

Society of Royal Cumberland Youths Newsletter 2009

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Master's introduction

It is an honour to introduce the 2009 SRCY newsletter as Master. It is fair to say that when I joined the Society as a "country member" living in the North East, I had no expectation of being in this position. But then I moved to London, and, less than four years later and with three years as Treasurer under my belt, here I am!

As the newsletter demonstrates, 2009 was another busy year for the Society, and I would like to thank John Loveless for all his hard work as Master during that year. The March and July country meetings were again excellently organised and very well attended, as was Not the Dinner Day, in spite of the snow. One of the highlights of the year for me was undoubtedly the dinner on the SS Great Britain in Bristol, which was a wonderful evening.

The regional practices continue around the country, with the recent addition of the South East. I have been able to get to a couple of regional practices since being elected Master, and aim to make it it to some more in 2010.

The weekly practices in London also continue to see strong attendances, with a wide range of methods rung in 2009. Also in the year, we saw the addition of the new 12 at St Magnus the Martyr to the towers we visit regularly.

Finally, a huge thank you to Jo Dorling, who has once again co-ordinated the preparation of this newsletter, and also to Jeremy Warren for his help with the printing. I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and I hope to see many of you at a Cumberland event or practice during 2010.

Mary Holden



SRCY v ASCY

Following our annual friendly ringing competition with "the other Society" – our Senior Steward writes:

"I just wanted to say thanks to you all for ringing and judging. I'm sure you will all agree a 2-1 win on "away" towers is a good result! That's three wins in a row for us (2-1 in 2007, 3-0 in 2008 and 2-1 in 2009).



Also special thanks to those of you who had to miss out on regular practices and other commitments as it was a Tuesday and to those who stepped in at the last minute. I really appreciate the effort you made to come along and support the SRCY".

Look out for next year's competition on 7 April 2010

Jake's Pitman's Day

Alan Regin fixed an SRCY Pitman's day on 22 September 1990. There were 13 peals scored including the 4-9 series rung concurrently in the morning. George will remember organising the brilliant "drop-in" lunch for participants.

The SRCY has over the years rung many peals of Pitman's. It's fun to ring, reasonably challenging to call and lends itself to membership participation.

Jake put many hours of work into this day – as any organiser can vouch for, it's never as straightforward as it looks on paper! Add to that organising attempts across the country as well as around Bedfordshire, it was certainly a fantastic result.

Perhaps the moral of the day though came in the phrase "read and check your e-mail". "Pitman's one" featured in the morning – part of the series it was claimed that had not yet been rung! Unfortunately thinking Pitman's series only went up to four was an error for one member. For myself I fared as bad, but was saved by a coincidental phone call from the conductor the evening before – and your writer discovered it wasn't Pitman's 9 after all – it was in fact Pitman's 7! So enough methods were learnt! Great news!

We did gallantly well in the morning, scoring all peals and all made their way back to Jake and Linda's where Linda had the barbecues going, the sun shining, the Pimms jug full and who could ask for more? A relaxing lunch hour followed, chairs sunk lower into



George Unsworth and Peter Emery enjoying the sunshine!

the lawn, and a general reluctance to head out to afternoon peals seemed to slowly spread around... perhaps it was this that made some of the afternoon peal bands drift back somewhat earlier than expected – was there any food left Linda?!

In all, 13 peals were scored with over 100 ringers taking part across the country. There were four new Pitman's conductors and a few members ringing Pitman's spliced for the first time.

Our very grateful thanks to Linda for the hospitality and to Jake for organising a real fun day with lots of achievement.

Any volunteers to organise another one?

Jo Dorling



The Aussies show us how to barbecue...



More tea for the Senior Steward?



IJ takes counsel on the many possibilities of the Pitman series from the master...



Shirley and Penny celebrating with prizes!

London 12-bell Striking Competition

This year saw the Society take part in the inaugural London 12-bell Striking Competition – and what a great event this turned out to be. Ringing on the new 12 at St Magnus, 9 teams from London took part. The competition piece was Cambridge Maximus and saw many Cumberlands ringing in the various London teams as well as entering a band of our own.

We came second in the competition – 1st place went to the CYs! We were pleased with our ringing though – and in the words of one of our past masters – as for next year's competition – bring it on!

The 2010 competition is on 30 October and is at Bow. If you are around in London that day, it's a great social event, the competition is friendly and it's a fun day – do come and support the SRCY team.

2009 National 12-bell Competition



A personal impression by a ringer who last participated in 1987.

Following a return to London SRCY practices after many years of childrearing, I was amazed to be offered a rope in this year's contest. My initial doubts were swept aside by the Master and the final gauntlet was laid down by my daughter: "go on Mum, you might not get many more opportunities at your age!" It was, I must admit, with some trepidation that I set out along the path to St Paul's.

Practices in London (and Bedfordshire) began in February. The SRCY were, once again, drawn in the 'eliminator of death' pitched against the invincible Brummies and the Leeds band on their own bells.

Our practice at Leeds in early March could have been better. Leeds bells are not easy and some shuffling of the band placing ensued.

London practices intensified (I don't remember having all these practices 20-odd years ago) and as 28th March dawned, I was back on a train via London to Leeds, full of anticipation and guilt as I was missing my son's birthday.

The 'hotel' arrangements at Leeds were excellent; the café in the Parish Church provided coffee and hot meals and a temporary bar was set up in the Chapter House. There was also musical entertainment in the church during the day.

SRCYs were drawn 5th and the tension mounted whilst waiting. My adrenaline-fuelled pull off in the opening rounds did nothing to calm my nerves as, with much embarrassment, my bell struck too soon. The test-piece (250 Stedman Cinques) began nervously but settled very well in the second course. A post-ringing visit to the Chapter House bar did wonders for the shaking hands. (Why do we do this?).

The results were given in the order 87651234 — just to keep people guessing and we were delighted to be placed 2nd, behind Birmingham.

Those of us who caught the early train back to London were entertained by some well-oiled members of another (South) London band celebrating their qualification at Sheffield. My son met me in a similar state when I arrived home — I don't think I was greatly missed.

The Final. Preparation for the final began in earnest in May. We had one voluntary change of personnel and a further shuffle of the band before our practice at St Paul's where we had the honour of ringing for Sunday service.

