

the NORTHERN STARS

Northern District Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 57

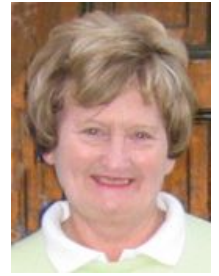
March 2010



Photo: Adrian Udal

Stedman Triples peal board from 1799. See Page 12 for a fascinating family connection with the treble ringer.

First the bad news, at least for me! On the last Friday in January, to make a change from slipping on the ice, I fell down the stairs and broke my left wrist and my right little finger, so I'm out of ringing for several weeks, at least until early April.



One of the pleasures of bellringing comes from the help we can all give to others. This might be through making up a band to ring a peal or a quarter or by giving learners the support and advice to get them started in change ringing. It is this aspect of practice and training that I am asking everybody to think about, because it is so important that we all do our bit. I mentioned in my last report that our monthly practice meetings have been greatly appreciated by local bands but that we are having to rely too much on the same small group of ringers who are turning up to support the sessions. The idea behind the monthly practices is to give the local ringers an opportunity to practice and improve by ringing with a wider group of people – and this is the key point. We need people at all levels of ringing to come and take part in these meetings, not just the most experienced people and the committee members. So I am asking every tower where there is an active band to undertake to provide one of their members, say for two evening meetings a year, to widen the network of people taking part. This would give us an extra half a dozen people every time and would make a big difference both to the ringing and to morale. Please think about this, especially if you are in a tower that is seldom represented. One person twice a year isn't a big commitment. The next three evening practice meetings are at **East Molesey on 16 March, Richmond on 21 April, and Addington on 17 May** - please put them in your diaries!

While on the subject of practice meetings, the committee has been giving some thought to the annual practice at Southwark Cathedral, currently a joint venture between the Northern and Southern districts. The meeting this year was reasonably well attended, but the ringing was not of a satisfactory standard, even allowing for the fact that many of those present rarely have a chance to ring on 12 bells, even less on a heavy and quite difficult ring. We appreciate that members like to have an opportunity to visit their diocesan cathedral despite these problems, but there does come a point where the quality of the ringing has to be considered. This meeting may be moved to another 12 bell tower where the bells are easier to ring.

The Christmas meeting at Colliers Wood was well attended and the seasonal fare provided by the local ringers was much enjoyed. We also had a good turnout for our annual district meeting at Richmond. We are most grateful to the Richmond ringers for welcoming us at fairly short notice and for all that they did to make the meeting such a success, including the wonderful tea. The ringing at both of these meetings was of a good standard.

Sarah Percival, our *Northern Stars* editor for the past four years, is standing down. She has done a wonderful job producing our magazine and we are very sorry to be losing her. Diane Pratt has kindly agreed to take on this job and wish her every success. Andrew Harvey from Richmond is helping Diane with production.

Caroline Prescott, our district secretary, is also standing down because of work commitments, after doing a great job for the last two years. Clara Westlake has been elected to fill this gap. Mike Bangham and Chris Baldwin have been elected to fill the two vacancies on the committee and we look forward to having them working with us.

We encourage as many as possible of our towers to enter the Association six bell striking competition at Buckland on 27 March. I'm sure that there must be plenty of towers in the district that can raise a band for a touch of Bob Minor! Please also start to think about the Association quarter peal week from 15 to 23 May – last year a quarter was attempted in nearly every tower in the district, and I'm sure we can do this again if we try!

We extend a very warm welcome to all our new members. Whatever your abilities, we look forward to seeing you at our district meetings.

Gillian Leale

Annual District Meeting 2010

Saturday 16 January saw the ADM held at Richmond - at last a day free of snow!

Jill Leale reported the District had had some successes, such as the quarter peal week, where every tower participated, with the exception of Banstead which was not available due to building works within the church. A third of the members took part in the quarters. Saturday meetings were held at Benhilton, Kingston, Rotherhithe and Colliers Wood during the year; a training day at Bletchingley; monthly surprise practices, and monthly practices at Cheam. The Association has also been able to promise £20,000 from the BRF to St John's Merton towards their project to install a ring of eight.

