

Great Gransden Church Bells

Blog 2018

22nd December 2018

Christmas jumpers (for those who have them) were the order of the day for our last practice before Christmas. Whilst some were ringing, others made paper chains to decorate the ringing room and there was a lot of chat about our forthcoming Christmas Dinner. Then there was the photograph, organising everyone to be suitably attired in festive hat and Santa beards.

We had a good evening but nothing too serious on the ringing front. We have a busy few days over Christmas, ringing for four services from Sunday through to Christmas Day. We'll leave the bells up in between times.

Best wishes to everyone for 2019, have a very happy Christmas, and thank you to all our readers here and on our Facebook page, and for our ringers' loyal dedication to ringing throughout the year.



A very Happy Christmas

L-R: Phillip, Matt, Sue, Michael, Georgia, Lynn, Hazel, David, Sheila P,
Sheila G.

20th December 2018

Today we rang a quarter peal for Alasdair's 18th birthday which was last Sunday. We took the opportunity to add two methods to the standard Plain Bob Doubles in the form of St. Martins and St. Simons. We had been hoping to ring separate quarter peals in these methods during the year but have not been able to get up to speed to do this, but a taste in this quarter peal was testimony to our achievement so far.

Many thanks to Cass Boocock for coming over from Gamlingay to help us.

Happy birthday Alasdair!



Alasdair's 18th birthday quarter peal.
L-R: Sheila P, Alasdair, Sheila G, Phillip, David, Cass

14th December 2018

We had nine ringers at practice and had a lot of ringing to fit in during the 90 minutes. But tower captain Sheila G managed to make sure that everyone worked on at least one of their current learning stages.

We are pleased to welcome Sue Taylor who has recently moved into the village. Sue also rings at Caxton and Bourn but thankfully practice nights don't clash. She can ring up to Plain Hunt on 5 and so augments our team with this skill. We now have at least three ringers at this stage, so the band is developing nicely into change ringing.

We rang all the usual things, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Minor (plain courses), call changes, Bastow and St.Martins, the latter two methods not being tremendously successful as we have rung them more precisely during previous practices, but we continue to gain experience in them.

Highlight of the evening, apart from opening a new box of chocolates, was ringing facing outwards. We don't do this very often and it proved to be a tricky exercise. Listening is the key skill, but it also requires good co-ordination and understanding of the motion of the bells. We should practice this more often!!

We are getting ready for Christmas and are on the search for paper chains to adorn the ringing room. At the moment a lone concertina crepe paper bell and a string of small gold plastic bells are our only decorations!!



L-R: Georgia, Sue, Hazel, Lynn. Waiting for the next ring!

7th December 2018

A very good practice last night although we were only due to have six ringers. Sheila G was called to a meeting to discuss the licensing service for our new Priest in Charge and two others sent apologies. During the day Ashley Smith had asked via Facebook if there were any practices on Thursday as he was visiting the area. We responded appropriately saying that we could offer only call changes and Plain Hunt, but he chose to visit us, and we were able to ring much more than expected.

As Deputy Tower Captain David was in charge and he kept us busy during the evening. We were able to ring call changes, Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Hunt. Lynn tried PBD on the treble for the first time, which was moderately successful, bearing in mind no resource to stand behind. Well done Lynn! Georgia rang Plain Hunt 5 on the treble, and with two bells swapped to help promote ropesite, again with no one to assist. She also called some changes.

Ashley had the opportunity to ring all the bells and we are grateful to him for his help during the evening and hope he had an enjoyable time with us.

During the notices:

The forthcoming quarter peal was confirmed - Thursday 20th December at 10.00am to celebrate Alasdair's' 18th birthday (note - mustn't forget to advise the churchwardens!).

Phillip announced receipt of a letter via the CCCBR from Lord Ashton of Hyde on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport thanking all ringers for contributing to half muffled ringing for Remembrance.

We were pleased to hear from Victoria, via the [Guest Book](#) and hope she can visit us if she is in the area at any time.

Forthcoming events: Sim practice on Monday morning, normal practice on Thursday.

29th November 2018

The Rev Rachel Elizabeth Blanchflower

The Bishop of Ely is pleased to announce that the Revd Rachel Blanchflower, formerly curate of The Good Shepherd, Chesterton, is to take up the post of half time Priest-in-Charge of the Benefice of Great Gransden and Abbotsley and Little Gransden and Waresley. Details of the licensing will follow, but it is anticipated that this will take place early in the New Year.

We look forward to welcoming Rachel and her family to the villages.

23rd November 2018

Good practice last night with some new things tried. Started with call changes and moved on to St. Martins. Then, learned and tried Bastow Lt Bob Minor. Good practice for everyone - inside ringers for treble bob work, and place making for the treble. Particularly good for Lynn who had learned the treble work on the sim on Monday. We also tried Plain Hunt on six with varying results but all good practice for everyone.

The announcements included news of the appointment of our new Priest in Charge who will be arriving sometime in the New Year. Her name is Rachel Blanchflower and she is currently assistant curate at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Cambridge. Good excuse for a quarter peal!!!!

