

## The Charleston Young Ringers Guild

The Charleston Young Ringers Guild is off to a great start! Last June, Stella Maris Roman Catholic Church added eight change ringing bells to their tower. With the help of our Tower Captain David Porter we started a small junior band. Within a few weeks we had about five Stella Maris juniors. We decided we could build a better junior ringing band if we joined with the St Michael's junior band. Now we are the Charleston Young Ringers Guild. Since St Michael's Episcopal Church is just across the Charleston harbour we can easily have practices at either tower.

Within just a few weeks we have had many guest ringers come to help us and the adults. Recently we had the privilege to have a practice with eight ringers from the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths. We figured they would be good but when they started to ring every junior ringer was stunned! They taught us good form and how to have STEADY rounds. Thanks to their help and the help of Ed Rosenlieb and especially CJ Cantwell for putting up with us when we're hyper. Without their help none of it would be possible.

Now we are working on Bob Doubles and Plain Hunt which most of us seem to be picking up very quickly. We are also working on a fund raising campaign for our trip to Washington DC at the end of April. While we are there we will ring at the National Cathedral and at the Old Post Office. We have given tower tours of St Michael's and have had sponsored ringing marathons. Recently a reporter from the *Post and Courier*, the Charleston daily newspaper, interviewed us for an article; we were quite excited.

We practise every Tuesday, Saturday, and Sunday giving us about seven hours of practice every week! We now have a weekly ringing spot at St Michael's and at Stella Maris to ring live after a Sunday service for about 30 minutes and we also ring every Saturday at St Michael's.

(Trey Avery writing in the Spring 1996 issue of *The Clapper*).

## Fire Service Guild

After several attempts by Mike Kernan to arrange towers, the Guild's May outing finally took place on 17th-18th-19th of the month. The venue for this foray was the quiet town of Eastleigh!, tucked in a corner between the M27 and M3!

6.30 p.m. on the 17th saw lurking figures arriving at Romsey Abbey for the first ring; followed by supper together in the nearby "Abbey Hotel". Here, as throughout, Mike's wife and "write-hand, Jane, coped with lists of food required by hungry ringers (using a whole note pad in the process). The night was spent in various "B" and "Bs" of sometimes spartan quality, but any shelter from the miserable weather was welcome.

Saturday began in the car park of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service H.Q. Eastleigh, where our coach awaited. A busy but happy day had three ten bell towers to start with. St. Mary and then St. Michael, Southampton, with Fareham just before lunch in the Fareham Hall complex. The afternoon had three eights and one six bell tower to keep us busy. Alverstoke, Bishops Waltham, Bishopstoke and Owslebury. At all of these the Guild showed good form despite the fact of being a group who only meet sporadically to ring together.

Once again Jane had been busy and the evening meal at the Good Companion, Eastleigh,

## Bickley restoration celebrated

The peal rung on Saturday 27th April was to celebrate the completion of the Lewisham District (KCACR) Centenary Project, the addition of two trebles to complete the new octave at St. George's Church, Bickley. The peal was rung by members of the KCACR who have been involved in the Bickley project in various ways, including one member of the County Bell Restoration Sub-committee (who were involved right from the start in the scheme to install a new ring of bells after fire gutted the church in 1989), the widow of one of those in whose memory the trebles were cast, several members of the Lewisham District who taught (and indeed continue to teach) the new Bickley band at various levels and who co-ordinated the fund-raising for the Centenary Fund, our recently-retired County Chairman, to whom we are most grateful for his support throughout the project, and even one of the new band at Bickley, who scored his first peal. In addition, we would like to associate the peal with Peter Romney (KCACR Bell Restoration Sub-committee), Mary Andrews (Lewisham District Secretary), Sonia Irwin (former Lewisham District Ringing Master), and Monica Sanderson (Bickley ringer), all of whom played a major part in the project at various levels, but who, for various reasons were unable to ring in the peal. Although the addition of the two trebles actually happened two years ago, we have only just completed the fund-raising, and so it only now seems appropriate to report the completion of the project in *The Ringing World*.

The story really starts on April 6th 1989, when St. George's Church, Bickley was gutted by a fire in which the existing bells (a clock

wound up another day of friendship among Fire Service comrades, old and not so old!

During the meal, arrangements were made for the next day when Winchester Cathedral was available for service ringing, with warnings of being locked out if late in arriving. As it transpired, our visit coincided with a change of tower Captain at the Cathedral and the vast ringing room was well populated. The climb with its last desperate turret steps was bravely tackled by even the most elderly and decrepit, to be rewarded by the ringing, shared by Guild and tower members.

