

Southern District NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING THE DIAMOND JUBILEE



Shenfield, St Mary the Virgin

Tuesday 5 June 2012 in 2 hr 31 min
(7-0-20)

5040 Minor (7m)

7 methods (720 each: Oxford TB, Kent TB, Ipswich S, Cambridge S, Double Oxford Bob, St Clements College Bob, Plain Bob)

- 1 Raymond G Jones
- 2 John Cousins
- 3 Darren F Osborne
- 4 Simon Greenwood
- 5 Stephen J Nash
- 6 John G Harpole (C)

In celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Also, compliment to Margaret and Laurie Turner on their Golden Wedding Anniversary, who were married at this church on June 9th 1962.

South Ockendon, Holy Cross

Monday 4 June 2012 in 2 hr 42 min
(3-3-9)

5040 Plain Bob Major

Composed: SJ Beckingham and AD Pink

- 1 Paul V Stannard
- 2 Stephen A Waters
- 3 Jon Waters
- 4 Philip Denton
- 5 Thomas R Sharp
- 6 June Mackay
- 7 Simon Greenwood
- 8 Alan D Pink (C)

Rung to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. First inside 4. The band sends Get Well wishes to John Stephenson, who was to ring in this peal.

Basildon, Essex St Martin of Tours

Monday, 4 June 2012 in 48 min
(11-2-24)

1280 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Darren Osborne
- 2 Jillian Laken
- 3 Hilary Donoghue
- 4 Cathryn Corns
- 5 Tom Pinnock
- 6 Helen Harpole
- 7 Jim Laken
- 8 John Harpole (C)

Rung to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Also to welcome Isabelle Cathryn Louise Pinnock, born 17th May 2012.

1st in method: 5.

NEXT EVENTS

ESSEX COUNTRY SHOW

Barleylands Billericay
8th & 9th September

DISTRICT MEETING

Saturday 15th September
3pm - South Weald

DISTRICT SURPRISE PRACTICE

Thursday 20th September
7.30pm - South Weald

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER

Saturday 6th October
- County Hotel, Chelmsford

DISTRICT AFTERNOON MEETING

Saturday 20th October
3-5pm - Orsett

CONTACTS

MASTER

John Harpole (Basildon)
17 Tiplers Bridge
Ramsden Heath Billericay
Essex CM11 1JE
Tel: 01268 711687
email: s-district-master@eacr.org.uk

DEPUTY MASTER & EDUCATION OFFICER

Cathryn Corns (Langdon Hills)
18 Lingfield Drive
Rochford
Essex SS4 1EA
Tel (H): 01702 533944
Tel (M): 07768 124683
email: cathryncorns@googlemail.com

SECRETARY

Alison Nash (North Ockendon)
2 Woodview,
Langdon Hills,
Essex SS16 6TZ
Tel: 01268 490061
email: s-district-secretary@eacr.org.uk

TREASURER

Mark Robbins (South Weald)
6 West Way, Brentwood
Essex CM14 4PB
01277 234345
email: mark@southweald.org.uk

DIAMOND JUBILEE RINGING CONTINUED



From left to right: Alan Moody, John Cousins, Ron Brown, Rowena Marshall, William Chandler, Anna Biddulph

Bentley Common, St Paul

Tuesday 5th June
1260 Plain Bob Minor in 44 min

1. Anna Biddulph
2. William Chandler
3. Rowena L Marshall
4. Ronald J Brown (cond)
5. John Cousins
6. Alan Moody

Rung by the Sunday service band to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee • Treble -1st quarter of minor



Canewdon, St Nicholas Sunday 3rd June 2012

Rounds and called changes were rung on the back six between 3.00 and 3:30 pm.

1. Sam Jones
2. Marion Squier
3. Ben Jones
4. Sharon Jones
5. Peter Hawes
6. Brian Meldon (Calling)

From left to right: Marion Squier, Sam Jones, Peter Hawes, Brian Meldon, Ben Jones, Sharon Jones

Brentwood, St Thomas

Call changes were rung before a special Evensong service on Sunday, 3 June. The service had some of the music from the coronation and was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Brentwood.

Fobbing, St Michael Sunday, 3 June 2012

Cambridge Surprise Minor, 1269 changes

1. Alan Gisby
2. Catherine Gisby
3. Cathryn Corns
4. Gordon Lucas
5. Darren Osborne
6. Andrew Martin (C)

Eastwood, St Laurence, Saturday, 2 June 2012

1260 changes 7 Doubles (Stedman, St Martin's, St Simon's, St Osmund's, Eynesbury, Plain Bob, Grandsire)

1. Penny Sloman
2. Gordon Lucas
3. Cathryn Corns
4. Darren Osborne
5. David Sloman (C)
6. Michelle Shorter-Bowen

• 6 -1st quarter

Also at **Eastwood**, the bells were rung for 45 minutes on the morning of Tuesday, 5 June by the local ringers.

