

Gt. Gransden Church Bell Ringers

Blog 2014

30th January 2014

Our party on the 30th December was a great success and very enjoyable. Sixteen of us enjoyed a meal provided by everyone by sharing the cooking and baking. Many thanks to Sheila and David P for hosting the party again, when this year we had a young persons' table and an adult table, but there was laughter and more serious chat too.

We are looking forward to ringing in 2015 and hope we can continue to progress. Thanks to everyone who supported us in 2014.



Prest Family Members back for Christmas

We were pleased to see Michael and Martin Prest for our ringing on the Sunday before Christmas. Both have moved away but return to ring when they are visiting and on this occasion celebrated with a family photo. L-R: Martin, Sheila, David and Michael.



20th December 2014

Our last practice before Christmas and nearly everyone was there (14 of us) so it was great fun (as usual). Sorry Andrew and Victoria could not be with us. Started by ringing up all six, not terribly well but at least we managed it. Well done Alasdair for ringing the two and keeping with me all the way. There followed a lot of Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Hunt and call changes. Other exemplary efforts included a good 120 PBD for

Daniel on the treble, some very creditable Rounds for Martyn on the 3rd and then the 4th and the prime ring at the end which was a 120 PBD for the "helpers". Sweets at half time (still got some left from Argentina), which are all in small boxes. As the boxes went in the bin I was asked what the tower re-cycling policy is. My reply - I am it, I take it all home and put them in the blue bin. Christmas party coming up so we had a chat about who would bring what and whether it would be a sit down or a buffet. We reckon about 17 of us so definitely a buffet. Thanks to David and Sheila P for inviting us to Old Dixies.

No ringing now until Christmas Eve when it will be for the Crib service and then for the midnight Eucharist.



David and Sheila P with Sheila G planning the ringers' party

5th December 2014

Another very enjoyable practice full of youthful energy and enthusiasm. It was a first in several small but significant achievements. Megan rang up in peal, albeit on the front three. Martyn rang up the 4th (first time ringing up since initial handling lesson, and his heaviest bell), Alasdair successfully completed a 120 Plain Bob Doubles on the treble, and rang tenor behind to the same, and Daniel S rang the tenor to call changes. We included a verse of Twinkle TLS, although this was not entirely successful, and some dodgy call changes which were not bad. Victoria rang down in peal (very well), and several touches of PB5 were rung.

We were visited by Una the guide dog puppy who managed the stairs very well, (it was particularly interesting to watch her going down), and she sat very quietly as we rang, but she was allowed to come off duty for a few moments and say hello to everyone.

As usual sweets were handed out by Megan during the notices. This week we enjoyed the delights of sweets from Argentina - caramel bars of some sort. They were voted better than the recent Chinese sweets!

Many thanks to everyone who came to the practice, it is a joy to welcome you all and ring with you.



L-R: Janet, Megan, Michelle with guide dog puppy Una. Just out of picture is Victoria

21st November 2014

A few apologies of absence from this weeks' practice but we managed some call changes, Mexican wave and dodgy call changes. Rounds for Martyn and call changes for Megan. Good to have the youngsters - we missed Dan from Swavesey this week but all others were there.

On Tuesday I gave a talk to the Gransdens Society, ably assisted by Sheila who managed the projector. They had invited me to talk about the church bells in the Gransdens. We were warmly welcomed and the presentation went well. There was some feedback during the talk, and a lot of questions afterwards. During the talk Sheila and I rang a plain course of Plain Bob Minimis on handbells. This seemed to be one of the highlights of the evening as many in the audience said how beautiful the bells sound (my own set of Whitechapel bells size 8 in C). A very pleasant evening amongst local people, some of whom we have known for many years, but also an opportunity to tell many others about the wonder of church bells and ringing.

31st October 2014

Fewer at practice last night due to half term, so we used the time to practice some fundamental skills. We had reasonable success with Mexican wave, and even Twinkle Twinkle, with not too many trips after our first attempt which was pretty disastrous! Dodgy call changes followed and most touches were halted by progressive standing either from the front or the back. It was all a lot of fun and helped us understand the importance of concentration and good bell control.

Martyn has been ringing for about 6 weeks (now ringing rounds) and has achieved his tenth bell in the Sherbourne Teaching Bell Club Awards and so was awarded with his first (blue) badge. Sadly, no photo but well done Martyn.

