

Middlesex Bell News



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St. Anne's, Highgate
Winners of the N&E
Novice Cup, 2026

Issue 125 September 2026

A Word from our President

The summer is here and with it, longer days to enjoy the outdoors and hopefully more chances to ring. If you are planning holidays where full-circle ringing takes place, you are likely to be welcomed wholeheartedly. How lucky we are to be treated as friends just because we have chosen to become bell ringers.

I am now in my second year as President. Both Master and President can only serve for a maximum of three years. Prior to this year's AGM, we held the inter-district striking competition, judged this year by Chris Ridley from the Surrey Association. The winning band was from the North and East, conducted by Stephen Jakeman. After a whole year without a General Secretary, I am pleased to report that the post has now been filled, and we welcome Peter Curwen to the team. After more years than anyone can remember, Stephen Jakeman stood down as Bell Restoration Officer, although he will continue to act in an advisory capacity. We welcome Brooks Hayes to this role. Association Librarian, Paul Norman also stood down. The 'physical' library is housed in the tower of St Giles-in-the-Fields. Whilst this is likely to remain, the committee will consider the future role of Librarian in a digital age.

Saturday 30th May saw the Middlesex 8-Bell Competition, held this year at St Mary Magdalene, Enfield. The event has been running for several years, organised by Tom Lawrance. The judges this year were Lucas Owen and Clara Waller. A most enjoyable afternoon.

And now to other national events coming up:

On Saturday 4th July the Ringing World National Youth Competition took place in Nottingham. The Middlesex has never entered a band for this on the basis that we don't have enough ringers under the age of 18 years. However, a recent check on our membership figures shows that we now have 10 ringers registered who might be eligible. If you are a Tower Captain with young ringers, and you think would like to take part in 2027, please contact me. Please remember that if we are to bring under 18's together to practise for the competition, this needs to be organised through an officer of the Association. We must ensure that Safeguarding matters have been addressed.

Finally, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers will meet this year on 4th - 6th September in Rugby. We have three officers who can represent us and vote on behalf of the Association: Adrian Sweeting, Angela Elliott and Brooks Hayes. One of those officers, Brooks Hayes, will be attending. The weekend is open to any ringer. Think about it.

Wherever you ring this summer I hope you enjoy it.

Alec Gray
President

Cover Photograph by Stephen Jakeman. St. Anne's, Highgate, winners of the N&E Novice Cup, 2026

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Success All Round

Lucy Chandhial, N&E District Ringing Master

The N&E quarter peal week running from 9th – 17th May 2026 was completed with 26 successful quarter peals. You can see the full details here: <https://bellboard.uk/event.php?id=23102>

Of particular note, and with congratulations to all involved we had:

- first ever quarter peals for Claire Sneddon (Aldgate) and Constance Redgrave (Highgate)
- twelve other firsts, ranging from first blows in method to first as a mother to first at a stage of ringing
- eight surprise quarters with special note to the band who rang seven spliced surprise major at St Giles -in-the-Fields

Thank you to the ringers and especially to the conductors who made it possible to deliver a range of challenging opportunities for ringers looking to develop their skills further.

Ringing quarters doesn't stop... if you would like more opportunities to ring quarter peals, please do ask for advice on how to arrange bands and who to talk to locally to join bands.

Associated performances

Sunday, 17 May 2026	City of London (St James Garlickhythe)	1344 Plain Bob Major
Sunday, 17 May 2026	Hackney (St John at Hackney), Greater London	1260 Plain Bob Minor
Saturday, 16 May 2026	City of London (St Dunstan-in-the-West)	1369 Doubles (5m)
Saturday, 16 May 2026	City of London (St Olave, Hart Street)	1260 Plain Bob Triples
Saturday, 16 May 2026	City of London (St Vedast, Foster Lane)	1320 Norwich Surprise Minor
Saturday, 16 May 2026	City of London (The Royal Jubilee Bells at St James Garlickhythe)	1260 Middlesex Bob Triples
Saturday, 16 May 2026	City of London (The Royal Jubilee Bells at St James Garlickhythe)	1260 Doubles (2m)
Saturday, 16 May 2026	Hackney (St John at Hackney), Greater London	1280 Lincolnshire Surprise Major
Saturday, 16 May 2026	Highgate (St Anne), Greater London	1260 Plain Bob Doubles
Saturday, 16 May 2026	Holborn (St Giles in the Fields), Greater London	1280 Spliced Surprise Major (7m)
Saturday, 16 May 2026	Kilburn (St Augustine), Greater London	1320 London Surprise Minor
Saturday, 16 May 2026	Tottenham (All Hallows), Greater London	1260 Grandsire Doubles
Friday, 15 May 2026	City of London (St Botolph without Aldgate)	1280 Plain Bob Major
Friday, 15 May 2026	City of London (St James Garlickhythe)	1250 Superlative Surprise Major
Friday, 15 May 2026	City of London (St James Garlickhythe)	1260 Plain Bob Doubles
Friday, 15 May 2026	City of London (St Katharine Cree)	1320 Plain Bob Doubles
Friday, 15 May 2026	Finchley (St Mary), Greater London	1260 Plain Bob Doubles
Thursday, 14 May 2026	City of London (The Royal Jubilee Bells at St James Garlickhythe)	1259 Plain Bob Minor
Wednesday, 13 May 2026	Hackney (St John at Hackney), Greater London	1260 Doubles (3m)
Wednesday, 13 May 2026	Hendon (St Mary), Greater London	1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor
Monday, 11 May 2026	Barnet (St John the Baptist), Hertfordshire	1260 Double Court Bob Minor
Monday, 11 May 2026	Edgware (St Margaret), Greater London	1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor
Sunday, 10 May 2026	City of London (St Botolph without Aldgate)	1280 Cambridge Surprise Major
Sunday, 10 May 2026	Hackney (St John at Hackney), Greater London	1264 Double Norwich Court Bob Major
Sunday, 10 May 2026	Harrow Weald (All Saints), Greater London	1260 Plain Bob Doubles
Saturday, 9 May 2026	City of London (St James Garlickhythe)	1260 Grandsire Triples

New Programme, New Opportunities

Lucy Chandhial, N&E District Ringing Master

In the North and East we have taken the decision to focus our district practices on opportunities you are less likely to get in your own tower - surprise major and higher numbers practices - but to ensure that our third Saturdays offer local general ringing (with tea and cake) as often as possible, with the aim to bring ringers together to enjoy the art of ringing.

Recognising that for many ringers a home tower practice is sufficient commitment, each week we will try to better support developing ringers in their home tower by freeing up the weekday evenings from district practices and instead offer support for set objectives, a bit like an evening course but at your home tower.

If you have a goal in your N&E tower and need a plan, support from an experienced ringer or two for a few weeks, to reach that goal let me know - lucy.chandhial@yahoo.co.uk (and if you are an experienced ringer who would be willing to help others for four-to-six-week periods also let me know!).