Another reason for a quarter peal will be for Alasdair's 18th Birthday in December but the calendar is a bit full, so we will have to squeeze it in somewhere before Christmas.

20th November 2018

Sim practices continue to be good fun and very beneficial. We usually meet on Mondays and practice for an hour. This week Lynn and Georgia were ringing the tenor behind to Plain Bob Doubles and getting some very good results.

In order to stretch their ability, I moved them on to the treble to ring Bastow Little Bob Minor. We have previously practiced place making (and dodging) with two single bells, but this exercise added the additional challenge of listening to the other bells as well as just the treble. This was more of a challenge and we will work on this, but it was good practice in building on their skills.

Emphasis is on bell control, listening and reacting to what they hear so that corrections can be quickly made where necessary.

We had an excellent practice on Thursday 15th which included call changes, Plain Hunt, St. Simons, St. Martins and Plain Bob minor.

New thing tried - firing on 135, 246. This is known as Hips (don't know why). Nice effect and something we could use at weddings. Surprisingly challenging!!

Christmas Party

Calendar pretty full for most of us between Christmas and New Year so we have made a provisional date of Saturday 5th Jan 2019 for our dinner. I hope everyone can make

this date. Thanks to David and Sheila for their invitation to Old Dixies. Details to be discussed nearer the time but please put it in the diary.

Striking Competition

The striking competition results will not now be announced until the AGM of the Hunts District in January because the judge (s) has not completed the judging!! I have expressed my strong disappointment to the District Secretary!

10th November 2018

This is an important weekend for ringing nationally. Armistice Day falls on a Sunday this year and it is co-incident with the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. To mark the occasion ringers everywhere have been asked to ring during the weekend.

Our ringing contribution started today (Saturday) with a half-muffled quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles. This was achieved in fine style and we hope was a fitting tribute to those who died and served in the Great War. Details can be found at <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1253818>

At this time we especially remember Arthur William Fuller who was a ringer at this church. Arthur served in the Bedfordshire Regiment and was killed on 26th October 1917 in Belgium during the third battle of Ypres.

We also remember members of our current bell ringers' families who died or served during the Great War. Thomas Walker (David Prest), Sidney Brittain (Sheila George), Ernest White, Robert Blacker (Hazel Pettit), Percival Walton, Hubert Price, John Price, William Luck, Charles Woodford, George Andrews (Lynn Walton), Hugo Schieffer (Susanne Machin-Autenrieth), Maurice Cousins, Thomas Cousins (Georgia Yarrow), Herbert Catmur, Harry Albert Frederick Valentine Catmur, Stanley Maurice Catmur, Graham Gunn (Alasdair Catmur).

Ringing on Sunday will start at 10.00am and will also be half muffled.



Quarter Peal team:
Hazel, David, Sheila P, Phillip, Alasdair, Sheila G



Muffles on treble and 2nd ready to go

8th November 2018

Only six at practice this evening with some key players away. However, we had an excellent practice with Lynn and Georgia calling 12 set changes on six bells for the first time. It is very easy to take for granted the ability to be able to do this, but it is

difficult. A conductor has to ring their own bell, make the correct calls at the correct time, work out the order of the bells and make the next calls etc. This is a challenge, but Lynn and Georgia did a good job - I can still see the grey cells working hard!!

During the notices Hazel asked what happens when a stay breaks. This was prompted by a news report that a learner was hauled up by the bell due to a stay breaking and suffered severe injury as a result, breaking both ankles. The question gave a good opportunity to give a detailed explanation and we had some discussion about this. Whilst it is agreed that accidents can happen here in Great Gransden we take a measured approach when teaching ringing, always emphasising safety and providing correct supervision. It was encouraging to hear spontaneous comment to this effect, but the incident is a reminder that nothing can be taken for granted!

We are looking forward to ringing the bells half muffled for Remembrance and the muffled will be put on the clappers tomorrow.

30th October 2018

Saturday 27th October was our eagerly awaited tower outing. We had not been able to organise an outing since 2016 due to lack of numbers. However, this year, thanks to having a couple more local ringers as well as ringing friends in Warwickshire we were able to make a good day of ringing at five towers and including a pub lunch.

Paul Kaye, who's home tower is Offchurch kindly offered to make the local arrangements and after agreeing a schedule he set about asking for bells and seeking out a good hostelry. After some necessary changes of towers we finalised the plan, submitted our pre-orders for lunch and looked forward to the great day.

The day started frosty and bright and we all arrived safely at the first tower which was Napton on the Hill (6, 11cwt), followed by Southam (8, 15cwt), Offchurch (6, 13cwt), Cubbington (6, 10cwt) and Ryton on Dunsmore (8, 9cwt). As the morning drew on so the rain started and we were grateful for the warmth of the Bowling Green public house in Southam where we had lunch. The rain became heavier in the afternoon but we enjoyed the variety of churches, towers and bells.

Some of the bells were a challenge to our newest recruits who's first time out it was away from home ground, but we didn't disgrace ourselves and a good day was had ringing and socialising. It was particularly good to welcome Alice, Paul's daughter (also a ringer) as well as Catherina Griffiths, Rebecca and Mark Banner with Dan and Heather.