AND MORE DIAMOND JUBILEE RINGING!

Hutton, All Saints Saturday, June 2nd, 30 minutes general ringing: Jean Dunne, Tony Grimes, Simon Higgins, Sue Matthews, Sylvia Martin, Susan McKay, Renee Page-Jones and Robin Page-Jones.

All Saints, Hutton, on Monday, 4th June

1260 Doubles (Grandsire and Plain Bob)

1. Robin Page- Jones
2. Alan Moody
3. Amanda Hazel-Rayner
4. Chris Bailey
5. Raymond Jones (c)

Rung for the Queens' Diamond Jubilee. Renee Page-Jones to be associated with this quarter.

Langdon Hills, St Mary Sunday, 3 June 2012

11 Doubles, 1260 changes (Stedman, Rev Canterbury, Winchendon Place, St Nicholas, Huntley Place, St Remigius, Plain Bob, St Martin, St Simon, Eynesbury, St Osmund)

1. Alan Gisby
2. Gordon Lucas (C)
3. Cathryn Corns
4. Darren Osborne
5. Andrew Martin

Leigh-on-Sea, St Clement's rang from 6.00-6.30pm on Monday, June 4th, prior to the lighting of the beacon on the Church tower.

Prittlewell Sunday 3rd June

720 Mixed Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles.

Treble	Peter Sloman
2nd	Penny Sloman
3rd	John Woollard
4th	Phil Briant
5th	David Sloman (c)
Tenor	Michelle Shorter Bowen

South Ockendon, Holy Cross Sunday June 3rd, held a '60 for 60' where we invited members of our congregation to come and handle a bell. Simon, Clare and Jonathan (3 of the local band) all helped about 35 people to come and try bell ringing, and be part of the celebration. We gave them all certificates.

South Weald, St Peter

Sunday, 3 June 2012 in 44 min

1264 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Sheila Shilton-Brown
- 2 John Cousins
- 3 Maria Jorysz
- 4 Vic Dale
- 5 Mark Robbins
- 6 Alan Ball
- 7 Paul Trueman
- 8 Ian Jorysz (C)

• Treble -1st quarter of major

In celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Rayleigh, Holy Trinity Sunday, 3 June 2012

Plain Bob Doubles, 1260 changes

1. Doug Bowles
2. Gordon Lucas
3. Simon Smith
4. Spencer Croucher
5. Cathryn Corns (C)
6. Tony Lowe

Rung for Evensong and to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; after this quarter a bottle of wine was opened and a toast drunk to Her Majesty!



SOUTHERN DISTRICT STRIKING COMPETITION

The 19th May dawned bright and sunny for the Southern District Striking competition, hosted by Navestock. The ground floor ring go well and their slight odd-struckness provided a challenge to the six teams who took part. Chris Bailey (Brentwood) carried out stewarding duties and Clive Stephenson had kindly agreed to judge the competition. Clive took up his position in a sunny spot in the churchyard which became a little chilly by the end of the day!

The scratch team was drawn to ring first and special congratulations go to Wendy Olley, one of the new band at Ingrave, who rang the treble for them.

cont...

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Jenni and Tom Pinnock (Basildon) on the birth of their baby girl - Isabelle Cathryn Louise Pinnock. Born 17th May 2012 at 16.45. 7lb 10oz.

Simon Smith (tower captain at Rayleigh) and his wife Tina have had a son, Liam, who despite arriving 2 moths prematurely is doing well and is now home.

Nicole Pound (South Weald) and Philip Brooks on their wedding in Sicily in June.

David Belcham is making a good recovery from his coronary bypass op and is back ringing quarter peals; Diana Belcham is making a very good recovery from her heart attack (suffered just after David was discharged after his op!).

Marion Squier has become the first of the new Canewdon band to ring a quarter peal of bob doubles 'inside' on May 12th.

SURPRISE PRACTICE

The next district surprise practice at South Weald is on Thursday 20th September starting at 7.30pm. Special methods are Cornwall, London and Lincolnshire. All Surprise major ringers welcome.

NEWSLETTERS

Please send any reports, pictures, notices etc., to Beth Johnson at bethjohnson6710@gmail.com, Tel: 01277 205102 or post to 67 London Road Brentwood CM14 4NN.

Newsletters are distributed at the end of Feb, April, August, October, and December - copy date 15th of these months.

A newsletter is circulated two weeks before each business meeting. Copies are sent to tower correspondents, preferably by email. If you receive a copy by email on behalf of your tower, please confirm receipt to Beth so we know each tower has at least one copy. Any member may request a copy via email by contacting Beth.

