

The Annual District Meeting

The tower of Bletchingley may be synonymous with the November Training day but it started off 2010 as the host to the Southern District Annual Meeting in February as well. The afternoon started with general ringing on the ten bells which catered for all those souls who arrived as and when they could. Many will have tried the bells after a Training Day or visited on a Monday practice night but all were encouraged to grab hold by the Master, Bernard Hawkins.

The District only has one service a year due to reduced attendance (below double figures on occasions) but most stayed for Evensong and a brief address by the curate on how bells have been present through his career.

We adjourned to the Community Centre for a traditional ringing tea - sandwiches and cakes prepared by our hosts from Bletchingley, and far too much so that they were being passed round at the end in case anyone could fit just a bit more in.

So 6 o'clock came and Bernard took the chair for the main event of the day. After dealing with last year's minutes, Gail Terry (District Secretary) took to the floor to highlight the events of the past year for the District and how the District's finances were shaping up. If you missed the meeting, they are reproduced in the Association's Annual Report in May but I'm sure you could ask Gail for a copy if you can't wait until then.

Next on the colourful agenda poster that was sent to towers is the most important part to the long term existence of the District - the election of New Members. Those elected and welcomed to this meeting were 15 in number (about 5% of the District). Hello to **Anne Greenaway, Sue Turner and Nicky Bushaway** of Outwood; **Lorne Cox and Tina Davies** of Charlwood; **James Burt and Helen Burt** of Ockley; **Beverley Ferguson and Joan Holman** of Limpsfield Chart; **Rosemary Henderson** of Leatherhead; **Jane Wheeler** of Epsom Common; **Keith Richardson, Julia Knowles and Eleanor Knowles** of Nutfield and **Ron Napper** of Bletchingley.

At this point Bernard handed over to the Association's President, Eric Godfrey, who thanked him for his efforts over his twenty four months as Master. He then handed over to John Squirrell as the only nomination for Master for the forthcoming year and welcomed him to his new role. In his no nonsense manner John introduced the Belfry Repair Fund, Training and Public Relations persons who rattled through brief reports on their respective activities.

Forthcoming events were then advertised including the Pinch Punch practice in two days time [you've missed it but 23 people didn't], the Midhurst area outing in April and others into the future. General Officers and Central Council nominations were made for the existing post holders. After closing the meeting, ringing continued for a while at Bletchingley.

The Masterpiece

What a privilege it is to be a bell-ringer ! The Church provides us with a Tower and a set of bells – the cost of which would buy a Stradivarius ! We let learners loose on these (with suitable help) and eventually turn them into decent ringers – at least those who last the course.

What other activity would train learners on such an expensive piece of kit ?

In return the Church expects us to ring for services, not necessarily difficult or awkward methods just good simple Rounds and Call Changes will call people to church. That sounds simple enough – but look more closely and you will find glaring gaps. Most bands in the Southern District would like more members, and more skilful members. How often do we need visitors for practice nights, and weddings, and then not ring to our true potential. Perhaps we are short of numbers because ringing seems old, traditional, or fuddy-duddy - and perhaps we make it seem that way.

However every Tower gets enquiries, and sometimes these result in a non-ringer appearing and being given a rope to pull. What happens then is that the new learner is taught over a period of some months. During this time many will disappear – a waste of their time, and our effort.

Ringing is a difficult skill to learn and we must convert as many learners into ringers as we can , if we do not then the current Golden Age of ringing will die out with this generation !

What IS the best way to train learners swiftly and painlessly, without the handling faults that can be spotted in many Towers ?

Is it possible that an impending local Ringing Centre will help ? Of course it will ! But it will not be sufficient on its own !

I believe that the basic training needs to be provided by a dedicated team spending several mornings working solidly with learners on their basic skills.

To spend an entire practice night, and ring three touches of three minutes each is no way to acquire the skills needed, and may well explain the high wastage.

