

# MASTER'S REPORT

I am pleased to say that 2021 was a much better year than 2020 as we were slowly being released from COVID restrictions. However, we continue to remember all those we have lost, friends and family, from COVID and for other reasons. We also continue to be grateful to the NHS and key workers for all the work and sacrifices they made in looking after the country and caring for the sick

It is great to see our ringing activities emerging and increasing: Tower practice nights and Sunday service ringing, 'in-person' District, Association and Training meetings and practices, and several extra practices organned throughout the Association. We have also been involved in wider ringing events: National Youth Striking Competition, Essex Trophy 10 bell and London 12 bell striking competitions. Having held 2 virtual AGMs, by the time you have read this, we will have again held a face-to-face AGM meeting. We are also now using our ground-breaking MemberMojo on-line membership and communication system to full effect and have started to collect our membership fees through it.

Despite all the positives we must be clear that we have some difficult times in front of us. All bands will certainly have lost some of their ringers and we have been unable to recruit and train new ringers. As a result, there are some bands that are struggling to continue. This is a challenge that we must all face together and be positive about what we can achieve, and in the coming year we need to focus on recruiting, teaching (including our ringing teachers) and developing our ringers, and we must also visit and support other towers. We will be encouraging and providing the opportunities to do all of this through our Recovery Plan.

As we celebrate with our ringing, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we send our best wishes to her, and hope that many of you are taking up the challenge to ring your first quarters and that we will ring a quarter peal in every tower in the Association.

As I finish my term as Master I would like to thank all tower, District and Association leaders and members for your hard work and dedication during such a difficult time, keeping our bells ringing throughout Surrey, to the Membership Development Committee for all the huge amount of innovative work leading to the launch and full use of MemberMojo, and especially John Coatsworth and Martin Crick for masterminding this; to the Recovery Committee for being at the forefront of our Recovery; to the whole of the General Committee and the General Officers – without them in all their different roles the Association would not operate as it should, and to Ann Beirne for her great work in leading the administration of the Association.

I wish all the best to Paul Flavell, your new Master, as he takes on the responsibility of leading the Association through these difficult times, and hope you will give him your full support as I will try to do myself.

**Noel Gibbin**

# GENERAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORT

As the Covid pandemic continued the year started with very little ringing except using virtual platforms. Slowly the recovery commenced with hand bell ringing outdoors and then in May ringing under guidance, although difficult it was a welcome return for some towers.

District meetings held in the early part of the year continued to use virtual media and were well attended. Similarly the annual quiz held in March was held virtually, making good use of Zoom and "meeting rooms". There were 115 attendees across 17 teams. Redhill took first place and gained the trophy. The event made a profit which was donated to the BRF.

Similarly to 2020 the AGM was held as a virtual meeting, 52 members attended. Alongside the usual Officers reports and agenda items an update was given on the Membership Development initiative and Ringing Recovery plan. One committee member changed in 2021 with Pam Donovan being formally elected as Northern District Master. In September Jackie Harrison agreed to take over from Chris Baldwin as Communications Officer at the 2022 AGM. Chris will remain as our webmaster. We thank Chris for his long service as Communications Officer and the great work he has done over the years to improve the communication channels.

Having completed an extra year Noel's term as General Master comes to an end at this year's AGM. It has been an extraordinary period of service with towers being silent for many months and a great number of events cancelled however lots of progress has been made in the background on the "workings" of the Association. Noel has been the instigator and a great leader for the sub-committees. He leaves us having achieved much and his commitment for continued support. He has been an excellent mentor for me and always willing to assist. Thank you Noel.

Following the great work by the Development committee MemberMojo is now the system of record for the Association members. Currently there are 583 member records, this is an increase over the numbers for the previous year. Online payments are accepted via Stripe and bank transfer, reducing the administration associated with manual fee collections.

We welcomed 14 new members including 2 students, 2 non-residents and 2 returning ringers. Honorary Life membership were awarded to Susan Bailey, David Beamish, Brian Boustred, Vivienne Boustred, Yvonne Cooper, Sheila Davison, Linda Georgiades, Diane Grose, Madeline Johnston, Helen Noble, Kevin Perkins, Angela Price, Marion Prideaux, Anthony Vere Hodge, Helen Vere Hodge, Phil Watkins and Adrian Wheeler.