Southern District Striking Competition, continued

The Langdon Hills band won a closely contested competition by 2 points from Prittlewell, who were 2.5 points ahead of South Weald in third place.

The first two teams went on to ring in the finals at Broomfield on July 7th, where Langdon Hills came 2nd behind Kirby le Soken and Chelmsford Cathedral, with Prittlewell in 6th place (see left).

(With thanks to Catherine Gisby for photographs)

Teams:

Scratch team (rang Plain bob doubles, peal speed 3hr 0min)

Rang 1st, 40 faults. Position 5th

- 1: Wendy Olley
- 2: Pattie Folkson
- 3: Ron Brown
- 4: Rowena Marshall
- 5: Alan Moody
- 6: Robin Page-Jones



Langdon Hills (rang Cambridge surprise minor, peal speed 2hr 52 min)

Rang 2nd, 9 faults. Position 1st

- 1: Alan Gisby
- 2: Gordon Lucas
- 3: Cathryn Corns
- 4: Darren Osborne
- 5: Stephen Nash
- 6: Andrew Martin



Downham (rang Grandsire doubles, peal speed 2hr 48 min)

Rang 3rd, 52.5 faults. Position 6th

- 1: Barbara Leigh
- 2: Julia Jones
- 3: Roger Dorking
- 4: Paul Cammiade
- 5: Nigel Taylor
- 6: Chris Tucker



THE ASSOCIATION STRIKING COMPETITION FINALS were held on 7th July, hosted by the South Eastern District. Nine teams entered the 6-bell competition at Broomfield.

The results were:

- 1st - Kirby le Soken (rang Plain Bob Minor) 20 faults
- 2nd Chelmsford Cathedral (rang Plain Bob Minor) 22 faults
- 3rd Langdon Hills (rang Plain Bob Minor) 38 faults
- 4th West Ham (rang Grandsire Doubles) 41 faults
- 5th Writtle (rang Plain Bob Doubles) 47 faults
- 6th Prittlewell/Thorpe Bay (rang Plain Bob Doubles) 52 faults
- 7th Sawbridgeworth (rang Grandsire Doubles) 66 faults
- 8th Rayne (rang Grandsire Doubles) 110 faults
- 9th Dagenham (rang Plain Bob Doubles) 115 faults.

After tea and the 6-bell results the inter-district 8-bell competition was held on the back 8 at Writtle. The test piece was 288 Kent/Oxford Treble Bob Major. The South Eastern District won the trophy with 43 faults, 2nd Southern (58), 3rd North Eastern (73), 4th South Western (91), 5th Northern (144).

The judges for both competitions were Steve Pettman and Brian Whiting from Suffolk.

South Weald (rang Plain bob doubles, peal speed 2hr 52 min)

Rang 4th, 13.5 faults. Position 3rd

- 1: Helen Harpole
- 2: Alan Ball
- 3: Mark Robbins
- 4: Maria Jorysz
- 5: Paul Trueman
- 6: Vic Dale



North Ockendon (rang Plain bob doubles, peal speed 2hr 59 minutes)

Rang 5th, 22 faults. Position 5th

- 1: Hilary Spooner
- 2: Alison Nash
- 3: Michael Warren
- 4: Matthew Scott
- 5: Andrew Beech
- 6: Brian Beech



Prittlewell (rang Plain bob doubles, peal speed 2hr 31 min)

Rang 6th, 11 faults. Position 2nd

- 1: Anne Porter
- 2: Penny Sloman
- 3: Phil Briant
- 4: Peter Sloman
- 5: Stephen Halliwell
- 6: David Sloman



A QUARTER PEAL FOR 40 YEARS OF MUSIC MAKING AT ST. THOMAS' BRENTWOOD

On 15th July we rang a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Doubles before a special Evensong Service at St. Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood. It was to celebrate David Rooke's 40 years dedication to the music at the church and also his 70th birthday on that day. It also marked his retirement as Director of Music.

We rang on the front six and our band was Jonathan Lee (1), Amanda Hazell-Rayner (2), Andrew Beech (3 & C), Matthew Scott (4), Chris Bailey (5) and Paul Burke (6). We owe a special 'thank you' to Andrew for conducting the quarter. Other Brentwood ringers, who were unable to ring, wished to be associated with the Quarter.

David Rooke is a composer of church music and accomplished organist and choir master. He has held several prestigious positions within the Diocesan music scene and is well known farther afield in church music. In earlier years he was organist at St. Lawrence's in Upminster and at St Mary Magdeline, North Ockendon. In this respect, it was perhaps fitting that Andrew Beech

and Matthew Scott, both North Ockendon ringers, should be part of the band. In fact, he was organist at Matthew's parents wedding! Under his leadership the choir has been invited to sing at several cathedrals around the country including Canterbury.

