

Bell-notes

The quarterly newsletter for The Chertsey District
Issue 51 August 2025



St Peter's Chertsey

Drawn by Michael Bryant, reproduced with thanks.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS



President: THE BISHOP OF GUILDFORD

BELL NOTES ISSUE 51 August 2025

Message from the Editor, -

Welcome to BELL NOTES 51. My thanks to all who sent kind wishes for my recovery and for the even kinder wishes from all of you on my bereavement and who attended my wife's funeral. I am still waiting to have a pacemaker fitted so have only rung once this quarter (Chertsey, Black Cherry Fair, briefly, ground floor/no stairs!).

My thanks as ever to our contributors., especially those who gave me text in Word and Arial 14 point. Please send 'Word' text, as some versions of Acrobat do not permit text to be copied (unless I spend money on a subscription and my Yorkshire ancestors would frown on that as being a southern wastrel).

It is great to read that several towers have had weddings with more to come. One required ringing before and after service, which poses the question of whether the fee should include an allowance for 'hanging about time' in the middle? A local, District or Guild policy issue?

Peter Binns

From the District Ringing Master, Rachel Johnson

Sometimes writing the Master's message is as easy as ABCD.

A is for apology – I'm sorry that due to family commitments I haven't been able to get out and about as much as I would have wanted to but it was great to see so many people at our mini outing in June, where 20+ ringers enjoyed the bells of Walton, Hersham and Weybridge, hopefully giving newer ringers greater confidence to get out and about more. 10 intrepid members braved the heat at the district practice in July, fortunately in the airy surroundings of East Molesey. We focussed on Plain Bob and our efforts were much admired by some passing future ringers!

B is for begging – I'd really appreciate some help with publicity. This would mainly involve preparing the monthly poster that's sent out to the towers, plus emailing our reminders for special events. If you can edit a word document and you're well organised, this could be you! I'd also be glad to hear from anyone who could organise our annual district outing on 4th October. This is just a case of picking an area and plotting a route covering 5 or 6 towers and a pub for lunch and making the necessary arrangements with those towers. If you've never organised an outing before then we can give support and guidance. Please get in touch with me if you could help with either or these.

C is for congratulations – well done to everyone who's achieved a first in a quarter peal this quarter! Do also keep looking out for people who would benefit from a quarter peal and let Tricia know - she will be delighted to organise a band for you. Ringing a quarter peal is an excellent way to cement your progress, whether that's ringing the tenor behind, trebling or ringing a new method. As well as ringing in several of these quarter peals Eliot and I managed to get along to the excellent ART bell handling training course in May. There are plans for a course within the Guild later in the year and I'd strongly commend it to anyone who is already teaching new ringers or interested in doing so. These early stages of learning are so important because good handling is crucial to be able to progress onto plain hunt and beyond.

D is for District practices – these continue in August at Egham (newly restored to 10!), Esher and Thames Ditton, then our next scheduled Saturday event is a listening skills session followed by a social in September (details tbc). Do try and get these dates in you diary (note the above publicity role that would help!) – district events give you the opportunity to ring at different towers and try things you might not be able to manage at your home tower. Don't be scared to come along whatever standard you are – we are friendly and encouraging. I will be enjoying some of the bells of Pembrokeshire and look forward to seeing you in September!

Best wishes

Rachel

Rachel Johnson, District Ringing Master

Out and About

The District outing in June was just that, with ringing at Walton, Hersham and Weybridge. Over 20 ringers took part with lots of rounds and plain hunt, plain bob and grandsire, might have been Stedman, A most enjoyable morning.

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).

Short and not-so-short touches from the towers.

Chertsey, 20cwt 8, Wednesday, KT16 8AS

Like several local towers we have had either met short or had to cancel practice ringing on a number of occasions due to lack of ringers either due to holidays, illness or other commitments, however we have managed to always ring four to six bells at 8.30-9.00am for the Sunday service. In addition, with help from Jill Huddle and Paul Thurtle we were able to ring eight bells for a wedding and for the Black Cherry Fair on 12th July 2025.

For the first time ever (?), Chertsey tower will be the venue for this years Guild 8 bell striking competition and requests have already been received from some of the District bands to have dedicated practice slots for quarter peals to get used to the bells (& stretchy ropes) prior to the event on Saturday 27th September 2025. We look forward to the results with interest!

