



# Middlesex Bell News

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## Learning the ropes

*Prudence Fay writes:* The MCA's first **Summer School** for novice bell-ringers, superbly organised by Lucy Chandhial, was a resounding success. About 19 students and 24 helpers gathered for the week of 21-25 August, at St Mary Abbots church in Kensington, and its church Centre. More than half the students had never tried ringing before. Student feed-back at the end of the week included: 'The 1-2-1 sessions with experienced ringers were invaluable'; 'An excellent, value-for-money course'; and 'Handbells were a eureka moment in understanding methods.'

The students, in 3 groups, rotated through the 3 sessions into which the days were divided, with a break for lunch. Handling tuition took place on the dumb-bells at Kensington, so 6 learners at a time could learn or practise handling, with 5 or 6 helpers.

Handbells, both for tune-ringing and for methods, occupied a second slot (some students achieved plain hunt on 6 with 2 bells in hand by the last day). A third session broadened the scope: Clyde Whittaker's workshop on listening skills; a visit to the ringing room at St Paul's, where Dave Bassford and Lucy Woodward showed the students round; and a session on steeple-keeping by Steve Jakeman at Fulham, with a close-up view of how bells, stays and sliders work.

By the end of Friday, Roger Booth, the ART Assessor, confirmed that 9 students had reached level One, with many others close to it. All the students knew where they could find help and continue ringing with the MCA.

We owe Lucy a great debt of gratitude for making this all happen (including securing the Aviva funding of £1,000 which made it possible). Many thanks also go to Stephanie Pattenden for hosting the event, and for all her work before and during the week.

## October Meeting

*Janet Drake writes:* The **Association Autumn General Meeting** and the 6-bell striking competition Finals (*see page 3*) will both take place on the 10 bells at St Dunstan's, Stepney, on 21 October. The programme is: 2-3.30 p.m., MCA 6-bell Striking Contest; 3.30-4 p.m., general ringing; 4-4.30 p.m., the service; 4.30-5.30 p.m., tea and raffle; from 5.30 p.m., the meeting; about 7-8 p.m., general ringing.

## Bells for the fallen

*Alan Regin writes:* The new ring of 8 for St George's, Ypres (Ieper), in Belgium, in memory of those who died in the Great War, will be dedicated in the tower on 22 October, at a special service at 11 a.m. It will be taken by the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, who is the Bishop in Europe. The bells were cast by Taylor's, and were on display this

summer there, and at the Great Dorset Steam Fair. They were due to arrive in Belgium on 30 August, and to be at the Menin Gate for the Last Post ceremony. They were then due to be displayed on the floor of St George's on 31 August, for a service of dedication that evening. They will be hung during September.

## N&E summer days

*Janet Drake writes:* On the third Saturday in July, with coffee made, cherries ripe, lifts organised, and maps at the ready, 20 members took part in the **N&E District outing** to north Kent. We visited 5 churches, most of them inside the M25 and in pleasant countryside. The 8 at Sevenoaks were deemed the easiest ring of the day, and the pleasantest sounding, even though we rang in the 'sleepy slot', after a buffet lunch at a nearby pub. Brasted anti-clockwise 8 were a challenge for some. Many thanks to Janet Betham, who organised the day, with the help of Caroline Stockmann.

**The N&E Learners' Outing** on 19 August took 9 learners, with 9 more experienced ringers, to 4 villages just south of Harlow. It was good to see some new faces among us, and all seemed to enjoy both the ringing and the pub lunch.

## A Fair do

Congratulations to **Janet Betham** for running the successful N&E stall at Highgate Fair in the Square in June. It raised £466 for the BRF; and more may yet come in.