The Service was very well attended by local dignitaries and representatives from other local churches as well as a great many of David's friends in the parish. We were treated to some magnificent music with singing by the Great Choir. The address was given by Fr. Bob White, former parish priest who worked with David for 19 years during his ministry at St. Thomas'. The Service was rounded off with an organ voluntary on the recently restored organ of Widor's Toccata from the 5th Symphony played by Sarah Stonehouse.

David leaves a strong vibrant music community for his successor, Sam Adams, whom he taught from Sam's first introduction to the choir as a young chorister. No pressure there !

Chris Bailey

MY FIRST PEAL



Having just celebrated a birthday (it ends with a nought but that is all I am prepared to say), I have rung my first peal – I still can't believe it.

When I first started ringing I could not even imagine ever ringing, firstly on my own and then in a method. I marvelled, and still do, at those who ring, conduct and put people right all at the same time – how do they do that?! I only mentioned that I would like to ring a peal and before I knew it Ann (Dorking) had taken it on board and organised it and, wow, what exalted company I was to ring in.

Roger Dorking, our Tower Captain, a legend in his own lunchtime for reasons some of which I cannot divulge, but did you know he is infamous for the talks he gives to various groups, not yet a star of the silver screen but he has broadcast on BBC Radio no less. Paul Cammiade, definitely my ringing super hero, he taught me to ring and takes

me to visit lots of towers, the limits of his patience and kindness is endless. He is also responsible for me having the wonderful opportunities to ring at such places as York Minster and Washington Cathedral – all due to me dropping his name in the right ear. I cannot thank him enough for all his support.

Ringling the fourth, Jo Horton from Kent, a very experienced ringer well known in Kent and Essex and a source of much encouragement to me, always generous with her great wealth of knowledge. Ringling the fifth, Nigel Taylor, the Master Tuner from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. He is the most amazing font of knowledge – just name any church and he can tell you when the bells were cast, what key they are in and what bell to avoid if you go ringing there!! Ringling six, our Steeple keeper Chris Tucker, who better to bring up the rear so beautifully, always there in the right place with that comforting bong!!

On Saturday 21 April we met at the allotted time, ropes checked all comfy, but it wasn't to be, so we rang a quarter which whizzed by. Another day was set, Saturday 12 May and I must admit I wasn't feeling as tense as before as I now realised nothing awful happened when we failed; the sun was shining on us, everyone was feeling on good form and we were off. It went really well, Paul conducted – it was his 1664th peal his 99th at Downham. We rang 5040 of Grandsire Doubles in 2 hours 40 minutes and it contained 135 bobs and 98 singles.

I can't express how thrilled and overwhelmed I am – done it and only one blister to show for it – a moment I will treasure forever. The icing on the cake is we are having a peal board and I have graciously agreed to share my peal with the Queen on the 60th anniversary of her glorious reign. Do you think I will be invited for tea at Buck House?

Onwards and upwards, looking forward to the next one and so grateful for all the support and encouragement I have and still receive. Thank you all so much.

Barbara, Downham

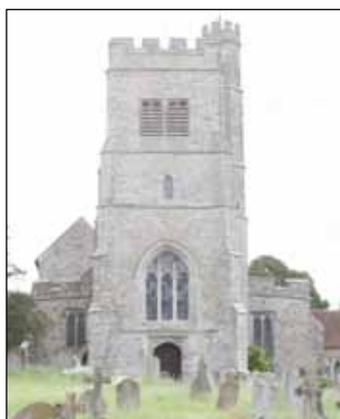


Left to right: Roger Dorking, Nigel Taylor, Paul Cammiade, Barbara herself, Chris Tucker, Jo Horton.

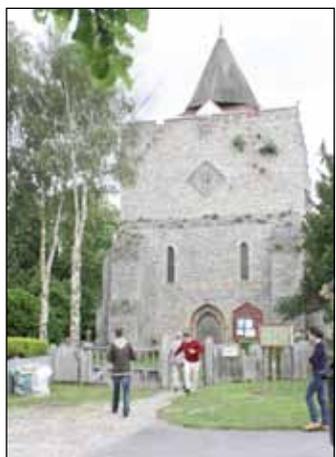
DISTRICT OUTING 2012



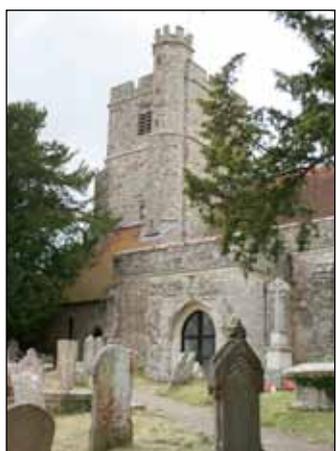
Hollingbourne, All Saints



Harrietsham, St John the Baptist



Leeds, St Nicholas



Ulcombe, All Saints

This year's district outing was to mid-Kent on June 9th. Nearly 40 members and friends came along and enjoyed the Kent countryside and, amazingly, a dry sunny day in the middle of our wet, early summer.

