
St Albans District Newsletter

Alan Patterson 1944-2006



Master of The Ancient Society of College Youths 1971/2
President of The Hertford County Association 1998/99
Deputy Conductor St Paul's Guild 1985/1993
Westminster Abbey Band Member 1968/1988

The Editor invited me to write a personal reflection and tribute to Alan and I am pleased to do so. Alan Ainsworth's thoughtful and kindly account of Alan's contribution to the exercise appears in the Ringing World of 21st April 2006, followed the next week by a very nice letter from Michael Uphill about Alan's early ringing activities in London. The picture of Alan in the RW is how I remember Alan rather than the rather less attractive one taken for the 1998 Association report when already ill health had started to bite.

Above everything else, Alan was a modest man. He never kept a record of his peals. Indeed I remember him telling me that he simply wanted to be remembered in that particular by the phrase "he rang some peals". And so, despite the distinguished list of offices he held as above, and the (around 600 to 800) peals he rang in, many as conductor, I will dwell for a moment simply on the time we shared when he was Ringing Master at Harpenden.

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Alan Patterson (contd)

I first met Alan when Liz and I moved to Harpenden in February 1974. Alan had himself moved to Harpenden with his then wife Josephine only a short time before and had already begun to work with the then Ringing master, Ed Broom, to improve standards and encourage progression. Even before I actually arrived, ringing friends in the North West had said to me, "Harpenden eh? That's where Mr Wonderful rings". That Alan was content with that sobriquet reflects the complex but self-deprecatory nature of Alan's personality rather nicely I think. (He knew he was good (which he was) but equally realised, and inwardly grinned, at the somewhat two-edged nature of that appellation).

Soon enough Alan was elected Ringing Master at Harpenden and, with his professional approach, laid out plans for each member of the band to reach targets to which they (well me at any rate) had hitherto thought almost impossible. What could I ring now? What was it in my grasp to accomplish? What steps needed to be taken to achieve that end? And then, in my case at least, a full and frank discussion in The Dolphin after practice of a Wednesday as to the next actionable steps to achieve same. Bon mots such as "God made seven days in a week - there are seven leads to learn in a plain course of surprise major. What's your problem?"

A slightly more gentle approach Alan employed with dear Fred Jacklin, a ringer of an older generation and one who really did find the transition to the backward hunting in London Surprise a challenge. Alan recognised the problem and soon enough all of us grinned mightily (including Fred himself who traditionally rang the 7th) at:

"Go London: (down Fred!)", and then at the following lead end

"Cambridge, (still down Fred!)" The smiles all round the band confirmed that we were all at one, doing our very best, trying our hardest to reach the standard that Alan had explained to us both individually and as a group. Only good motivators can engender that spirit.

There are still some folks around who will remember Alan's "Snooty Grabs".

Now I confess I forget precisely the definition of a "Snooty Grab". I think that reasonable quality bells were an important feature of the outing. But I recall that the idea was to ring, at the very least, touches of 8 spliced with precision and to attempt Belfast, Glasgow and whatever in similar fashion. A decent luncheon was important. And even more so was the quality of the real ale. I mention this only to reinforce the commitment that Alan had to the furtherance of excellence, though it does also show he did enjoy a decent outing!

Back at home - at Harpenden - we had to endure the "Black Book".

This was a questionable idea picked up (by Alan) from Alan Ainsworth. All the ringing was noted. All the mistakes noted. Who rang what noted. Who went wrong - noted!

And sometimes - who rang brilliantly - noted!!

That attention to that detail which Alan employed did, I think, for a while turn off some of the band. But I believe it helped the majority because with that experience, that evidence, he was able to speak kindly to the individuals involved and engender a purpose to strike better, turn up on time and spend some time learning new methods and particularly take a tip or two about a particular method of a 'construct' nature. (This is probably why he could ring Double Norwich on handbells when I couldn't) Alan was (and I think he would like to be remembered as) a kindly teacher, an encourager, a mentor.

Around the time of Alan's funeral many of us remembered the stories and jokes he would tell. One story which I don't think had an airing at that time is the one Alan told about his visit to a Lancashire Association meeting many, many years ago. Alan had arrived during the afternoon and was welcomed by the Branch Ringing Master, Jo Ridyard (who was the Ringing Master at Liverpool Cathedral, incidentally).

