

Gt Gransden Church Bell Ringers

Blog 2013

16th December 2013

Following the success of the previous video Rebecca has kindly compiled another which includes a recording of the bells before they were re-hung in 2000. The two-minute clip is part of a quarter peal of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles which was rung in September 1996. This is the only known recording of the bells before they were re-tuned. The photographs are of the installation before the restoration, and includes a shot from the then silence chamber (now the clock room) when the bells were rung from the ground floor.

13th December 2013

Not much happening at practice on Thursday. One away on holiday, Sheila P was assisting Martin with his performance of A Christmas Carol, and we received two notifications of absence. Never mind! we had some good practice at ringing up the front 4 in peal - well done Andrew, and this was followed by call changes on six and Plain Hunt on five. The ring down was equally good, so all in all we made the best of the situation. Planning for our Christmas party - we have about 20 coming made up of ringers, former ringers and supporters, so we are looking forward to this. Tips of the week - hands all the way down at backstroke and practice adjusting the rope correctly to enable the bell to ring sooner or to ring later when ringing Plain Hunt

6th December 2013

A very intense practice last night with a lot of effort given by everyone. We managed to ring plain courses and touches of Plain Bob Doubles as well as call changes. Still need to work on the dodging and improve the striking but the basics are there and we are gradually improving. Thanks to Matthew and Michelle (Michelle unfortunately not well on this occasion) for coming over to help us every week, it is helping a lot. Victoria is learning to ring up and down solo but did ring up the second in peal on the front three pretty well. Andrew is keen to ring by counting his places, and Alastair realises that this is the way too. Much encouragement needed to help everyone even though the lessons are sometimes hard learnt! Keep up the good work everyone, it will pay off in the long run. Hunts District quarter peal tomorrow with Sheila P ringing the treble.

21st November 2013

As mentioned in the blog of the 11th I hoped to be able to include a sound bite of the peal rung on the 9th November. Thanks to Rebecca Banner this has been achieved. Rebecca merged photographs of the church with a 2-minute audio extract and the result can be seen here.

23rd December 2013

Pretorium commented on the video: Lovely piece of ringing on a nice ring of bells. A pleasure to listen to.

11th November 2013

Not much to report for recent weeks. We have been a bit short on ringers from time to time but we manage to keep the bells ringing. and thanks to our visitors on Thursday evenings. The attendance for tower open day was disappointing as it competed with a myriad of other Saturday "things to do". Never mind, highlight of the afternoon was the visit by a young lad who had very limited sight. He was able to experience the bell tower in a much different way than most of us and it was a joy to help him do this.

Sheila and Phillip are trying out their newly learned teaching skills picked up at the ITTS course. Victoria is helping us with this and is progressing well. Ringing up and down are the next skills being learned and the new techniques are proving to be very helpful so far.

A [peal](#) was rung on the 9th November. Originally planned months ago for some ringing friends. I decided to muffle the bells as it was Remembrance weekend and we had some lovely ringing for just over 3 hours. I recorded the entire peal and hope one day to upload part of this recording to the website.

Clock wires continue to be a challenge. I have just repaired two which recently broke. Its tortuous working under the bell frame - I don't think the knees will hold out much longer!!

6th October 2013

Well, we're ready for the tower open day. The tower is clean (thanks to the efforts of the clean-up team last week), offers of cakes for the open day have been received, the Ely Diocesan Association publicity display boards have been collected ready to be erected in the church, advertising leaflets have been circulated to each household in Gt and Lt Gransden and we are looking forward to welcoming visitors and showing them something about church bell ringing. Date: Saturday 12th October - 2.00pm to 5.00pm. All welcome.

23rd September 2013

Not much to report this week. Main point of interest (or not) is the acquisition of some tools for the tower. This included the usual things which might come in useful, some of which are usually forgotten when there is a job to be done and tools have to be brought from home! The xxx-year-old "wander-light" finally packed up last week, so a new one was added to the purchases. Horrible bright red plastic - just can't get the quality these days! The tools are neatly stored in a small plastic tool box and the whole lot came to about £50. Good job we had some wedding money in the bell fund!

