

Bell-notes

The quarterly newsletter for The Chertsey District
Issue 37: February 2021



GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

President: THE BISHOP OF GUILDFORD

A Message from the (new) Master, Richard Pearce -

Greetings, once and future ringers!

I would like to say I'm honoured to become the Chertsey District Ringing Master, but to be honest, surprised and confused would come closer. I hadn't exactly planned to become Ringing Master, especially when there's no real Ringing to be Master of! But no doubt many of you have found things not going to plan in much more dramatic ways over the last year. I sincerely hope you're managing to cope with whatever trouble lockdown is throwing at you. And I hope I'll get to ring, virtually or in person, with each of you in the next few months.

For those of you that don't know me, let me introduce myself. I learnt to ring at Crayford (a ring of 8 a few miles from the M25 Dartford Crossing) at the age of 15. Like many youngsters I learnt fast, and I was lucky enough to have good ringers around me to learn from. When I learnt, the local District was very active and gave me the opportunity to learn most of the standard methods. I went to a university with an active ringing society and I spent most of my twenties ringing in central London, which gave me plenty more ringing experience, including learning to conduct, and to ring methods on handbells. Then I moved to Woking. I've been a member of the Old Woking band for the last 20 years, and Tower Captain there for the last 10. My partner, Ruth Blackwell, is a member of the band at Egham so I ring there most Sundays (or at least I did until last March!)

Outside of ringing, I do IT work for a company called Red Bee Media. Among other things, Red Bee produce much of the information you're likely to see in TV programme guides, whether that's on an actual TV, a website, or a magazine. I provide technical guidance for getting that data from Red Bee to our customers' IT systems (the ones that get the TV guides to you). I'm lucky enough to have been able to work from home throughout the pandemic. In my spare time I run and

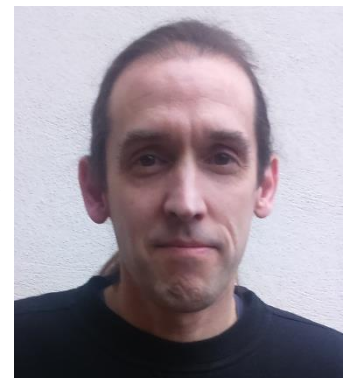
cycle to keep fit (I ran the Surrey Half Marathon just before the first lockdown started), and I listen to quite a bit of music (of all ages and most types).

When the pandemic hit, I decided I'd done plenty of ringing in recent years, and would spend some time on other things. Others gave up less easily and ventured into the virtual world of Ringing Room (or similar). Here a band's members can each be anywhere with an internet connection, and pressing a button on one computer produces a bell sound (and changes a picture of a rope) on all the other devices milliseconds later, so you're all (sort of) ringing as a team.

Having hidden from ringing for 9 months, I was persuaded to try this out a few weeks ago, and I would recommend giving it a go. You may like it, you may not, but I certainly found it interesting.

It's like ringing in many ways, and different in many other ways, and it made me think about how I go about ringing with other people, something which many of us have done on auto-pilot for years. A lot of the feedback you get in the tower, like the (fairly) predictable swing of the bell, is missing in Ringing Room. As a result, your first attempts at virtual ringing - like mine - may be pretty ropey, but at least there's no danger of hanging yourself when it goes badly wrong! After a while I realised that it probably helps to use some techniques that most of us rarely call on in the tower, like course and after bells.

An article explaining what those are and how they might help with virtual ringing with written clear instructions and diagrams, are attached as a separate sheet so that it is easier to print out and refer to when you most need it And if you're not, hang on in there, we'll surely get back to the real thing later this year!



Best wishes, Richard

Short touches from the towers

Weybridge



I have been racking my brains but there is nothing of note to report. Therefore...

....the only change made in the ringing room this quarter is the 2021 calendar.

I'm afraid there has been no ringing whatsoever since the beginning of October.

The spiders are enjoying the peace and quiet and this photo is the closest we get.

Linda Strange

I think we need something to cheer us up but sadly and as with everything else nowadays these chocolate bars are virtual. The game was originally on the House of Games with Richard Osman and they did really badly so can you identify them? Answers p 16 Ed.