We hope to organise another tour next year when we can reciprocate Paul's hard work in organising everything.

A suite of photographs of the day can be found [here](#) but our group photo shows the happy band at Offchurch after lunch.



Back: Sheila G, Lynn, Paul, David, Alasdair, Rebecca, Mark, Alice.
 Middle: Georgia, Sheila P, Dan, Heather
 Front: Phillip, Edward, Catherina, Oliver

21st October 2018

On Saturday 20th October we hosted the Huntingdon District monthly ringing meeting. Seventeen ringers from 10 different towers in the area came along to enjoy our bells on a glorious autumn morning.

Ringing ranged from call change to surprise minor and there was ample opportunity for everyone to ring several times whatever their ability.

We were pleased to welcome everyone and meet new ringing friends.



12th October 2018

Practice on Thursday was an exciting moment in the life of our tower! We had entered the Hunts District striking competition and our entry was recorded at the beginning of our Thursday ringing session.

Geoff Durrant (District President) arrived promptly to carry out the deed. The ringers had arrived early to get the bells up and after a few minutes practice to warm up sounded the treble for two whole pulls to indicate to Geoff that we were ready to ring our test piece. Two eager supporters listened attentively in the north porch and tried to work out where we were in the ringing.

The test piece was 120 rows of twelve call changes and we set off in (nervous) determination. We had practiced for weeks beforehand and now this was the moment that counted for all our efforts. Our ringing lasted a little over 4 minutes and we felt we had rung well, although we all thought that we had previously rung the test piece better! It's always different on the day!!

Geoff returned to the tower afterwards and said he thought the ringing was good. An analysis of our ringing taken from our own digital recording was that it was not bad at all. However, we will have to wait for the judges to deliver the result on Saturday 20th November during the district meeting at Hamerton.

In the meantime, a copy of the recording has been circulated to our ringers and a stills video will be produced for eventual upload to Facebook (with a link on this website) for all the world to hear our ringing.

Thanks to the competition ringers: David, Sheila P, Sheila G, Phillip, Hazel and Alasdair for your continued hard work in perfecting our ringing, and just as importantly to the other members of the team who supported us in this, namely Lynn, Georgia, Matt and Susanne.

Well done everyone!

post script: A video has been compiled which includes the recording and it can be found on Youtube [here](#)



Striking Competition Evening
L-R Lynn, Georgia, Phillip, Hazel, Sheila P, Alasdair, David, Sheila G

1st October 2018

We were pleased to welcome visitors today to ring a quarter peal. They chose to ring Great Gransden Surprise Minor. This method was rung and named for the first time on the 28th April 2001 after daughter Rebecca discovered it whilst "inventing" new methods. We researched it and found that it hadn't been named so we rang it for the first time and named it after our tower.

Details of the quarter peal can be found [here](#) and a recording of the last lead and the ring-down can be found [here](#).

30th September 2018

It's been a relatively quiet month. Practices and service ringing continues but tied bell practices have been fewer due to holiday distractions. Nevertheless, ringing progresses as we continue to develop with Lynn has starting to ring Plain Hunt and Georgia is now competent at call changes and is learning how to call them.

We practice our striking competition test piece every time we meet but the date has not yet been set by the organisers and we are wondering whether it will actually happen! We are due to ring it on either the 4th or 11th October - we'll see!

October is going to be a busy month for ringing in the tower. We have quarter peals on the 1st and 30th and the District Meeting on the 15th. Our annual outing is on the 27th which we are very much looking forward to.

Janet has decided to give up ringing for the time being due to family commitments. She has not been ringing during the summer and feels that she is not able to return on a regular basis. We are sorry that she has decided on this, but we will welcome her back if her circumstances change.

We had eleven ringing this morning (30th Sep) which included Martin and Michael Prest visiting for the weekend. It was great to have so many, but everyone had a good ring.

Thanks for coming.



Service ringing on Sunday 30th September 2018

1st September 2018

During the summer the ringers decided to offer a prize to the Gransden Summer Ball committee which would include a tour of the tower and a quarter peal for the winners. This attracted a lot of interest when it was auctioned during the Ball.

The winners visited the tower for their tour back in July and the date was set for the quarter peal on the 1st September.

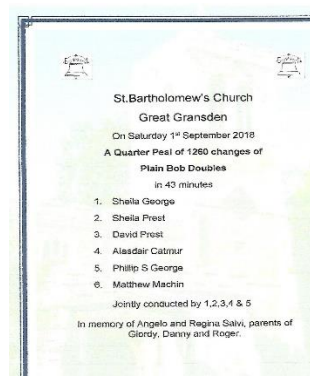
It was a glorious sunny morning when Giordy and his brothers came over to listen to the ringing and it was a delight to meet them again together with other family members.

We duly scored the quarter peal which was a first for Sheila P, David and Alasdair because they each conducted two extents of Plain Bob Doubles, the first time they have conducted during a quarter peal. Thanks too to Matt for keeping a good steady pace ringing the tenor. Very well done to everyone.