26th October 2014

It's time for the annual outing. Wait! I hear you say - we have already had an outing! Yes - to Elgood's Brewery in Wisbech. Well I mean a ringing outing, and October is traditionally the time of year when we join with Swavesey to visit churches in a nearby county to enjoy ringing for the day. It was our turn (Gransden) to organise it this year and after greeting visitors to Gransden from Rushden (Northants) in the summer we thought that a return visit might be a good idea. A chat with Pam Bailey gave us some

ideas of which bells might be able to accommodate novices as well as more experienced ringers and so a route was designed, which included the all-important pub lunch.

Saturday 25th was warm and sunny (for the time of year) and ringers (including from St. Neots and family from Ratby, who usually join us) met at Cogenhoe, then on to Grendon, then lunch at Bozeat followed by ringing there (at the church, not the pub), then Rushden (where parking was a bit of a challenge - sorry about that), and finishing at Orlingbury where we enjoyed the best kept ringing room of the day (and possibly even better than Gransden) (but the book shelves did need dusting!).

Joy of the day was helping the young ringers all at different stages and some have only been ringing a few weeks but are already able to take part albeit with a little help from adults. A great day and thanks to everyone who joined us - let's do the same next year.

11th October 2014

Another good practice last night, full of excitement, frustration, success, joy, laughter, and sweets! Sheila and I started at 7.00pm with a handling lesson for Martyn, who is now just going on to ringing with both strokes together, and is doing very well, this being his third lesson. We only get half an hour at a time, so we work hard to practice all the required elements in this short time. He is very good and just gets on and rings - I am sure he will make a good ringer. Megan (Martyn's sister) is keen to continue her progress too, so asked if she could ring a bell up, which she did successfully. She was slightly disappointed when I marked her 8 out of 10 - for two faults. One, letting the last coil out too early, so leaving her with too much tail end, and Two, not easing off the pulling when the bell was up, which caused a bump of the stay! Mind my stays!! But! - an excellent attempt and in control all the time.

Practice commences and we ring up the back 5. Not very good, but we managed to all finish in Rounds. Plenty of Rounds, call changes and Plain Bob Doubles. Tower Captain decides to have an under 39 band and an over 41 band which caused amusement. The ringing was pretty good for both. It is great to have a good cross section of ringers so that we can differentiate like this.

Half time notices and it's a job to quieten everyone so I have to tell them to shut up. Meanwhile, Megan is standing behind me waiting patiently to hand out the half time sweets. We open a new pack this evening, but Megan won't allow the new sweets to go into the tin until the older ones have been consumed. Lucky me, I was the last to be offered one and so was able to try the freshly opened ones.

It is difficult to make sure everyone gets a good chance to ring when there are so many of us. We are mostly all at the same stage so struggle to make progress week on week. The boys go at 8.30pm and this eases the pressure a bit until we finish at 9.00pm. So, one final ring for them and just as we are going to start Alasdair pipes up something about the difference between Communism and Buddhism. We all thought - "where did that come from!" Unfortunately, we didn't have time to ask. He is a real thinker and also has a great sense of humour for a 14-year-old.

We ring more Plain Bob Doubles until the end of the practice and then ring all six down in peal. Fairly good, but one bell struggles to keep information. Never mind - a good effort.

Well done everyone - see you next Thursday (no ringing this Sunday).

26th September 2014

Another excellent practice last night when we enjoyed the company of 14 ringers including 4 youngsters. David and Sheila P managed to attend having literally just arrived back from holiday in China. We are looking forward to trying the new sweets - definitely not EU so that will be a real treat! Managed to ring a lot of plain Bob Doubles and Plain Hunt 5, as well as call changes. Martyn George had his first bell handling lesson and seems to be a natural, so we are looking forward to some speedy progress. He joins his sister Megan in the art of ringing. Megan is ringing almost unaided and is making good progress. During the sweet break Sheila G presented Victoria with her Association membership certificate (see photo). We love all sorts of badges, gongs and certificates, so take every opportunity for a photo call. Firsts this evening - Daniel S, Michelle and Victoria first of PB5 on the treble. Well done everyone.



