

Calendar

Date	District	Event	Venue	Time
Thur 1 June	N&E	7- and 8-bell Practice (including G'sire Triples)	St Mary's, Islington	7.30-9pm
Sun 4 June	S&W	District 6-bell striking competition	Cranford	From 2.15pm
Fri 9 June	MCA	12-bell QP and Method Practice (<i>see below</i>)	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 10 June	S&W	District Ringing Meeting	Shepperton	10.30am-12 noon
Sun 11 June	N&E	10-bell Method Practice	St John-at-Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tue 13 June	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tue 13 June	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Thur 15 Jun	MCA	BBC Music Day (<i>see page 1</i>)	Any or all towers	7pm
Fri 16 June	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 17 June	N&E	Highgate Fair: fund-raising event (<i>see below</i>)	Highgate	12.30-5.30pm
Tue 20 June	S&W	District Triples Practice	Christ Church, Ealing	7.45-9.15pm
Fri 23 June	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm
Fri 23 June	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt	Fulham	7.30-9.15pm
Sat 24 June	N&E	Training: Little Bob (<i>see below</i>)	St Mary Magd., Enfield	10am-1pm
Thur 29 Jun	N&E	District 10-bell Practice	St Clement Danes	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 8 July	S&W	District Ringing Meeting	Hayes	10.15-11.45am
Sun 9 July	N&E	10-bell Method Practice	St John-at-Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tue 11 July	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tue 11 July	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Fri 14 July	MCA	12-bell QP and Method Practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 15 July	N&E	District Outing (<i>see below</i>)	Sevenoaks area	All day
Tue 18 July	N&E	District 6-bell Practice	St Mary's, Kilburn	7-8.30pm
Fri 21 July	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 22 July	N&E	Training: Bell Handling (<i>see below</i>)	St Margaret, Uxbridge	Tba - a.m.
Sat 22 July	N&E	Training: T B Hunt & Kent Minor (<i>see below</i>)	tba	Tba - a.m.
Fri 28 July	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/ QP attempt	Twickenham	7.30-9.15pm
Fri 28 July	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm
Wed 2 Aug	N&E	7- and 8-bell Practice	St Mary's, Hendon	7.30-9pm
Tues 8 Aug	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tue 8 Aug	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Fri 11 Aug	MCA	12-bell QP and Method Practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 12 Aug	S&W	District Ringing Meeting	Heston	10.30am-12 noon
Sun 13 Aug	N&E	10-bell Method Practice	St John-at-Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tue 15 Aug	S&W	District Triples Practice	Christ Church, Ealing	7.45-9.15pm
Tue 15 Aug	N&E	District 6-bell Practice	St James's, Prebend St	7.45-9.15pm
Fri 18 Aug	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 19 Aug	N&E	Learners' Outing in Essex	Roydon/Harlow area	All day
21-25 Aug	MCA	London Bellringing Summer School (<i>see p. 2</i>)	Kensington-based	Mon-Fri incl.
Fri 25 Aug	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/ QP attempt	Harrow	7.30-9.15pm
Fri 25 Aug	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm

Fri 9 June: *John Manley writes:* MCA 12-bell practices are trying a new format: a quarter peal at 6.30 pm, followed by an hour's practice, from 7.30 pm. We hope this might boost attendances.

N&E Fund-raising on 17 June: This is the annual bell-ringers' stall at the **Highgate Fair in the Square**, raising money for the BRF. Janet Betham's email on the ringers' list has full details of transport, times, goods needed for selling, and help needed with setting up, selling, and clearing up (*see p. 1*)

Training: those who want to attend the training session on 24 June, or the handling session on 22 July, should contact Clyde Whittaker (07956 327675). For the 22 July Treble Bob/Kent workshop, it's Angela McClellan (07956 575956).

