that time for about £2,500 for the work; unfortunately not valid in 2006!

Fast forward to 2001: a new Tower Captain at Kelvedon, a man with a plan! Raise a bit of money, get the old bells re-hung in a new frame lower in the tower. Much easier to ring (who said Kelvedon bells were difficult?) and a frame sized for two bells to be added later. The usual companies contacted: we now need to raise £25-£30,000, plus costs for moving the Church clock, as we wanted the bells in the old clock room for stability.

District Officers for 2006:

Master: Marian Wood	(01371-856382)
Deputy: Andrew Smith	(01787-477073)
Secretary: Peter Smith	(01376-322094)
Treasurer: Di Carpenter	(01279-870414)

Then followed a series of meetings, with the PCC, English Heritage, Clock people, Bell people, Diocesan people, Funding people, Building people: all in all a lot of meetings! By mid 2003 the shape of the project was pretty much mapped out and was almost agreed when a change in English Heritage led to a recommendation that the clock should stay in the clock room and the bells stay above. Luckily with much support from very knowledgeable local advisors a strong letter was sent to English Heritage; and it's back to "Plan A". The cost was now £35,000, but with many generous donations we could go ahead. At about this time two local families offered

to give two new treble bells as memorials. It looked like the eight bell option was on. Plans were redrawn. A minor technical hitch, in that we now had to remove the old bell room floor to accommodate the frame, and arrange a platform for the clock did not delay things long, the faculty was soon applied for and speedily granted.

Fast forward to 2006. Winter. Up a cold tower manhandling lumps of cold metal, along with wheels and assorted clock hammers. They seemed big in the tower, but seem even bigger on the ground: and it's a bit of a tight squeeze getting them out past the font and into the churchyard. It's casting day in February, and a coach travels up to the foundry for the museum tour and to watch the casting of "Caroline" and "Peter". We also saw the new frame under construction - it seems pretty big. A party of Essex Young Ringers is also booked the same day, so we have a healthy audience, if a few chaotic moments!

There are a few pictures of the day on www.goodchild01.plus.com/Bells.htm and www.kelvedonstmarys.co.uk

District Events

District Quarter Peal Week from 1st to 15th September

(details to Andrew Smith please)

- **Friday 6th October:** District Practice at Rayne, 7:30 to 9pm.
- **Saturday 28th October:** Service and District Meeting at Kelvedon. The Service is at 4:30pm with ringing from **3:00pm**; Tea & Meeting from 5:30pm. This will be a special service commemorating the new ring of 8 bells. Evening ringing is planned at Feering from 7:30 to 9pm.
- **A Saturday in November (Date TBA):** Quiz Nite at Braintree - eyes down at 7.30pm. All for fun - will NOT have questions just for ringers. So **DO** put in a team! *We can make up teams on the night.*
- **Saturday 2nd December:** District Carol Service at Bocking is at 4:30pm, with ringing from 3:30pm beforehand.
- **Saturday 6th January 2007:** Service and Annual District Meeting at Felsted. The Service is at 4:30pm with ringing from 3:30pm; Tea & Annual Meeting from 5:30pm. Evening ringing is at Stebbing from 7:30 to 9pm.
- **Tuesday 27th February 2007:** District Practice at Black Notley, 7:30 to 9pm
- **Saturday 3rd March 2007:** Service and District Meeting at Coggeshall. The Service is at 4:30pm with ringing from 3:30pm; Tea & Annual Meeting from 5:30pm. Evening ringing is also at Coggeshall from 7:30 to 9pm.

Association Events

Saturday 7th October: Association Dinner at the County Hotel, Chelmsford., near the railway station. Please book your tickets with Mary Bone **NOW**.

Saturday 25th November: Association Training Day from 9:30am based around Kirby-le-Soken in NE District. Adrian Malton would like to hear (on 01371-859423) from anyone intending to go, especially if you have a particular method you wish to study. Adrian would also like to hear from anyone who could be a helper that day.

Thursday 12th to 14th April 2007: The Essex Training Course, based as usual at the Honeywood School, Coggeshall. **Note the date now** - application forms will be available in January for a mid-February closing date. Get in early to book your place... first come, first served.