NOTABLE QUARTERS

All Saints, Harrow Weald

Sunday, 19th April 2026 in 42m (7-3-3 in A)

1272 Plain Bob Minimus

5 as cover

1 Caspar Kennedy

2 Sonia Field (C)

3 Kate Eden

4 Matt Peperell

5 Keith Parr

First of minimus on tower bells for all

Rung for National Garlic Day



L-R: Matt, Keith, Kate, Sonia, Caspar (Image: Sonia Field)

All Saints, Harrow Weald

Sunday, 25th January 2026 in 44m (7-3-3 in A)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Joshua Gearing

2 Simon J O Head

3 Sonia Field (C)

4 Richard J Chandler

5 Matt Peperell (C)

6 Caspar Kennedy

First away from cover - 1

80th birthday compliments to Derek Croxall for Tuesday



Christ Church, Hampstead, Greater London

Tuesday, 24th March 2026 in 56m

Tenor: 24-0-5 in Eb

1250 Lincolnshire Surprise Major

1 Michael Royalton-Kisch

2 Ian Campbell

3 James Belshaw

4 Paul Daybell

5 David Holdridge

6 Richard Chandler

7 Stephanie Pattenden (C)

8 Thomas Lawrance

Rung to mark the 250th anniversary of the death of John Harrison, inventor of the marine chronometer, who is buried in the churchyard at Hampstead Parish Church



St Katharine Cree, City of London

Friday 8th May 2026 (9-3-18 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1. M Louise Booth

2. Charlotte D J Pacey

3. Elliot J Hughes

4. Jeremy Capstick

5. Edward Gormley

6. Colin Friend (Conductor)

Rung in celebration of Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday

Edward Gormley writes: Elliot Hughes took a photograph of me (left) holding the rope connected to the fifth bell. I am also holding my Space Shuttle Pin Badge. Sir David Attenborough has filmed commentary at the Kennedy Space Centre, specifically working on location at Launch Pad 39A. He has examined the infrastructure and likely filming for a documentary related to Earth observation or the history of space exploration.

The bell-ringers went to The Old Tea Warehouse pub in Creechurch Lane, just a stone-throw from St Katharine Cree Church. I invited the bell-ringers to raise a toast to Sir David Attenborough on his 100th birthday!

Edward Gormley says: "A toast to Sir David Attenborough on his 100th birthday!"

Everyone responded: "A toast to Sir David Attenborough on his 100th birthday!"

Sixty-Year Service at Aldgate. Part 2

Keith Barber, St Botolph's, Aldgate

With our bells resting on bearers and the fittings in Bridport, Sunday mornings were unusually quiet at Aldgate through November and some of us were grateful for the chance to lie in, which is not to say ringing ceased because the Aldgate practice went 'on tour'. Some of us were uncomfortable with the longish draft at St Katharine Cree. The big ten at Camberwell felt more familiar but still took some mastering. Perhaps the highlight was the warm welcome at West Ham, where we joined the local ringers for their weekly practice. Bethnal Green provided some drama when a slider was flipped off its pivot. The Vicar of Poplar was immensely pleased at his bells being rung. Finally, we travelled to Isle of Dogs, where a broken rope caused a brief hiatus. To the key holders and ringers of all six (and not to forget Garlickhythe, where the bells were made available lest we needed them on 5th December) the ringers express their immense gratitude.

Meanwhile, news filtered through from Nicholson's that all sixteen bearings needed replacing; the grease had congealed, and the assemblies were rotating in their housings. There was also evidence of water, presumably due to condensation as the bells are well protected from the weather. No wonder our bells were hard to ring. With news like that (and the state of the gudgeons still unknown) there was some anxiety about the finances. You may imagine the relief when we heard that the gudgeons on the fourth were sound. There were one or two other items that hadn't been as costly as we'd anticipated, and we wouldn't be charged for the clapper on the fifth (which had been repaired just a few weeks before). Not only was the black hole disappearing, but for the first time it seemed we might have a little money in hand. Then, towards the end of the month, came the news we'd been waiting for: Nicholson's would return on December 1st, and re-assembly and testing should be finished by Friday of that week. There was one final scare when we learned all the new bearings needed machining, being fractionally oversize, but in the event the return was delayed by just one day.

Nicholson's van duly arrived about 11:30am on 2nd December and the usual group of six set to, along with Neil Deem and Chris Cozens. Progress was rapid and, by the time work finished that day, four bells had been re-installed. Wednesday then started at 8am so that by late evening all eight bells were back in the frame and adjustments complete. Fraser Storie was good enough to turn out for the try-out and, for the first time in many years, Aldgate was treated to the sound of all eight rising in peal.

The bellhangers set out on the long drive to Dorset at 9pm, and the Middlesex gang: Stephen and Ruth Jakeman, Brooks Hayes, Tim Mills, Guy Wells and Lucy Chandhial, made their weary ways home.

Practice night on 5th December was our first chance to put the bells properly through their paces and the difference was astonishing. Bells with a deserved reputation for being 'challenging' turned sweetly and even the temperamental seventh was quite biddable. We assume it was the work on the clappers that altered the sound, with a glorious resonance in the ringing room. We found ourselves appreciating anew what a magnificent ring we have been bequeathed!

So, the overall verdict is that the job was worth every penny, and every aching joint and muscle too! The learners and improvers in the band certainly appreciate the better 'go' of the bells. For the more experienced, rising in peal has become far easier, extended touches are something to look forward to and we've even essayed a surprise major. Another thing that's not happened for many years! As the Christmas ringing unfolded, we really started to enjoy our 'new' bells, and the new year has seen practice nights even busier than usual. Not that the bells have entirely ceased to be challenging, of course: Aldgate remain a heavy ring that can be hard work, especially when rung too fast, but the feeling remains that Nicholson's have done us proud and we are *very* pleased.

All that remained was a celebratory quarter peal, duly rung on 4th January by the 'local labour'; the volunteers who had assisted so willingly and achieved so much. The footnote also referenced the many donors who made the project possible, too many to mention by name (a list now hangs in the tower) but led by the Middlesex Association whose generous support was so crucial. To everyone who contributed the Band is enormously grateful.

Aldgate, City of London
St Botolph without Aldgate

Sunday, 4th January 2026 in 48m (25–0–7 in D)

1260 Plain Bob Triples	First quarter-peal on these bells
1 Ruth Jakeman	following a major mechanical
2 Brooks Hayes	overhaul in 2025. This was rung
3 Alec Gray	by the eight volunteers who
4 Tim Mills	assisted the bellhangers with the
5 Keith Barber	practical work. With very grateful
6 Guy Wells	thanks to everyone involved,
7 Stephen Jakeman (C)	including those who contributed
8 Lucy Chandhial	generously to the project funding.

An Afternoon South of the River

Fr. Stuart Bates, St Magnus the Martyr

N&E District 3rd Saturday ringing St. James, Bermondsey and St. Mary, Rotherhithe 14:30 - 17:00 Saturday, 21st March. Both participants arriving and people in the churchyard were bathed both in a glorious mix of warmest spring sunshine and the melodious sound of Grandsire Triples ringing out on the St. James, Bermondsey bells cast in 1993. The Impressive Roman Senate-style doors opened to let us in for an adventurous climb up various staircases, through a brick vault and further stairs and trap door into a homely and well-appointed ringing chamber.

Enough seats for all 8 or so sitting, with 8 ringing: the youngest a keen 13-year-old plus one dutiful and patient mum; the oldest a keen 80-year-old. Beginners pitched-in to start with rounds and call changes on 8, and then fearlessly stepped up for Plain Hunt on 7, acquitting themselves well. Then some courses of Plain Bob and Grandsire Triples, with the youngest member both hunting and covering. More call changes, and then the experienced members rounding off the session with a signature course of Middlesex Bob Triples for 2.30pm.

Down through the trap door, with a few members leaving, the remainder made a happy walk down Bevington Street and along the Bermondsey Wall. With the Thames sparkling diamonds on green-grey high water to our left we passed The Old Justice and then The Angel with so many people out on the grassy lawns having a happy Saturday Sunshine holiday drink. Then arriving at the wonderful St Mary's, Rotherhithe some sat on the churchyard bench enjoying the sound and the last warm rays, while 10 or so keen ones enjoyed the ringing chamber with its graffiti-covered panelling and eclectic sallies, whilst testing Plain Bob Doubles with three covers behind, ending once more with a fine flourish of Middlesex Bob Triples.

