

Winter Outing

Before the snow came for the second time, we had some rain and most of it seemed to fall on the Tuesday between Christmas and New Year - the day of the District's Winter Outing.

This is always one of the better supported events and so it was again this year with around 30 people joining the throng at some point during the day.

Continuing the District's unofficial tour of Olympic 2012 venues, the morning started at St James the Less, Dorney - within site of the entrance to Dorney lakes where the British team will hope to win several golds in the rowing events.



Dorney church - from www.stjohnstjamesed.org.uk

This is a 12th century church that has had many changes and extensions over the years - wonderfully described to some by the "local" whilst they waited to get into the smallish ringing chamber. Whether it was the three pulpits, the recent opening of the west door after 50+ years or the dual level/gallery, it was a building that has seen much.

The mid morning tower was the ring of six at Clewer - a suburb of Windsor which is right by the main road on the map but you needed to take a route away from it before you could actually get there. To fit everyone in, a rapid changeover of bands was necessary.

The eight bells of Old Windsor was the tower before lunch down a long road seemingly well away from the main housing area these days. As everywhere, rounds and call changes were mixed up with Grandsire, Stedman and Surprise ringing to give everyone an opportunity.

At lunch groups went far and wide to the local establishments Gail had recommended, before most gathered again much nearer the Heathrow flight path at Wraysbury. Built on the highest point on land, hopefully it continues to avoid flooding. The oldest bell here was cast in 1591 by Henry Knight of Reading.

Horton is a joint parish with Wraysbury and was the fifth and final destination of the day. We arrived in the darkening skies of dusk was the prelude to a little bit of excitement and delay. Thanks to Gail Terry for organising the day's ringing and thanks to everyone for coming along and making it such a varied day; and a chance to make acquaintance with new friends.

A Soggy but Surprising Day

Here you are. You have had a long, hard week at work and you finally return home on Friday night to Kew to unwind over the weekend, perhaps a lie-in before your normal, gentle Saturday.

Then it hits you, or rather it hit me ... this Saturday was to be my first Surrey bell ringing Training Day, miles away from Richmond, in Bletchingley, which I had never visited. And it was to be a whole Saturday.

As a “donger” at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond with a year’s sporadic learning of bells around a busy job, it was with trepidation that I arose early and waited for Amanda and Theo Adams, fellow ringers from Richmond, for my 7.30 lift to Bletchingley.

It rained. It rained, all the way, and all day. Did I wonder quite why I was putting myself through all this as I became soaking wet in the 2 minute walk from the church hall to the church in Bletchingley? Yes I did. Was it worth it? Surprising, perhaps, it was.

There were around 50 people it seemed to me, gathering for a coffee and a briefing before being dispersed to various church towers in the area (lucky residents to be listening to me, I thought).

I was in the bell handling group led by Chris Stanley, with enough helpers for a one to 2 ratio of helpers to learners, which I thought was good and included the Bletchingley Tower Captain who explained he had been captain since the mid 1970s. (Wow!). We were a motley crew, some with several years’ experience and, in my case and probably others, having been nominated by our Tower Captains for the bell handling. (What does that say about our limitations, I wondered?).

We trooped off to Bletchingley tower, a large tower of ten bells and were promptly observed and videoed at the start of the day so we could later see how - if! - we had progressed. Theo took charge of the photos for me, whilst I quickly became friendly with a fellow learner who found a bell she liked and resolutely stuck with it all day (with which I very much sympathised having done the same at Richmond for some time!). I was delighted at how much I learned from others with some of the not so impressive habits I knew I had myself, and once we started, Chris moved us along at a good pace, yet with a great deal of time to practise and to work at our individual bell handling needs. My posture, positioning of my hands as I moved from sally to tail, flicking for the tail stroke, were the big issues for me.

For a distraction we had the ghost of Bletchingley tower: the air duct underneath the tower floor lifted the rug gloriously, whilst the story of the tower dating back to the Duke of Northumberland and a spectacular brass lent an imaginative air as the wind howled and the rain poured outside.

The group repaired to the local pub or church hall for lunch and we then continued with some larger group work on going faster and slower as we rang down (my nemesis). We then were videoed again and observed our progress, which in all cases was both obvious and remarkable, given the fairly short time we were there. I think we were all staggered by the progress and even the ghost in the tower quietened down in the afternoon.

Amanda, Theo and I left feeling very satisfied and I certainly felt more confident. A personal goal for me was to be able to ring in church following the Training Day so I was delighted to be asked to do so for the next morning, a fitting salute to a soggy but rewarding day in Bletchingley.