Victoria receives her association membership certificate from Sheila

19th September 2014

Sorry for no recent update - missed practice last week due to a bad cold, so really looked forward to practice on Thursday 18th. It was a great practice - you could call it a celebration of youth. The average age ringers are between 50 and 70 but last night the over 60's were definitely outnumbered by youngsters and what great fun it was. Plenty of laughter and chat, and generally a lot of noise. We did manage to get some ringing in which included Plain Hunt and call changes, involving all the ringers.

The half time sweet break was enjoyed with Alasdair explaining to visitors the rule about being allowed to take two. We are just finishing off the French sweets brought by Victoria, and these will be superseded by samples brought from Russia by Janet!

We were pleased to welcome Caroline and Daniel from Swavesey, and Matthew and Michelle, Megan and (non-ringing Martyn) from Littleport; most of whom are becoming regulars to our Thursday night practices. Everyone welcome of course.



Back Row: Matthew, Martyn, Alasdair,
Andrew, Michael, Caroline.
Front Row: Daniel, Phillip, Megan,
Sheila, Janet

29th August 2014

Well, it is late summer and although we have practiced during August (except last week when we held the ringers' outing) we have been thin on the ground. Last night, however, the practice was well supported and we welcomed Caroline and Daniel and well as a surprise appearance by Andrew Smith of Gamlingay. Gamlingay also practice on a Thursday but apparently two of their clappers are at Taylors at the moment for some work to be carried out (not specified!). Thank you Andrew for visiting us as this enabled us to help Andrew L to ring the tenor behind to Bob Doubles (a first for him), and for Alasdair to ring Bob Doubles on the treble, which helped him consolidate counting his places. Well done both! Sheila P was able to have a go at Grandsire Doubles, and Andrew L called some changes and put some ringers right!

On Tuesday a group of friends rang a quarter peal of Ipswich S Minor. This was arranged by Phillip and it coincided with David and Sheila P's 60th birthdays (belated) and Matthew and Michelle's forthcoming wedding this Saturday 30th August, so we dedicated our ringing to these occasions.

Last Sunday we were visited by Paul Kaye and his daughter Alice who live in Offchurch (Warks). Until a couple of years ago they lived in Gt. Gransden but fairly soon after arriving in their new parish they were asked if they would like to learn to ring. They can now ring treble to Bob Doubles. We were delighted to see them particularly as this made our numbers. Mark and Rebecca et al. were staying with us and so that made a further two as well so our total was eight.

9th August 2014

Hi everyone, well it's all a bit quiet at the moment. Several people on holiday and so we were a bit short for practice on Thursday last. Thanks to Caroline and Daniel who came over from Swavesey we were able to ring a touch of Plain Bob Doubles on the

front five. We also rang plain Hunt and Call Changes, so in spite of the shortages we had a constructive practice. It was very warm and humid and although the window was open and the fan going, the atmosphere in the ringing room was a bit "smoggy".

Saturday 9th August

A better day today, there is a breeze and the air is much fresher. Heavy rain on Friday caused flash flooding in nearby villages and we were concerned for a time in case the heavy rain continued and prevented our expected visitors from Rushden (and surrounding towers) coming to ring our beautiful bells. All was well, the rain had cleared and the sun shone. A dozen or so ringers arrived and produced some very creditable ringing. Highlights were a course of London and a course of Stedman, but other good touches included Plain Bob Minor and Kent TB Minor. And the ringing up and down in peal was pretty good too. It was good to see Pam and Paul Bailey again after several years. Got a "very good" grade from one of the ringers for the quality of the bells and the upkeep of the tower - *many thanks!*

There will only be two of us tomorrow so there will be no ringing this Sunday - thankfully this doesn't happen very often. Practice as usual next Thursday and the following wee a trip to Elgood's Brewery. Looking forward to that!

25th July 2014

The last couple of weeks have seen a busy period in tower ringing. During the weekend of the 12th and 13th July the ringers were part of the Gransden Revellers alfresco production of Time Travellers. One scene was set at the beginning of WW1 and to add poignancy and effect the bells were rung half muffled whilst the audience walked from the Baptist Chapel to the church lych gate. Some of the ringers were taking part in the production and had to make some hasty costume changes and swift moves to get to the church in time to ring. Two productions on each day kept them busy! Sheila and I were away so we had to call on all hands but thanks to their dedication to the task the ringing was a success. Thanks to David for looking after the ringing and removing the muffles afterwards.