After the ringing we presented a certificate to the family and took a group photograph.



Ringers and Giordy's family after the quarter peal



The certificate presented to the family

27th August 2018

Today we rang the 270th quarter peal on the bells. This is not important in itself, just a matter of fact. The reason the for the quarter peal was to score Sharon Williams first of Cambridge on an inside bell. It was also dedicated to Peter Clifford Herne, grandfather of Francis, who rang the fifth.

We had tried this twice before, failing on both occasions due to method mistakes which could not be corrected. With renewed determination we all set about achieving our goal this morning. There was a patch near the end when mistakes occurred, and the conductor had his work cut out keeping the ringers right. The ringing was poor at this stage and would normally have been stopped but for the reason we were ringing. However, the ringing did settle down again and was quite respectable.

Well done Sharon for your first in method.

24th August 2018

There are still a couple of key members away on holidays, but we had a very enjoyable and constructive practice.

We were pleased to welcome a visitor who is staying in St. Neots for the weekend. Helen Scholfield telephoned to ask if she could join our practice. She was a great help being an experienced ringer and so making up our numbers to enable us to ring Plain Bob and St. Martins Doubles.

We also rang call changes when Georgia and Lynn showed progress in ropesite. Georgia had been told at the tied bell practice earlier in the week that she was ready to be assessed for LTR Level 1. During a call change session Sheila G quietly carried out the assessment and Georgia passed with flying colours with the comment "...has a very good style.." Well done Georgia.

Much laughter and fun during the practice as usual and Helen's parting comment on thanking us for the ringing was that we are achieving a good standard. This is very encouraging to hear from a third party who has never met us before.

Keep up the good work everyone.

20th August 2018

We have a few people away at the moment but still manage very useful and enjoyable practices. Last Thursday Dan and Heather came along (staying with grandparents) and we were able to ring call changes for Dan and give Heather some practice at handstrokes.

We also welcomed Caroline and Matt once again who helped us with St. Martins Doubles.

Ringing on Sunday was good with a good ring up on the front four some reasonably struck call changes on the six.



Dan ringing the second to call changes

5th August 2018

The long hot summer continues and whilst we expect the church to be a nice cool place at this time of year it too is warming up. Thankfully the ringing room isn't too hot with the window open and the fan going, but at practice last Thursday it was rather stuffy up there. The heat seems to be accumulative!

We were pleased to welcome Caroline, Dan and Matt from Fenstanton and this boosted our numbers for the evening. We managed to ring our objectives, Plain Bob Minor (plain course), St.Martins (not very well) Plain Bob Doubles (good striking) and some good call changes especially for Lynn and Georgia. Georgia also learned how to lead.

With holidays in full swing we will use August to consolidate rather than break new ground. This will give us all a mini break from learning.

On Saturday 4th we welcomed ringers from Basingstoke, a tour led by Adam Greenley. Adam was a key player in the re-hang project at Buckden in 1997 and had arranged for his band to visit our area. He hasn't rung at Gransden since the bells were re-hung in 2000. It was good to see him and have the opportunity to ring with some of his team.

During the week Phillip inspected the bells and tightened up all the nuts on the wheels and timber work.

Tied bell practices continue on Mondays for Lynn and Georgia. Lynn is currently learning about place making and dodging and Georgia is consolidating bell handling and ringing up and down. It's all going very well.

27th July 2018

Exciting things are happening almost every week at the moment and this week the highlight was Lynn receiving her Level 2 certificate in the Learning the Ropes Scheme. Lynn has made good progress since early April when she was awarded with Level 1 and has learnt new skills and is developing a greater understanding of ringing in general, not least coming to terms with the jargon. She is a keen and reliable member of our team and is taking advantage of weekly tied bell practices to gain as much experience as possible.

Pictured here : Phillip, Lynn, Georgia (news celebrity last week) and Hazel, while everyone else looked on with congratulatory comments.



L:R Phillip, Lynn, Georgia, Hazel

Photo by Sheila G

Other highlights of our practice. It was the hottest day of the year so far, but the ringing room was surprisingly relatively cool, helped a little bit by the fan. We are leaving the window open all the time at the moment. We are also situated above the kitchen area which has a de-humidifier, and this helps cool and dry the air and I think this helps upstairs too.

We almost rang the extent of our modest repertoire, namely: Plain Bob Minor (plain course), 120 St.Martins Doubles, 120 Plain Bob Doubles - key point here is that Alasdair turned in the 5th for the first time and rang it very well. Alasdair is a hard worker and will make a good ringer. We will miss him in a years' time when he goes to university!

Sheila P called a 120 Plain Bob Doubles and Lynn rang call changes on the third. Georgia rang call changes for the first time . This is a completely new skill for her. She learned that the practical is much harder than the theory, but she did very well. When asked if she was ok to ring in a second touch she replied "...well, I've got to learn how to do it..."

At every opportunity we are practicing the test piece for the striking competition in October. We are getting some very nice ringing now, I hope we don't peak too soon!

