

Middlesex Bell News

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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and more...



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Issue 124 December 2025

Middlesex Bell News

All the news, articles, achievements, outings and history from members throughout the Middlesex County Association and the London Diocesan Guild.

Note from our President

Alec Gray

We have now reached that time of year where Autumn is behind us and Winter has definitely arrived. Remember ropes don't like damp conditions in the tower and neither do ringers. Do try to keep some 'safe' heating in the ringing room particularly during practices. A chilly room, for those sitting out during practices, is an encouragement to stay at home!

During the last few months the Middlesex has been busy. As well as the usual practice nights and service ringing we had the Inter-District ringing competition at Cranford followed by the Autumn General Meeting at Heston. My thanks to everyone who made the afternoon possible especially Bridget Campbell for the hospitality arrangements, Michael Palmer for the service and ringing and Fraser Storie for being the competition judge. One of the decisions made at the meeting was to award a grant of £5,000 to the bell project at St Mary's, Richmond. If you missed it, there is an article in the RW p944 by Jackie Harrison explaining what's happening. We wish all those involved good luck. On the subject of bell restoration, a significant overhaul is currently taking place at St Botolph's Aldgate, again supported by our BRF. This work should be completed by early December 2025.

Other events which have recently taken place were the South and West District outing, as well as S&W quarter peal month. Thank you to everyone who took part. On Saturday 4th October many of us enjoyed the latest Jaunt, a walk in the countryside with ringing at two towers, this time to the Tonbridge area. The next Jaunt will be on Saturday 4 April 2026. Thank you to Janet Betham and Janet Drake for organising these. Recent notable achievements for our members have been first peals for Bookes Hayes and James Chisnell. Well done to both.

And now to December. If you enjoy a traditional pantomime - oh yes you do - there is a chance to join other ringers at the Hackney Empire on Saturday 20 December. Please see recent Middlesex email from Janet Betham about this. So having completed all your preparations for Christmas (!) sit back, relax and enjoy ringing.

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*Wishing you a Very
Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year*

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."
-Alfred, Lord Tennyson



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60-Year Service

Keith Barber, St. Botolph's, Aldgate

As I write, the 'slow bells' (according to the long version of *Oranges and Lemons*) of Aldgate are out of action. The fittings have been taken to Dorset, and the Aldgate Practice Night is on tour (with thanks to St Katharine Cree, Camberwell, West Ham, Bethnal Green and Poplar who have already generously hosted us).

It all started with a routine inspection by Stephen Jakeman and Tim Mills in Summer 2024. A suspect loose gudgeon was found on the second bell, provoking a regime of regular and close inspection. With attention directed to the handling and 'go', we started to realise some of the bells were becoming harder to ring than they used to be. By the time Andrew Nicholson carried out a survey in November 2024 another suspect gudgeon had been discovered on the fourth.

Nicholson's report was only partly reassuring, confirming the appearance of looseness we had noticed but adding that "this type of gudgeon...[is] notorious for appearing to be loose when in fact all is well", albeit he found none of the bumping and oil staining that would be expected if the looseness was significant. As might be expected, he noted the bearings needed cleaning and lubrication. Clappers, sliders and runner boards would also, he suggested, benefit from some attention together with new pulleys, and he thought there were stumps of the old crown staple that would need removing from the seventh.

The bells were installed in 1966, when they were lowered in the tower and provided with a new frame and fittings. Since then, maintenance has been confined to replacing ropes and stays and keeping the bolts tight. The present band was formed in 1989, and the bells have been rung weekly. We believe this is the longest period of sustained, regular ringing they have experienced in their 250-year-plus life. By any standards, they were overdue some tlc! Tim decided to ensure they got it.

With a quotation in excess of £17,000 (plus VAT) plus an unknown amount if any gudgeons or bearings needed replacement (one set of gudgeons and a couple of sets of bearings would immediately add some £2,500, we realised), fundraising was a priority. Even with the substantial reduction promised for provision of 'local labour', we had a lot of money to find. Exploratory conversations with the Bell Restoration Committee were positive and the Church offered a significant contribution, so a formal application was made to the BRC. We were immensely grateful when the Annual General Meeting approved a grant of up to £10,000 and the Church offered a further £5,000. Pledges and donations from ringers and friends around the District together with some Gift Aid gave us around £20,000, which we thought would cover most likely eventualities and was sufficient to decide we could go ahead with the project.

