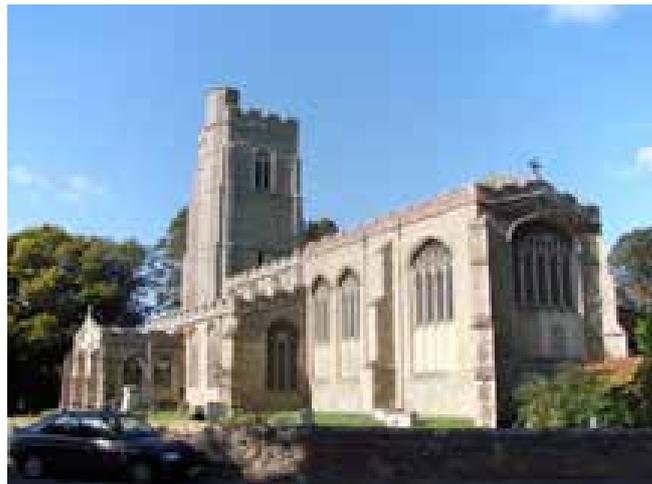


SOUTHERN DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT OUTING JUNE 17TH - NORTH ESSEX AND SUFFOLK



What are you doing on June 17th? Planning to come on the district outing? If not, do consider it. Although the group is not travelling far, the destinations are of the most scenic in north Essex and south Suffolk, with impressive churches and a great choice of bells.

Ringling starts at St Nicholas Edwardstone at 9.45, moving on to scenic Lavenham, ringling at Ss Peter & Paul . The three churches in Sudbury provide ringling for the next three towers - All Saints, St Gregory and St Peter (10) and there are plenty of eating facilities in the town.

The final tower is back in the lovely north Essex countryside at Castle Hedingham, a light six to end the day. Ringling ends at just after 6pm

PLEASE SEE
MINUTES
ATTACHED FROM
PREVIOUS
DISTRICT
MEETING

If you require a lift, please contact Nigel who is organising the day.

Home telephone: 01268783792

Mobile: 07825810847

Email: nigelsdtaylor@outlook.com

Poster with more details attached.



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STRIKING COMPETITION AT LANGDON HILLS 20TH MAY



Five teams took part in the method striking competition, judged by James Laken and Tony Faulkner. The judges complimented all the bands on the standard of their ringing, and there was only half a mark between the band that won and the band in second place.



WINNERS - LANGDON HILLS - 5 FAULTS

1 David Buckley 2 Catherine Gisby 3 Charlie Martin
4 Alan Gisby 5 Andy Martin 6 Stephen Nash (c)



2ND PLACE - DOWNHAM - 5.5 FAULTS

1 Barbara Leigh 2 Hilary Donoghue 3 Roger Dorking
4 Paul Cammiade (c) 5 Nigel Taylor 6 Chris Tucker



3RD PLACE - PRITTLEWELL - 10.5 FAULTS

1 Penny Sloman 2 Sarah Chin-a-Loy 3 Ros Skipper
4 Peter Sloman 5 Steve Halliwell (c) 6 David Sloman



4TH PLACE - NORTH OCKENDON - 17 FAULTS

1 William Beech 2 Samuel Beech 3 Alwyn Brock (sub)
4 Alison Nash 5 Andrew Beech (c) 6 Brian Beech



5TH PLACE - SHENFIELD - 22.5 FAULTS

1 Joel Wiggins 2 Beth Johnson (c) 3 Mark Robbins
4 Ray Jones 5 Paul Wiggins 6 Chris Bailey (plus mascot
Katie Wiggins)

Are you on the Southern District's Email List?

If you are but have changed your email address, or you want to be added to the list, please contact your District Secretary, **Alison Nash** on: alison1nash@yahoo.co.uk or s-district-secretary@eacr.org.uk or give her a ring on 01268 490061!

NEWSLETTERS

Please send any reports, pictures, notices etc., to Beth Johnson at bethjohnson6710@gmail.com, or post to 67 London Road Brentwood CM14 4NN.

Newsletters are distributed in December, March, June and September – copy date for each at the beginning of the month.