1)



Chobham

Sorry there is not much news from Chobham. We are still holding Zoom calls on a Monday night with other tower members for a long general chat, a small amount of theory and some ringing on Ringing Room. It's nice to see other tower members and catch up with their news.

On the Monday night before Christmas we had a virtual get together with mince pies, drinks, and party hats all in our own homes.

While the church was open we tolled the treble for five minutes before the 10.30 am service and also rang the sanctus during the communion service. The church is now closed again probably until 28th March.

We are now attending church via Zoom on Sunday mornings and we are able to see other people from the parish who we have not seen since the lockdown.

Chris Hill

2)



Old Woking

Inevitably, it's been a quiet few months at Old Woking but, pleasingly, we have managed two spells of ringing since the last newsletter. We rang 5 bells for a wedding that was pulled forward a day, at 24 hours notice, to take place before we hit tier 3 and, courtesy of Rachel, Eliot and Isaac, rang 3 bells (1,4,6) for Christmas Day. This was permitted as they are from a single household (although it was noted that plain hunt on 3 was hard work now that their muscles are so unused to ringing)! We also had a get together over Zoom in the run up to Christmas - it was lovely to see everyone again and will be having our AGM via the same route next month.

Away from ringing-related matters, I had noticed a large number of holes appearing in my garden, so invested in an infra-red camera to try to identify the source - it turned out to be a badger, with a number of foxes also putting in appearances. I've uploaded a number of videos to YouTube if anyone is interested in seeing them -

- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjIOrjAVpb_lpTbDy5FXfiQ/featured

The band also wishes to congratulate Richard on his appointment as District Ringing Master!

Doug Stoneham

3)



Send

A you may have heard, the Today Programme is reciting the names of some of those who have sadly lost their lives to Covid 19, to give us pause to think of them, be thankful for their lives, remember their kindnesses and their contributions great and small which have made our lives so much richer.

On the 28/01/2021 Today Ivan's name was called out.

In case you missed it, the recitation today was at about 08:55 and can be heard again by going to BBC Radio 4 or BBC Sounds via your browser.

Peter Binns

Rachel Wilkinson

4)



Esher

Just as we were getting used to ringing 4 bells only and had practiced to ring for Remembrance Day – Elmbridge was raised into a higher tier and Lock down was re-imposed and ringing was no longer allowed – just one person to toll a bell. I am not sure who was more disappointed - us, the bellringers or the Parish who, much to our surprise, really look forward to the half muffled ringing on Remembrance and they said so. We said we would ring for Christmas as Boris had promised to leave the churches open – but yet again I had to disappoint them along with all the requests refused for the bells to be rung/tolled for funerals – no one appears to be getting married at the moment!!

However it is better news on the Ringing Room front we have (with John Young's help) mastered Plain Bob Doubles, St. Simons etc. plus Grandsire and on a good day Stedman Doubles – some of them with calls – now to move on to 6 bell ringing. Plain Hunt has been achieved and PBM after fashion – I do wonder how we are going to manage on real bells!!

Jennifer Meade



5.

Chertsey

Sadly there is little to report due to the cessation of ringing in December due to the Covid -19 restrictions although up until then we had been ringing 4 bells, socially distanced, on Sunday mornings on a rota basis.

A few of the ringers continue to meet every Wednesday evening via Zoom and also ring bells on-line via the Ringing Room app. In addition, we have rung the Curfew bell on a rota basis at approximately 8.00pm on the weekday evenings and continued to wind the clock.

Representatives from the tower attended the on-line District ADM in January.

Services at Chertsey have been streamed on-line, largely thanks to Peter Whisker who has provided all the IT Support.

Malcolm S Loveday

6.



Ockham

Well the good news is, we were awarded the Parsons Cup for the best progress tower, in a very unusual year, where most of our ringing was in the Virtual world. This was at the recent ADM held online a couple of Saturday's ago. Clare spread the word to the parish church team of our award and this was made public at the following Sunday morning virtual service gathering to loud applause.