Five for ringing on Sunday. Thought we would only have four but Martin was visiting and so came to ring. Excellent! Sheila was at the cathedral supporting her co ALM workers for their re-licencing. She sang in the improvised choir. Comment received today about how nice the choir sounded. I digress - we rang some very good call changes on the back five (tenor cover).

Everything ready for the tower clean-up day on Saturday when we will sweep from top to bottom. Thankfully we don't have any unauthorised bits of stuff to move so often found in towers such as lawn mowers and Christmas cribs etc. That's the advantage of having an upstairs ringing room. Happy days!

15th September 2013

Another good practice on Thursday and progress continues albeit in small steps. More tenor ringing for the boys seemed to tire them out as they flopped across the chairs during the last 10 minutes, but that could also be put down to the new school routine. Victoria rang rounds unassisted and Michelle continues to improve with call changes; and Matthew called them. David and Sheila P rang PBD and all is well! The Plain Hunt was "fun"!

Sadly, we said farewell to Michael who is moving to Bath, so we will miss him, but say thanks for being one of our regular ringers. We look forward to seeing him at Christmas.

On Saturday we rang for a wedding - usual stuff - sixty on thirds which takes about 20 minutes followed by firing if the wedding party are still there. We thought they wouldn't hang around this time because it was wet under foot and a little chilly. However, they were still there after the call changes, indeed, the bride and groom came back into church to have more photographs. So we fired the bells. Rachel (churchwarden) was still in church so I asked her to video it for me (thank you Rachel), and this can be found on my Facebook page and YouTube.

We were down to three on Sunday - family event and scout camp prevented some from being there. Neve mind, we rang two lots of three in rounds, followed by down. Very good ringing, and at least we made a noise. Looking forward to Thursday - back to full house!

6th September 2013

Our first practice after the summer holidays and it's good to see everyone again. The tin is full of sweets and biscuits brought by returning holiday makers. The ringing room is noisy and full of energy but everyone gets the opportunity to ring. Andrew writes the new academic years' resolutions on the white board:

Pay attention to the striking Concentrate listen to the conductor

Don't call 1 to 6 (a throwback from when he learned to call changes when he called 1 to 6 and threw everyone into turmoil!)

Alasdair and Andrew rang the tenor (Alasdair for the first time). Although it is only 673 kg (13.5cwt in old money) it is much heavier than what they are used to. We should encourage them to ring this bell more often. Alasdair immediately suffered from "tenor to treble syndrome", when he was asked to ring the treble but couldn't control it at all. We had to start again!

Victoria is coming on well with bell handling and is much improved after her last ring 2 weeks ago and Michelle is almost competent at call changes. Michael is with us for another week or so and he and Matthew rang the tenor behind for others to ring a couple of plain courses of Plain Bob doubles.

The leaflet for the tower open day on October 12th has been proof read and is at the printers ready to go. (see front page and the Events Diary.

I carried on my work this week for Dove by making digital recordings of each of the bells (including old No 3), so that the records can be updated. I sent these to Tim Jackson for analysis. Dove will be updated in due course. The link is

1st September 2013

Unfortunately, there were only two of us this morning (Sunday 1st), so the bells were silent. Last minute family arrangements kept some away and the tail end of the holidays prevented others from attending. Never mind - it is the start of a new season and we should look forward with anticipation to getting back into routine.

Since I added the page on Little Gransden Bells I have been contacted by the editors of Dove (the bell ringers' guide to church bells) and asked if I could get more information about the bells. This has entailed a further visit to the belfry to measure diameters and make a digital recording of each bell. The founder of the tenor is uncertain but the bell is dated 1616. The church does not hold records going back this far and I have contacted the Cambridgeshire Archives to see if they have any parish records. First contact suggests that they have and so I will investigate further and hopefully be able to visit Shire Hall to carry out further investigation. Details of the bells recorded in Dove can be found at

<http://dove.cccbr.org.uk/detail.php?DoveID=LITTLE+GRA#frames>.

I have also been asked to clarify one or two details about Great Gransden bells and frame and I will carry this out during the next week or so.