On 4 July the precincts of St Paul's and Paternoster Square were heaving with ringers and supporters, identifiable by stickers giving free access for the day to all public areas of the Cathedral. Everyone squeezed into St Faith's Chapel in the crypt for the draw and a warm welcome from the Dean. SRCY were drawn 7th – not ideal but I vowed to drink nothing stronger than coffee before we rang.

It was interesting listening to other bands tackling these heavy bells; the local ringers were drawn first and really set the standard for the day. I broke my vow of abstinence when someone passed me a little tot of beer 'to calm my nerves'.

At $2.00\,\mathrm{pm}$ we ascended the Geometric staircase – a rare treat, but sadly not really appreciated on this occasion. Tension was high whilst waiting in silence in the gallery under the ringing room especially as voices could be clearly heard above.

Finally up we went via the sewing room into the ringing chamber. After a brief practice and words of encouragement from the Master, we began – 252 Stedman Cinques. Relief – first backstroke fell in place this time. The ringing felt quite brisk but settled into a reasonable rhythm. Oddly, I felt much more relaxed than in the heats (what was in that tot of beer?).

I listened to the last two teams from the unusual vantage point of the outside gallery right at the top of St Paul's above the dome with magnificent views over London. It was then time for a well-earned pint (or two). The Paternoster allegedly has the largest cellar in London which was fully stocked for the competition but was still in danger of being drunk dry. The staff did stirling work pulling 2,000 pints and serving hundreds of meals well into the evening.

Some ringers attended Evening Service in the Cathedral and others rang at St Mary-le-Bow and it was here that the results were announced. The judges' comments for SRCY: "Technically good, shaky start, faults by (undisclosed) small number of bells, lost its way early in the second course. Bits very good". This curates egg resulted in a disappointing 6th place. Although not the fastest ringing of the day, our peal speed of 3.46 was a full 20 minutes quicker than the winning team (St Paul's) – yes, the Brummies were 2nd this year.

I enjoyed the challenge of taking part again after such a long gap and it was a real honour to be back at St Paul's. It all seemed much more competitive than previously as there are so many more really good 12-bell bands around today; a very healthy sign for the exercise as a whole. The day was extremely well organised and the Cathedral Authorities did a splendid job — it was business as usual for all their other visitors that day.

A group of non-ringing friends from my local church who had come along to see what it was all about, stayed right to the end. They must have been bemused by the judges' summing up but said they had a wonderful day around the Cathedral and got carried along by the atmosphere. They thought the camaraderie between ringers was second to none. Hear! Hear!

Geraldine Forster

I know it when I hear it:

Judging the 12-bell - by Ian Roulstone, Chief Judge 2009

This slight variation on the somewhat infamous colloquial expression by which, according to Wikipedia, "the user attempts to categorize an observable fact or event, even though the category is subjective or lacks clearly-defined parameters", captures something of the essence of judging the National 12-bell Competition. Is it possible to be totally objective in this, the pinnacle of all ringing contests?

The rules of the contest are clear in as much as the performances are to be judged on 'faults' and no marks are to be awarded or deducted for 'impression'. But what constitutes a 'fault'? Direct clashes and persistent clipping are something of a rarity in the contest these days: the overall standard is very high, but in any one event, be it an eliminator or final, there will be a reasonable spread of marks between the top and bottom teams. If you were to ask each judge what they consider to be a 'half fault' or 'full fault', you will invariably get different answers; but I would argue that there will be a common denominator, perhaps best summarised by 'subjective opinion defines the objective mark'.

Although judges focus on marking each row, it is not uncommon for the marks awarded by a judge to be at odds with their overall opinion of a piece. For example, we might find we have awarded one team 20 more faults than another, only to reflect and agree that the team that was marked more harshly produced a better piece of ringing! Of course, if the ringing is somewhat erratic – perhaps as a result of indifferent leading – but each row is struck reasonably well, then the inconsistency might not be captured as well as it should be on the score sheets. Equally, it is easy to pick up on any blemishes in very good ringing. I suspect that something akin to a subliminal process comes to our rescue: in other words, our brains register aspects of the ringing that we don't always capture with pencil and paper.

So does this mean that judges are inevitably at odds with the rules of the

contest? No, I don't believe so. To argue that we should mark on 'impression' is very different from acknowledging that we don't always mark faults as accurately or consistently as a machine (strikeometer) might do. In any case, we nearly always record the ringing these days and, when any discrepancies occur, we listen to the teams again. At the end of the day, with the knowledge of how all the teams have rung and how we have marked, it is possible to be thoroughly objective in arriving at the overall ranking.

To aid this process, spreadsheets are now used to collate and analyse the marks awarded by each judge for each team. The basic idea of the algorithms used in these spreadsheets is to remove any bias caused by the difference in the standards that any one judge adopts (so that a judge marking twice as harshly as his or her colleagues won't dominate the overall ranking). These spreadsheets save a great deal of time, and enable the judges to arrive at a ranking in a very efficient way. The actual marks awarded to the teams placed first and last have to be chosen: this is to facilitate the linear fit, but it also serves to give an indication of the judges' opinion of the overall quality of the ringing during the contest.

And so what of the 'elephant in the room', hinted at above? Should some form of 'strikeometer' eventually replace the judges? Richard Grimmett has enlisted the help of several ringers (from the UK and overseas) to develop an algorithm that could be used in the 12-bell. My personal view is that if the strikeometer can be developed to the point where it might serve as a useful

aid, then that would indeed be a welcome development. Judging nine teams is incredibly challenging (six teams is widely regarded as the maximum number to be reasonably confident of an accurate ranking), and having some independent measure of accuracy would be useful. But I would be unhappy at the thought that such a measure of 'quality' would take precedence over the judges: the top teams invariably produce ringing that has a certain panache, which computer simulators don't reproduce. It would be a sad to think that we should strive to produce ringing that lacks modest flamboyance. At present the algorithms are under development and further research is needed. I agreed to the recordings Adrian Udal made this year being analysed by the strikeometer after the contest. I have to say that my consent was given with some trepidation: it would be so easy for a close call (as it was this year) to be analysed and result turn out to be a different ranking (which was not the case this year – phew!).

