

St Albans District Newsletter

Volume 21 Issue 2 – November 2016

St Peter's Outing (3rd September 2016)

By Rosemary and Richard Sales



St. Peters Ringers normally hold their outing on the 1st Saturday in September and this year with a few friends from other Herts and Essex towers we visited towers in the Southend area, Essex. With the knowledge that two new rings of 10 bells were available at Canewden and Prittlewell gave us the idea to visit these along with the fine 8's at Thorpe Bay, Taylors 1946, Leigh on Sea with the old village and cockle sheds below and the Gillet & Johnson 8 at Rayleigh.

The day started with glorious weather and coffee at the 1st tower, and everybody agreed that the new 10 bell installation in the village church at Canewden went well and sounded very good. After ringing we were treated with a view from the top of the tower and the tower captain pointed out all the landmarks including Grain Power Station chimney which was due to be demolished during the next week.



Prittlewell had replaced their bells in 2010 and we enjoyed an hour's ringing on these. By now the weather was changing and lunch for some of us was on the seafront at Leigh on Sea with a brisk wind and a threat of rain. Parking was a challenge in the local streets but we all managed to start on time. With the rain holding off some of us motored all the way along the front through Southend passing the pier and onwards to Thorpe Bay. The church here is surrounded by a large private estate of which the church was built first. The fine Taylor 8 was a joy to ring and listen to. Finally we rang at Rayleigh which was at the top end of the High Street and were made very welcome by the local ringers. With it now raining we drove the short distance to our evening meal venue The Hawk at Battlesbridge which is at the end of a small inlet from the sea. An excellent meal was had by all and along with good towers made an enjoyable day out.

FILMING FOR A QUESTION OF SPORT

By Alison Evans

On a bright, sunny morning towards the end of June, a small group of ringers gathered at St Albans Abbey to await the arrival of a special guest. The producers of the television quiz, A Question of Sport, had contacted the Abbey authorities to ask permission for a sports star to be filmed trying his hand at bell ringing and we had all come to help.

In case anyone is not familiar with A Question of Sport, I should perhaps explain that it's a long-running, light-hearted quiz in which two teams of sports stars answer questions on their own and other sports. The mystery personality is filmed doing something other than playing the sport for which they are known, and the teams have to identify him or her from glimpses of their profile, views of their back and close ups, for example, of their ears or fingers.

Jennifer Johnson took on the task of teaching the mystery guest bell handling, guiding him through the basics on the Abbey's eighth bell. He was brought up in Harlesden but now lives locally, making St Albans Abbey a good choice as filming venue. He won a gold medal for boxing in the Middleweight category at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, after which he turned professional. He was tall so the rope was just right for him but Jennifer had to stand on several boxes to be able to reach the sally.

We didn't have much more than an hour to complete all the filming, so the pressure was on! However, the mystery guest picked up the key points very quickly and was soon ringing a nice steady backstroke with Jennifer doing the handstroke, ready for the rest of us to join him to ring rounds on the Abbey's middle six bells.

There were two members of the film crew and the finished film (which was broadcast towards the end of August) included footage of the one-to-one training, as well as all of us ringing rounds, spliced with views of the sallies, pictures of the bell turning and shots of the belfry. The ancient beams in the Abbey ringing chamber gave plenty of scope for partial views of the novice ringer, especially as he was wearing a baseball cap in order to help mask his identity further.

The film crew told us it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to think of out-of-the-ordinary things for the mystery guests to do, so ringing was an interesting choice. I really enjoyed the morning and felt the finished film came across well: it presented bell ringing as a perfectly normal thing to do. The production team could have taken the opportunity to make silly jokes or puns but they didn't and I liked the fact that it was clear that ringing is a social activity.



The mystery guest was really friendly and acquitted himself well. I've given a few clues as to his identity so perhaps you've already worked out who it was but, if not, here is a picture of the band with boxer James DeGale, IBF Super Middleweight World Champion.

L-R: Charles Pocock, Janet Penney, David Hodgsen, Deb Crawley, James DeGale, Jennifer Johnson, Alison Evans, Neil Evans.



District Committee Meeting Thursday 1 September

Janet Penney kindly hosted the District Committee Meeting and provided tea, coffee, homemade Jaffa Cakes and biscuits.

In attendance: Richard Sales (Ringing Master), Vivian Nutton (Secretary), Janet Penney (Treasurer), Ben Quinn, Alison Evans and Rob Goss.

Item 1 on the Agenda was about the state of our finance – a big payment about to go out so they are fairly dire...time for a Jaffa Cake...