Copies are sent to Tower Correspondents, preferably by email and all members who have supplied their email address. Any member may request a copy via email by contacting Beth or the District Secretary.



Join the Southern District - EACR group on Facebook. If you are a Facebook user do 'like' the page. If not follow this link : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eacr.southern/>

It's invaluable for sharing information, for appealing for ringers for weddings and funerals, advising when practices are cancelled and so forth. Plus of course, news of achievements!

To become a Facebook member go to Facebook.com. Protect your privacy via the padlock icon and 'settings'.

CAROLINE LOWE 1952-2017

Caroline Lowe was a fully involved bell ringer and secretary of Ingrave tower until July 2016. She ceased being able to ring with us in October 2015 but remained as district contact until her death in April 2017. Caroline was a straight speaker and regularly commented on Sunday morning ringing – good and bad. Ingrave bell ringers have put together a few memories of a dear fellow ringer who is very much missed.



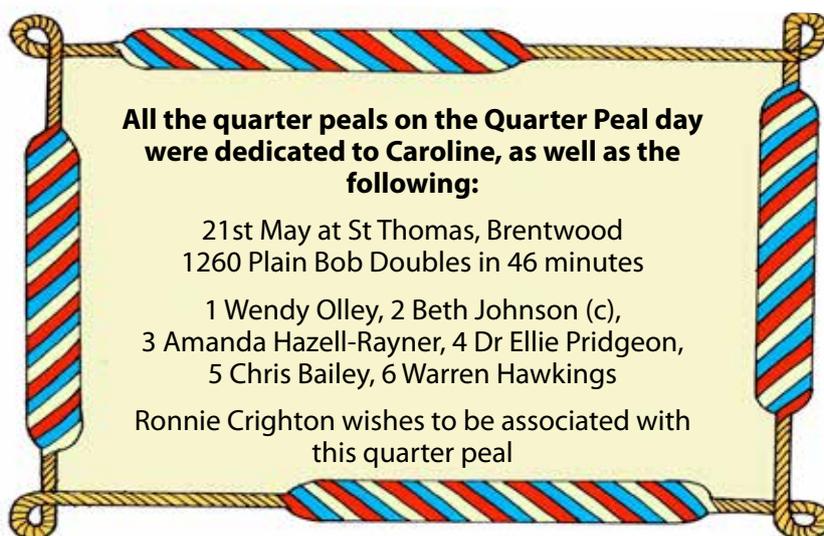
Caroline was a central figure in so many ways to St. Nicholas Church and Ingrave village where she and David lived since the early 90s. Amongst others, she was a very active member of Mothers' Union and the WI, churchwarden, PCC member, PCC appointed school governor, bell ringer, church choir, and Hutton and Shenfield choral society, as well as mother, wife, dressmaker, gardener, maths teacher and tutor. Caroline was the 'hostess with the mostest', totally involved in church and village life, a fantastic cook and a lover of life with opinions on most subjects and a great sense of humour once you knew her.

Well known for her MU quiz evenings, the bell ringers attended one with the team name 'The Clangers' and with a lot of help from Vikki Lowe (Caroline's daughter) won the quiz – David Lowe, Caroline's husband, was on another team!! We remember bell tours with soirees back at the Lowe house and also a BBQ in the churchyard ending at midnight.

We have so many memories of Caroline: ringing in the New Year and then drinking champagne in the tower afterwards, ringing when the Olympic torch came through Ingrave, village parties and socials, drinks in the Green Man after practice night, pavlova, a karaoke session, gifting Caroline a barrel of Old Rosie cider for her 60th which was transported by wheelbarrow to her front door.

Caroline certainly lived life to the full and celebrated her 64th birthday last October. She is missed by so many.

