

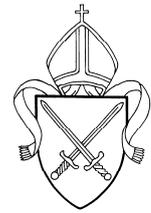


Middlesex Bell News

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www.mcaldg.org.uk



Well done, Wigney!

Prudence Fay writes: Congratulations to both Jill and Mike Wigney on recent milestones. Since taking to his wheelchair in 2002, Mike has scored his **1,000th tower-bell QP**: 1320 of Merton Delight Minor at Colliers Wood on 16 February, which he called. This is a record that's unlikely to be broken any time soon!

On Thursday 9 February, Jill rang her **100th hand-bell peal for the MCA** — 5024 Yorkshire Surprise Major, on 5-6, called by James Smith.

Jill writes: I would like to dedicate my peal to Roger Bailey, who was such an inspiration, and gave me guidance and so much chance to progress, and with whom I rang 37 of those peals. I gave up tower-bell peal ringing in 2007, due to arthritic wrists and dizziness; and handbell ringing has since become a passion, and enabled me to continue to ring peals.

Details of the MCA's AGM

Stephen Mitchell, the General Secretary, writes: The **Association AGM** will be held on Saturday 22 April at St Stephen's, Rochester Row, in Westminster, giving us all a chance to ring on these fine, newly refurbished bells (a project supported by the BRF).

The programme is:
3.15-4.45 p.m.: general ringing and service touch.
4.45-5.15 p.m.: service
5.15-6.15 p.m.: tea

6.15 to about 7.45 p.m.: the Annual General Meeting

All the officers are up for re-election. There is a vacancy for President, owing to the sad death of Philip Vracas last year; also for Master, Geraldine Forster having completed her 3-year term of office; for Treasurer of the BRF, as Sarah Taylor is standing down.; and for our four representatives to the CCCBR.

The Inter-District 8-bell Striking Contest will take place the same afternoon at St Saviour's, Pimlico, judged by Kate and Paul Flavell:
1.45 p.m. meet & draw;
2.00-3.30 p.m. competition

Ringling, friendship, and music

Jo Dorling writes: On one of the coldest January days of this year, it was a pleasure to be at Christ Church, Hampstead, for the N&E District's Social -- a delightful **evening of musical entertainment**.

It opened with trumpet-playing by Alec Gray. A string player myself, I enjoyed being reminded of what a beautiful and commanding tone the trumpet can produce. It's always nerve-racking to open a concert, a bit like ringing first in a striking competition! Alec, Handel, and Haydn, provided an assured opening, and we knew at once we were in for an excellent evening.

Delights followed: Michael Royalton-Kisch on the organ; then Caroline Stockmann on the flute, accompanied by Ruth Darton on the piano.

Characterful and amusing madrigals, followed by audience participation, rounded off the first half. In the interval, there was a cheerful bring-and-share supper.

The second half began with music on handbells by the Hackney ringers. I tried tuning more years ago than I care to remember, and it's not as easy as they made it seem. Spell-binding guitar-playing from Sam Cave revealed what a sophisticated, versatile instrument the guitar is. It was followed by Beethoven's *Ghost Trio Sonata*, with Ruth Atkinson (violin), Elizabeth Atkinson (cello), and Michael Royalton-Kisch (piano).

Finally, you couldn't have asked for a more beautiful item to close with than the soprano Penny Sharpe, accompanied by Ruth Corney, singing songs and arias from Puccini, Schubert, and Mozart. I just didn't want the fantastic evening to end!

Raffle and tickets raised a superb £758 for the BRF. Thanks to all the performers, especially Michael Royalton-Kisch, whose inspiration and dedication brought it all to be.

Handbell heaven

Christopher O'Mahony writes: For the fourth time, Harrow School will host the Association Handbell Day, this year on Sat 6 May, 9.30am-5pm., following the usual format. The two MCA handbell striking competitions will also take place. If you'd like to take part, please let me know: cdo@harrowschool.org.uk

Ruth Foreman RIP

Prudence Fay writes: Ruth Foreman, a *grande dame* of the MCA, died in a nursing home in Kent on 19 February, at 86. She was a member of the Association for more than 60 years, held all its major offices, was a Trustee for many years; and still a Vice-President. She was Ringing Master at Hendon 1953-2000, where she taught more than 100 people to ring. Her funeral will be at Hendon on 3 March.