Alan Patterson (contd)

Jo called for a plain course of Bristol Major and turned to Alan asking if he could manage to ring the treble. Alan recounted what he said:

"Well I think I can, let me see, first I've to dodge with the 2nd and then hunt up to dodge in three four and then up to five six for another dodge and on up to seven eight for yet a further dodge. Then I lie behind before dodging down in seven eight and then down to five six for a dodge, on down to three four for another dodge and finally down to dodge at the front before leading full."

"That's right", said Jo, "Go and catch hold then, young man!".

Half way through the course the ringing began to come apart and, (yes, you've guessed it) Alan proceeded to put everybody right in that 'wonderful' way he could. At the end of the course and after standing Jo came up to Alan and said "You've been having me on, haven't you, young man?"

(I think the sole reason I can recall the tale with such clarity is Alan's charming habit of repeating tales he'd told before. I never tired of hearing them again, however. Like good wine they seemed to improve with age.)

Alan persuaded me once to help with a street collection for the Royal National Mission For Deep Sea Fishermen, a charity for which he worked for a while. "Don't have any alcohol before you go out knocking at doors" he said.

I and my fellow ringers at Harpenden miss his presence and his hard work enormously. And we thank him for that contribution and friendship which we will not forget. And the District too will wish to remember and give thanks for the time (four years) Alan gave as Ringing Master of the St Albans District.

May he rest in peace.

- Charles Pocock

Hertford County Association Essendon, St Mary the Virgin

Saturday, 11th Mar, 2006; 2h 58m

5184 PRIMROSE SURPRISE MAJOR

1. Owen A Davis
 2. Edith M Robinson
 3. Colin M Parker
 4. David J Hawkins
 5. Peter V Rogers
 6. Philip D Bailey
 7. Alan P Mayle
 8. Jason R Turnock (C)
- 1st in method by all.

In memory Alan R Patterson, Past Master ASCY,
Past President Hertford CA.

Harpenden, St Nicholas

Monday, 13th Mar, 2006

1280 PLAIN BOB MAJOR

1. Guy Morton
2. Charlotte Gamble
3. Audrey Alldrick
4. Charles Pocock
5. Gaurang Patel
6. Alan Luxford
7. Michael Morton
8. Ian Blake (C)

Rung on Commonwealth Day. In memory of Alan R
Patterson

Ancient Society of College Youths Harpenden, St Nicholas

Monday, 27th Mar, 2006; 2h 54m

5088 LONDON SURPRISE MAJOR

1. J Alan Ainsworth (C)
2. Stephen A Coaker
3. Robert J Crocker
4. David E Rothera
5. David Kemp
6. Christopher Forster
7. Richard J W Tibbetts
8. Bernard H Taylor

Rung in fond memory of Alan R Patterson, a former
Ringing Master of this tower.

Kimpton Cup

Two bands from St Peter's came first and fourth out of ten in this years Kimpton Cup, held at St Michael's on September 30th. Full results are available on the Hertford County website.

Rounders and Picnic

Saturday 10th June was the chosen date for a picnic and rounders match to which all our District members were invited. The Northern District of the HCACR was invited too, perhaps to show off its members' sporting prowess.

Many of the seventeen people who turned up at Verulamium Park at 5pm with assorted chairs, mats and food containers came rushing along after ringing for weddings. Others had earlier participated in the Coburn Trophy striking competition. It was one of those early hot days of the summer, ideal for sitting around and relaxing. Even the thought of physical exertion seemed a bit much to begin with. However, the chosen spot was ideal; under the shade of a large tree by a flat expanse of grass with views of three very familiar towers, St Michael's, St Peter's and the Abbey. The pitch was set out and we were soon enjoying the match.



Two Northerners were invited to be captains. Chris Forster's team began by batting. All change, then Geoff Horritt, leading by example, got his team to equalize with a score of 4-4 before half time.

The two umpires, Judith and Camilla, did a great job in keeping score and in quelling some attempts to bend rules and exaggerate achievements. This may not have been an inter-district match but it was no less competitive for that! All agreed with the declaration that "The umpires are right, even when they're wrong."



After refreshments, the competition continued. Some excellent batting, good fielding and fast running was spotted between the no balls, dropped balls and gasping for breath in the second half. Eventually, Geoff's team was victorious with an 8-6 win.

With the match over, chatting and eating began in earnest. By 8.30pm, the temperature was still 25°C. We dispersed in a leisurely way having thoroughly enjoyed a good humoured few hours in the park. A big thank you is due to Cathy Hughes D'Aeth for having organised and publicised the event.