Wendy Olley and Ronnie Crighton



2017 QUARTER PEAL DAY (WITH-A-DIFFERENCE)

Once again, Andrew Beech masterminded the District Quarter Peal Day (with-a-difference) gathering 24 ringers from 12 towers to take part. We met at Shenfield for coffee and the first draw, and after a little massaging of the result, bands set off for Ingatestone and Danbury, with the third band remaining at Shenfield. Two of the three morning quarters were scored, with the Danbury quarter of Bob Triples resulting in both **Marion Squier** (treble) and **Alan Moody** (tenor) gaining their first quarter on eight. After a good lunch, the ringers met back at Shenfield for the afternoon draw and three teams once again set off/remained with High Ongar replacing Ingatestone.

All three afternoon quarters were successful and congratulations to **Alwyn Brock** who rang her first on eight at Danbury. It was a good effort on some tricky bells! Well done everyone, a good result. Details are below and all quarters were rung in memory of Caroline Lowe who had died just the preceding week.

Danbury 45 mins 1260 **Plain Bob Triples** 1 Marion Squier 2 Hilary Donoghue 3 Julia Montague-Jones 4 Anne Porter 5 Beth Johnson 6 Stephen Nash 7 Paul Cammiade (C) 8 Alan Moody **First on 8: 1,8**

Shenfield, 43 mins 1260 **Grandsire Doubles** 1 Barbara Leigh 2 James Laken 3 Paul Trueman 4 Alwyn Brock 5 Stephen Halliwell (C) 6 Raymond Jones

Shenfield 41 mins 1260 **Doubles (4 Methods)** 420 Grandsire, 240 St Martin's, 240 St Simon's, 360 Plain Bob 1 William Beech 2 Paul Cammiade 3 Jillian Laken 4 Anne Porter 5 John Harpole (C) 6 Steve Ashley

High Ongar 45 mins 1260 **Plain Bob Minor** 1 Marion Squier 2 Samuel Beech 3 Hilary Donoghue 4 Clare Beech 5 Nigel Taylor 6 Stephen Nash (C)

Danbury 49 mins 1260 **Grandsire Triples** 1 Alwyn Brock 2 Beth Johnson 3 Julia Montague-Jones 4 Andrew Beech 5 James Laken 6 Stephen Halliwell (C) 7 Paul Trueman 8 John Church **First on 8: 1**

Thanks to the conductors for volunteering to call and to the towers for allowing us to ring.



Danbury am above, pm right



Shenfield am above, pm right





◀ High Ongar band

▼ All the ringers back at Shenfield for tea and cakes - strange how all the pink/red-dressed ringers gathered together!



FROM THE ASSOCIATION PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

Last year 200 towers around the country took part in the BBC's Music Day. This year the date is June 15th and the Beeb is inviting towers around the globe to ring at 19:00 (tower local time!) to help celebrate. There's a leaflet attached on how to get involved – and there's a chance you may be asked to record/video your ringing for them. If you'd like to take part, please email bbcmusicday@bbc.co.uk with the subject line 'Ringing Event'; the name and location of the bells; a contact telephone number.

As well as this, registration for Heritage Open Days (H.O.D) on 7th-10th Sept is now open – another opportunity to get local people inside your tower and to share your enthusiasm and enjoyment of ringing church bells. You may even attract new learners! You only have to open for an hour or two on one day as a minimum, so have a think about it. <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>

Any other questions or ideas on things we could do then drop me a mail on pro@eacr.org.uk or give me a call on 07774 906051

Emily Ashton Ass PRO

BENTLEY ST PAUL'S TOWER OUTING

The seven ringers from Bentley were joined by friends from around Essex on their tower outing on Friday 26th May to the Essex/Suffolk borders.

The weather was glorious as we made our way to the picturesque village of Kersey for our first ring. The eight bells went well and we were made very welcome. The view from the church was lovely as was the countryside as we travelled on to Polstead. The huge fish in the pond near the church created a lot of interest and the easy going 6 bells made an excellent second ring.

For some reason we kept passing each other on our way to the chosen pub, The Shepherd at Langham! But once we all arrived, everyone agreed that it was a good choice with excellent food, especially the steak and ale pie!

The church at Langham is nowhere near the village but is near the hall and the lovely black cat called Gerry visited us as we arrived. He came up into the ringing room and sat with us a while, then went off to do 'cat activities' in the church!

