

## St Albans District Newsletter

### Volume 19 Issue 2 – November 2014

#### District Practices – April to October 2014

The District Practices have had mixed success with the May meeting at South Mimms having to be abandoned due to lack of numbers. However reasonable numbers were present in June/July/September and on 18 October at St Peter's we were joined for the first hour by about 30 ringers (+ a few others) from the Friends of Dorothy Society and we were able to cater for everyone from 'Rounds' to Surprise Royal.

See you at North Mymms on 15<sup>th</sup> November!

#### The Maplestead Mini-Ring comes to Wheathampstead

By Susan L'Estrange

Wheathampstead Village Day on Sunday 13 July was enhanced this year by the Maplestead Mini-Ring, thanks to the organisation of the Wheathampstead Ringers (in particular Gill Clark, who arranged for it to be there – and Ben Quinn, who helped set up and supervise).

The mini-ring is a set of 8 bells in F sharp weighing between about 7 to 10 lbs mounted on their own square tower standing about 3m high, but the important thing is that the bells are hung like church bells. And the way to ring them successfully is to pull the sally with one hand for the handstroke and pull the tail end with the other hand for the backstroke, then get the feel of them until you can ring to the balance.



Sounds obvious, but even very (I mean VERY) experienced ringers from various towers had problems mastering them, and I didn't see anyone who wasn't already a ringer getting the hang of it at all.

Because of various other commitments, we didn't manage to get a consistent group ringing well enough to do more than rounds (after a fashion), so our original plans to put on a bit of a show came to naught. But it was tremendous fun.

The bells come together with an excellent chap called Alistair Donaldson who shared the bells generously with all comers – including some quite small children – and offered help at all levels as requested or required. And Gill assured us that the price was very reasonable (and since it was paid for from our fund and she is our treasurer, she should know).

Check out their website for more technical info (if you're that way inclined), for details of how to hire the rig (highly recommended!), and for more interesting stuff about bell ringing.  
[www.donaldsonfamily.org.uk](http://www.donaldsonfamily.org.uk)

## **Progress in Ringing or How to Get More Time on a Rope**

*By Ann Evans*



Judging from many of the best change ringers, the surest way to progress is to start young and preferably be part of an enthusiastic ringing family! However, as neither turning back clocks nor choosing our families are options, a practical approach needs to be taken.

Everybody needs time on a rope. The use of a dumb bell is undoubtedly an asset at this stage so the learner can ring to their heart's content without upsetting any neighbours or keeping other ringers waiting for a turn on the bells. However, using a real bell is fine and usually there is no alternative. A little further down the line when rounds and later call changes are attempted an instructor and, say, five or more other ringers who can strike well will result in the greatest progress.

If all goes well and the individual's rope handling skills are secure, plain hunt might be introduced. At this stage, being surrounded by those who know what they are doing will undoubtedly result in better progress but the ringer can do more to prepare for each ring in order to make the most of each opportunity. Thinking about rope handling technique, studying the theory behind ringing (the CCCBR's New Ringer's Book or Steve Coleman's The Bellringer's Early Companion are both worthy of a read at this stage) and standing behind other ringers while trying to follow what they are doing are all useful ways of improving. Computer software such as Abel, Mabel or Mobel (see <http://www.abelsim.co.uk/>) can help with listening and striking as well as learning methods without the need for other ringers or for bells.

The benefit of attending practices at more than one tower cannot be overestimated - no two sets of bells or two practices are identical and you are bound to gain something from your visits. Going to district and county events will give you more practice time and getting to know ringers from other towers with whom you can plan some ringing of your own is another positive step.

Ask for help if you need it, stand behind others who are ringing what you aspire to ring if there is an opportunity to do so and be patient when it comes to taking your turn.

In summary,

- attend as many practices and as much service ringing as you can
- consider attending a ringing course (see <http://www.cccbr.org.uk/learning/> for links to nationally advertised ringing courses)
- always listen to the rhythm of the bells and be prepared to make small positive adjustments to your striking.

## **Kimpton Cup**

The Kimpton Cup was held at Sandridge on 27th September 2014 and St Peter's represented the St Albans District. The Judges were John Loveless & Linda Garton and their comments about St Peter's ringing were "*Accurate, pleasant ringing which improved during the touch – but perhaps a lack of focus in last few leads*"



**St Albans St Peter's Team: Judith Mack, Deborah Butler, Ann Evans, Rosemary Sales, Richard Sales, Barry Mack**

The final result was as follows:

- 1. Hemel Hempstead**
- 2. Bushey**
- 3. Apsley End**
- 4. St Peter's, St Albans**
- 5. Tewin**
- 6. Bishop's Stortford**
- 7. Hitchin**