



Issue 110

[www.bellringing.london](http://www.bellringing.london)

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## Platinum Jubilee Issue

### Bellringing outings for spring

*Lucy Chandhial*

This spring I have been on a few excellent outings! It is the perfect time of year to visit new towers as the sun comes out and the churchyards fill with flowers.

The first was a train and cycle day out to South West London with ringing at Hampton, Richmond and both Twickenham towers. Despite being close to home two of these were new for me and I particularly liked the clock at All Hallows' Twickenham. This is an unusual tower as the church building is quite new but the bells, and the peal boards which come with them, are much older, relocated from a city church which lost its tower through bombing in the war. This was an outing organised by a young ringer and as such recordings were made at each tower, there was less interest in cups of tea and more ringing!



Joining  
Hackney and

Aldgate the next was a rural day out in Suffolk with an early start, a chance to explore Lavenham at lunchtime and then a full pub dinner before the drive home. We learnt a little about pargeting, like icing sugar decorations in plaster, very distinctive and a Suffolk speciality. The final tower of the day was a gallery floor with two very large boxes for the tenors, giving a slightly insecure feeling as you stand nearly as high as the bannister behind you.

With the Barnet band we had a more relaxed day, just three towers and not so far from home. At Sandridge, near St Albans, the ringing chamber is a little like a canal boat with a porthole window for the clock face and gypsy style floral painted panels.

I'm not sure the day out to Uxbridge for the AGM counts as an outing! Only two towers and a much more urban environment but still a good quality tea, tasty cakes and a drink in the pub before the journey home.

The last of the spring outings was bank holiday weekend in and around York, again with Aldgate and Hackney ringers. Highlights here included the feature of a broken stay, followed by us breaking a stay in Sunday service ringing (whoops), time to walk the walls of York before a very generous pub dinner (including Yorkshire pudding of course) and a new ring of ten near Newark on the way home. A friend from University who lives in York was able to see me ring while we were there, which is a growing trend as my friends realise that bellringing takes up most of my spare time so they might as well know what it looks like!

Key takeaways for organising an outing? Allow enough time to travel between towers, find the way up the stairs, etc and still have ringing time for everyone. Never skimp on time for lunch or afternoon tea and have a clear idea of what people would like to ring before you start. Let's see how much of this I can manage for the district outing on Saturday 20th August and learners outing Saturday 17th September!



## Membership and recruitment

At the Association Annual General Meeting held on 23rd April Jill Wigney reported that membership overall had fallen from 571 in 2020/21 to 508 for the current year. Junior membership included in the total fell from 30 to 21. In recent years membership has fluctuated, rising from 541 in 2016-17 to a peak of 597 in 2019/20, then falling back. Jill told the meeting that the noticeable drop in numbers was mainly due to Covid restrictions, and expressed the hope that numbers will rise again as ringing recovers.

New ringers will come forward if they are actively identified and encouraged to come and try it out. However, retention of learners depends in large part on good teaching. This issue of Bell News reports on opportunities for current ringers to consider teaching at various levels, and to learn how to teach. Some ringers have been teaching for years, and are excellent at it, but there may be competent ringers who hesitate to teach basic bell-handling, or progressive practice, because of uncertainty and lack of confidence. The Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) provides training for teachers at various levels – see <https://ringingteachers.org/> for further information.

## Teaching Bell Handling (Module 1)

The Association of Ringing Teachers – ART

*Tricia Narracott-Wales, April 2022*

The training day took place at All Saints Church, Harrow Weald on 2nd April. Six of us were there to be taught to be better teachers of bell handling, tutored by David Smith, assisted by Sonia Field. Some of us had already taught bell handling to new recruits but others had not. We were able to use a separate room for the theory part of the training and then use the tower bells for the practical part, which meant there was not too much sitting around.

Although quite intensive training, the areas of bell handling teaching were broken down into smaller chunks, each followed by a practical demo, followed in turn by a chance to practise ourselves. Back stroke and hand stroke were dealt with separately and then put together in a further session.

Role play was used, taking it in turns to be either tutor or new recruit. We were encouraged to use single key words to instantly inform the new recruit of handling faults, such as 'golf' to remind them to follow through at the bottom of the backstroke and to resolve the handling fault as quickly as possible.