To round off the outing, Guild ringers assembled at St. Mary, Portsca, later on the Sunday, to ring a quarter peal. Hopefully this would have been triples or major but with ringers so far flung from their home ground it was only possible to get together a willing six.

Dedication: Rung for the 1,692nd anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Florian, Patron Saint of Fire-fighters. 4th November 304AD.

1260 Spliced Doubles, five methods.

- 1 Peter Knight
- 2 Jack Long
- 3 Ken Baker (C)
- 4 Ken Phillips
- 5 Andrew Phillips
- 6 Mike Kernan.

The Guild members have to thank the towers visited, Mike Kernan for his efforts, together with Jane and her worn-out note book. Ken Baker as ringing master and all the others who bear the burden of taking charge. Our commiserations to Guild members who couldn't make it for various reasons.

JACK PEPPIATT.



St. George's Church, Bickley.

chime) were damaged beyond repair. In the subsequent restoration project, a new ring of six bells (tenor 14 cwt), cast by Whitechapel, were installed in an eight bell frame, the intention being that the octave should be completed when funds became available. However, with the church heavily committed to raising money to cover the remaining restoration work to the building, this was seen as a very long term aim! With the new ring of six on order, Lewisham District officers (Mary Andrews, Sonia Irwin and Andrew Young) started teaching a new Bickley band, on the bells at the Annunciation, Chislehurst. The restored church and new ring of six bells were dedicated in December of that year, and the story so far appeared as the cover story in *The Ringing World* on 10th April, 1992.

That year, 1992 was the Centenary of the formation of the Lewisham District of KCACR. To mark this event, members decided to adopt the addition of the two trebles to complete the octave as the centenary project. Fund raising began!

Over the subsequent 18 months the bells were rung regularly, the band progressed steadily under the watchful eyes of various members of the Lewisham District, and the Centenary Fund gradually grew. However it was not all joy, for we suffered three sad deaths of people closely connected to the Bickley project during that time. Phil Corby, who had been bell-advisor on the DAC at the time of the installation of the bells, and whose enthusiasm had a great influence on the success of the installation of the new ring of bells; Philip Irwin, husband to Sonia, and one of the dedicated group of followers who assisted in advancing the Bickley band; and Michael Sanderson, who, as churchwarden was one of the primary movers in getting a new ring of bells installed, and who, with his wife, Monica, were members of the new band of ringers. Generous donations in their memory pushed the funds ever closer to the target, and it was decided that the two new bells should be cast in their memory.

When the offer of an interest-free loan for the remaining funds came along, we gladly accepted, and the order was placed for the two

(continued overleaf)

new trebles. So it was that in September 1993, the two new trebles were cast at Whitechapel, in memory of Phil Corby, Philip Irwin and Michael Sanderson. The casting was witnessed by several members of the Bickley band and congregation, and by members of the Lewisham District.

The bells were delivered to the church at the beginning of October, and a short service of hallowing was held while they were still on the church floor. At this service the new bells were also named, Anthony (Michael Sanderson's second name – the 7th was already named Michael) and Philip. Over the next few days they were raised into the tower and hung in the awaiting pits.

Following the dedication of the new bells, it was back to the harsh realities that we were now training a band for an eight-bell tower, and that we still had quite a bit of fund raising to do. A major body blow was delivered when we received a large invoice from one of the experts who had assisted in the project, and whom we had thought, due to family connections with the church, had been donating his services free of charge (project organisers be warned!). Despite this, at the recent quarterly meeting of the Lewisham District (April 1996), with huge sighs of relief, we were able to close the Centenary Fund. So it was that on Saturday 27th April 1996 the first peal was rung on the bells, for the patronal festival, and in celebration of the completion of the Centenary Project.

Although hard work and at times frustrating, this has been a very rewarding project to be involved in. I would like to extend a personal thank-you to everyone who has been involved in the many aspects of the project, be it in fund-raising, helping with the fabric (many giving of their time and expertise free of charge) or helping with teaching the ringers. This has been a real team effort, and so many people have been involved that it is impractical to mention them all. Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of the whole project has been the enthusiasm of the Bickley ringers, and the support of the local congregation and in particular the rector Fr. David Herbert.