On **Tuesday 2nd September at 7:30** the Bishop of Guildford will Licence Rev'd Anne Richardson as *Priest in Charge*, and Rev'd Phil Richardson, her husband, as *Associate Vicar*. We will probably ring prior to the service and hopefully Anne will chime one the bells as part of the induction.

We are pleased to report that four members of the congregation have indicated an interest in learning to ring so we will have to start holding some beginners' handling practices using our dumb bell and a tied bell to train the recruits. At Chertsey it normally takes about 10 -15 hours of rope time spread over six months before a person safely ring rounds unaided.

We welcome any intrepid ringers on Wednesday evenings if any of you are brave enough to ring our bells.

Malcolm Loveday, Tower Captain

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

Since our last entry in Bell Notes, Chobham are delighted to have gained a couple of new ringers and we now regularly manage to ring all 8 bells on a Monday practice. In 2024 we were able to ring for all the Christmas services and our tower Christmas dinner gets larger each year.

We rang in the New Year followed by mince pies and a celebratory drink and 2025 continues to see a good band turn up for a monthly Sunday service. February & March were remembered for 'cake' as many practice evenings we were celebrating at least one of our ringers' birthdays.

Like many Towers we rang for Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday in April and then May saw Chobham host a district practice and ring for the 80th anniversary of VE Day on eighth of May.

Thanks as always to our many visitors who've joined us over the last 6 months and especially John Young who has been a regular this year helping to strengthen the ability of the band and encouraging us to try new methods.

Helen Scrivener

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

We rang a QP of Grandsire Doubles on 6th May for SA's QP month Band was 1 Alison Stephens, 2 Jane Marsters, 3 Giles Andre, 4 Andrew Fisher, 5 Paul Flavel (c), 6 Joanna Hoad . A first for Alison on the treble – well done !

We rang rounds and call changes and firing on 8th May at 6.30pm onwards for VE Day – a passing parishioner asked if we were ringing for VE Day or the Pope as his name had just been announced minutes beforehand! Sadly, Bell Sunday passed East Molesey by once again on 18th May as the Annual Parochial Meeting and lunch followed the main service and the early Holy Communion was cancelled A few of us were able to ring for the later service and became visible to a different congregation – so that was a bonus.

On 27th May we devoted our practice night to ringing up and down in peal to try and improve our skills here. Richard Pearce led the session and imparted his wisdom – very useful and I hope we can build on it.

We had a wedding to ring for on 21st June – the first for a very long time. Hopefully there will be more to come. St Mary's was honoured to be chosen for the civic service for commissioning the new mayor of Elmbridge, Steven Bax. We enjoyed seeing all the dignitaries in full regalia and rang before and afterwards – though we nearly started too early afterwards as the congregation launched into a second verse of the National Anthem taking us by surprise !

We hosted the District practice on 12th July. Not a huge turnout as so many regulars were busy or away but useful nevertheless.

We're having some rope maintenance done at the moment – new tail ends for 4 of them. We've taken the opportunity to have a clean-up – well overdue. My thanks to everybody who took part but particularly Andrew, Giles and Jonny who did the dirtiest tasks. We've suspended practices until the ropes return

but still ring for Sunday service on 12367 – a different sound but not too unmusical.

Finally we enjoyed lunch at Jane's on 20th July – managing to dodge the showers. Always good to have time to socialise and catch up with the news as well as enjoying the delicious contributions

Jane Marsters

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

After nearly nine months of ringing the front 6 because of a broken 9th wheel we are pleased to announce that the wheel was repaired by Whites and the ten are ready to be rung again.

Many thanks to the GDG for their generous grant from the BRF.

The first Thursdays in the month will be 10 bell specific practices, so anyone who wishes to improve their ten-bell ringing please come along. The practices start at 19.45 and end 21.15. First one on 7 August, I look forward to seeing of many of you as can make it.

David Cox

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

A quiet summer for Esher, in terms of ringing, weddings and funerals.

Our ringing has been hit by the loss of three ringers, all of whom are sadly missed. The result is we are down to five regular ringers, which with work and family commitments can make getting a band together for Sundays or even running a Wednesday practice quite difficult! Judging by the weekly emails of cancelled practices we are not alone.