Thanks to Janet Betham for making the arrangements, Louise Booth for hosting, to the kindly bells of two noble churches, and for the keen leadership and participation. South of the river hosted a great afternoon.

The Royal Jubilee Bellringers' 2026 Bristol Ringing Tour

James H Chisnell, St James, Garlickhythe

On the last weekend of January, the Royal Jubilee Bellringers enjoyed their annual ringing tour, organised by Neal Dodge. This year's destination was the historic city of Bristol. Many of the band travelled down on the Friday, and the weekend began with a quarter peal of 1260 Stedman Doubles. Afterwards, everyone gathered at a nearby pub to catch up and look ahead to the busy couple of days to come. Saturday began at Bristol Cathedral (8 in 21 cwt), before the band walked on to St John on the Wall (6 in 11 cwt). A well-timed lunch stop (at a pub, naturally!) provided a welcome break before heading up to St Michael on the Mount (6 in 12.5 cwt). Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we weren't able to gain access to ring there. Undeterred, the band continued to St James' Priory (10 in 28 cwt), where we were warmly welcomed and even invited to ring for longer than planned - more than making up for the earlier disappointment.

The final tower of the day was St Philip and St Jacob, now known as "Bristol Central Church". Across the day, the band rang a wide variety of methods, from called changes through to Stedman Caters, ensuring there was something to suit every level of experience within the group.

In the evening, ringers (and consorts) reconvened at a local Indian restaurant for a well-earned curry, kindly organised by Dickon Love - a fitting end to a full day of ringing and walking.

On Sunday morning, the band divided to provide ringing for services at several towers across the city. At St Paul, Southville (6 in 7 cwt), another quarter peal of 1260 Stedman Doubles was successfully rung, rounding off the weekend in fine style.

Overall, the tour was a great success: plenty of good ringing and good company. Overall, 22 ringers came on the Tour, which was a brilliant turnout. To commemorate the weekend, Dickon Love has produced an impressive book detailing all the touches rung, along with photographs capturing the highlights of the tour.



The band at St James' Priory



Ringing at Bristol Cathedral

Outing to Windsor and Maidenhead Area

Wendy Johnson, All Hallows, Twickenham

I had prepared for an outing around the Windsor and Maidenhead area by spending the previous day writing out the method I'm currently learning. Luckily, all ten other ringers, mostly more advanced than myself, turned out to be friendly, helpful and inclusive. A few more turned up later on, too.

First off was Old Windsor, a ground floor ring, with 2 ropes hanging a few inches from the main west door. This door began to open (!) during rounds and call changes as a hopeful potential wedding couple, scoping the church, pushed into the room, to shouts of "can't come in!" They heeded the message (and may never be seen again....). Immediately on starting the second piece of ringing, a 6" square chunk of Victorian fresco fell to the floor. This bit of the George Gilbert Scott renovated church, together with its plaster backing, came off the wall above the main archway, showering widely over the carpet. The host ringer hastily swept the debris, if not under the carpet, then somewhere close by! Perhaps heavy rain, the first of the summer, had affected the church fabric. Having left the tower almost as intact as we found it, next up was Windsor St John. There was a biblical downpour, so it was good to be inside. The tenor wouldn't stand for me, so some tolling ensued. The mournful sound may have 'chimed' with many tourists in the busy High Street, probably disappointed by the Coldstream Guards Band march past being cancelled "because of the rain". After three months of heatwave, a fair few drops and they couldn't play...!

Lunch was congenial and hearty for some of us, in Windsor's Greek restaurant, where we discussed the Odyssey (film, books, location, holiday). The route through Magna Carta country was stunning to Tower 3 at Clewer. Parking instructions, clear in Mary's email, needed to be properly read as street signage was ambiguous. Between ringing, Peter fascinated us with the tale of a 17th century bell filled with punch for the ringers. A tradition to reinstate maybe, though not for the drivers.

Tower 4 at White Waltham was not located in a housing estate as the sat nav initially fooled us, but we found the smart hamlet, with its tower, only 8 minutes later. Conversely, we arrived at the next church very early, with time for the driver to try out the seat massage option (Jackie in her new car...).

The final ring at Shottesbrooke was set in a sheep park with pond and trees. Tower Captain Vikki welcomed us, encouraging all, whatever our levels, then supplied Jammy Dodgers, which took me back to my childhood. This was a beautifully maintained tower and ring. The bells were a joy both to handle and listen to. A group photo came at the end of our 9-hour day, hence some glazed expressions. The ringing finished at 6:30pm. It had been tiring, but fun and productive, consolidating the method. Huge thanks to Mary Gow for organising such a varied and entertaining day.

Methods rung were:

Grandsire Triples, Little Bob Major, Plain Bob Major, Cambridge Major, Kent, Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Bob Minor, Spliced something or other, Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles, St Clements Minor, London Minor.

200 Club Update

The Middlesex 200 Club raises money for the Bell Restoration Fund but everyone who pays in also has the chance to win with monthly prizes.

Here are the most recent winners:

Roger Gage, Mark Harris, Mary Gow, Elliot Hughes, Mark Herbert, Prudence Fay, Celia Workman and Margaret Pratt have each won £50 since the Association AGM.

In October, at the Association Autumn Meeting we have an opportunity for a bigger prize with £500 to be won so if you are not already a 200 Club subscriber and would like to start 'investing' £5 per month for the chance to win prizes (and support the Bell Restoration Fund) please contact Lucy (lucy.chandhial@yahoo.co.uk) or check the website for details: <https://www.bellringing.london/200-club/>



Janets' Jaunt

Deborah Tyler, St. Botolph's, Aldgate

A walk in the countryside in the Spring, visiting two beautiful churches with the opportunity to ring unknown bells with supportive help, and lunch in a canal-side pub. When I heard about 'Janets' Jaunt' I put the date into my diary and I am so delighted to have been able to join for the first time on Saturday 11th April. Both Janets have been organising these outings each Autumn and Spring for 17 years.

Twenty-five of us took a train to Denham and walked to our first church, St Mary's, Harefield ("Harefield's oldest building" with a ring of 6, tenor 7-0-12 in A).

With 21 ringers and 4 non-ringing supporters we took it in turns to go up the carpeted stairs to a spacious ringing room with cushioned seats. Everyone had the chance to ring at least twice, from rounds and call changes to Grandsire, Stedman and a rather special April Day Doubles.

Then we set off to walk to our lunch break at the Coy Carp where the River Colne and the Grand Union canal meet. (Highly recommended: spacious, comfortable and good food and service!). After lunch we had a longer walk to Rickmansworth expertly planned to take in 2 birdwatching hides overlooking the lake. Plenty of noisy gulls (mostly black-headed gulls), mallards, coots, tufties but also a great-crested grebe; from the canalside path we saw a heron and pair of Mandarin ducks (exotically coloured male and rather dull female!) and many red kites flying overhead.

The stairs to the ringing room at St Mary's, Rickmansworth were a challenging steep ladder to a challenging ring of 10! The tenor weighs 20cwt+, rung up by Alec Gray with some help from Chris Weaver. The least experienced ringers (like me!) rang rounds and call changes. But with some expert ringers amongst us it was a great opportunity and a pleasure to watch and listen to Grandsire Caters.

I loved the day and so appreciate the friendliness of the company and the encouragement from experienced ringers to a forever-novice like me.....and we raised £169 for the BRF, what's not to like?!



