

St Albans District Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 2 – December 2021

An expedition to the River Colne

By Alison Evans (St Michael's St Albans).

We have been trying for a while to arrange our outing on the same weekend in mid October each year so that it's easier for everyone to keep it free. This year, although coronavirus restrictions had been lifted in July, it would have been necessary to conclude the arrangements almost immediately if the outing were to go ahead on time but it wasn't clear how many towers would be willing to accommodate visitors and it could have been difficult to assess for myself ahead of the visit how big the ringing chambers were or what the ventilation was like. So we decided to go for a walk in the country instead.

I identified an interesting itinerary from an old book, but it was in Buckinghamshire and, as the date drew nearer, the fuel supply position grew worse, so we changed plan again and opted for something more local. I plotted a route and walked it the day before, to make sure there were no fallen trees or impassable stretches of mud.

We started from Bricket Wood and walked through the Munden Estate to the ford on the River Colne. We saw a horse ride through but there is a bridge you can cross if you don't want to get your feet wet. Beside it, there is a big horse chestnut tree and we collected a fine crop of conkers. The next destination was Blackbirds Farm. The public footpath goes right through the middle of the farmyard, shortly after which we turned left and skirted a field of turnips in the general direction of Aldenham. However, before we reached the village, we took a path through a field of towering maize and continued into the Wall Hall estate. The mansion used to be a teacher training college, but it has been converted into luxury residences and a small housing development now surrounds it.



I had put together a list of I-Spy type questions that I thought might keep people interested as we went round, such as: “Can you list all the different coloured waymarks you see and what they are for? What animal features on the crest of the Wall Hall estate and how many concrete mushrooms are there underneath the granary on the corner of Pelham Lane?”



Leaving Wall Hall, we were on the home straight: crossing the Colne again, we headed back towards Munden House and on to Bricket Wood common.

It turned out that this was new territory for most people in the band and, as it was a fine, sunny autumn day, it was a good way of socialising away from the ringing chamber, all the more enjoyable as opportunities have been so limited over the last eighteen months.

Have Bells Will Travel

By Rob Goss

Our daughter Sarah moved to Spain about two years ago to live with her fiancée in Durango near Bilbao. They had originally planned to get married in Valencia in May 2021 but delayed it to October due to Covid. After a short spell back in UK during the summer of 2021 they moved to Valencia (Antonio’s home city) and arranged their wedding for 30 October. Sarah did learn to ring when she was about 11 but retired from the Exercise at the age of 13 as she decided as a teenager that it was no longer ‘cool’ to have the same hobby as Mum & Dad.



As father-of-the-bride, I delivered my speech in both Spanish and English. I could not have done this without the help from my cousin David who speaks fluent Spanish and gave up his time on Zoom in the 3-4 weeks before the wedding to help me with the translation and the pronunciation.

Mary and I could not allow our daughter to get married without bells so (with kind permission of the Hatfield ringers) we took the Hatfield handbells over to Valencia and as a surprise I persuaded the three bridesmaids, the two best men and our son Tom to ring a few changes on six bells. Spanish weddings do not include speeches – and certainly not bells – but the guests seemed to appreciate it and at the end of my speech, several Spanish

relatives stood up and followed my example by giving impromptu speeches. A great day despite the drizzle during the outdoor ceremony.



First Quarter

By Sue Skerratt (Hatfield)

My first quarter peal at Lemsford was arranged for 2nd October. Having rung at Hatfield for a while, I went to Lemsford for practice over a few weeks as the bells are so different. I found the bells at Lemsford very comfortable, easy to ring and therefore I could concentrate on keeping in time, making sure it sounded nice and I didn't even look at the clock!

It was all over in around 35 mins, many thanks to the others (Rob, Mary, Dianne, Ron and Judith) who made it sound great and my part as easy as possible.

Would certainly want to do it again, think will be a while before I can do more than ring behind though.

Hertford County Association

Lemsford, Hertfordshire

St John the Evangelist

Saturday, 2 October 2021 in 37m (3–2–4 in Eb)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1. Ron E Titmus
2. Judith E Titmus
3. Dianne E Crowder
4. Mary E Goss
5. W Robert E T Goss (C)
6. Sue J Skerratt

First Quarter (6)

Sandridge Flower Festival – October 2021

By Christine Nutton (Sandridge)

Here is a photo of (half) the display I did for the St Leonard's Flower Festival in October, whose theme was A Harvest from Round the world. I did a series of small arrangements to represent the countries where English style ringing is practised. The picture shows (l to r) Wales, Scotland, Singapore, New Zealand and the three countries in Africa. A lower shelf, which the photographer did not include, also had England, Netherlands Australia, France and Belgium.