Our practices in the virtual world have gone on a pace, as we now have several more visitors joining us from other district towers, who have been made most welcome. All the ringers with us have now shown great improvement in this most different of environments.

Tricia and I have had many outings to other virtual towers, with many thanks to our hosts Jane and Jen at East Molesey and Esher, along with our out of district visits to Crondall and Odiham practices and also the late lounge opportunities on a Saturday Morning. We hope to be at the SA Peripatetic's meeting on Monday morning.

Whenever we join Esher or at our own practise, we hear that Jen or someone has just baked a cake or made cookies. I am sure we are looking forward to when we can all enjoy and sample these niceties in the real world again. Jen and others keep tickling our tastebuds for the promise of a better future.

John Young

7.



East Molesey

Nate, our new vicar, is being licensed at a service here on 27th January. This requires him to chime a bell to let the Parish know it's happening – only 4 people allowed to actually attend the service including Nate although it will be live streamed. *Ed; Jennifer says Nate rather overpulled it so will need lessons when we are back to some sort of normal.* This was the only activity on our bells since Christmas Eve when Tiana rang one for the midnight mass service. We had high hopes of being able to ring 6 bells for the Christmas services as CCCBR had relaxed the distancing rules but this was cruelly cancelled at the last minute due to rising infection rates and the new variant of the virus. So we continue with our regular Ringing Room sessions at which we are slowly improving.

About a year ago we thought we should have a proper bank account to deal with the monies coming our way – wedding fees, visiting band donations etc – rather than the cash box in the cupboard favoured by my predecessors. We found this surprisingly hard to do. It required us to call ourselves St Mary's East Molesey Society of Bell Ringers and have a constitution, officers, AGMs and all the other formal paraphernalia hitherto alien to East Molesey's easy going (but effective) ways of working. Thanks to Tim's expertise we finally achieved this just in time not to have much use for it as lockdown put paid to any visiting bands, wedding fees etc. The account has had a flurry of activity recently though paying out members' subs to GDG and SA. We've also taken the opportunity during enforced inactivity to replace the tops of bell ropes 1,2 & 3 with synthetic fibres and were able to pay for these via bank transfer rather than the usual cheque from my bank account and a hard copy audit trail. All 8 ropes now have synthetic tops – I sometimes hear John Williamson turning in his grave (so to speak as his ashes are buried just outside the tower) but I'm a believer in the durability of synthetic tops and have found Avon Ropes a reliable firm to deal with. We are now in good nick both bankwise and ropewise and very much look forward to the time when we can ring again.

Which brings me to some thoughts from Felicity – what shall we do when we can start ringing properly again

Try and remember how ?

Toll for lives lost ?

Ring lots of cheerful QPS to celebrate the new normal ?

Ring every Thursday in an echo of the NHS clap ?

Have meals/picnics to make up for the ones missed?

Jane Marsters

8.



Hersham -



9.

Oatlands

Because of the local and national Covid restrictions, ringing has scarcely happened since October. 10 o'clock Sunday morning services at St Mary Oatlands have reduced from pre-booked attendance to on-line only. It does not seem worth ringing the single bell we are allowed if no-one is there to hear it.

We did ring a half-muffled tenor on Remembrance Sunday: appreciated by the Vicar and at least one member of the virtual congregation.

We also rang on Christmas Day, disagreeing with the CCCBR proposed alleviation and ringing just one bell. Since then the tower has been silent.

Two or three of us are grateful to join the East Molesey Ringing Room practice on Zoom. It sharpens our listening skills and provides some human contact.

The only other excitement to report is that the clock in our own ringing room stopped. It's probably as old as the bells (installed 1913) and we considered replacing the mechanism with something modern and radio-controlled. The clock repairer was horrified and refused to do it. So, the clock is back on the wall, overhauled and good for a few more years, though still needing to be wound every week.

John Burnett

10.



Walton-on-Thames

Wow! The church clock on the west face of the tower stopped in the high wind that we had and someone actually had to go into the tower to reset and restart it! High adventure! The chime is the only thing now heard.