Peterborough Outing

Robert Bacon, St John the Baptist, Barnet

It was a super Saturday morning on 25th July when I headed up the A1 to Peterborough for the N&E district outing. After an all-important coffee stop, I headed to our first ring at the Cathedral Church of Saints Peter, Paul & Andrew for 10.20 am, where a gaggle of people were already waiting outside the west door. We were checked off the list, our cash donations taken and then we were ready to be shown up to the ringing chamber. The route to the chamber was suitably long and windy and even involved some stairs down, only to ascend again. This was a first for me to ring at a cathedral, so I was very glad to be able to ring several of the 12 bells, the tenor being 21-1-20, a tad lighter than my home tower. The bells were well behaved, though I did receive some welcome coaching notes from the experienced ringers. Here there were two fans which we were glad of but found only one to be working, so that was understandably soon directed towards the back half.

Following a lovely hour's ringing we again descended and ambled a short distance to another first for me, a new church with bells, Saint Mary's. These were also the first new ring of bells that I had rung, so a double first. Unusually, there was no ringing chamber, but we rang in more like the top landing. These bells were light, the tenor being only 8-3-17 so I stayed in the back half of the eight. (We could add in the connection with St. Saviour, Pimlico but that would make it even longer!).

After another hour of satisfying ringing, we set off for some lunch nearby. Again, Janet Betham had made a few suggestions and a fair number of us ended up in her first suggestion, a 'spoons' [The College Arms in The Broadway] for some reasonably priced and reliable grub, along with in my case, a very nice ale.

It was but a short walk to our third tower in the main square at Saint John the Baptist. This eight had a tenor of 25-2-22, a tad heavier than my home tower, so I decided to try covering, to Grandsire Triples I think it was. This went well and I found this tenor much easier to handle than I dared hope. The ventilation here involved a short iron ladder to open a door halfway up the chamber and another double door at floor level where at one point it looked like Janet was going to sit on the ledge and risk toppling out. I think this was my favourite tower, as it had great atmosphere and lovely sounding bells.



We then proceeded outside to take our group photo in the square as several people were leaving before our final tower which was Saint Guthlac's in Market Deeping, 9 miles north of Peterborough. This lovely old church had a narrow spiral stair to the chamber with some uneven and small steps, not for the unwary! We were not accompanied to the chamber and had to guess where the treble was and duly pulled off only to find we were one bell out. This ring of eight had a tenor of 13-3-25 and again I managed to ring it covering.

At each tower the group rang a variety of methods including several that I had not heard before and I, along with other more novice ringers, were able to take part in rounds and call changes and plain hunt, though at one of the towers I leant rather heavily on Cathryn's guidance to keep my place in the plain hunt. A fair few of the group then ambled down the street to the local hostelry for some well-earned refreshment before the bus back to Peterborough station, but as I was driving, I had to avoid temptation and headed back down the A1 feeling happy to have ticked off four new towers and several firsts. A big thank you to Janet for the faultless organisation of the day and to the experienced ringers' guidance when needed. I look forward to the next one.

The Royal Jubilee Bellringers

Neal Dodge, St James, Garlickhythe

Going back a bit now but at the end of Dec the Royal Jubilee Bellringers had our Christmas do at St Magnus.

In previous years we've had carols and food.

This year I wrote a Royal Jubilee Bellringers carol, you would be welcome to publish it...it was good fun.

The Royal Jubilee Bell Ringers Carol

(To the tune of God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen)

Come gather close ye of London,
And hear what we convey,
We ring the bells with joyful sound
To hail the Christmas Day!
At Garlickhythe, St Magnus too,
And Dunstan's peal so gay:
O tidings of ringing and joy, ringing and joy!
O tidings of ringing and joy

At St James Garlickhythe we ring,
Our Jubilee bells chime,
Through alleys old, their music rolls,
A gift of Christmas time!
In rounds and changes loud we call,
Proclaiming news sublime:
[Refrain]

At Martyred Magnus by the Bridge,
Our changes rise in flight,
Each peal falls on the Thames' broad stream,
A wonder and delight!
The faithful city listens close
To music true and bright:
[Refrain]

At Dunstan's tower we proudly stand,
Our changes weave their song,
Through Grandsire, plain, and joyful peal
Our music rolls along!
With heart and hand we ring for joy,
The theme of Christmas strong:
[Refrain]

We are the Royal Jubilee,
Bellringers true and bold,
In London's heart our peals resound,
Glad tidings to unfold!
At Christmastide we lift our song,
A story ever told:
[Refrain]

St Andrew's, Enfield

Cathryn Hunt, St Andrew's, Enfield

Tower works at her home Tower (St Andrew's, Enfield) didn't stop Lesley Roper from ringing her first Quarter Peal at the end of March. The successful QP was scored "up the road" at St Mary Magdalene, Enfield just in time to celebrate another milestone for Lesley - her Golden Wedding Anniversary the following day. Congratulations Lesley on both counts!

St Mary's, Hampton

Clare Toberty, All Hallows, Twickenham

Although All Hallows is my home tower I also practise at St Mary's, Hampton. On Monday 27th April they started to remove their bells and at the end of the process gave away the old wheels. Every garden should have half a treble wheel for the wildflowers to grow through.

Middlesex 8-bell 2026

Tom Lawrance, St Vedast, Foster Lane

As we all know, the weather is fixed on two days of the year: cold and wet on Lord Mayor's Show Day; and roasting hot for the Middlesex 8-bell striking contest. And so it was as the competition gravitated (or levitated, rather) this year up to the far North of the Association to Enfield Chase on May 30th. The Bard of Middlesex had this to say:

St Giles-in-the-Fields first took the field
as Grandsire Triples was pleasantly pealed;
Next up the band styled 'Greatest Grandsire'
offered their own brand of Grandsire in answer
The Middlesex Ladies not to be outdone
joined eagerly in the Grandsire fun
Who then set their sights on Enfield Surprise?
The Enfield Rifles - their shot at the prize.
(Forgive this poor bard for delicately enquiring
if they *meant* to illustrate it with a tiny bit of firing?)
Foster Lane headed a bit further north,
A ramble through Cambridge was what they put forth
Lastly two courses of Major – Plain Bob
Was the final blast from the Bishopsgate mob
From the judges encouraging words were employed,
but the Cambridge was what they most enjoyed.
And so we recovered from our travails
with the Crown and Horseshoes' finest ales

Thanks to Jason Goodman and Cathryn Hunt for helping with the arrangements to host the event, and to Lucas Owen and Clara Waller for their thoughtful and well-presented judging. Next year's competition will be on Saturday, May 29th.

Not So Much a Rant; More a Recommitment...

Constance Redgrave - St Anne's, Highgate

I thought I had nothing earth shattering to contribute to this issue. Then something arrived this week during a particularly challenging session of having bobs thrown at me on Plain Bob Doubles from the three. I understood the goal was to get me to stop following bells and move my priority to rhythm and counting places, but by the end of it I was very close to tears of frustration. People keep saying I don't need to know what Bobs and Singles are. I'm really sick of hearing that. I do need to know what they are and how they impact what I am doing because it changes a calm sane ringer into a panicking idiot!

Then to cap it off, they finished with (in a very gentle sympathetic voice) perhaps this was the junction where I could choose to stop progressing and that *'the bell ringing world is full of people who keep it going from a supporting place they can manage.'* WTF?!!!

I don't know if it was meant to fire me up, but it most certainly did! I am a lifetime musician who has been battling these plateaux and mountains my whole life! Stop progressing? That's just not going to happen here. I am so much more than that! So, after I went home and had a good cry, I got back on a rope and had *long fifths* 'unaffected' explained to me in probably more detail than I needed (again in a very gentle sympathetic voice).

Arghhhh!