Our last port of call was Wormingford where they were decorating the church for a flower festival. The sight and smell of the flowers was beautiful. We were surprised to find the bells were now rung from upstairs and we were shown the hand crafted wooden staircase made by a local craftsman. In their new

location the bells weren't initially the easiest of rings for learners but once you got used to them they were fine.

My thanks goes to all the tower correspondents who were so helpful and who made us welcome, and also to the ringers for making it such a fun day out.

Rowena Marshall



HAPPY BIRTHDAY AT RAYLEIGH

Our lovely and efficient tower secretary Penny Drayson was due to turn 70 years young on Friday 26 May 2017 but as Holy Trinity, Rayleigh's practice falls on a Tuesday we decided to surprise her with an early celebration.

So the customary card was purchased and discreetly passed around. Knowing her interest in gardening we thought a voucher would be a suitable way of signifying our thanks for all she does for us. Of course we had to have cake and candles and our thanks go to Ros who took on the Mary Berry role without Paul Hollywood.

So on practice night with the tower table covered in a very patriotic Union Flag a very rich chocolate cake festooned with some very volatile candles was presented to our good friend Penny. Of course she was obliged to blow out the candles but we felt we should spare her the bumps out of respect for her office.

Among those present to witness this happy event was Steve Jakeman of Hackney and Middlesex who unexpectedly turned up bringing with him a potential novitiate ringer for us from our area.

Jim Laken



RECENT DEATHS

With sadness we report the death on 13th May of Diana Belcham of Rayleigh.

It is with sadness we report the death at the end of April of Hilary Davies, past member of the Prittlewell band. She was only 48. The quarter peal on Sunday 30th April at Hornchurch was in memory of Hilary.

BEECH FAMILY ROYAL FLUSH

North Ockendon
Sunday, 7 May 2017 in 42 mins
1260 St Clement's College
Bob Minor
1 Andrew Beech
2 Samuel Beech
3 Clare Beech
4 Helen Harpole
5 Paul Cammiade
6 John Harpole (C)
For Evensong. 1st in m - 2.

Paul Cammiade's footnote in the RW ('completes the Beech family') for the above quarter might start a trend. John Harpole has also 'completed' the Beech family by having rung quarters with seven different family members – Brian, Ann, Alison (before she became a Nash!), Andrew, Clare, Sam and Will. Does anyone else (apart from those with the surname Beech) belong to this exclusive club?

CRAG SUMMARY

CRAG Final Summary and Report on the structure and future of the Central Council is now available from

<https://cccbr.org.uk/2017/04/28/crag-final-summary-report/>
Click on the download link.

It's your Central Council – be informed as there is sure to be much discussion and publicity after the meeting in Edinburgh at the end of May.

RINGING ACHIEVEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO...-

To **Steve Nash** for his 550th quarter as conductor at Langdon Hills on Sunday, 14 May 1260 Plain Bob Minor 1 David Buckley 2 Alwyn Brock 3 Cathryn Corns 4 David Belcham 5 Alan Gisby 6 Stephen Nash (C) **Rung in memory of Diana Beryl Belcham, who died on 13/5/2017**

To **Sue Matthews** for her first treble bob, and to **Mark Robbins** for his first in method at Shenfield on Sunday, 14 May 1320 Kent Treble Bob Minor 1 Sue Matthews 2 Beth Johnson 3 Helen Harpole 4 Mark Robbins 5 Stephen J Nash 6 John Harpole (C)

To **Cathryn Corns** for her 900th quarter peal at Stanford le Hope on Sunday, 26 March 1288 Grandsire Triples 1 David Buckley 2 Julia Jones 3 Nick Allen 4 Cathryn Corns 5 John Cousins 6 Nigel Taylor (C) 7 Andrew Martin 8 Alan Gisby

To **Sam Beech** for his first major at Rayleigh on Sunday, 23 April (photo below) 1264 Plain Bob Major 1 Anne Porter 2 Samuel Beech 3 Helen Harpole 4 James Laken 5 Lydia Roberts 6 John Harpole 7 Andrew Beech 8 Stephen Nash (C)