22nd August 2013

What a great practice this evening! Started at 6.30 with a tied bell practice for Victoria. She is learning quickly and ringing both strokes together with help. Just got to iron out some detail handling issues, but all going well so far. This was followed by the main practice at 7.30pm when we had 13 in the tower - a record for many a month. This included Daniel and Caroline from Swavesey, coming over during the school holidays, and Matthew, Michelle and Megan from Littleport. Everyone had several rings, either solo, in Rounds, or otherwise.

Andrew had returned from holiday and brought some clotted cream fudge, so he gets a special mention in dispatches. - Thanks Andrew. He rang the tenor for the first time this evening to Rounds and made a pretty good job of it too.

We managed a "limited variety" of things, and the bells were kept busy with only short breaks in between. Daniel rang the treble as the second (its lighter so a bit easier for him), and he is definitely improving as I am confident about leaving him to his own devices now, so - well done Daniel. Michelle is making great strides too as she now has the opportunity to ring nearer home as well as with us and she is gaining in confidence. Megan also rang the handstroke and backstroke on their own and although she hasn't had the opportunity to touch a bell rope for several months has not forgotten how to do it.

The sweets were handed around during the notices and I said that if they were sticky everyone would have to go and wash their hands. Comment delivered with a smile and received with quiet laughter!! Of course I was ignored!

We did manage to ring a few courses of Plain Bob Doubles interspersed with Rounds and call changes and hopefully everyone had enough ringing. Next Thursday is due to be well supported too and then it will be back to routine as school starts again, and we lose Michael who is shortly moving away. [Our Bell Ringing for Beginners and Tower Open Day in October](#) will need to deliver some new recruits!

Many thanks to our supporters from other towers, we are always pleased to see you whenever you have time on a Thursday. Sheila and I will reciprocate and whiz over to Swavesey when we can.

20th August 2013

We rang a quarter peal today at Great. A group of friends meet once a month to ring a quarter peal at different churches. We include a variety of methods in our attempts and this month was Cambridge S Minor for Becky to ring the treble. We were due to ring this month's at Houghton but due to last minute circumstances we had to change venue but were able to get Gransden bells at short notice and a very nice quarter of was rung in 47 minutes. The band was: Becky Zarate - 1 (first in a treble dodging method), Sally Mew - 2, Catherina Griffiths - 3, Sheila George - 4, Iain Hayden - 5, Phillip George (c) - 6. Thanks to The Rev Catharine Furlong for allowing us to ring at short notice. A summary of all quarter peals rung on the bells can be found [here](#).

16th August 2013

I have mentioned previously that we are a bit low on ringers at the moment with most taking it in turns to be on holiday and others with work commitments. Recruitment is the answer for the long term and so we have decided to have a tower open day on Saturday 12th October. No details yet but I expect it will include a visit to the belfry, demonstration ringing and CCTV.

Amidst the current uncertainty of who might be at practice or service ringing we are sometimes pleasantly surprised. A couple of weeks ago Caroline (Swavesey) brought Daniel along to our practice and we were able to give him the opportunity of ringing on different bells. Caroline was a great help to our practice too, making up the numbers to ring Plain Bob Doubles. They also came to our practice last night, this time Daniel brought his Bell Club card and we were able to tot up enough bells to award him his 10-bell badge. (Hope dad Andrew doesn't mind!). Matthew came along too and rang the tenor behind to PBD, another great help for our practice.

On Wednesday Victoria had her first bell handling lesson. She had shown an interest when we were chatting at a recent garden party and so we were keen to give her the opportunity to learn something about ringing. In little over an hour she was ringing handstroke and backstroke together with help and progress looks promising. We meet again next Thursday when she will be able to join the main practice after a tied bell session.

Indications are that our next practice will be well supported, so we look forward to welcoming everyone.

Last Sunday I received a comment from a member of the church choir that the bells sounded lovely, and also how nice they sounded after the wedding on the Saturday. "But", she said, "what was that crashing sound at the end?" I explained that we always

fire the bells at the end of our ringing for weddings. This is our party piece and something we are quite good at. It's good to know that people do listen to and appreciate the sound of church bells, and it's always nice to have the opportunity to explain something about our art.