In the time between the dedication of the new trebles and the publication of this article, many readers will have already had the opportunity to ring on the new octave. The bells are rung from a balcony high up in the west tower (making them a little daunting for some!)

which offers an unrivalled view of the magnificently restored church, and is indeed a memorable experience. As a final thought on the completed project, I recall at the "try-out" of the newly installed ring of six in 1991, Phil Corby said to me "What a lovely six, but won't they make a splendid eight!" How right he was, although sadly he never heard them for himself.

The details of the new bells are as follows:

Treble: 4-0-19 in F-sharp: "Anthony"

Second: 4-0-20 in E-sharp: "Philip"

Both bells were cast by the Whitechapel Foundry in 1993, and bear the inscription:

LEWISHAM DISTRICT CENTENARY

CAST IN MEMORY OF

PHILIP CORBY

PHILIP IRWIN

MICHAEL SANDERSON

Full details of the back six, cast by the same foundry in 1990, can be found in *The Ringing World* of 10th April 1992.

At St. George's Church, Bickley, Kent

On Saturday 27th April 1996

A peal of 5152 changes of PLAIN BOB

MAJOR (arranged by C.H. Enzor)

was rung in 3 hours 4 minutes

1- Lucile Corby

2- Peter V. D. Swift (cond)

3- Jeremy Clitheroe

4- Frank W. Lewis

5- David H. Kingstone

6- Alexander J. Britton

7- Andrew M. J. Young

8- Thomas M. Barlow

First peal on the bells. 3 - first peal

Rung for St. George's Day, and to celebrate the completion of the Lewisham District Centenary

Fund, to provide the two trebles to complete the octave.

The bells are rung regularly on practice night (Wednesday, 8.00 to 9.15), and on Sunday mornings, and visitors are always made most welcome. We are very aware that bells are entirely new to the neighbourhood, and so ringing over and above practice night and service ringing is fairly restricted (especially during the wedding season!) On this basis, visiting bands and quarter-peals are accommodated where practical, but peals will be restricted to one (or possibly two) per year on set dates. Enquiries should be addressed to Mrs. Valerie Cruickshank, 1, Glen View Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 2QQ.



Ariane Bishop – volunteered by her mother.

## An exchange of Bishops

Following an invitation from Tom and Margaret Chapman, four out of five Bishops (Wendy, Catherine (12), Ariane (10) and Hugo (7)) made their way down to Marston Bigot, to join John and Ceri Dodd, and Rose Ball in ringing on Tom and Margaret's new bells. The petite wooden 'tower' with rudimentary battlements proved a useful homing device, and we were soon admiring the wallpaper, carpet, curtains, peal-board etc. inside. After a few experimental pulls, the 'experienced' ringers (i.e. everyone except Hugo) had more or less got the idea and took turns at ringing rounds on these truly delightful mini bells.

From there we proceeded to Marston Bigot church and in doing so it became apparent that a quarter peal was intended. At this point, an anxious Mother Bishop (arch-Bishop?) balked at the idea of leaving three junior Bishops running/fighting around the churchyard for 45 minutes and volunteered Ariane to ring in her place. After some hesitation and discussion, this was agreed to. A very good quarter of Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles was rung at a cracking pace, and Ariane scored her first at the first attempt. Tom drew the short straw and took the other two Bishops home, for further practice on his bells. Catherine mastered the art of ringing one with each hand, and Hugo (nearly putting hand-stroke and back-stroke together at Compton Bassett) learned to ring one mini bell in the traditional style. (Everything was on just about the right scale for him!)

Needless to say, everyone ended up in Margaret's kitchen and were treated to a delicious tea. We had all had a thoroughly enjoyable time, thanks to Tom and Margaret's hospitality, the lovely sunshine, and the delightful bells.

WENDY BISHOP.

Kilkhampton ringers and friends enjoyed a week's ringing holiday in March, based as usual in Derby, but venturing into the neighbouring counties. The weather was somewhat inclement at the start of the week, but this did not affect us too much, however, Tuesday morning travelling toward Leek and Macclesfield through the snow was an experience.

Our thanks go as usual to the Incumbents for allowing us to ring in their towers; to the very pleasant people who unlocked doors for us; and to our drivers, Howard and Claude, who dealt admirably with the weather conditions.

PETER SLATER.



The peal band left to right: Fr. David Herbert, Rector of Bickley; Peter Swift, David Kingstone, Jeremy Clitheroe, Andrew Young, Frank Lewis, Tom Barlow, Lucile Corby, Alex Britton (50%).