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Note: Under-18s get a discount!

District PRO - Unofficial Report

Earlier this year Libby arranged for a reporter to spend all day visiting the ringers on the EACR course, who went away and compiled an excellent 8 minute long report for BBC Radio 4 "Womans Hour". This can still be heard on the BBC and EACR Websites. What you may not know is that the reporter was so impressed that she asked for directions to her nearest tower to learn to ring, I hope she went along. This association with "Woman's Hour" is planned to continue with a special method being rung and "Named" sometime this autumn to mark the 60th anniversary of the programme, which is on 7th October.

Libby also arranged for a German TV film crew to shadow the Gestingthorpe ringers for the day of Her Majesty's (real) 80th birthday on 21st April. They joined us at 11am for coffee while filming the band watching the

Our Hosts -

Sue at the BBQ

(Yes it was wet



The District BBQ



25 hardy souls pictured sheltering under the "Party Tent" kindly lent by Roy Threadgold, who just arrived in time to catch it blowing away..



Birthday walk-about on TV, then filmed members of the band ringing 2 QPs at Gestingthorpe and Great Yeldham. They even stayed on to see the practice at Belchamp St. Paul and have a beer later at the "Cherry Tree" pub, leaving near midnight. Sadly all this film was condensed down to only a 3-minute item which was shown on German TV on the day of the Queens Official Birthday, 17th June.

Some said it was **MUCH** warmer in the pool! - and to prove it jumped in!



Many thanks to Marian Wood for organising the BBQ, and Graham and Sue Tobbell for hosting it in their garden a good day was had by all in spite of the weather!

£115 was raised for the Bell Restoration Fund

So we re-started, and this time it was Roy who "dropped" his bell two-thirds of the way. So, rather dejected, we made our way to the feast. During the afternoon many ringers, young and old, had a go on the mini-ring, and yet more bells were accidentally dropped - you do have to pull the ropes quite hard (no floating) or the ropes will fly off the wheels. Later we decided that we could admit defeat - and recruited Di to help us ring a little something on 6... **SUCCESS at last!**

1260 changes of Stedman, Grandsire, St. Simons, and Plain Bob rung in only 37 minutes...

The ringers were:

Ian Hamilton (1),
Alistair Donaldson (2),
Sarah Holland (3),
Nick Holland (4),
Daniel Smith (C) (5), and
Di Carpenter (6)

Tenor 3.9kg: that's 8lb 10oz in old speak.

Many thanks to all the ringers for having a go, and Daniel Smith for calling it.

It only remained to demolish the mini-ring and put it back in Alistair's car before opening the real BIG tower bells to all the others to have a ring and conclude the day.



First Quarter Peal for all on Mini-Ring

It seemed such a good idea to get the Maplestead Mini-Ring out of Alistair's garage and set it up at the District BBQ.

Hours of fun for all... and what an opportunity for a Quarter Peal on them! However the Good Lord had other ideas!

The day dawned grey and miserable, and it was clearly NOT a good idea to put the mini-ring up outdoors as planned; so we put it up in Finchingfield church. It seemed strange to see a mini-ring of 8 bells set up in the base of a bell tower under a set of eight ropes....

Why don't they just ring the proper bells?

But that would not be nearly so much fun!

So eight of us set off into a Quarter Peal of Triples: it was only a quarter of the way rung when owner Alistair embarrassed himself by

"dropping" his bell very rapidly - and was unable

and Graham guarding the drinks... and a little windy!

to raise it again and regain his position.

It happens so quickly with such light bells!

Beginners School

The District Beginners School resumes from September after its summer holiday break at Felsted - ringing is from 10 am to 12 noon, with a coffee break halfway or thereabouts.

All abilities from initial bell handling to Call Changes, Plain Hunt Doubles and Plain Bob Minor are taught here by the District Master Marian Wood and her team of helpers. Some theory sessions and discussions of "Belfry Etiquette" are often given.

No need to Book! You will be made very welcome - just come along and see what goes on! Marian is on 01371-856382.