So, give me a step forward, and I will run a mile with it. I can do this. I am going to do this. *It's the journey, not the destination... mantra, mantra blah, blah, blah.*

Editor's Note: Constance rang her first QP Bob Doubles on the Treble on Saturday 16th May. Rung in Memoriam Eldred Halton, ringer in the band for 20 years.

St Anne's, Highgate

Saturday, 16 May 2026 in 44m (6-3-8 in Ab)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

Plain Bob Doubles

1 Constance Redgrave

2 Mary Ruth (Em) Mayo

3 Janet Betham

4 James Thomas

5 Stephen Jakeman (C)

6 Andrew Reed



The happy band, l-r Constance, Em, Janet, James, Steve, Andrew. (Image: Andrew Reed)

Running a Successful Practice

Sonia Field, All Saints, Harrow Weald

Guidance for leaders and attendees:

1. Tailor to individual goals and abilities.

- Ask each person what they'd like to focus on.
- For the leader: come to the session with a tailored plan, based on the specific attendees.
- Use the strengths of the people you've got. More experienced ringers may support those with less experience.
- Accept that different people learn in different ways.

2. Maximise rope time

- Start on time.
- Save general chat for outside the tower.
- Come to the session having completed the necessary homework.
- If you need a prompt sheet, have this to hand.

3. Stay focused

- Don't chat whilst ringing/teaching is taking place.
- If you're not ringing, perhaps follow a particular bell.
- Keep clear roles and responsibilities: teacher, timekeeper, key holder etc.

4. Push outside the comfort zone, but with compassion!

- Be prepared to try new things.
- This is a practice, not a service ring. It's OK to fail.
- Don't push people to the point of driving them away. If someone is stressed out or upset by a particular task, and doesn't respond to a bit of gentle encouragement, then respect their point of view, and allow them to withdraw from the task for now.
- Accept that we all have 'off days' e.g. our ringing can be impacted by personal/health issues that we don't necessarily wish to share with the group.

5. Keep a positive atmosphere

- Celebrate progress.
- Support each other.
- Consolidate success: if something works, then repeat it, to embed the learning.

Above all, remember that tea, biscuits and chocolates work wonders!

Cool Changes

James H Chisnell, St Magnus the Martyr

Most of us are familiar with the usual named changes used by called change callers and composers to incorporate musicality and satisfaction into the ringing. Here I have shown three well established (eight bell) examples graphically, to help visualise the tonal profile of the changes:

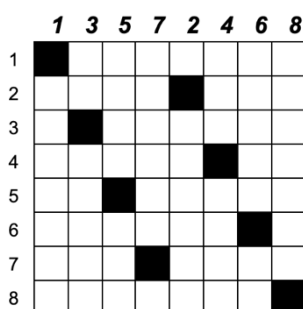


Fig 1: Queens

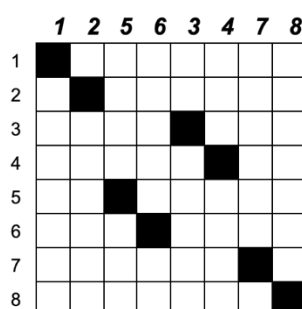


Fig 2: Hagdyke

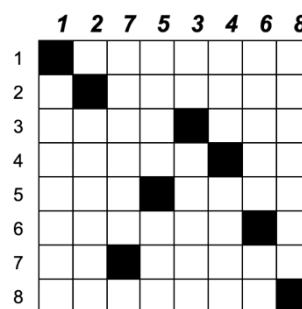


Fig 3: Whittingtons

Whilst ringing, I have stumbled across some other changes which sound very satisfying and musical, and often incorporate them into my call change medleys. As far as I can tell, these have not yet been formally named. I wondered whether chess pieces might provide a fitting theme. With that in mind, here are three suggestions:

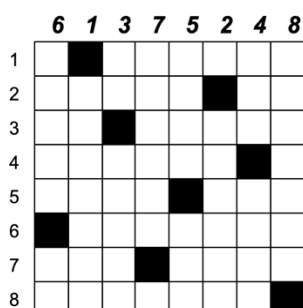


Fig 4: Bishops

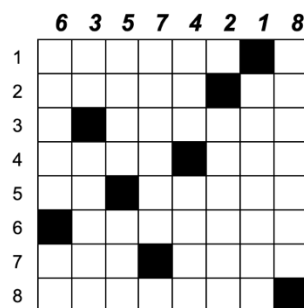


Fig 5: Knights

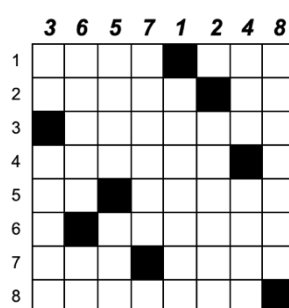


Fig 6: Rooks

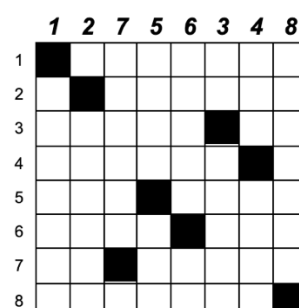


Fig 7: Mayors

Bishops (fig 4) occurs in the first row of the 9th six of the plain course of Stedman Triples. Knights (fig 5) occurs at the 4th half-lead of the plain course of Single Oxford Bob Triples. Rooks (fig 6) comes up in a touch of 112 Plain Bob Triples (PPBBPPBB).

To my ear, each of these rows stands out for their musicality. Mayors (fig 7), which I have named thus, due to its similarity to Whittingtons (and Dick Whittington being the most famous Lord Mayor of the City of London), appears at the 2nd lead-end of the plain course of Grandsire Triples and also sounds quite satisfying. It can be reached with just 2 calls after reaching Whittingtons and is then 4 calls away from Hagdyke, which is itself only 2 more calls away from Tittums.

Bishops can be extended to higher numbers of bells: 8135972460, 01357E92468T; and can quite easily be reached after calling the bells into Queens, and when calling back into rounds you could theoretically call the bells into rounds leaving the 6 at the front, ie 61234578 and then call the 6 to follow the 5, to incorporate a bit of fun into the exercise! Maybe give these changes a go at your next practice and see if you can spot any other musical rows when ringing!

Ding DONG!

Three readers explain how they developed a passion for bell-ringing

'It's an astonishing experience – the noise travels for miles and it's thrilling'

Catherine Lane, 76, lives in Oxfordshire. She is a retired headteacher and widowed, with two adult sons.

I've loved the sound of bells ever since hearing them as a child, playing outside on a Sunday evening. Years later, with my own family, living in a village in Berkshire, I saw bell-ringers in the gallery when I went to church. I asked if anyone could have a go. They were very keen to teach me so, as soon as my sons were old enough, I cycled

there twice a week to learn how to do it. I've been ringing for 40 years now.

It takes anything from a couple of sessions to a few weeks to get the hang of it and is daunting at first. The rope travels at 40 miles an hour, and it's a feat of coordination and timing. You're using

'It's a feat of coordination and timing'

your body, your eyes, your ears and working in time with the other bell-ringers. When the bell moves there is a rumbling of the rope and mechanism above, then you hear the most stupendous sound as the clapper hits the side of the bell. It's an astonishing experience. The noise travels for miles and it's really thrilling. You never stop learning and can always do more. I like ringing peals, where the sequence isn't repeated from start to finish – it can go on for more than three hours.

Now I'm the Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers but that doesn't mean I'm the best ringer! I help organise the association, which is nearly 150 years old. We have 400 towers and I try to ring in as many as I can. I like to explore the history of each church. Bell-ringing is something that's been going on for centuries. I can be ringing a bell that will have sounded since the 15th century.