Ruth Martin *from The Northern Stars (adapted)*

Next Training Day - Saturday 6 March (9am meet), based at Wimbledon. If this article has inspired you, look out for the details and enrolment form being sent to your tower correspondent (possibly by e-mail) shortly and get yourself enrolled. Helpers also very, very welcome.

The Masterpiece

As I write this snow is again falling, creating a thicker white blanket across the countryside and causing further disruption to travel and our daily routines. We haven't had to resort to convening the Pools Panel yet but judging by the number of emails appearing via SurreySD almost all ringing has ground to a halt across the District. Whilst I applaud the use of the group email to keep everyone informed I do wonder why we are so easily deterred. I well remember tramping through the snow in the 1960s in order to keep my local practice night running. Incidentally I also remember that the bells had been left up after Ringing in the New Year and that we were rewarded with dollops of snow dropping out of the bells and finding their way through the rope holes onto our heads!

I am sure that the weather forecasters are correctly warning us of the likelihood of snow, but our modern risk averse culture seems to err on the safe side and to more readily issue warnings about staying at home unless your journey is absolutely necessary. The first time I can remember hearing such advice was in December 1981 for the last real bad winter. That was when my second daughter decided to arrive. I left Redhill hospital around midnight to find my car the only car in the middle of a very white and slippery car park. Strangely, it often seems to snow when she visits from Australia, this Christmas being no exception.

Fortunately our winter outing was timed to avoid the worst of the snow, although being centred on the Windsor Area it did provide some navigational challenges, and we did discover that it can be a long way to reach a tower which is just across the river. Congratulations to Gail for again providing us with an interesting tour and my thanks to John Squirrel for re-ropeing the 4th bell by torchlight at the last tower.

Now it is time to look forward to the coming year. We have a full programme for the start of the new decade and hopefully this will provide opportunities for all of you to progress. I have just two more meetings before my term of office comes to an end at the Annual District Meeting. I am immensely grateful for all the help and support I have received in the past two years as District Master and for the previous seven years on the District Committee. So I will sign off my final masterpiece by wishing you all good ringing and much enjoyment in maintaining our traditional art. It may be a bleak midwinter but there is every reason to follow the words of another carol and "Let steeple bells be swungen".

Cheers

Bernard

Surrey Peal Weekend - 19 -21 February

If you would like to be included, please get in touch with Shirley McGill (semcgill@blueyonder.co.uk) This message is intended for the experienced and not-so experienced. We will try and cater for your needs if at all possible.

Email is the preferred medium of communication but please phone 020 8406 3083 or 07747 897001 if you would like to talk about options.

Looking Back 80 Years

A review of the 35th Annual Report of the Association, published in 1929, provides an interesting glimpse of the times, and covers an interesting period in the development of ringing in Surrey.

The new Diocese of Guildford came into being on 1 May 1927 and led to the creation of the Guildford Diocesan Guild on the final day of the same year. This may be the reason for the 35th Annual Report covering both 1927 and 1928. The Surrey Association had sought some form of amalgamated Society at the time, but the creation of the new Guild led to the former Association's Western District being dissolved, as this area had the greatest overlap of towers. What had been the Association's Central District became the North Western District, with the Southern District covering the remaining area.

The Association has always represented a union of churches with members within the old County of Surrey, rather than covering a specific area. It was, therefore, presumed that former Western District members would change their allegiance from the Association to the new Guild, leading to a significant drop in membership. The Annual report, however, says this had not happened. Nevertheless, the long list of unattached members was an early indication that membership and some of the then affiliated towers would gradually migrate to the new Guild over the next few years.

The Central District now comprised 15 affiliated towers but there were 3 other towers where ringing did not take place because of the bad condition of the bells. A further 11 towers made up the Southern District. It is interesting that addresses for every member are shown in the report, as well as peal totals to date for every member who had rung a peal in the last two years (i.e. 1927 and 1928). The leading peal ringer was William Smith who had rung his 200th peal for the Association. He was followed by the Honorary Secretary (Charles Kippin - 133 peals), who together with the Assistant Honorary Secretary Frank Darby, was to set national ringing records over the next few years. The first peal of Yorkshire Surprise Royal had been rung for the Association at Beddington. This was to lead to the development of the band led by Charles Kippin who would ring the first ever peals of Bristol Surprise Royal and then four Spliced Surprise Royal there in 1934 and 1936 respectively. Peals were typically of Grandsire and Stedman, although Double Norwich Court Bob was also popular. Peal ringing appeared to be strong in both Districts with peals of London Surprise Major taking place at Godstone and Banstead, matched by peals of Bristol and London Surprise Major at St John the Baptist, Croydon.