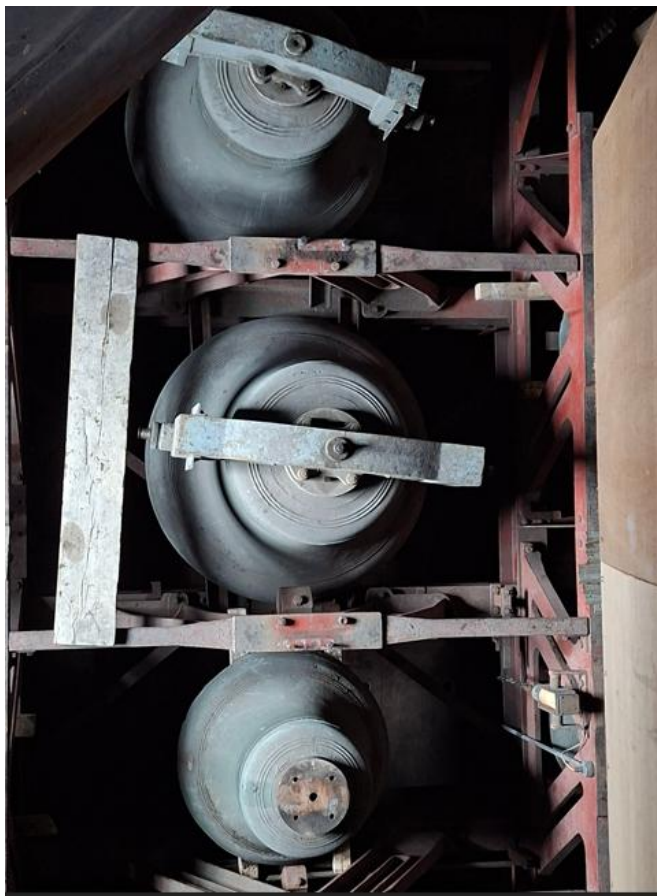
The contract having been awarded to Nicholson's, the bells rang for the last time on Sunday 19th October. A dirty and strenuous afternoon followed as the wheels were removed and fittings dismantled on the front four bells. Neil Deem, the Bellhanger, arrived just before midday the following day and dismantling went ahead with a vengeance; local labour was much in evidence, with no less than six Middlesex ringers helping. Although the gudgeons on the second were sound, Neil felt those on the fourth would need attention, so removal of the fourth headstock was added to the agenda. (We would later find that the bearings were in a much worse state than had been anticipated and would need replacement *en-masse*, adding considerably to the cost of the project.) Progress was so rapid that all the bells were out of the frame and supported on bearers by Tuesday evening, with all the fittings in the ringing room awaiting collection. There being no stumps to remove from the seventh, it was decided to substitute the installation of new twiddle pins to the front six bells on the Wednesday, followed by another heavy day loading Nicholson's van which departed for Bridport around midday.

We were grateful to the Middlesex Association, the Church and numerous ringers who donated, and to those who laboured under difficult conditions to dismantle and move the fittings: Stephen Jakeman, Tim Mills, Brooks Hayes, Ruth Jakeman, Lucy Chandhial, Guy Wells, Alec Gray and Keith Barber. The Church, too, was quick to express gratitude with a unanimous resolution by the Parochial Church Council.



The Aldgate Treble

60-Year Service - continued



Seen from above

The fittings were returned to Aldgate on Monday 1st December, which was the cue for another week of hard work. The final bill, too, will soon arrive and seems likely that, despite our optimism, we will find a shortfall in the available finance.

Reassembly took place on Wednesday 3rd, over a 13-hour stint.

Editor's Note:

Having rung at Aldgate on 5th (with apologies for the lateness of this issue) I can attest to the smooth ringing of the Aldgate bells, a sharper, more sonorous bong from all, and that beautiful resonance when ringing down, now enhanced. If you ring there on a regular basis, coming back to ring on them post repair can be quite a shock. You pull off with the usual heft, expecting it to react in a familiar way – and then it doesn't. So, ringing for the first time after a period away is like ringing at a totally different tower.

Part 2 of the repair report will appear in the next March issue of Bell News.

Well done to all who worked hard to get the bells ringing again!!



Number Seven – above and below



Picture Right: Tenor

S&W District Annual Outing Saturday, 6th September 2025

Bridget Campbell, S&W District Secretary

This year's outing started at St Mary, Beddington, a ring of ten bells enabling a range of ringing. Our hosts also kindly gave a brief tour of the historical church. The second stop was at All Saints, Banstead, a ground-floor ring of eight bells with its appreciated café nearby. Next stop was at St Dunstan, Cheam, an interesting ring of six bells. We were told the bells weren't rung often but they would be rung a second time that day for a wedding. Lunch was at a Toby Carvery which served generous portions and gave us our own section of the restaurant. They also welcomed ringers who had brought their own food for dietary reasons. The afternoon was spent ringing at St Mary, Ewell and at All Saints, Benhilton, both good rings of eight bells. Many thanks to the twenty ringers who supported the outing; some could only attend for part of the day but made a valuable contribution.



Most of the ringers at Cheam

Thanks, particularly to Mike Palmer for managing the ringing at the five towers and thanks also to those who shared their cars for the day. It was an opportunity for some ringers to meet ringing friends at the various towers and for us to welcome three American ringers who had landed in England a day or so earlier. All towers were very welcoming, and the good weather was a bonus. Apologies to the ringers unable to join us on the changed date for part of the day but who made a most valuable contribution.