Ringling has actually changed my life! That sounds theatrical but I met my second husband bell-ringing.

'I joined bell-ringers in Boston on a business trip'

Lucy Chandhial, 49, works part-time as an IT project manager. She lives in Chingford with her boyfriend Guy, 63.

Bell-ringing is like riding a bike. You never forget but it feels a bit strange when you first go back to it. I learnt when I was 12, living in the village of Ditchling in Sussex. I enjoyed the fact that we weren't treated as children but accepted in a group of adults, as part of the team, and there was always something new to learn. I liked the routine of getting together for practice night and the Sunday morning service.

After a gap when I was at university, I started bell-ringing again 10 years ago. I'd moved house after getting divorced, and moved in with my aunt. She lived next to the church and I was happy to have a hobby close to home again.

Now I'm living in London and am very involved – not everybody rings quite as

much as I. Kilburn is my home tower but I'm an ex-ringer wherever I'm needed and I teach people how to be bell-ringers. It's a great way to meet people and also to go to places you wouldn't necessarily visit.

There's a website that lists all the different towers where you can ring – worldwide. I went to New York on a business trip and

'It's good to keep the skill going and our heritage alive'

joined in with the ringers in Boston on a Sunday morning, and then we went for brunch by the harbour. I have joined in the 'Ringing Ringers cycling week' where we stayed in converted farm cottages in Leicestershire and then cycled out each day to ring at different churches. I've also been on outings to Bath, Tewkesbury and York. Sometimes we go by train, walk to a church to ring the bells, have a pub lunch, walk to the next church to ring and then loop back. Oh, it's so enjoyable, and it's good to keep the skill going and our heritage alive.

'It's all-consuming, providing exercise, mental stimulation and an amazing group of people'

Sue Robinson, 65, lives in Stanford Bridge, Worcestershire, with her partner Rob, 56, and works part-time in his catering-machinery business. She has two grown-up children.

I first learnt to ring as a teenager with my younger brother Tony. We had moved to Devon and our neighbours invited us to go to a local village church practice night with them. We were quite musical but had no idea what bell-ringing involved. We loved it (our neighbours gave up!).

In addition to bell-ringing, our teacher also gifted me a love of farming. I went on to study agriculture but college life proved too much of a distraction and I gave up bell-ringing for a few years.

Relocation, independent children and a career change

meant more free time, so I decided to give the hobby my all. That was seven years ago, and I am now tower captain at Bromyard church and also Guild Master for the Hereford Diocese. It's the Guild's 140th anniversary this year and our aim for the year is to recruit more young people to learn to ring.

'You can ring handbells while sitting down'

Bell-ringing is an amazing thing to do for people of all ages. You must be able to stand, climb steps and raise your arms above your head, but there are also bell-ringing apps and programmes for our phones and laptops, and you can ring handbells while sitting down. Usually we'll train people in their local tower. We can tie the

bells up to stop them striking or double-muffle them so nobody can hear you while you're learning.

I also ring and teach at Worcester Cathedral, where we have a world-class, purpose-built teaching centre – eight dumbbells are rung

just like the real thing using a simulator for the sound. It's an amazing facility. Worcester is such an iconic location and

it's a privilege to ring here. The bells are the fifth heaviest in the world. They're big and beautiful, but they are quite difficult to ring. My family laughs about how much bell-ringing I do but it really is an all-consuming hobby providing exercise, mental stimulation and an amazing group of people.



Sue is tower captain at her local church



Catherine says bell-ringing has changed her life



It's a great way to meet people, says Lucy

Fame?

Lucy Chandhial, N&E District Ringing Master

Last autumn I was asked by the then Central Council PR Officer (who also happens to Edit this newsletter) if I was willing to talk to a journalist for an article in Woman's Weekly. After a chat over the phone on a train journey in October the article was published in January, and I am one of three ringers featured to demonstrate the various appeals of bellringing as a hobby.

When I shared this publicity one ringing friend pointed out that the article leads with the statement that we are 'readers' (as though we had simply chosen to write into our favourite magazine and tell them about our bellringing hobby), another told me he realised how small the world of bellringing can be when he recognised two of the three featured ringers as people he regularly rings with!

I receive our learning to ring requests and was delighted last year when one gave their reason for being interested the Guardian article about new things after 60. I have not yet had a learning to ring request which quotes the Woman's Weekly article as inspiration, but it can't hurt for more people to be aware that ringing is an inclusive and enjoyable hobby, with real people controlling the swing of the bells and not simply the press of a button!

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Fined for Not Ringing

Peter Curwen, St Mary's, Twickenham

It is probable that the bellringers of St Mary's, Twickenham were the last band in the country ever to be fined for not ringing for a monarch! Twickenham is extremely fortunate at St Mary's in having Churchwarden and Vestry records which date back to the beginning of the 17th century.

In fact, the first legible entry in the parish records from 1606 reads:

"vijj d was given to the ringers when the King went by with the King of Denmark."

This is a reference to James I and his brother-in-law Christian IV of Denmark. The custom at the time was that bells should be rung whenever the monarch passed through a town or village. With Twickenham on both the road and the river from London to Hampton Court, the ringers were often called to ring the 5 bells then in the tower. (The current 6th bell, dating from c1495, is the sole survivor and would have been heard on this occasion.)

A few decades later and we are amid the English Civil Wars. During a lull in 1647, following the Parliamentarians victory at the Battle of Naseby, King Charles I was put under house arrest. There followed a lively debate in Parliament regarding the New Model Army, led by Oliver Cromwell, who favoured both a Republic and a Puritan approach to worship.

By August 1647, Charles I was at Hampton Court with a form of court attending to him. Two of his children, Elizabeth and Henry, were a short distance away at Syon House in Isleworth, and the King was given permission to visit them. The route from Hampton Court to Isleworth passed through Twickenham.

This brings us to the following Parish record – actual wording:

"ffor default of rininge in harveste when the Kinge came by twice" and the cost for not ringing was the substantial sum of 13 shillings and 4 pence.

An article in the Ringing World in 1942 by the noted ringing historian J. Armiger Trollope first alerted me to the main elements of this story. Trollope suggests that the plea of bringing in the harvest was simply a ruse. He may be right. Twickenham was certainly a Parliamentary village, and a hardline Puritan and anti-monarchist, Thomas Willis, had recently been appointed as the Vicar. (Editor's Note: Willis served as vicar of Twickenham until 1660, the time of the Restoration, when his parishioners had him removed. By 1670, however, he had been appointed as Chaplain in Ordinary to Charles II.)

Earlier in 1647, on 2nd February, there is the following entry in the record:

"ffor the Ringers upon the Coronation daye in drink att Richardson's & bread" – 5 shillings.

It's worth noting that a shilling per ringer is generous, given that was about the daily rate for most manual work, and the reference to drink and bread reflects the fact that the ringers were often paid in kind at a local pub. Twickenham in the 17th Century was mainly an agricultural community based on market gardening, mainly grown in walled orchards: plums, apples, pears, strawberries, cherries, etc... Harvesting this fruit and then transporting it rapidly, mainly by river, to Covent Garden was critical for the prosperity of the village. Thus, if the Parish was as hardline as J. Armiger Trollope suggested, they surely wouldn't have bothered with an excuse for not ringing! Either way, the Parish (I doubt very much whether it was the bellringers themselves) had to stump up a 13 shilling fine for not ringing for the King. Quite possibly, he and his courtiers had more pressing issues to think about in August 1647 (he was less than 18 months away from his head being on the block) than whether bells were being rung for the journey from Hampton Court to Isleworth. It is extraordinary, given the tumult of the time, that the issue was even considered by the local JP, and that they extracted a fine, but there we have it – St Mary's, Twickenham has the distinction of being probably the last band of bellringers ever to be fined for not ringing for a King!

