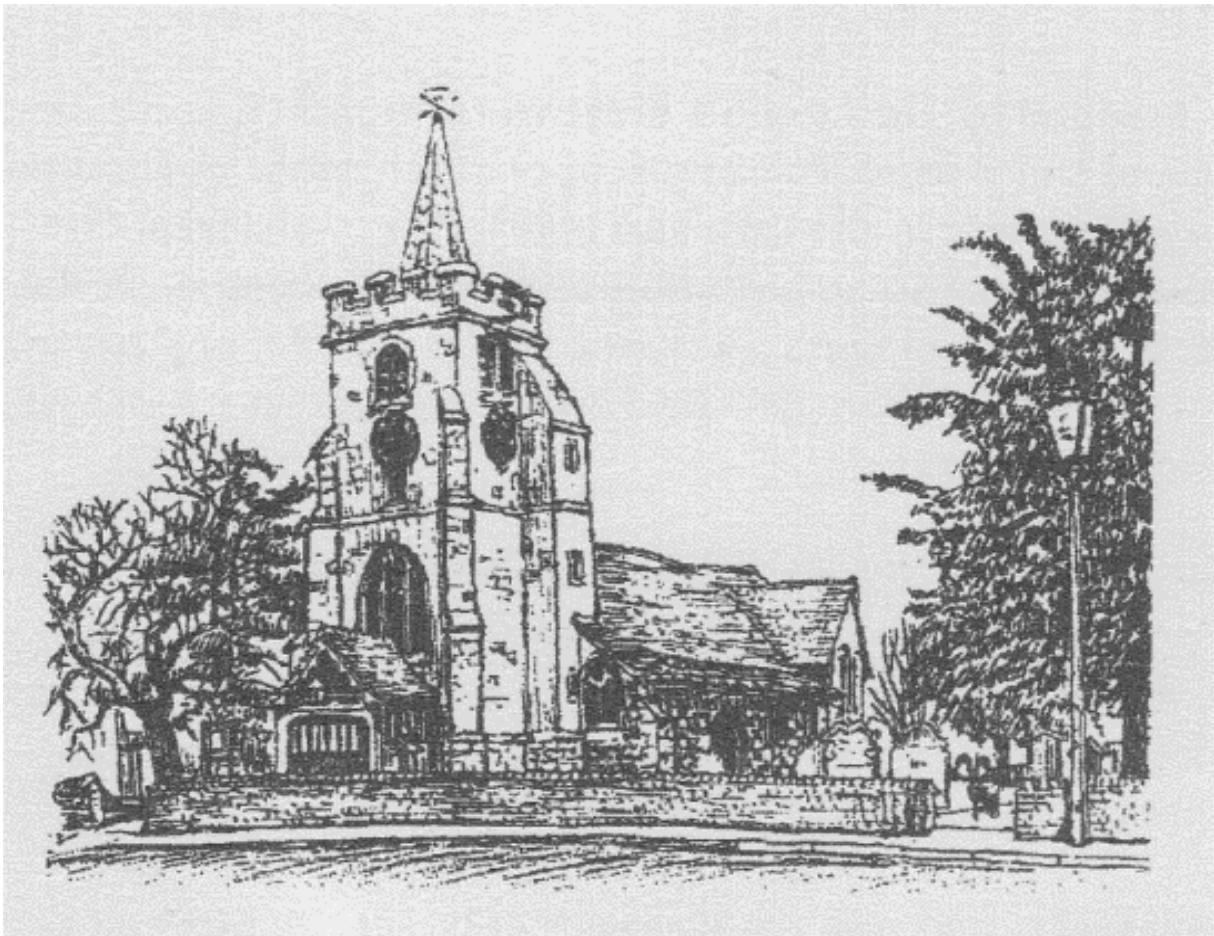


Bell-notes

The quarterly newsletter for The Chertsey District
Issue 52 November 2025



St Lawrence Chobham

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 52. My thanks to all of you who have contributed to this issue. We have almost a full set of contributors – a record!? My thanks, too, these contributors who have provided more than one report.

We note with sadness the deaths of two District ringers – Denise Balmer (Horsell - September) and Jennifer Meade (Esher – October). Both will be sorely missed. Jennifer's funeral and wake will be at Christ Church Esher on 13 November at 1.15.