N&E District Outing 15 July: *Janet Betham writes:* We will go by car, starting at 10 a.m. at Chelsfield, Kent, and finishing at 6 p.m. at Cudham. Lunch will be in Sevenoaks. Full details to follow by email nearer the time.

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 August 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.



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Headlines from the AGM

Stephen Mitchell, General Secretary, writes: The MCA's Annual General Meeting was held in the church hall of St Stephen's, Rochester Row, in Westminster, on 22 April, giving MCA members a chance to ring on the refurbished and rehung bells. The Association had contributed towards funding this work, and the bells are now much easier to ring.

At the meeting, the 200 Club draw for the annual prize of £1,000 was made, and the winner was Catherine Newton, Fiona Clode's mother. Ginny Johnson and South Hackney tower won the prizes of £50.

Geraldine Forster was elected President, on completing her three-year term as Master; and John Manley was elected as the new Master. Clyde Whittaker was voted in as Training Officer; and the Central Council Reps for 2017-20 are Linda Foddering and Clyde Whittaker. Vacancies remain for another two Reps. All the other officers were re-elected.

The Bell Restoration Committee proposed two grants. The meeting approved the first — £3,000 to St Giles in the Fields for work on the clappers; and it approved an amendment from the floor to the second proposal, granting St Paul's Cathedral £12,000 towards the major refurbishment of its ring of 12.

The **8-bell Inter-District Striking Competition** for the Roger Bailey Cup was held at St Saviour's, Pimlico, before

the AGM. The test piece was Grandsire Triples, and Paul and Kate Flavell judged the contest. They placed the bands as follows:

1 *S&W* (conducted by James White); 2 *N&E* (conducted by Stephen Jakeman); 3 *N&E* (conducted by Martin Clode); 4 *S&W* (conducted by Mike Palmer).

Philip's bell

Alan Regis writes: For the past few years we have been remembering ringers who died in the Great War, and ringing on the anniversaries of their deaths. We have also planned to hang a ring of 8 bells in St George's church in Ypres, Belgium, which is the focal point of remembrance for the fallen, and these are now being cast. The project was very close to the heart of **Philip Vracas**, who died in 2016, and the treble is to be dedicated to him. The inscription on one side will read:

In loving memory of Philip Vracas, 1959-2016, Trustee Bells4StGeorgeYpres

On the other side will be:

For a soldier of the Great War known unto God

together with a cross that is the same as those on the war graves, which have a flaring tip at the ends of the upright and the cross bar.

The bell is scheduled to be cast on Thursday 15 June, and the ring will travel to Ypres (now called Ieper) during the early part of September. There are then likely to be 2 events,

so as many people as possible can attend: one dedicating the bells on the church floor, and the other when the bells are in the tower. When the dates are confirmed, I'll let you know.

Taylor's is to hold an **Open Day at the Foundry** in Loughborough on Saturday 29 July, open to all. One of the items on view will be the completed Ypres ring in its frame.

Reminders

- **BBC Music Day** is on 15 June, and ringers are urged by the BBC to join with music-makers around the world, to celebrate 'the power of music in all its glorious forms', as Bob Shennan, BBC Director of Radio, puts it. Bell-ringing is, of course, some of the most glorious music of all, and should take its place with pop, jazz, rock, orchestras, and the 1,000 children in Portsmouth aiming to set a new world record for drumming (yes, really). Email BBCMusicDay@bbc.co.uk, to tell them what you are ringing, and leave contact details so that they can get back to you.

- See Steve Mitchell's email concerning **ringing courses** in Tulloch, in the Scottish Highlands, in September: one week for complete learners and one week for improvers: email circulated on 31 March.

- See Lucy Chandhial's email about **easyfundraising**, as a simple way to boost the BRF: email circulated on 14 May

- See Janet Betham's email with details of **Highgate Fair in the Square** fund-raising stall; circulated on 17 May.

