



ANNUAL REPORT AND NEWSLETTER OF THE
**ANCIENT SOCIETY OF
COLLEGE YOUTHS**
JUNE 2015



The Master greets members arriving on HMS Warrior at the 2014 Country Meeting.

The natural rhythm of the Society's year is punctuated by the election of a new Master and other officers at the business meeting in November, held shortly after the Anniversary Dinner. 'Simon Meyer's year' was completed in excellent style with a most enjoyable dinner, and we are now being swept along briskly through 'Katie Town's year'.

There is also continuity, though, and this is evident in our regular Tuesday practices. We have been fortunate in having a core of members who attend regularly, and are usually assiduous in ensuring that

they come well prepared. Recent Masters have ensured that there has been continuity in the repertoire (apart from Simon Meyer's brief venture into Carter Cinques), which has meant that some ten maximus methods are now on the regular agenda, rung singly or in spliced, with plenty of Stedman to satisfy those with a taste for it. Indeed, the current Master invited members to sign up for some tuition in conducting Stedman from Paul Mounsey, and a few new voices have been heard uttering unfamiliar words (including 'stand' on one or two occasions).

A particular highlight of 2014 was the Country Meeting held in Portsmouth. This was preceded, as has now become the norm, by two or three days of peal ringing, taking in such fine buildings and bells as Romsey Abbey and Winchester Cathedral, as well as the excellent light rings of ten at North Stoneham and Bishopstoke. The Saturday programme included open ringing on all three towers in Portsmouth, though the attraction of a long lunchtime on a sunny terrace of a dockside hostelry detained a number of members. The short business meeting was followed by a reception and dinner on HMS Warrior, the armoured frigate built for the Royal Navy in 1860 and now moored in Portsmouth's historic dockyard. Dining on the gun deck was certainly an atmospheric business.

Attendance at the Country Meeting was boosted by members from North America, Australasia and mainland Europe, arriving for the start of UK14, the fourth of Simon Linford's intensive programmes designed for overseas members (UK05, UK08, UK11 and UK14). Based initially in Southampton, then moving on to Birmingham, the 26 members were pushed – mostly willingly – to take opportunities to ring things which they had not been able to tackle before. Five members of the party took part in a course of Stedman Septuples during a practice at St Martin's Birmingham. A full course of Bristol Maximus with all eleven inside ropes taken by course members was real evidence of the programme's success, as were the four successful peal attempts which brought it to a conclusion. These events are badged as Society events, and are offered to Society members, but the vision and energy behind them comes very much from Simon, to whom thanks and congratulations are due.

Another group of 26 members and friends took part in a visit to the World War I war graves and memorials in Northern France and Belgium, remembering members who fell in the conflict which began 100 years previously.

The final of the National Twelve Bell Contest took place at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Having emerged as convincing winners from a tricky eliminator at Cripplegate earlier in the year, the Society's band sallied forth in fairly optimistic mood. Birmingham were clear winners for a fifth

consecutive year, with the College Youths in the chasing bunch, and feeling slightly disappointed to have been placed behind both the SRCY and Bristol. There was some consolation in knowing that the Hawkear models also found it difficult to agree upon teams two to four. The Oxford ringers organised a splendid day, through which the constant heavy showers simply drove competitors and supporters towards the enormous marquee on the college lawns. This year, too, the Society's band was judged to have won its eliminator contest at Wakefield Cathedral, and looks forward to the final in Norwich at the end of June.

The London Twelve Bell Competition has now become a fixture in the calendar. The sixth annual contest took place at St Mary-le-Bow in October, and the Society's band was a convincing winner, with a second Society band taking third place (and the SRCY sandwiched between the two). This was a repeat of the result on the inaugural competition, held in October 2009.