What has not been successful has been the lack of members other than the local bands at the monthly practices. Jill asked that tower captains encourage their members to attend. The ringing at the Southwark practice was not good and this may be moving to a new venue this year.

Caroline Prescott is standing down as Secretary and Clara Westlake has agreed to take over. There are two new members joining the committee: Chris Baldwin and Mike Bangham. Jill thanked everyone for their support.

Rosemary Lilley reported that the BRF had made grants to Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon. The BRF income comes from many sources including clothing sales, the Numbers Club and the Brockham firework night. Future projects include works at Cheam and Walton on Thames. The total fund is currently standing at nearly £30,000. Rosemary thanked Robin for all his work in keeping the fund records up to date. Jason Hughes is retiring from the committee and they would welcome a new member with technical knowledge.

Chris Stanley thanked the committee for the promised grant for St John's Merton and said they need to raise £150,000. £45,000 has been raised to date; £20,000 of this is the grant from the Association. At present there is no incumbent, but hopefully new clergy will be in post by the summer.

Michael Uphill reported that Chris McLean is running a multi-Doubles training session in February. A training day is planned for 6 March in Wimbledon, and a Plain Bob Minor training session on 17 April. Chris Stanley is running a Grandsire Triples training session at West Hill in May and in June a maintenance course is planned.

The Get Surrey Ringing sessions held at Beddington in November went well and Jean Kimber was grateful for the support her band had received. Individual training is also going ahead with Michael Uphill and Anne Rueff.

Shirley McGill reported that 26 peals had been rung last year; South Croydon being the leading tower. The leading peal ringer is Kate Desbottes with 11 peals (and 102 quarters) for the Association. The leading method: Stedman Caters.

Sheila Cheesman reported no changes regarding the PR committee. Jill Wigney is working on the new website. Chris Ridley complimented the PR committee on the improvements to the current website.

Lawrence Davies reported book sales are doing well. It was mentioned that Lawrence has been running the book stall for 30 years. A magnificent achievement!

Eric Godfrey thanked Jill for all her efforts and welcomed her back into office as District Master.

Those nominated for the Committee were all elected and the Central Council Representatives for 2011-2013, were also nominated.

Sheila Cheesman raised the question of the Government's sliding scale retirement age and how the membership subscription needs to reflect this change. This will be discussed at the AGM.

Jill thanked the Rev Neil Summers for taking evensong, Phillip Ridley for playing the organ and Sarah, Jackie and the Richmond ringers for a splendid tea.

Finally, Sarah is standing down as *Northern Stars* Editor and Chris Ridley thanked her for all the wonderful Newsletters she has produced. He then presented her with an original print from the Illustrated London News Christmas Supplement of 1856. The inscription reads:

*Sarah Percival, Editor,
Northern Stars, 2005-2010.*



Sarah Percival

Sarah thanked all her contributors for all the support she received during her tenure and said how much she had enjoyed the role. Sarah passed on her good wishes to Diane and Andrew who have taken on this task.

DP

Does the Surrey Association have a future?

Prior to the Association's foundation in 1880 ringing was based around centres of excellence. This gave rise to local societies such as the Mortlake Society, Croydon Youths and the Richmond Society but to mention a few. Ringing at the time had only tenuous connections with the church, the tower simply acting as a convenient structure in which to hang the bells, providing a source of funding through paid ringing, and even better if a public house was located nearby. The Belfry Reform movement towards the end of the 19th Century was an attempt to improve the behaviour of the ringers and led to the formation of many of the regional and guild associations that continue to this day.



Given the behaviour of ringers is generally much improved these days, with a few exceptions, is it time to re-visit the role of the Association and what it has to contribute to ringing? The rules currently set out eight objectives for the Association which are only loosely defined and rarely referred to. Indeed, it could be argued that having so many does not help to give a clear focus to what the Association should be attempting to achieve to be really effective.

