

# Tech Adviser's Blog



# April 2026

In a bid to help our members to understand how the EACR supports ringing across Essex, I am planning to share a few interesting items from the various projects and inspections I have been involved with each month. Here is my first offering.

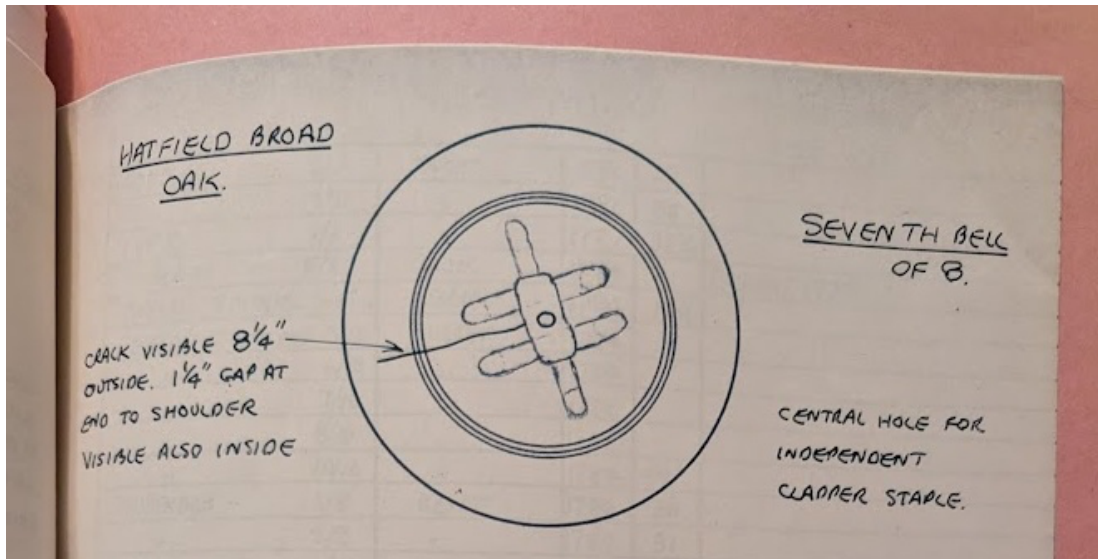
If you would like to contact me for help with your bells, please email me on [techadviser@eacr etc.](mailto:techadviser@eacr etc.)



I visited **Hatfield Broadoak** in early March, (a little before April, it is true), specifically to check the sixth and seventh bells, which have been cracked at least since the 1970s. [The picture above is the seventh bell](#), the blue arrow is Nigel Taylor's mark, from 2020 and the scarlet arrow is the end of the crack today, (it is hard to see!)

Although the cracks have grown \*, I am told that Andrew Nicholson who also inspected the bells, suggests that the crack is growing very slowly and that ringing can continue.

[The same crack as reported in 1974 \(courtesy of David Sloman\) looking rather similar.](#)



\*The cracks were probably caused by remnants of the original **iron staple**, which was cast into the bell metal, originally placed to support the clapper. As the iron rusts it expands and cracks the bell.

**Fobbing** -1<sup>st</sup> April



Steve Nash and I inspected the bearings on the bells at St Michael, Fobbing, having realised the bearings hadn't been greased since the 1931 overhaul, the grease looked surprisingly good.

[I'm intrigued by this wooden cannon retaining headstock](#)

## Epping Upland – 11<sup>th</sup> April

I assisted Ian Kerwin with the installation of two new ropes at All Saints, Epping Upland. I took the opportunity to look at the bells briefly while we were in the tower, having heard the bearings were stiff during recent ringing, I was surprised how this could be, as I have never seen so much grease in one tower! I think the tower needs a visit from a professional, and a working party to clean up and have a proper look at the bearings.



Greasy bearings at Epping Upland!

### Chip Tuning

Interestingly, whilst I was at Epping Upland, I noticed that you could clearly see evidence of the **chip tuning system** used in older bells (these at All Saints are from 1707).

[You can clearly see many chip marks in the old bell in the first picture below.](#)

Prior to the far more accurate tuning system used today, where bells are carefully turned in a giant lathe to remove exactly the right amount of metal to achieve the perfect note, chip tuning is a, manual method of adjusting a bell's pitch by physically chipping or scraping small pieces of metal off its inner lip with a hammer and chisel.



Above, distinct chip marks at Epping Upland.

Right, a ring of bright bronze, resulting from modern tuning, as seen in one of Stafford's recently refurbished ring of bells, which sounded beautiful.



### **Hutton – 21<sup>st</sup> April**

I was warmly welcomed to All Saints, Hutton by Beth Johnson and her fellow ringers, to inspect the recently installed rope guides and compare what was constructed with the specification for the work.



Above, the new rope guides at Hutton - circular black painted metalwork, indicated by the red arrow.

I was pleased to be able to report that the work done met the specification and this allowed the funding to be released.

The Hutton ringers are very pleased with their new guides, and I enjoyed my ringing, followed by tea and cake.

I hope you found at least some of this interesting, let me know what you think.

Steve Ashley May 2026