6th August 2013

Only five of us at practice last Thursday 1st August. Several on holiday. We practiced for an hour and had some useful Plain Bob Minimus for Michael on the treble, and some call changes. There is talk of an open day in October to try to recruit more ringers! Watch this space!

Sunday 3rd we were down to four. Change of shift for holidays - the boys were back from scout camp and others were away. Nevertheless, we rang some well struck call changes on the front four.

18th July 2013

Tower visited by the Cambridge District Ringers on Saturday 13th. Sorry that Sheila and I could not be there to greet as we were away on holiday. Many thanks to Matthew for deputising on the day. I understand that the ringers enjoyed the bells (thanks for the donation)

4th July 2013

Practice with a difference this evening. We "fired" the bells to mark the American day of Independence. We had two bands of ringers to make sure that everyone had a go, and fired three times in each session, each firing punctuated with Rounds. We had one or two rogue bells but overall the desired effect was achieved and we all enjoyed making as much noise as we could in a controlled way!

Apart from that the usual menu was consumed - PBD and Call Changes.

Wedding on Saturday so the firing was good practice!

23rd June 2013

Not a bad practice last Thursday but still some ringers missing due to holidays or other activities. We were successful in 120 Plain Bob Doubles and several plain courses as practice for treble ringers. There will be a couple of weeks in the summer months when we will be too few to practice and we discussed the possibility of holding an open day in the autumn to try to attract new ringers. On Monday 17th we took our two youngsters to the young ringers' evening at Hilton where they rang the treble to Plain Bob Doubles, and both called call changes. Its good to give them the opportunity to be with ringers of their own age group and we would like to attract youngsters at Gransden to help invigorate the band!

3rd June 2013

Sheila and I have had a busy weekend. A quarter peal of Stedman Caters for me on Friday at St.Neots preceded three more quarters on Saturday which was the Hunts District Quarter Peal Day. Sheila and I rang Cambridge at Gransden, Reverse Canterbury at Fenstanton and Plain Bob Minor at Warboys (much improved recently by the installation of rope guides). After the two morning quarters we all met at the Ferryboat Inn in Needingworth for lunch and this gave us the opportunity to see how

other ringers had failed in the morning. During the day nine quarters were scored in total and thanks to Angie Gell for organising us.

In the evening we went over to Stretham in the Ely District to judge their striking competition. We enjoyed their hospitality and listening carefully to the ringing. See report and photographs at <http://ely.elyda.org.uk/> . Afterwards we were able to chat to friends and we had the opportunity to ring a course of Plain Bob Minor on the newly restored Histon handbells. This was followed by rounds on 12 and very nice they sound too!

Sunday was not so good as a problems developed with the tenor clapper as reported on the front page news. We were fortunate to get the quarter on Saturday because after only a few minutes ringing on the Sunday it was clear that we had a significant problem.

The peal scheduled for Saturday 8th has had to be postponed and I hope we can identify the problem and carry out an effective repair.

Calling all potential ringers - we are desperately short of ringers following two or three moving away or deciding not to continue ringing. We now struggle to ring six on Sundays and really need more recruits. So, if you are a non-ringer and are reading this (highly unlikely), please [contact us](#) to find out more about this fascinating skill.

11th May 2013

A cold and very showery day today, so instead of the hard labour of re-laying paving slabs I decided to work on the composition pages for the website. Writing out compositions is a fiddly task. I have tried using Excel and Word but formatting is a continuous problem. It is a similar challenge in BTCK software and in the end I copy typed the data into a single cell in a table. This turned out to be the easiest and best format. So what I have done as a start is to upload two or three miscellaneous touches at stages from doubles to royal. I do not intend to include any of the many usual touches most commonly rung, but instead will publish some of my own work (not knowingly plagiarised), and compositions by others which I feel are more interesting. I will add further work in the coming weeks. There are many resources where compositions can be found and it's pointless duplicating them here.

On Thursday 9th I was browsing through Change Ringers Resources and came across a link to our church bells which was obsolete. I requested a change by email and almost by return the link had been updated. This has been notified to the world on the front page of [that website](#) under May Additions, so many thanks to those involved for doing this for us and so quickly.