Item 2 was about the Kimpton Cup and the Coburn Trophy. Not sure if we can raise a team for either event – so a Jaffa Cake was required to provide 'food for thought'.

Item 3 was something about a seminar organised by CCCBR on 'How to Run a District'...I rather enjoyed the Jaffa Cakes.

Item 4 and now we were discussing the District Monthly Meetings ...numbers are at the lowest ever...time for another Jaffa Cake to contemplate revival strategy. My pen ran out of ink with all the crossing out's and suggestions so Alison came to my rescue with a spare pen. Perhaps my nib had blocked with a Jaffa crumb?

Item 5. Any Other Business – any articles for the Newsletter? How about another Jaffa Cake – any left...?



Frances Rings Home

By Janet Penney

Frances Leonard returned to bell ringing in 1991 at St Albans Abbey, having originally learnt in Warwickshire as a teenager. Gerald Penney (Cathedral Ringing Master at the time) immediately suggested a few brush up lessons at Sandridge, the light six being easier to handle than the Abbey bells at the time. Frances then became a regular member of the Abbey band until 1996 when family and other commitments took priority over her time.

When she became Mayor of St Albans



earlier this year she offered her help with the recruitment of ringers both in St Albans and the wider district.

On September 17th the monthly St Albans District Meeting was held at St Albans Abbey and we were pleased to welcome both (The Worshipful) The Mayor of St Albans, Frances Leonard and The Deputy Mayor of St Albans, Councillor Gillian Clark who rings at Wheathampstead. The meeting was exceptionally well attended and the Ringing Master, Richard Sales, kept the 24 ringers present busy with rounds, call changes and Grandsire Caters. After many years of absence from ringing and after disentangling herself from the Mayoral chain of office, Frances caught hold and rang some rounds as if she had never been away! Coffee and cake were available throughout the morning in the opposite corner from the ropes so those when not ringing, could socialise and have some refreshment.

Following on from the meeting, articles reporting on the morning together with photographs of Frances in the belfry have appeared in the local press. This has resulted in some towers being contacted by people showing an interest in learning.

Frances has not ruled out returning to ringing at the Abbey when her term as Mayor is over and I know that members of her family are also encouraging her to once again make the 160 step climb to the belfry, only next time, on a more regular basis!

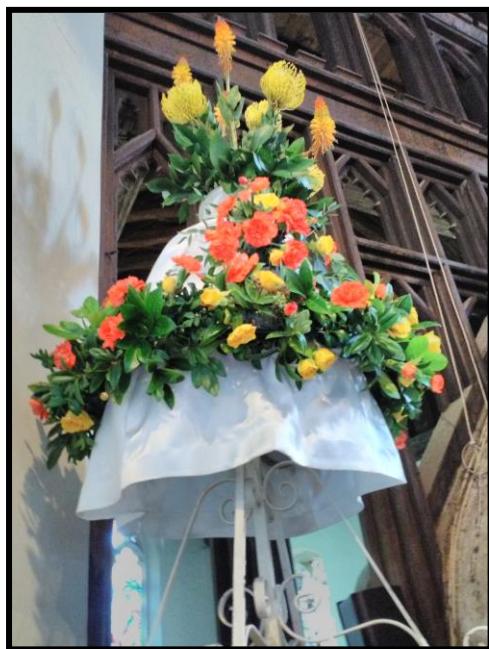
The Mayor of St Albans, Frances Leonard, and the Deputy Mayor, Gill Clark, tying up their ropes to general applause after ringing at the September District Meeting.

L to R: Trevor Hawkins, Frances Leonard, Jennifer Johnson, Gill Clark, Christine Nutton.



Sandridge Flower Festival

The Sandridge 2016 Flower Festival with a theme of 'Anniversaries and Celebrations' was held at St Leonard's Church from Friday September 30th to Sunday October 2nd. Opened by the Mayor of St Albans, 2016 was the 40th year that the Festival has been held.



'Wedding Bells', an arrangement at the Sandridge Flower Festival by two members of the band, Christine Nutton and Laura Hill.

Peals and Quarter Peals

I found the following Peal on Bellboard:

Lemsford, Hertfordshire

St John the Evangelist

Saturday, 28 May 2016 in 2h26 (3–2–4 in E b)

5040 Doubles (6 Methods)

2 extents Grandsire, 8 extents each of: St Simon's B, St Martin's B, St Osmond B, Eynesbury B, Plain B.

1. David A Cornwall
2. Judith E Titmus
3. Robert J Crocker (C)
4. Julia Pentelow
5. Keith D Waples
6. Ron E Titmus

Specially arranged as a 60th birthday compliment to Judith.

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