Some contestants are of the opinion that having a great time is the overriding goal, and all that matters is getting the winning team placed first! But passions run deep; there are frequently 'local derbies' and old scores to settle — where teams are placed in the overall order matters to many! So Richard's project needs our support, and I would encourage those interested to sign up and contribute to the debate (contact Richard@Grimmett. org).

Ian Roulstone

July Country Meeting in Lincolnshire

Country slice A recipe for success

Ingredients:

- Around 100 Cumberlands
- 18 peals
- 28 towers
- 1 weekend



Philippa Stokoe, Lizzie Stokoe, Emma Southerington and Josh Douglass.

Method:

Take one Friday night pub carvery, add 60 or so Cumberlands, several gallons of real ale and mix well. Chill for several hours.

The following morning, add a further 40 Cumberlands and separate the mixture into two halves: one half to be peeled, and the other half distribute evenly among a-sauteed towers.

Gather both halves back together again at Deeping St James before rolling out a heavy metal striking competition.

Observe teams poach well-seasoned ringers to form stiff competition bands before adding tea and cake. Simmer in a meeting and fold-in five new members before celebrating the local and national cream of the crop: Congratulations to Ron Noon on 64 years membership; and "Glint's Minor Celebrities" on winning the informal striking competition.

Turn out to Edenham and apply your loaf while being grilled in the quiz. Stew over difficult questions.

Add curry and ale to the Cumberlands and chocolates and thanks to the organisers: Jim Benner, Ben Ricketts and Emma Southerington. Gently pickle.

The Deeping Cake Squad



Cathy Brown and Derek Wilesden visit from



Harold and his ladies!



Ron Warford judging the six-bell striking competition.



Ron's dream team alias Glint's Minor Celebrities.



Jim Benner announces the quiz results.



Sarah Young, Kevin McManus and Ed Mack join the SRCY.

One hundred years on:

A Society anniversary at Loughton, Essex – and hints of mystery

Kenneth Felstead's magisterial database of tower bell peals provides impeccable authority for the 5120 changes of Kent TB Major rung at the church of St John the Baptist, Loughton, on 4 December 1909. Within the tower's local records, a peal board in the ringing chamber compliments Felstead and credits the peal to the Society:

There is an immediate element of mystery here in that the Society's peal book does not record this performance. Were the participants all bona fide Society members in 1909? The absence from the peal book is still being researched vigorously but notwithstanding this, Loughton's ringers invited the Society to attempt a commemorative peal exactly a century later. Thus it was that eight members travelled in rain and darkness to this *rare* tower for an evening attempt on a singularly dismal Friday 4 December 2009

The tower was a grab for most of us, even the London-based participants, and Felstead records only 45 peals on the John Warner & Sons ring since 1875. These, perhaps, are both surprising features given the proximity of London as a centre of ringing activity and Loughton's location within the capital's underground railway network. Whilst advances in tuning have rendered bells of this period less popular it seems extraordinary that after the 1909 peal, St John's had to wait until 1952 for its next - also treble bob major but this time in the Oxford variation. Was it the case, then, that the earlier peal was associated with some controversy that has now become cloaked in the mists of time?

Despite its Friday evening *graveyard* timing, our commemorative peal left no room for controversy. By proper invitation, eight duly elected and fully paid up members rang 5056 changes of technically correct and aesthetically pleasing Kent TB Major. We were unable to identify which of Henry



Dains' compositions was used for the 1909 peal but we felt that ringing the same method to a tenors-together two part by the same composer reflected the then-prevailing tastes in music and method popularity.

Whilst Kent TB is now profoundly unfashionable – even held in contempt - the method worked well in practice, the rhythm generated by the coursing tenors enabling us to overcome the odd-struck nature and physical demands of St John's challenging eight. Arguably, the current thirst for stimulating blue lines, combination rollups and runs has diverted attention from this quality. In this context Kent TB seems unlikely to rise from the ashes, but our leading peal ringers may wish to rise to the challenge of Craven's Diamond Delight Major, an irregular method published in 1907 and pealed first by Tony Cox's

enterprising band exactly a century later. The peal report's interesting footnote evokes the linguistic style of 1907: "tenors (or better to say course bells) apart only 48 changes in the whole course, against 52 in the previous best, viz. Kent TB, Bristol and New Cumberland."

We thank Loughton's incumbent, tower correspondent and ringers for their kind invitation, for receiving us before the attempt and for reviving us after it. The warmth of their post-peal hospitality will not be forgotten. We are grateful too for meticulous organisation by Russell Brown, who was unable to take part in the peal.

Iim Belshaw

March Country Meeting in West Sussex

With Jane Wilkinson in charge, an effectively organised country meeting was expected, and over 80 Cumberlands who made the trip to Sussex for the day were not disappointed! Four out of five peal attempts were scored, and many members enjoyed the general ringing circuit.

The business meeting was held at Pulborough, and included presentation of a cake and flowers to the Secretary, who was celebrating a significant birthday that weekend. Following the meeting Jane and her band of helpers achieved the impressive feat of providing a delicious home-cooked meal to over 70 people, ensuring that we all went home well fed at the end of a very enjoyable day.

SRCY – Kalamazoo September 2009

After last year's successful Cumberland gathering in New York City, Don Morrison once again took it upon himself to organize another Society of Royal Cumberland Youths ringing weekend, this time in Kakuk, Mike Hinton, Don Morrison, Margaret Miller, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

On Friday, 25 September, early bird Don Trumpler showed up at the tower on the campus of Kalamazoo College, followed closely by Kathryn Tucker both well ahead of the scheduled 7.00 pm start time. After others trickled in, we plunged right into Yorkshire Major, using it as a warm-up for the quarter peal attempt to come. Don Morrison then asked, "Who doesn't know Cornwall?" A couple of hands inched up (ahem, one was mine), but most had studied it and a nice plain course was rung. At 9.00 pm, eight ringers stayed on to ring a successful quarter of Yorkshire major.



How can I begin to describe the copious amounts of ringing that took place the next day? Take a deep breath folks, and hold onto the handrails....

At 9.00 am, a quarter peal of Yorkshire Major was scored. During the hour after that, there was general ringing, which included 8-spliced, Cornwall and Lincolnshire. At 11.00am, it was time for another quarter, this time it was a successful spliced Cambridge and Yorkshire, a first of spliced for Mike Hinton and Kathryn Tucker. Noon to 1.00 pm brought more general ringing and then another quarter - this time of Bob



Anti-clockwise: Kathryn Tucker, Don Trumpler, Rob Christine Fowler, John Danaher.