We started off at the tricky 6 at Hollingbourne, and then the 8 at Harrietsham. Then came St Nicholas, Leeds – the massive squat tower houses one of the oldest rings of 10 and was a leading centre for change ringing in the 18th century. Kent treble bob was invented here and in the corner of the tower we found an undistinguished board commemorating a remarkable achievement; the extent of Plain Bob Major (40,320 changes) was rung in 27 hours on 7th and 8th of April 1761 by a team of 13 ringers who rang in shifts.

While some went off for picnics or found their favourite restaurants, the majority had lunch in The George Inn at Leeds; the food was delicious and washed down with Kent ale!

Most of us got to the next tower, Ulcombe, early and spent the time discovering (and climbing!) two yew trees that claimed to be over 2,000 years old. We also gathered for the customary group photo. In the tower, the master embarrassed himself by slipping wheel on the 5th!

We finished the day with the two best rings of bells – the 10 at Staplehurst and the 8 at Marden. At Staplehurst Steve Nash followed my earlier attempt by calling our first ever touches of Stedman Caters, following a teaching session at the recent Essex course.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the day, with a range of ringing from rounds to Surprise Royal. The day made a profit of £105 for the Essex bell restoration fund. Thanks to everyone who came along and helped to make it a very enjoyable day.

John Harpole



Staplehurst, All Saints



Marden, St Michael & All Angels

RINGING FOR THE OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY

Friday July 6, day 49 of the Olympic Torch relay saw the flame being carried through the Southern district as it made its way from Ipswich to Hylands Park, Chelmsford.

The torch entered the District at **RAYLEIGH** where, according to the Evening Echo, 30,000 people lined the streets. The bells of **Holy Trinity** rang a quarter peal as the torch was carried around the streets.

1260 Plain Bob Minor (7,8 cover) - 47 mins

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 David Belcham | 5 Jim Laken |
| 2 Penny Drayson | 6 John Harpole (c) |
| 3 Cathryn Corns | 7 Don Stoneman |
| 4 Spencer Croucher | 8 Tony Lowe |

Rung as the Olympic Torch visited Rayleigh. 1st on 8 - 8. 1st as a member of the "zipper club" - 1.

It was great to see David Belcham ringing again after having open heart surgery.

Next stop was Southend, and David Sloman writes:

Fourteen ringers from **PRITTLEWELL** and **CANEWDON** are very pleased to have taken part in the Olympics! That is to say they were very pleased to have taken part in ringing some excellent rounds and call changes on the bells at **St. Mary's Prittlewell** as the Olympic Flame was carried past the church. As there were more than ten, four ringers were able to have a quick ring and then go down to the churchyard in order to see the torch, take photos, join the crowds and experience the excitement of the occasion. Because of this the belfry is now in proud possession of a Union flag bearing the words "I saw the Flame" – due to be corrected to "We rang for the Flame"!

Next stop was **Basildon**, where an estimated 65,000 people saw the torch as it was carried from Basildon sporting village (temporary home of the Japanese swimming team) and then through the town centre. At the Bell Tower rounds and call changes were rung to accompany it. We knew as soon as the flame had passed as thousands of people filled St Martin's Square and watched and listened to our ringing.

Next was Grays and Simon Ward writes:

GRAYS tower rang all eight bells for an hour to welcome the residents and visitors to Grays before the Olympic torch travelled through the town. The bells were rung during the procession of local school and youth groups and the build-up to the relay itself. The bells were rung by five of the Grays band; Simon Ward, Sophie Barlow, Sarah Barlow, Sue Cordingley and Louise Amery-Richardson and were joined by Catherine Gisby (Leigh on Sea), Alan Gisby (Fobbing) and Andy Martin (Laindon Hills). No particular method was rung as the Grays ringers are not yet up to this standard, changes were called by Andy Martin. The ringing team were able to watch the torch procession in a reserved area laid on by the local council.



We are very grateful to Andy, Catherine and Alan who rang with us. We received a number of very positive comments after the event by local councillors and residents; also our MP who was in the church whilst we were ringing.