Janets' Jaunt

Kris Fowler, USA

Janets' Jaunt went off without a hitch on Saturday, 4th October, thanks to extraordinary planning efforts. Janet Drake and Janet Betham walked the route beforehand not once but twice, scrambling up embankments and devising detours to avoid construction blockages and the overnight demolition of a key footbridge. It was fine on the day, with 2 dogs joining 19 people from at least 2 counties and 4 countries, all enjoying the 5-mile ramble from Leigh (pronounced "Lye") to Tonbridge, Kent, and raising £106 for the Bell Restoration Fund.

Lucy Chandhial gave handling lessons to Yvonn from Switzerland, while her friend minded Delphine, Yvonne's guide dog. Lucy, Alec's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, got 2 grabs as well as a dip in the River Medway. Other nature notes included the seasonal "hips and haws," as well as sloes, swans, sun and a brief shower. Our large party surprised the Haysden Country Park outdoor café staff, but they rose to the challenge and provided generous baguette fillings for every taste.

The ringing itself ranged from rounds and call changes, through Grandsire Doubles and Triples to a half-course of Cambridge Surprise Major, with Martin Clode and Alec Gray running the sessions. Tonbridge's refurbished bells still presented a bit of a challenge—multiple people had trouble setting the tenor—and we were grateful to get two reinforcements from Canterbury who had driven over to catch up with Kris Fowler (from towerless Minnesota, USA) but turned out to be old friends of Alec's as well. Jen Thomas also joined us at Tonbridge.



As required, we all ended up in a pub-cum-restaurant for a drink and a natter afterwards before wending our various ways home, well fortified with fresh air from Storm Amy's trailing edge.

Photo by Martin Clode

A Day Out

Christine Day, All Hallows, Twickenham

Well, I thought I knew what bellringing was about - until I discovered, on an outing to Clapham on Saturday, 15th November most efficiently organised by Aveline Perez de Vera, that there was a completely different way of sounding bells.

It was not the random bonging one hears on the continent, with someone floating precariously at the end of a swinging rope, nor was it the automatic perfection of an electrically-driven machine. No, we were introduced to a system invented some 200 years ago by the Reverend Henry Ellacombe so that he did not have to put up with unruly ringers...

The Ellacombe Chimes enables one person to ring all the bells in the tower: by pulling towards you one rope in a framework in the ringing chamber, you can activate a hammer which strikes a static bell in the belfry. The frame we were encouraged to try out had eight ropes and, in pairs, we sounded rounds, Queens and 'Abide with Me'.

We then crossed Clapham Common to Holy Trinity Church with its ring of 6 light bells - a restful way to end an enjoyable afternoon which had started at Borough Bells.



Top: St. George the Martyr, Southwark

Bottom Right: Christine and Sachie trying the Ellacombe Chimes

Bottom Left: Chime on bell

Goals and Resolutions

Setting Goals

Em Mayo, St. Anne's, Highgate

Several years ago I gave up making New Year's resolutions as it was proving to be an exercise in futility and instead set myself bell-ringing targets for each year. It's not as easy as it sounds. There are quite a number of factors that seem to obstruct or complicate matters, such as that well-known trouble-maker, Opportunity. To avoid pitfalls that can lead to disillusionment, I have three basic rules.

Rule No.1: Keep it Simple. Setting too many goals in one year can lead to frustration, confusion and disappointment, so now I aim for only one or sometimes two goals per year. They need, of course, to be realistically achievable, ie. the next step up, rather than several miles down the road, so progress will be different for everyone, as we all develop at a different rate and not necessarily in a straight line (Opportunity again, motivation, life circumstances, etc). It also helps to be ringing in a tower where there is a band of ringers capable of supporting progress at all stages, and even better if you are tucked under the wing of an experienced and encouraging tower captain. Much depends on who turns up, so patience is required and the willingness to embrace whatever presents itself, even if it does not directly contribute to your personal goals (it's that Opportunity gremlin again). It may take months (or longer), but all practice is good practice, even if it sometimes feels like going backwards - and it is always possible to be a bit proactive and let the practice or Training Master know what you are hoping to accomplish, and possibly even getting together your own QP attempts, depending on who you ring with and what towers are available to you.

So, with the above in mind, once I had conquered Plain Hunting at the end of my first year, and after we had unlocked from a Covid year of bell-silence, I set the following year's goals at Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Bob Minor. It actually took two years but along the way, I learned to do some calling, got pretty good at covering reliably on any number of bells, and got the hang of ringing up and down in peal (still yet to crack the leading bit), as well as improving my bell-handling in over 100 different towers, including on training courses and outings. The following year I rushed a bit too enthusiastically at learning over two dozen methods and began to get them all muddled up, so I took a year off from target-setting and called it Consolidation. That was a very good idea. The year after that I set my sights at a QP of Cambridge Surprise Minor inside – tick.

Rule No.2: Never Compare. Comparison with anyone else is fatal (though having role-models is helpful – my current role-model is Dennis Brock), because we all learn in different ways and stop at different comfort levels. Not everyone is a natural conductor and not everyone wants to ring full peals - that is certainly not for me and that's OK. I just want to be competent, versatile on 6 and 8 bells, and above all, consistently reliable and supportive. Any more than that is a bonus.

