

Bell-notes

The quarterly newsletter for The Chertsey District
Issue 55 August 2026



St Peter's Hersham



GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

President: THE BISHOP OF GUILDFORD

BELL NOTES ISSUE 55 August 2026

A Message from the Editor, -

Welcome to Bell Notes 55; a huge 'thank you' to our contributors. This issue is a little lean; heat, humidity and holidays may be the culprits!! Reviewing issue 54 I was dismayed at the number of typos escaped my scrutiny and correction. I've tried to do better this time!

Please note that it would be most helpful if contributions for issue 56 could be with me by Monday 26 October.

Peter Binns

Chertsey, 20cwt 8, Wednesday, KT16 8AS

We continue to ring at Chertsey on Wednesdays and for service on Sunday mornings where numbers allow. After a series of open mornings throughout April and May, we are now fortunate to have four new learners who are making good progress, despite Chertsey's bells being difficult to master. We have instituted an additional session from 7.15-8pm on Wednesdays dedicated to new learners. An unofficial cross-guild link with Staines and Sunbury has allowed a couple of new ringers from Sunbury plus our new ringers to experience practices at all three towers which has been very beneficial - many thanks go to Anna Leach at Staines and Geraldine Forster at Sunbury for their support, also to Rachel Johnson, our own District Master, John Young, Andrew Fisher, Sue Loveday and other Chertsey District ringers for their support. Our dumb-bell has proved to be very beneficial in training.

The extremely hot weather has disrupted some practices but we will carry on!

Peter Whisker

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

Helen Scrivener

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

A relatively quiet quarter, with no funerals or weddings. We have however, had visitors to the tower; a touring band from Rochester, also the 'Haroldies', and our friend Aila from Bournemouth who always drops in for a Sunday Service ring when she is visiting family in Claygate.

We have said goodbye and good luck to Morgan Rook as he has now left the area for a new job and home up in Yorkshire. We appreciated his humour, good ringing advice Steeple Keeping skills – he will be very much missed.

This is our last Sunday together.

The eagle eyed among you will note that with Morgan's leaving, we are now a band of only five ringers! Whilst we are currently training four new ringers it is still very early days, so please be ready to answer our calls for help with Wednesday practice so that we can develop our ringing further.

Ann Battensby Tower Captain

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

We hosted an up and down SA training session on 2nd May which hopefully was useful for the participating students. On Friday 8th May we took part in a quiz night to raise funds for the youth groups. We came a respectable 3rd out of 17 teams and also enjoyed a delicious apple cake baked by Tiana and purchased by Jo in the cake and pudding auction - almost as popular as the vicar's cinnamon buns which he brought in straight from the oven.

We remain popular with visiting bands - The Haroldies on 12th June, the bells got a good work out and it was a pleasure to hear a well struck lower of all 8. Another band on 13th June who enjoyed the experience.

Saturday 11th July saw us hosting a District general practice concentrating on good striking. Rachel's instruction that "we won't go into plain hunt until the rounds are perfect" did indeed concentrate the mind to listen more carefully. We'd combined this with an open session in the hope of recruiting new ringers as there was the monthly market in the car park with plenty of people around. Leafletting and ads on face book and church newsletter resulted in 6 people coming and having a go. My thanks to Giles and Andrew for looking after them and to Alison, Tiana, Tim & Jo for their help. We know

that at least 2 of these won't seriously take it up but live in hope that the others might. One came to our subsequent practice and is enthusiastic - hurrah !

Is anyone else finding the hot weather is affecting the ropes and bells ? Our tail end tuckings are prone to unravelling and the no 8 and 5 bells seem harder to ring than usual. Any suggestions ?

Jane Marsters

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

The Hersham band continues to ring on Tuesday practice night 7.45 to 9pm. Some progress is being made but we are thin on the ground due to holidays.

Earlier in the year the church decided for safety reasons we should have a rope banister fitted to the tower stairs and went ahead and got one fitted. This turned out to reduce the effective width of the stairs too much making difficult for all but the slimmest to get up the stairs. It has now been removed and the rope hung down the centre. The top door has also been removed making access to the stairs much easier.