I believe that a dedicated training team, with the judicious use of a Ringing Centre, can make an enormous difference to the way we train ringers, and I will be asking the Southern District Committee to support me in this. It will also need the help of all in the Southern District because once a learner has become a safe and skilful bell-handler then they will need to be taught to ring methods **and that is another story.**

John

Changed Date for Your Diary

One item for the ADM that did raise interest was a changed date and the venue for the joint District 12 Bell practice. All are invited along and it is now:

Wednesday 21 July at 6.30pm - St Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge

The tower formerly contained ten bells, which were removed for safekeeping in 1940. However, the parish lacked the funds to restore the bells, which were scrapped in 1976. In March 2009, after a silence of almost seventy years, a new set of 12 bells (tenor: 26-3-9 cwt) were put into place to replace those removed during World War Two.

Surrey Bells

The idea of collating details of all the bells located in an area did not materialise until late into the 19th century. The first 'proper' book listing those towers with bells, together with background on the history where ringing was practised, was written by Amherst Daniel-Tyssen for the county of Sussex. This initially appeared in 1864 as an academic paper in the transactions of the Sussex Archaeological Society, before being published as a book later in the same year.

Over the next 40 years a number of prominent authors undertook similar tasks for other geographical areas, giving rise to what are commonly known as the 'county books'. Typically only 100 to 250 copies of the standard size were produced for each county. In addition, a handful of large paper copies are known to exist for certain county editions. Most of the standard size editions can still be found in secondhand bookshops at a cost of a few hundred pounds each. Some are obviously rarer than others and this affects the asking price. The larger paper copies rarely come on the market and often retail at twice the price of a standard sized copy.

Surrey Bells and London Bell Foundries: A Contributive Study of Bells Inscriptions was written by John Charles Lett Stahlschmidt and published in 1884. This was opportune, being just four years after the founding of The Surrey Association. It is regarded as being one of the better 'county books' both in style and content and is only known to exist in the standard size. The author, who lived in Fontenoy Road, Balham also wrote the definitive book for Kent, and was co-author for Hertfordshire with Thomas North, one of the most prolific of the 'county book' authors.

John Stahlschmidt appears to have had an appropriate background for the task being a past Master of the Worshipful Company of Founders, as well as a member of the Royal Archaeological Institute and the Surrey Archaeological Society. The book itself runs to 278 pages and includes details of all the bells and their inscriptions in the old county of Surrey at that time, together with numerous illustrations. It also contains much information on the bell founders, especially the Eldridge family at Chertsey who were responsible for a number of bells cast for the county - although towers such as Battersea later had their bells recast elsewhere!

At the time of writing there are three original copies of Stahlschmidt's Surrey Bells available on the market at prices ranging from £250 to £400. However, if you would like to own a copy at a fraction of the price then you may like to know that a facsimile copy can be obtained. These reprints are of good quality and retail at prices common to similar modern paperbacks. Further details can be found at www.kessinger.net or at www.Books2Anywhere.com, the latter being a distributor offering what at the present time appear to be the cheapest copies.

Chris Ridley, from *The Northern Stars*

The Numbers Club

You can join the Belfry Repair Fund's Numbers Club at any time - your membership runs for 12 months from that start month. Recent winners have been:

February	No 78	£77.98	Owen Drew of Battersea
January	No 28	£25.00	Linda Foddering of Kingston
December	No 115	£25.00	Battersea Ringers

There is an application form available on the website. March's draw is at the Quiz Evening but you can join from April's draw - contact Robin Leale.

Peal Weekend

Eight peals out of ten were successful this year. Details of all eight are available from the home page of the website but well done to Oliver Thompson, Kate Desbottes, Stephanie Rueff and Anne Rueff from this District who took part.

Quarter Peal Report 2009

What a year! If you have seen my report on Leading Quarter Peal Ringers in *The Ringing World* a few weeks back, you may know what is coming as some Southern District names appear there for the first time in a few years (well done to Kate Desbottes on ringing more than 100 quarters last year and Alan Streeter for appearing for the first time after all these years - I couldn't really pick you out in the write up nationally).