To **William Beech** (aged 12) for his first quarter peal at first attempt at North Ockendon, on Sunday, 16 April 1260 Plain Bob Doubles 1 William Beech 2 Clare Beech 3 Samuel Beech 4 Andrew Beech 5 Stephen Nash (C) 6 James Laken

To **Paul Wiggins** for his first treble bob at Shenfield on Sunday, 19 March 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor 1 Paul Wiggins 2 Beth Johnson 3 Helen Harpole 4 John Cousins 5 John Harpole (C) 6 Andrew Beech

To **Terry Thornhill** for her first quarter peal at Hornchurch on Sunday, 21 May 1260 Plain Bob Doubles 1 Mary T Thornhill 2 Lionel S Woods 3 Christopher C M Pain 4 Gavin S Carpenter 5 Clive J Stephenson (C) 6 Anthony F Ammerlaan

BROWNIES VISIT INGRAVE

On Tuesday 23 May Ingrave Tower entertained the 1st Pilgrims Hatch Brownies! After a short introductory talk, the girls watched the band ring some rounds then split into groups to go up the tower, try ringing backstroke and ring some tunes on handbells. They were all very interested and well behaved, and several showed ability with simple handling. Future ringers maybe?



THE DIARY OF A COURSE HELPER by Ros Skipper

Arriving at the Honeywood School on an idyllic sunny Thursday, I registered and then having been assigned to help with a Plain Hunting Group I met up with them and our tutor Ann Bray.

Never entirely sure how things would go I attended the first tutorial of the Course. I don't know how the students felt but it was a bit of an eye-opener for me. So whilst the students were working through the information pack with Ann I looked at the doubles methods that the helpers were expected to ring. Once I had got over the panic stage with the support of the patient Ann, by the time I arrived at Rayne, our first tower, and with some encouragement from the ever-youthful Paul Bloomfield I settled in and rang with a lot more confidence. Rayne is in a beautiful setting and I was fortunate in being able to sit in the churchyard and listen to the ringing in the sunshine towards the end of our sessions there. By the end of the day every student had made progress with their bell handling and Plain Hunting to thirds, fourths and fifths place.



A warm Friday morning saw us strolling to Coggleshall church. Unfortunately, the simulator decided to hamper the situation by not working and the students had to cope with inconsistent striking as well as trying to concentrate on what they needed to do. Eventually, Ann decided to turn off the simulator and we rang silently which I thought was brilliant. The students are to be congratulated for the way they soldiered on despite these frustrations. Fortunately we were joined by Christina and George and huge thank you to them for filling in for missing personnel. I hope administrators look into the matter of using simulators and perhaps another time have them checked prior to the students arrival.



After a relaxing lunch by the river at Kelvedon (above right), we took the short drive to Inworth where I could not but help take a picture from the tower window there (left). The peace and tranquillity with the view was breathtaking. An extended period of ringing for the students was very helpful to them with a welcome break for refreshments mid way. These were supplied by Janice and Jim and were a life saver.

Last day, Saturday and although I was personally flagging a little nonetheless I was keen to finish on a high. On an even warmer day, we drove to Terling where we were to stay for both morning and afternoon sessions. This was to become another progressive day for the students as here they were encouraged to ring to fifth's place and back culminating in ringing the treble to touches of Plain Bob Doubles and courses of Grandsire. Thanks are due also to Sue Page who although not due to join us agreed to stay and help in the afternoon. By this time my arms were having difficulty in corresponding with my brain!

All in all, I believe everyone had a terrific time and my thanks to Ann, assisted by husband Paul, for a fantastic, fun-filled three days. It was a good experience for me and I intend to volunteer as a helper next year. At the end of the day,

any bell handling experience, learning new basic skills based on the methods that I know already and helping others to progress is all that I wanted to do.