Our best wishes go to Ann Battensby (Esher) for a speedy recovery and early discharge from hospital.

Our congratulations to Bob Hudson (Chertsey) on attaining a 90 years young (still ringing so 'old' doesn't apply!).

Congratulations too to Juliet (Oatlands) for giving yet another demonstration of muscle memory in a return visit to the tower.

Don't forget The Annual Nomination Meeting at Old Woking on Sunday 8 November starting at 2.30.

Don't miss the opportunities to ring at Ranmore Common, a commodious ringing chamber and a magnificent church, resplendent with examples of polished stone due to the, then, new study of geology and indicating that our planet was more than 4,500 years old! (say 5,675 now).

Some contributions have a pale green background. This is because all or part of that contribution has been copied down from Dove's report of a Peal or Quarter – It's not down to the editor's application of artistic licence!

Peter Binns

From the District Ringing Master, Rachel Johnson

There have been some real highs and lows this last quarter. The October mini outing to Ockham, Send and Old Woking was well supported and gave a number of newer ringers the chance to try different bells, as well as seeing some well struck touches of Stedman and Plain Bob Triples, whilst the Chertsey district band were pleased to come second in the Guild 8 bell striking competition which was lavishly hosted by the Chertsey band. Another highlight was the October 10 bell practice at Egham, which had a bumper turnout meaning we were able to ring everything from call changes to Yorkshire Royal – do come along next time if you want to have a go on 10, you will be very welcome. Less well supported were the September general practice and the programme meeting, which makes it harder to know what you would like from the district next year. (Please do come to our final district practice of the year at Thames Ditton, incorporating our annual nomination meeting, to share your views and show your support.) But of course the real low points of the last few months are those we have lost – Denise Balmer from Horsell and Jennifer Meade from Esher, both I'm sure much missed by their towers. Jen in particular was a regular presence at district events for many years, usually with a lemon cake in tow, a smile on her face and an encouraging word or two to offer. As ringers we mark all kinds of occasions, joyful, solemn and sad. Underpinning all of these are our camaraderie, our skill and the call to worship; so the sound of the bells points us to God who rejoices with us in the good times, weeps with us in the bad times and offers us the hope of the resurrection. May the sound of the bells encourage and uplift you today.

Rachel Johnson, District Ringing Master

Out and About

The District mini outing on Saturday 4 October was a great success even though (or perhaps because) only three towers were visited – and all within the District's boundaries. Over 20 members and friends enjoyed the bells of Ockham, Send and Old Woking. Great experience for newer ringers and we enjoyed decent courses of Stedman and Plain Bob Triples.

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, 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.

We are pleased to report that our latest recruit, Jenni, is now almost able to handle a bell safely on her own, ringing rounds & call changes on Sunday mornings as well as practice night.

We rang the bells on **Tuesday 2nd September** at **7:30** for the Licencing Service of Rev'd Anne Richardson as *Priest in Charge*, and Rev'd Phil Richardson, her husband, as *Associate Vicar*, by the Bishop of Guildford. Interestingly, Anne was not required to chime one the bells as part of the service since she was not Inducted as Vicar but only Licenced as Priest-in-Charge of the joint benefice of Chertsey with Lyne and Longcross, so that the Diocese can have the option of pastorally splitting the parishes during the coming few years.

Due to an oversight we forgot to include mention in the last issue of ringing for VE Day, so we have included the details below:

VE80 Ringing at St Peter's Church, Chertsey, Surrey



Photo by Douglas Kurn, Chertsey

Ringers (l-r): Richard Pearce [Conductor], Peter Wisker, Isaac Johnson, Geraldine Forster, William Bishop, Anna Leach, Malcolm Loveday, Rachel Johnson

Chertsey, Surrey St Peter Sunday, 11 May 2025 in 74m (20 in E)

1945 Little Bob Major

- 1 Peter Whisker (*Chertsey*)
 - 2 Geraldine R Forster (*Sunbury*)
 - 3 Anna Leach (*Staines*)
 - 4 Rachel Johnson (*Old Woking*)
 - 5 Malcolm S Loveday (*Chertsey*)
 - 6 William P Bishop (*London*)
 - 7 Isaac W Johnson (*Old Woking*)
 - 8 Richard A Pearce (C) (*Old Woking*)
- Rung to mark VE80