Anyway, after many years in the doldrums with sub-100 quarters across the whole District, 2009 saw 130 quarters. It was probably back in the early 1990s when that total was beaten regularly - the slide has been going on for a while. You will see the detail in the Annual Report out at the AGM in May (and didn't that fill a bit more space up) but Nutfield was the leading tower with 36 quarters there during the year. Bletchingley managed half that total with Epsom (7) and Buckland (6) before several towers rang 5 in the year. This was probably helped with the adoption of Gillian Leale's idea to make much more of May's Quarter Peal Week but there were still five towers where no quarter peal was recorded. Something to change this year?

John Hawes was leading conductor by some way with 50 during the year. Andrew Holland was next with 9 and then Quentin Armitage on 8. All in all, a healthy 33 people conducted a quarter in 2009. Well done to Oliver Thompson, Jennifer Meade and Chris Sayles for calling their first quarters. Also, congratulations to Judith Snelling, Ruth Goodsir, John O'Reilly and Jane Wheeler on ringing their first quarter peals.

49 of the quarters were of Surprise, 32 of Plain Bob, 28 of Grandsire and a depressing just 2 of Stedman. 50 quarters were of Minor and 40 of Doubles plus 2 of Royal and 1 of Minimus at the other end of the scale. Most were rung on a Sunday though Friday was a close second. Just the one on a Tuesday though.

We are already a quarter of the way through the year but Quarter Peal Week isn't far away and who know's what other special occasions may arise where you could attempt a quarter peal in celebration. Happy ringing!

Richard Wallis

Anyone interested?

I am arranging a London Minor practice at a tower in the Southern District (which will remain nameless). It is primarily for the band at that tower, though it may feature, if there is enough demand, a following session (on the same day, at a different tower), which will focus on touches of London. The date and towers are unconfirmed at the moment, though Saturday 22 May is a date that has been suggested.

If you would be interested in attending the touches session, please contact me at oliver@thehouse.org.uk or leave a message on 01737 82396.

Oliver Thompson

A Ring on the Wild Side

In February, the Training Committee organised a Mixed Doubles training session

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 Saturday 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 lot of very little knowledge.

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!

If you are wondering if there is anywhere you can look for further information - Yes. There's Peter Hinton's website "Doubles Methods & Variations", Steve Coleman's *The Method Ringers Companion* Ch 12 p 113, Stuart Bamforth's "An Introduction to ringing multi-method doubles" published by the Whiting Society. No doubt others too.

Jane Marsters



Quarter Peal Week

The Association's Quarter Peal Week this year is from Saturday 15th to Sunday 23rd May inclusive.

It would be a real achievement for a Quarter to be rung at every tower in the District at some point during the week. I would be grateful if Tower Captains would let me know their plans for this, and if they cannot raise the necessary band to let me know so that I can try to import "spare" ringers for them.

We would like to see some "firsts", whether it be a first ever Quarter, or first inside, or first covering, or even first as Conductor!

If you are keen to ring a Quarter but do not have the opportunity to do so, or feel unable to arrange it yourself, please let me know: I will endeavour to organise both a tower and a band for you. . However, I do need plenty of notice, so please get in touch with me with your request **by no later than Saturday 17th April**.

Kate Desbottes
07768 934677

Reigate Practices

Have you wondered if Reigate were practising this Wednesday night? Wonder no more, they will now practice every Wednesday night of the month. All welcome.

Quotations

"Great are the mysteries of bellringing, and this may be said in its praise: that of all the devices that man has sought out for obtaining distinction by making a noise in this world, bellringing is the most harmless."

English poet Robert Southey (1774-1843)

"Of all the devices which men have sought out for making a noise in the world, certainly bell-ringing is by far the most harmless."

attributed to J. E. Troyte c. 1870, founder of the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers in 1872

Yahoo Groups

The best way of keeping in touch with everything in the Southern District is to become a member of the Yahoo Groups. You will be sent the news as and when it appears. No one need to know your e-mail address.