District Meeting 6th May at Braintree

21 members representing 10 towers attended the Spring meeting at Braintree where we all enjoyed a marvellous High Tea cooked and served by the home team. There was even a little left - so why don't more people come to the meetings?!

After welcoming all present the Master, Marian Wood, updated all on the recent Association Annual Meeting held at Chelmsford on May Day Monday.

All the Association Officers were re-elected, including Andrew Taylor for one final year - his 15th as Treasurer - he will **not** be standing next year. So if anyone out there is interested in taking on this role **please** speak to Andrew, who will be glad to explain what is involved. (*Andrew's address etc. is in the Annual Report*)

Marian also noted that the "Top Team" has now been in place for quite a long time - the membership should be looking around **now** to nominate suitable candidates for next year's elections.

Maurice Downs and Peter Sloman were elected to Life Membership of the Association, and Maurice was congratulated on this well-earned honour.

Speaking of Elections: the meeting ratified a Belfry Election prior to a Peal attempt of Matthew J. Bayley of Witham. The Peal was scored, and thus can now be credited to EACR.



Talking Newspapers

This Charity, which provides audio newspapers and magazines for blind and partially-sighted people, recently contacted Roger Fleming seeking a 10-minute slot on bellringing, which he agreed to do.

Thus one Sunday morning a lady arrived with a recorder and joined Roger chiming the 3 bells at Alphamstone for the service. Roger had planned to go on to ring at Wormingford, but their tower is under repair, so Roger played his own recording of Greenstead Green's Tuesday practice: a call change sequence called by Roger.

The interview itself was then conducted in Roger's dining room, with questions about how he got interested in ringing, where can you go to learn the Art, the difference between chiming and ringing, etc. and many other questions including the usual "Is it dangerous?"

All this material was taken away to be edited down to a 10-minute item, including inserts of bellringing, for distribution to all their subscribers.

Roger was selected for this interview after a fellow bee-keeper had done a similar item, and knew of Roger's "other" hobby. Roger has been promised a copy of the item when it is "published" and hopes that he can make it available to the EACR website for others to hear in due course.

Well done Roger!

Striking Competitions

The District Heat

On the first warm and sunny day for many months 8 teams met at Great Yeldham for the 2006 **District Striking Competition**.

The teams were: Bocking, Coggeshall, Gestingthorpe & Pebmarsh (2 teams), Great Yeldham, Stebbing/Felsted, and Wethersfield (2 teams). John Hall (Steeple Bumpstead) and Roger Collins (Saffron Walden) were our judges, and the Downs umpired in the tower.

Methods rung included Plain Bob, Grandsire and Stedman doubles, plus Plain Bob minor. One team rang plain hunt, and 2 teams call changes - one call change team from Wethersfield were all under 16! Well done!

The results - Changes: Coggeshall 1st, Bocking 2nd, Wethersfield 3rd, Stebbing/Felsted 4th; Call changes/Plain Hunt: Great Yeldham 1st, Gestingthorpe & Pebmarsh 2nd, Wethersfield 3rd. (The other G&P team bravely attempted Stedman, but failed to complete)

Well done to winners Coggeshall and Great Yeldham.

The score by Gt. Yeldham would have got them 3rd if all results were combined. It was a both a good contest and a pleasant and enjoyable evening, some even setting out a picnic in the Churchyard.

Coggeshall and Bocking went through to represent the District in the Finals.

The Association Finals

6 bell Striking Competition Report

The 6-bell competition was held at Inworth, a good easy-going ring recently augmented to 6 by Jim Towler. The judges were Adrian Malton and Colin Chapman. Congratulations to Coggeshall for coming 3rd, even beating Dagenham! Sadly, for substitutes were available, the Bocking team found themselves short on the day and did not compete.

8 bell Striking Competition Report

The selected touch this year was 252 Grandsire Triples. The Deputy Master chose a band which was representative of several towers in the District, together with a reserve, and I was asked to call the touch.

We decided on two practices, and on each occasion we needed to rely on the reserve. On the second occasion, there was a bigger problem as Peter damaged his ankle playing rounders, and a couple of others were not able to be there.