Keeping the bells ringing

Stephen Jakeman writes: The main project supported recently by the BRF with a grant of £5K was the restoration of the ring at **Southwark Cathedral**, which has had major publicity (press, TV, *RW*). The General Secretary, Stephen Mitchell, attended the service for the blessing of the returned bells in January.

Work has started at **Great Stanmore**, and is likely to be one of Whitechapel's last contracts. The treble, 2nd, and tenor are now out of the tower. Whitechapel are also undertaking work at **St Giles in the Fields** to modify the clappers, and hopefully make the bells easier to strike. A grant application has been received from St Giles, and will be considered at the BRC meeting in March.

Both this, and a grant application from **St Paul's Cathedral** towards its restoration project, have been received by the BRF, and any proposed grants will be voted on at the AGM. An appeal for the St Paul's project (£360,000) was formally launched on 9 November at a service in St Paul's attended by the Master, Geraldine Forster, and by myself as Bell Restoration Officer.

News from the District ADMs

Mike Wigney writes: The **S&W's Annual District Meeting** was held on 7 January at Fulham, attended by about 30 people, and with Peter Kemp in the chair. There was general ringing beforehand. In the elections held at the meeting all the officers were re-elected, with the exception of two who stood down: John Manley as Training Officer, and John Barrance as BRC Rep. **Roger Forster** was elected to be a Training Officer, and **Richard Jones** as BRC Rep.

Janet Drake reports: The **N&E's Annual District Meeting** was held at Edgware on 18 February with Margaret Peirce in the chair, and 23 members attending. Alec Gray stood down as Ringing Master, and **Stephen Jakeman** was elected, with 4 Assistant Ringing Masters: **Martin Sutcliffe, Helen Porter, Martin Clode and Jinny Kuflik**. Helen Porter stood down as Training Officer, and **Angela McLellan** was elected in her place. All other District officers were re-elected.

The ART of teaching

Lucy Chandial writes: Clyde Whittaker, as a Training Rep for the N&E district, organised a day with Pip Penney of ART (the Association of Ringing Teachers), to introduce several N&E officers and interested others to the Learn the Ropes scheme, and the Module 1 **techniques for teaching bell-handling**. It was hosted by St Margaret's, Uxbridge.

I had previously attended the Module 1 course on learning to teach bell-handling, so was interested to see how this version, devised to promote

thought among the N&E officers, would compare. We covered essentially the same syllabus, with a mixture of presentation and practical. The presentations focused on how people learn, what teaching handling can learn from sports-coaching techniques, and how our way of learning won't necessarily work for all novices. Explaining proven techniques, and considering the difference between teaching an auditory and a visual learner, showed that academic rigour has been applied to creating ART's teacher-training scheme.

Exercises, such as keeping control of the handstroke as your learner takes in rope while ringing down, were an opportunity to check our own ability to explain a task and to give feedback effectively. Some attendees had been teaching bell-handling for many years, some of us have never taught this first step, but everyone learnt something new.

We concluded the day by agreeing that we'd like to use the Learn the Ropes scheme at the Summer School (see page 3) and at handling master-classes planned for this year, as well as in many of our towers. Pip's enthusiasm for applying thought-through techniques to address a learner's needs, and the thoroughness of the Learn the Ropes scheme, gave us confidence that adopting them would help us to teach happy and well-prepared learners.

For more about ART courses and techniques, go to www.ringingteachers.org, or ask Clyde Whittaker (07956 327675). Our thanks to Clyde for organising, Alan Rix for hosting, and to Pip Penney for leading the day.

A Grand(sire) day out

James White writes: Saturday 28 January was declared to be London Grandsire Day, and a group of 13 ringers attempted — and scored — quarter-peals of Grandsire from Maximus down to Doubles, as a group of Somerset ringers did two years ago.

Two quarter peals were rung at each of four towers in the City, starting just after 9 a.m. and finishing at 8 p.m., 10,544 changes later. At St Magnus the Martyr, 12 ringers rang both Grandsire Maximus and Grandsire Cinques. The Cinques required a restart after a mis-call rather a long way through, putting the project close on an hour late thereafter. The Royal and Caters followed, at St Dunstan in the West. Then we moved on to St James Garlickhythe for Major and Triples.