Major, rung for local ringer Colin Brown - it was a crisp and lively quarter at that. By this time, it had become warm and humid in the tower, despite open doors and good air circulation - most people were now "glowing" a bit. At 3.00 pm, a peal of Yorkshire Major was begun, and 2 hours and 51 minutes later, the bells finally fell silent. But wait, there's more.... during all this tower bell ringing, others were sequestered away ringing handbells. Quarters of Treble Bob Minor, Spliced Treble Bob Minor, Spliced Plain Minor and Double Norwich were scored by (in various combinations) John Danaher, Kris

> Fowler, Margaret Miller, Don Morrison, Mike Schulte, Jeff Smith, Don Trumpler and Elisabeth Trumpler, Eventually, the gang shuffled off to Saffron, a wonderful Indian restaurant not far from the college, and waiters juggled dishes of chicken Peshwari, Palak Paneer and garlic naan to hungry

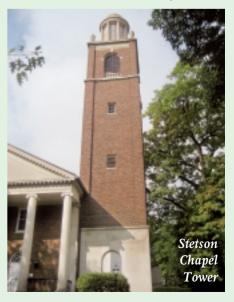
ringers.

There was no rest for the weary on the Lord's day. At 9.00am sharp, a quarter peal of Stedman Triples was attempted, but like so many Stedman attempts, it fell apart faster than an Oreo cookie dunked in a glass of milk. However, two more tower quarter attempts were successful -Cornwall and Spliced Surprise (C & Y). By 1.00 pm, 8 folks had gathered for another tower peal attempt of Yorkshire, as well as a handbell group who settled down at the same time for a quarter of Kent Treble Bob minor both had happy endings.

When there was a moment to slip away from the tower, many in the group took the chance to relax in the beautifully spare, white-painted Stetson Chapel - the ringing sounded lovely from there. Or they would nosh on the snacks provided by the Kalamazoo ringers - thanks go to Kit Almy, Britt Hartenberger, Rob Kakuk, Margaret Miller, Jeff Smith and Linda Woodford for their wonderful hospitality. Of course, very special appreciation goes to Don Morrison, who once again took on the not-so-easy task of planning the SRCY weekend, and whose organizational skills enabled everyone to ring up to their skill level, and even beyond.

For those SRCY members not based in North America, we urge you to watch for announcements about next year's gathering (fingers crossed) and try to find time to put it on your schedules - you'll find it to be a very welcoming and worthwhile visit.

Kathryn Tucker



Thoughts on the Dinner

I asked for this article to be called "thoughts on the dinner" because, although Io Dorling did asked me beforehand, I forgot. Had I remembered, I would of course have made detailed notes and you would have the benefit of an accurate account of proceedings. Instead, well...



Kathy Carter and George Unsworth

I remember it was a beautiful sunny evening. The SS Great Britain looked great and there seemed to be plenty enough champagne and orange juice to go round. After a while socialising, we were herded into the bow section of the open deck by a photographer with the ambition of including all 148 participants in his shot. This was never going to be easy, required many exhortations, and took some considerable time; but the end result was a success. And I suppose it is probably the first time that 20 per cent of living Cumberlands have assembled on the deck of a ship.

Having extricated myself from the photo shoot fallout I had a look around the restored parts of the SS Great Britain, such as the ship's galley, cabins, and stables. No restored toilets unfortunately, and I wonder how they got on back in the days of IKB. I expect it all went over the side.

Time to order some wine and join the masses in the dining saloon. First on was the ship's steward with an account of the construction and history of the SS Great Britain; then the food, which was scrumptious - soup, chicken and apple pie. Then a smoke break, in which I learned more interesting things about SS Great Britain, like the wrought iron plates are half an inch thick above the waterline but ninesixteenths below, and also about how one should deal with English Heritage.

The speeches. This is where notes would really be handy; after a three course meal and a bottle of wine I am not at my most attentive. However, I think they started with Richard

Offen from Perth, Western Australia, proposing the Church, and introducing himself as the person in charge of the foremost secular tower in the world. I have rung at Perth, and yes he is right, there is no church attached to the tower, not that in practice that makes any difference. Richard must have said something nice about the church but I can't remember what. Then I think the Revd James Croft replied, and I guess he said something nice about ringers, but perhaps not as he is one. He did tell us about his impressive ringing achievements, though now I can't remember what they were, and Lindarella, which he did not elaborate on! Peter Valuks proposed the Society, saying lots of



Jane Wilkinson

Julia Lysaght

Peter Harrison



Jesse McLeod and

Phil Gorrod and Maggie Ross



nice things about us. Finally Jake came on to tell us that the bar was closing in five minutes and thank the organisers, which took considerably longer than five minutes.

I really enjoyed the dinner – I don't suppose there was anyone there who didn't. Afterwards, someone who didn't go asked me if it was worth sixty quid. I tried to explain that it is an occasion; you can't really put a value



Joe, Andrea and Doug Beaumont



Peter Harrison, JJ Ford and Richard Hohhs

on it and so on. But I am afraid that anyone who asks that question probably is not going to understand the answer.

JJ Ford

Cumberland Peal Weekend 2009

This year's Peal Weekend was the most successful to date. In 1979 we attempted and rang four peals: this year we arranged 58, attempted 55 and rang 45 for the Society. A further peal had to be rung for a local Association because of injury, that at Dalton-in-Furness was cancelled because of the heavy rainfall and at Bermondsey a band was locked out.

The first Peal Days were held in London and they were followed by a social evening in a pub. One year I was asked (I think by Dennis Chapman of the Southampton band) if they might ring a peal in their home area. Thus began a much wider event and we have never looked back! Today, Peal Weekend is international!

So how does the system work? This year's experiences are fairly typical. At the outset I should emphasise that I do not organise peals – that is done through a group of members who are scattered throughout the country. I know many of them personally and others are friends via e-mail and telephone. The Society greatly appreciates the efforts that they make – ringing the peal is often the easy part, it is the organising that takes the effort! I support them as 'Resources Officer' as much as I can.