The torch then travelled up the A128 into Brentwood, accompanied by **INGRAVE** bells; Ronnie Crichton writes:

The bells at **St Nicholas Ingrave** rang out to welcome the Olympic Torch as it passed through the villages of Herongate and Ingrave. The villagers gathered on the Cricket Green where a fete and activities were held. We opened up St. Nicholas church and hall where free tea and coffee was provided. The streets and green were packed; an estimate from BBC Essex radio put the numbers at about 8,000 to 10,000 people spread over a mile. Numerous garden 'gazebo' parties were being held with music drifting out.



We are a 'young' band and rang a number of varied call changes and also some plain hunting on our 6 bells. A party was in full swing opposite the church and the host (not a ringer) actually turned his music off to hear the bells. He even went up to the vicar at the end to ask if we were finished before turning his music up.

That evening some live bands were at the green and during the course of the night myself and other ringers

received appreciative thanks for ringing the bells, on this special day.

The Ingrave ringers were: Sophie Olley, Jackie Channa, Liz Atkins, Wendy Olley, Ronnie Crighton (C) and Colin Tilbrook.

So what was all the fuss about? In between ringing at Rayleigh and Basildon I went to see the flame as it was carried along Southend seafront, joining the 200,000 other people who turned out to line the streets of South Essex that day!

John Harpole



RINGING TO MARK THE START OF LONDON 2012

The following towers rang at 08:12 for 3 minutes as part of the All the Bells project to mark the start of The Olympics:

Basildon: bells were fired and partially rung down by: John Harpole, Julia Fry, Jenni Pinnock, Roger Hobson, Helen Harpole, Tom Pinnock.

A photographer from the Echo was present, and lots of people watched us from St Martin's Square. Pictures were posted on the Echo's website, in the paper edition on July 30th and also the Basildon, Billericay and Wickford Recorder.

Downham: rang and fired the bells with some of our most inexperienced ringers.

Hutton: Eight of us rang the bells at All Saints, Hutton at 8.12am. After we had finished, three children, two aged three and one aged nine, who had been watching us chimed the treble once it had been brought down. The smiles on their faces made the day for all of us.

Ingrave: villagers were so pleased that the tower was part of something nationwide.

Leigh-on-Sea: twelve ringers made the effort to come up the tower and we rang two ten minute sessions of call changes.

Orsett rang 4 bells.

Pritlewell rang, as did **Thorpe Bay** for around 10 minutes.

The three bells of **Ramsden Belhouse** were chimed.

Rayleigh: Seven ringers at 8.12 rang some fast but decent rounds, and were filmed for BBC East (but not broadcast)

South Weald: rang from 08.12 to 08.15 raising the back six as far up as possible in half the time, then lowering. The band was (treble to tenor): Ian Jorysz, Sheila Shilton-Brown, Beth Johnson, Maria Jorysz, Alan Ball, Paul Trueman

BELLS WERE ALSO RUNG LATER IN THE DAY AT:

Ingrave: rang at 20.12 for 25 minutes of simple call changes.

Bentley Common: 240 Plain Bob Minor: Ron Brown, John Cousins, Bill Chandler, Pattie Folkson, Alan Moody

Fobbing: quarter peal of 1344 of Plain Bob Major 1 Alan Gisby, 2 Gordon Lucas, 3 Cathryn Corns, 4 Clive Garroway, 5 David Belcham, 6 Dennis Stott, 7 Charlie Martin, 8 Andrew Martin (C)

Langdon Hills: quarter peal of 1320 Appleby Surprise Minor 1 Alan Gisby, 2 Cathryn Corns, 3 Gordon Lucas, 4 Dennis Stott, 5 Andrew Martin, 6 Stephen Nash (C)

A SUMMER OF EXTRAORDINARY RINGING

We ringers are a shadowy bunch, often renowned for slipping in and out of our towers and being largely unknown to the local congregation or community. This summer has forced many of us into the limelight, and although we may not all have welcomed the attention of the All the Bells initiative, or the founding of the Olympic bell, we cannot say that bell ringing has not been given a prime slot in the summer's events. More TV and radio coverage has been shown of bell ringing than in living memory, even if some of it has been of questionable accuracy. But from showing John Barrowman learning to ring (properly, not just as a quick take), through the amazing floating ring captained by Dickon Love which many of us watched with pride from the banks of the Thames, to so many towers taking part in the torch relay and the ringing

at 8.12am (or later in the day), ringing has certainly been given remarkable publicity. Ronnie Crichton of Ingrave says how many positive comments he received in the village, and even a letter from a resident saying how lovely it was 'to hear the bells and know that Ingrave was part of a national event'. John Harpole said how he was 'absolutely amazed at the support the district gave All the Bells'. So, from early grumbings, the ringers, at least of this district, embraced the 2012 events. Thank you to David Timmins for his article below, outlining some of the reports and developments during this 'once in a lifetime' summer.