Peal weekend – the third weekend in September – saw 30 successful attempts completed, including peals in Holland and in the USA. These contributed to a total of 232 peals rung during Simon Meyer's year as Master. More detail is given elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The 377th Anniversary Dinner was held at the Guoman Tower Hotel on 1 November. The gathering was richly entertained by Rev Steven Brookes, currently chaplain at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and formerly vicar of St Nicholas Liverpool. His knowledge of the bad habits of Liverpool ringers, some of whom were seated very close to him, was impressive. The toast to the Society was proposed in fine style by Ann White.

At the November business meeting, Katie Town succeeded Simon Meyer as Master. An accomplished ringer on tower and handbells, Katie comes from a ringing family (mother and father have both rung over 1000 peals). A graduate of the University of London, she has taken part in almost 300 Society peals since her election as a member in 2001. Tessa Beadman became Senior Steward, while Rob Lee was elected Junior Steward.



A brand of watch, far outside my price-range, advertises itself with the slogan: You never actually own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation. This is similar to how I see my role as this year's CYs Master. I feel enormously honoured to be in the position of leading the Society for a short period, but I am well-aware that any success this year is the result of lots of hard work from the Masters who have gone before me and my aim is to leave the Society in an even stronger place for those who come next. Hopefully, come November, I'll have achieved that.

As I write, it is already an alarming way through the year. Past Masters told me the year would go quickly, but they did not convey just how incredibly rapid it would be. In some ways I feel as if I have hardly got started and that there is so much still to do, but another way of looking at this is that there is so much still to look forward to.

I have always felt Tuesday night practices are at the core of keeping the Society successful and it has been a priority for me to keep the practices fun, whilst maintaining high standards and a demanding portfolio of methods. It seems that this approach is appreciated, with numbers high and members enjoying the challenges presented. Of course this poses its own issues for me and it is an on-going

challenge to balance the practices for quality, progression, opportunity, aspiration and inspiration; I hope I continue to hit this fine balance and I am sure that members will (continue to) tell me when I don't.

As part of my aim to give developmental opportunities, I commissioned Paul Mounsey to run a series of sessions about conducting Stedman Cinques – Stedman School or Boot-camp as it came to be known. Nine members have already successfully completed the course and there have already been opportunities for some of them to conduct touches on Tuesday nights. In addition there was interest from members further afield and notes will be distributed as part of a distance learning scheme.

It is always lovely to be able to welcome members from further afield on Tuesdays – please do come along if you are visiting London. However I'm well aware that visiting a Tuesday practice is not possible for most members. As I also know how important the Society is to our members, wherever they are based, I have tried to create moments during the year where more members can get involved.

We were able to involve over 80 members in a peal weekend based in Birmingham during the early May Bank holiday. For this, Michael Wilby secured a lot of towers all across the Midlands. A major problem on the railway meant that one peal attempt had to be abandoned, and another reduced from twelve bells to ten. Human error also contributed to a reduced success rate, but the weekend also had a strong social focus.

The Society's Country meeting will be held in the gregarious city of Leeds on 18 July with dinner in the Royal Armouries Museum, peals on the days before and open ringing during the Saturday. Then towards the end of the year on 10 October there will be a Master's Challenge day in Worcester. The format is still a work in progress, but towers and venues have been booked and beer is being brewed. I hope this will attract bands from across the country.

Thanks to everyone who has supported society practices and events during this year, or who will do so in the months ahead. The warmth of feeling for the Society and engagement with its activities is already over-whelming and it makes all the hard work behind the scenes feel more than worthwhile. I really hope that those who are able to get involved enjoy the year as much as I am.

PEAL RINGING IN 2013/14

The year from November 2013 to 2014 saw a total of 232 peals rung by the Society, of which 208 were on tower bells and 24 on handbells. This was slightly down on the previous year (257), though broadly similar to the three years before that. Peal weekend accounted for 30 peals, and the anniversary dinner weekend a further 16.

The number of members taking part in these peals was 415, rather fewer than the previous year (491). Once again, the leading peal ringer was Graham Bradshaw with 58, followed by Philip Rogers with 51. A number of bands contributed to the total on a regular basis – Tony Kench’s ‘first Saturday’ band (in its final year), Gwen Rogers’ second Tuesday band (there must be a kinder name than ‘Old Fogies’), and the handbell bands meeting at Cornhill Vestry, Highbury Crescent and Aldenham School. Roy LeMarechal and Graham Bradshaw were assiduous peal organisers, spurred on by their enthusiasm for visiting new towers, no matter how far flung.

