

# News Archive 2013

## 28th December 2013- Ringers' Party Photos

Thanks to David and Sheila Prest for hosting our annual dinner again this year (2013). We had a lovely time as depicted in these photos taken by David.



Clockwise from front centre: Phillip, Victoria, Andrew (backs towards camera), Sheila G (hidden), Sue, Matthew, Michelle, Richard, Michael, David and Sheila P



Arrival of the Christmas Pudding  
L-R: Phillip, Victoria, Sheila, Matthew



Phillip and Sheila receive tokens of appreciation for their help during the year

## 16th December 2013 - NEW VIDEO

Thanks to Rebecca for her work on the next Gt Gransden video, this can be seen on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/CyXhi7VTZ5Q> or on the Blog page. This is a unique recording (2-minute clip) of the bells before they were re-hung and is part of a quarter peal rung in September 1996.

## 23rd November 2013 - Quarter Peal by Linton Ringers

It was good to welcome our ringing friends and guests from Linton on Saturday. I understand that our bells had been specifically requested for a quarter peal following a visit by one of the ringers during the summer when the Cambridge District ringers included Gransden on their mini-outing. A quarter peal of Ipswich S Minor was successfully rung.

### **9th November 2013** Peal at Great Gransden

A peal was rung on Saturday 9th November comprising 7 surprise minor methods in 3 hours and 4 minutes. The bells were half muffled for Remembrance and the ringing was excellent throughout enabling us to really appreciate the sound of half muffled bells. It was Phillip George's 50th peal as conductor. We hope that everyone who heard the ringing enjoyed it as much as we did!

### **26th October 2013** - Great Gransden / Swavesey Outing

We had a very enjoyable day ringing in five towers around Thaxted. [Click here](#) for more details and photographs or go to the [Gransden / Swavesey Outing 2013](#) page.

### **Saturday 19th October 2013**- Association of Ringing Teachers

Sheila and Phillip attended a training course run by the Association of Ringing Teachers. The association aims to train trainers to a consistent standard so as to improve the quality of teaching throughout the country. Trainers will be assessed by mentors and if successful will become members of the association.

### **Tower Open Day - Saturday 12th October 2013**

We had a steady trickle of visitors during the afternoon with everyone enjoying seeing things in the tower which they had not experienced before. The opportunity to chime a bell and see a bell ringing using our CCTV camera helped give a full understanding of how things work, and most were amazed when visiting the belfry at the size of the bells.

Communication using walkie-talkies made sure that the belfry was clear before the bell (No4) was rung, and kept the stairway clear as one party moved down and another prepared to move up between rooms. Tea and cake were provided by Sue Lawrence (with thanks to Rachel Fogg for also donating a cake), and visitors were interested to see the small display and try the handbells.

We were disappointed with the turnout but as we had done this several times before a lot of people had already visited us. Two people were particularly interested - maybe potential ringers, and overall it was a good PR job.



Many thanks to David & Sheila P, Sue & Andrew, and Sheila G for attending all afternoon, and to the Association for loaning the display boards and advertising banner.

### **Saturday 27th September 2013 - Tower Clean-up Day**

The day we have all been looking forward to!! Well, not exactly, but we all enthusiastically turned up to help with the tower sweep from top to bottom. Phillip had previously completed the old belfry so teams were assigned to the new belfry, clock room, ringing room and stairs. Victoria kindly provided some back-pack hoovers and this made access to difficult places much easier, especially under the bell frame.

The sound of hoovers resonated around the tower as work got under way. Coffee was served at 10.15 and notes compared. We were about half way through so all was going to schedule. Although we keep the tower tidy there is still quite a bit of stuff to be moved around, especially in the clock room. The ringing room is adorned with striking competition certificates and other notice boards which were all taken down and cleaned. Sheila P and Sheila G were in charge here where the roof beams were dusted and the tower arch screen windows cleaned. In the clock room, Phillip was sweeping and moving stuff back and forth so that Victoria could vacuum all areas including the walls. The belfry is clear of "accessories" but clock wires are a significant inconvenience especially when scrambling about under the bell frame. David only trod on a clock wire once, so he did pretty well! Steve hoovered and swept the staircase and we managed to keep out of his way most of the time.

After two hours the job was complete. This represents 12 person-hours, so a significant amount of work was done. Many, many thanks to the team for your time and effort. Sheila G's cake was eagerly enjoyed at half time and we all left feeling that it had been a job well done (cleaning the tower as well as eating the cake!)