The core band of six, who had been involved from the start, ended at St Katharine Cree for the Minor (which we thought the best ringing of the day) and Doubles. Both were without incident, and we retired to a local hostelry for rehydration, with satisfaction. The same ringer rang the treble throughout, and the same conductor called all eight quarter peals (ringing "n-1" throughout) with compositions all of different (even) lengths. Full details of the bands (and compositions) can be seen on Bellboard: <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/vent.php?id=5136>

Ringing school in August

Lucy Chandhial writes: Many, many people voted in the Aviva Community Awards to hold a **London Bellringing**

Summer School for learners; and this is duly happening in August, from Monday 21 to Friday 25. It will be based in St Mary Abbots, Kensington, where the tower has excellent training facilities, including dumb-bells partly funded by the MCA.

Each day will run from 10 to 4, and will include handling lessons on tower bells, hand-bell ringing, some history of ringing, and change-ringing theory. We will aim to introduce each learner to a home tower contact during the week, and hope they will be ready to start ringing there after the course. It will cost around £50 per learner (with possible support, if required). If you would like to help with any aspect of the week; and/or if you have potential learners who might like to join the course, please email londonsummerbells17@yahoo.com

All ears

Lindsay Wakeman writes: A **Listening Skills Training** event was hosted on 28 January at St Margaret's, Uxbridge (thanks, Alan Rix), in an upstairs room, with refreshments available all day. Some 20 students took part in four sessions — two desk-based and two practicals. In the morning, Clyde Whittaker introduced the importance of listening, using a series of CCCBR recordings in which we had to pick out the errant bells and describe their faults. We learned the best way to pick out striking faults, and over the morning were able to hone our skills to hearing just a 10% error in rounds on 6! After a brief lunch break, we reconvened in two groups to alternate between ringing on real bells at St Andrew's nearby, and on a simulator

in St Margaret's. The practical tower session (with Mike Bale) provided a good opportunity to listen to our own striking problems! As Mike said, without proper bell control we are hardly in a favourable position to correct our striking, and he had helpful pointers for correcting handling, and modifying speed.

The simulator practical was led by Roger Booth. Two of St Margaret's bells were connected to the simulators, and we each had a chance (wearing headphones) to cover to rounds or a method, with a graphical view of our errors and scores. This was harder than I thought! Back, then, to the final exercises with Clyde, this time with real bells ringing methods. Picking out the striking problems was tricky, but definitely trained the ears.

Thanks to all the organisers for a well-packed day — smoothly run, enjoyable, and very useful. Recommended!

Notable achievement

Peter Blight writes: A first for the Middlesex was scored on 23 December, when an **MCA peal was rung at the Queen's Tower, Imperial College**, by a band that contained five present or past MCA officers. The peal, of 5151 Stedman Caters, composed and conducted by Lucinda Woodward, was both the longest peal (number of changes) rung so far at the Queen's Tower, and also the quickest (3hr 27 min).

It was rung in remembrance of all regular Queen's Tower ringers no longer with us, notably the MCA stalwarts Jack Crampion, Clive Buswell, Stan Mason, Dennis Randall, Roger Bailey, and Fred Ellis.

