

Bell-notes

The quarterly newsletter for The Chertsey District
Issue 50 May 2025

Christ Church Esher



Christ Church, Esher

Drawn by Michael Bryant, reproduced with thanks.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS



President: THE BISHOP OF GUILDFORD

BELL NOTES ISSUE 50(!) May 2025

Message from the Editor, -

Welcome to BELL NOTES 50 Revision 1*. What a milestone and what a privilege to be its editor. Mind you, it nearly didn't happen and I owe huge thanks to our Master for stepping in and issuing the initial and reminder calls to contributors whilst was in St Peter's and, of course, to contributors for responding so promptly. Happily, after much excellent care, I am now out of there and waiting to have a pacemaker fitted. My thanks to all those contributors who have used Arial 14 point, it really makes my job that much easier.

Almost enough of me! My failing health since New Year meant that I could not remain Tower Captain and, like others who have to step down, I guess I had fears that all the effort I had put in would go to waste. Huh! Of course it didn't, 'cometh the hour, cometh the man' / 'The Lord will provide'. Ottershaw's new Captain is fellow band member Gordon Cox and I know that District will support him in his efforts to build the band.

My apologies to Paul Thurtle for misspelling his name in the first edition, our hearty congratulations to Richard at Old Woking for stamina as well as skill in participating in the 9 hr 17 minutes peal of Caters and Royal and thanks to John Young for assigning Alan Regin to Ottershaw after all these years and his extensive/intensive ringing elsewhere (we too still reckon he's one of ours!')

Ahead of our Master's contribution, I am truly impressed by her zest and energy in motivating our District's ringers with so many and such successful ringing events in the quarter and yet to come. A heartfelt 'thank you' from the touchline! A copy of the latest Programme on a Page will be sent with this issue.

* I am not in the habit of issuing revisions/2nd editions but with two important late entries and the extra items above I'm making an exception!

Peter Binns

From the District Ringing Master, Rachel Johnson

What an eventful few months it's been in the district! In February a very well attended training session saw ringers practise their handling skills under Richard Pearce's expert leadership, then in March at our general practice we had a particular focus on leading. The Striking Festival in April was a delight, with 6 teams taking the opportunity to focus on their striking, showing ambition and determination. Congratulations to Egham, who emerged victorious, and to the Ockham&Send band who won the Master's special award for novice bands, with two brand new ringers putting in an excellent performance. (Perhaps next year we will manage to put together a young ringers band, with young learners coming through at Walton and Oatlands???) Going out and about, it has been wonderful to see new ringers making progress, and we are planning for our June mini outing to be within the district, to give newer ringers a little taste of local towers and more confidence in getting out to other practices. But for me a huge highlight has been the monthly district quarter peals (plus a few extras) - well done to everyone who achieved a 'first' in something and thank you to everyone who helped by ringing or conducting. Keep putting your requests in to Tricia and she will be delighted to organise one for you, anything from ringing the tenor behind to conducting surprise major! You will see from the updated programme that we have had to make a few changes - in particular the plain bob training has been brought forward to May so do get in touch asap if you're interested in that. We are continuing to think about how we can support newer ringers with handling, and we will also reschedule the listening session, so watch this space.

Rachel Johnson, District Ringing Master

Out and About

Another reminder! In addition to 'home tower' ringing and practice night visiting the District has a full schedule of specialist ringing sessions to which you are welcome.

And as always, the regular opportunities such as the monthly 10 bell practices at Egham (first Thursday but check first) and monthly 8 and 6 bell and daytime practices and training and general practices and striking competitions (see the annual programme accompanying this issue of Bell Notes for details of where and when as it varies from year to year).

An updated version of the Programme on a Page will accompany this edition of Bell Notes.