The Bank balances remain healthy with a total of over £41,000. Expenditure in 2021 totalled just over £8,000 with the major spend being the tower inspection grants across 16 towers. This was an initiative put in place by the ringing recovery group. £64 was spent on recruitment banner grants, another scheme from the ringing recovery group. In addition £950 was paid as a tower grant to help fund a simulator setup for St. John's, Caterham. With income from membership fees and donations the year ended with a decrease of just over £3,000 in total funds.

There were just two Association peals rung in 2021 but both significant events. In November 5060 Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung at St Mary's Wimbledon to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first peal rung for both Michael Uphill and Alan Millidge. More details and a photograph are included later in the report. Then on New Year's Eve a 5090 of Stedman Cinques was rung at St Peter Church, South Croydon to celebrate Michael Moreton's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Congratulations to both peal bands.

During the year we learned with sadness of the death of the following members:- Jenny Clarke a Life member from Newdigate, John Munton, Life member from Epsom Common, Tim Pryke from Ockley, Sally Stayce, Life member from Buckland and Anne Tuppen from Putney.

We look forward to attracting new members in 2022, welcoming a new General Master and lots of ringing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

**Ann Beirne**

# NORTHERN DISTRICT REPORT

This year saw the lifting of anti-Covid restrictions in July 2021 and Northern District ringing has come back with a bang!

The Northern District Saturday practices resumed in August. We held four meetings, visiting Mitcham, Merton, East Molesey and Richmond, before concerns about the omicron Covid variant led to the cancellation of the practices planned for December and January. Saturday practices resumed in February 2022 with a very well-attended meeting at Putney. On 19<sup>th</sup> March we joined a mini-outing in East London organised by the North & East District of the Middlesex County Association, visiting Stepney, Borough and Bermondsey. More than 40 ringers came for all or part of the outing and enjoyed ringing rounds, call-changes, Grandsire and Stedman triples and Cambridge major, as well as Stedman caters and Little Bob Royal on the majestic heavy ten at Stepney. No Saturday District practice is being held in April because of Holy Week but a continuing programme of events on the third Saturday of the month is being arranged for the rest of 2022. I'm looking forward to visiting Barnes in May.

The Saturday practices are "general ringing" and any ringer who can handle a bell independently in rounds is very welcome to join in. The District also arranges or supports other more specialised practices which are aimed at particular groups of ringers. I am very happy to report that the Northern District surprise major practices on the third Friday have re-started, and so have the all-comers 12 bell practices at Croydon on the first Tuesday of the month. A new initiative started this January has been 8's Great! This is a regular monthly practice for ringers who are competent on 6 bells and wish to start or develop their ringing on 8. At the time of writing we have held three 8's Great! practices, ringing plain hunt on 7 and Grandsire triples.

The Nomination meeting in November 2021 and the Annual District Meeting in January 2022 were both held on Zoom but we are planning to go back to face-to-face business meetings in the coming year, all being well. All District practices and events are advertised on the Events calendar on the Association website.

District practices this year have all been well attended and it's been clear that the ringers who came have enjoyed getting out and about and meeting friends after the long period of restrictions. I appreciate that not everyone is in a position to join District events at present, but please don't feel that you're not a good enough ringer to come – we aim to provide enjoyable ringing for everyone and it's a great way to meet other ringers and perhaps to ring something you don't get an opportunity to ring in your own tower.

Most local bands in the Northern District have lost ringers during the pandemic. Other ringers intend to return to ringing but are not yet in a position to do so. This means that most bands are short of ringers for Sunday service ringing and practices. I know that many District members are busy helping out other bands and that there are active support networks helping to keep ringing going at various levels. Thank you for supporting your own and other towers during this difficult period as we build our bands up to full strength again.

I would like to thank the District committee, the Association Master Noel Gibbin and all the other members who organise ringing events and practices in the Northern District area for all their hard work. I would also like to thank all the ringers who turn up for Sunday service ringing and local practice nights and keep ringing going at the grass-roots level.