And absolutely nothing else is happening there at all. Even when we had a live service it was at 9.00am and so we did not think the flats all around would want a single bell wake up call at 8.45am on a Sunday.

Will we ever get back I wonder and will we be fit enough to climb the stairs by then?

Ps, please see separate sheet

Hilary Brooks

11



Ottershaw

There is not a lot to report. Despite Simon Linford's exhortations our view is that the ringing chamber at Christ Church is too small and too poorly ventilated for meaningful practice and service ringing so we have not ventured into the tower except to put the clock right every now and again. The band has kept in contact via Zoom and we are getting to grips with Ringing Room - good fun but not the same as swinging great chunks of metal about above our heads and hoping that is where they stay! Our start with Ringing Room was a bit chaotic but improves with the use of two devices each, one for Ringing Room and one for Zoom (or any other group communications app). Whether the band takes up the suggestion of homework on a personal 'tower' is another matter! Given that every ringer could have their own virtual tower to practice methods or ring hand bells, it's no wonder the app requires a 9 digit identifier!

Christ Church held two 'in person' services at Christmas, on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. For those services two of us attended - one to ring a calling bell and one at the foot of the tower to provide health and safety/accident cover. It was very good to hear a bell ringing again and a number of villagers have commented very positively, which is heartening. We are looking forward to more Ringing Room activity which can involve all our band members, including those who are shielding or find the stairs a challenge etc, and we hope, improve our skills and bring on our 'learners' (i.e. most of us!!)

Peter Binns

12.



Horsell

Alan Nichols, as the sole ringer authorised to enter the tower and ring, has continued to ring the no 4 bell before the 10 o'clock service every Sunday when ringing has been permitted. Since 3 January 2021 and the nationwide tier 5 lockdown, normal services have been suspended and therefore ringing has stopped.

One piece of good news is that after a delay of several months, Horsell St Mary's has appointed a new vicar, Dmitry Lutsenko, who is expected to start at the end of January.

Dmitry comes from St Mary's Walsgrave where there is a ring of six bells.

Avril Blagbrough



13.

Thames Ditton

Ringling at Thames Ditton in 2020/21 has been very limited. We continued practicing for as long we could until restrictions forced us to stop. As with most 6-bell towers, the prospect of only ringing ding-dong on only 3 possible bell combinations with a 2m rope separation was not inviting, nor a great call to worship on the few services that took place in church. St Nicholas church has been extremely good at using Zoom and You Tube for services and the many other church activities that the demand for having services in church was quite low. For a while there was a 6pm service on Sundays which was soon brought forward to 3pm, but that coincided with me having to spend most weekends in Bedfordshire to clear my mother's house, so could not enable ringing for the services. For a couple of services around Christmas all bells were rung up and then down to allow some variety in sound and shake the dust off the bells, but that is all the bells have been rung for except when the vicar chose to chime the tenor during the 'Clap for Carers' events.

Some of the Thames Ditton ringers have joined in with the East Molesey practice on Zoom and Ringing Room, which has been great for keeping up contacts and at least keeping the hand in on methods, but nothing like actual ringing. For a few weeks after restrictions lifted, and until we moved in Tier 2, we rang socially distanced 8-bell hand bells in church on our practice night, which was enjoyable, but all too short lived as we are now all in tier 4. Hopefully sometime in the not too distant future ringing will become possible again.

Giles André

14.



Egham

Willy Burgess eghamten@gmail.com

15.



Well, if we cannot ring -

Shortly before Christmas I answered a call from my local civic society for volunteers to help at the vaccination centre being set up in Chertsey. Once they'd checked I had hardly any criminal tendencies I was invited for a quick tour of the Chertsey Halls where the centre was being set up and returned at 8am the next day for my first four-hour shift. Talking about it beforehand there were some worries about whether we'd have to deal with anti-vax protesters but I only met elderly people (initially 85-year-olds and above) who were uniformly enthusiastic about the whole process. I was initially stationed outside managing the queue (we could accommodate only twelve people queueing inside). Some people chose to wait in their cars and the rest waited cheerfully in the cold. Fortunately our clerks, who had the time-consuming task of checking we were vaccinating the right people, soon caught up with the backlog and we could let everybody wait inside. I left at the end of the day feeling I'd helped make the world a better place.