9th May 2013

We discovered today that the best dodging practice is whilst ringing a method, and the best method to ring for dodging practice is Plain Bob Minimus. There is virtually no plain hunting and there is very little time between dodges, so the technical differences between up and down dodges can be practiced thoroughly for 45 minutes or so! The reason I have come to this conclusion is because this is exactly what we did this evening on meeting short for practice. Rather than ringing a bit of this and that we agreed to go for a quarter specifically for the dodging practice, and it was very

worthwhile. The start was a bit jumpy, but as we settled into a rhythm and routine the ringing improved and some very good striking was achieved for much of the attempt. Strictly speaking it was not quite a quarter because the conductor forgot that it is 53 extents that have to be rung and not 52, but as there are no rules for QPs and we had worked hard during the attempt it was agreed to count it. After all, what is 12 changes between friends! Thanks to Matthew for coming over this evening - sorry you had to wait until we had finished!

3rd May 2013

We managed to muster seven at practice last night and focussed on good striking and bell control which resulted in some good call changes and successful PBD and Plain Hunt. Swopping bells enabled us to see things from a different point of view and after initial uncertainty we managed to get a result. The importance of actually dodging was re-emphasised but progress was made. The mystery of counting places was explained to Alasdair which helped him to understand where he was on the line and he was a very steady treble ringer to the PBD, even though the use of numbers was his main methodology. He rang the third and fourth bells for the first time, which he managed very well.

We are another ringer down (hopefully only temporarily) and are now desperate for new ringers. A note in Roundabout inviting people to come and learn will probably not bear fruit, but we will persevere with our efforts. Our lack of numbers has led to our decision to postpone our Durham trip which was scheduled for July. We will try to arrange a mini outing instead.

20th April 2013

Only five at practice last Thursday due to business trips and holidays and wondered whether to cancel or go to Gamlingay. Decided to carry on but had a useful 60 minutes or so. We rang Plain Hunt Doubles - just. A new experience for some without the tenor behind. This was followed by call changes on 4 when each ringer called a change in turn taking the treble out to the back and in again while swapping other pairs in order to get the 24 changes of the [extent](#). Quite well done actually, but a little hesitation in places. Well done everyone! We then did some dodging practice which was reasonably successful. In between the dodging we called the bells to move on a place so that the next set of dodging was with a different bell. Finally, we had a go on the handbells with much amusement as although we managed Rounds with one bell each, any attempt at call changes resulted in a fire-up!

Ringing today (Sunday) was very good. Several sets of call changes all reasonably well struck. Sunday School in the ringing room today so all left unlocked ready for the over 8's and their leaders.

11th April 2013

Not a bad practice last night with the added bonus of sweets being brought back from their holidays by Andrew and Alasdair. We managed a 120 of Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Hunt and call changes. Andrew called some excellent changes and was able to put one or two ringers right. Impressive - well done Andrew! We need to focus on accuracy when dodging and to help this we did some dodging practice which highlighted how much you have to check and pull at the same time in order to keep the bell in the right place. It all comes with experience but we are progressing.

We need to recruit more ringers. In the last 3 months we have lost two ringers. Martin has moved to London and Cat has decided to give up ringing. Both were valuable members of the band. This week we learned that Michael will probably leave us in the near future as he will move away from Gransden as he sets off on a new career. We wish him good luck for the future. Michael has rung one quarter peal ringing the tenor behind and this has recently helped us to routinely achieve touches of Plain Bob Doubles. Andrew is next in line to ring a quarter peal on the treble but we desperately need more experience to help us along. However, we can still manage to ring all six on Sundays and this is also an important objective for us.

I will put a note in Roundabout to see if we can attract new ringers.

The strike of the tenor is very much better after the last bout of clapper adjustments on the 6th April. See report on the [Welcome page](#). The treble clapper is striking in a slightly different place on the sound bow and several people commented that it sounded different! Indeed, it does. We will have to adjust this when Tom returns.