The Society makes very good use of the excellent rings of bells in and around the City of London, with St Magnus the Martyr, St Mary-le-Bow and St James Garlickhythe making frequent appearances in the list. 71 of the peals were on 12 or more bells, while 23 were of Minor or Doubles. Stedman, Cambridge and Bristol were rung most frequently, along with Spliced Surprise.

Among the notable performances were:

- Peals in 78, 107, 147 and 148 Treble Dodging Minor methods, composed and conducted by John Warboys, including the 147 regular TD methods and the ‘standard’ 178 methods respectively;
- 5040 Scientific Triples at Garlickhythe, the first peal in the method by the Society and Andrew Graham’s first odd-bell peal as conductor;
- 5016 Spliced Maximus (the ‘Pipe Classic’ composition on a cyclic plan) at Exeter Cathedral, with the tenor rung by Matt Hilling;
- 5010 Spliced 16 in eight methods at St Martin’s Birmingham by Tony Kench’s ‘first Saturday’ band (augmented), with 16-bell

versions of the Moons of Jupiter methods rung for the first time;

- Peals of Stedman Cinques and Yorkshire Maximus at Trinity Church, New York, by US members;
- John Noonan’s composition of Stedman Triples rung silent and non-conducted.

The Society’s Peal Recorder, maintains full details of peals rung, including compositions, and these records are available to all on the Society’s web site. The Society also maintains its tradition of hand written illuminated peal books. The current handsome volume was generously donated by Paul Mounsey, and the peal writer is Clare Griffiths

VISIT TO WAR GRAVES AND MEMORIALS

The Master’s initiative of a visit to the World War I war graves and memorials came to fruition on 26 and 27 July, when a group including ten past masters of the Society made the journey to Ypres (Ieper), and visited some dozen locations over two days.



Alan Regin’s immense knowledge of the subject, so willingly and sensitively shared, made it a most moving occasion. Plans are now being made to mark the centenaries of the deaths of individual members as they occur over the next three years, and to preserve the valuable biographical records which Alan has created.

THE COLLEGE YOUTHS AND NORWICH

On 27 June, a Society band will be in Norwich, hoping to achieve at least a respectable result in the final of the National Twelve Bell Striking Contest. They will enter what George Pipe recently described as ‘one of the great atmospheric ringing chambers we have’, and look upwards to the three sets of guides – all very daunting. But this will, of course, be just the latest in a long series of relationships between the Society and the talented ringers of Norwich. Three specific examples come to mind.



Much is being made of the 300th anniversary of a peal of Plain Bob Triples, rung at St Peter Mancroft on 2 May 1715, which is widely accepted as the first certainly true peal. Loyal College Youths, though, point to their record of a peal in the same method rung at St Sepulchre's without Newgate on 7 January 1689/90, also claimed as ‘the first 5040 that was ever rung’. Historian John Eisel examines the evidence for the Society peal (in *Change ringing: the history of an English art*; volume 1; CCCBR, 1987), and shows that a true composition was available at the time, so the peal could have been true and complete. But he eventually concludes we do not have the actual figures for the composition and that ‘unless further evidence comes to light, a definite decision one way or the other cannot be made.’ Nevertheless, and in a good-natured way, the Society holds to its belief that the Mancroft peal was the second true peal. It is perhaps through divine intervention that plans to ring two Society peals of 5002 changes over the first weekend in May, as a compliment to our friends in Norwich, both came to grief.