As usual there was lots of technical jargon and Phillip suggested that we all have Babel fishes so that we could immediately understand each other! The real solution is practice and involvement.

No ringing this weekend but tied bell practice on Sunday instead of Monday and we look forward to our next practice on Thursday 2nd August.

22nd July 2018

Georgia has been learning to ring since the 11th June - only five weeks. During this time, she has had weekly tied bell practices to learn basic bell handling. She has not been able to attend practices immediately and her first was last Thursday when she was able to meet the other ringers and ring Rounds on open bells for the first time.

This was very successful and the opportunity to ring on Sunday could not be missed so she came along for our ringing for the service of evening prayer, once again ringing very confidently.

As always, we took the usual photograph to mark this occasion.



Georgia's (front row) first Sunday ringing with (L-R) Lynn, Sheila G
Sheila P, Phillip, David and Alasdair

16th July 2018

A good day in the tower on Sunday 15th.

Starting with some lovely ringing for service; very good Rounds and the beginning of the Plain Bob Doubles and steady throughout for our test piece practice for the striking competition later in the year.

Highlight of the day was an organised tour of the tower for winners of the Ringers' Prize recently raffled at the Gransdens Summer Ball.

A gentleman from Gamlingay won the prize and six members of his family accompanied him to the church at 1.00pm for the tour. The guided visit included the ringing room, clock room, belfry and old belfry, ending in a "taster" of bell ringing inviting all of them to ring the backstroke (assisted) on No 2 bell.

There were a lot of questions and undoubted enthusiasm and interest in the bells, clock and tower in general.

Part of the prize is for a quarter peal to be rung for an occasion of their choice and this will be to mark a wedding anniversary in early September. Watch this space for a further report.



The Ringers' Prize ticket



In the ringing room



Visiting the clock room



Visiting the belfry

14th July 2018

Time for our Ringers' and Singers' Summer Supper.

Every year we arrange a party for members of the church choir and the bell ringers. There is some cross over between the two groups, hence the joint party. Partners are also invited, and it is always a lovely occasion, hosted by different members each year. This year was no exception, and we were blessed with beautifully warm, sunny weather.

The evening started at Nutbells (Phillip and Sheila's) with the main course, and then we walked the short distance to Tom and Nochola's for sweets. The warm weather enabled us to eat alfresco and to enjoy the gardens. At Tom and Nochola's the horses in the adjoining paddock were a pleasant attraction.



At Nutbells



At Nutbells



At Nutbells



At Tom and Nichola's



At Tom and Nichola's



Saying hello to the horses!!



2nd July 2018

Some good ringing on Sunday when we decided to ring only call changes. Just six of us present so we started with 60 on thirds. We had a different placing of the band with

Phillip on the treble, Sheila on the tenor and Alasdair on the fifth. Hazel rang the 2nd, David the 3rd and Sheila P the 4th. The ringing settled in nicely at a good pace and rhythm to produce some very enjoyable ringing. Perhaps we'll place the band like this for the striking competition which is later in the year.

More tied bell practice this morning (Monday) for Lynn at 9.00am, when we practiced up and down dodges, followed by Rounds on 6,8 and 10 bells. Very good ringing.

This was immediately followed by practice for Georgia, our newest recruit who had her first lesson on the 11th June. She is ringing on her own and can also ring up. This morning was her first lesson on ringing down and with two bells tied we were able to have some basic following practice. More of the same next time to consolidate learning and continue to develop new skills.

15th June 2018

A double celebration at recent practices. Last week we awarded Susanne her Learning the Ropes Level 2 certificate, and this week awarded Matt his Level 3 certificate. Continued focus on ringing has helped Susanne achieve this level, and Matt completed his recently by ringing a quarter peal on the treble, his first away from the tenor. Congratulations both.

The "summer curtain", which comes out for about three weeks in June and July stops the glare of the sun in the ringing room during the evening. It is a shame to block it out but being dazzled can be dangerous. It isn't needed so much these days because the trees are growing taller and are quite effective in acting as a shade. It is beautiful ringing in this weather, cool inside (until we start working hard!) and most of all light when we leave the tower at the end of practice at 9.00pm.

Alasdair continues to enthral us with his anecdotes. This week he has been visiting a bookshop in Cambridge where they sell 1960's science fiction paperbacks. He is drawn to them by their covers, which, rather than being minimalistic as they are nowadays, are colourful depictions of space craft and other space and scientific paraphernalia.

On the ringing front, not so good this week. Everyone was working very hard but we struggled a little bit with Plain Bob Minor, finally achieving a 180 but not in very good fashion. However, Lynn rang call changes very well, and Matt rang the treble to PB Doubles. 120 St.Martins was rung and overall, we had a good evening. Most importantly - we are gaining valuable experience.

1st June 2018

So, we were having a minute between ringing on practice night and Alasdair announces that he is learning to drive. We all listen attentively, and he explains that although he has driven his father's automatic, he is finding a manual gear box much more difficult.