However, earlier this month we were contacted by a new beginner, keen to ring. So far, she is doing very well indeed!

Ann Battensby Tower Captain

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

The Hersham band continues to ring on Tuesday practice night 7.45 to 9pm. Our three learners are doing well, all ringing good rounds and one just beginning plain hunt. We are lucky to have help from neighbouring towers which speeds progress. The deanery confirmation service was held at Hersham. Weybridge, Walton and Esher all had candidates for confirmation and ringers from each joined us before the service. One of our learners was confirmed. Alexa who was learning but had an accident at school so has not been able to continue was also confirmed.

David Meador

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

My news is much more positive for this period, with service ringing on 13 Sundays and an average attendance of 5 1/2 ringers*. There was no ringing on 2 Sundays due to school holidays and illness.

After a year of no bells being required for weddings, we have rung for 2, one of which required bells to be rung before and after the wedding. We have a third booked for 20 September with another full complement signed up. On a negative note, we were only able to have one practice night as a result of other commitments.

7 members rang to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day and 6 are committed to ring for the 80th Anniversary of VJ day, the end of World War 2 on 15th August.

On Saturday 15th May we entertained 13 visitors from Christ the Saviour Ealing (8, 13-2-0; 1852 G.G. Scott) and on 6th June we welcomed 14 pupils and 4 staff from Horsell Church of England School, who visited the tower and church. We were supported by 3 members of the staff at St Mary's.

Sadly, we have lost 2 of our ringing members, one of whom has been admitted to a local hospice.

Alan Nichols - Tower Captain

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

The summer is inevitably depleting our numbers but we have managed to ring every Sunday morning since the last report. The monthly practice seems to be more vulnerable, sometimes enough to ring all eight with people sitting out, other times only enough for a few attempts at minimus before going to the pub.

In June, we rang for one of the only two weddings at Oatlands this year. (*Stop Press: We were asked today to stand by for another one on 29th December*)

The highlight of the past three months was on Thursday 8th May, the 80th anniversary of VE Day. For the first time in very many years a local band attempted a quarter peal. Noel Gibbin, son of a previous Vicar of Oatlands, conducted an unambitious but successful 1260 of Plain Bob Doubles. The date was also the birthday of our late Tower Captain, Bruce Rogers, who would have been ninety-six. His daughters rang the number 1 and 2 bells.

John Burnett

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

On VE Day 8th May at the appointed hour, 8 combined tower ringers rang 800 changes of general ringing to celebrate its 80th Anniversary at Ockham tower. Tricia and I along with several other parishioners were kindly invited on the 27th to the Orangery Garden of the big house to join the celebration of Lady Greta Griffiths 90th Birthday and on 1st June we rang a QP of 1290 changes - 90 of Grandsire and 1200 of Plain Bob Doubles in her honour.

The day before we had visitors from Ealing.

Ringers from both towers joined the local mini outing arranged by Rachel on the 14th June.

In July on the 20th we successfully scored another QP of 6 Methods for Lorna's challenge towards her Guiding Queens award.

Finally on the 27th we rang for our one and only wedding this year so far.

John Young - Tower Captain

Old Woking- St Peters,

It's been a busy few months at Old Woking, both in and away from the Tower. The biggest event in the Tower was the ringing of the 100th peal in the Tower on 10th May, which was also marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Six Old Woking ringers took part – thanks to Jackie Roberts for stepping in at short notice when Doug was laid up with flu. The band also rang on 8 May to mark the actual anniversary of VE Day and a number of band members took part in a quarter-peal of Cambridge, which included firsts for two members of the Egham band. The band additionally offer their congratulations to Isaac on ringing his 100th peal.

Practice nights have been well attended, with the band ringing Glasgow and Cornwall in recent weeks. Our newer ringers have continued to make progress, with Christine ringing bob doubles, Jacqui ringing called changes and Vivien now coming along to practice night to ring rounds. We had some drama at practice night earlier this month when the rope slipped the wheel on the two and the bell became stuck in place. A subsequent inspection revealed the stay was cracked (unusually, seemingly from contact at back stroke) and the rope had become extremely frayed on the wheel, caused by what looks to be a slight warping of the wheel where the two halves meet. The stay has now been replaced and a spare rope deployed, but we're still struggling to resolve the issues.