Hope to see you around!

**Pam Donovan**

# SOUTHERN DISTRICT REPORT

I am afraid that we were still cursed by the Covid Pandemic for most of the year and this was reflected in the number of quarter peals rung – 15 and all of these were in the second half of the year.

We did celebrate the relaxation of the rules by having a Christmas Outing to Ground floor churches – to ensure the ventilation. It was so nice to ring with others and I intend to start things going after Easter.

Last year, I had hoped that things would improve during the year but this didn't really start happening till the end of the year – we were still struggling to even practice at our own churches. However, I hope that this year we can begin to help ringing in the Southern District.

We have already started helping bands as they come back to ringing and, at my home tower, using money provided by the Association were able to hang a banner outside resulting in 6 beginners!

Again, I am still worried that information is not being disseminated that well even though we have a good web site with a page that covers all the practices. For the last few months we have been running practices to help ringers come back to ringing and provide time at the end of a rope – this will continue so please check the calendar on the Events page of our web site.

I hope that we are over the problems that have beset us and I want to feel that we should be looking forward to a summer of ringing. Thank you very much for the help and support you have given me and other District Committee Members over what was quite a troublesome year.

**Paul Beeken**

## **BELFRY REPAIR FUND**

The past year has seen some revival of demands on the resources of the Belfry Repair Fund, with the planned works on Croydon Minster coming to fruition and some urgent repairs being made later in the year at St Peter & St Paul, Lingfield. Hence, while overall income was steady year-on-year, total funds ended down for the right reasons.

Donations from towers bounced back to an extent as ringers reconvened. However, a retained preference for computerised meetings no doubt contributed to the drop in cash collections. The Numbers Club continued to grow, reaching 195 numbers by the end of the year and increasing its contribution to the BRF by 5%. Thanks are due to Kate Wills for donating the funds to buy a top-up of balls for the extra numbers. Sadly, Brockham Bonfire was a part of the entertainment sector that did not emerge from the lockdown last year. However, the Association Quiz, held in early May, was a new entrant and a very welcome source of funds, contributing £224. Kate Wills was also active in the purchase of clothing – encouraging others to place their orders, from which the BRF made a modest turn. A small but generous core of regular donors persist and are to be warmly thanked. Finally, an update on interest earned in the deposit account realised a surprisingly healthy amount – overwhelmingly from rates in place before March 2020.

Proposals for future applications for funding have been aired in locations from Betchworth to Egham to Roehampton. Croydon Minster may have required some further remedial work, for which a promise of assistance is in place.

The fund ends the year at just over £18,600 having begun it at around £21,000. Of this, more than £15,000 is held on deposit and slightly more than £3,000 in the Barclays current account.

The committee, comprising Malcolm McAlister, Gail Terry, Russell King, Kate Wills, Noel Gibbin and Sid Bensberg, have been active in discussions of projects and awards as well as in the running of the Numbers Club and the compilation of clothing orders.

Donations were received during the year from the towers of St John's, Caterham, and Reigate; and the PCCs of Beddington, Oxted and St John's, Egham.

**Malcolm McAlister**

# TRAINING GROUP REPORT

2021 started in full Covid lockdown with no ringing. By the late spring there were signs of restrictions being lifted so a programme of 'Return to Ringing' was put in place by the General Committee. The Training Group pursued a plan of providing basic level of ringing (Plain Hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire), provide a transition from 6 to 8 bells ringing as well as encourage Association Members to develop their teaching skills to help others. Courses were organised from late summer in a Covid compliant manner focussing on these objectives. Due to the success of events held and the subsequent rise in Covid infections at the end of 2021, this cautious policy has been extended into 2022.

Events run in the 2021 programme were:

January – July	Nothing planned (due to Covid)
August	Handling skills and call changes. Bletchingley and Barnes
September	Nothing planned (following Covid concerns)
October	Plain Hunt Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles. Merton and Horley
November	Rounds and Call changes on 8. Merstham
December	ART level 1 (bell handling) refresher. Oxted

Due to Covid 19 preventing gatherings the Training Group had few meetings throughout the year but those held were virtual meetings held using Zoom and focussed on 'Returning to Ringing'. Whilst appearing very un-ambitious, the Training Group will maintain a similar programme for 2022 which includes two ART Teaching Skills courses. This will provide further help to the Association for 'Return to Ringing' while Members continue to be (wisely) cautious about meeting in large groups in confined spaces.