The original 8 handbells (belonging to the tower and given to the ringers by the Ladies of the Hall about 100 years ago) were on display in the Reading Room as part of the weekends' activities, and were much admired by visitors.

Thursday 24th July was our first practice in three weeks and we had a full house. Twelve ringers gathered for a very busy practice on a very warm evening. Caroline and Daniel visited from Swavesey (school holidays now), and as well as Matthew, Michelle and Megan (regulars now) it was a delight to see grandson Martyn too, who was given a go at backstroke alone and managed admirably.

Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Hunt and call changes were on the menu, with an opportunity for Daniel to ring the fourth and to try Plain Hunt. Michelle rang a plain course or two of Plain Bob Doubles and Megan rang Rounds with some assistance. And we rang all six down in peal. A good productive practice - well done everyone!

29th June 2014

The practice last Thursday was didactic. Only seven of us due to other engagements by some ringers. But, we had a very constructive evening with Megan making further

good progress combining handstroke and backstroke, and M&M brought along one of their learners, Lisa, who is presently learning handstroke and backstroke.

During the evening Michelle successfully called her very first set of call changes and we generally had a very enjoyable practice. Victoria was presented with her level 2 certificate in the ITTS Learning the Ropes training scheme.

21st June 2014

Very pleased to present Michelle and Matthew with their 25 bell badges (Sherbourne Teaching Aids Scheme) and photo will follow. A good practice and we welcomed Megan who all being well will be joining us every week. Megan can manage backstroke and handstroke and is just beginning to ring them together.

Following our quarter peal on the 15th June for the Garden Gander we were delighted to receive a donation for ringing on the Saturday and Sunday. The very generous gift of £30 will help start to re-build the bell fund following our £1000 expense to modify and improve the tenor clapper. Many thanks to the Reading Room Committee for their generosity. The event raised over £1300.

16th June 2014

Good practice last Thursday although only six of us due to last minute alterations in some ringers' diaries!! Rang call changes and Plain Hunt but we enjoyed ourselves.

We rang on Saturday and Sunday as part of the Gt. Gransden Garden Gander. Eight gardens in the village were open to the public for two days. We rang for the opening on Saturday and towards the end of the event on Sunday. The Sunday ringing was a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles by a local band. About half way through the tenor ringer made a mistake and managed to get at the wrong stroke. Fortunately, everyone else managed to keep right (under the conductor's instruction) and after a couple of leads the tenor fell back in line again. This should really have been stood up, but I decided to continue with it because apart from the tenor the other bells were in the right order and it was valuable experience for everyone in keeping level headed in times of crisis, something we as a novice band are still learning to do. We don't get many opportunities to ring a local quarter peal and so several of us are not used to ringing for more than ten minutes, and it is good to experience challenges like this as part of the learning process. Well done everyone.

5th June 2014

Another good practice this evening (and last week) which included a lot of Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Hunt on 5 and 6, and call changes. David took the practice and he kept us busy all evening, except during the notices when we all enjoyed some biscuits which Andrew had made. Trying out the tenor for the first time after re-fitting the clapper today, having poured a cast resin pad into the crown to create a flat surface for the clapper staple. The bell is now excellent. Thanks to Whites of Appleton who advised us on this and carried out the work.

24th May 2014

Another useful practice on Thursday 22nd with lots of Plain Hunt and Plain Bob and a variety of call changes by different conductors. Had to replenish the sweet tin as we had finally finished all the gifted confectionery! Looking at the calendar for the next few

months which are likely to be busy. Quarter peals, ringing for the Garden Gander and production by the Gransden Revellers, which this year has a WW1 theme. Elgood's Brewery is booked for the 21st August. Quarter peal attempt this evening by local band - wish us luck! Stop Press! - quarter peal successful and great to be able to do this ourselves.

1st May 2014

Had a very productive practice this evening with Victoria calling changes for the first time and Alasdair and Andrew ringing the tenor in turn which they don't do very often. Well done everyone. Discussion about our trip to Elgood's Brewery which we think will be the 21st August, so I must book that tomorrow.

Sheila and I are in the Hunts District team on Saturday at Longstanton when we take part in the Association inter district striking competition. We are ringing Plain Bob Triples. Wish us luck! This will be followed by the Association AGM at Over. The AGM is usually held on the bank holiday Monday but local arrangements in the Ely District has meant a change of day this year. In any case it will be a long afternoon and evening!