## Birthday bells

*Margaret Willis writes:* I would like to thank all who made my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday concert in St Matthew's, Ashford, on 29 April, such a success. The musicians were the Barfield Handbell Orchestra, founded in 1965 by Bill Butler. With generous donations from my friends, I could send the BRF £435, and give the same to our church choir and organ fund

## Talking big numbers

*Elizabeth Lemoine writes:* The current band at St Dunstan's, Stepney, celebrated its tenth anniversary in May. In 2007, a small core of experienced ringers came together with a group of new learners, helping, supporting, and encouraging — and since then we have come a long way. But though our experience has increased, in ringing terms Stepney is still a relatively young band, and we still do much on just the front 6.

Recently we lost our in-house 8- and 10-bell conducting capabilities, when the three most experienced members of our band moved away. Undaunted, our tower captain, Joe Tilley, initiated an inspired programme of monthly higher-numbers practices, each with an invited guest ringing-master and supporters. The brief is to give every member experience on 8 and 10 that will build on their current abilities: from rounds, call changes and plain hunt to methods on 7, 8, 9 and 10. We have so far enjoyed 18 of these superb, challenging

practices, and look forward to this programme continuing. Our thanks go to Joe for the initiative; and to all the remarkably skilled and generous ringers who agree to drop in on the last Thursday of the month, and help us realise our aspiration to do justice to Stepney's bells.

## Making wishes come true

*Linda Foddering writes:* The S&W quarter-peal week starts on Saturday 30 September and ends on Saturday 7 October, with the idea of ringing a QP in each of our towers. If you would like to ring or conduct a quarter, please contact me (fodderi5@aol.com) or Mike Wigney (07748 933779), and we will help to put together a band and make it work.

## Shedding light on Little Bob

*Anthony Davey writes:* On Saturday 24 June, St John at Hackney welcomed Adrian Sweeting, a very experienced band of helpers, and five student aspirants to a **training course in Little Bob**, put in place by Clyde Whittaker. With the aid of what appeared to be an endless supply of A3 diagrams, Adrian proved that to ring Little Bob well on any number of bells requires only good striking and knowledge of one simple rule. It is unnecessary to learn the blue line; but ropesight and knowing one's place must become instinctive.

The purpose of this iconoclastic approach was, of course, entirely serious. By

the end of three hours, all the students had grasped — some possibly more firmly than others — the principles of the construction of the method; and the need to focus on both the lead and the half lead. All emerged with a toolkit which may be applied not only to Little Bob up to Royal and beyond, but to other Bob methods also. Many thanks.

## Body-building with St Botolph

*John Adams writes:* In 1992 the bells at St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, were retuned and rehung in a new frame; and they were first rung for the patronal festival in June. They have always been a difficult but rewarding ring, on account of the wobbly tower; and we will now never know whether the restoration improved the handling, or made it worse!

We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the rehang this year, by attempting a quarter peal, also before the patronal festival, on 14th June. Six ringers from the lunchtime service band met on a hot and sweaty day, and rang Plain Bob Doubles on the front six. A rope that slipped wheel put paid to the QP after about 1,000 changes, but we were chuffed with the steady and fault-free ringing we achieved.

We still ring every Wednesday at lunchtime before the service, despite falling numbers. If you work or live in the City, you are very welcome to join us when you can. It's a better (and cheaper) workout than the gym.

## Success at St Paul's

*Stephen Mitchell, General Secretary*, writes: The Association has an annual invitation to ring before and after the Ordination of Deacons service at St Paul's Cathedral. This year, on 1 July, after the service, an MCA band rang a QP of Stedman Cinques, its sixth successful QP in a row, in a series that started in June 2012. It was conducted by our President, Geraldine Forster; and the band included a Vice-President, the Master, and the General Secretary. The Cathedral's bells will be removed for restoration in 2018. We hope to be invited by the St Paul's Cathedral Guild to ring for this service again in 2019.

## The 6-bell bands in the Finals

On 20 May, the **N&East District striking competition** was held at St George-in-the-East, and was judged by Peter Joyce. He placed the bands as follows: 1) Islington St James, 2) Stepney St Dunstan, 3) Aldgate St Botolph A, 4) Hackney St John, 5) Enfield St Andrew. Kilburn St Augustine did not complete the piece.

The Novice competition was won by Aldgate St Botolph B.

