



PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT

NEWS

JULY

Portsmouth District Walk

On Saturday 10th July, many of the Portsmouth District donned their hats and walking boots, ready to set off on a walk between Ropley and Easton in the Winchester District. As we arrived at the car park behind the church hall in Ropley, we were amazed at the luck we were having with the weather. Equipped with bags filled with water, snacks and suntan lotion, we marched a little way up the road to join the ringing at Ropley.

Ringling at this interesting six (the tenor's sally being low enough to ring kneeling down!) included Rounds and Call Changes, London Surprise Minor and various battles to get Max up the stairs to try ringling some Cambridge! During the ringling, more and more people turned up at the tower; until, finally, we were ready to set off in the direction of the train station.

The sun was glaring down on us as we marched through several fields; Marie was kind enough to fuel us with some strawberries as we went along. After about a mile, we hit the back of the station with plenty of time to spare, only to find that the back gates were shut! With a sudden realisation that we could possibly miss our train, Diana hopped on her bicycle with every intention of stopping the train from departing without us! The rest of the group turned around and started to walk down the road toward the front entrance of the station. Edd (I believe he was the one holding the map at the time) attempted to cut off a corner of our journey by leading us into a large field filled with cows.

This would have been nothing unusual, except for the fact that the cows began charging toward us as we came near! Thankfully, Doug and Ian chased them away, and we all briskly made our way to the other end of the field... the cows watching us from afar with their beady little eyes... More obstacles lay in our way when we realised that Edd had lead us into a dead end, and so most of the group decided to turn back and try another way across the field. Several of us were unwilling to brave the cows again, and so opted to climb over a barbed wire fence rather than walking all the way back the way we had come.

Finally, we arrived at Ropley Station, just in time



If you have a story you'd like to tell the District, please email the Publicity Officer at: lizzie.hough@ntlworld.com



to board the steam train to New Alresford Station. No one got left behind! After enjoying the old style springy seats and the views from the window, we arrived at New Alresford and made our way to the church.

This was easily my favourite tower of the day. The ring of eight was lovely, and amongst the ringing was some Plain Bob Major, Yorkshire Surprise Major and Rounds and Call Changes before I left to enjoy the summer air! We all then went our separate ways to enjoy some lunch at the various pubs and cafes in New Alresford. The group met up after lunch and headed off along a scenic route toward Avington – however a few of us chose to stay for an extra pint in the pub and took a more direct route in order to

catch up! We rejoined each other after a while and walked with the rest of the group for the remaining three miles.

The weather was stifling at this point, and the Byfords' poor dogs, Daisy and Bruno, were really suffering with the hot weather. We arrived almost an hour early to Avington, but were so glad to see a massive tree in the grounds of the church for us to rest under. After a well-deserved rest, we were joined by a few new faces who wished to grab this newly installed ring of five.

Amongst the ringing was some Stedman Doubles, Grandsire Doubles, and Rounds and Call Changes with the obligatory “pop goes the weasel” change on the bells! After everyone had had a ring, most of the band set off for the final tower. Some of us, however, took a cheeky look in the bell chamber to see how the bells were hung. Steve Hough was quite fascinated by an old bit of headstock that he found, and the more anorak-ish of our group started talking bell-gibberish. It was about time we left!

At this point, I had to leave for a peal back at home, and so Harriet Mather kindly offered to finish up the report:

“The last section of the walk was very enjoyable with a stretch along the river passing picnic-ers and even a few swimmers. There were many variations in the route at the end, one involving a 'short cut' through a pub as many had not brought enough to drink. The bells at Easton were lovely and we had a nice touch of Cambridge Surprise Minor and some well struck Call Changes amongst other things. Before we all left a presentation was made to Marie for her efforts with organisation. A great day was had by all.”



Lizzie Hough - Publicity Officer

Videos of the day can be seen on YouTube:

Ropley: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INpBFFhiw8s>

New Alresford: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fowBix1ym1E>

Avington: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha3tbg8oLOY>

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