Since then I've done several more shifts, and the whole process has become much slicker (it was all organised at very short notice by a group of local GPs). They have opened more centres in Woking, Staines, Hersham and Walton and recruited an army of volunteers.

*Blue skies! **Jo Hoad** of East Molesey*



Further to the earlier message from the Guildford Cathedral 12-Bell Contest Steering Committee, I can now confirm that the 2022 Final of the National 12-Bell Contest will be at Guildford Cathedral on Saturday 25th June. It will be a grand day out and volunteers will be required to assist on the day from around the Guild.

Chris Rogers

Guildford Cathedral Tower Captain

Introducing our Guild Recovery Champion

I am Nigel Smith and I recently volunteered to be the Guild's Ringing Recovery Champion. I'll start with a quick introduction.

I learnt to ring at Stoke D'Abernon before the days of the M25. We were then an enthusiastic band of over a dozen and, with two exceptions, were all still at school. I also had a lot of early help and encouragement from the Cobham ringers. After several years living away from Surrey, I returned and joined the Guildford Cathedral Band where I am now tower secretary. Prior to lockdown, I was also a regular at Yorktown on their fine new bells.

Ringing Recovery Champions

Ringing Recovery Champions is an initiative set up by the Central Council of Bellringers and ART (Association of Ringer Teachers – although they do rather more than just that). There is a concern that the current lack of ringing will result in a significant number of ringers not returning when restrictions ease.

Ideas abound on how this might be addressed. The role of the champion is to help mould those ideas, tailor them to the local situation, and facilitate action.

I am still very much in learning mode as regards this and developing ideas.

What can we be doing during lockdown?

I think the following link provides a useful summary of ideas for things that we can do during lockdown:

<https://ringingteachers.org/resources/COVID19-ringing-support>

I recently undertook the (free) online course on call changes and learnt something new – it is possible for changes to take effect at back stroke.

I find the St. Martin's Guild webinars interesting – I watched one on how our memories work.

<https://www.stmartinsguild.org/teaching/training-and-resources/>

I must admit to having been rather put off by the title of the 'Fun with Bells' podcasts but actually they are well worth listening to:

<https://funwithbells.com/about-fun-with-bells/episodes/>

Ringing Room

Ringing Room is an online virtual bell tower that I would recommend if you are not already using it. It takes a bit of getting used to, but as one ex Guildford Guild ringing master told me recently: 'I didn't like RR very much to start. It has grown on me'.

There were various technical problems in the early days, and I must admit to having been put off. However, I was recently invited to the Crondall Tower Monday practice and was surprised to find that it is rather easier than I initially thought.

<https://ringingroom.com/>

If you are a little unsure about trying Ringing Room or can't find a practice, please get in touch and I will facilitate something.

If you want to run a ringing Room session and would like a little help – there is a free workshop available:

<http://ringingteachers.org/news/articles/ringing-room-workshop>

More Material (and Potential Overload)

Below is a copy of the second issue of the Survival and Recovery newsletter – however, I am very aware of the negative effect of being bombarded with too much information.

[http://ringingteachers.org/application/files/3016/1045/3463/Survival Recovery New sheet Issue 2.pdf](http://ringingteachers.org/application/files/3016/1045/3463/Survival_Recovery_New_sheet_Issue_2.pdf)

ART produces a newsletter – there is a link to the latest one below. There is a good graphic on page 6 with Top Tips for Survival and Recovery.

[https://ringingteachers.org/application/files/1416/0788/7324/Tower Talk 18.pdf](https://ringingteachers.org/application/files/1416/0788/7324/Tower_Talk_18.pdf)

Please get in touch

I am keen to hear back from people:

- Perhaps you would like more support from the Guild?
- Have you got some good ideas for survival and recovery and / or would like to share tips?
- Have you tried out some of the survival ideas?
- Or, do you think it is all being overhyped?