Moving forward to 1785, there is no doubt that the Norwich Scholars had a band of outstanding ringers, and a very fine ring of twelve (the same bells as we shall ring on this year, cast in 1775, apart from the tenor which was recast in 1814). During a visit to Norwich in 1785, a Society band failed to score a peal of Treble Bob Maximus (the Norwich Scholars

held the T.B. Maximus record of 6240 at the time), but were treated to a touch of Stedman Cinques by the Norwich band, which they heard ‘with great astonishment, and acknowledged they never before heard the like’. They left one of their number, Thomas Blakemore, behind in Norwich for some months to learn Stedman Caters and Cinques, and to pass on his knowledge to the Society after his return to London. Three years later, the Society rang the first ever peal of Stedman Cinques, composed and conducted by Blakemore (6 October 1788 at St Martin-in-the-Fields). We therefore have to acknowledge the help which the Society received from the Norwich Scholars, introducing it to Stedman Cinques.

And then there was 1998, when the final of the National Twelve Bell Striking Contest was held at Mancroft, and the Society maintained its pattern of winning the contest every six years (1980, 1986, 1992 and 1998). I was a judge on that occasion, working with George Pipe and Ann White. We were located for the day in an adjacent pub, where Ann and I shared a cramped lavatory (the best place from which to hear the bells), with George in a separate room. We came to ready agreement on the winning piece, held together by Chris Kippin's steadfast tenor ringing, and I think had a pretty good idea that we had been listening to the ASCY. What I certainly had not foreseen was that we had been careless enough to place Birmingham fifth out of eight. Within moments of the results being announced, Rod Pipe dashed across the church to upbraid me, giving me a comprehensive account of my errors, with the characteristic arm waving that always accompanied his perorations. It is not the only time I was offered corrective advice from Rod, but it was certainly memorable. Fortunately, none of those debates undermined our warm friendship.

It would of course be wonderful to see this result replicated in 2015. Whatever the outcome, we are sure to have a feast of good ringing and socialising, and will hope to have strong support from members on the day.

(The illustration of Mancroft above is a pen and ink drawing by George Pipe which was commissioned by Rod Pipe as a birthday gift for David House in 2006).

RETIREMENT OF THE 'FIRST SATURDAY BAND'

In January 1995, there was a peal of Spliced Maximus in 10 methods at St Sepulchre, composed and conducted by Steve Coaker. It was the first in a series of peals arranged by Tony Kench – a series which was drawn to a graceful conclusion in December 2014. 138 peals were rung (and quite a few lost) over twenty years, concluding with the final peal in December 2014.

The composition for the first peal in the series was in 11 parts (part-end 1ET234567890), and the methods were drawn from the repertoire of the day – Avon, Orion, Rigel, Strathclyde, Maypole, along with Cambridge, Superlative, Countesthorpe [12ths place Lincolnshire], Fenchurch and Newgate. The transition from part to part was made through the use of four singles in each part. Five more peals were rung in 1995, all on a similar plan and all composed and conducted by Steve Coaker, with new methods replacing some of the simpler fare. Their names (Cockpit, Dr Butler, Jam Pot, King Lud, Giltspur) signalled the band's association with streets and hostelrys of the City of London.

The band's first peal without bobs came in 1997, with Cheetah Little Alliance obviating the need for all those singles. And over the years, the link methods proliferated – Blink, Clink, Slink, Slinky, Lynx, Chain Link, Fleet Lynx, Thames Lynx. For some of the band, it became a running joke that one should not look at the month's link method until inside the M25 on the way to the tower. 'Channel Tunnel Rail Link Little Differential' boasted a name longer than its six rows in a lead.

Twelve part compositions – all the work for all 12 bells – appeared from 2001, and the two versions of the 'Pipe Classic' (11 part and 12 part) were at the heart of the repertoire for succeeding years. Tony Kench was a determined innovator, and found ways of sneaking new methods into the Pipe format – Niad, Kings, Hebe and Porter all came and went. Two other composition families brought variety and new challenges – the 'Red' methods from John Warboys, and the 'Moons of Jupiter' from David Pipe.

There were three excursions into 16-bell ringing, proving that cyclic music works just as well on 16 as it does on 12, with even longer runs up and down the scale.