A 25 second extract, recorded by Peter Whisker, from the touch of 1945 Little Bob was broadcast on BBC Radio 4's **Bells on Sunday** on Sunday 24th August 2025. It is thought to be the first time that Chertsey has been on **Bells on Sunday**. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002hkqg>

Chertsey was the venue that was chosen for this year's Guild 8-bell striking competition which was held on Saturday 27th September 2025. Three Districts managed to muster bands and we were pleased that a number of visitors came to practice prior to the event, either joining our practice night, or on a Sunday evening for a dedicated practice, including the Farnham District who managed to ring a quarter peal:

Guildford Diocesan Guild, Chertsey, Surrey ; st Peter

Sunday, 14 September 2025 in 52m (19½ in E)

1280 Cambridge Surprise Major

- 1 Brenda A Mayle
- 2 Mark B Place
- 3 Martin J Turner
- 4 Joseph A Sharp
- 5 Stuart A Aitken
- 6 James White
- 7 Oliver R Hall (C)
- 8 Jonathan C Hetherington

Abut twelve of us enjoyed an evening meal at *The Swan*, Chertsey on Wednesday 27th August 2025 to celebrate Bob Hudson's 90th birthday. Sadly, Bob's eyesight is now not good, so he no longer is able to drive but still joins us to ring when he gets a lift. We thanked him for hosting the meal and for all the support he has given the tower over the last 20 years or so.

Michaelmas (29th September) saw the start of ringing the Curfew, which we ring at about 8pm on a rota basis on weekday evenings during the winter months until Lady Day (25th March). Chertsey is one of the few towers in the country that continues this ancient custom. A bell is rung up, tolled for about

60 blows, rung down and when the sound dies away the day of the month is swung chimed, i.e. 10 blows on the 10th of the month etc.

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

We hold regular Monday practices and have solid core band and often have all eight bells going. However, we do very much welcome visitors as this provides us with the opportunity to have someone stand with someone learning a new method, or for us to practise a range of new or more challenging methods, especially minor and triples that we are often one ringer short for.

Our novice and returning ringers continue to make good progress with rounds, call changes and plain hunt. One ringer can now treble to a range of plain methods, which has been a big boost for the band.

We now have regular service ringing on the third Sunday of each month; the congregation appreciate our efforts. We nearly always have six bells ringing and enjoy some good call changes along with Bob Doubles. Sometimes, we have enough of the local band to ring all eight bells which is great.

Outside of ringing, we all have a variety of other hobbies. Chris, in particular, has had a very productive season growing pumpkins and squashes (pictured).



Helen Scrivener

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

Our new tail ends are softening up nicely – not now so tough on the fingers, particularly when ringing down. A visiting QP band on 18th October has helped the process.

The Wednesday afternoon practices continue well. In August we managed Cambridge Major which we haven't done for a while. It being Summer holiday time there were plenty of activities for youngsters in the church. Many of them were fascinated watching us ring so we agreed to arrange a demonstration session for Sapphires Nursery School (opposite the church in what was the church hall). The children are tiny but their enthusiasm and curiosity boundless -we may ignite a spark for the future!

On 24th September the church organised a quiz night to raise funds to support the Alpha courses it runs. We were unable to raise a full bellringers team but Jonny, Giles, Sally and Giles' daughter formed half of the Dingbats and they won by just half a point. Another highlight of the evening was the pudding auction where Giles' blackberry and apple crumble went for over £30. Well done !

We were saddened to hear that Timothy, Pamela's husband, died on 9th October. He came to our practices long ago but decided ringing wasn't for him. He remained a loyal supporter for Pamela and often joined our social events. It was good to see him at our summer lunch in July. We shall miss his erudition and quiet humour

We were also deeply saddened by Jen's death on 11th October. She was so much part of Chertsey District's ringing scene in so many ways and for so long. We would very much like to ring a QP in her memory but will need some help to do so.