The clean-up team  
Phillip, Victoria, Sheila  
G, Sheila P, David,  
Steve and David  
cleaning the belfry floor



The remains of Sheila G's cake

### **26th September 2013 - Bell Club Award to Victoria**

Our newest recruit is Victoria Moulton and we were pleased to be able to award her 10-bell badge at practice on Thursday 26th September. Although the bell club awards are aimed mainly at youngsters, the programme is structured in such a way that it

helps all novices identify and meet targets in the early stages of ringing, and we have found that all our adult learners have been keen to take part in the scheme. Standing ten times at hand stroke was the final task in completing ten "bells" and this was achieved with determination and patient practice. Victoria had her first lesson on the 7th August and is now ringing Rounds competently.



#### **4th July 2013- American Independence Day**

Our practice this week was on 4th July - American Independence Day. Many years ago our ringing friend Nancy Perry, who used to ring at Washington DC, was visiting England and came to our practice on the same date. We welcomed her as we would any visitor and when we learned that she was from the USA we decided to fire the bells to mark the occasion. She was overwhelmed by this gesture and in due course Sheila and I became very good friends with Nancy and still keep in touch. As her work brought her to the UK fairly frequently we would often meet up and ring together. We have rung several quarter peals and two peals together and had exchange visits.

As the 4th July co-coincided with our practice again this year we decided to fire the bells again, something we usually only do for weddings, or on Bonfire Night. We had several "fires" to ensure that everyone present had a go. It was great fun and very successful.

During the practice Janet presented the tower with a new wall clock, the former one having suddenly failed the previous week. Well it was free from a famous stationery supplier 12 years ago, so it didn't owe us anything! Thanks Janet.

#### **23rd June 2013 - Hunts Tour.**



Sheila and I went on the Hunts Tour on Saturday 15th June, this year to Nottinghamshire. We had a good day and rang at six towers. We enjoyed all the bells and had some nice ringing during the day. See the Hunts District website for a full report.



Some of the ringers on the Hunts Tour at Cropwell Bishop

### **11th June 2013- Handbell Quarter Peal**

Sheila & Phillip George and Sally Mew have been practicing change ringing on handbells in earnest every week since the 6th March. Sheila has been able to ring plain courses of Plain Bob Minor for some time but wished to progress and so we were determined to advance together. Early touches were fraught with danger, not least because the conductor couldn't always say what he meant and sometimes we all took it in turn to make mistakes. This led to many a fire-up! We typically met for two hours, breaking half way through for a nice cup of tea and general chat to revitalize the brains. With practice the touches lasted longer and the quality of the ringing improved. We scored several 360's, 540's and a couple of 720's. We didn't plan to ring a quarter on any specific day but on Tuesday 11th June we soon settled into some reasonable ringing and rang straight through in 38minutes, starting with the 720 and then on to the slightly easier 540. At the end - smiles all round and congratulations to Sheila. Thankyou Sally for supporting the venture, we look forward to continuing our weekly meetings.

### **8th June 2013 - Clapper Inspection and Adjustment**

David and I inspected the clapper this morning. It has not come loose again (good), but still hits the bell frame. We think that when it became loose before, one of the washers turned due to the movement of the clapper against the crown of the bell. This caused the odd-struckness and because here is no tolerance between the arc of the clapper and the bell frame the flight clipped the frame at every hand stroke.

We turned the washers and measured the distance between the ball of the clapper and the strike point on the sound bow. It was immediately improved as both sides were pretty much the same distance. We tightened up the nuts and checked that the clapper was swinging true, which it was. Finally, we marked the position of the washers with felt tip pen so we now have a point of reference should anything else go wrong. We tested the bell and all seemed to be ok. The striking seems to be accurate too, but best wait for some ringing to properly judge this.

Tom is visiting on Sunday the 16th to complete the adjustment on the treble and second bells, so we will have the opportunity to discuss this incident with him then.

Notice, at this point of the bell swinging the clapper has already left the lip of the bell and is arcing across the mouth of the bell to strike on the other side. It is at this crucial point that the clapper is nearest the frameside of the 5th bell. There can only be 1 or 2 mm to spare and adding tapered washers to the clapper in the crown of the bell has been enough to cause the clapper to hit the bell frame at this point.



The bell swinging at handstroke 3rd June - Clapper Strikes, as Craig Revel Horwood would say "It's a disaster.....!"