The **S&W 6-bell striking competition** took place at Cranford on 4 June. A record 8 teams entered, and the judge was Ben Kipling from St Martin-in-the-Fields. It was particularly good to see a U3A band from Twickenham, some of whom started ringing only

last autumn. The results were: 1) Staines St Peter, 2) Acton 3) Hillingdon, 4) Twickenham A, 5) Harrow, 6) Ealing, 7) Chiswick, 8) Twickenham B.

So the **finalists** at the Association Autumn General Meeting at St Dunstan, Stepney, on 21 October will be Islington, Stepney, Hillingdon, Acton, Staines, and Aldgate A.

## Help from the spanners

*Stephen Jakeman writes:*

It is pleasing to report that since the closure of our long-time source for bell repairs (Whitechapel Bell Foundry) we have been able to help towers not only with broken stays, as previously advised on the mailing list, but also a clapper (Bow-in-the-Road's 4th), and a gudgeon (Hanwell's 7th).

Other activities have included addressing a knocking noise with the 7th at S. Hackney (loose clapper kissing the frame), and helping the steeple-keeper at Bow-in-the-Road to replace the wooden pulley sheaves with modern nylon ones with new spindles on ball-bearings. This is all part of our commitment to help towers maintain their bell infrastructure, so they can focus on teaching.

## Trainees, do apply

*Roger Forster writes:* The S&W District will resume monthly training meetings on Saturday 2 September, at 9.30am at Harefield. Ringers of all standards are invited to apply, stating the methods they would like

help with, and their experience so far. Contact me (rog.forster@btinternet.com.) and Richard Jones (jrichard216@aol.com), if you are interested.

As our October meeting coincides with the District Quarter Peal week, we hope to ring a couple of quarters on Saturday morning, 7 October, so that some of those we have trained this year can consolidate their learning with a quarter. Again, contact Richard or me — first come, first served. We would also like to hear from willing helpers.

## Back to basics

*Elizabeth Pether writes:* 7 learners gathered at St Margaret's, Uxbridge, for a **bell-handling course** on 22 July, organised by Clyde Whitaker and run by Mike Bale. I was taken aback by the location in a shopping mall, concerned about inflicting our efforts on the shoppers!

Despite having rung for a few years now, I knew my handling was not brilliant, and it was really useful to just focus on the basics, and see where some of my errors lay. Explanation, videos of us ringing, and quiet correction and encouragement, all helped towards our progress.

I thoroughly recommend this half-day course, and am grateful to Clyde and all the helpers for giving their time and expertise, and to Uxbridge for their hospitality.

At the end, the shoppers were treated to a lovely few minutes of what accomplished ringing sounds like! Maybe one day I and the other learners will get there!