St Sepulchre was very much a home base, with 84 peals rung there, and another dozen at other London towers. There were also a few foreign forays, with

four peals at Trinity Church Wall Street, New York, three at Ballymena and one at Toronto Cathedral.

Over the twenty years, 84 ringers took part in the peals. Tony Kench was in 137, and the others who rang in over 100 were David Dearnley, David House and Paul Mounsey. John Hughes-D'Aeth became the band's regular conductor, in the chair for 87 of the 138 peals, while Phil Rogers was frequently seen on the tenor box (42 times to be precise).

In February, over thirty of those who had taken part in these peals entertained Tony to lunch at the Market Porter in Southwark. There was immense gratitude and admiration for his dedicated organisation. Not only were bands organised every month for 20 years, but before each attempt, clear written instructions were circulated, with the composition neatly typed and handwritten blue lines drawn with Tony's dependable blue felt-tip pen. Occasional hints and tips about the methods were also offered. Overall, this was a major contribution to the ringing activity of the Society.



The post-peal social activity was also a valued part of the proceedings, and there are many memories of extended sessions in The Paternoster, sometimes flushed with success and at other times accepting defeat with as much grace as we could muster.

NEW MEMBERS

The following were elected and welcomed as new Members in the year to November 2014:

Mark P Jacot of Macclesfield
Christopher Teasdale of Morpeth
Alexandra J Hajok of Worcester
Aled G Jones of Bassaleg
George M Salter of Ipswich

Penny J Salisbury of Ludlow
Patrick W J Deakin of Stapleford
Robert G Gibson of Washington, DC
Timothy M D Stanford of Billericay

OBITUARY

We paid tribute to the following Members at Society Business Meetings in the year to November 2014:

E G (Jeff) White of Vancouver, elected in 1947
S Geoffrey Waters of Wittersham, elected in 1950
Philip W Weeks of Ebbw Vale, elected in 1951
Roy H Jones of Marston, elected in 1951
Alan D Flood of Horsell, elected in 1970
Robert P Wood of Bedford, elected in 1973
Roger P Peters of Benhall, elected in 1974

Dennis A Hewitt of Walthamstow, elected in 1978
Simon P Griffiths of Ipswich, elected in 1980
Edward W Martin of Washington, DC, elected in 1983
Peter Mayle of Clare, elected in 1986
F Gordon Faulks of Heanor, elected in 1989
Thomas C Arkell of Victoria, BC, elected in 2000

MILESTONES

We congratulate the following members who celebrated 50 years' membership in 2014:

Michael Bland of Caversham
W John Couperthwaite of Fleet
David W Friend of Poynton
Richard D Gibson of Cottingham
Frederick R Harris of Dilwyn
David J Herschell of Lichfield
David G Massey of Frome
Ian C Maycock of Leamington Spa
John Meredith of Southwell
Christopher T Osenton of Dartford
David S Osenton of Maidstone
John Owen of Winston-Salem

Malcolm A Phillips of Warwick
Roger W Powell of Aylesbury
Geoffrey Pratt of Bulkington
Philip J Rothera of Oswestry
David R Saunderson of Eaton Socon
Nicholas W H Simon of London
Anthony H Smith of Biggleswade
Richard S Starkie of Macclesfield
George E Thoday of Colchester
Roger Tingley of Hereford
Keith J Triplow of Fyfield

And we congratulate the following members who reached 60 years membership in 2014:

J Richard Castledine of Stotfold
Brian Grinter of Poole
Colin A S Harwood of Biggleswade
Canon David Hoare of Aylsham
Bernard Ongley of Grappenhall

Raymond I F Parsons of Coleman's Hatch
Gwilym G Salmon of Dunedin
David Sutcliffe of Baldock
John Waters of Mousehole

DIARY DATES

18 July: Country Meeting, Leeds
18-20 September: Peal weekend
10 October: Master's Challenge, Worcester
7 November: 378th Anniversary Dinner