And finally.....

- Poshest picnic furniture - Alex and Camilla
- Highest individual score - Geoff (3 rounders)
- Biggest picnic - the Mack family (OK, they were the biggest family)
- Highest scoring tower - St Michaels (6 rounders)
- Most newly discovered muscles - Howard

- Ann Evans

A Ringing Holiday in Ireland



Northern Ireland by Alison Evans

Having spent a week ringing in the towers of Northern Ireland recently, I am tempted to begin by asserting that all Irish ringers must be leprechauns. For who but persons of their diminutive stature would be able to cope with the excessively long ropes and extremely low sallies we found in ringing chamber after ringing chamber? And who but those endowed with magical powers would be able to make music on the uneven, jerky bells we encountered so frequently? But maybe it was just me.

We travelled independently and came together for the first time as a group on a damp and misty Monday morning at St Patrick's in Ballymena, a light ring of twelve. There were twenty-two of us all together, nineteen ringers (fifteen from St Peter's, St Albans, and four from other towers in the District) and three valiant non-ringers who provided moral support and, where necessary, valuable service as chauffeurs and map-readers.

From Ballymena, we had a long drive across country to Londonderry. One noticeable feature of the landscape was the painted kerbstones (red, white and blue in Loyalist areas; green, white and orange in Republican ones) and the flags of political allegiance, which hang from lampposts in many towns: Union Jack, Irish Tricolour, Orange Order and many others. The journey gave us the chance to see a bit of the countryside but, although we didn't dawdle, we arrived late again. From the outside, we admired the deep tones of the heavy ring of ten at St. Columb's Cathedral, but once inside, admiration turned to dismay when we found we couldn't get into the ringing

chamber, as the door at the bottom of the stairs was locked. Fortunately, Judith answered her mobile phone and came to let us in.

The Cathedral precinct has a beautiful gate of ornate ironwork and in the church itself there is some lovely stained glass, including a window showing details of the siege of the city in 1689.

After that, we drove along the shore of Lough Foyle as we made in the direction of the Giants Causeway on the North Antrim coast. By the time we got there, it was late in the afternoon but the advantage was that there weren't too many people about and, as the sun began to go down, the colours on the rocks were highlighted beautifully. The basalt columns are intriguing and well worth a visit. On the recommendation of a friend, we then made for the beaches at Portrush and Portstewart. We reached Portstewart as dusk was falling but there were still a few people on the strand, building sandcastles and walking their dogs. The wide, sandy beach is beautifully clean and really very impressive.

The following morning, somewhat surprisingly, we arrived on time at the first tower at Holywood, not very far east of Belfast, only to find that the start of ringing had been delayed because a stay had broken during ringing up. Emergency repairs having failed, we rang the light eight anyway, the bell in question being held on the balance point in between touches. Fortunately, I didn't have to ring it!

Next stop was another, slightly weightier, eight at the seaside town of Bangor, and the last ring before lunch was a light six at Greyabbey about half way down the western coast of the Ards peninsula, on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough. The ringing chamber here was entered through a trapdoor and was so compact that it only accommodated the ringers. It was also the venue of a girls v boys striking competition, judged by the three non-ringers. The girls won. Lunch at a local pub followed, and included presentation of a wedding anniversary card to Barry and Judith, together

with some gift vouchers as a thank you for all their hard work in organising the tour.

After the meal, we made our way down the peninsula to Portaferry and, after a look around, caught the ferry across the Narrows, which separate the lough from the sea, to the pretty village of Strangford.

The first ring the following morning was an eight at Ballylesson, which turned out to be the nicest bells we had come across so far. Then, it was on to another eight at Lurgan where the municipal flower displays were magnificent and the welcome at the church was as warm as the ropes were stretchy. It was Don's birthday that day and he was presented with a card signed by all the members of the party.

Then it was on to Enniskillen, entailing another long, cross-country drive. The cathedral where we rang was a ring of ten, right in the centre of town. One of the local ringers came to watch us and, by coincidence, turned out to have relations who lived in St. Albans.

The next day, we went to Belfast. The first ring was in Dundela, an eastern suburb, in a fine church with a nice ring of ten bells. Then it was on to a six at Bloomfield, where we learned that the bells were being rung for the first time ever on a weekday. We were careful not to ring past the end of the agreed time, so as to minimise the risk of anyone complaining. Lastly, it was a recently refurbished eight in the Windsor area of the city, not very far from the university quarter.