Wedding bells

Chris Trawin writes: Congratulations to our Treasurer at Enfield St Andrew, Ruth Everatt, and her partner, Sean, who were married on 29 April. We wish them all the best. Ruth will now be known as Mrs Ruth Butler-Lee.

First things first

Kate Ferguson writes: St John at Hackney hosted a bell-control session on Saturday 25 March, which was enjoyable, and well organised by Clyde Whittaker. Nine learners with an equal number of helpers enjoyed a morning that involved an array of teaching techniques. Learners identified their blunders, and discussed common denominators — gripping the tail end for dear life, not bringing the bell up to the balance, over-pulling, under-pulling, and bad habits.

Teaching methods included showing video clips of common errors; and practical one-to-one bell-control sessions.

Hopefully, we will remember our homework with a wall and broom, and useful tips such as musical drains, horizontal thumbs, and correct posture, when ringing quality rounds from now on, in our home towers.

Huge thanks to Clyde Whittaker, Steve Jakeman for hosting, and all the helpers for their time, patience, and generous sharing of knowledge.

From Disraeli to Dahl

Jennifer Ansell writes: The morning of April Fools' Day saw ringers and friends taking the train from Marylebone Station, and then striding out from High Wycombe in high spirits on the **Janets' Spring**

Jaunt. Disraeli country treated us to sunshine, banks of daffodils; violets and primroses by the pathway; and soaring red kites above us, as we headed to our first ring of the day: St Michael & All Angels, at Hughenden. It is a beautifully situated church, with 8 lovely bells to match. After a good ring, and a look at Disraeli's grave in the churchyard, we set off again, and arrived ready for a well-earned lunch at the Red Lion in Great Kingshill. Some of us ate inside, some outside, in the (now patchy) sunshine.

Fortified, we set off to Great Missenden, where Roald Dahl's house is, and also our second tower: St Peter and St Paul. The ground-floor ringing, with sunshine in our eyes, and a heavy tenor, added an extra challenge. Tea and delicious homemade shortbread (thank you to the Bishop's wife!) were much appreciated.

After a look at Roald Dahl's grave, we headed homewards, smiling. Thanks to the Janets and to John for organising a lovely day for all the 25 who donned their boots. It also raised £108 for the Bell Restoration Fund.

Bells, and a pint

Stephen Mitchell writes: The weekly Wednesday-morning **ringing practices at All Hallows'**, Twickenham, under the auspices of Richmond U3A, have now been running for two years. This initiative goes from strength to strength, and continues to attract new members. Four who have been learning to ring with us on Wednesday mornings rang their first quarter peals (covering to Doubles) in the period January to March 2017. Congratulations to them all:

Peter Baker, Paul Newton, Jill Cox, and Andree Guinness. First QPs for others are planned soon.

The group meets every Wednesday from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30. We currently practise ringing up and down, rounds, call changes, dodging, plain hunt on four or five, and simple Doubles. Any MCA member is very welcome to come along. We occasionally end up in the Cabbage Patch at lunchtime!

Kensington classes

Lucy Chandhial writes: The MCA is hosting a **Bell Ringing Summer School** to teach up to 20 new ringers bell-handling through to call changes; and we hope they will become part of Middlesex tower bands through this new initiative. The Aviva Community Fund has entrusted us with £1,000 towards the cost of running this week-long event, thanks to the votes many of you placed last year.

What we need now is helpers — and learners! I am looking for helpers who can teach handling, or handbells, or can provide a presentation / talk / exercise on the history of ringing, or the methodology of ringing, which we will feature between practical sessions. Do urge anyone who is thinking of learning to ring to come and take part.

The Summer School will be based at St Mary Abbots, Kensington, and will run from Monday to Friday, 21-25 August.

If you could help (for half a day, the whole week, or anything in between), do email londonsummerbells17@yahoo.com. The School will cost £50 per participant (and support may be available, if it is required).