During Sunday service ringing yesterday, the tenor clapper came loose and started to hit the side frame of the 5th. We immediately stopped ringing and then continued without the tenor. Later, I inspected it and found that the clapper nuts had worked loose and so it was an easy job to tighten them. I was a little concerned as to why this had happened but thought it could be to do with recent work we have been doing to improve the strike of the bell. Although we checked our work, perhaps the clapper is not seating squarely on the underside of the crown and subsequent ringing has gradually caused it to move?

After tightening all seemed to be ok but I didn't have time to test it. Today, when we rang it up for our Jubilee Coronation quarter peal there were still ominous thumping sounds coming from the bell and so we reluctantly had to postpone the quarter peal. We could have rung the front 5 but that sounds rather mournful and not appropriate for a celebration.

David and I will try to find the cause of the problem on Saturday and hopefully can fix it and all being well we will ring our quarter in due course.

### **9th May 2013- Unexpected Quarter Peal**

A last minute phone call from Alasdair's mum declared that he was not too well this evening and would not be coming to practice. This would leave five of us as we knew that one other would be absent too. So we decided to ring a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minimus with the tenor behind. This was excellent dodging practice for David and Sheila P, and the quarter was successfully rung in 45 minutes. We dedicated it to mark Ascension Day.

Ringers were: 1. Sheila George, 2. Sheila Prest, 3. David Prest, 4. Phillip George, 5. Michael Prest.

### **7th May 2013 - Association AGM**

The association AGM was held at Ickleton in the Cambridge District on bank holiday Monday. It was preceded by an 8-bell striking competition between one team each from the Ely, Cambridge and Huntingdon districts. The Wisbech district were unable to enter a band. The Ely district won the trophy for the second consecutive year by scoring 125 faults, against the Huntingdon district's 137 faults and the Cambridge district's 142 faults. It was a close run competition and those attending enjoyed the ringing and socialising in the warm sunshine. The competition was followed by a short church service, a scrumptious tea and the business meeting.

After 14 years' service Sheila George did not seek re-election to the office of Hon Treasurer. She was warmly thanked for her work during this time and was presented with flowers accompanied by enthusiastic applause as a token of appreciation by members.

The George family is still involved with the association committee as Phillip retains his position as Safeguarding Officer, which is a triennial appointment, this being the second year, and for the time being Sheila is still a trustee of the bell restoration fund.

### **4th May - Successful Quarter Peal**

Great Gransden was one of the venues for the monthly district quarter peals. 1260 changes of Single Oxford Bob Minor was successfully completed in 44 minutes by the following ringers:

1. Sheila George, 2. Sally Mew, 3. Becky Zarate, 4. Roger Beaman (1st qp in the method), 5. Geoff Durrant, 6. Phillip George (conductor)

### **25th April 2013 - District Secretary Presents Membership Certificates**

We were pleased to welcome Sally Mew to our practice this evening when she presented certificates to Alasdair Catmur and Andrew Lawrence our two junior ringers, who were elected as members of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers at the annual district meeting in January. Before presenting the certificates Sally said how important it is to be members of the Association as this will hopefully enable them to meet ringers from other towers and help them develop their ringing careers and prepare them for ringing when they leave Gransden for university. Sally also mentioned that their election was supported by about 50 other members and she recalled that they were introduced as being enthusiastic and loyal members of the band, ringing for Sunday service as well as practice, and how important service ringing is. Another comment was that it was said of them at the time that they were learning to ring Plain Hunt, but that they had obviously progressed from that stage since January as they are both now competent in that method.

Note, Andrew is now learning the treble to Plain Bob Doubles, with Alsdair not far behind.



L-R Alasdair, Sally, Andrew

During the practice we rang plain courses and touches of Plain Bob Doubles and Andrew called some call changes in a very competent manner. Vanilla fudge from the Lake District was the treat of the evening. The challenge of the evening was a striking competition judged by Sheila George. There were two teams each comprising 5 of the same ringers plus one! Team B was placed second with 36 faults and team A won the event with 31 faults. Everyone rang very well and enjoyed the challenge.

Many thanks to Sally for visiting this evening, it is a great encouragement for us to be supported in this way.