My email is Guildford.Guild.Recovery@gmail.com. Please do get in touch.

Nigel Smith

The ruins on the front cover are of Waverley Abbey -

The monastery at Waverley, 2 miles SE Farnham was the first Cistercian house to be established in Britain. Founded by William Gifford, Bishop of Winchester, in 1128 and was colonised with 12 monks and an abbot from Aumone in France, by 1187 there were 70 monks and 120 lay brothers in residence.

In 1201 the abbey buildings were badly flooded. This became a common occurrence and as a result the abbey was substantially rebuilt during the 13th century.

It continued to grow in the 14th century. The monks and lay brothers farmed the surrounding land, were active in the Cistercian wool trade and provided shelter for pilgrims and travellers and an infirmary for the sick.

In 1536, with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the site passed to Sir William Fitzherbert, treasurer of the king's household. Much of the abbey was dismantled and some of the stone was reused to build Sir William More's house at Loseley, a few miles to the east. "Waverley Abbey House" was built in 1723 in the northern portion of the former abbey precinct.

Waverley followed the traditional plan of a Cistercian abbey with a large church, 300 feet in length.

To the south was the chapter house, where the monks would gather daily to have a chapter of the rule of the order read to them and to discuss business. Further south was the monks' dormitory. The refectory and latrine block lay south of the cloister and the lay brothers' accommodation was situated to the west.

Today only parts, some substantial, of the buildings remain standing, although archaeological excavation has recovered the complete ground plan.

The most impressive ruin is that of the lay brothers' quarters, at the far end of the site. The long cellar has graceful columns supporting the vaulting above. Parts of the upper floor and the south wall remain standing.

Close by, an end wall and parts of the side walls of the monks' dormitory are visible up to the full height of the gable. To the north are substantial remains of the chapter house and the south transept of the church, as well as traces of the north transept. An isolated stretch of wall to the east of the church is part of the abbey's infirmary chapel.

The monastic precinct covered an area of about 24 hectares (50 acres), bordered to the south and east by the River Wey. The brewhouse and other buildings associated with the economy of the abbey lay in the western part of the precinct – these are visible today only as earthworks.

In the eastern part of the precinct are earthwork remains of a water supply system and the fishponds which provided one of the staples of the monks' diet.

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/waverley-abbey/history/>

The site was excavated by the Surrey Archaeological Society between 1890 and 1903, and the ruins restored in 1966 when the site was under the care of the Ministry of Works.

The ruins of Waverley Abbey House, and the surrounding land were all designated a conservation area in 1989. Waverley Abbey House is protected as a Grade II* Listed Building, while the abbey ruins are also a Scheduled Ancient Monument https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waverley_Abbey

Chertsey District contacts -as elected in January 2021

| | |
|---|--|
| Ringling Master and Chairman: Richard Pearce | richard@holbreck.co.uk |
| Secretary: Willy Burgess 01784 439583 | egamten@gmail.com |
| Treasurer: John Young 01252 319739 | jgy-young@tiscali.co.uk |
| Assistant Ringing Master: Peter Binns | pjbinns43@gmail.com |
| Assistant Ringing Master: Peter Whisker | peter@whisker.org.uk |
| Executive Committee Member: Jennifer Meade | jennifercmeade@btinternet.com |
| Independent Examiner: Roger Pashley | maryandroger@ntlworld.com |
| Belfry Inspector: Andrew Fisher 01932 829130 | andrew@atf.me.uk |
| Training: Jane Marsters 020 8942 0886 | maljan@ic24.net |
| Newsletter: Hilary Brooks 01932 227088 | hilaryjbrooks@gmail.com |
| Bookstall: under review | |

Quiz answers; 1 Twix: 2 Mars: 3 Mint Aero: 4 Bounty: 5 Double Decker: 6 Snickers:
7 Wispa: 8 Boost: 9 Toffee Crisp: 10 Lion Bar: 11 Flake: 12 Crunchie: 13 Milky Way:
14 Picnic: 15 Fudge:

*Dates for the diary - No dairy dates have been given to me yet,
so I cannot pass anything on, Ed*