During this quarter we had visits from Rochester District outing and Surrey Wandering Bobs

David Meador

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

Alan Nichols - Tower Captain

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

Another uneventful three months. We managed to ring every Sunday except one. On 24th May, there were nine ringers in the tower and I noted "good ringing". We also had a Friday wedding.

Hilary Brooks's home tower is Walton but she often joins us at Oatlands on a Sunday morning. She's a reliable treble ringer, and we enjoy her company. As probably reported elsewhere in these Bell-Notes, she suffered a crashing fall at home at the beginning of July and has been in hospital ever since. We miss her and wish her a continued recovery. As the holiday season is about to limit ringing in August, our thoughts move towards recruiting and teaching in the autumn.

John Burnett

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

Ockham over the last six months has had regular practice nights combining Ockham and Send Ringers,

All are doing well and starting to learn plain Hunt and we have had a couple more who have recently started.

We are also lucky that we have more experienced ringers visiting practices and can therefore practice minor methods, Stedman doubles and even occasionally Surprise methods Visiting Ringers always welcome.

The last six months we have had various groups visiting our tower such as the wondering Bob and the advanced minor practice, from Surrey Association. We have also hosted training sessions of Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob doubles and handling skills.

We are looking to offer more Sunday pm training sessions over the next few months such as surprise minor methods, more Grandsire and Plain Bob.

Visits from the local Saint Matthews Junior School to see church and bells and also ringers from Saint Mary's Twickenham occurred recently.

John Young - Tower Captain

Old Woking- St Peters,

It's been a relatively quiet few months at Old Woking since the last newsletter. The band have continued to make progress in a number of different areas - the work on Ipswich Surprise Minor culminated in a quarter-peal, so it's now onto Primrose and Norfolk. We also rang a quarter-peal of Bob Minor, which was a good achievement for Jenny M and Alex from Egham. Jacqui is making progress with ringing the treble to Plain Bob and Grandsire, while Vivien is getting the hang of call changes. At a recent practice we also rang a course of Grandsire Minor for the first time in many years.

The next couple of months will hopefully see our annual BBQ taking place, along with our Tower Open Day in September.

Doug Stoneham - Tower Secretary

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

Our band has been greatly saddened by the passing of Roger Pashley, our long time Tower Captain, a good ringer, a great teacher, always quietly encouraging, never overtly critical but always helpful. We were very glad to welcome a number of ex-Ottershaw learners – the Grieves brothers, Paul Feast, David West – to ring at the service celebrating his life.

Ringling at Ottershaw has continued, if fitfully, over the last 3 months with varying attendances not helping practices. The heat has tended to discourage energetic activity. That said, our Tower Captain has instituted 90 minute practices which are bearing fruit – more time to practice (and improve), more time to reflect on what went right and what didn't. In all a good move. We may only get 3 or 4 at service ringing sometimes, but it's better ringing and Pavel is getting to grips with PB Minimus..... then Doubles.....and Minor??? When we get our Tenor back!

We have welcomed Isobel, another lady ringer, to the tower, new to the exercise but happy to learn. More news as she progresses.

More good news – the BRF have approved a grant towards the repair of the wheel on our Tenor. A great fillip and encouragement to complete the fundraising and progress the work.

Petere Binns Tower Secretary

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

Rachel Wilkinson, Tower Captain

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

Pamela Rider, Tower Secretary

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

Elizabeth O'Connor Tower Secretary

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

We have been willing and able to ring throughout the last quarter.

We haven't had to cancel due to the heat, although the church was closed completely in the excessive temperature for a couple of days which meant we couldn't ring.

We also found competition on several Thursdays due to Ascension, Corpus Christi and a flower arranging demonstration.

Unsurprisingly, a peal band did postpone.

There was a very successful flower festival in mid June and the bell ringers were pleased to have the opportunity to 'have a go'!

We have rung for two weddings since April with several more to come.

Lastly, we have been pleased to have a couple of ringing visitors; one house sitting locally and the other, a student who has learned to ring at university since she started last Autumn. She has already trebled her way through a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles!

We also enlightened a member of our congregation who spent a practice night finding out what goes on in the ringing room. It always amazes people when they discover how skilled you need to be to ring out those bells every Sunday.

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.

More details in the Programme on a Page