Away from the tower, we had our annual BBQ which was kindly hosted by Jenny Webb. As is tradition, there was a lengthy and closely fought game of croquet, with Doug and Caroline gaining a narrow victory over Richard and Talia. Thanks to Jenny for hosting, Caroline for arranging the food and Simon for doing the cooking.

Doug Stoneham - Tower Secretary

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

Now Gordon has his feet under the table I have become Tower Secretary. At this rate we might have a full complement of officers by about 2050!

For information our officers are

Tower Captain Gordon Cox

Treasurer Roger Pashley

Ringling Master Nick Springall (currently hors de combat but improving)

Secretary Peter Binns.

We have held 9 practices this quarter but by no means full bands. A skeleton band made one visit to Chertsey in lieu of practice. Numbers at practice have only recently been boosted by our new ringers. Service ringing has been thinner with only 6/13 Sundays covered. I have not rung at Christ Church since January (stairs won, heart lost!). I hope the magic of a pacemaker will improve matters.

Nonetheless, thin attendances have helped with handling practice and have given our two newest ringers, Brian and Pavel, practice in rounds. Gordon has been/is giving Brian and Pavel separate tuition too, which really helps. Kate is now a 'new-ish' ringer having been with us for a good while, practices elsewhere too and is increasingly confident and competent.

Oh joy, we got new ropes in June and David West, with Gordon and Peter Wren hung them in early July. The sallies are new and fat and the top ends terylene, so a bit springy. However, the band are getting used to them. Our thanks go to members of our congregation who responded to our appeal and to the several band members who enabled the purchase of these essential connections between ringers and bells!



Delivered



Hung

We rang for VE Day on May 8 and welcomed Jacqueline Patel (Leatherhead) to our practice in early June. As ever it is good to be visited!

We are looking forward to the homecoming of a number of our 'old' ringers (from the '70's and '80's) on 2 August – more next time.

Peter Binns, Tower Secretary

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. 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*

Walton-on-Thames

It's feast or famine at the Friday evening practices. Occasionally there are barely enough to make it worthwhile. We are always reluctant to cancel, as now and then an unexpected visitor appears at the door. That was the case last week when we suddenly had a room full of competent ringers and could ring beyond our normal modest range.

On VE Day + 80, the former learners took over and organised celebratory ringing free of comment from their usual teachers, who were ringing elsewhere. A flood of WhatsApp messages followed, including "It was a joyous session", "I'm very proud of us all" and "Amazing to think we were part of it". Rewarding reading for the teachers!

Last wedding of the season tomorrow. It took 15 requests to get 6 ringers. Is that everyone's experience?

John Burnett (for Hilary Brooks)

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

On May 8th we were able to find a band to ring at the suggested time of 6:30pm for VE 80.

That same month we were asked to ring before the Ascension Day service. Quite by chance, two passing ringers (from Oswestry,) came in to ring with us when they heard the bells!

We also rang for the service on Corpus Christi in June. These three events all occurred on a Thursday, our practice night, so happily, we had a band at the ready.

The mini outing in June was well attended and we were the last tower of the morning after Walton and Hershaw.

There have been two weddings with bells this quarter.

One practice was cancelled due to low numbers but we usually average 8 on Thursdays and 6 on Sunday morning.

Recently, we had a visitor who arrived with his young daughter. He was taught to ring at Weybridge as a teenager.

We were very impressed to see a seven year old balanced on two boxes ringing both strokes by herself!

We have also acquired one of those rare things...a learner!

Early days as yet but he seems very keen so far.

As ever, we are grateful for the support of local ringers who regularly attend and help with wedding bands and teaching.

We couldn't manage without them,

Linda Strange, Tower Secretary

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Dates for the diary -

Dates and details of special events will be circulated by email in advance.*

For Training events, names to the Ringing Master or a Training Officer please

(Nothing to do with ringing but remember that in late September you can celebrate 200 years of passenger rail transport at your local railway – Great Cockrow, Mizens, Hampton & Kempton Waterworks, SWT(?).....! Ed)*