THE OLYMPIC BELL

"Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises.." The Tempest, William Shakespeare

Change ringing is steeped in history – history going back centuries – and is almost-exclusively a British art. Change ringers over many decades and centuries have been intensely loyal to their foundries who, in turn, have cast, re-cast, retuned and re-hung bells in our church towers over as many years. We still have two of the most famous foundries in the world – John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough and the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which dates back to at least 1570, in London.

To underline the historical importance of church bell ringing, 2013 marks the 300th anniversary of the life of the 'father of change ringing', Fabian Stedman. Although church bell ringing existed well before Stedman, it was pioneers such as he that began to formalise the methods and principles of change ringing. Stedman was born in Yarkhill, Herefordshire in December 1640 and died in London in 1713. During his life, he published two books about the art of change ringing and, undoubtedly, his finest achievement was the Stedman Principle which is still rung regularly today.

Partly because bell ringing still remains the second most popular sound in the U.K., second only to birdsong, the London Organising Committee (LOCOG) and the London 2012 Ceremonies Ltd (L2012C) decided that it would be a good idea to commission a large bell to be rung on July 27th 2012 as part of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2012 Olympics. The opening ceremony itself had been inspired by artistic director Danny Boyle – the film-maker behind *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Trainspotting*. His 'Isles of Wonder' theme for the opening ceremony had been inspired by the quote from Shakespeare at the head of this article - indeed the quote was to be cast into the new bell. It had been taken for granted by U.K. ringers that the new bell would be cast in this country. What a splendid idea, you might think, commissioning an Olympic Bell for the London Olympics – the largest bell in Europe - which would be designed, planned, cast and hung by one or other of the two premier foundries in the world – and both based in England! Would it happen? Not on your Nellie!

As far as I can gather from the *Mail Online* and *The Ringing World* within published articles covering the past six months or so, the London Organising Committee has unnecessarily upset both change ringers and, more importantly, one of our premier foundries – John Taylor & Co.

The new bell for the Olympics was always going to be a challenge. At 27 tons, and with a mouth measuring 3.3 metres, it was to be a foot wider than the largest bell in Britain, the Great Paul at St Paul's Cathedral, which was cast by Taylor's in 1881. None-the-less, casting such a large new bell would have been logistically possible in the U.K. and, whatever one's views about Taylor's recent financial problems, their absence of recent casting experience of heavy bells, the investment in heavy bell founding equipment that would be required to cast such a large new bell and the possible necessity for adaptation of some of Taylor's heavy equipment, casting the bell in the U.K. would have been theoretically possible. Financial savings in the short term by sending the contract elsewhere in the world would undermine investment at home. Indeed, Richard Grimmett, General Manager for John Taylor & Co., stated in a letter to *The Ringing World* (R.W., May 4th 2012 p 443) that, "We are disappointed that our 44 tons of casting capacity, making us still the largest bell foundry in the world, has been disregarded..."

So what happened? It appears that John Taylor & Co. was asked by L2012C in August 2011 to provide estimates for casting 'the biggest bell in Great Britain'. Taylor & Co spent 20 days or so of their expert time designing, planning and providing an estimate for such a large bell. Figures were submitted, as requested, early in September 2011 to the L2012C. However, within a few weeks, Taylor's was notified by L2012C by Dave Williams, Deputy Production Manager, Staging and Scenic L2012C, that the bell was no longer being considered and "the decision has been made to go a different route for this section of the show."

Loughborough MP, Nicky Morgan, representing a ward with a massive connection with the Olympics over many years- especially with Team GB - challenged this decision to no avail. Loughborough University is well known as the pre-Games base for Team GB. "I am disappointed," Miss Morgan said. "Taylors is a fantastic company".

Taylors closed their file.

It seems then that within days of Taylors receiving the e-mail from Dave Williams cancelling any further action from Taylors towards the production of the Olympic Bell, L2012C entered into a formal contract with Whitechapel Bell Foundry! Worse than that, Simon Aspland, Head of Procurements and Contracts, L2012C, stated that Taylors had only been approached "for the purposes of ensuring that the quotes provided by Whitechapel were consistent with market pricing". All that time and effort provided by a British foundry known to have the capacity to cast such a large bell had gone to waste. There seems little doubt that John Taylor and Company Bellfoundry were seriously misled and, indeed, Hugh Robertson MP, Minister for Sport and Olympics and Bill Morris, Director of Ceremonies, Education and Live Sites for LOCOG had little option but to apologise to Taylors.

But worse was to follow. All knew that Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd., for all its history and expertise, simply did not have the capacity to cast such a big bell – even though the Company was well known for having cast Big Ben in 1858. None-the-less, the Whitechapel foundry pressed ahead with final designs for the bell. As Mrs Kathryn Hughes of the East London firm stated, *“This (will be) a Whitechapel bell and we have supervised every stage. The design, shape, lettering, metal specifications are all Whitechapel.”* Indeed, cast into the bell was to be the logo that Whitechapel has used since 1570.