There is the lack of younger ringers leading to an adverse demographic profile of ringers nationally. The 'risk free' society is further creating a regulatory environment that could hinder usual ringing activities in the future. The standard of ringing accepted as being satisfactory is variable – something that a choir or orchestra would be unlikely to get away with. As Alexander Pope quoted in 1709 'a little learning is a dangerous thing'. The usual response to such observations is that any ringing is to be preferred to no ringing being heard, and that those offering voluntary service cannot be dictated to. The do nothing option however, could see fewer and fewer ringers in the future with many towers becoming silent.

So what are we to do? A start might be to re-visit those Association objectives to highlight where our efforts might best be focused over the next few years. A key activity must be the need to attract and then offer quality training to new ringers. Surrey has previously had many successful training events, but is it the same few people involved all the time? Communication and publicity are key features. Our PR efforts have again been good over the years, but how can we attract new ringers? Given that ringing has something for everyone whatever their interests (i.e. from psychology to mathematics to engineering) how can we exploit this fact? There appears to be a greater interest in history these days – can this be used as the hook to attract ringers given the rich heritage of our bells and historical ringing achievements?

Given that ringing appears to have progressed successfully prior to the Association being formed, what should the Association be doing that the local societies cannot deliver as effectively? What are the Associations strengths and how might any weaknesses be overcome? What can we do as an Association to set some clear routes for all members to contribute to?

Ask not what your Association can do for you, but what you can do for your Association – with apologies to John F Kennedy

Chris Ridley

What do you think?

The editor welcomes your comments and suggestions.

The Tree of Souls (or the Soul of Trees)



I went to see *Avatar* the other day and it was spectacular - the way those airborne jellyfish float out of the screen at you - but it was the storyline that really gripped me. It set me thinking, as things do.

The underlying message is pretty obvious. Humanity at large, and western civilisation in particular, is pursuing an unsustainable way of life that is greedy, exploitive and ultimately destructive. And the beautiful rainforest being trampled by mechanical monsters is not on some exotic planet light years distant but right here on earth. I read that people are being treated for “post-*Avatar* depression”, having been moved to despair by the contrast between our society and the simple, noble, eco-friendly lifestyle of the Na’vi.



I have a lot of sympathy with that message. How often have I looked down from a hilltop, gazed out of a railway carriage or walked along a road and been struck by the observation that the vista before me is a mixture of beauty and ugliness: concrete boxes juxtaposed with trees, a broken shopping trolley dumped in a stream, a carelessly discarded can or crisp packet among the wild flowers. Invariably the ugliness is man-made while the beauty is natural.

That is not to say that everything man-made is ugly of course. The spire of Salisbury Cathedral, for example, blends seamlessly into the natural landscape. But cathedrals were built to the glory of God, nearly all of the world’s most sublimely beautiful music was written for the purpose of worship (sorry, General Booth, but I really don’t understand that remark about the devil having all the best tunes) – and in an age when anything done to glory of God, whether dressing stone for the tower, carving wood for a pew end or writing a hymn, was automatically done to the best of one’s ability (sadly the evidence of modern church buildings and “worship songs” suggests this attitude no longer prevails).

So God-given or God-inspired equals good, everything else bad or indifferent? A non-believer might express it in terms of harmony or conflict with nature, which is probably closer to what the makers of *Avatar* had in mind and may amount to much the same thing in the end. But does everyone think like this? Did some cinemagoers, watching the scene where the armoured vehicles move in and the Hometree comes crashing down in flames, think “Yeah, good shot, man!” Do such people, when they are not spitting gum on our pavements or adjusting the angle of their baseball caps, consider the rusting fridge a work of art in an otherwise dull pond? Or does most of what they see around them fail to even register on their emotional radar?

Suppose the Na’vi really existed and visited Earth. What would they make of us? Would they immediately recognise that materialistically acquisitive but spiritually bankrupt mindset which might drive the human race a few generations hence, having pillaged our own planet, to turn its rapacious attention on one like theirs? I suspect they would.