We were most grateful for the willing support and help of Debbie and John and Richard for coming along to help the team practice the touch, knowing that they would not be actually taking part on the day. Marian (the reserve) stood in for Peter.

On the day, I was most impressed with the way everyone got on with the job in hand, and we very nearly beat the locals from the South East district - note that there were only 2 faults in it!

The final results were SE 54, N 56, NE 64, S & SW 69 each with NW 77.

At the start of the adjudication, the judges Adrian and Colin announced that they thought that the treble, fifth and tenor would be the most difficult to strike, and when it came to our result, they were complimentary on each count. Well done.

We rang early on, so Brian took some of down to the creek to see the sights, so as to stop us fretting about the performances of the other bands... We were entertained along the way by Dan with his diablo!

The band was Marian Wood, Alistair Donaldson, Kath Downs, Dan Smith, Jake Suett, Maurice Downs, and David Learmonth.

Maurice Downs

Anyone for Rounders?

Remember - this District was challenged to a Rounders match by South-Eastern last summer? Well on the day the Northern Team failed to show, only the Team's Cheer-leaders making it to the venue. Thus, in order to save any more embarrassment, our two gallant OAPs generously agreed to play.

Things did not go to plan even then.... Our reporter assures me that, in spite of Yvonne Towler running rings round them, Peter and Marian Wood put up a good fight. Then Peter put his best foot forward - and pulled his Achilles tendon, thus ensuring a most costly draw. Peter and Marian then found themselves in Casualty for hours, followed by Peter spending many weeks in plaster; he is only just getting mobile now.

GET WELL SOON, PETER!



And Finally...

The "Intermediate Practice" as it was last year has been re-named by the new management team as "Beyond Bob Minor" to more accurately reflect the intention - to build on being able to ring Bob Minor to climb in easy stages to the dizzy heights of Surprise Minor, Cambridge, Bourne, etc.

A certain Mr. Hamilton of Wethersfield now delights in announcing this Practice in a sort of

"Buzz Lightyear"

voice over:

(ask a junior member!)

"Bob Minor - And beyond!"

Try it!



BRAINTREE BULLETIN

Weekend Outing to Builth Wells

St Michael's bells were silent for services on Sunday 28th May, as on Friday 26th we packed our bags, dusted off our passports and made for Wales. We slipped over the border without paying the toll and arrived just in time for tea. [just as well for Laura had a plan...] We were in Wales for a bellringing and social weekend staying either with the Childs family or in a B/B run by another Essex expatriate.

Up early on Saturday, for at 9.15am our motorcade left for ringing at churches to the north of Builth; to the locals it must have seemed that the week's rush hours had all come at once. We rang on 2 very different peals, a light hard going 6 and a heavy-ish very quiet 8, before a very convivial lunch.

In the afternoon we rang on another light 6 and a heavier 6 before a delightful 5 which are rung from the church porch. The evening was spent at David and Laura's home where we had a very tasty buffet. We also surprised "Birthday Girl" Pauline with a birthday cake, made by the Master (we all survived). The evening continued in a typical bellringing fashion, with much banter and laughter along with serious discussion, and so to bed.

Sunday was to prove a busy but rewarding day. We rang for morning service at Builth, then drove 15 miles to ring for morning service at Glasbury, then on to Llanfeugan before lunch in Brecon. After lunch we rang for evensong at Brecon Cathedral. To access the tower you have to become a contortionist, 3 right angle turns on narrow stairs along low narrow passages to emerge into a large luxurious ringing chamber with a really nice ring of 10. Three more towers followed, at Brecon, Llanfaes, and Llandefaelog Fach where the local band provided us with a cream tea. Even though the bells were good some people had to be convinced there would be some cake left if they rang! Back to Brecon Road for a succulent and tasty BBQ expertly cooked by our hosts; time to discuss the bells we had rung, the things we had got up to and the enjoyment we had had.

Monday am suitcases were packed into cars ready for the journey home.