So what happened next? Yes, the contract for casting this huge bell, despite all our British expertise and abilities - and the state of the British economy – went to a company in Holland. As Richard Grimmett, General Manager for John Taylor & Co., stated, *“...we are disappointed that not only our time has been wasted so blatantly but that another piece of our beleaguered British manufacturing industry has been so badly let down by our own side.”* (R.W., May 4th 2012, p 443). Mr Grimmett also observed and felt that L2012C had ignored the LOCOG’s Diversity and Inclusion Business Charter which had been essentially set up to allow firms in this country equal access to Olympic public monies.

So, although the new bell had been designed and planned in London, it was cast in Holland. Does this matter? A letter written to *The Ringing World* on May 11th by the Revd Tony Graham of Crawley, West Sussex seems to sum it all up (Letters, R.W., May 11th 2012, p 498). Revd Crawley starts his letter, *“How much I was looking forward to the unveiling of That Bell. A feeling of pride that here is something we English can make, and make well, has increasingly been eroded over the past thirty years. But no. Like so much else the bell has been Outsourced.”*

Ah well, the die was cast – and so was the bell! To be fair, all the expertise available within the Whitechapel foundry was used so far as was possible and Nigel Taylor himself, well known to us for his help in the revival of the tuning of bells (and keyboard instruments) by unequal temperament (‘well tempered tuning’), supervised the tuning of the bell. So why are our British change ringers further upset? It takes little imagination to realise that a huge bell, of the order of 27 tons, physically would have been difficult to swing and struck on its sound bow by a clapper as are our full-cycle British bells and the only way to sound the bell would be by an internal clapper swung to hit the sound bow. So what happened on July 27th? There was just one loud “BONG!” courtesy of Bradley Wiggins, chosen to perform (some heard more “BONGs” later in the ceremony) after which the million pound bell was spirited away into storage. Another “BONG!” was heard by some people at the closing ceremony (I didn’t).

And now, this heavy ‘White Elephant’ will be largely ignored in Stratford as a kind of strange, isolated, static memorial to the 2012 Olympics – a prime target for vandalism and metal theft (the bronze alone being worth around £400k). When will there be another occasion in anyone’s lifetime to ring the bell again? And in Stratford?

Far better, think many change ringers, should it not have been possible to cast within cost such a large Olympic bell in the U.K. then it would have been better to have spent a fraction of the money on, perhaps, a purpose-built mobile ring of bells that could be moved to different parts of the country to celebrate other occasions after the Olympics. It could always be called the ‘Olympic Bells’, or some such.

Anyone who managed to hear on YouTube, or even on the day, the inspiring Whitechapel Bell Foundry’s ‘Royal Jubilee Bells’ as they were brought up the Thames cannot fail to have been moved. The bells had been inspected by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Whitechapel foundry on 15th May, transported to Denton Wharf at Gravesend where they were re-assembled and lifted onto their barge. The ‘Royal Jubilee Bells’ led the flotilla of a thousand boats down the Thames on the afternoon of 3rd June – a truly mobile ring of bells! One can only imagine how difficult it must have been to ring the bells on a moving platform in the wind (which caught at the ropes) and the rain. Ringing the eight bells were some of the top change bell ringers in the country, led by Dickon Love, and a description of their experience is delightfully described in the July 27th 2012 issue of *The Ringing World*.

A further stretch of imagination might have produced, once again easily within the million pound limit, five smaller mobile rings of training bells – perhaps labelled ‘Asia’, ‘Europe’ and so on – coloured appropriately. This initiative could have helped re-vitalise change ringing, increase the declining number of change bell ringers across the U.K., assist with training future ringers and be a far more adaptable ideology. A recent survey has suggested that reasons for a lowering of the subscription rates to *The Ringing World* included ageing of the subscription base (R.W., July 6th 2012, p 690) and this may be linked to an increasing fall in numbers of the younger subscriber.

My point is that it takes more than one, single, large bell to represent our U.K. bell ringing which is the envy of the world. Not for nothing is Britain known as ‘The Ringing Isle’ and long may it stay so.

As it is, Anthony Smith’s letter from Winchester to *The Ringing World* (R.W., April 20th 2012, p 391) suggested that *“...many bands will be planning to ring Howard Skempton’s composition of **Five Rings Triples** for the Olympics...”* - in a way, our ringers were turning their backs on the idea of a ‘single’ Olympic Bell to a far more challenging and rewarding 7-working-bell method!

David Timmins, August 2012