HAPPY DAYS ON THE RINGING COURSE by Barbara Leigh

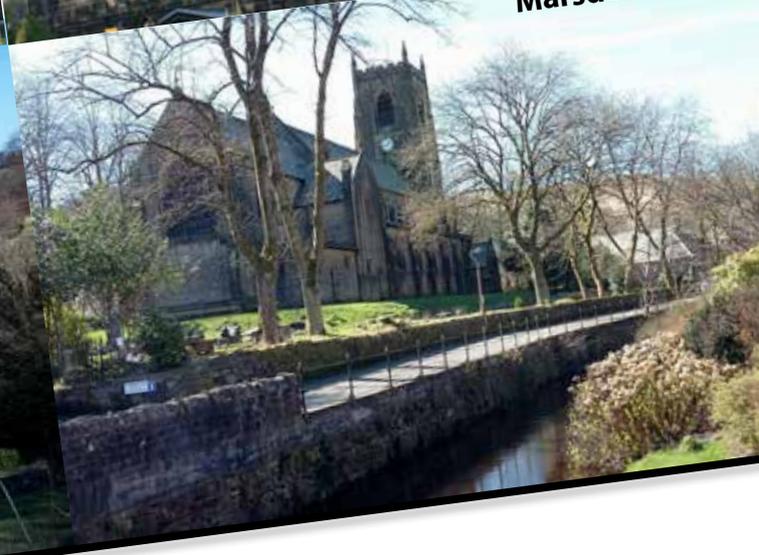
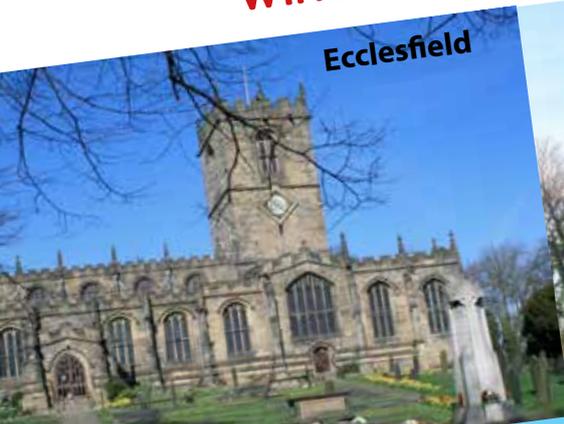
On day one of the course, Thursday, I was at Downham all day and what a glorious day it was, the bells are always a joy to ring and everyone loved them. I bypassed the need to go to Coggleshall first and then drive all the way back, I cycled up to church and cycled back a whole lot faster, love the hill.

Day two I was at Layer de la Haye in the morning, another glorious day and a lovely view across the reservoir. In the afternoon we were at Shrub End where we were greeted by a sea of beautiful kneelers and a ladder at almost 90 degrees!! I took a walk with some ringing friends around Coggleshall before the social in the evening, which is always great fun.

Saturday we were at Great Bromley and Ardleigh, another glorious day, lovely bells but a bit heavy for the last day and two helpers down, I can know scratch my ankles without bending down!! The closing of the course is always good the hand bell ringers amazing, how do they do that, bet they can tap their heads and rub their tummies at the same time!! it was great fun, I took lunch and enjoyed the sunshine listening to a play I had downloaded from iplayer. It was good to have Holy Week off, all Bob Doubled out!!

HELPERS ARE ALWAYS WANTED TO MAKE THE COURSE A SUCCESS, MAYBE YOU CAN SIGN UP TO HELP NEXT YEAR, IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY ON THE HELPERS LIST.

WINTER BLUES UP NORTH AGAIN!



Friday, March 24th saw a group of local ringers make the long trip north to visit Maria and Ian Jorysz in Salford.

Our initial rendezvous was lunch at The Black Bull in Ecclesfield, near Sheffield, where we met up with my host, Andy, and two of Paul T's friends, Brian and Debbie. The more competitive of us couldn't resist the lure of the pool table, with Andrew "Hot Shot" Beech eventually being declared the winner. Ecclesfield church looked beautiful in the spring sunshine, surrounded by daffodils, and with the village stocks in the churchyard. We had a good ring there including an abortive attempt at Double Norwich Caters, one of our methods for the weekend.