#### **24th March 2013 - Triple Success in Quarter Peal**

After visits from other ringers to our practices recently via Bottley's Bonkers, we decided to organise a local quarter peal to give David Prest the opportunity to ring his first of Plain Bob Doubles on an inside bell, and for Michael Prest to ring his first quarter peal. This was successfully achieved today (Sunday 24th March) prior to the service of evensong. The ringing was a good opportunity to consolidate learning of recent weeks and was a good achievement. By co-incidence it was Phillip George's 400th quarter peal as conductor. We also dedicated the ringing to mark the induction of the Most Rev Justin Welby as 105th Archbishop of Canterbury on Thursday 21st March. We are a largely novice band but are gradually becoming more confident to attempt local quarter peals. Well done everyone!

1260 Plain Bob Doubles - 42 minutes  
1. Sheila Prest, 2. Tamsyn Hadden, 3. David Prest (1st PBD inside), 4. Sheila George, 5. Phillip George (400th as conductor) 6. Michael Prest (1st quarter peal)



L-R: Phillip, Sheila, Tamsyn, Sheila P, Michael, David

### **22nd March 2013 - Ringers' Annual Meeting**

We held our annual meeting during the practice on Thursday 21st March. The Tower Captain reported on the many events during 2012 which we celebrated by ringing the bells. These included national events such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games, and local milestones of significant birthdays and wedding anniversaries for local ringers. During the 200th quarter peal was rung on the bells. The Treasurer reported that there had not been any significant income or expenditure during the year but we did realise a surplus of £136.54. (Perhaps HM Government would like to borrow some to reduce the deficit!)

The officers were individually re-elected as follows: Tower Captain - Sheila George, Deputy Tower Captain - David Prest, Secretary / Treasurer - Phillip George. Details can be found on the People page.

Ringling activities for 2013 will include a tower outing in July, possibly to the Durham area and a day out during the Autumn half term holiday. Details to be discussed.

Thanks to all the ringers for continued support which helps keep all 6 bells ringing for church services, weddings and practices.

### **2nd March 2013- Quarter Peal on Dinner Day**

Three of us (Sheila P, Sheila G and me (Phillip G)) rang in a quarter peal this morning at Hilton. It was one of the District monthly quarter peals and this time held on Dinner Day. Ringers are drawn from many towers in the district for these quarters and this month Brenda Coatsworth from Houghton asked to ring. It was Brenda's first quarter peal on an inside bell and although she admitted to being nervous at the beginning she soon settled into the ringing.

### **22nd February 2013- Alasdair becomes a Happy Hunter**

At our practice on Thursday 21st, Alasdair Catmur (one of our younger ringers) achieved his 25th bell in the Sherbourne Teaching Aids Bell Club and was awarded his Happy Hunter badge. In fact, we had to play catch up and fill in 3 bells on the progress card which took him to 27 in total. The one that clinched the success was an extra bell which we award if a ringer stands 10 consecutive times from ringing. Alasdair is now ringing Plain Hunt (5) on the treble and is just moving on to Plain Bob Doubles on the treble. He is also competent at ringing call changes and ringing up and down. Congratulations Alasdair!

On Monday 18th Andrew Lawrence attended the Young Ringers' evening at Hilton arranged and run by Iain Hayden. Andrew managed a 120 Plain Bob Doubles on the treble and is now progressing steadily in this discipline. A quarter peal is not too far off now!! Watch this space for more news.

### **15th February 2013 - New Recruit**

At our practice on Thursday 14th an opportunity arose to give Megan George her first ringing lesson. Megan has been thinking about learning for some time and had thought that we would wait until she was 10 years old, which will be in April. A little encouragement by family and friends persuaded her to try the backstroke. Here she is pictured during her first handling of a bell rope.

She had a couple of goes during the evening and was very pleased to find that it was not quite as difficult as she thought it might be. It is early days yet but first impressions are that she will manage very well.



Photos by Michelle George

### **9th February 2013 - Date Touch**

We usually ring a date touch on New Year's Day but this year's attempt was unsuccessful. Today was the first opportunity for the same ringers to try again and this time we succeeded.

### **3rd February 2013 - Watoto Children's Choir**

On Friday the 1st we rang for the (very colourful and excellent) concert given by the Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda. More information about the choir, with more photographs can be seen at [Gransden Churches](#)



Some of the Watoto choir members.

*Photo: Alan Rowbotham*

### **1st February 2013 - email to Jez regarding help given by Bottley's Bonkers**

Many thanks to Geoff and Richard for helping with our practice last night. In spite of three absent due to illness and one away on business we had a very productive practice with opportunities for Plain Bob Doubles inside and on the treble, and tenor behind to PBD and PCs of Plain Bob Minor. This included three first attempts in method.