This year's target (2025) was to get comfortable with all the usual 7/8-bell methods including Cambridge Surprise Major. So far, the latter has been somewhat elusive, so next year I will be specifically chasing down that and other often-rung Surprise Majors – could take years. What lies beyond that, who knows? One step at a time.

Rule No.3: Rejoice in your Achievements. Have a drink, share it with friends and take a moment to be proud every time you achieve another target. Over the years I have factored in the general aim of doing a QP each time I reach a milestone, to help consolidate any new method – such a great sense of accomplishment, worth celebrating. There is no final destination in bell-ringing; it is perpetually a work in progress, and it is vital to stop now and then and look, not at where you think you should/could be but where you have come from.

My overall intention, as always, is to keep on having heaps of fun ringing bells as well as I possibly can and just enjoying myself. Yay!

A New Year's Resolution for Ringing

Lucy Chandhial, St Augustine, Kilburn - N&E District Ringing Master

When you reflect on your ringing during 2025 is there something you are particularly proud of? Would you like to set a goal for 2026? This year I have been working on calling a quarter of Stedman Triples, I haven't completed it yet, but I know that it's achievable whilst challenging in the way that Stedman always is! I've been extending my repertoire of surprise minor methods and building experience in 12-bell ringing, while also gathering quotes for an overhaul of the bells at Kilburn as it's one hundred years since the last major work. Next year my personal ringing goal is a quarter of Bristol Surprise Major and learning London Surprise Major to complete the core seven/eight standards.

What should you consider when setting a goal for your ringing? The GROW model promoted by the Association of Ringing Teachers says that the Goal should be Realistic, and you should consider the Opportunities and Obstacles when planning the Way forward. Opportunities can come from District training sessions, practices and outings. It is also possible to arrange your own ringing. Obstacles can come from a lack of time, other responsibilities, and a lack of supportive ringers.

So, what is the Way forward? If you have a suggestion for a training session which would suit you then email the district training reps (N&ETrainingRep3@bellringing.london, N&ETrainingRep2@bellringing.london or S&WTrainingRep@bellringing.london) and if you would like to see something different in district practices to support your ringing development then email the ringing masters (N&EMaster@bellringing.london or S&WMaster@bellringing.london). Talk to the experienced ringers at your regular practices for advice on steps towards your goal, homework for outside ringing time and opportunities to make the most of rope time and plan to achieve your goal during 2026.

Teaching Yvonn – Ringing When You're Blind

Lucy Chandhial, St Augustine, Kilburn - N&E District Ringing Master

This summer Yvonn contacted the Middlesex Association with an unusual request; she would be in London for three months and would like the chance to learn to ring before returning to Switzerland. The request was more unusual as Yvonn is a blind radio journalist and author, so it was very specifically the experience of hearing the bells which attracted her. I decided to give it a go, at the very least to try some backstrokes and find out how far we could take it. Yvonn and I had our first experience at St James in Islington, a light set of six, and we started by talking through the demonstration bell whilst moving the parts to give an idea of what's going on when we ring.

Making use of the training bell at Hackney we tried the next step of catching handstrokes with my hands on Yvonn's to guide the catch, but it was clear that it was virtually impossible to know when to catch or where to catch without the visual of the colourful sally. I asked Andrew (a blind ringer from Kensington and Walthamstow) to meet Yvonn at a Holloway practice, to share his top tips on how he learnt and how he rings, as moving on to handstrokes was a challenge. She was (as we all are) impressed at his ability to ring through rhythm and listening and he emphasised repetitive practice, keeping the rope taut and keeping contact as much as possible.

On our next training bell session, Yvonn kept the backstroke whilst starting to catch handstrokes (knowing that on the training bell it doesn't matter if you miss a catch) and gradually settled into the rhythm of it with me steadying the sally less and less often. By joining the Janets' Jaunt, Yvonn got the bellringing outing experience in the countryside, and her guide dog, Delphine, enjoyed fresh air and fields (with 'other' Lucy, a four legged regular on ringing outings with Alec). Here we rang rounds with called changes, I had the handstroke and Yvonn the backstroke, and Martin only had to prompt me occasionally to adjust as I was facing out of the circle!

One of these towers had a truly 3D demonstration bell which was a helpful refresher, particularly to understand when the clapper strikes as part of the ringing.

With another training bell session Yvonn could ring ten-plus whole pulls without me needing to do anything and was able to enjoy backstrokes in called changes at St Mary's, Islington with Freddie's best musical changes.

I realised how often I illustrate my words with gestures and gradually found ways to explain what is happening, what it should feel like or how to judge what to adjust in words rather than by demonstration.