There are now 98 members of **surreysd** - be the 100th. Click the link on the Association website's home page to join in.

“It was twenty years ago today ...”

With apologies to the Beatles and Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band - but whilst this may be the 20th Anniversary issue of *News of the South* (or NotS, if you will), it actually appeared for the first time on Saturday 26 May 1990 as a four-page A5 folded sheet.

I started that first issue with:

Welcome to the first issue of News of the South”, a new look Newsletter for a new decade. It will be published every two months and contain the latest news of the Southern District. However, the main difference which could make it unique is that every member will have their own copy to take home and read.”

Soon after I became District Secretary one of the comments I was hearing was that members did not know what was going on. What to do about it? With improved technology and cheaper copying, a short Newsletter for ever member became possible and, I think, the Southern District was the first place to try it and I know others have copied it since. Given that it was primarily a Diary, the fact that it appears six times a year has been important to me as well as having Diary Dates handily on the back page - does anyone pin it on their noticeboard at home or work and look at the forthcoming events?

This frequency does mean that I need items to put in the newsletter. One way round that was for the Word Search, later added to with Sudoku Caters, that I know some people wonder about. Unfortunately these are the most commented upon items over the years (usually mistakes) but if some people only look forward to the puzzles then, occasionally, they may have their attention grabbed by one of the other six pages and read that and that makes it worth it.

Back in May 1990, Margaret Thatcher was still Prime Minister, George Bush was President of the USA, Robert Runcie was Archbishop of Canterbury and Saddam Hussein was possibly still receiving CIA money. Nelson Mandela was three months out of prison, East and West Germany were reunited as Germany, women priests were ordained for the first time and, four days before NotS appeared, Microsoft launched Windows 3.0. People would have looked at you with blank faces if you mentioned “the internet” (even Sir Tim Berners-Lee hadn't worked out what it was) let alone an iPhone, the iPlayer and flat screen televisions.

In the Southern District, the installation of new bells at Caterham St Mary has been documented and there has been major work at several other towers. District membership had risen to over 300 for a while and a series of Masters, Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Committee members from almost every tower have come and gone to improve matters. That first Diary Dates had details of weekly practices run by the District (some visiting towers on their practice night and some special summer practices) including the regular second Friday and fourth Saturday Allcomers practices.

I did not expect still to be editing the newsletter 20 years later. I also only expected a 4 page production to be the norm. It has only been possible with help from a lot of people - Nigel Goodship at the start for the name and production help probably the most - but others for contributions over the years. However, I could always do with more and it can be more than 8 pages if I have interesting items to include.

Gail Terry ended the ADM with a request for thoughts about how the District can mark its centenary in 2012. If NotS is still around, I hope it can play its part in those celebrations.

Richard

March's Training Day



Six groups of ringers went across South London on the first Saturday in March for a day of training. Included in that were Irene Rich's group practising with "Plain Hunt the Chocolates".

Ringling of the bells

*The ringing of the bells,
the dropping of the confetti.
The lights are flashing in earnest,
coming in the new...
going out with the old.
Memories of days gone by,
Time to start anew.
"What will the future hold this time?"
The year has begun anew to signal
fresh beginnings.
The ringing of the bells,
So distant when time just passes on by.....*

Charles Lang

Page Ten Word Search

Starting in June but already dominating the sports pages of the newspapers is the Football World Cup to be held in South Africa. All the words in this issue's Word Search are related to that event. As usual, the words can be found forwards or backwards; horizontally, diagonally or vertically. The 42 unused letters spell out a further four words or phrases linked to the World Cup.

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

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Next Editions of "News of the South"

Saturdays 22 May (Items to Editor by 8 May, please) and 24 July (10 July).