Our practices remain well attended but recently we've sometimes struggled to muster enough ringers for Sunday service ringing – due to holidays, illness, work etc. So I am very grateful to our regular visitors who respond to my begging emails

Jane Marsters

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

David Cox

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

The band were deeply saddened by the death of Jennifer Meade, such a stalwart of both her Tower and the District. Her funeral and wake will be held at the church at 1.15 on 13 November

On behalf of *Ann Battensby Tower Captain (Ed)*

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

We are having regular Tuesday evening practices which have been well attended recently with help from nearby towers. Our three learners are at the rounds and call changes, starting plain hunt and competent plain hunt stages respectively. We have been able to ring Plain Hunt on seven and simple doubles methods. Ringing on Sunday is not always possible but mostly we manage 4 to 6. We have rung at five weddings with one to follow.

David Mealar

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

This issue of Bell Notes is written with mixed emotions, following the death of Denise Balmer on the 1st September, 2025, who was admitted to the Guildford Guild on the 9th May, 1998, and whose funeral was marked by the ringing of half-muffled bells, on the 6th October, 2025. Tributes were paid to her by family and friends from many parts of the world.

As forecast, we rang on the 16th August to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of V.J.Day, marking the end of World War II. We rang also for the Deanery Confirmation Service, at 18:30, on the 21st September and our church and Tower were open for visitors on National Heritage Day, 13th September, attracting some 80+ who climbed the Tower, were shown the bells and given demonstrations of ringing. There was lots of interest but no takers! We continued with an average of just under 6 for Service ringing and only missed one Sunday. On the other hand, we had one more wedding and another practise night.

Alan Nichols - Tower Captain

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

We rang on every Sunday in August, September and October, the attendance ranging from a low of five ringers to a high of nine ringers and a dog. On one occasion, we were pleased to welcome a former Oatlands ringer, Juliet, who had not held a bell rope for many years. She took hold and rang flawless rounds and call changes.

Our second Wednesday of the month practices continue. The September practice was led by Peter Hampson who happened to be in the area. Peter got us going about five years ago after several years without a regular practice evening.

It is known that St Mary Oatlands does not encourage visiting bands on weekdays, out of consideration for the pupils and staff of Cleves primary school which is immediately opposite the church. A quarter peal band from Kingston, who must have studied the school dates, will be ringing this Wednesday during the school's half-term break.

John Burnett

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

Ringling at Ockham continues to be very successful, with a good number of ringers participating each week. The new learners from Send are making good progress, as the bells at Ockham are slightly easier to ring than those at Send.

This is a brief entry for the bell notes since John is currently away in Australia. I am not aware of any quarter peals being rung since the last edition of Bell Notes, except for the one mentioned below.

All Saints, Ockham, Surrey Sunday, 20 July 2025 in 40m (7 in B)

1260 Doubles (6m/v/p)

60 Stedman 2x120's each of Old Bob, St Simons, St Martins, April Day, and Plain Bob Doubles.

1Freddy Bragg

2Rachel E Johnson

3Eliot P Johnson

4Lorna Jackson

5John G Young (C)

6David J M Manners

Rung as the final achievement in the Personal Development challenge section of 4's Queen's Guide award.

4 Most methods. 4 First in the method of Stedman, Old Bob and April Day.

Rachel Wilkinson for John Young - Tower Captain

Old Woking- St Peters,

Old Woking October 2025 Newsletter

It's been a fairly quiet few months at Old Woking since the last newsletter. The band have continued to make progress working towards ringing the Nottingham Eight, with Glasgow and Cornwall being rung on practice nights. Additionally, Vivien is coming along to practice nights now, Jacqui is ringing Plain Hunt and Christine is ringing Bob Doubles from different bells. The Tower was also the final stop on the District Mini Outing, which was very well attended.

The band have continued to face issues with stays – at a recent practice night, the treble felt unusually deep set at hand stroke and further investigation established that the stay was cracked. A replacement is standing by to be installed, which we're hoping will prove to be more robust.

Doug Stoneham - Tower Secretary

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

Since the last report the new ropes ordered from Maypole have arrived and were fitted by David West in early July. We decided on blue and gold for the sallies as these are the colours of Surrey and we think that they look very smart. The new ropes "feel" a little different to the old ones, but we are gradually getting used to them and they are bedding in quite nicely.

We have two new bellringers Brian and Pavel who are both coming along very fast and I hope that they will be ringing methods by the New Year to bring the band back up to full strength. Peter Binns has had his pacemaker fitted and is generally looking much fitter, but the tower stairs are still a challenge for him so we will have to see how things develop over the next few months.