In July I send out the first reminder of the dates to organisers and potential organisers. Only ten years ago this involved sending out about 110 letters: in 2008 ten letters were sent and the remainder went by e-mail. I also ensure that members who have notified the Society of an interest in participating are in touch with a peal organiser. Three or four further e-mail reminders follow, the later ones asking for details of what has been arranged. Every year, at about the beginning of November, I become depressed because I know of far fewer peals attempts than were arranged the

previous year. I should not worry – it is simply that I have not been told!

It is gratifying that members are coming over from Ireland and from the States to join us for the weekend. It is good to have them with us. The Society is grateful to those who provide bed and breakfast for the weekend and transport them from and to trains and airports as well as to peal attempts.

A final plea to organisers – please keep me in touch with what you are arranging. Remember that as well as knowing who will be ringing in your peal or peals, it is as important for me to know who is not available! It can save a lot of last minute phone calls!

To end with a summary of the 2009 event: 265 members participated in successful peal attempts. A further 42 (and who were in no other attempt) took part in the unsuccessful attempts. If you include the 7 members who rang in the Lancashire Association peal at Walkden, that gives us 314. All the would-be participants at Bermondsey later rang at least one peal elsewhere. 36 conductors shared the conducting of the successful attempts. Top scorers were Russell Brown with six peals and Michael Crockett with five peals! But for the lock-out, Jo Dorling, Alan Regin and Richard Hobbs might have scored five!

John Barnes



Editorial Comment

John has achieved the remarkable milestone of organising peal weekend for the last 30 years – I wonder if such a record has been surpassed in previous Society events? We are as ever indebted to John for his very significant contribution and we would like express and gratitude and thanks to John on behalf of the Society.

Around and about

SRCY Eastern Practices

It's hard to believe but we are now approaching our 15th bi-monthly practice!



For the sake of accuracy and for those who aren't pestered by my annoying e-mails, our practices are held on the first Thursdays of 'even' months. Since 2007 we have visited each of the counties in the region, a region which seems to stretch across a huge area; from Peterborough to Chelmsford; from Bedford to Ipswich. Despite the distances involved, the commitment shown by regular attendees in travelling has been magnificent and has helped to generate a special camaraderie.

In 2009 we visited (I think!) Cambridge (GSM) once on the old and once on the new, St Neots, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich (SMLT) and Norwich (SPM). As well as our practices we held two Sunday events this year. The first was the May quarter-peal afternoon in the Sudbury area, followed by an evening meal in a local hostelry. For the second time, we held a picnic afternoon in September; this time meeting at Wimpole Hall to 'nosh' and then ringing in the area afterwards.

This year we are trying something different. On 16 May we're hoping to hold an ESRCY 8-bell friendly contest with a band from each of the counties making up the 'East'. We haven't got a venue finalised yet but another of those annoying e-mails will tell you.

Thanks to all those who have helped, encouraged and supported us over the past 2 years. If you haven't tried visiting us yet, then you will be most welcome. If you don't receive and would like to find out just how annoying my e-mails can be, send me an e-mail to simon@enterprise-cs.co.uk and you can see what drives everyone else crackers!

Happy ringing in 2010 to all Easterners and even beyond!

Simon Rudd

Stockton report 2009

The SRCY northern practices at Stockton continue to be popular and well-supported.

The repertoire has remained static with standard methods, including Bristol and Zanussi and attendance has varied with a dip in the summer months followed by a surge in the autumn. It has been encouraging to see a lot of younger people at these practices; some are potential members (or have been proposed) whilst others have already joined a rival Society. Either way, it is good to have their support because they are the future of ringing.

It never ceases to astound me that ringers are so supportive and keen, some of them travelling considerable distances for the Stockton practices. We have some who brave the A66 from Penrith with great regularity and others who travel from near Selby in the south and Newcastle in the north.

Highlights from the year include our 12-bell squad coming joint first (with ASCY) at the eliminator at Rotherham (although it has to be said that we didn't give them much of a challenge at St Paul's in the final) and ringing an excellent peal of spliced "at home" with only three visitors supplementing the Stockton team. Inevitably, because of the nature of the practices, these achievements are not totally by SRCY members, but the practice remains firmly under the Cumberland umbrella with visitors welcome.

Jennie Town

Nearly a first for WA Cumberlands!

It should have been easy to get a band together, however, with only six members and this being WA, it wasn't. Would Michael be back from the bush that weekend? Could Amanda be persuaded to go for the 'hat trick' this year?

In the event the replies to my first enquiries were mixed; Michael would be back, Amanda, might be persuaded, and Richard couldn't ring Saturday or Sunday! By chance, a visiting ringer (actually an ex-Perth resident) Tony Mann, who had actually been around for a few weeks, asked me if we were ringing anything for the peal weekend. This together with Richard's suggestion of ringing on the Friday evening, a peal attempt became a possibility. Christ Church Claremont were the obvious choice and we are grateful to Mary Townsend and the church office for agreeing to an attempt, at, what was by now, quite short notice. There would be a wedding rehearsal in the church whilst we were ringing but they would not disturb us, no but...!

We thought that Cambridge would ensure a good performance and chose Roger Bailey's 5040 for a change. We got into changes just before the target start time and after a few courses the ringing settled down to a reasonable pace. Claremont are a delightful little six and the ringing was quite pleasant to listen to, although there were a few wry grins at the 65s. Everything was going pretty well until after about 45 minutes the lights went out. Fortunately it wasn't completely dark and we all just kept ringing. Equally fortunate was that Richard, who was ringing the fourth was able to do a smart one step to his left and managed to switch the lights back on. Obviously there was a two-way switch somewhere, which the wedding rehearsal team had switched off!

The excitement over, we settled back to the task and an acceptable peal was completed in 2:29, some 13 minutes slower than the previous Society peal on the bells!

After the obligatory photo' it was off to Richard and Callum's for well earned drink and a Thai take-away - thanks for the hospitality guys.

Oh, yes, the 'nearly a first' bit was about whether we could call it the first by a resident Cumberland band and although we were grateful to Tony for making it possible, we decided we couldn't really claim it as such but next year, who knows?