Short and not-so-short touches from the towers

Chertsey - St Peter, 20cwt 8, Wednesday, KT16 8AS

We manage to ring four to six bells for Sunday services at 8.30-9.00am, sometimes with the help of visitors, some who visit Chertsey to stay at the riverside Caravan & Camping Club site near Chertsey Bridge. Ringing the Curfew bell at approximately 8 o'clock on weekday evenings finished on Lady Day, 25th March. In addition, the ringers wind the church clock twice a week and reset it for BST when the clocks changed. One of us also climbed up on the tower roof to fly the flag for Easter & St George's Day.

Before Easter, we were part of the team that welcomed children from Meadowcroft primary school and spoke to them about the bell and ringing.

We were very pleased that we managed to field a band for the District Striking Competition held at Ockham on Saturday 12th April, with thanks to John Burnett who kindly assisted us by ringing the tenor. We rang Rounds & Call Changes, being place 3rd behind Egham & Old Woking who range changes.

The Vacancy (Interregnum) advert for new Priest-in-Charge that appeared in *The Church Times* at the beginning of January resulted in 9 applicants. Five applicants were interviewed and subjected to 'trial by quiche' with a number of parishioners, including ringers resulting in the appointment of a husband and wife clergy couple who have accepted a job share. The old rambling Victorian vicarage has been sold by the Diocese and they are refurbishing the former curate's houses to meet the modern specification as a Vicarage. The Revs. Anne and Phil Richardson will share the role of Priest in Charge at Chertsey, Lyne and Longcross. They are currently Associate Rectors at Cove in Guildford Diocese. We are hoping they will be able to move during August, with their two daughters, Ella who is 6 and Lexi aged 2; it is pleasing to report that Anne used to be ringer.

If anyone would like the challenge of ringing on our ground floor heavy bells, or try our Dumb Bell, please come along on a Wednesday practice night; you would be most welcome.

Malcolm S Loveday, Chertsey Tower Captain on behalf of Chertsey Ringers

Malcolm Loveday, Tower Captain

Chobham - St Lawrence, 9cwt 8, Monday, GU24 8AA

Helen Scrivener

East Molesey - St Mary the Virgin, 10cwt 8, Tuesday, KT8 0ST

We rang a QP of Grandsire Doubles on 23rd February for the District's 4th Sunday QP initiative. Band was:- 1 Ellie Thomas Rose 2 Jane Marsters 3 Giles Andre 4 Jackie Roberts 5 Paul Flavel(c) 6 Andrew Fisher A first QP for Ellie – well done !

We raised a band for the Guild's 6 bell striking competition at Seale on 8th March. The first time we have taken part in this – apart from via zoom and Ringing Room during the pandemic when we didn't exactly cover ourselves in glory. It was a challenge on unfamiliar bells but it was a good experience for us and we enjoyed some excellent ringing from the other bands taking part. We didn't fare much better at the District's striking festival at Ockham on 5th April. This was probably down to me trying to be too ambitious. We'd rung a well struck 120 of Grandsire Doubles at our previous practice – what could possibly go wrong ? Needless to say we rang some perfectly struck rounds and call changes the next day for Sunday service. It was an experience made enjoyable by the lovely weather and Ockham's hospitality.

The 4th Wednesday afternoon practices continue to be well attended and we also hosted a combined SA/CD plain hunt practice on 15th March Always good to meet ringers from other towers. Our bells continue to be popular with visiting bands – Battersea ringers came on 29th March as part of their Thames tour.

Andrew is bringing two youngsters from Oatlands to our practices and they are progressing well – as is Jonny, who joined us last summer, under Giles' tuition.

We had our AGM and curry on 15th April during Holy Week – replacing our usual Tuesday practice – very enjoyable. We hope to ring for VE Day on 8th May and also attempt a couple of QPs for SA's QP month on 6th and 27th May. Watch this space !

Jane Marsters

Egham - St John the Baptist, 17cwt 10, Thursday, TW20 9HL

Esher - Christ Church, 7cwt 8, Wednesday, KT10 8QS

With fluctuating numbers for our Wednesday practices we have taken to joining another local band once a month; in this way we can ring more varied methods and become confident on new bells. Plus we have the benefit of meeting and ringing with other members of the Chertsey District.