What if they entered a church? Would they experience the same sense of reverence as in their own sacred forest? Would they feel the presence of spiritual energy stored up in ancient pillars? Or would they not understand the relevance of an artificial sacred place? (There is an interesting parallel here, albeit in reverse, with the early white explorers in Australia who concluded that the Aborigines couldn’t be religious because they didn’t build churches or temples.)

What would they make of bells? Big lumps of metal – not a promising start. But think of bells as dangerous creatures, tamed and controlled by slender cords of natural fibre (for those who haven’t seen the film – the Na’vi ride huge, fearsome, flying reptiles and six-legged horsey things by plugging their hair into antennae on the beast’s head) and it begins to make sense. And ringers? A bunch of strange people working together in harmony, praising the Creator Spirit, recounting tales of illustrious forebears and indulging simple pleasures, far removed from the shallow, glitzy preoccupations of so many of our contemporaries. You know, I think they just might understand!

Tony Nunn

A special Birthday Celebration



"Having been born in the middle of November, Mike Todd from Bermondsey often spends the Saturday nearest to his birthday at the Bletchingley training day. When he retired from work, his absence from home for that day gave an excellent opportunity to "set him up" for a surprise party. This year another significant birthday was reached and another surprise was planned – this time a meal in a restaurant. He was expecting a quiet evening with just his wife and a visiting friend, but tables had in fact been booked for 40 people. His face was a picture as familiar faces – friends, relatives, neighbours (including more than a few ringers!) arrived one after another, some having travelled from as far afield as Whitley Bay and Crediton. A really good evening was had by all – and some were still capable of ringing the next day – his actual birthday. A quarter was rung at Rotherhithe – though the conductor was instructed not to include in the footnotes just which birthday was being celebrated!"

Morag Todd

The future of the Exercise

This is a photo of Cheryl Watson's (née Gosling) son, Daniel aged 2. Daniel loves going ringing with his parents and also has his own bell rope at home (as you can see from the photograph) which was made by my son Philip (Cheryl's cousin).

Cheryl was *Southern District Ringing Master* from 2002 to 2004 and now lives in Faringdon, Oxfordshire with husband Julian and Daniel's younger brother Alex.

Daniel is also the late Carol Gosling's grandson. Carol was *General Master* of the Association from 1981-1983 and would have loved to have seen this.

You may have seen his picture in the *Ringing World* reading his mum's copy!



DP

New members

The following were elected members at the ADM on 16 January:

Addington	Frank Pritchard
Kingston	Hilary Gullen
Colliers Wood	Phil Barnes Nick Kermatzis
Merton Park	Rachel Aland Ed Gosden Dudley Hay (J)
Carshalton	Kim Sudell
Non-resident	Matthew Rainer Stephen Beckingham Nick McMahon

Reminder



Don't forget the Quiz Night during Holy Week on **Wednesday 31 March 2010** at the **All Saints Institute, Banstead** (next to the church).

7.15 pm for 7.30pm start

For more details please see the poster in your tower or on the website. Final numbers and food orders by **22 March**. Contact Richard Wallis: email: gensec@surreybellringers.org.uk, phone 01883 380745

Numbers Club winners

Recent winners have been

December	No 115	£25	Battersea Ringers
January	No 28	£25	Linda Foddering
February	No 78	£77.98	Owen Drew

Many congratulations to those lucky ringers, especially to Linda on her first win after having been one of our members right from the beginning.

The next *Northern Stars* will be available mid June. Contributions to the Editor by 5th June at the latest, please.