Martin has moved to London. We knew this was expected due to his work commitments but this has happened rather sooner than expected. Martin is one of our

more experienced ringers and we will miss him. Fortunately, partly due to the Bonkers, I think we can still just about manage plain courses of PBD, whereas on previous occasions when we have "lost" ringers we have been demoted to call changes (nothing wrong with call changes).

### **26th January 2013 - Bottley's Bonkers**

We were pleased to welcome Hannah and Angie from Houghton to our practice on Thursday 24th to help us with Plain Bob Doubles. With their help we managed to ring touches for "inside" ringers and "treble" ringers. We also rang Plain Hunt on 6 and we finished the evening with an extent of Grandsire Doubles. Many thanks for their help.

### **11th January 2013 - Bell Club Awards**

At our weekly practice on Thursday 10th three members of the band were awarded Bell Club badges. Michelle George, who had her first ringing lesson on the 8th November 2012 achieved her blue 10 bell badge. Matthew George, recently returning from ringing after "xx" years also achieved this goal. David Prest clocked up 45 bells and so is awarded his red badge. Here they are pictured proudly displaying their awards.



L-R Matthew, Michelle and David

### **5th January 2013 - Happy Birthday Victor**

A quarter peal of 1292 minor in three methods was rung at Great Gransden today on the 92nd birthday of Victor Hughes.

Victor was elected as a member of the Ely DA in 1978 and continues to take an interest in our ringing activities at Gransden. He is also the church organist, playing for Sunday morning services at both Great and Little Gransden churches as he has done for over 50 years. As choir master he built up a good choir over the years and this continues today led by Sheila George, but still under Victor's watchful eye. The well struck quarter peal comprised a 572 of spliced Plain and Little Bob and a 720 of Cambridge S Minor.



Victor at the organ on his 92nd birthday



L-R Sheila, John, Andrew, Cass, Jez, Phillip

### **27th December 2012 - Christmas Party**

An excellent dinner was hosted by Sheila and David Prest on Thursday 27th, when ringers and friends enjoyed a relaxing evening of good food and good company. The catering was shared and as some of our younger ringers were away for the Christmas period we decided on a semi-formal setting where conversation rather than games was the order of the day. During the evening we were challenged to identify the methods being rung on the Lost and Found 3 CD featuring the bells of Worcester Cathedral. This proved to be quite entertaining and one of our number managed to get 9 out of 10 correct answers! Ringing was not the only topic of conversation as friends old and new whiled away the evening enjoying the convivial company. Many thanks to Sheila and David for hosting the evening and to others who also provided food. Here's looking forward to more ringing and social opportunities in 2013. A Happy New Year to everyone.



Ringers Dinner 2012 L-R: Matthew George, Michelle George, Michael Prest, Alan Wynn, Janet Wynn, Sarah Ward, Martin Prest, David Prest, Sheila Prest, Sheila George, Phillip George. *Photo by Matthew George*

### **20th December 2012 - Date Touch**

A date touch of 2012 changes was rung in 1 hour and 12 minutes on the 20th December (2012 on 2012 in 2012), apparently the last opportunity for a date touch with this degree of coincidence until 21st January 2101. Many thanks to our guests David, Catherina, Charlotte and Anthony for ringing, and especially to our local ringers for giving up their practice. Methods rung were 572 spliced Plain and Little Bob Minor, and one extent each of Cambridge and Norwich Surprise Minor. This was the 21st date touch rung at Great Gransden.



L-R in order of ringing Sheila George, David Gill, Catherina Griffiths, Charlotte Smith, Anthony Smith, Phillip George (c).

*Photo by Phillip George*

**18th December 2012 - A Christmas Carol**

Martin Prest (bell ringer and member of the church choir in the Gransdens) gave three performances of his own adaptation of Charles

Dickens' A Christmas Carol in St Bartholomew's on the 14th and 15th December. The one-man show featured over twenty different characters to tell this well-loved story. The audiences were all very appreciative and everyone's spirits were lifted. Mince pies and mulled wine afterwards brought the events to a sociable close and raised over £200 for the Church restoration fund, Martin will be performing the show again at Brampton Little Theatre Thursday 20th - Saturday 22 December.



Martin as Scrooge in Gt Gransden Church.

*Photo by David Prest*