Watching the weather became a full time occupation in March as the ropes needed to be adjusted in all directions. Eventually Morgan Rook and myself spent a whole day up with the bells checking ropes, pulleys, garters, headstocks and clappers and so much more. We also gave the Tower a good clean to rid it of the accumulated flies!

Three of band undertook a First Aid course run by the church in the use of a defibrillator (we have one on church grounds)

To date we have rung for one funeral but have been booked for two weddings this summer.

Ann Battensby Tower Captain

Hersham - St Peter, 8cwt 8, Tuesday, KT12 4AA

David Mealar

Horsell - St Mary the Virgin, 11cwt 6, Tuesday (check first), GU21 4QQ

The winter months have been very quiet and there were just 2 Sundays when we were unable to provide a team for Service Ringing; this was largely as a result of ringers being away with their families, during the school holidays. On those Sundays when ringing was possible, the average attendance was 6 members.

On the 16th April, we held our Annual Dinner, which was enjoyed by 7 members and 3 guests, at The Cricketers, Horsell.

The good news is that we have a wedding booked for the Spring and a full team is available.

Alan Nichols - Tower Captain

Oatlands - St Mary, 12cwt 8, 2nd Wednesday, KT13 9TS

The last report mentioned two new ringers who were recruited at a tower open day before Christmas. Christian (14) and Rohan (16) have benefitted from attending the Tuesday practice at East Molesey and are now ringing with us on Sunday mornings.

We suffered another stay problem in April (different one). It broke on a Sunday and a new one was in place for our Wednesday practice, thanks again to excellent work by Stephen Darvill.

Oatlands ringers have been to plain hunt training at Send and East Molesey, both well-led. The supporting ringers at Molesey included at least three College Youths.

John Burnett

Ockham (+Send)- All Saints, 7cwt 6, Thursday, GU23 6NL

It has been quite a busy Quarter at Ockham this period. We had a visiting band on 7th March organised by Isaac Johnson ringing a QP of spliced surprise Minor in 11 methods. This he kindly dedicated to two local parishioners 90th Birthdays a few days earlier.

The RAF Guild visited as mentioned previously on 22nd for Ringing followed by service taken by Rachel Johnson, Tea, and then the AGM. They/we had visited several local towers inclusive of Chobham, Old Woking, Send and West Clandon during the day. With many Thanks.

On the 24th A Kent county group visited, and scored the 38th Peal on our bells containing in the band Alan Regin of Ottershaw! This was spliced Surprise Minor in all 41 Regular methods. And the SA Advanced Minor Group came in the evening

On the 7th April the Surrey Association Peripatetics came to both Send and Ockham for their monthly gathering.

On the 12th we hosted the District Striking Festival and our joint Send And Ockham members came a very credible 4th as for several this was their first time ringing like this! Well done to all who participated.

The following day Lorna Jackson called Plain Bob Doubles in celebration of the wedding of her friend two days earlier in Norfolk.

Finally on Thursday 1st May I called an extent of Cambridge Surprise Minor before practice to celebrate All Saints Ockham being the 2nd in Deanery, 3rd in

Diocese, and 73rd church nationally to be awarded Gold in A Rocha eco church scheme. (*A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment. It is a member of Churches Together in England (CTE) and accept the CTE's Statement of Belief. As such, we welcome any church that supports this to join the Eco Church scheme. Ed.)*

John Young - Tower Captain

Old Woking - St Peter, 17cwt 8, Wednesday, GU22 8GF

It's been a busy three months at Old Woking since the last newsletter. Early February saw our AGM - the only change in the Tower officer roles saw Isaac becoming Steeple-keeper, with Rachel swapping to be the deputy SK. Thanks to Jenny Webb for hosting the meeting.