The need for the Association to re-establish itself may also have led to discussions for a new membership certificate. It was reported the Master, Kenneth Birt, was taking the lead on this. Although a few examples of the large, original certificate can still be found in some towers, and this was used in smaller form for the Association's centenary certificate in 1980.

From *The Northern Stars*

Kingston retain 8 bell trophy at Ewell

The rule allowing towers to combine to enter striking competitions proved very successful as this enabled a Benhilton practice night band and a team from Putney/Battersea to take part. The other entrants were Wimbledon and current 8 bell trophy holders Kingston.

Ewell bells are a pleasant eight, slightly odd struck with some springy ropes, but are an excellent venue for an eight bell striking contest. We were all fortified by numerous cups of tea and Caroline's wonderful scones with jam and cream.



The Master, Sheila Cheesman, introduced the judge, Mike Bale from nearby Epsom to give the results. He had managed to find a quiet spot round the back of the church away from the traffic to listen to the ringing. Mike's method of judging is quite simple

- How easy is the ringing to listen to?
- Is it even?
- Is it consistent?

He went on to say that faults ranged from 1 (clip) to 4 (major crunch) and said that the marks were quite close before making the following comments on each team:

Team 1 (Benhilton practice night team - Grandsire Triples) Used most of the practice time which was needed to set a rhythm. The overall impression was a lot of nerves, but the ringing settled nicely despite a few lapses of concentration towards the end.

Team 2 (Battersea and Putney - Plain Bob Triples) Quite a confident start but the ringing got quite unsteady after a few leads. The ringing was rather nervous and unfortunately didn't come round after 224 changes, incurring extra faults.

Team 3 (Kingston - Grandsire Triples) Good use of practice time. The first few rows in the test piece were a bit shaky but the ringing soon settled into a good test piece. Nerves crept in as the ringers could see the end in sight but in all nice ringing.

Team 4 (Wimbledon - Grandsire Triples) Used 2 minutes of practice time to good effect. A few bells were inconsistent in striking and leading and unfortunately there were also a few method mistakes. Otherwise the ringing was fairly consistent.

Mike declared that Kingston were the winners and presented the Pat Cannon Memorial Trophy to Paul Flavell. Sheila thanked Mike and all who were present, and said that all teams had done well to enter the competition, there were another 64 towers in the Association who had not entered - a challenge for next year perhaps?

Paul Flavell

Page Six Word Search

Starting in just 20 days time, the Olympic Winter Games are in Vancouver. Never a rich source of gold medals for the Great British team but somehow the name of Rhona Martin (Curling) and Shelley Rudman (Skeleton) can still be remembered as our recent medal successes.

All the words in this issue's Word Search are related to that sport. As usual, the words can be found forwards or backwards; horizontally, diagonally or vertically. The 38 unused letters spell out a further four words or phrases linked to the Games.

J A C Y N O M E R E C U R L I N G R E N O B L E Q C
F R E E S T Y L E S K I I N G C I N O S A N A P U B
O Z Z E P M A D A N I T R O C O C A C O L A E O O N
S A L T L A K E C I T Y R T N U O C S S O R C L V W
Q P L A K E P L A C I D N A L N I F O U D E Y S E H
U A E B S R O G N I D L A B E R A L C M E C P L J I
A C N E E S H O R T T R A C K I C E H I N A R A A S
W I S O D R I H C T A U Q A A N A L I E I G E V R T
V F K T I S T M O R I T Z N A P A J H R B N S O A L
A I E O R S K V S H O O T I N G G C T G M I S C S E
L C L R E O I A I G N U S M A S R S A Y O I M I K R
L C E C N P P V T L R E L A Y I U N I E C K O P I E
E O T H O I S S E I L W E D K A E O C K C S U M J E
Y L O N I H X Y O L N E E N R R C B E C I E N Y U T
B I N O N S I A N R E G E S A P P O R O D N T L M N
B S I T U R N W K S U T H D P R T B I H R I A O P U
C E T L T O O R C N R E R L T E O S N E O P I D I L
L U R I E S M O U A L I E A S M R L K C N L N N N O
L M A H I N A N P L B K N N E M I E S I F A D O G V
E S M C V O H H E R U C I O R A N I O O L D R M L A
B E A T O P C Y E M E U L D C H O G M R A A A H L N
M G N T S S R D K O G R H C L E L H E A G N O C I C
A D O A I U N U W V U B S M L L H Z G R S A B I H O
H U H M D U M O L A L S I I I L T I A S M C W R N U
A J R M H G I E L D E N N G H I A K O R E A O A W V
R A A T O S O R I G I N I A W L I O N A G A N T O E
G N I T A K S E R U G I F S U E B A R K E R S Y D R

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Next Editions of "News of the South"

Saturdays 27 March (items to the Editor by 13 March - 20th Anniversary issue) and 22 May (8 May).