In Yvonn's words:

Bells put a spell on me. I always dreamt of ringing bells, of bathing in their sound, my dream became true. Thanks to Lucy and thanks to Andrew. It was such a pleasure to work with Lucy. She believed in me, gave clear instructions, answered all my questions patiently, gave me praise. It took me a while to imagine the process of ringing a bell. Where to catch the sally. I realized that my well-trained perception helps me to read and lead the bell. It is fascinating to get to know a bell and to lead it, like a horse, a creature which is far stronger than me. But gives her delicious sound if I manage to handle her.

It was good luck that I could practice on the training bell at Hackney. In the beginning, I was very nervous. With the time, I felt more courage and confidence. And I fell in love with the towers of London. Every tower has its beauty, its magic. I feel all the stories that are lingering. The walls are whispering.

I felt deep joy when I first could ring back strokes in rounds. After these weeks with Lucy, I know that I can learn it, that I can become a ringer. I want to come back. I miss it already. Thank You so much, dear Andrew, for your advice and encouragement, and thank you so much, dear Lucy, for being such a great teacher! And for your nerve when the rope went mad and wanted to become a lasso.



Learners' Outing

Amelia McBeath, St. Anne's, Highgate

Back in September I had the pleasure of joining the learners' outing in Hertfordshire, pulling ropes in the towers of four quintessential flint churches. Our first stop was St Lawrence at Abbots Langley, a flint-and-chalk church nestled in a pretty, cottage-lined village, bunting flapping proudly in the breeze. The tower dates to the early 13th century. Records show that five bells were cast at the Whitechapel Foundry in 1734, with a tenor added in 1809 to make a ring of six, the tenor weighing 9 cwt. A short flight of stairs leads to a ringing stage that looks down over the aisle of the church. A low banister and split-level floor add an extra twist for a beginner.

I only began learning to ring this January or February, and I would never have guessed it would be such a long, slow and deeply rewarding process. At the time of the outing, I could ring rounds and manage basic call changes, though I was still prone to my bell dropping. The steady watch and gentle guidance of an experienced teacher helped enormously whether coaxing my strike into something more precise or reminding me to regulate my rhythm through my breath. Still, this first tower, with its stage-like layout, heightened my beginner's nerves. Fears in a new tower are tripled: sweaty palms, shaking legs... don't let go of the rope, don't smash the stay, don't let the bell drop. And they talk about the importance of rope-sight—yeah right, I'm still learning to breathe. But I'm no longer an absolute beginner. One learner on the outing was ringing only the backstroke with help, confident and enthusiastic. I was a step on, with rounds and simple call changes under my belt. Others seemed streets ahead, already learning the beginnings of methods—plain hunt, my next goal.

The second tower, St Paul's, Langleybury was flanked by clipped yew trees and proved very snug for our group of around twenty. The stone spiral staircase became overflow seating as we took turns with call changes, plain hunt, and the occasional accidental clang (usually followed by a sympathetic wince from an experienced ringer). The tower is hung with six bells, the tenor weighing 8 cwt. Lunch is not allowed to be mentioned, due to strange pub rules.

Our third stop, St Giles in South Mimms, began with a half-hour wait—the keyholder had forgotten us—but this gave time to explore the graveyard, which houses an extraordinary tomb carved with skull and crossbones. I'm glad we eventually got in, because the church interior was beautiful: chandeliers, rich colours and warm, worn wood all glowing in the moody afternoon sun. One level up, the ringing room was spacious and bright thanks to a large arched window filling one wall, mirrored by a glass arch looking down into the church. St Giles has a ring of six bells, the heaviest around 11 cwt. I struggled a little here, but having so many teachers on hand is invaluable for fine-tuning techniques.

Constance led the convoy to our final tower, St Peter's in Bushey Heath, with me riding shotgun and Steve tailing behind. A few peeled off at this point. We ended on a high with some really pleasing rounds and call changes on the peal of eight bells—the youngest of the outing, installed only in 1921. The tenor here is 11 cwt.

I'd like to thank Fiona for organising such a wonderful day, and all the teachers who dedicate their time and expertise with such patience and encouragement. And to all my fellow ringers, at every level: your reassurance and camaraderie make this journey not just possible, but joyful.



St Lawrence, Abbots Langley



St Paul, Langleybury



St Giles, South Mimms

Open House Ringing

St Mary's Old Church, Stoke Newington

Rita Stephens, St Mary, Finchley

As part of this year's Open House London weekend in September, St Mary's Old Church, Stoke Newington, opened its doors to visitors interested to learn more about its history, architecture and its bells. The church, which stands beside the later and larger St Mary's, is the oldest place of worship in Hackney, with roots dating back to the 16th century. The perfect opportunity was provided for visitors and more than a few curious ringers, to discover one of London's more idiosyncratic ringing chambers.

There is no ringing circle in Stoke Newington, instead the ropes are arranged in a linear fashion and not only that, they are in the seemingly random order of: treble, 2, tenor, 5, 4, 3! For the ringers, this setup added a quirky layer of complexity and meant we had to rely on sound and rhythm to stay in sync. The challenge of ringing when the ropes are out of order can be disorienting, but it was also a great exercise in focus and listening.