The band have rung five quarter-peals - Bristol (to celebrate the collation and installation of Jonathan Thomas as Rector after a decade as priest in charge), 3-spliced on a Sunday morning (to mark the Surrey Half-Marathon), Plain Bob Minor (Simon's first as a conductor and Talia's first in the method), 5-spliced (to mark Alison's 60th birthday and in memory of her sister) and 3-spliced (for Palm Sunday).

The last of these quarters was also as practice for a peal attempt on 10 May of Bristol, Cambridge and Superlative - if successful, this would be the 100th peal on the bells. We're also planning 'Bell Sunday' the day after that and have the Tower BBQ in July, so there's plenty to look forward to in the next few months.

Finally, the Band would like to offer their congratulations to Richard on being part of the band which rang the longest peal yet rung of Caters and Royal - 15,009 changes taking 9hrs 17mins.

Doug Stoneham - Tower Secretary

Ottershaw-Christ Church, 16cwt 6, Wednesday, 8pm-9pm KT16 OPB

Hello everybody! I'm Gordon Cox and I am the new Tower Captain at Christ Church Ottershaw following Peter's retirement earlier in the year due to ill health. After most of April in St Peter's I am glad to say that Peter is much better and looking forward to getting his pacemaker, so we may see him ringing again.

What a quarter! A time of change and challenge but also hope! As mentioned last time, we started the quarter having had a dropped clapper on the 2nd which had damaged the slider and wheel rim on the way down. David West came to our rescue and repaired and reinstated the wheel rim and replaced the rope.

We have at last ordered new ropes from Maypole and expect to get them quite soon. As ever, the most difficult aspect is deciding what colour(s) the sallies should be! In addition, we are hoping that an appeal for funds will be successful, otherwise we may be working the treadmill!

Aside from Peter's retirement our band has seen some changes. Dr Nick Springall has spent/is spending a long time in St George's Hospital with an unknown disease of the nervous system, we of course wish him a full recovery but do not expect to see him ringing for some time. Another of the band is due to have a biopsy so we are anxious for him too. On the brighter side, Kate continues to get ringing experience at other towers as she is very keen to learn and Paul Thurtle, who lives locally but usually rings at Esher, joins us for practices and service ringing if he forgets to set the alarm right! Paul has undergone some ART training so that will be useful to the bands he rings with. We also have a new learner for whom we are giving separate individual training. Finally, last but not least, I want to thank Neil Shaw for holding it all together, despite low numbers, when I took a holiday and the band for helping to make my transition to Captain as easy as possible.

Gordon Cox - Tower Captain

In issue 49 Peter suggested readers share how they became ringers, so here's his!

'My first wife and I had not been married long and we lived in a village south west of Liverpool. A neight inhbour suggested we went for a drink at the local pub next Thursday. We agreed. "but not until after 9 as I'm ringing till then" What? "Oh, come up to the church about 8.45 and see" We did. Then lots of explanation over glasses of Higsons at 'The Childe of Hale'. And we went to*

*see more of it the next Thursday, were given tail ends and more explanations and met ringers, characters all, from around Liverpool. More practice nights and beer, then service ringing, outings, visiting other towers and there was no going back!' (*St Mary's Hale, Cheshire, 6 bells then now 8, 8cwt. The Childe of Hale was supposedly 9ft 3in tall – 2.82m, died 1623 aged 45)*

Send - St Mary the Virgin, 11cwt 6, Wednesday, GU23 7JL

Note to All - Ockham practice on the 4th Thursday of each month will be rung at St Mary the Virgin, Send as from 25 April. Ringers from other towers will be very welcome at this practice which is intended to ensure that the people of Send continue to enjoy the sound of their bells on a regular basis and that the few local ringers get a practice at their home tower.