The teaching technique for ringing up and down was new to me and seemed an excellent way to allow the new recruit to learn gradually and safely. All areas of training emphasised safety. The Accreditation Process

was explained with a flow chart whereby at least one new recruit has to be trained and this training has to be mentored by an appointed mentor, then assessed by an ART Assessor.



At the end of the day's training, we were given a full pack of guidance notes, flow charts and hand book, together with a ringer's personal progress logbook for the new recruit. Additionally there were options for further training within the Association of Ringing Teachers.

I have personally taught several ringers rope handling, but I enjoyed the course and found it useful. If I have a new recruit soon I may wish to go on towards accreditation.

## Docklands outing 1

*Pam Donovan of the Surrey Association*



On March 19th the N&E District had an outing to Docklands jointly with the Northern District of the Surrey Association. The event was kindly organized by Janet Betham of the Middlesex who invited our District to come

along and join in. On a lovely afternoon with glorious sunshine we rang at St Dunstan, Stepney and St George, Southwark, and St James, Bermondsey. It was a crowded - about 45 ringers taking part - and popular outing, an opportunity to blow the Covid lockdown cobwebs away, meet friends and ring. More than 40 ringers joined the outing, including 15 from the Surrey Association, and we were very pleased to welcome several young ringers from both north and south of the river.

We rang rounds and call changes, Grandsire and Stedman Triples, Cambridge Major, Stedman Cinques, and Little Bob Royal.

A BIG thank you to Janet Betham and to the tower contacts who opened up for us.



## Docklands 2, a young ringer's account

*Fraser Storie, of the Surrey Association*

The Docklands Outing was a fantastic experience for me. I got to ring at the grand 10 at Stepney St Dunstan which felt as if I had never rung there before! (Although I did, back on the Jan 2020 Docklands Outing). Not only that, I got to meet new faces as well as see people who I hadn't spoken to since before lockdown.

I recorded the ringing at all three towers. The Bermondsey video was the best, an extremely well struck ring of Cambridge Major while I was outside. Do watch that video, with additional commentary, , and many others I have recorded on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/boobah444/videos> .



sun, rain, snow and sleet in under an hour. Next to the pub is the Winkwell swing bridge, so called as it swings out across the canal to allow people and vehicles to cross over the canal. Sadly the bridge wasn't in operation as maintenance work was being carried out, but

interesting to see nonetheless.

Luckily, as we set off towards Berkhamsted the weather settled down to a bright late spring day. After a pleasant walk, we left the canal near the Berkhamsted totem pole to walk up into the town and enjoy a warm drink before making our way to St. Peter's Church (8 bells, 15-2-2).

Some of us managed to squeeze in a quick visit to Berkhamsted Castle, the remains of a motte-and-bailey castle first built in the late 11th century. No longer needing to worry about Norman soldiers blocking our route, we made our way home at the end of a highly enjoyable day, which also raised valuable funds for the Bell Restoration Fund.

As ever, many thanks to both Janets for their excellent organisation!



*Is he checking the blue line for Bob Doubles ?*

## Canals, Cress Beds and Castles

*Chris Weavers*

Saturday 2nd April saw the Spring Janets' Jaunt – meeting at Euston Station and heading out into west Hertfordshire. Alighting at Apsley, our first stop was



St. Mary, Apsley End (6 bells, 14-3-6). Apsley is a village on the outskirts of Hemel Hempstead, once dominated by the paper mills of the British Paper Company. The Church itself is a Grade 2 listed building, was consecrated in 1871 and was the vision

of Charles Longman, a senior partner in the mills.

After 45 minutes of ringing we headed northwest along the Grand Union canal skirting the Gade-spring Cress Beds and the Boxmoor Trout Fishery.

For lunch we stopped at the Three Horseshoes in Winkwell and for four seasons – not the pizza, but

## Quarter peal fortnight

Quarter peal fortnight ends next weekend. So far 9 performances have been posted to Bellboard linked to this event in the Association's calendar; for details see <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=14818>

Performances linked to the Platinum Jubilee falling within the fortnight will also be counted into the total.

Thanks are due to Helen Porter, the District Secretaries and others who have put a lot of work into making the complex arrangements to match the requests put up by members to towers and bands.