But were not finished yet there were 3 more towers to be visited, a 6, a 5, and a very good 8 to finish our ringing. We had our final lunch of the weekend in Leominster [Some people can't pronounce it properly]. Afterwards we said our goodbyes and our thanks and slipped back over the border and home.

It was a very happy and enjoyable outing, very many thanks to David, Laura, Thomas and Ruth for allowing us to invade them, and for all the arrangements that entailed. Be warned we are coming back next year !!!!

Congratulations to:

First Peal

Matthew J Bayley 22nd April
Debbie Hill 22nd April

First Quarter Peal

Frances Holliday 10th June
Vicky Lefevre

Other Notables

Libby Laurence First Quarter as Conductor : 21 Apr
First QP Surprise: Cambridge Minor
Richard Dunhill First Peal as Conductor : 22 Apr
First Peal as Conductor : 22 Apr
First Peal of Royal First Quarter as Conductor : 30 Apr
First Peal of Royal First Handbell QP Has now rung 150 QPs [100 this year!] conducting 50 of them.. So far...
Di Carpenter First QP spliced surprise (4 methods)
David Learmonth First QP Grandsire Triples
First QP Major

Milestones

Our newest Association Life member, Maurice Downs, (*Rayne*) was 70 on 27th August. A Quarter was rung at Coggeshall to mark the event.



Kelvedon (continued)

The bells finally return home on 20th April with a complete kit of parts for the frame and are laid out in the Church for the new bells to be blessed and dedicated. (*Photo*).

The hard work now restarts once more with holes to be hacked in the tower walls for the new frame members, after which everything has to be hauled up the tower. The tenor - cast in 1951 as the "Festival of Britain Bell" - has clearly been on a diet, dropping from 21cwt to just over 19cwt, though its key note of E^b is unchanged.

Key statistics:

Treble:	Caroline	wt: 6-0-6	Date: 2006
2:	Peter	6-3-5	2006
3:	Victoria	6-3-10	1895
4:	Charlotte	7-2-22	1803
5:	Anne	8-0-11	1705
6:	Mary	10-0-16	1803
7:	James	14-1-3	1615
Tenor:	George	19-3-2	E ^b 1951

The bells are re-dedicated by the Vicar, David Reynish on 7th May, and hallowed by Bishop Christopher on 4th June.

A "Well done" to John Elliott from us all!

Advanced Practices

These continue on the 3rd Saturday of each month at St. Michael's Braintree: please come along if you can ring Treble Bob hunt, Surprise minor or major, or Stedman triples or better. We also intend to ring some Caters and Royal methods during the evening whenever practicable.

Please contact Maurice Downs on 01376-330412 if you want to practice a particular method. Suggestions: Look up Rutland and Lincolnshire Surprise Major...

Future practice dates: ~~16th September~~, 21st October, 18th November 2006; also 20th January, 17th February and 17th March 2007. Put them in your Diary *now!*

Beyond Bob Minor...

These sessions take place on the 1st Saturday of the month unless a District event intervenes. Each session will start as usual with a short discussion and theory session from 7pm with actual ringing from 7:30 to 9pm.

Everyone welcome to come along – helpers especially welcome - but please let the Alistair Donaldson know if you are coming during the week before... and please study the methods beforehand!

Let Alistair know if you would like a Handout sheet.

A big "Thank you" to everyone, students and helpers, who have come along to past sessions - and then gone on to organise their own local practices.

Future Sessions:

- 2nd September, St. Clements and Double Court at Witham.
- 4th November, Double Oxford & Oxford Treble Bob Minor at Felsted.
- 3rd February 2007, Cambridge & Ipswich Surprise Minor at Sible Hedingham.

The Future of the Association?

Adrian Malton and Adrian Semken have written a short paper asking:

- Does ringing in Essex **NEED** any organisation such as an Association?
- Do we need to change anything?

Copies were circulated earlier this year

Note that EACR official objectives are:

- To further the work of the Church through ringing of bells
- To financially assist the Church to maintain and improve bell installations

So:

- Do we meet EACR's objectives?
- Do we need the District structure?
- Are the old boundaries still relevant?

If you have any comments please let Secretary Peter Smith know ASAP