Rachel Wilkinson

Thames Ditton - St Nicholas, 8cwt 6, Monday, KT70QQ

Pamela Rider, Tower Secretary

Walton-on-Thames - St Mary, 21cwt 8, Friday, KT12 2QS

The “learners” who started at the end of 2023 now form the majority of the Walton ringers. Supplemented by two or three of the experienced ringers, it is an all-Walton band that rings on a Sunday morning.

They continue to benefit greatly from the support of visitors at the Friday evening practices who are willing to join in with rounds, call changes and plain hunt. For anyone thinking of coming to ring at Walton on a Friday, we move on to more challenging work in the second part of the evening.

The Surrey Association came visiting on a Saturday morning in April, strong in quality but not in numbers. They encouraged the Walton ringers to join them and took some of us beyond our normal comfort zones, both technically and physically (e.g. ringing the 20 cwt tenor). I'm sure it did us good.

Walton-on-Thames has an association with New Zealand dating back to the first World War when thousands of servicemen were treated in specially created hospitals in the town. An annual service at St Mary's Church recognises ANZAC day, supported by the British Legion and attended by notable guests. We always try to muster a full band to ring them in and did so on Sunday 27th April.

John Burnett (for Hilary Brooks)

Weybridge - St James, 11cwt 8, Thursday, KT13 8D

February started off with a special service for Candlemas. Rev. Paul Davies, Bishop of Dorking was presiding.

One of our number that morning was a visiting ringer (who learned at St James in the 1980s) and he mentioned that the bishop was a ringer.

How surprised we were when shortly after, he arrived in our midst and rang with us.

We also had our previous curate's son (Alex Bishop) ringing that morning. It's not often that you can find two bishops in the belfry!

The University of London Society visited in April. They were successful in a peal attempt of Cambridge Surprise Major conducted by Isaac Johnson.

We continue to practice each Thursday with around 8 ringers, thanks to some regular visitors.

On Sunday we usually have 6 bells so it was very satisfying to have 8 ringers on Palm Sunday and 10 ringers on Easter Day!



Linda Strange, Tower Secretary

Chertsey District Officers/contacts 2025

Master: Rachel Johnson (Old Woking)

24 Howards Rd, Woking, GU22 9AP. (07722 650090.
rachel.e.johnson@sky.com)

Secretary: (Joint) Simon & Liz Burton (Ockham)

Simon : 3 Roughlands, Woking GU22 8PT (07789 876514.
svburton26@gmail.com)

Liz : 07788 190816. eburton71@btinternet.com)

Chairman & Assistant RM: John Young (Ockham)

5 Parsons Cottages, Harpers Road, Ash, GU12 6BX. (07814 554627, jgy-
young@tiscali.co.uk)

Treasurer Alison Sanderson (Chobham)

20 Fernhill Close, Woking, GU22 0DJ. (07784 091369.
ali.hullah@googlemail.com)

Executive Committee Member: Patricia Hoverd-Hughes (Ockham)

22 Poyle Road, Tongham, GU10 1DU. (07426 197761.
patriciahughes@live.com)

Independent Examiner: Post Vacant

Assistant Ringing Master: Eliot Johnson (Old Woking)

24 Howards Rd, Woking, GU22 9AP. (07769 674609.
eliotpjohnson@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Peter Binns (Ottershaw)

5 St Crispins Way, Ottershaw, KT16 0RE. (01932 872844.
pjbinn43@gmail.com)

Belfry Inspection Co-Ordinator: Andrew Fisher (Oatlands)

18 Woodland Grove, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 9EQ. (01932 829130.
andrew@atf.me.uk)

Training Officer: Patricia Hoverd-Hughes See Above Exec Officer

Paul Thurtle (Esher)

3 Waverley Drive, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 9PE. (07732 746504.
thurtle@hotmail.com)

Dates for the diary -

Note the following dates for your diary – details have been or will be circulated by email in advance.

For Training events, names to the Ringing Master or a Training Officer please **Spring Outing**, details of the June outing to be available in due course