## Isleworth practice change

*Louise Dixon*

The second Wednesday daytime practice at All Saints, Isleworth ( 16cwt 10) will move from 10:30 to 3pm on 14th June, after the kindergarten has closed. This will makes access to the toilet easier, and free space in the church car park (access via Park Road, 200 yards beyond the turn for Snowy Fielder Waye).

This friendly practice offers general ringing for all, with methods chosen to suit those attending, from Bob Doubles onwards.

## The Bell Ringing Debutante

Netia Lascelles

(written for Buzz Magazine, by permission)

I live within earshot of St. Anne's on Highgate West Hill and have been intrigued by what goes on in that famous Betjeman church tower that inspired "Summoned by Bells". So I decided to try a bit of bell ringing myself. It couldn't be that difficult after all – just yank on a rope when someone tells you to, and I'm quite musical. How wrong I was!

Practice night is Thursday and this is when I present myself. The bell tower is reached up the narrowest of stone staircases, which I spiral round and round, scraping my inappropriate handbag in the cramped space as I climb – followed by a steep ladder and a hatch.

In the tower room seven ringers are gathered and I am told to sit on a bench against the wall, to be quiet and never to cross my legs. Before they start the bells must be upended so they can be controlled rhythmically by the ringer. The noise is thrilling and a little unnerving as I feel the tower tremble and sway slightly. Then when all is ready, a tune is suggested – or "method" to use the proper jargon. "Grandsire Doubles" is chosen, or "Cambridge", "Bob Minor" perhaps, or "Primrose" even? These are all ancient methods and everyone knows them (*improbable. Ed.*) without prompting.

A decision is made and they start the ringing proper. The command is "Look to, treble's going, she's gone". I have no idea what they are doing but it looks amazingly expert. Occasionally someone shouts an instruction such as "bob" or "dodge!" but generally the ringing is done in silence and with intense concentration.

Then it is my turn on my own. I get a middle-size bell and my teacher Catherine holds the fluffy blue sally to stop me getting into trouble, while I get the tail end of the rope. I am learning the "back stroke" – which is only half of it – and even that I can't do properly. I jerk my rope and the bell becomes heavy and wild. It is a bit like riding a horse or keeping the sails filled when skippering a boat. When I get it right it is a lovely responsive feeling – but I keep losing it. I am told to "keep the body straight and arm movements fluid". Why is that so difficult?

The bell ringers are so patient when I ask endless questions. They teach me knots which I instantly forget. I admire curious diagrams on a blackboard and boards of honour on the wall celebrating the names of ringers who achieved something particularly difficult. Finally, after two hours of practice the evening ends with birthday cake and tea and then everyone repairs to the local pub.



I have been three times now and find it fascinating. I am being taught a real skill. However, in a rather unworldly way, I haven't yet been made to fill in a formal course application demanding money upfront. Perhaps I shouldn't mention this as the opportunity always lurks to spoil it

all. Meanwhile it is so good to be away from life's troubles down in the real world.

## Recruitment

Sonia Field ( [sonia.field@hotmail.com](mailto:sonia.field@hotmail.com) ) is the Association's recruitment champion and can provide suggestions and advice. The CCCBR website ( <https://cccbr.org.uk/> ) may also help. Not everyone who tries out with a band will stay for the longer term, so careful training after the initial welcome!

Some towers have arranged visits from scout bands and schools. Bridget Campbell is the Association Safeguarding officer ( [bcampbell2114@icloud.com](mailto:bcampbell2114@icloud.com) ) and can provide guidance where youngsters or other vulnerable visitors are involved. As Simon Linford, the CCCBR President points out, "you never know what might inspire a youngster to want to ring. I was inspired by wanting to annoy my sister."

The University of the Third Age ("U3A") has been a successful source of recruits for Twickenham, where an email to the 100 local members attracted 11 to an initial meeting. The article on this page submitted to 'Buzz' magazine is an example of publicity that local and community publications often welcome.

## And finally...

Any member planning to ring a peal, or even a quarter, for the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth should first check whether any famous but grumpy authors reside within earshot.

When the St Mary Abbots Guild rang a peal of 5,000 Stedman Caters for the coronation of King George V on 11th June 1911, Ezra Pound, living in lodgings in Church Walk, Kensington, wrote an enraged letter of denunciation to Ernest Hemingway, and moved to Maylebone. Pound wrote "*The act of bell ringing implies the pointless interference with the quiet of other people*".