St Albans District Vacancies

In 2022, the St Albans District is looking to fulfil the following role:

- **Secretary**
Fantastic opportunity to carry out a KEY ROLE in the running of the St Albans District.
Rewards are extraordinary.

Next District Meeting

Everyone is welcome to St Peter's on 18th December. Whether you want to ring Rounds or a Surprise Method, we'll try and make sure you get to ring.



Hertford County Association

St Albans District Christmas Meeting

SATURDAY DECEMBER 18th, 2021

St Peter's, St Albans, AL1 3HG

3.30 pm ringing

5 pm Christmas service

5.45 pm Festive tea

6.45 pm Annual Nominations Meeting



Please send names for tea by
Wednesday 15 December to Jackie
Broadfoot (jackie.broadfoot@
gmail.com)

We look forward to seeing you there

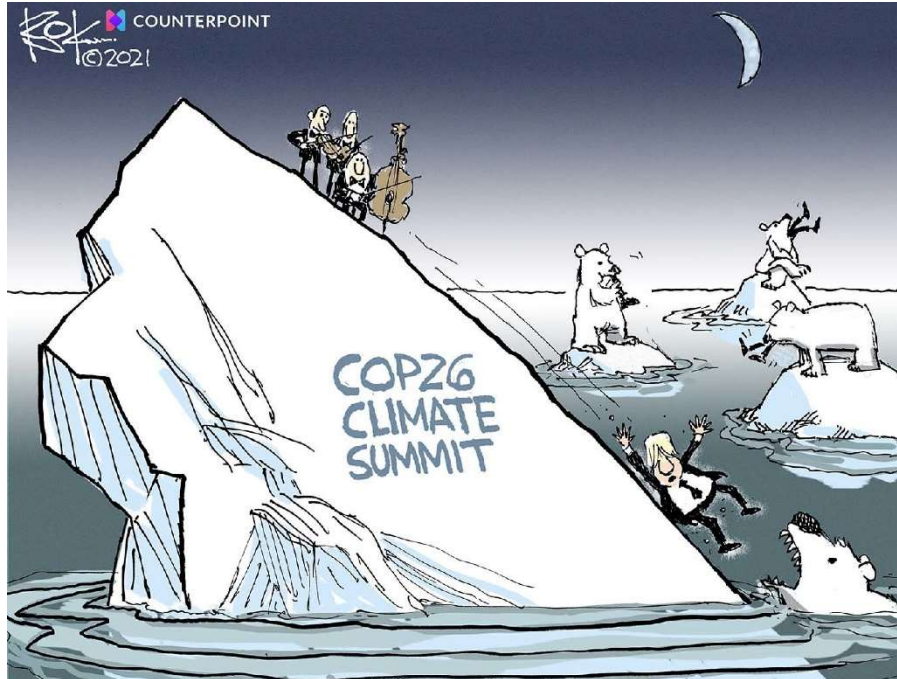
Ringling for COP26

By Alison Evans
St Michael's, St Albans

The band of St Michael's, St Albans, joined other bands across the country in ringing on Saturday 30th October, ahead of the COP26 climate conference being held in Glasgow. In addition to the email from HCACR about this event, I also received messages about it from the vicar, the churchwardens and one of the assistant wardens, so it certainly seemed that the church was very keen for us to play our part. Most of the band were available and it was a good opportunity for our young learners to join in, particularly as climate change will affect them in the years to come.

In view of the fact that the messages from the Diocesan Environment Officer mentioned that "the organisers hope that the bell ringers will be able to make their bells sound like a warning rather than a celebration, with some kind of dramatic climax" and that bell ringers were to be encouraged to discuss this, we decided we should have a go at firing and we attempted this at the Wednesday practice preceding the event. Most of us hadn't done it before so it took us a few tries to get it right. On the day, we rang some simple Doubles methods, alternating with rounds for each of our two young learners, aged 10 and 11, who are currently being taught handling by their respective fathers. We

saved the firing until last, of course, and, as neither of the girls had been able to come to the practice, the experienced ringers went first in order to demonstrate. I certainly found it an arresting sound. The final ring of the evening was firing on six with both girls taking part, providing a suitably dramatic conclusion.



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