# Calendar

Date	District	Event	Venue	Time
Fri 8 Sept	MCA	Association 12-bell Method Practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 9 Sept	S&W	District Ringing Meeting	St Mary's, Sunbury	10.30am-noon
Sun 10 Sept	N&E	District 10-bell Method Practice	St John at Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tues 12 Sept	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tues 12 Sept	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Fri 15 Sept	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 16 Sept	N&E	Open House ( <i>see below</i> )	Aldgate	All day
Tue 19 Sept	N&E	District 7- and 8-bell Practice	All H'ws, Tottenham	7.30-9pm
Fri 22 Sept	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm
Fri 22 Sept	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt	Isleworth	7.30-9.15pm
Wed 27 Sept	N&E	District 10-bell practice	St Clement Danes	6.30-8.30pm
30 Sept-9 Oct	S&W	Quarter-peal Week ( <i>see p.2</i> )	District-wide	All week
Sun 8 Oct	N&E	District 10-bell Method Practice	St John at Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tues 10 Oct	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tues 10 Oct	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Fri 13 Oct	MCA	Association 12-bell Method Practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 14 Oct	MCA	Janets' and John's Jaunt ( <i>details to come</i> )	Tba``	Tba
Tues 17 Oct	S&W	District Triples Practice	Christ Church, Ealing	8-9.30pm
Fri 20 Oct	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
<b>Sat 21 Oct</b>	<b>MCA</b>	<b>Assoc. Autumn General Meeting (<i>see p. 1</i>)</b>	St Dunstan, Stepney	From 2-8pm
Fri 27 Oct	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm
Fri 27 Oct	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt	Hillingdon	7.30-9.15pm
Thur 2 Nov	N&E	7- and 8-bell Practice	St Andrew's, Enfield	7.30-9pm
Sat 4 Nov	S&W	District Outing ( <i>see below</i> )	Surrey	All day
Fri 10 Nov	MCA	Association 12-bell Method Practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6.30-8.30pm
Sat 11 Nov	MCA	Lord Mayor's Show ( <i>see below</i> )	St Mary-le-Bow	10am-about 12
Sun 12 Nov	N&E	District 10-bell Method Practice	St John at Hackney	2.30-4.30pm
Tues 14 Nov	S&W	Tuesday-morning Practice	Isleworth	10.30am-noon
Tues 14 Nov	S&W	District 6-bell Practice	Norwood Green	8-9.15pm
Wed 15 Nov	N&E	District 6-bell Practice	All Saints, Edmonton	7.30-9pm
Fri 17 Nov	S&W	District Surprise Major Practice	Harlington	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 18 Nov	N&E	Half-day Outing ( <i>details to come</i> )	Docklands towers	Afternoon
Fri 24 Nov	N&E	District Surprise Major Practice	St Saviour's, Pimlico	7-8.30pm
Fri 24 Nov	S&W	District 10-bell Practice/QP attempt	Fulham	7.30-9.15pm
Sat 2 Dec	S&W	District Planning Meeting , and ringing	Isleworth (tbc)	2-5pm
Thur 7 Dec	MCA	London Ringers' Advent Carols ( <i>see below</i> )	St Clement Danes	7.30pm

**Open House, 16 September.** More help is needed to serve refreshments, act as stewards, and demonstrate ringing for either morning (10am-12.30) or afternoon (2 -5pm). Offers of help to Margaret Peirce on [peircemargaret@aol.com](mailto:peircemargaret@aol.com).

**S&W Outing, 4 Nov:** *Mike Wigney (07748 933779) writes:* The programme is Cobham, Surrey 9.15am; Stoke D'Abernon 10.15am; Leatherhead 11.30am; Lunch; Dorking 2.15pm; Ranmore 3.30pm; and Ockham 5pm.

**Lord Mayor's Show, 11 Nov:** *John Manley writes:* As usual, there will be general ringing from 11am till the procession has passed; and ringing in the afternoon will be arranged at a tower to be announced.

**Ringers' Advent Carols 7 Dec:** *Margaret Peirce writes:* This service for all London ringers and their friends will be conducted by the Chaplain of St Clement Danes. Ringers who would like to sing in the Choir should contact Gregory Rose on [gr@gregoryrose.org](mailto:gr@gregoryrose.org). There will be ringing before and after the service, and a social event afterwards, nearby.

**N&E Training Sessions:** Those interested should contact Clyde Whittaker (07956 327675) or Angela McLellan (07956 575956).

Items for inclusion in *Middlesex Bell News* to Prudence Fay, editor, at [prudence@sandpfay.co.uk](mailto:prudence@sandpfay.co.uk), or by post to 5A Furlong Road, London N7 8LS. Next deadline, 15 November 2017. The newsletter is distributed by Janet Betham (020 8340 1368, or at [jrbetham@hotmail.com](mailto:jrbetham@hotmail.com)). Material for the website should be sent to your District Webmaster: Anthony Davey (N&E) [Anthony@smoketree.eu](mailto:Anthony@smoketree.eu); James White (S&W) [jw\\_home@ntlworld.com](mailto:jw_home@ntlworld.com). *Middlesex Bell News* is printed by Absolute Print, 50 junction Road, Archway, London N19 5RD, 020 7272 2224