Next up was Wortley, where the steep ladder, carved out of tree trunks while the tower was being built over 200 years ago, proved too much for some, or maybe it was the lure of the tea shop opposite? Here Double Norwich Major proved more successful than the caters at the previous tower. It was then on to the best, and final ring of the day, at Penistone, a fine Taylor eight.

As most of us were staying in Greater Manchester, we then had a long drive to our evening meal venue in Royton. The drive took us through Holmfirth, where we paid homage to Norah Batty, Compo, Clegg and Dewhurst before crossing over the Pennines and out of Yorkshire. The scenery as we crossed Saddleworth Moor was absolutely stunning.

Saturday morning was bright and frosty, and our first tower was Glodwick. Here we were joined by Ian and

Maria, Paul T's sister Sarah and another friend Mary. We put these light bells to good use, including 7 spliced (the conductor forgot about the Bristol!). Unfortunately, Stedman came to grief when a strand broke on the tenor rope and started unravelling at an alarming rate; we carried on after some quick repairs using duct tape.

Next up was Leesfield, where we were made welcome with coffee and jammy dodgers. Despite the bells being odd struck and very difficult to ring, we managed a course of Glasgow.

It was then time to leave Greater Manchester and head east towards the Pennines. The Yorkshire Association's Western branch ringing master then got two grabs in his own branch (there's over 60 towers in the branch!), firstly at Saddleworth and then at Marsden.

Saddleworth church is situated in the most beautiful of locations on the edge of the moors. There were several peacocks strutting around outside, and we finally got to ring 8 spliced on the best bells of the day.

We then drove over the moors to Marsden and lunch. Some of us had time to explore the visitor centre at the entrance to the Standedge tunnel; at 3.25 miles, this is the longest tunnel on the canal network, as well as the highest and the deepest. The ring of 10 bells was the heaviest of the day and quite difficult to ring; all of the ropes were very short and they were difficult to hear.

We eventually got to ring Double Norwich Caters, as well as Cambridge and Stedman.

We then had to say goodbye to the stunning scenery and return to Greater Manchester to ring at Moorside. Again, the bells were difficult to hear, and we finished with the obligatory group photo on the steps outside the west door.

Our last tower of the day was at East Crompton, another light eight where we managed to ring Glasgow and a touch of Double Norwich. It was then time for dinner at The Navigation Inn, where we enjoyed giant Yorkshire puddings, homemade curry and local ale.

While I rang at Guiseley and Ilkley on Sunday morning, the rest of the group rang on the challenging twelve at Oldham; a 35 cwt 12 is packed into the relatively small tower with flighty trebles and difficult back bells. After several attempts to ring on twelve, a good touch of Stedman Caters was rung for service. Some of the group also made it to Pendleton, where Maria is teaching a band.

After a Mothering Sunday lunch at The Fleece at Holme for those of us travelling to the A1, it was then time to return home after another great weekend up north. It was good to see Maria and Ian again, and thanks to all of our organisers. Must do it again!

John Harpole



GRAND TOUR 2017 by Paul Cammiade

We set off as a group, seven of whom were going to spend over nine weeks together on a very long distance peal tour. I did wonder whether this was completely mad but for me the attraction was the opportunity to visit new places and meet new people, starting with my first visit to New Zealand and South Africa. The chance to do this sort of trip does not come around very often and probably never will again so this was an opportunity too good to miss. Just 8 people were going to New Zealand, a further nine joined in various places across Australia and the original seven plus three went to South Africa.

New Zealand is a beautiful country and as the focus was on ringing this was really a taster to whet my appetite for another visit one day. We visited both Islands and for me some of the highlights were a visit to the centre of Christchurch where sadly the ruins of the Cathedral remain and a large area of the city centre is still unoccupied. The temporary Cathedral is an interesting structure and larger than I had expected. From other members of the party who had visited before, I understand that these were the best ring of 12 in the Southern Hemisphere so it is sad that there doesn't seem to be concrete plans for them to be heard in the near future. Having some spare time after arriving in Dunedin, we travelled out to the Albatross Nesting site where we were able to see (through binoculars) nesting Northern Albatross. Unfortunately none of them were flying that day. If you visit Dunedin, it is an absolute must to take the Taieri Gorge Railway trip from Dunedin Station. The station is very ornate but unfortunately only provides tourist trains and freight now as passenger services stopped long ago. The train takes you out of Dunedin and into the most stunning scenery with endless photo opportunities.