5th April 2013

Thursday 4th April was recorded as the coldest April day since 1966. We were all freezing but the ringing room heaters kept the chill off. Not so many of us at practice this week due to school holidays keeping Andrew and Alasdair away, but we did ring a few plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles and two attempts at 60 on Thirds! Two attempts because due to a miscall everyone tried to ring in everyone else's place, which led to an eventual fire up. All good fun. The second attempt was fine and quite well struck.

Tom and I had another go at adjusting the tenor clapper last Saturday. Due to very tight tolerances we had to do a bit of angle grinding, but this was successful. However, further adjustment is needed because the bell is still quick at backstroke, and we will continue this on Saturday afternoon. Pity really because I will miss the Grand National!

We need more ringers. We can usually ring all six, and thanks to everyone for helping to achieve this but another couple of ringers would really help ease the pressure.

22nd March 2013

We have had a good week and our spirits are not dampened by the weather as it continues to be winter-like. Not much sign of daffodils yet and it's the end of March!

On Monday Alasdair and Andrew attended the young ringers evening at Hilton where progress continued. Andrew managed an unaided 120 of Plain Bob Doubles on the treble. We were reminded at the beginning of the touch that this was "...for the benefit of the treble ringer...", and the only person to go wrong was the ringer of the third, so well done Andrew for sticking to your guns. Alasdair rang the treble to Grandsire Doubles and although still need a little help to find the bells is managing very well. Call changes were also rung, and when not ringing, the merits and skills of solving the Rubik's Cube entertained Andrew and other young ringers too.

The recent help we have received from Bottley's Bonkers is paying off. At our practice last night, we managed a couple of different 120s of Plain Bob Doubles with an entirely local band. Progress indeed and well done! We are still on a bit of a wing and a prayer

because we need the right people to be there but in any case we usually have six and we can find something else to do if not PBD.

During the evening we held our annual meeting. This only took 30 minutes. It is traditionally held on the Maundy Thursday, but ringer availability determined the date this year. Although both heaters were on we gradually became a little chilly and were glad to get back to ringing afterwards. I remember annual meetings when I first came to Gransden in the early 70's. They were held in the vicarage in those days, and took a lot longer! We decided on Durham as the venue for our annual outing. Sounds like a weekend away - looking forward to it. David and I have some planning to do.

Weather permitting - (heavy snow is forecast) - we will have another attempt at measuring the strike of each bell this Saturday 23rd. Tom Ridgman will bring his strike-ometer and we will spend the afternoon running up and down the turret stairs to ring each bell individually and make adjustments. Andrew (jnr ringer) volunteered to help but I have since found out from his mum that he is going to the science fair in Cambridge to learn about the raspberry pi. Mm! might be more interesting than clapper adjustment, but I am looking forward to it because the tenor is quick at hand at the moment and needs to be sorted. Watch out for a report as a news item.

Addendum 23rd March - About 2 inches of snow but the roads are clear. However, temperature just above freezing and we felt that conditions were not conducive to working in a cold belfry! New date being negotiated.

15th March 13

An excellent practice last night and many grateful thanks to Jez and Angie (of Bottley's bonkers) for coming over to help us with Plain Bob Doubles. Thanks also to David Hope (St. Neots) for helping too. We were successful in several touches of PBD for inside and treble ringers, which we would not have been able to achieve without help.

Megan is finding ringing on Thursday evening during term time quite tiring and so will probably not press ahead with ringing just at the moment, although whenever there is an opportunity she will be encouraged to take part. She was explaining how they had looked at the website at school and seen pictures of her, which created great excitement especially as she is the only young person in the school to have rung a bell (as far as we know!).

1st March 13 - Happy St. David's day!

We had a busy practice last night which included plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles, call changes and some bell handling experience for Megan, who at the beginning of her ringing career is still slightly nervous, but is quite competent and I am sure will do well. (See [Bell Handling](#) under the Training page) She was explaining that her teacher at school was interested to know the weight of the bells. So Megan jotted down all the details from the notice board but then wanted the weights converted to kilograms. I really must update the notice to show KGs, and probably just as important to think in Kg's instead of CWT's. Anyway, the information made a bit more sense to Megan when we had done a quick conversion into metric!