References:

The Bells of Twickenham – The Ringing World, 16th January 1942

Morris, E.A. (1977) *The Bells of St. Mary's, Twickenham*, published by the Twickenham Local History Society

Cobbett, R.S. (1872) *Memorials of Twickenham: Parochial and Topographical*. London: John Russell Smith

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Ring Out Your Dead

Andrew Harvey, St Mary Magdalene, Richmond

On February 6th, the church of St Mary Magdalene was transformed into a cinema for a special screening of the bell ringers' whodunit "Ring Out Your Dead". The event, that attracted a full house audience of 120 people, including Richmond Park MP Sarah Olney, was a gala fund-raising evening in aid of the New Bells for Richmond campaign.

The film was originally made for the ITV television series Midsomer Murders featuring Hugh Bonneville who sent a message of support from the Aldwych Theatre where he is currently starring as C. S. Lewis in the play Shadowlands. The special guest at the St Mary's screening was John Harrison from Wokingham who taught six of the Midsomer actors to ring. He is a ringer of 60 years' experience and in his introduction, he gave a brief explanation of the bell ringing process as well as sharing some stories from the film set.



There was a buoyant feeling in the church when it was announced that fund raising for the new bells had passed £170,000 towards the target of £240,000. The order for the new bells has now been placed. They are due to ring out over Richmond before Christmas.

Mobile belfry brings a new sound to Richmond May Fair

Jackie Harrison, St Mary Magdalene, Richmond

The tinkling sound of bells was a new attraction at the annual Richmond May Fair this year where a mobile belfry made its debut. During the course of a glorious sunny day the event attracted record crowds. Hundreds were drawn to the bell tower where a team of experienced ringers helped a stream of adults and children enjoy their first experience on the end of a rope.

One of the key aims of the New Bells for Richmond campaign is to attract and encourage young people to develop an interest in learning to ring. Roger Booth, chairman of the Mobile Belfries Trust that operates two mini-rings, brought the Charmborough Ring to Richmond because the lighter structured Touring Tower was undergoing repairs. Roger was helped by a team of local ringers who assembled the frame and hoisted the six bells into place. Their task complete by 9:45am, the ringers then went to St Mary Magdalene church to formally sound the opening of the May Fair.

Back on the green, the Charmborough had already started to attract attention and by the time the ringers returned to give a demonstration the queue of eager beginners was building up. Jackie Harrison, TowerCaptain at St Mary's, was present throughout the day and was delighted by the response. She said that although fund raising for new bells remained a priority, the day at the May Fair had been principally about stimulating interest in bell ringing.

During the afternoon Radio Riverside, the local broadcast station, carried a live interview with Andrew Harvey, one of the Richmond ringers, that added some personal recollections to the overall publicity.

And next year? Expect new church bells to ring out a May Fair message to the town – and another day of excitement around a mobile belfry.

Charmborough Ring information

The Ring was designed and built by Matthew Higby using bells cast by Richard Bowditch and made its first public appearance at the Ringing Roadshow in 2005. The Ring was sold in 2007 and is now operated by the Mobile Belfries Trust. With a ¾ cwt tenor, this is the heaviest portable ring currently in existence.

<https://www.mobilebelfries.org/charmborough/>

Christmas Outing

Lesley Roper, St. Andrew's, Enfield & St. Mary Magdalene, Enfield

I have been a bell ringer for 2.5 yrs. My ringing towers are St Andrews, Enfield and St Mary Magdalene, Enfield. I am now experienced enough to ring Rounds, Call Changes and Plain Hunt but because we usually only get 6 ringers at any one time, I usually only get to Plain Hunt on 5 with a bong behind. It is because of this that I was encouraged by my tower captain Cathryn to attend any district practices or outings.

I was notified of one such outing just before Christmas last year. We would be visiting 3 towers on Saturday, 20th December, St Giles-in-the-Fields, Holborn, St Laurence Jewry, Guildhall and later on in the evening, St John at Hackney. I remember that the day was dry although a bit chilly and I got to the 1st tower in good time. I have rung here only once before and to be honest, don't really remember much about it except that outside the church there were some stalls giving out food and drink to those who required it. I also met some new ringers who I had not met before. We had a good time ringing as usual and soon it was time to move to our 2nd tower. As we had to be at Holborn for midday I did not have anything to eat beforehand so decided to have some food when we got to Guildhall.

On arriving at Guildhall, I saw a beautiful square in front of me with a giant lit Christmas tree and marble tiles. As a few of us had now travelled to this tower we decided that this was the ideal time to eat. There was an Art Gallery here as well so some of the ringers went for a look round whilst the rest of us ate. When the time came we all ascended the steps to the tower and I remember how spacious it was. To be honest I sometimes find myself getting a little anxious about attending different towers, but I find all the other bell ringers to be welcoming, friendly and helpful so I soon began to enjoy the experience. As there were numerous more experienced ringers here today, they were able to advise me on bell handling when ringing on a new bell with longer ropes than I had ever rung on before. I remember the incredible sound of all 8 bells ringing and how in this tower the sound seemed to echo. It was amazing. Everyone got to ring their choice of bells, and I remember coming away from the day incredibly proud of myself for what I had achieved. Learning to Bell Ring is one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Pantomime

Janet Betham, St. Anne's, Highgate

Those of us who went to the Hackney Pantomime in the evening, to see Cinderella, thoroughly enjoyed it, although it somewhat missed the wonderful presence of Clive Rowe, who has passed on his glamorous dresses to a successor whilst still directing the show. The transformation scene was magical: Cinders twirled her way into a ballgown before our very eyes, and the huge coach and horses moved across the stage as the curtain came down for the interval. We got our usual shout-out for 'The Hackney bellringers' from the Dame, thus continuing the tradition, and met up in the pub with those who had rung at Hackney instead of coming to the panto.



Clive Schofield 1938 - 2026

St James, Islington

Clive, together with his wife Helen, learned to ring at St James, Islington in about 1996. For several years he rang regularly on practice nights and Sunday mornings, and often at St. Bartholomew-the-Great. His preference was always for the tenor, and he became very good at tenoring to methods, but didn't want to ring inside. During the early 2000's Clive and Helen organised several enjoyable tower outings, with attractive printed programmes including illustrations of each tower to be visited. Clive was also a very keen and knowledgeable botanist, and on outings and other ringing events could usually be found wandering round churchyards looking for, and at times gathering, wild plants which were often found to be new to the botany experts. He stopped ringing some time before Covid but remained a member of the Middlesex Association, and continued to take an interest in the ringing at St. James. In recent months he would predict how many ringers would turn up for practices or on Sunday mornings, and he was usually correct. He died at home on Friday 6th February, soon after returning from several weeks in hospital. His funeral was held on 11th March at St. James.

St James' Ringers

Gordon Gridley 1931 - 2026

St James, Islington

The ringers of St James were sorry to learn of the death of Gordon Gridley (aged 94), once a regular member of the band. He was well known in Islington as the proprietor of a long-standing antique and curio shop in Camden Passage – home to many such businesses for many years. In the late 1980s, his wife Ginny was taught to ring (at St Bartholomew-the-Great) by Jo Barton, and by the early 1990s, Gordon was encouraged by Ginny's enthusiasm to have lessons himself. He became a steady tenor ringer for doubles methods but never wished to move on to method-ringing. Two photos taken in 1991 show him as a member of the St James home band, and he remained such until 2009, when the arrival of a new incumbent led to a change of church, and they began to worship at St Clement, King Square – timings of the services precluding their continued regular attendance at St James' tower on Sundays. Thus, Gordon stopped ringing. Ginny, however, remains a member of St James tower and still rings quite often on a Sunday. The band have been kept informed as to Gordon's progress over the past years. A final period in a care home in Oxford (near his son and other family) came to a peaceful end on 21st January. His funeral was on 16th February.