The next stop on the itinerary was an evening ring at Carrickfergus. We navigated our way through the Belfast rush hour and onto the motorway without any trouble but, having spent ages at the back of a queue of traffic on the coast road, we abandoned the journey as we knew we would never get there in time. Those who did make it enjoyed the castle and, predictably, reports of the eight bells were that they were lovely.

The following morning, we set off in what we thought was reasonable time for the seaside town of Newcastle but after an over-long examination of the one way system in Lisburn

when signposts for the road we needed suddenly seemed to dry up, we made our way over the Mourne Mountains straight to the tower at Rostrevor.

After an easy journey down the M1, we came to Drogheda. We made this eight our final ring of the week and I managed to acquit myself reasonably well here (even if I do say so myself). As the rest of the party continued south for a hectic weekend schedule in Dublin, we squelched our way around the sights of Drogheda before making our way back north.

Southern Ireland by Thomas and Edward
Mack

Our first ring in Dublin was at the Christ Church Cathedral on Friday evening. Everyone met at around quarter to seven outside the cathedral in eager anticipation of ringing on sixteen bells - a first time for many. There were actually nineteen bells in the huge tower, including three sharp bells so you could ring different combinations of bells according to the band present. Rope sight was extremely difficult, largely due to eight of the front bells being in a straight line. Not surprisingly, we only rang rounds and call changes on the full sixteen bells.

After a hard going practice we made our way back to the Holiday Inn, grabbing a sandwich on the way to fill our empty stomachs.

There was much to look forward to on Saturday morning despite Mum getting a phone call at 22:58 the previous evening to say we could not ring at Taney, the first tower on the Saturday morning, because of a funeral meaning Mum had to text everyone to tell them the news. At least it meant we got a longer lie in and more time to enjoy our first cooked breakfast of the week (and year for that matter).

We then travelled a long way southwest towards Kilkenny's Cathedral Church of St Canice where we rang a heavy, difficult and very loud eight bells. This was hard work and at this late stage of the holiday everyone was noticeably beginning to tire. Consequently we

made our way down the main street and found a small coffee shop and were grateful for a cold drink and a bite to eat.

Unfortunately we were then faced with another long stint in the car so as to reach Blessington where everyone would meet to join a local practice and enjoy an evening meal afterwards. With Dad at the wheel, though, this wasn't as boring as it could have been. The experience at Blessington was interesting to say the least and it was also uncomfortably hot up in the belfry. An evening meal in the pub opposite was more than welcome to us all.

On the Sunday morning, we were to ring at four towers, including ringing for three Sunday services at Dublin St Audoen, St Patrick and SS Augustine & John (John Lane). The other tower was the reorganised Taney where we would now all ring at one o'clock. This made Richard's day as Taney was the only grab he needed on the tour -he even gave Mum a hug!

St Audoen was a six where the bells were not very rung very often, evident by the dusty and damp ringing chamber. The bells were easy enough to ring but were odd-struck and heavy for a six. However they weren't anything near as heavy and difficult as the twelve at St Patrick's. The tenor there, at 45cwt, was slightly heavier than the tenor at the sixteen (Christ Church). The belfry was steeped in history with many old peal boards amongst other things. The first thing you couldn't help but notice was the enormous tenor box. It was at least 70cm in height.

Only nine of us decided ignorantly to walk across towards John Lane, the other six wisely staying put at St Patrick's. We had been warned at the challenge of getting to the bells but we didn't quite know what we'd let ourselves in for. The first bit was a spiral staircase with a low rail and gaping holes between each of the stairs. You then had to walk across a landing before climbing another steep staircase, looking down at the service going on a long way below, with only a low rail between yourself and dropping down well over ten metres or facing the massive stained glass window in the other direction. Then there was a small straight staircase before yet another

small staircase to the belfry. After all that, the bells weren't even that great. A local guy winked at me, though, when I told Dad that the ninth was difficult and he didn't think much of it. Sure enough, Dad struggled as well! Everyone needed a strong coffee after such an experience.

Despite being moved back more than once, Taney proved a delightful peal of eight to finish of with and there was some great ringing which bought an impeccably organised week by Mum/Judith to an end.