New Year's Day Parade - London 2010

This float was Richmond-upon-Thames' entry into the London Borough's competition on New Year's Day. The aim was to teach a small group of learners to handle a mini-ring bell in the time it took to travel around the New Year's Day Parade circuit. It consisted of a low loader with a 12 ft St Stephen's clock tower at the front, the Charmborough mini-ring in the middle, and a 12 cwt Mini Ben (*courtesy of Whitechapel Bell Foundry*) hung for chiming on the back. The parade wound its way from the Ritz Hotel at Green Park to Parliament Square through some of the most famous streets of London. The Mayor of Richmond and the learners also waved and wished the crowds of half a million a 'Happy New Year' as it passed by.

Adrian and Helen Udal



Bells for the Lord Mayor

Barnes Winter Outing 2010

Cold and cloudy weather did not deter the hardier of the Barnes ringers and friends. We all zipped from tower to tower on their winter 2010 outing. There were six towers on the list and a pub with good grub. Andrew Howard-Smith kicked off the ringing at Sandridge.

Wheathampstead was billed as very difficult to ring due to the long draught. However everybody had a ring on their own and some managed call changes or a touch of Grandsire doubles. They are beautifully kept bells, which helps a lot with the handling and the fact they are a ground floor ring in the chancel crossing on full view of the congregation gives them an extra twist.



A highlight for me included meeting by chance an Aussie ringer Elaine Phillips who I last saw in Hunter Valley outside Sydney, Australia. She was visiting friends locally and dropped by hoping to grab the Wheathampstead bells when we were there. Which goes to prove ringing can make the world a small place!

After Wheathampstead we went on to the shortest draught of the day being St John the Evangelist at Lemsford, run by Eddie Hartley. This was quite a relief.

At The Crooked Chimney for lunch Mike Wigney told us of his journey to the first tower and how Monica Trow steered her car to safety after it slipped a wheel on the A1. The food was delicious with a haggis speciality which Mike gleefully wolfed down.

Navigating through the back lanes we arrived at St Mary and Thomas-a-Becket at Old Knebworth. Knebworth House, famed for its rock concerts, has a small church within the grounds. At least two of our group had been to concerts and parties there within the last 50 year; time to divert some of the profits to the bells, I think.

Tewin seemed easy to ring at first but took work. Next the Old Hatfield bells were a dream and there was a strong chevron pattern design on the cupboards around the ringing chamber. The church of St Etheldreda had lots to see including stained glass windows by Burne-Jones and Morris & Co. Phaedra Sawbridge skilfully ran the tower and we all had a pleasant ring even though we had just sacrificed our afternoon tea slot!

About 20 ringers took part and some of us enjoyed a curry later at the Spice of India in Castlenau to round off a great outing organised by Andrew.

Helen Udal

CALLING SIMPLE TOUCHES OF PLAIN AND LITTLE BOB MINOR METHODS –Part I

When calling touches of Plain and Little Bob methods, you must call the calls, and the change of method at the right places. When you call a Bob, or Single it must be at the start of the change of the Treble when it is in 2nds place before it leads. When you call a change of method it must be at the start of the backstroke lead of the Treble. You may think this is a strange point to make, but there are many ringers that are quite happy to put the calls in the wrong place. But remember the calls must not be too early, and certainly not late.

Two simple touches of Plain Bob, and Little Bob:

32 changes		36 changes	
123456	Plain Bob	123456	Little Bob
135264	Plain Bob	164523	Little Bob
156342	Little Bob	135264	Little Bob
123456	A	142635	Plain Bob
		123456	A

These compositions can be rotated: - Plain-Little-Plain, or Little-Plain-Plain. Also when you are extending the touch by having a call at 'A' you can have one part using the three lead touch, and then have the next part, the four lead touch.

To extend these simple touches call a Bob, or Single at 'A'.

Have a Single at 'A' and repeat, this will produce 64 and 72 change touches respectively.

Have a Bob at 'A' and repeat twice, this will produce 96 and 108 change touches respectively.

Have the calls at 'A' – Bob-Single-Bob-Single, or reverse, this will produce 128 and 144 change touches respectively.

Have the calls at 'A' –Bob-Bob-Single, and repeat, this order can be rotated, this will produce 192 and 216 change touches respectively.