Hemingway remained sanguine: "Pound's crazy. All poets are. They have to be."

## CALENDAR

Date	Distr	Event	Location	Time
Planned events - any changes and more details will be sent via email to the Middlesex Association email list nearer the date of each event. If you are not already on the list and would like to be, send an email with your preferred email address to <a href="mailto:mcaldg+subscribe@googlegroups.com">mcaldg+subscribe@googlegroups.com</a> .				
Date		Topic	Location	Time
Wed 1st Jun	N&E	Minor methods practice	Southgate	7:30 – 9pm
<b>Thu -Sun 2nd - 5th Jun</b>		<b>Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend</b>	<b>Various</b>	
Tue 7th Jun	MCA	125th Anniversary of the MCA (not LDG)		
Thur 9th Jun	N&E	Major practice (and tower band practice)	Upper Street, Islington	7 – 9pm
Fri 10th Jun	MCA	Association 12 bell method practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6:30 – 8:30pm
Sun 12th Jun	N&E	10 bell method practice	Limehouse	2-4pm
Tue 14th Jun	S&W	General practice	Isleworth	3 – 4.30pm
Tue 14th Jun	S&W	6 bell practice	Norwood Green	8.00-9.15pm
Wed 15th Jun	N&E	Daytime general practice	Barnet or TBC	10-12 noon
Fri 17th Jun	S&W	Surprise Major practice	Hayes TBC	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 18th Jun	N&E	Ringing and social picnic	Twickenham, & Richmond	Afternoon
Fri 24th Jun	S&W	10 bell practice	TBA	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 25th Jun	N&E	Stedman Doubles Training	Hackney	10:30-1pm
Wed 6th Jul	N&E	Minor Methods practice	Holloway Road	7:30 – 9pm
Thu 7th Jul	S&W	8 bell practice	Hanwell	8-9.30pm
Fri 8th Jul	MCA	Association 12 bell method practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6:30 – 8:30pm
Sun 10th Jul	N&E	10 bell method practice	Hackney	2-4pm
Tue 12th Jul	S&W	General practice	Isleworth	3 – 4.30pm
Tue 12th Jul	S&W	6 bell practice	Norwood Green	8.00-9.15pm
Thur 14th Jul	N&E	Major practice (and tower band practice)	Upper Street, Islington	7 – 9pm
Fri 15th Jul	S&W	Surprise Major practice	Hayes TBC	7.45-9.15pm
<b>Sat 16th Jul</b>	<b>N&amp;E</b>	<b>Striking Comp (6 bell)</b>	<b>Edgware</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>
Wed 20th Jul	N&E	Daytime general practice	TBA	10-12 noon
Fri 22nd Jul	S&W	10 bell practice	TBA	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 23rd Jul	N&E	Training	TBA	TBA
Wed 3rd Aug	N&E	Minor Methods practice	Southgate TBC	7:30 – 9pm
Thu 4th Aug	S&W	8 bell practice	Hanwell	8-9.30pm
Tue 9th Aug	S&W	General practice	Isleworth	3 – 4.30pm
Tue 9th Aug	S&W	6 bell practice	Norwood Green	8.00-9.15pm
Thur 11th Aug	N&E	Major practice (and tower band practice)	Upper Street, Islington	7 .00– 9pm
Fri 12th Aug	MCA	Association 12 bell method practice	St Magnus the Martyr	6:30 – 8:30pm
Fri 19th Aug	S&W	Surprise Major practice	Hayes TBC	7.45-9.15pm
Sun 14th Aug	N&E	10 bell method practice	Limehouse	2-4pm
Wed 17th Aug	N&E	Daytime general practice	TBA	10-12 noon
Sat 20th Aug	N&E	Ringing – district outing	Romford, Brentwood etc	All day
Fri 26th Aug	S&W	10 bell practice	TBA	7.45-9.15pm
Sat 27th Aug	N&E	Training	TBA	TBA
Wed 7th Sep	N&E	Minor Methods practice	TBA	7:30 – 9pm

Items for inclusion in *Middlesex Bell News* to Anthony Davey at [BellNewsEditor@bellringing.london](mailto:BellNewsEditor@bellringing.london) .

Next deadline Friday 19th August 2022

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