Roger Lubbock



SRCY peals analysis 2008–2009

(last year's figures are in brackets)

This year there has been a slight increase in the number of peals rung. Between 1/8/08 31/7/09 there were 223 compared with 216 last year. There are 13 (5) handbell peals in that total including two in the USA. The number of towers was slightly higher with 162 (152). Shoreditch remains the leading tower with 17 (20).

Towers: Shoreditch 17 (20), Spital-fields 7 (6), Barton Seagrave 4 (9), Texarkana 4 (0), Kettering 3 (4), New York 3 (4), Downham 3 (0), 20 towers all had 2 and there were 134 (130) with just 1. 8 (0) of the 13 (5) handbell peals were rung at 15 Harford Drive.

Geographically the peals were more widespread but sadly none in Australia (1). In the British Isles peals were rung in 45 (35) different counties including 9 (7) peals in 4 counties in Northern Ireland; 26 (22) were rung in 8 (6) states in the USA, and 2 were rung in Canada. In the UK most were rung in London 37 (48), followed by Hertfordshire 19 (7), Lincolnshire 16 (0), Kent 10 (7), Northamptonshire 8 (13), Cambridgeshire 7 (16), Leicestershire 7 (3), Surrey 7 (5) and Essex 6 (2).

This year although there were slightly more peals rung the number of members taking part in peals is slightly down at 353 (377). 136 (188) rang in only one peal.

Ringers: Alan Regin 67 (75), Mary Holden 50 (40), Derek Sibson 49 (69), Jane Sibson 42 (61), Richard Hobbs 42 (26), Jo Dorling 38 (38), Graham Duke 38 (31), Ian Fielding 38 (37), Michael O'Callaghan 33 (47), Frank Rivett 33 (43), Paul Cammiade 30 (18), Cath Merlane 30 (35), Shirley McGill 27 (30), Ian Campbell 26 (44), Russell Brown 25 (19), Janet Menhinick 24 (6), Jason Turnock 24 (34), Christine

Carter 23 (9), Peter Waterfield 23 (18), Stephen Wheeler 22 (22), John Ford 21 (16).

The conducting was shared by 59 people this year compared with 52 last year. Derek E. Sibson 44 (62), Ian R. Fielding 29 (18), Stephen A. Wheeler 19 (18), Matthew J.L. Durham 14 (7), Roger Baldwin 13 (7), John P. Loveless 9 (12), Anthony Cox 7 (3), Ian Roulstone 6 (11), James W. Belshaw 4 (7), Simon Holden 4 (5), Ian Butters 4 (2), Mary Holden 4 (2), Peter W. Sheppard 3 (5), Jonathan Hetherington 3 (3), fifteen (10) members with 2 and 30 (26) with 1.

The variety of methods has increased slightly. 98 (94) different methods or groups of methods (e.g. 4-Spliced) were rung. 12-bell peals have decreased again with 21 (25) including 5 (3) of Cinques this year. Still only 5 (3) 12-bell peals at Shoreditch.

Royal 42 (51), Caters 6 (4), Major 128 (118), Triples 2 (0) and Minor 24 (18).

Methods: Bristol S. Major 22 (25), 4-Spliced S. Major 11 (4), Lincolnshire S. Major 9 (7), 7 Surprise Minor 8 (9), Yorkshire S. Major 7 (5), Yorkshire S. Royal 7 (6), Bristol S. Royal 6 (10), Cambridge S. Major 6 (6), London S. Major 6 (4), 6-Spliced S. Major 5 (3), Cambridge S. Maximus 5 (4), Cambridge S. Royal 5 (4), Stedman Caters 5 (4), Superlative S. Major 5 (4), 5-Spliced S. Major 4 (2), 8-Spliced S. Major 4 (10), Bristol S. Maximus 4 (8), Yorkshire S. Maximus 4 (6), Lessness S Major 4 (2), London No.3 S Royal 4 (3), Stedman Cinques 4 (2).

To update the personal totals for the Society of those who have rung over 500, the list is as follows: Alan Regin 1665, Derek Sibson 1558, Simon Davies 1276, Jane Sibson 1042, Ian Fielding 976, Ian Campbell 913,

Graham Duke 909, John Loveless 843, Linda Garton 792, Richard Hobbs 720, Peter Fleckney 681, Stephen Wheeler 661, Catherine Merlane 648, Paul Cammiade 579, Shirley McGill 572, Roger Baldwin 519 and Michael O'Callaghan 502.

These figures are for peals published in *The Ringing World* up to December 18/25th and are therefore by definition out of date by the time you read this! Roger Baldwin and Michael O'Callaghan rang their 500th peal for the Society at Texarkana on 3 December 2008 and Shoreditch on 18 October respectively Derek and Jane Sibson rang their 1,000th peal together for the Society at Shoreditch on 19 April. 7 of the 18 members elected during the year rang their first peals for the Society.

In methods, those with more than 100 for the Society since the computer records began in 1934 has changed with Cambridge S. Major and Rutland S. Major joining the list and Bristol S. Royal overtaking London No. 3 S. Royal. Bristol S. Major 489, 4-Spliced S. Major 208, 8-Spliced S. Major 190, Yorkshire S. Major 190, 7 methods S. Minor 188, London S. Major 179, Bristol S. Maximus 166, Yorkshire S. Maximus 152, Stedman Cinques 143, Bristol S. Royal, 134 London No.3 S. Royal 131, Yorkshire S. Royal 126, Cambridge S. Major 106 and Rutland S. Major 101.

It would be greatly appreciated if conductors would please check the peal list published on the web site and notify me of any omissions or errors.

If any member wants a list of their Society peals please get in touch with Derek Sibson at dereksibson@btinternet.com

Derek Sibson

Tower reports

St Martin-in-the-Fields



It is with regret that I report the death in May 2009 of Dr David Hardwick, a church warden at St Martin's from 1981 to 1992. As many members of the Society will recall, David's enthusiasm and expert knowledge helped ensure the successful completion of the 1980s bell restoration project, culminating in the installation of the present ring of 12 bells in 1988. Although not a member of the Society, he was an honorary member of the St Martin's Band. The bells were rung open before and after his funeral service on 3 June by members of the Society and several other ringers who knew him.