Two basic touches for either Double Bob, or Single Oxford, and Little Bob. These two methods can be interchanged at will as they both have the same lead end.

20 changes		20 changes	
123456	Double Bob	123456	Little Bob
156342	Little Bob	164523	Double Bob
123456	A	123456	A

Two basic touches for St Clements, Double Oxford, Buxton Bob, Pinehurst Bob, and Little Bob. Again as these methods have the same lead end, they can also be interchanged at will.

44 changes		28 changes	
123456	St Clements	123456	Little Bob
142635	St Clements	164523	Little Bob
164523	St Clements	135264	St Clements
156342	Little Bob	123456	A
123456	A		

To extend these compositions follow the notes for Plain Bob, and Little Bob touches apply.

Little Bob has the first lead end 164523. Hereward Bob has the same lead end so you can interchange the leads of Little Bob and Hereward Bob at will. To extend the plain course with both methods in it, again the notes for Plain and Little Bob will apply.

In these notes I have only used 2nd place methods that have all right places. In the next issue of Northern Stars I will look at the 6th place methods.

Tony Bishop

PEALS TO CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

aka 'THE SURREY ASSOCIATION PEAL WEEKEND'

Some important (!) questions answered.

No surprises awaited me when I offered to organise the Surrey Peal Weekend this year. I had expected a keenness from some quarters, lukewarm responses from others and sheer indifference from another section of the ringing community. However, I hoped that there would be good nature and good team spirit amongst us as well as some successful outcomes.



How does it work? I collect names of interested ringers – those who wish to attempt something new, those who are willing to support the former and those who want to put peal ringing a little higher in their ringing portfolio. I then allocate ringers to peal towers and find a suitably qualified conductor to steer the attempt to success - hopefully.

Why does the Surrey Association need a Peal Weekend? Peal ringing generally raises standards. Ringing for a sustained period should improve concentration and striking and, in most cases, it's better to break new ground in your local area with people you know. I think it is important to raise the profile of Peal ringing in the Association and give ringers *who want to* the chance to ring a peal (or two).

Were any major goals achieved? Yes – I think so. There were firsts 'inside', first treble bob, first on 8, first 'two in a day' and many more. Several ringers rang their first for many years and lived to tell the tale! There were some happy faces and a real sense of achievement for some.

What are the actual details? We attempted 10 peals, 8 of which were successful.

Towers used were: Ashford (Middlesex), Hascombe, Walworth, Reigate, Carshalton, Battersea, Wimbledon, Addington, Wandsworth (West Hill) and Ockley.

Conductors were: Ian Bushell, Chris McLean, Chris Mew, Ian Fielding, Tom Lawrance and Chris Stanley.

Methods rung were: Mixed Doubles (2), 7 Surprise Minor, 5 Plain Minor, Superlative S Major, Yorkshire S Major, Rutland S Major and Grandsire Triples.

Who were the stars? Everyone who turned out! But special mention must go to Lawrence Davies who left the warmth of Sunday afternoon at home to ring at West Hill with TWO MINUTES notice!

Thanks also must go to the conductors – to Chris Mew for travelling from Warwick - and to a small number of 'out of county' stalwarts.

What's the 'Year of the Tiger' got to do with Peal Weekend? You will have to ask John Hawes that question!!

DON'T BE LEFT OUT NEXT YEAR - PLEASE KEEP 18-20 FEBRUARY 2011 FREE

Shirley McGill

LOST: Dove's Guide

Have you lost your copy of Dove's Guide? There has been a copy of the 1988 edition (white cover) in Kingston tower for some time. A few Surrey towers have been ticked, but the most visited county is Devon. If it is yours, do get in touch with us. Mike Bangham

A RING ON THE WILD SIDE



Was that Single an Antelope, Wollaton or Newark? You might think that this was some sort of wild life safari but, no, it was exploring Doubles variations with Chris McLean at Colliers Wood on 13 February. Variations are unique to Doubles, properly recognised by the Central Council and allow you to mix and match calls from other methods to create a myriad of ringing opportunities.

