

Talk of the Tower – Silverware!

On the beautifully sunny Saturday afternoon of June 2nd the ringers from Goldington gathered with other ringers from across the Bedford area for the annual 'striking contest'.

The aim of the exercise is to see who can complete the best test piece of ringing – this generally means ringing at an even speed with evenly spaced gaps between the bells so that every bell can be heard clearly without lumpy pauses in between or the sound of one bell clipping too closely beside (or even clashing over the top of) the next. A neutral judge is brought in, the ringing order of the teams is drawn on the day and then each team has the chance to do their best.

This year the Goldington team consisted of Jenny Thompson, Gale Bevan, Jim Framp, Ash Kathuria, Andrew Dennison, Doug Taylor and Dorothy Kirby. We entered the rounds category this year. 'Rounds' is the term used when the bells are rung in descending order 123456 from the lightest/highest bell to the heaviest/deepest bell and repeated without any change to the order each time. This is usually how most ringing starts before then moving into other options that change the order so this is often what springs to mind as the traditional peal of English church bells.

When the results came in Goldington was placed in overall 2nd place out of the total seven teams but more importantly we were first in our category so we came home as winners of the rounds cup!

The cup was collected from the judge by Ash who was making his debut in a striking contest band. Ash only started ringing a little over 18 months ago, having first had a go during the 2016 church fête and then joining the band a little while later that year. Since then Ash has been making good progress so this was an opportunity to put him to the test! And we certainly did that – especially since we put Ash on the most difficult bell at Carlton! No problem though and Ash coped admirably and held his own amongst a strong team performance from all the Goldington ringers.

We have been very pleased to be able to welcome Ash into our band over the past couple of years. We are a small band at Goldington but luckily with enough ringers to still maintain a relatively active band. Indeed, Goldington is one of only two towers in the area who have reliably managed to field a team at the striking contest every year for the past 10 years. Oddly, during that time our only other win was in 2014 when we last won the rounds cup – and that was at Carlton too, when Gale was then our relative new-starter.

So if you'd like to come and give it a go just like Ash did then you'll be most welcome so that we can keep this tradition alive at Goldington. But even if it's not for you then just remember: next time you see Ash in the congregation, make sure you tell him how well he did!

Andrew Dennison