Visitors were seated in the main body of the church to watch a demonstration of change ringing. The ringing room is open to view from a gallery above the nave, allowing a glimpse in to see the ringers ringing. From this vantage point Steve Jakeman explained the basics: how the bells are controlled, and how the changes are produced — an introduction that was especially appreciated by those hearing a live ringing demonstration for the first time.

Once the demonstration was over and the bells had been lowered, the visitors were invited upstairs to see the ringing room at close quarters. Under careful supervision, many took the opportunity to chime a bell for themselves, discovering just how much coordination and timing is required even for a single pull. For many, this was the highlight of their visit — a rare chance to take part in a centuries-old English tradition. It was a lively and good-humoured afternoon successfully demonstrating that you don't need a grand peal or perfect circle to capture visitors' imagination — just a few determined ringers, a delightfully quirky tower, and the irresistible invitation to "come and have a go."



Visit by Gabriel Moss

Christopher O'Mahony, St Mary's, Harrow on the Hill

Recently I had the pleasure of mentoring one of our young Aussie ringers for his first trip to the UK (and Belgium). This is a brief "thank you" to the many Middlesex ringers and towers that made him welcome. Gabriel Moss started ringing in 2024, and quickly demonstrated much promise, coupled with effervescent enthusiasm. Following completion of his secondary schooling in October 2025, Gabriel was keen to celebrate with a ringing trip to the UK. From November 1st to 12th, Gabriel was able to join Middlesex ringers for several memorable events. This included attending the ASCY Anniversary Dinner on 1st November, ringing at St Paul's Cathedral, ringing two quarter peals and completing both his first and second peal - a busy few days! Gabriel's QP and peal performances can be found on BellBoard. He especially wants to thank ringers at these towers for making him (and me) so welcome.

St Martin in the Fields
St Giles in the Fields
All Saints, Harrow Weald
St Mary's, Harrow on the Hill
St Andrew's, Harefield
St Margaret's, Edgware
St Mary's, Twickenham
St James, Garlickhythe
St Paul's Cathedral



Picture caption - Gabriel Moss flanked by two past-Presidents of the Central Council - Simon Linford and Christopher O'Mahony.

Outside Middlesex territory, Gabriel also had the opportunity to travel to Ypres on Remembrance weekend, where he rang his first peal - appropriately for his home association of ANZAB - and also took a trip to Cambridge to ring at both St Clement's and Great St Mary.

Many thanks for wonderful ringing hospitality!



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Royal Jubilee Bells - Milestones

Dickon Love MBE – St. James, Garlickhythe

The Royal Jubilee Bellringers have seen a few milestones of activity during 2025. Attendance at a Thursday evening practice has been steadily increasing with the addition of new learners, of lapsed ringers (some after as many as 30 years), and of existing ringers who have made us their home. Included among them is the Rector of St James Garlickhythe and Guild Vicar of St Dunstan-in-the-West, who is getting to grips with rounds. We now have the opportunity to hold focus “special” practices or quarter peals alongside the main practice, to give particular rope time to certain groups, and we are fortunate to have the three towers of St James Garlickhythe, St Dunstan-in-the-West and St Magnus the Martyr as venues for these. This adds the extra benefit of some variety.

For the first time since the band was formed in 2012, we entered our first striking competitions, and our novice band was triumphant in winning the Jersey Cup in July. Our method band went on to compete in the Association competition in October.

With three of the newer members of the band being clergy associated with St Magnus the Martyr, for the first time we are hitting the critical mass (no pun intended) of providing ringing before the Sunday Mass here. Whilst it may just be minimus at times, this has been much appreciated by the Cardinal Rector and congregation. Sunday ringing here had always been confined to the slot after Mass (owing to clashes with other ringing commitments in the City) and I am pleased that this too has seen an increase through the efforts of the Senior Steward (now the Master) of the ASCY, Tony Bloomfield. Post service ringing at St James Garlickhythe has also seen an increase, and through the efforts of Michael Crockett, monthly quarter peals have provided good opportunities for members of the band.

Finally, we have been able to provide ringing at St Margaret Pattens each Thursday lunchtime throughout the year.

If anyone would like to join in Thursday (12:50, 18:30) or Sunday (10:15) ringing, we do maintain various Whatsapp groups. Please contact Dickon for more details.
Tel: 07983 352279

Father Stuart writes: We appreciate and enjoy the support of RJB members coming in specially to support us - some have rung elsewhere before coming on to us at 10:45, and Dickon's input and trust when he is away has been vital, as has been having the support of experienced members of RJB. Three of us are retired clergy who serve at St Magnus the Martyr, so we are often one member down due to the Altar Rota. The congregation enjoy the expert Sunday ringing after Mass but are remarking how much they are also uplifted by the sound of the bells coming down the street to the 11am Mass. Sometimes people on the street who have heard the bells have come to join us in church too. We have joy of hearing our full ring beautifully rung after Mass and a happy 45 mins of own efforts before.