The names are fun - between us we managed to ring Eynesbury, St Osmund, Southrepps, Eynsham, Austrey, Churchill, St Leonard, Elford, St Ignatius, St Jude, St Felix, Pinks and Zennor - but you don't need to remember these. So long as you know what the Single or Bob does - and keep an eye on the treble to tell you what to do when returning to the base method - you can make a little knowledge go a long way.

So next time you find yourself in a 5 or 6 bell tower and want to add a little, um, variety to the ringing, try some variations. It's fun!

Jane Marsters

For more information on variations: Stuart Bamforth's booklet "An Introduction to Ringing Multi-Method Doubles" published by the Whiting Society, has an easy to read section on the subject and Peter Hinton collates the details of literally thousands of variations recognised by the Central Council on his website.

Chris McLean

The Kingston ringers' annual feast

Mark Twain once said that golf spoils a good walk, but I am sure he would have approved of golf clubs as a venue for a bellringers' dinner.

Kingston ringers certainly do. This was the 4th year in which their annual feast was held in the illustrious, if cunningly hidden, Surbiton Golf Club. Of course it helps to have your tower secretary doubling up as a prestigious member of said club, and we were all very appreciative of Jill Leale's organisation of the event. While not exactly doing it with one hand tied behind her back, she was encumbered by a plaster on her wrist following a fall, so thanks went to Robin Leale too, for literally lending a hand. Incidentally the day after the dinner was Valentine's Day, and Jill's plaster was a fetching shade of pink. Who'd have thought that hospitals would be so thoughtful?



The Master in Plaster

Just over 30 past and present Kingston ringers, visitors and guests attended, rather fewer than expected due to illness and we hope those affected will soon be back to full fitness. The ringers were put to shame when Charlie, Chloe Grimmatt's non-ringing boyfriend, was the only one to come up with the right answer to Robin's quiz question to win a bottle of bubbly. Perhaps it's no wonder we haven't won the Easter Tower quiz lately....

On behalf of Paul Flavell (who had left early, we believe he may have been overcome by the death of Phil Archer, which had just been broadcast) Kate Flavell welcomed our Rector the Rev Jonathan Wilkes and all the other guests, thanked Jill and the golf club staff for providing a delicious meal, reminded us of the outing to Cornwall in July (who could forget?), and had everyone note the date of the second Friday in February for the 2011 dinner (it will be the 11th).

One final note that improved the evening for some – nobody brought any handbells! ***Maggie Paul***

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

April 2010

Fri 16 April	Surprise Major Practice	Epsom, St Martin's (10)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat 17 April	Plain Bob Minor Training	tbc	10.00 – 12.00
Mon 19 April	Wandering Bobs	Colliers Wood (6)	10.30 – 12.30
Wed 21 April	District Practice	Richmond (8)	7.30 – 9.00

May

Sat 8 May	Grandsire Triples	West Hill (8)	10.00 – 12.00
Sat 8 May	AGM	Beddington (10)	3.00 pm
15-23 May	Quarter Peal Week		
Mon 17 May	Wandering Bobs	Cheam (6)	10.30 – 12.30
Mon 17 May	District Practice	Addington (6)	8.00 – 9.30
Fri 21 May	Surprise Major Practice	tbc	7.30 – 9.00

June

Sat 12 June	Maintenance Training	tbc	10.00 – 12.00
Fri 18 June	Surprise Major Practice	tbc	7.30 – 9.00
Sat 19 June	Half Yearly Meeting	Wimbledon (8)	3.00 pm
Mon 21 June	Wandering Bobs	Betchworth (8)	10.30 – 12.30

Further Ahead

Sat 3 July	Call Changes SC	Addington (6)	5.00 pm
Sat 7 August	Joint Practice with Guildford Guild	Kingston (12)	7.30 – 9.30

Peripatetics are on the first Monday of the month and are for those around during the day. Please see the website for details.