Our new ropes

Home Coming/ Old Haunts Tour 2 August 2025

A band of 12 ringers visited us - 5 revisiting their Home tower (the one they first learned to ring at), 3 with spouses and 3 of the rest had all started to ring within Chertsey District.

Touches of Grandsire, Cambridge and Stedman (were rung despite comments that the new ropes made our bells 'difficult'! A credit to their teachers of many decades ago as well as their years of practice up to this high point!! *(It's amusing to think that our new ropes posed a challenge to this band, given their long experience and acknowledged quality!! Ed.)*

The roll call (with Home and current towers) was

Alan Regin (Ottershaw, now Spitalfields and all over); his brother Jack (Ottershaw, now Binstead Hants) and his wife Anita; Simon Grieve (Ottershaw, now Dronfield Derbys) and his wife Cathy; David West (Ottershaw, elsewhere and back to Ottershaw!), Ian and Alison Cole (Old Woking), Martin Turner (Wolvercote, now Farnborough), Chris Cole (Horsell now Wokingham) and Alistair Brown (E Molesey, now Romsey Abbey).

Our thanks to Martin Turner for organising this outing and including our tower, *(My thanks too, to our Tower Captain, Gordon Cox, for suggesting that a touch was rung in my wife's memory. Ed.)*



The band for Stedman was Alistair Brown (1), Martin Turner (2), Jack Regin (3), Roger Grieve (4), Alan Regin(5) and Simon Grieve (6).

We were to have another visiting band in September but we had just broken the number 2 stay so they managed to organise an alternative tower. The Stay was replaced very quickly thanks to the help of Stephen Darvill and Richard Waters from the District. However, while installing the new stay a number of issues were noticed on other bells so these will need to be addressed over the next couple of months.

Lastly our Tower Captain's contact details in the 2024 Guild report were incorrect so here are the correct details if anyone needs to contact Gordon

Email gordon.cox.53@outlook.com

Mob 07884 113914

Peter Binns, Tower Secretary

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

We continue to join Ockham each week, as we have five new learners and hopefully a sixth joining us very soon. We had initially planned to hold our practice at Send on the fourth Thursday of the month, when Ockham joins us, but it has been easier for us to stay and learn at Ockham.

Over the past few months, Send has continued to welcome visiting bell ringers for various activities, including training mornings, quarter peals, and visits from different ringing bands. For instance, the Haroldies will be ringing at Send on Friday, November 14th.

Looking ahead to the new year, we hope to have more ringing events at Send, particularly on Sunday mornings.

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, Tower Captain

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

At Thames Ditton we now have two young learners and an adult learner who hopefully will stay the course and add to our numbers, which are very much in need of expanding.

Giles is currently replacing the broken stay on the tenor and hopes to have the new one in place by November in time for welcoming the Chertsey District ringers to the Nomination meeting on 8 November.

Pamela - Tower Correspondent

Pamela Rider, Tower Secretary

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

The pattern for service ringing is now on the first and third Sundays of the month.

On Friday 15th August, which happened to be a regular practice night, we rang to mark eighty years since VJ Day, the end of the second World War.

There was some excitement in early October when high winds nearly blew down the flagpole on top of the tower. The churchwardens decreed there should be no bell ringing in case the resulting movement caused the flagpole to separate completely and cause further damage. During the following week, a huge crane arrived to remove the damaged pole and later to replace it with a shiny new one.

The bell ringers take an interest in the flagpole as the route to it is up through the belfry. We often find ourselves responsible for hoisting the flag for special occasions.

John Burnett (for Hilary Brooks)

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

This has been an uneventful quarter.

Practice night has an average attendance of 7 ringers, of limited ability, which makes it quite hard to progress the newer members of the band. We rely on a couple of regular visitors to help us. We have one keen learner at present. On Sundays it varies between 3-6 ringers but we haven't had to cancel at all.

There was a peal attempt on 10th October by a band arranged by George Hart. Unfortunately they were not successful on this occasion but they did ring a very respectable quarter peal of Spliced Surprise Major (16m) which was dedicated to the memory of Jennifer Meade. RIP.

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

Annual Nomination Meeting at Old Woking on Sunday 8 November starting at 2.30.