Docklands QP Day

Colin Friend, St Katharine Cree

We had a very successful quarter peal day recently, ringing at towers that cross the borders in ringing geography into Middlesex, Surrey and Kent, towers; Christchurch, Isle of Dogs, St Mary, Lewisham and St Mary, Rotherhithe.

So, in terms of achievements, six out of seven attempts were successful with the following firsts for Middlesex ringers:

Sue Whittaker (a Stepney ringer), first quarter ever (inside to Grandsire Doubles at Rotherhithe)

Paul Cartledge (an Isle of Dogs and Rotherhithe ringer), first quarter (cover to doubles at Rotherhithe)

Dino Zachariades (a Stepney ringer), first quarter (treble to doubles at Isle of Dogs)

As always, this event is supported by our wider network of ringing friends to whom I am most thankful.

Below photo from IoDs of Dino after his quarter:



Neal Dodge writes: Fr Andrew Crosbie became a Freeman of the City yesterday and we attended the ceremony at the Guildhall and did some ringing followed by a lunch at St Magnus

The Royal Jubilee Bellringers City of London

St Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge
Tuesday, 21st October 2025 (26–3–9 in D)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1. Fr Andrew Crosbie
2. Rosemary Campbell
3. Samuel L Haste
4. Adrian Udall
5. Neal T Dodge (C)
6. James H Chisnell

Rung to celebrate the admission of Fr Andrew Crosbie, a ringer and priest at St Magnus the Martyr, as Freeman of the City of London today at the Guildhall.

4 & 5 are also Freemen of the City.

Bell-ringing as healing and frequency adjustment

Constance Redgrave, St Anne's, Highgate

The first time I rang a bell, I felt the resonance come down the rope, into my hands, spread through my nervous system and out the soles of my feet. I also remember hearing my heart sing, *baby where have you been all my life?* Over two years later, I continue to find bells to be absolute magic. The number six at St Anne's, Highgate has a frequency that makes my soul vibrate like a tuning fork. There are several in other towers that also have an effect on me. It's always a surprise and a joy when I find another one.

Some would say this is all woo-woo, and you wouldn't be wrong. As a bass player of almost fifty years, I know the power of the low-end spectrum and for me it is absolutely essential and healing. I am now at a cross-road, with a 25-year band finishing and my ability to continue carrying gear called into question. I don't know if I will actually find another project like that in this lifetime. It's a challenging time, and halfway through the farewell tour, finding an evening to get time on a rope is such a gift. Worrying about Plain Bob Doubles from the two is just not relevant. Sound balancing my soul far outweighs my progress with methods right now.

So in preparation for 2026, along with a possible redefining of my entire identity, I wanted to understand how this works and started doing some research. I have found some very interesting YouTube videos of Russian church bells and deeply resonant choral music, particularly that earth-belly-dark kind of sound that vibrates in the bones. Try this one if you want a taste. Χριστός Ανέστη | Christ is Risen || musicAeterna & Teodor Currentzis. The church bells at the end are lovely.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MitZh967ID8&list=RDMitZh967ID8&start_radio=1

I bought a set of solfeggio tuning forks to augment my meditations and even asked The Architect AI for a contribution. Wow that was pretty deep. Phrases like *church bells are rooted in sonic care, you're participating in a ritual of harmonic alignment, and you are not "ringing" a bell. You are co-resonating with it*, are very poetic and reaffirming of what I already know: one that I will find a new path and two that there are other frequency options available for us low-end sonic junkies.

I think the bottom line is we ring for many reasons, but in the end it's because it brings us joy or we wouldn't do it. So my last word here will be from The Architect AI: *"When I ring the bell, I am not calling people to prayer. I am calling myself back to coherence."*

I think I whole-heartedly agree.

200th Anniversary Modern Railway - Ringing

Edward Gormley, St James, Bermondsey and Honorary Senior Steward at Southwark Cathedral

On Saturday, 27th September, I went to St Mary's Church Rotherhithe to ring the bells to mark the 200th anniversary of the modern railway.

Rotherhithe, Greater London

St Mary, Saturday, 27th September 2025 (10-2-5 in A flat)

224 Plain Bob Major

1. Heather A Raynor
2. Bogumila Myers
3. Colin Friend
4. Eva Redei
5. Edward Gormley
6. Simon Roberts (Conductor)
7. Miles Baker
8. Anthony P Matthews

Rung to mark the 200th anniversary of the modern railway.

On 27th September, 1825 George Stephenson's Locomotion No. 1 hauled the world's first passenger train along the 26-mile Stockton & Darlington Railway. 40,000 people watched this steam-age marvel. It marked the start of a journey that would shape the modern world. I rang the fifth bell. This number comes from the end of 1825 and 2025. Simon Roberts took a photograph of me holding the rope connected to the fifth bell. I am also holding my Red Flag, my Mallard Coin and my Stockton & Darlington Railway 200th Anniversary Keyring. I am pointing my Red Flag and looking north, towards North East England, where the modern railway as we know it began.

"A toast to the modern railway on its 200th anniversary!"