Wandering Bobs are for those wishing to practise calling – every third Monday of the month. Venue details are also on the website.

Surprise Major Practices were new in 2009 – every third Friday of the month from 7.30 to 9.00 pm. Open to all ringers who can ring Surprise Major, or Surprise Minor, or aspiring Surprise ringers. Please see the website for details

DFP every second Monday from 7.30 to 9.00 pm, for those wanting to ring more complex six bell methods – plain courses and touches. Venue details can be found on the website.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Please see website for contact details

www.surreybellringers.org.uk

Profile: Linda Foddering,

All Saints, Kingston upon Thames and St Mary the Virgin, Norwood Green.

Linda was just 12 when she had her first ringing lesson along with the rest of her family. She'd like to ring 50 quarters this year, but after her last experience she's no intention of adding to her tally of peals.



When did you start to ring?

I first started bell-ringing in 1974 when my Mum, Dad (Valerie and Tom Payne) and sister Janet visited Winkfield, Berkshire. We all went so Mum could search the churchyard for

information about our ancestors on the gravestones. Winkfield had an open day and we heard and saw the ringers in action. I was only 12.

Where did you learn and why?

I still have the original letter from Mr Percy Venn inviting us all to learn to ring at St Mary's Hayes (8). With a family of four learning to ring (almost making up a band ourselves) we soon joined a team that went onto St Mary the Virgin, Norwood Green (6) on Sunday mornings after ringing at Hayes. Mum became Tower Captain and Dad was Steeple Keeper of Norwood Green. **Why:** because we go to church and the bells are rung for the glory of God.

Did you visit other towers whilst you were learning?

Yes we did. We went to local towers on their practice nights. In fact we had our annual holidays in Dorset so that Mum could research the family tree and the local ringers organised ringing for us in the surrounding towers each year.

What do you enjoy about ringing?

When I moved to Kingston I became part of a team and I was soon able to ring confidently on 8, 10 and 12 bells. I love the camaraderie of the ringing world. I find method ringing is both challenging and satisfying when rung well.

What has been challenging about ringing?

Learning a new method, and then ringing it well. I have to have time to study a new method and find the technical side interesting. When I visit towers that have odd struck bells I find the intensity of the challenge to ring and strike in the correct place fun.

What have you found easy?

Any new towers I have visited the locals have made me feel welcome and at ease.

What has been your best bit?

I was absolutely amazed to find out that my Great, great, great, great grandfather, Henry Symondson, had worked as a brass bell founder/tuner at No.1 Tottenham Court Road. Henry rung in the first true peal of Stedman Triples in 1799 and is shown on a peal board at St Giles in the Fields, Holborn. (See front cover picture). When ringing at St Giles in the Fields I feel proud in the knowledge that my ancestors heard and rang the same bells.

At Mum's funeral at Norwood Green in May 2009, we rang a quarter peal while my family listened in the Church. It was at this point that my niece, Lauren, said she would like to continue the tradition of bell ringing. Recently I saw Lauren, aged 16, and her brother, Christian, aged 13, ringing rounds at Bromley Church. I was an extremely proud Auntie.

What has been your worst bit?

I have only rung three peals. I find them very long; I nearly fainted while ringing my failed 4th peal so this would be my worst bit.

Have you achieved your goals or are there more goals you want to achieve and what are they?

I am always looking to better myself; however I have achieved some well struck ringing and quarter peals. I would love to ring over 50 quarter peals this year. I can always strive to improve my striking.

Do you have any funny stories or incidents that you can recall?

Mum used to organise the Norwood Green outings. In order that we didn't forget the tower we were at, she would make a name banner of the church for us to hold in the tower photograph; this provided lots of laughs and we still know (years later) which churches we have visited!

Have you encouraged others to take up ringing and how are they progressing?

I have encouraged my sister to take my niece and nephew to practice nights more often.

This is a new feature, please contact me with your ringing experiences, or recommend a friend who has a good story to tell.
DP