We crossed Australia from East to West visiting as many towers as feasibly possible but not all of them. In many places the local ringers took advantage of the opportunity to publicise ringing as much as they could with many radio interviews and newspaper features that seemed to involve endless posed ringing shots, even a buffet lunch with the Deputy Mayor while we were in Maryborough. The electronic display board outside St Francis Xavier Adelaide (right) had to be seen to be believed and that coupled with an article in the Southern Cross magazine encouraged people to come from far and wide to listen, including a man who travelled 300km to park his deck chair outside the tower and listen to the whole peal!



We had varying fortunes with the heat as this was the middle of the Australian summer. Where towers didn't have air conditioning, which was most of them, we survived with plenty of fans and for visits to some of the heavy rings, like the eight in Adelaide. The predicted 40C temperatures missed us and it didn't really heat up until we had left. The whole journey from Brisbane to Perth included not only the ringing we had planned, but also practices and quarter peals with the local bands, evening meals and visits to ringer's houses for food and socialising. Too many to mention, all memorable and contributing to great feeling of camaraderie that we felt throughout the tour.

We arrived in South Africa at Johannesburg having taken a detour via London and an opportunity to ring at Harlington to fill in the waiting time between planes [Editor's note, what Paul doesn't mention is that they actually rang a peal 'between planes' see <http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1162512>]. Things are a bit different here. For those unused to driving from secure car park to secure car park, it seems a bit odd that walking the streets as we would do here and take for granted, is not something that is recommended. It also takes a while to get used to the endless people at every intersection either selling something, performing something or just plain begging. More evident in Johannesburg and Durban but present everywhere.

The ringers' welcome is the same everywhere but it is apparent that the ringing scene is nowhere near as vibrant as in Australia. We joined practices and Sunday ringing where we could but there are places where no ringing takes place or they need more ringers to man all the bells.

At the Holy Cross Monastery in Hillandale (tower shown right), which nestles in the rolling hills above Grahamstown, the bells are only rung full circle by visitors although they are swung before every service by the monks. Sadly, they now only have two monks and an uncertain future. We were made very welcome at the guest house and took our meals with the monks, breakfast and lunch being in silence. Not easy for





One peel too many? Or one drink too many?

some. Here there are fantastic views from the ringing chamber, probably among the best in the world.

Our last country to visit was Zimbabwe where a stay at a safari lodge provided some close up opportunities with animals we would normally only see in a zoo. At Kwekwe, they have a thriving local band and we were entertained to an African-style ringers tea. Our last stop was in Harare where the massive economic problems the country has manifests itself in very poor road infrastructure which takes careful driving skills to avoid damaging the underside of your car. We were made so welcome at the Cathedral. Here they have an enthusiastic band including some young ringers. At the practice we had with them, one young girl had been told to learn Stedman. Having never rung it before, she rang Stedman Doubles twice without fault. It just goes to show what a determination to learn and an opportunity to ring can do. A lesson for all of us. We finished our visit with service ringing and a picnic at a nearby animal sanctuary with all the local ringers joining us. A fitting end to a wonderful trip.

I had a fantastic time. When leaving home I wasn't sure quite how I would endure the length of trip, the endless ringing and long distance travelling. At the end of the trip, I could have carried on for months. Any apprehension that none of us would be speaking to each other after two weeks was completely unfounded and we all remain as friendly towards each other as when we started. What I have taken away from this apart from going on an epic adventure is that wherever you go, ringers are really the nicest people you could meet, you will get a great welcome, enjoy fantastic hospitality and come away with new friends made and old acquaintances renewed and an overwhelming feeling to return soon.



Elephants at the Pamuzinda Safari Lodge



Zebra at the Pamuzinda Safari Lodge



The touring party with the ringers at Harare Cathedral