Well, this sort of news is an opener for all the old adults because we start reminiscing about manual gear boxes and having to double de clutch because there was no synchromesh on the gears. Phillip sits down and demonstrates how this is done by

pretending to drive a virtual car. We then go on to talk about our first cars, which, for Alasdair, is like listening to a foreign language! An interesting few moments. Good luck with your driving lessons Alasdair !!

More attempts this evening to ring Plain Bob Minor, but not so successful, however, we continue to learn, and a plain course with ringers on different bells helped see things from a different angle.

We also rang a 120 St.Simons Doubles, and Susanne rang Plain Hunt on the treble thereby achieving level 2 in the LTR scheme. Well done Susanne.

Progress continues to be made - excellent!

30th May 2018

An exciting day when Terry from the Cumbria Clock Company arrived to repair the hands on the church clock. Over the last year they had gradually seized and eventually the clock was unable to drive them, and it stopped in December 2017. A recent exploratory visit found the cause of the problem and they were disconnected from the clock so that at least it could be kept going.

Today, the entire hand linkage mechanism was removed and stripped down, cleaned, lubricated and re-assembled. The work took all day and involved the use of a Bosun's chair being elevated from the ground by the clock engineer.

An excellent job was done with attention to detail and quality of work being the order of the day.

Many thanks to Terry for his hard and studious work.



Setting up the ropes at the top of the tower



Ascending



Nearly there



Quite a long way up



27th May 2018

Instead of having general ringing for the service of evening prayer today we arranged a quarter peal for Matt to ring the treble to Plain Bob Doubles. Matt has rung three quarter peals to date, all of which were on the tenor behind to Plain Bob Doubles. This opportunity enabled Matt to complete the requirements for his Level 3 in the Learning the Ropes scheme.

Details can be found at <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1233404>

The photograph shows the ringers after the quarter peal, happy with their achievement. Well done Matt !



L-R: Sheila G, Matt, David, Phillip, Alasdair, Sheila P.

As an aside, the practice last Thursday was excellent, with the "A" team ringing a 120 Plain Bob Minor. We are just embarking on this project and it is fair to say that a lot of encouragement was needed on the part of the conductor to get the band through the

touch. Nevertheless, we did succeed, and it all helps to build our experience of the bells coming at us in a different order.

Our objective - to ring a quarter peal of it by the end of the year !!!

20th May 2018

Rang for the church fete today from 1.45 to 2.15pm. We rang 60 on thirds, conducted as usual by Sheila G, and very well struck. We will enter the Hunts District striking competition and will take every opportunity to practice good striking leading up to the event in October. Ringers were: Hazel Pettit 1. Alasdair Catmur 2, Sheila Prest 3, Phillip George 4, David Prest 5, Sheila George 6.

19th May 2018

The beautiful weather continues and an early start for a quarter peal today meant that it would not be too warm in the ringing room. The ringing was arranged to celebrate the marriage of Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle, taking place today at Windsor Castle.

We couldn't quite muster a local band and we are grateful to Sally Mew (Houghton) and Andrew Smith (Gamlingay) for ringing with us today and turning out for a 9.00am start.

We rang four methods, St.Simons, St.Martins, Plain Bob and Grandsire and had some very nice ringing for the 44 minute duration.

The band is pictured below: L-R David, Sheila G, Phillip, Sheila P, Sally, Andrew.



Details of the quarter peal can be found [here](#).

18th May 2018

Another excellent practice last night with eight attending. We were not able to practice last week due to shortage in numbers and we didn't ring on Sunday because there was no service, so we all thought we would all be a bit rusty. However, we just picked up where we left off and rang pretty well through the evening.

We started with some call changes to help Lynn. These were quite successful, still a bit of work required in spotting who is following who, but not bad overall. Then some Plain Bob Doubles - standard fayre. Then on to the "heavy stuff" - Plain Bob Minor. Two attempts necessary due to losing the treble in the first go, but the second try was good, and we are definitely improving.

Matt rang the treble to PB Doubles in practice for his quarter peal on the 27th (for service of evening prayer). No problems there, and Lynn rang the treble to practice leading which was very good.

The Huntingdon District is organising a striking competition which will be done by recording a test piece in our own tower instead of meeting on a specific day at another church. After some discussion we agreed that we should take part. We have to enter the competition by the end of May and give two possible dates ring which must be before the end of October. Plenty of practice time then!!

We have decided to abandon the idea of a tower outing because there are too few of us and our ringing friends from other towers are not available on the date we fixed. It is hoped that we can organise something in October.

Quarter peal tomorrow with 4 local ringers, for the Royal Wedding, and as well as Sunday ringing, we will be on duty to ring for the church fete in the afternoon, at which the ringers have presented a prize, The Ringers' Prize, which is a tour of the tower and a quarter peal to be rung to mark an occasion chosen by the winner. Hopefully more news on this soon.

5th May 2018

Practice nights just keep getting better. Only seven of us on Thursday 3rd May but we had our budding Plain Bob Minor band and, although high risk we decided to try ringing three Homes (180 changes). The only previous touch we have tried has been three consecutive Bobs, and on one occasion we tried BBS BBS. Both touches are the easiest thing you can do with Bob Minor, so three Homes was a significant challenge.