It was commented upon that the tenor seemed to sound different since the clapper adjustment last weekend. We have improved the striking accuracy but I think it is now

slightly slow at hand, although I didn't really have the opportunity to test it during the practice. It is probable that the clapper is striking the bell in a slightly different place on the sound bow which could make a difference in the sound quality. In any case, what we have done is only a temporary fix because Tom will return on the 23rd March when we can make an accurate and lasting adjustment once we have done a bit of angle grinding! (see News on the front page)

We talked a little about our annual outing which is suggested will be during the school summer holidays. Nothing fixed yet, but David and Sheila have contacts in the Durham area and so we thought that could be a nice venue for a ringing trip. To be discussed at our AGM on the 21st.

22nd Feb 13

Thinking we would meet short this week we were pleasantly surprised when we had enough to ring Plain Bob Doubles with one spare so that help could be given "standing behind". We managed eventually to ring a 120. Well done everyone! Progress is slow but steady and we put a lot of emphasis on good striking and concentration. No-one ever said ringing was easy and the least experienced are certainly finding this to be the case. Following another reminder about concentration and focus, Andrew piped up that he found bell ringing to be very helpful in the world of gaming. He said that sometimes at school there is so much noise in the computer suite that he really has to focus and drive out any external influences, a skill he says he is learning through ringing!

15th Feb 13

We were a bit short for practice last night. The boys were away during half term and a couple of adults were not able to be there. But we managed to muster 7 and achieved several plain courses of Plain Bob Doubles. Matthew is coming on pretty well ringing the tenor behind. Michelle hadn't been able to ring for a few weeks and as she has only been ringing since November settled for some very well struck Rounds to get back into it. Granddaughter Megan was there and it was announced that she would be interested to learn but not until her 10th birthday which is coming up soon. Not to miss an opportunity we persuaded her to have a go and I helped her with the backstroke.

Megan is no stranger to the ringing room and has been there many times since she was a toddler. Whenever she can she will help with taking off the clock chimes and letting the ropes down before practice. Nevertheless, ringing for the first time in front of everyone else was a daunting experience for her and she admitted to "shaking all over" just before we started. It's almost like a rite of passage - most of us have been there! Fears were soon allayed when she found that ringing backstroke with help was not so difficult after all. The second time she rang I was able to let her manage the backstroke entirely on her own. Afterwards, she was talking about how she thinks she should progress, so it seems that the nervousness has been cast aside and she can't wait for dedicated lessons.

Well done Meg!

7th Feb 13

A good practice this evening with many thanks to Sally for visiting us and helping with Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Hunt. Sweets half way through the practice re-invigorate the ringers and excite the youngsters, and Alasdair is keen to update the "standing" tally on the notice board after every piece of ringing. Cat is aiming to stand first time after 20 successive pieces of ringing and is confident that she will achieve this. Unfortunately, some others gain one or two and then fail and so have to start at the beginning again. Its rather like a game of snakes and ladders!

The weather is very cold with a biting wind but the ringing room is warm and those of us who have been around long enough (only Sheila G and me) reminisce on the single bar heater which we huddled around in the winter time when we were a ground floor ring. Ah! - those were the days!

1st Feb 13

What a co-incidence and thanks to the website.

Sheila and I have just arrived home from church this evening after seeing the African Choir from Watoto. It was excellent, full of colour and energy. We rang before the concert and had some good call changes - just the six of us on this occasion. Luckily Andrew and Alasdair had recovered from the bug going around the schools.

On Tuesday I received a telephone call from someone asking if I was the man from the church. "Yes", I said and then asked, "Where are you calling from?" She said she lived in Cambourne and could she have tickets for the concert. I said that it was free entry and no tickets were required. I said that the church was likely to be full and hoped she could get in.

Just before the concert a woman came in and walked to the back of the church where Sheila and I were standing because there were no seats left, and asked if she could stand with us. I recognized her voice and asked if she came from Cambourne. She confirmed this. Then I asked if she had spoken to a man from the church with regard to tickets for the concert. She confirmed this too. I said that I was the person she spoke to! Out of 300 people in the church how co-incidental it was to meet someone I didn't know and had only spoken to once on the phone.

I asked where she found my number. She explained that she Googled Great Gransden and found my number on our new website.

Brilliant!