St James' Ringers

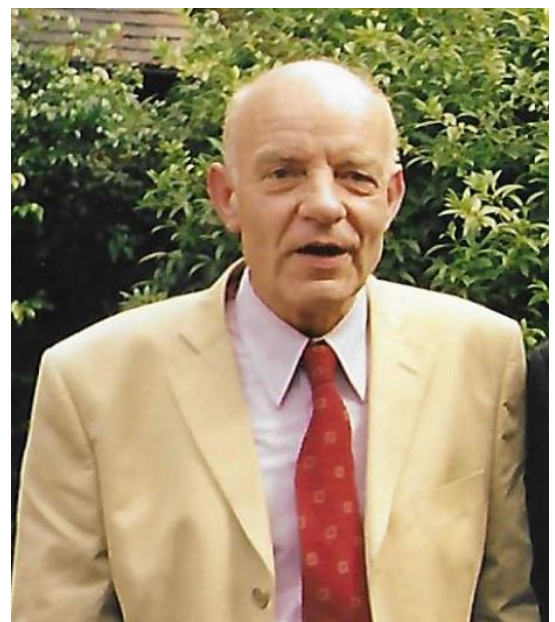
Eldred Halton 1940 - 2026

St. Anne's, Highgate

Eldred got into bellringing at the age of 13, when the churchwarden in Harrietsham, Kent, decided that if the pupils could sing they joined the choir, and if they couldn't, they rang the bells. Early in his career as a financial analyst in the mining sector, he worked for many years in Australia and rang quarter peals of Plain Bob Major and Minor in Melbourne and Perth as well as joining the bands in South Africa and Canada. He joined the St. Anne's band in 2007 and contributed to much important ringing - weddings, birthdays, births, Queen Elizabeth's funeral, King Charles's coronation, Remembrance Sundays and Christmases, and his wife and daughter often walked on Hampstead Heath, listening to the Sunday ringing. He also very much enjoyed our tower outings further afield with his wife. He was never keen to ring a peal but would offer to be a 'spare' for quarter peals and help run practices and Sunday ringing, taking over from John Thorp when he was no longer able to ring. We will remember him for his own brand of terminology and humour and will miss him greatly. His daughter said at his funeral

'Dad will always be remembered as the traditional, old fashioned, English gentleman that he was, with his unique sense of humour, and twinkle in his eye, wearing a tweed cap in the winter and a Panama hat in the summer, with his pipe in his mouth, engulfed by a trail of aromatic blue smoke.'

Anthony Davey/Janet Betham



Calendar

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
S&W	03.09.2026	Thursday	Triples/6-bell practice	Hayes	20:00 - 21:30
S&W	08.09.2026	Tuesday	6-bell practice	Norwood Green	19:45 - 21:00
Assoc.	11.09.2026	Friday	12-bell practice	St Magnus the Martyr	18:30 - 20:30
N&E	13.09.2026	Sunday	10-bell practice	St. John at Hackney	14:15 - 16:15
S&W	18.09.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	Hayes TBC	19:30 - 21:00
N&W	19.09.2026	Saturday	Learners Outing	St Mary's, Merton Christ Church, Collier's Wood All Saints, Tooting Graveney St. Mary, Battersea	10:00 - 11:00 12:00 - 13:00 15:00 - 16:00 17:00 - 18:00
N&E	25.09.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	St Olave, Hart St.	18:00 - 20:00
S&W	25.09.2026	Friday	10-bell/general practice	Twickenham	19:45 - 21:15
N&E	26.09.2026	Saturday	Training Course	TBC	10:00 -13:00
S&W	01.10.2026	Thursday	Triples practice	Hanwell	20:00 - 21:30
Assoc.	03.10.2026	Saturday	Janets' Jaunt	TBC	All Day
S&W	06.10.2026	Tuesday	6-bell practice	Norwood Green	19:45 - 21:00
Assoc.	09.10.2026	Friday	12-bell practice	St Magnus the Martyr	18:30 - 20:30
N&E	11.10.2026	Sunday	10-bell practice	St. John at Hackney	14:15 - 16:15
S&W	16.10.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	St. Mary, Twickenham	19:30 - 21:00
N&E	17.10.2026	Saturday	Ringling at 3 towers, followed by Association Autumn Meeting at St. Augustine's, Kilburn	St Mary's, Willesden St Mary's, Kilburn St. Augustine's, Kilburn	12:30 - 18:00
N&E	23.10.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	St Olave, Hart St.	18:00 - 20:00
S&W	23.10.2026	Friday	10-bell/general practice	Hillingdon	19:45 - 21:15
N&E	24.10.2026	Saturday	Training Course (London 12-bell contest)	TBC	10:00 -13:00
Assoc.	31.10.2026	Saturday	Higher numbers practice	St. Magnus the Martyr	14:00 - 16:00
S&W	05.11.2026	Thursday	Triples/6-bell practice	Hanwell	20:00 - 21:30
N&E	08.11.2026	Sunday	10-bell practice	St. John at Hackney	14:15 - 16:15
Assoc.	08.11.2026	Sunday	Remembrance Sunday	Various	
S&W	10.11.2026	Tuesday	6-bell practice	Norwood Green	19:45 - 21:00
Assoc.	13.11.2026	Friday	12-bell practice	St. Magnus the Martyr	18:30 - 20:30
Assoc.	14.11.2026	Saturday	Lord/Lady Mayor's Show	St. Mary Le Bow, Cheapside	10:30 - 12:30
Assoc.	14.11.2026	Saturday	Lord/Lady Mayor's Show	St. Michael's, Cornhill	14:30 - 16:00
S&W	20.11.2026	Friday	Surprise Major QP attempt	Sunbury on Thames	19:30 - 21:00
N&E	21.11.2026	Saturday	General Ringing	St Olave, Hart St.	14:00 - 17:00
S&W	21.11.2026	Saturday	QP attempts	Various	
N&E	27.11.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	St Olave, Hart St.	18:00 - 20:00
S&W	27.11.2026	Friday	10-bell/general practice/planning	Twickenham	19:45 - 21:15
N&E	28.11.2026	Saturday	Training Course	TBC	10:00 -13:00
S&W	28.11.2026	Saturday	QP attempts	Various	
S&W	29.11.2026	Sunday	End of QP Week	Various	
S&W	03.12.2026	Thursday	Triples/6-bell practice	Hanwell	20:00 - 21:30
S&W	08.12.2026	Tuesday	6-bell practice	Norwood Green	07:45 - 21:00
Assoc.	11.12.2026	Friday	12-bell practice	St Magnus the Martyr	18:30 - 20:30
N&E	13.12.2026	Sunday	10-bell practice	St. John at Hackney	14:15 - 16:15
N&E	18.12.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	St Olave, Hart St.	18:00 - 20:00
S&W	18.12.2026	Friday	Surprise Major methods practice	Hayes	19:45 - 21:15
N&E	19.12.2026	Saturday	Christmas Ringing	Various	14:00 - 17:00
S&W	19.12.2026	Saturday	Christmas Ringing	Various	Various
Assoc.	25.12.2026	Friday	Christmas Ringing	Various	Various

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

Next deadline Friday 23rd October 2026 for inclusion in the Christmas Edition.

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