The main address was given by Canon Geoffrey Brown, vicar of St Martin's at the time the new bells were installed. If anyone would like a copy of the address, please let me know. (elizabeth@aspidistra99.fsnet.co.uk)

With enormous relief, I can report that, after two years of wrangling with the main contractors (Costain), the silica, dust and debris remaining from the sandblasting of the tower and spire has been removed from the bell chamber – reputedly 14 cwt of it, in sacks, down the spiral staircase! A comment was heard to the effect that "At least you now know that the tower could withstand the weight of an additional 4 bells!" Whitechapel Bellfoundry have also carried out a full inspection of the bells and fittings as part of the clearance. From their report, the only area requiring additional work relates to worn sliders and slider boards and this is in hand. I am grateful to Hugh Player, chief executive of St Martin-in-the-Fields Limited, who dealt with Costains on our behalf and secured a very satisfactory result. Over the next 6 months, it is hoped that proposed work will be carried out to restore the woodwork in the ringing room and have additional bookcases installed.

The tenor clapper broke quite spectacularly one Sunday morning during part of the recording for the Oranges & Lemons project. The replacement, which includes a nylon section in the shaft, has been deemed a success as the bell goes a lot better and (we think) there is an improvement in tone. As the new clapper is lighter, the bell now goes up wrong and we currently have to turn the clapper. However, plans are in hand to construct a permanent clapper turner to deal with this.

Ben Kipling and Andrew Brown spent a chilly couple of days between Christmas and New Year oiling bells following the dust clearance and laying underlay and carpet under the bells as the first step towards reducing the harshness of sound in the ringing room and we will be continuing to monitor this over the coming months.

The Society's library has returned to the ringing room and later additions will be accommodated in the new bookcases.

We're looking forward to welcoming visiting bands to St Martin's as one of the Eliminator towers in the National 12-bell Striking Contest on 27 March 2010.

Society practices have continued during the year on the first Wednesday in the month. Members are always very welcome to join the St Martin's Band for Sunday service ringing which is from 09.00-10.00.

Christ Church, Spitalfields 2009



Spitalfields Open Day

I am very pleased to say that the air conditioning unit mentioned last year has now been wired in and is working very well, as an added bonus it also acts as a heater so in the colder months we can put it to good use as well! At the same time as the air con was wired in some new lighting was put into the belfry which has improved things beyond recognition!

During the year we took delivery of 8 new ropes which are now in use, these were blessed by the Revd Andy Rider during the SRCY practice on 29 April.

Peal ringing has continued to be popular with 16 being rung since the last newsletter, one highlight was to welcome, on 29 March, 5 ringers who rang in the last peal on the bells before were transferred from Stephen's Clapham Park (rung on 28 March 1968), a very good peal of Stedman Triples was rung. Another was on the 19 November when a peal of Golden Heart Surprise Major was rung as a compliment to Sandra Esquilant on her 30 years as Landlady of the Golden Heart Pub close to Christ Church, the peal was also rung to the memory of Dennis, Sandra's husband who died earlier in 2009.

We have also welcomed quarter peal ringers, a number of outing bands, 4 SRCY Practices, rung for 5 Weddings, 1 Memorial Service, a couple of Carol Services, various Spitalfields Music events and for the opening of the refurbished Whitechapel Art Gallery.

We have maintained the regular First Sunday of every month Service ringing and also added a few extra Sundays as well this year, we are heavily reliant on a dedicated few so if

...overleaf

Tower reports - continued

you are in London on a First Sunday please do get in touch with me. The Sunday Service band is very grateful to Spitalfields local, Philip Vracas, for providing warm hospitality after the Service Ringing.

As always we have received tremendous support from many people at Christ Church and in particular the Rector, Andy Rider.

Alan Regin



Shoreditch ringing continues to maintain a busy schedule throughout the year and we are indebted to our vicar Paul Turp for making the bells so available to us. We continue to ring a lot of Society peals at this church and our particular thanks go to Derek Sibson and his Sunday Service peal band who often co-ordinate their peals into service ringing at Shoreditch.

The initial project on the acoustics has been completed and we would welcome any feedback on this. Our thanks to Doug, JJ and Alan for all their hard work. Please do contact us with your views and any ideas that will progress things further in terms of the acoustics.

As we go to print, plans are well under way for the one of the 12-bell eliminators to be held at Shoreditch in March 2010. We are very grateful to George Unsworth in volunteering to lead us through the organisation of such an event – it is no small task as all ringers involved previously will know – thank you George!

Finally, do keep a look out in the future for a new TV comedy – Handle With Prayer – filmed at Shoreditch early in 2010.

2010 Dates for your diary

27 March – National 12-bell Eliminator – Shoreditch (and St Martin-in-the-Fields and St Magnus the Martyr)

7 April – SRCY vs ASCY Striking Competition – St Martin-in-the-Fields

5 May – Business Meeting – Central London

15 May – SRCY/ASCY Peal Weekend

8–11 July – Country Meeting – Shropshire

11 September – Informal Dinner – Central London

2 October – Annual General Meeting – Central London

30 October – London 12-bell Competition – Central London

20 & 21 November - Peal Weekend -

Wherever your peal attempt is!

5 January 2011 (tbc) – Business Meeting – Central London

If you would like to sign up for any of the events detailed above please do so by either completing the sign up list on the website or by contacting the assistant secretary (assistant.secretary@srcy.org.uk or telephone: 07837 867854), or by contacting any of the officers.

Australia trip 2010

At the March Country meeting in 2009, the Senior Steward announced a plan for a trip for the Society to Australia (and New Zealand if there was sufficient interest) in 2011. The plan has now moved forward greatly.

The plan is to travel from west to east, with the core trip taking in Perth, Adelaide and Sydney in two weeks (Friday 18 February to Monday 6 March 2011). There would be a third week involving Melbourne, Brisbane and possibly Hobart. The exact cost of the trip is in flux as one would expect with the exchange rates, but we would hope that the core trip would cost no more than £2,500, but are aiming for the £2,000 mark. The extra week would only be a few hundred pounds more as the main expense is getting there and back.

For those who don't know, the ASCY are also going to be in Australia at the same time, and we would be crossing over with them in Adelaide on the weekend of 26/27 February. On this weekend we would have a striking competition of some sort, and on the Saturday we will have a joint dinner at the Adelaide Town Hall.