With plenty of experience of ringing Plain Bob Doubles the team shouldn't find too much difficulty in ringing the bobbed lead ends, so here was an opportunity to demonstrate transfer skills from ringing 5 bells to ringing 6 bells. Ropesight and listening skills would need to be used if we were to succeed.

Off we go, and the first course is easiest because we have rung plain courses before (ringing with no calls). The first Bob was called, and everyone did as planned. Thereafter some help was needed, so with a lot of "encouragement", between us we managed to keep in the right places. The second Bob was called, and we were in the last course. Only five leads to ring, can we do it? A bit more encouragement and correction and we were in the last lead, only 12 changes to go. The final Bob was called, and the bells came into Rounds.

What an achievement - well done team.



Plain Bob Minor Band.

L-R: Sheila Prest (4), Hazel Pettit (1), Phillip George (6 -conductor),
David Prest (3)
Sheila George (5), Alasdair Catmur (2).

This report should not conclude without mentioning Lynn Walton, for thanks in taking the photograph, but also for progress in call changes. Lynn is now almost able to use ropesight for ringing call changes. Having recently passed Level 1 in bell handling she is now working towards level 2.

You might notice from the photograph that Phillip is holding a blue oil can. We have been looking for one to carry out minor oiling jobs in the clock room. It has proved to be quite a difficult item to find. Cycle shops and even car shops don't seem to stock them. This one was purchased from Halfords.

Saturday 28th April 2018

Started with some Plain Bob Doubles with Matt on the tenor, then on the front five so that he could ring the treble, with Sheila P calling it and Alasdair ringing the fourth. This was followed by call changes (60 on thirds) called by Sheila G with a call every other handstroke which kept us on our toes. Then, we persuaded Alasdair to call 120 Bob Doubles (own observation), which he did for the first time, and very well. During the interludes we talked about quality of striking and Sheila G played some Devon call changes on her phone. This inspired us to ring just Rounds with no errors, trying to replicate the rhythm we had just heard; and we did this pretty well. A very enjoyable evening, not bad for a small local band.

Well done everyone!

Sunday 22nd April 2018

By ringing his first quarter peal on a bell other than the treble or tenor, Alasdair Catmur achieved his Level 4 in the Learning the Ropes scheme developed by the [Association of Ringing Teachers](#). The quarter peal, referred to in the previous Blog on the 18th April was to mark the retirement of the Rev'd Catharine Furlong.

Alasdair had been ringing touches of Plain Bob Doubles for a couple of months and Catharine's retirement was an ideal opportunity to consolidate his learning. He practices on different bells to ensure that he gains ropesight from different positions in the rope circle and on this occasion rang the 2nd.

Alasdair is a key member of the team and is currently learning Plain Bob Minor and one of our objectives this year is to ring a quarter peal in this method.

Well done Alasdair!



Alasdair with his Level 4 Certificate

Wednesday 18th April 2018

Excellent ringing last Sunday the 15th April starting with a quarter peal arranged as a compliment to the Rev'd Catharine Furlong, Priest in Charge of our parishes for the last 12 years. Catharine has been very supportive of the ringers throughout this time. Her regular visits to the ringing room when we have been ringing for service has been much appreciated.

The quarter peal, by a local band, was also Alasdair's first on an inside bell. Well done Alasdair.



Quarter Peal Ringers: Sheila G, Sheila P, Alasdair, David, Phillip, Martin.



Catharine and more ringers arrive after the quarter peal
Phillip, Sheila G, David, Sheila P, Catharine, Martine, Lynn, Alasdair.

A copy of the certificate documenting the quarter peal and presented to Catharine can be found here: [Catherine farewell.docx](#)

Sunday 8th April 2018

A good weekend for one of our ringers. First, on Thursday at our practice Lynn Walton passed her Level 1 in the Learning the Ropes scheme on bell handling. Having joined our team in September Lynn has worked through the many elements of bell handling and has become proficient at this stage in her ringing career. Well done Lynn.



Lynn receives her certificate
from trainer Phillip

Also happening this weekend, on Saturday 7th April - Lynn, Sheila and Phillip G attended the Hunts District meeting arranged for new ringers and those at the ringing Rounds stage. This was held at Hemingford Grey. It was an excellent opportunity to meet other ringers from many churches in the Huntingdon area and get to ring at a new tower. It was a very useful meeting and gave encouragement and enthusiasm to the many new ringers.



Lynn (in red) ringing the 3rd at Hemingford Grey

Sunday 1st April 2018

Some lovely ringing this morning for Easter Sunday including Rounds and Plain Bob Doubles. Although some were away for Easter, we had seven ringers.

Annual Ringers Meeting

David Prest presented his annual report for our ringing during 2017 which can be found here. [Bell Ringing Report 2017.pdf](#)

The meeting was held on Maundy Thursday. Only five in attendance due to holidays but it was an opportunity to discuss our ringing activities and plan for the year ahead. We talked about training and recruitment as well as ringing activities during the year. We hope to hold an outing in the summer and have set ourselves objectives in ringing quarter peals during 2018 in three different methods, namely St.Simons, St.Martins and Plain Bob Minor.