St Mary's scores its century

Stephen Mitchell writes: On Sunday 30 April 2017, with a peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major rung by a Middlesex County Association band, St Mary's, Twickenham, became the latest tower in south-west Middlesex to register 100 peals. This century took the best part of three centuries to accumulate since the first peal on 22 January 1733. Nearby Isleworth, meanwhile, has already been pealed 100 times; and the historic, relocated ring of 10 at All Hallows', Twickenham, has been rung to 124 peals since 1951.

St Mary's slower pace is not surprising, given its riverside location, in the middle of the town, surrounded by shops, restaurants, pubs, and houses. There is frequent wedding ringing; and the bells are quite loud, even when enjoyed over a pint in the adjacent Eel Pie! So we were pleased by a fairly positive reaction to the bells' being rung for 3hrs 4mins on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

St Mary's bells are quite a mixture: the oldest (6th) was cast by John Saunders around 1545; one dates from 1695; three from the early 18th century; and the tenor (18cwt) was recast by Taylors in 1887.

In the 18th century, the bells were rung to two lengths of more than 6,000 Plain Bob Major, one of these by The Twickenham Scholars. (Whatever happened to them?) Almost a quarter of the 100 peals have been Grandsire Triples, the latest of these being Holt's Original, called by James White for the MCA in 2002. Surprise Major peals have included 110 Spliced in 1994, and Norman Smith's 23 all-the-work Spliced, which

was called by Andrew Graham for the ASCY in 2009.

The band at St Mary's, led by Norman Edwards since the early 1980s, is at present rather depleted, and has no currently active peal ringers.

There goes a stay ...

With the lamented closure of the Whitechapel Foundry, how are ringers quickly to replace a broken stay? Various people are considering this, but meanwhile **Stephen Jakeman** (07770 387230) has access to a supply of stays, and towers should contact him for the time being, about breakages.

Visit to Verona

Janet Betham writes: I was inspired by an article in *The Ringing World* and had met a representative of the Associazione Suonatori di Campana a Sistema Veronese at the Roadshow in Newbury, so on a recent trip to Naples with my choir I decided to stop off at Verona. I was glad I did.

I was met at Verona by the President of the ASCSV, Eles Belfontali, who drove us to Custoza, a village about 20 minutes out of town, where she had assembled 10 enthusiasts to demonstrate their way of ringing, of which they are very proud. They ring the bells up with no sallies, ropes coiling on the floor, and hold them on the balance without a stay, until their number is called by a *maestro* with a list on a music stand in front of him. He has several of these *concerti*, and the skill lies in ringing a sequence of numbers on command, sometimes two blows one after the other, and always in the correct rhythm, so intense concentration is needed. Chords can be rung with 2 or 3 bells sounding together; but the numerical

order is not in a circle — which makes ringing rounds more interesting! If you go to their website www.campanesistema.veronese.it you can see them ringing *Ave Maria*, and watch the ringers at work in various churches.

It's well worth visiting them, if you are ever near Verona.

Central Council matters

Linda Foddering writes: I am a MCA Central Council Representative, but sadly will not be at the Annual Meeting in Edinburgh on 29 May, when our own Christopher O'Mahony, who rings at Harrow, will take over from Chris Mew as President. However, our other CCCBR rep, Clyde Whittaker, will be there. He is on the CRAG committee, and will be considering CRAG's proposals for reforming the Central Council. He will then bring us up to date via the ringers' list. He is also on the Public Relations committee, and involved with BBC Music Day on 15 June (*see page 1*).

Being on the Library committee, I am planning a nationwide peal-board project, asking Associations and/Guilds for information on their peal boards. My mother started this within the MCA 30 years ago; and, Paul Norman, our Librarian, has loaded the details of more than 400 peal-boards in Middlesex towers, which can be found on Flickr.

These are exciting times. If anyone wishes to become a Central Council Representative there are still two MCA vacancies (contact Clyde, on 07956 327675 or me, on 020 8908 3092).

With these filled, we would have a better chance of making our views known.