The Society is already taking £250 deposits for the trip, and a number of people have already signed up (from the UK and the US). If you want to come along then please send your deposit to the Senior Steward. If there are any Aussie or Kiwi

members who want to join in for any part of the trip then please let the Senior Steward know. If you have any further queries then please take a look at the website (there is a link at the bottom of the home page), or ask the Senior Steward directly.



Membership news

Losses of members

It is with sadness we report the death of:

Harry W. Brown of Hurstpierpoint, elected 30 4 49

Andrea Purchase of Harare, elected 1989

T. Brian Porter of Hassocks, elected 10.4.76

David R. Reed of Dorchester, elected 22.2.56

Ernest F. Willcox of Shrewsbury, elected 19.5.54

Patrick Harrison of Staplehurst, elected 3 4 71

Monica Martin, elected 17.1.53

Robin Turner of Melbourne, Australia,

elected 18.9.54

Patricia Medley of Middlesex,

elected 1.4.92

Caroline Harris of Norfolk,

elected 11.7.98

Kevin Betesta elected 2.4.66

Carol Hardwick elected 8.1.92

Milestones to report

Congratulations to:

Derek and Jane ringing their 1,000th peal together for the Society, and for ringing their 2,500th peal together

Frank Rivett on ringing his 2,000th peal

Kath Baldwin on ringing her 1,000th handbell peal.

Matt Hetherington and Jessie McLeod on their engagement

Sam and Phil Gorman on their marriage

Wendy Winter and Colin Belsey on their marriage

Lizzie and John Hetherington on the birth of James Thomas Hetherington

The Devon Call Change band who won the Trinity Shield in the National Devon Call Change competition.



Congratulations

We were delighted to welcome Ron Noon to the July Country Meeting – Ron has been a member for 64 years and shared with us past memories of the Society.

Website

The SRCY website has seen some changes in 2009. The main addition has been the creation of the Peal Compositions database. This database has been a long time in the planning, and once we got some compositions in it to search against, it went live. It will be continually expanded as more and more compositions are rung for the Society and sent to the Junior Steward. We will also start going back to previously submitted compositions as well.

For those of you who have already used it, you will see you can search against the most common options. There have been a couple of suggestions about how to enhance it, and some of these will be added in 2010.

Most of the other work that has gone in to the website has been administration – adding and editing pages, uploading photos, and making sure all of it is up to date. I must thank everyone who has helped contribute to the site, whether it be writing articles, picking up on corrections, or submitting photographs.

The other thing to note is that the website is the Society's website, and as members everyone gets a say. If you have any ideas for something that could be added then please let me know. I have a couple of ideas myself – and they will be added to the website in the early part of 2010. Please remember all contributions, whether it be ideas, words or photos, are appreciated.

Peter Harrison

Anniversaries of Membership

Elected 1949 – 60 Years

Audrey Allaway
Jim Page
Barbara Raithby
Beryl N. Reed
Patricia Cross
Stella Knight
The Revd The Lord John Wrenbury
Treyor A. Cross

Elected 1959 – 50 Years

Mark W. Lewis
Derek Wilkinson
Stan Jenner
The Revd Ian D. Zass Ogilvie
Ivy Senior
Clive M. Smith
Andrew J. Strathdee
John H. Allen
The Revd
Canon Chad R. C. Coussmaker
Maria Stanley
David A. Leach
Michael W. Fairey
The Revd Reginald J. Stretton

Elected 1969 – 40 Years

Jean Nixon
Lucy Smith
Susan Read
Jeremy D. Cheesman
Katharine Firman
Jennifer Starbuck
The Revd Janet House
James R. White
Graham A. Duke
Valerie Roberts
Felicity S. Warwick
David S. Harris
Jeanette Harris



SRCY PEALS 250, 200 and 100 years ago

Date	Tower	Method	Conductor
1760			
21st July	St Giles Camberwell	Plain Bob Major	Samuel Wood
1810			
19th February	St Andrew's Holborn	Grandsire Triples	George Gross
26th April	St Mary's Harrow on the Hill	Grandsire Triples	Daniel Pope
1910			
8th January	St Luke's Chelsea	Double Norwich CB Major	Frank Smith
11th January	St Anne Highgate	Kent TB Major	William J. Nudds
2nd April	St Anne Highgate	Kent TB Major	Richard Bevan
2nd April	All Saints' Edmonton	London S Major	James Parker
23rd April	St Martin-in-the-Fields	Stedman Cinques	Frank Bennett
30th April	All Saints' Edmonton	London Major	James Parker
20th May	All Saints' Edmonton	Stedman Triples	James Parker
28th May	All Saints' Leighton Buzzard	Kent TB Royal	Frank Bennett
11th June	All Saints' Edmonton	Stedman Triples	Edith K. Parker
19th November	St Mary's Walthamstow	Stedman Caters	John D. Matthews
19th November	All Saints' Edmonton	Superlative S Major	James Parker
10th December	St Mary's Battersea	Double Norwich CB Major	Frank Bennett
31st December	All Saints' Edmonton	Stedman Triples	Edith K. Parker

The peal on 20th May at Edmonton was rung with the bells muffled for the funeral of HM King Edward VII.

Elected 1983 – 25 Years

(Editorial error – not included in last year's newsletter)

Keith F. Chambers
Joy Kipling
Martin Morris
Alan Regin
Simon K. Ruth
Caroline A. Emery
Jeffery P. Cooper
Sarah Vernon
Eileen V. Sweet
Andrew M. J. Young
Lorna E. Champney
Ray East
Paul J. Flavell

New Members

Ben Hockenhull, Edward Marchbank, Clare McArdle, Christopher Pearson, Sarah E. Hutchinson, Angela M. E. Jasper, Thomas J. Waterson, Michael Barnicott-White, Valerie J. Simmonds, Anne E. Deebank, Edward Mack, Kevin McManus, Judith R. Moreton, Sarah Young, Nick Brown, Martin Crick, Vicky Johnstone, Edith Robinson, Marion Robinson.

Elected 1984 – 25 Years

Rosemary Buckle
Simon J. Plackett
Wendy Bloom
Christopher M. Wulkau
Alison J. Cox
Patricia A. M. Halls
Janet I. Rogers
Emma Cundiff
Christine E. Dringer
Joanne F. Milner
Susan M. Sawyer
Peter J. Sawyer

Michael C. Maughan

A future Member?



Adelaide Sheppard