Word Search Words

Acer, Albertville, alpine skiing, Atos Origin, Austria, BBC, biathlon, bobsleigh, Canada, ceremony, Chamonix, Clare Balding, Coca Cola, Cortina D'Ampezzo, cross-country, curling, Cypress Mountain, downhill, Ed Leigh, Eurosport, figure skating, finish line, Finland, flag, freestyle skiing, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Graham Bell, Grenoble, Hillcrest Park, ice, ice hockey, ice rink, Ilanaaq, Innsbruck, IOC, Japan, judges, Korea, Lake Placid, Lillehammer, luge, mascot, Matt Chilton, McDonalds, Miga, Mukmuk, Nagano, NBC, nordic combined, Norway, Omega, Oslo, Pacific Coliseum, Panasonic, Puck, Quatchi, Richmond Olympic Oval, Rhona Martin, Salt Lake City, Samsung, Sapporo, Sarajevo, Shelley Rudman, shooting, short track, skeleton, ski jumping, slalom, slope, snowboard, Sochi, Soviet Union, speed skating, sponsorship, Squaw Valley, St Moritz, Sue Barker, Sumi, Switzerland, television, Thunderbird Arena, torch / relay, Torino, Vancouver, volunteer, Whistler.

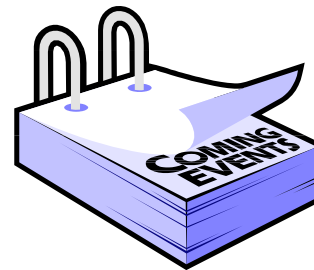
Sudoku Caters

To solve this puzzle each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9 - just the once. This Sudoku is described as "Very Hard".

	7					9		
3		9			7			4
5	2				8			
		1			9		6	
			8	7	1			
	9		6			7		
			9				5	6
9			5			4		2
		2					3	

Missing words: Jacques Rogge, Sweden, snow, Visa.

Diary Dates



February

- Mon 1 The Peripatetics meet at 11am at **Caterham St Mary** (8) and at 2pm at **Coulsdon** (5). If you want more details, please contact Ken Brooks (01883 626172).
- The venue for tonight's Pinch Punch Advanced practice is **Redhill** (8).
- Mon 8 The DFP is at **Ashtead** (8). This monthly practice is for those wanting to ring more advanced minor methods.
- Sat 13 **Training Event** Details of the Mixed Doubles Morning have been circulated to all towers a while ago - book your place quickly if you are interested.
- Mon 15 Today's Wandering Bobs practice is at **Charlwood** (6) from 10.30am to 12.30pm followed by optional lunch. Contact Sue Bailey (020 8669 0602) or Kath Chilcott (020 8686 2272) for more details.
- Thu 18 Northern District practice at **Beddington** (10).
- Fri 19 New monthly Surprise Major practice. Contact Clara Westlake (020 8879 9836) for the venue or keep an eye on the Groups e-mail.
- 19 - 21 **General Event** Peel Weekend. See page 3 on how to get involved - but do it soon.
- Sat 27 **HIGHLIGHT** The Annual General Meeting of the District is at **Bletchingley** (10) from 3pm. Full agenda and timetable will be sent out shortly (after nominations for posts have closed) and should be available on the website.

March

- Mon 1 The usual date for the Peripatetics at **Merton Park** (6) then **Wimbledon** (8).
- Pinch Punch Advanced practice at **Ashtead** (8, tbc) for eight bell ringing of methods.
- Sat 6 **Training Event** The Training Day based at **Wimbledon** from 9.00am - details and enrolment forms will be sent to all towers soon.
- Mon 8 Tonight's DFP is at **Ockham** (6).
- Mon 15 Today's Wandering Bobs practice at 10.30am (to 12.30pm) is at **Godstone** (8).
- Tue 16 Northern District monthly practice at **East Molesey** (8).
- Fri 19 Monthly Surprise Major practice - contact Clara Westlake for details.
- Sat 27 **General Event** Six Bell Striking Competition at **Buckland** at 5pm. Invitations will be sent out earlier in the month but keep the early evening free.
- Regular Fourth Saturday Allcomers practice at **Leigh** (6).

**All events are from 7.30 to 9.00pm, unless otherwise stated.
Look on the website for more details.
In case of bad weather, please check it is still on before travelling.**