Congratulations to Matthew who rang his first quarter peal on Easter Monday (Ringing the tenor to Doubles as reported on the front page). He rang his second one last Sunday at Littleport, this time ringing the tenor behind to Grandsire Triples. They can be seen at <http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=331196> and <http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=332259>

I have registered the website with Cambridgeshire.Net This is a free website where clubs and societies can advertise their activities. I noticed that several other towers have also signed up. I hope it will help raise our profile because we really do need more ringers. There is a link on the Welcome page.

18th April 2014

Last minute apologies meant that we were very short for our annual ringers' meeting on Maunday Thursday, but we carried on and the usual tower business was transacted. Minutes have been sent to all ringers.

I have been looking out the old minute books and the oldest we have goes back to 1945 when the then vicar called a meeting of the ringers because there had not been one since the time of the previous vicar who had left in 1942 and there appeared to be no record.

During this meeting it was mentioned that the house to house collection at Christmas time for the ringers has ceased at the outbreak of WW2 when there was a ban on the ringing of church bells. The ringers wondered if it could now be re-introduced! - Which planet were they living on?

Meetings were held rather less than annually thereafter until 1995 since when they have been annual. In the early days the major topic was installing electric light in the tower, and then the condition of the bells. It took decades for anything to happen usually because the matters were referred to the PCC and so it was a year before

there was any formal reply at the ringers' meetings. Ah! those were the days!!

11th April 2014

A bit thin on the ground at this week's practice. Scheduled holidays and business trips accounted for some, but unexpected colds kept others away. Nevertheless, we had a useful practice with thanks to Caroline and Daniel, and Matthew and Michelle for visiting us.

A good bout of Plain Hunt 5 really settled into a good rhythm and was very enjoyable. Call changes were the other staple for the evening, and the infamous card trick, which is actually quite futile in my opinion, but seems to amuse everyone else! Much better to pull off in Rounds accurately - we still need practice at this.

No ringing next Thursday because it is Holy Week and we still uphold the tradition of not ringing at this time. Instead, we are going to hold our annual tower meeting, but recent apologies makes me wonder if it will be worthwhile. We will see! Maybe hold a simulator practice instead - haven't done that for a while.

4th April 2014

We continue to press on. This week Victoria was given the opportunity to plain hunt. I said that now she had tried it out she can read the manual! Good effort for first attempt, but clearly confused (oxymoron). The lesson on call changes this week was to "check your change". An error by a ringer sent a bell the wrong way and it wasn't spotted quickly enough by the conductor, ending in a fire-up! But it's all part of the learning curve, which these days seems to be exponential! Sweets half way through as usual - they are getting a bit sticky now and there are still two unopened boxes, so instructions to Alasdair who is going on holiday was ".. please don't bring any sweets back..!"

Victoria's mum was visiting so I took her to see the bells afterwards. Oh dear! I forgot that the chimes would go off. Ear defenders to the rescue as we safely negotiated our exit from the belfry!!

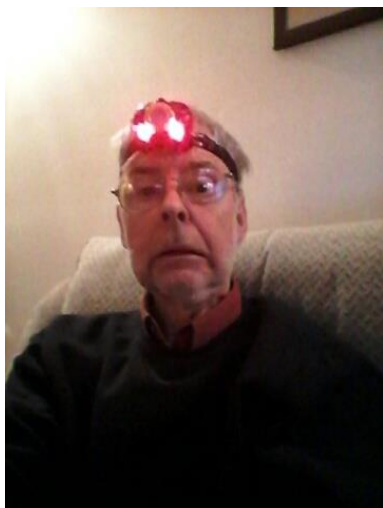
Another good evening.

27th March 2014

An excellent practice this evening with 100% effort put in by everyone. Sheila G introduced place making to us as part of our ongoing ITTS training scheme. When instructed the two bells called make places at hand and back and visa versa until told to stop and then the next two in the sequence do the same etc. A different type of concentration required for this exercise but we did pretty well with it. We also included some Plain Hunt and call changes and I think everyone went home exhausted! Well done everyone!

One of our ringers was absent this evening - in Argentina I believe. Ah! I thought, I wondered who it might have been who logged on to the website today from there, when I did my daily check of hits? The IP address is 200.85.103.# (Cooperative Telefonica Del Viso). Good way of keeping in touch. If it is you David - looking forward to seeing you next week!