Word Search Words

Afrikaans, ANC, Apartheid, Augrabies falls, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bantu, Bartholomeu Dias, Beeld, Beskuits, Biltong, Bloemfontein, Blue train, Blyde river, Boerewors, Boers, Braai, buffalo, Cango wildlife ranch, Cape of Good Hope, Cape Point, Cape Town, Cederberg, Cradock, cricket, Darling, diamond, Drakensberg, Durban, East London, elephant, Free / State, game / reserve, Gansbaai, Gauteng, girafe, gold, Gondirana, Graaf-Reinet, Hermanus, impala, Jacob Zuma, Jagersfontein, Jan van Riebeeck, Jeffrey's Bay, Johannesburg, Kalk Bay, karoo, Kimberley, Knysna, Konfynt, Kruger, Langebaan, leopard, Lesotho, Limpopo, lion, lodge, Madikwe, Makhado, Maseru, Melkart, Namaqualand, Natal, national park, National Party, Nelson Mandela, Nelspruit, Nieu Bethesda, Northern Cape, Orange Free State, Orange / River, Pap, Paternoster, Philippolis, Pilanesberg, Port Elizabeth, Port St Johns, Potjiekos, Pretoria, province, Rand, republic, Rhino, SABC, Sabie, safari, shark, Sharpeville, Soweto, springbok, Stellenbosch, Steytlerville, Swaziland, Table Mountain, tourism, Transvaal, trekking, Thabo / Mbeki, Treaty of Vereeniging, Truth and Reconciliation / Commission, Tshwane, Vasco da Gama, Western Cape, Wild Coast, wine, World Cup, Zulu.

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 "Easy".

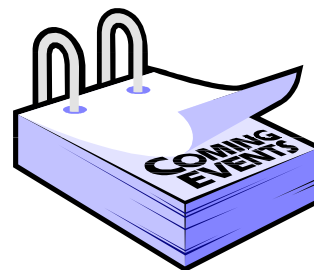
7			2		3			6
1	4							
					6	7		
	7			6	1	9		
8								7
		5	3	9			1	
		8	4					
							5	4
5			1		2			3

Missing words: Pietermaritzburg, Garden Route, Kalahari, Kwazulu.

Diary Dates

March

Wed 31 **General Event** Details of the **Quiz Evening** at the Banstead Institute have been sent to towers in February.



April

Mon 12 The Peripatetics meet at 11am at **Merstham** (8) and at 2pm at **Nutfield** (6). If you want more details, please contact Ken Brooks (01883 626172).

The DFP is at **Cheam** (6). This monthly practice is for those wanting to ring more advanced minor methods.

Fri 16 New monthly Surprise Major practice at **Epsom** (10). Contact Clara Westlake (020 8879 9836) for more details.

Sat 17 **Training Event** Details of the Plain Bob Minor Morning have been circulated to all towers a while ago - book your place quickly if you are interested.

Mon 19 Today's Wandering Bobs practice is at **Colliers Wood** (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.

Wed 21 Northern District practice at **Richmond** (8).

Sat 24 **HIGHLIGHT** Keep the date free so you come and join others for a great day out for the **Spring Outing**. Full timetable and additional details will be sent out nearer the time.

May

Sat 8 **Training Event** Look out for the usual Training Committee poster with details of this morning's Grandsire Triples training event.

General Event The Annual General Meeting is just over the District border at **Beddington** (10) from 3.45pm. Full timetable and agenda will be sent out after nominations close for posts (Fri 9 Apr). All are invited to have their say in the running of the Association.

Mon 10 A delayed date (due to the bank holiday) for the Peripatetics at **Farnham** (10) then **Frensham** (8).

Tonight's DFP is at **Charlwood** (6).

15 - 23 **General Event** Quarter Peal Week marking the foundation of the Association on 17 May 1880. All towers are encouraged to attempt a quarter peal - see page 6.

Mon 17 Today's Wandering Bobs practice at 10.30am (to 12.30pm) is at **Cheam** (6).

Northern District monthly practice at the friendly tower of **Addington** (6) from 8.00pm.

Fri 21 Monthly Surprise Major practice - contact Clara Westlake for details.

Sat 22 Regular Fourth Saturday Allcomers practice at **Reigate** (10).

**All events are from 7.30 to 9.00pm, unless otherwise stated.
Look on the website for more details.**