We are also investigating the possibility of modifying the clappers of No5 and 6 bells to have nylon or wooden shafts. We are consulting Whites of Appleton about this.

Safeguarding was discussed following the introduction of new National Church Guidelines and Data Protection was also mentioned pending the enforcement of new regulations in May. The former is managed by the Tower Secretary and the latter will be discussed with the newly appointed church Data Protection Officer.

Our Priest in Charge the Revd Catharine Furlong retired on the 31st March but her last service for us will be the 15th April. The ringers are organising a farewell quarter peal. More news of this later.

Thursday 22nd March 2018

Another excellent practice this evening with successful attempts at a "simple" touch of Plain Bob Minor, and 120 St.Simons Doubles, a first for David and Sheila Overall, we are seeing a significant improvement in capability. We think our attempts at PB Minor have helped with ropesite and are adding more interest to the ringing.

Exciting banter all evening ranging from the flavour of some of the chocolates to explaining the meaning of course bells and the going rate for babysitting. The notices were an amusing struggle, becoming more like an episode of BBC's Question Time, when a question is asked, and the response is completely off topic, and everyone interrupts! Lots coming up, not least our tower AGM next Thursday and, in due course, repair of the clock, which although still working is currently disengaged from the hands which have seized up!

Cumbria Clock Company inspected the clock this week and will send a report and quotation for repairs. We hope to receive this soon so that we can get on a fix it. The church wardens are aware of course. A nearby resident asked me what was happening because the chimes were working but the hands are stationary at 12 o'clock.

Ringing this Sunday is at 5.15pm and we had a great debate as to who would be able to ring. Alasdair said he should be back in time, so it was funny to hear him ask, at the end of the practice, what time ringing was! Hey ho! it's all in a day's work.

Our practices are a happy time, lots of energy and enthusiasm, with great fellowship and laughter.

Tuesday 13th March 2018

Being aware that some odd-struckness had crept in on the treble and second bells we arranged for Whites of Appleton to visit, take some readings and make any necessary adjustments.

Mark Walker brought along his electronic device which measures the accuracy of the clapper strike at handstroke and backstroke. Each bell was, as we suspected, in need of adjustment, being about 500 milliseconds out, causing the bells to be slow at handstroke and quick at backstroke. In each case the clappers were removed and adjusted by inserting tapered washers between the clapper and the crown of the bells. Several attempts were required but after not too long Mark got the strike error down to 9 and 5 milliseconds respectively. A job that was needed to be done has been done well.

We look forward to improved striking and accuracy in our ringing!

Monday 5th March 2018

It's been pretty quiet recently. Ringing has carried on but there has not been anything significant to report.

The recent severe winter weather led to the practice being cancelled last week but we'll be back to normal this week because the 3 inches of snow and accompanying ice has now completely gone. The clock stopped again, due I think to bitter northerly and easterly winds, but a re-start on Sunday was successful and it continues to run. We are still waiting for The Cumbria Clock Company to contact us about a site visit.

Tied bell practice resumed this week for Lynn. Her bell control is developing nicely, and we are ringing Rounds nicely on the simulator to 6 bells and we have now started on 8. Dodging practice was successful too with up and down dodges.

Sunday 28th January 2018

Ringing for evening prayer this afternoon and we were pleased for Lynn, ringing for service for the first time. Ringing included some Plain Bob Doubles and nicely rung Rounds and call changes on six.



L-R: Lynn, Sheila G, David, Sheila P, Phillip, Alasdair.

Thursday 18th January 2018

Another good practice continuing the good work on Plain Bob. Amusing comment of the evening was made by Alasdair. We were talking about BCP and church services in general. This included comments about the Bible. Alasdair said that he thought reading the Bible was like reading Terry Pratchett, but not so amusing! Laughter followed!

We have been struggling to keep the clock going. We fitted a "Heath Robinson" replacement part to replace the suspected faulty one, but this seemed to make no difference. Just before the practice started, I pushed the pendulum to see if it would go - and it did. It is still going, so this is a mystery. We are pleased of course. We are now waiting for the Cumbria Clock Company to arrange a visit to inspect the clock for any underlying problems which might cause it to stop again.

I have decided to remove the video from the Welcome page because it is nearly 4 years old. People change in that time - youngsters grow up and adults get older. We are happy to have new ringers since 2014 and hopefully we could include them in any future videos.

Thursday 4th January 2018

An excellent practice this week when we achieved a creditable plain course of Plain Bob Minor, a 120 of PB Doubles for Alasdair - now quarter peal ready; some of the same for Christine on the treble - also quarter peal ready; some Plain Hunt 5 for Susanne - tick, and a three batches of call changes with the same strong band for the benefit of different less experienced ringers. Lynn managed some steady Rounds - more 1:1 training lined up to help with bell control.

During the notices members of the Association were reminded that subs are now due. This prompted interest from the newer ringers, who would like to become members. Very encouraging. Phillip to get the application forms.