Several 'Focussed Ringing Sessions' introduced on the 'Southern District' by Paul Beeken and extended to the 'Northern District' were restarted. These are proving to be successful, and it is expected more will be rolled out during 2022. I believe these need to focus on basic skills and need to be both "regular" and "frequent" to provide practice opportunities, enable ringers to regain confidence and to integrate the new ringers we hope to recruit.

*Jan Griffiths*

# COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER REPORT

Chris Baldwin, who had spent over 10 years on the General Committee, wanted to step down at the 2021 AGM but was persuaded to continue for another year as no-one else had offered to fill this role .

Having retired at the end of September, I was persuaded to stand as Communication Officer at the 2022 AGM and was pleased to help by pulling together the first newsletter since July 2020 just before Christmas.

Chris has, however, agreed to continue to manage the website and Alan Cooke to administer the Association Facebook page.

During lockdown, with the newsletter suspended, we focussed on using email and social media to share information. Zoom was used for meetings and continues to be used in many cases even though restrictions are now lifted.

Many of the initiatives introduced during the pandemic, continue to play an important role. For example, there are prominent links from the main page of our website to the CCCBR [Ringling Forums](#) the virtual ringing hub [Ringling World BellBoard](#) which was designed to be a central place to find information about virtual ringing - related events. As we had hoped, people are adding events to the [calendar](#) which is intended to be self-maintaining with event organisers adding their own events.

The Surrey Association has had a Facebook page since November 2011. This is used to share news, event details, publish performance details from BellBoard and celebrate achievements. There has steadily been more engagement with the Facebook page and followers have increased over the last year from 267 to 332 so members should take advantage of Facebook to communicate across the Association. (See the Spring newsletter for details of how to post to Facebook.)

MemberMojo is now well established and provides a very effective means of communication by email.

Now that the Association newsletter is back everyone should be encouraged to submit articles and photos so that we have a good variety of stories for each edition. Contributions should be sent to [communications@surreybellringers.org.uk](mailto:communications@surreybellringers.org.uk) as should any suggestions on how we can improve any aspect of the Association communication.

**Jackie Harrison**

# YOUNG RINGERS REPORT

## Surrey Strikers (AKA Surrey Young Ringers)

Like everyone the Surrey Young Ringers are emerging from the Covid shutdown.

We have made a good start however, getting back to seeing each other has been wonderful. The most noticeable initial striking feature was how tall everyone had got, not something noticeable over Zoom!

The Ringing World Youth contest changed its date from July to September to enable bands to build back up. A team of 7 from Surrey attended, leaving on a very early train from London to Worcester. Once we arrived, we were lucky to have the use of a small minibus which enabled us to travel to the outlying towers in the morning. In the afternoon we did a walking tour of Worcester, with our test piece of Call Changes being rung at The Cornmarket. At Worcester Cathedral, all the young ringers had a chance to ring on the 12. Also at the Cathedral, a variety of stalls and handbell sessions kept us well occupied. Thank you to the Surrey Association for financial support for this day.

The regular attendees of the group have been taking it in turns to organise a young ringer's practice at their home tower. We have been to Leatherhead, St. Mary's Twickenham, Barnes, and most recently Addington. We have also had some joint sessions with groups from neighbouring Associations. At the Barnes practice in January, we were joined by young ringers from the Middlesex Association. In March we had a joint outing with our old friends The Berks and Bucks young ringers to London, see photo below.

We continue to meet formally once a month which has landed on the 4th weekend either the Saturday or the Sunday, although with plenty of ringing going on now, we meet up in a variety of places. We have entered a team for the Ringing Worlds Youth contest in July, this year to be held in Exeter.

All young ringers are welcome to come and join in our events, do get in contact if you wish to get involved in the group.

**Caroline Prescott**