Sponsored Quarter Peal

Judith Mack is organising a group of youngsters from the district to ring a sponsored quarter peal at St Peters for The Children's Society Peal Appeal on Saturday 18th November. Towers should have received the press release about this from the district secretary, and if they are not going to organise their own event then Edward & Thomas Mack, Adam Crocker, Edward Hughes-D'Aeth, Roy Scivyer and Owen Woods would welcome their sponsorship

With an average age of 15 will they be the youngest ever band in the district to ring a quarter peal? There is one recorded at St Peters in December 1981 where the average age was 17. Does any tower have a record that can beat this?

St Albans District Outing 4th November 2006

Remember to book your place on this tour by 21st October. Ringing will be at Drayton St Leonard (6), Warborough (8), Benson (8), Wallingford (10), Brightwell (8) and Cholsey* (8). An optional buffet lunch is available but must be booked and paid for in advance. You may also wish to wish to join other ringers for an evening meal at the end of the day. Details about the tour and booking forms have been distributed to each tower but do not hesitate to contact the organizer if you have any queries.

Organiser Ann Evans
E-mail: ann@ev43.wanadoo.co.uk
Phone: 01727 824313

Wanted: New District Secretary

As you may know, John Nicholson will be standing down at the next ADM. He has produced the following job description detailing the duties the secretary performs throughout the year. As you can see, the secretary also performs the role of Debenham Bell Fund Secretary, but John has affirmed that this adds very little to the time required if you are already attending meetings as District Secretary. Nominations for this post will be taken at the December meeting.

Date	District Secretary	Debenham Bell Fund Secretary	Notes
01-Jan	Get Accounts to District's auditor	Get Accounts to District's Auditor	Subs Account District account Debenham Bell Fund Account
10-Jan	Get Accounts Signed	Get Accounts Signed	Districts Auditor
10-Jan	Make copies of accounts For ADM		60 copies
10-Jan	Make copies of District Agenda for ADM		60 copies
	Make copies of Previous ADM Minutes		60 copies
10-Jan		Make copies of Debenham Bell Agenda for AGM	
10-Jan		Make copies of minutes of Previous Debenham Bell Fund AGM	
	County Secretary should inform you which Officer will Chair ADM		
3rd Saturday	Attend ADM and manage business meeting		
	Take Minutes of ADM		District Secretary is Normally County Bell Fund Trustee
	Take Minutes of Debenham Bell Fund AGM		
Last Saturday in Jan	Attend County General Committee Meeting		If Required County Bell Fund Meetings held before General Committee Meeting
Jan /Feb	Produce Ringing Programme and District details on Card for Diary		
Feb	Distribute Ringing Programme and District details on Card for Diary		Usually at one of the February Ringing Meetings
March	Distribute Annual Reports in time for AGM		
Throughout the Year	Collect Subs and Issue Receipts	Collect money at meetings and bank it	
Throughout the Year	Pass Subs to County Treasurer		
Throughout the Year	Organise Committee Meetings		Committee need to organise Socials and District ringing events. Ensure members wishes at ADM are incorporated.
Throughout the Year	Take Minutes of Committee Meetings		
Throughout the Year	Issue Minutes of Committee Meetings		
Throughout the Year	Take Minutes of District Meetings		
Throughout the Year	Issue Minutes of District Meetings		
April	Attend County AGM		County Bell Fund Meeting held before AGM
01-Oct	Prepare proposed Ringing Programme for following year		
Last Saturday in Oct	Attend County General Committee Meeting		If Required County Bell Fund Meetings held before General Committee Meeting
01-Nov	Mail Tower Secretaries with Proposed Ringing Programme		
01-Nov	Mail Tower Secretaries with Details for Annual report		Use this as an opportunity to remind those who have not paid subs. No subs no entry in or copy of report
	Build confirmed programme as replies come in.		
01-Dec	Ensure Committee Members are available to be nominated at the Harpenden Meeting		
Mid Dec	By mid December send income and expenditure summary to County Treasurer		If this is accepted can produce subs account.
Mid Dec	Produce subs Account		
Mid Dec	Produce District Account		
Mid Dec		Produce Debenham Bell Fund Account	
Throughout the Year	Liaise with County and other District Secretaries		
Throughout the Year	Answer phone calls, emails and letters from visiting ringers and bands.		
Throughout the Year		Arrange meeting with the 2 other trustees if a grant request is received	Grant recommendations need to be presented at a full District business meeting for approval.