Calendar

| Date | District | Event | Venue | Time |
|---------------|----------|--|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Wed 8 Mar | N&E | District 7- and 8-bell Practice | St M.M., Holloway | 7.30-9pm |
| Fri 10 Mar | MCA | 12-bell Method Practice | St Magnus the Martyr | 6.30-8.30pm |
| Sat 11 Mar | S&W | District Ringing Meeting | Chelsea Old Church | 10.30am-noon |
| Sun 12 Mar | N&E | 10-bell Method Practice | St John at Hackney | 2.30-4.30pm |
| Tues 14 Mar | S&W | Tuesday-morning Practice | Isleworth | 10.30am-noon |
| Tues 14 Mar | S&W | District 6-bell Practice | Norwood Green | 8-9.15pm |
| Fri 17 Mar | S&W | Surprise Major Practice | Harlington | 7.45-9.15pm |
| Sat 18 Mar | N&E | Quarter-peal Day (<i>see below</i>) | District-wide | All day |
| Fri 24 March | S&W | District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt | Harrow | 7.30-9.15pm |
| Fri 24 Mar | N&E | Surprise Major Practice | St Saviour's, Pimlico | 7-8.30pm |
| Sat 25 Mar | N&E | Training: handling (<i>contact Clyde Whittaker on 07956 327675</i>) | Tba | Tba |
| Sat 1 April | MCA | Janets' and John's Jaunt (<i>see below</i>) | Buckinghamshire | All day |
| Sat 8 April | S&W | District Ringing Meeting | Ruislip | 2.30-4pm |
| Sun 9 April | N&E | 10-bell Method Practice | St John at Hackney | 2.30-4.30pm |
| Tues 18 April | S&W | District Triples Practice | Ch Ch, Ealing | 7.45-9.15pm |
| Tues 18 April | N&E | District 10-bell Practice | St Clement Danes | 6.30-8.30pm |
| Fri 21 April | S&W | Surprise Major Practice | Harlington | 7.45-9.15pm |
| Sat 22 April | MCA | Association AGM and 8-bell striking competition (<i>see page 1</i>) | Pimlico and Rochester Row | From 1.45pm-8pm |
| Fri 28 April | S&W | District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt | Isleworth | 7.30-9.15pm |
| Fri 28 April | N&E | Surprise Major Practice | St Saviour's, Pimlico | 7-8.30pm |
| Tues 2 May | N&E | District 7- and 8-bell Practice | St Mary's, Enfield | 7.30-9pm |
| Tues 9 May | S&W | Tuesday-morning Practice | Isleworth | 10.30am-noon |
| Tues 9 May | S&W | District 6-bell Practice | Norwood Green | 8-9.15pm |
| Fri 12 May | MCA | 12-bell Method Practice | St Magnus the Martyr | 6.30-8.30pm |
| Sat 13 May | S&W | District Ringing Meeting | Stanmore (tbc) | 10.30am-noon |
| Sun 14 May | N&E | 10-bell Method Practice | St John at Hackney | 2.30-4.30pm |
| Fri 19 May | S&W | Surprise Major Practice | Harlington | 7.45-9.15pm |
| Sat 20 May | N&E | District 6-bell Striking Competition (<i>see below</i>) | St George in the East | 2-4.30pm |
| Fri 26 May | N&E | Surprise Major Practice | St Saviour's, Pimlico | 7-8.30pm |
| Fri 26 May | S&W | District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt | Hillingdon | 7.30-9.15pm |
| Sat 27 May | N&E | Training: Little Bob (<i>contact Clyde Whittaker: on 07956 327675</i>) | Tba | Tba |
| Sat 27 May | MCA | Open 8-bell Striking Competition (<i>see below</i>) | Finchley | From 3.45pm |
| Sat 4 June | S&W | District 6-bell Striking Competition | Cranford | From 2.30pm |

N&E Quarter Peal Day, 18 March: Alec Gray is organising this: 020 7703 5440

Janets' and John's Jaunt, 1 April: Janet Drake writes: The Jaunt will be a walk of 7.5 miles from High Wycombe to Great Missenden, with ringing at Hughenden and Great Missenden, and starting with a train at 9.35 a.m. from Marylebone Station. Further details will be published on mcaldgringers, nearer the time; or phone Janet on 020 7278 9930.

N&E Dist. 6-bell Striking Competition, 20 May: Janet Drake will be asking for names of bands wishing to enter, nearer the time (020 7278 9930). Please consider entering for either the Novice Cup, or the Jersey Cup. Both are up for grabs.

Open 8-bell Striking Competition, 27 May: The draw will be at 3.45. To enter a band, which any MCA member may do, or for more information, contact Tom Lawrance at thoslawrance@gmail.com or on 07807 604344

NB: The N&E fundraising stall is at Highgate Summer Fair on Sat 17 June: contact Janet Betham (020 8340 1368) for details and to offer help and goods to sell.

ALSO: Stephen Haigh writes: Practices at **St John of Jerusalem, South Hackney**, are now at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday in every month. I hope to increase the frequency as numbers build up. If in doubt, contact me on 07786 912 635. During March, we will also practise at 7.30 pm on Fridays, as St Botolph's ringers are with us while their tower is out of action.

Items for inclusion in *Middlesex Bell News* to Prudence Fay, editor, at prudence@sandpfay.co.uk, or by post to 5A Furlong Road, London N7 8LS. Next deadline, 15 May 2017. The newsletter is distributed by Janet Betham (020 8340 1368, or at jrbetham@hotmail.com). Material for the website should be sent to your District Webmaster: Anthony Davey (N&E) Anthony@smoketree.eu; James White (S&W) jw_home@ntlworld.com.