No ringing on Sunday because it is a joint service at Waresley, so the next ringing is practice a week today. Thanks again to M&M for coming over, and if I may be indulgent with a selfie - thanks for the birthday present - excellent!



Headlights in the sky!

20th March 2014

First - I must thank our regular readers for not only keeping an eye on the website, but also for gently telling me that the Blog has not been updated for a couple of weeks! Perhaps the weekly Blog is like receiving a letter in the post - something to look forward to!! Well - I hope it is! I try to keep you updated with the latest, very modest, goings on at our practices but sometimes it's a job to write something which sounds original but I will do my best.

We continue to have some pretty intensive practices, with not much chatting between ringing. This is a good thing because it keeps us focussed on the job. The exception is when the weekly notices are given out. This week I was called to do so and then the TC wouldn't stop talking, so I had to wait! During the practice this week we rang PB5, call changes and plain hunt. We also attempted the card game pull off (see 7th March), with varying degrees of success. At the second attempt someone forgot to shuffle the cards so the bells pulled off in the same order - 512463. Duh! Good fun nevertheless.

Alasdair attended the young ringers evening on Monday at Hilton where he rang the treble to a 120 of PB5. I stood behind him and told him the place he was in whilst he picked out the bells whilst ringing. This evening I had to ring inside, so Andrew was asked to stand behind and help Alasdair. Both did very well. Alasdair got a bit lost from time to time, and Andrew discovered how difficult it is to stand behind, but a very good effort by both boys.

We included some call changes by place bell, which seemed to be more of a challenge for the conductor than the ringers, and then had some dodging practice on the back five. This came to grief when 2 and 3 became confused and the ringing was stood-up! We had rung most of the touch so it wasn't a complete failure. A few nice call changes ended the practice.

Thanks to Matthew and Michelle for coming over - it means we have someone to ring the tenor behind for us.

If you are one of our other regular readers we would be pleased to hear from you - let us know who you are and your comments on the website, and if there is any other information we might be able to help with. Sign it on our [Guest Book](#) page.

7th March 2014

Another exciting practice last night! It began with a card game. This is where each ringer stands by a bell and then randomly picks a card numbered Ace to 6. Each card represents the order in which the bells are pulled off. The ringer who picks the Ace is the treble and gives the usual command to start. The other ringers have to pull off in the correct sequence without knowing who has which number. We did this several times, changing bell and choosing different cards each time (although Matthew managed to get the Ace on two occasions!) The result was chaotic the second time around when Alastair's brain went into a time warp and only the first two bells pulled off. He was number 3 and the other three ringers were waiting - but did not know who they were waiting for! On another occasion once the bells had settled into the randomly chosen order, Sheila G started to call changes to get them back to Rounds. Disaster! - everyone thought the changes were being called by place bell, not by bell number. We don't usually fire the bells on a practice night!! This was great fun and overall this was a good exercise and pretty well done by all.

The evening continued with the usual menu of call changes, Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Hunt on six. During the notices Victoria was awarded her ART certificate for level 1 bell handing. Applause all round. Emphasis for everyone continues to be on achieving a good pull-off, hands all the way down at backstroke, and listening. Dare I say that we are improving?

21st February 2014

Thought we were going to have to cancel this week at the last minute with school holidays and sickness leading to some being absent. But, we were pleased to see Caroline and Daniel from Swavesey who saved the day and we had a very busy but useful practice. Flagged half way through due to lack of tower sweets!

14th February 2014

Three short for practice last night but made the best use of 7 attending. Plain Hunt on six was successfully rung, but striking was erratic. Several lots of call changes by various artists with the emphasis all the time on good bell control and striking. How do we teach listening skills - it is a difficult thing to learn!! Then, the dodging exercise emphasised the need to pull as well as cut in, or the result is a clash of bells, but we rang this fairly well. Overall a good practice, hard work, and I hope a lot learned.

7th February 2014

Another busy day at the office last night! Started at 6.30pm with David and Sheila P, Victoria, Sheila G and me with some kaleidoscope ringing. This is an excellent way to understand how dodges work and how important it is to work at them to make sure each bell is struck correctly. By half seven most of the others had arrived and we started the normal practice with ringing call changes by place bell. Not at all difficult,

so well done everyone! Thereafter we tried Plain Bob Doubles, call changes and Plain Hunt.