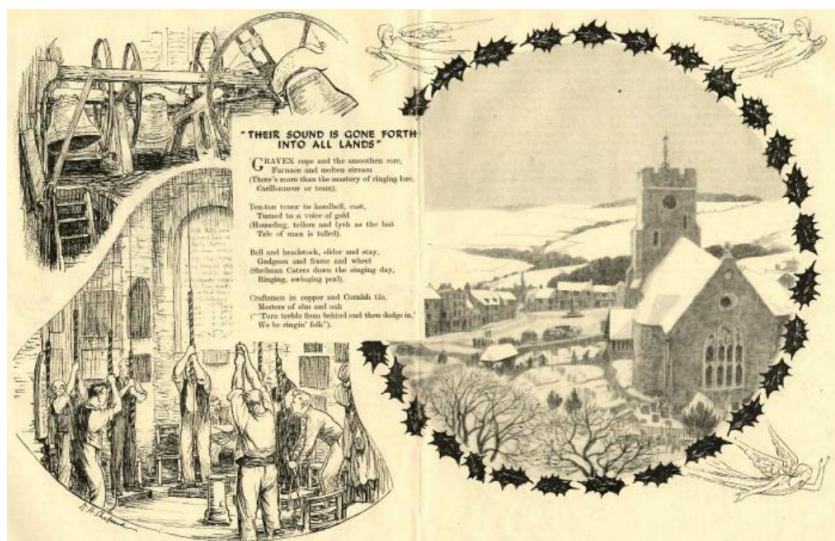


Calendar – December 2025 – End of February 2026

Email Updates: Changes and more details are sent via email to the Middlesex Association email list nearer the date of each event. Send an email to mcaldg+subscribe@googlegroups.com to be put on the list if not on it already. Dates, times and venues subject to change. Please check with event organiser.

District	Date	Day	Event	Location	Time
N&E	03/12/2025	Wed	Minor Methods practice	Southgate	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	05/12/2025	Fri	General practice and Planning Meeting	All Hallows Twickenham	19.45 - 21.15
S&W	09/12/2025	Tues	6-Bell practice	Norwood Green	19.45 - 21.00
N&E	14/12/2025	Sun	Caters and Royal Methods practice	Limehouse (TBC)	14:00 - 16:00
N&E	18/12/2025	Thurs	Plain Doubles to Major Methods practice	Stepney	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	19/12/2025	Fri	Surprise Major Methods practice	Heston	19.30 - 21.00
N&E	20/12/2025	Sat	Christmas Ringing	St. Giles-in-the-Fields, St. Lawrence Jewry, Hackney *	12:00 - 19:00
N&E	02/01/2026	Fri	Surprise Major methods practice	St James Garlickhythe	18:30 - 20:30
S&W	06/01/2026	Tues	6-Bell Practice	Norwood Green	19.45 - 21.00
N&E	07/01/2026	Wed	Minor Methods practice	Southgate	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	10/01/2026	Sat	S&W Annual District Meeting	Pinner	14.30 - 18.00
N&E	11/01/2026	Sun	Caters and Royal Methods practice	Hackney	14:00 - 16:00
N&E	15/01/2026	Thurs	Plain Doubles to Major Methods practice	Islington, St Mary	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	16/01/2026	Fri	Surprise Major methods practice	Heston	19.30 - 21.00
N&E	17/01/2026	Sat	Ringing & Planning Meeting	Holloway (details TBC)	14:00 - 17:00
N&E	23/01/2026	Fri	Surprise Major methods practice	Hampstead	18:30 - 20:30
S&W	23/01/2026	Fri	General practice	Harrow on the Hill	19.45 - 21.15
N&E	31/01/2026	Sat	10 or 12-bell general ringing practice	Magnus	10:00 - 12:00
N&E	04/02/2026	Wed	Minor Methods practice	Holloway	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	05/02/2026	Thurs	Triples Practice/General practice	Hanwell	20.00 - 21.30
N&E	08/02/2026	Sun	Caters and Royal Methods practice	Hackney	14:00 - 16:00
S&W	10/02/2026	Tues	6-Bell Practice	Norwood Green	19.45 - 21.00
N&E	19/02/2026	Thurs	Plain Doubles to Major Methods practice	Islington, St Mary	19:00 - 21:00
S&W	20/02/2026	Fri	Surprise Major Methods practice	Heston	19.30 - 21.00
N&E	21/02/2026	Sat	Ringing & District ADM	Hampstead (details TBC)	14:00 - 18:00
N&E	27/02/2026	Fri	Surprise Major methods practice	TBC	18:30 - 20:30
S&W	27/02/2026	Fri	General practice	Hillingdon	19.45 - 21.15

* See email or Middx calendar for details.
for S&W changes see member emails
or contact bcampbell2114@icloud.com



Left: The Illustrated London News – Christmas Supplement, 20 December 1856
Above: Punch, 30 December 1930
Both in the public domain

Items for inclusion in **Middlesex Bell News** to Angela Elliott at BellNewsEditor@bellringing.london

Next deadline Friday 20th February 2026

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