PRACTICE SCHEDULE 2015

The practice schedule as currently arranged is set out below. Changes to this are posted on the Society's website and notified to members via the e-mail group. Business meetings take place after the practice on the second Tuesday of each month. The normal venue for Business Meetings is The Counting House, 50 Cornhill, London EC3. The July meeting will be at The Red Herring,

June 2	St Sepulchre
June 9	Cornhill (Special practice: Bow)
June 16	High Wycombe (7pm)
June 23	Bow
June 30	Southwark
July 7	Cornhill
July 14	Bow (Special practice: St Sepulchre)
July 21	St Paul's Cathedral
July 28	St Magnus
Aug 4	St Sepulchre
Aug 11	St Magnus (Special Practice: St Paul's)
Aug 18	Cornhill
Aug 25	Southwark
Sept 1	St Magnus
Sept 8	Cornhill (Special practice: Bow)
Sept 15	St Sepulchre
Sep 22	St Paul's Cathedral
Sep 29	Cripplegate
Oct 6	St Magnus
Oct 13	Bow (Special practice: Cornhill)
Oct 20	St Sepulchre
Oct 27	Southwark
Nov 3	Bow
Nov 10	Cornhill (Special practice: St Magnus)
Nov 17	St Paul's Cathedral
Nov 24	Cripplegate
Dec 1	Cornhill
Dec 8	Bow (Special practice at St Paul's)
Dec 15	St Magnus
Dec 22	St Sepulchre
Dec 29	Cripplegate

SOCIETY OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS 2014/15

Master	Katherine L Town
Secretary	David E House
Treasurer	Philip Rogers
Senior Steward	Tessa K Beadman
Junior Steward	Robert W Lee
Librarian	Dickon R Love
Trustees	Paul N Mounsey Christopher H Rogers
Peal Recorder	Richard I Allton
Webmaster	Martin J Cansdale

TOWER SECRETARIES

St Giles Cripplegate: Gwen Rogers, 193 Lennard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1QN. Tel 020 8778 6308
E-mail: gbm.rogers@ntlworld.com

St Lawrence Jewry: Jillian Galloway
E-mail: jewry@ascy.org.uk

St Magnus the Martyr: Dickon Love, 10 Wharton Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3LF. Tel 020 8466 1953
E-mail: dickon@ascy.org.uk

St Sepulchre: Rachael Smith
Tel 07966 962654
E-mail: Rachael_c_smith@yahoo.com

St Michael's Cornhill: Tony Kench, 75 Little Britain Apt 51, London EC1A 7BT. Tel 020 7796 2656
E-mail: tony.kench@btinternet.com

ASCY ON THE WEB

The Society's Web Site is at www.ascy.org.uk. The Web Site contains regular updates on Society activities, pictures of Society events, contact details for Members, Society peals and much more information.

PEAL FEES

Peal fees (£1.50 per rope) and details should be forwarded to the Treasurer within 2 months. Advance notice of peal attempts is given at Society Meetings if advised in time.

CORRESPONDENCE

Please send to the Secretary, David E House, at 28 Waldegrave Road, Brighton, BN1 6GE (tel: 01273-507077; e-mail: secretary@ascy.org.uk). Items for the web site should be e-mailed to Martin Cansdale (webmaster@ascy.org.uk).

SOCIETY E-MAIL NEWS SERVICE

The Society maintains an e-mail news service, which is free to members. Subscription is via the web site or by sending an e-mail request to the Secretary or Webmaster. Members are encouraged to subscribe to the e-group and to provide their e-mail address for inclusion on the (hopefully spam-proof) web site list.

NEWSLETTER FINANCE

This Newsletter depends heavily on financial support from members. Postal charges continue to increase and last year the total cost of printing and distributing the Newsletter was almost £1400. We are most grateful to those members who have contributed a total of £1250 towards this sum. Some 600 members have now elected to do receive the newsletter by e-mail, rather than by a paper copy, which has led to a saving in production and postage costs. However, postal charges continue to rise, so we still need more of you to sign up. Of course, we accept that it will not suit all members and hard copies will continue to be available for those who want them.