We were pleased to welcome Andrew Downs to our practice. Andrew rings at Meldreth and had come over to collect some old Ringing Worlds which I was disposing of. His help this evening was much appreciated because it gave us one more experienced ringer to give stability in the ringing. Continued support from Matthew and Michelle is also highly valued.

Sweets half way through as usual during the notices, when I announced forthcoming summer/autumn outings as well as ringing in the next week or so. Keep up the good work everyone!

31st January 2014

A didactic practice last night starting with tied bell at 6.30pm for dodging practice and the introduction of kaleidoscope ringing. Then, clappers untied and we were let loose on open bells. We started by focusing on the pull-off. Could we ring Rounds and the first whole pull. No! So we start again until we get it right, which we did after a few tries. Onwards to call changes by David, Plain Bob Doubles (plain courses so we could practice the 3/4 dodges at the end of the courses), more CCs, this time for Sheila P to conduct, and an introduction to leading for Victoria. A few more bells were filled in on the Sherbourne Teaching Cards and progress made!

Janet's ringing down lesson on Tuesday was successful, and she rang down both trebles to consolidate the learning.

Overall a good practice, especially the sweets! Well done everyone. More tied bell next Thursday at 6.30pm.

28th January 2014

Sorry for late blog this week - power supply on the PC failed and had to be replaced which took a couple of days!

Good practice on the 23rd when we rang the usual stuff, but the band seemed to be full of energy and raring to go. Having been to the Young Ringers evening on the Monday Alasdair was keen to try out his skills and both he and I were please to show off their writing out a plain course of Plain Bob Doubles to get another bell in the Bell Club Awards scheme.

Notices during the evening seems to get more chaotic. I usually have to battle over at least two people chatting. This week I managed to shut them up this week but then was overwhelmed by the noise of sweet packets being opened by the tower captain! I give up :-)

ITTS continues as we introduce weekly tips for ringers to help improve style and striking. Today, Sheila held a lesson for Janet in "ringing down". This was mentored by Iain Hayden and we thank him for coming over to help with this.

Grandson Daniel (aged 7) likes the website - he is impressed because it tells you when it is updated!

17th January 2014

An excellent practice last night with everyone full of energy and keen to ring. Sheila and I met with Victoria at 6.30pm to review her training records as part of the ITTS Learning the Ropes Module 1 training scheme. Its nearly time for an assessment so we will arrange this soon.

Everyone else arrived at 7.30pm and we rang up - front two and then back 4. Ringing during the evening included call changes and Plain Bob Doubles. Andrew has just started to learn PB5 and so has a minder as he rings the 2nd. Both he and Alasdair are keen to re-visit writing out PB5 by place notation in order to earn their Bell Club Awards bell, so this exercise was set as homework. Both boys rang the tenor (hurrah!) after declining the invitation several times before Christmas. They managed very well and I hope they will continue to ring it and learn to enjoy it. 13.5cwt is a reasonable bell for most 13year olds (just turned).

Notices included the usual hand out of sweets and an advance warning of additional ringing, one of which is for the Gransden Revellers who have asked us to ring during their production in the summer about the effects of the Great War on the community. Half muffled will be in order.

10th January 2014

Although only seven of us met for our practice on Thursday 9th we made good use of the time, enjoying some Plain Hunt and Plain Bob 5, and finishing with a very good 60 on 3rds. Illness kept some away and someone else is on holiday. We are looking forward to next week's practice when hopefully we be back to normal attendance.

5th January 2014

Now that Christmas and New Year have passed it is time to settle down to routine again. The year started well with a good piece of ringing in the form of the annual date touch. This took 1 hour and 8 minutes and included 574 changes of Plain Bob with 1440 changes of Cambridge S Minor. It was the 20th New Year's Day date touch. Details can be found [here](#). The aim is to ring at least 25 - it takes such a long time! Our local band is not strong enough to achieve such a piece of ringing but it surely must be our aim to do this eventually.

We had a good practice on Thursday 2nd when we welcomed Daniel and Caroline from Swavesey. We are finishing at 8.30pm at the moment and so try to have an hours' intense ringing which helps focus the mind. Annual subscriptions are due and an email has been sent to everyone!