



NEWSLETTER

MARCH-APRIL 2019



March 2019 Events

- Saturday, 2nd March 2019: Spring Ringing School – 9.45am-12.15pm.
- Saturday, 9th March 2019: Spring Ringing School – 9.45am-12.15pm.
- Friday, 15th March 2019: Surprise Major Practice at Felsted – 1.30pm-3.30pm.
- Saturday, 16th March 2019: Spring Ringing School – 9.45am-12.15pm.
- Friday, 22nd March 2019: Stansted Practice – 7.45pm-9.00pm.
- Saturday, 23rd March 2019: Spring Ringing School – 9.45am-12.15pm.
- Saturday, 30th March 2019: Spring Ringing School – 9.45am-12.15pm.



April 2019 Events

- Saturday, 6th April 2019: 4th SEECOM, St Mary's, Horton Kirby.
- Thursday 11th / Friday 12th / Saturday 13th April 2019: Essex Ringing Course, Coggeshall.
- Friday, 26th April 2019: Stansted Practice – 7.45pm-9.00pm.
- Sunday, 28th April 2019: Young Ringers Practice.



May 2019 Events

- Monday, 6th May 2019 [Bank Holiday]: EACR AGM – Chelmsford.
- Friday, 17th May 2019: Surprise Major Practice at Felsted – 2.00pm-4.00pm.
- Saturday, 18th May 2019: NW District Meeting and Method Striking Competition at Nazeing – 9.30am.
- Sunday, 19th May 2019: Young Ringers Practice.
- Friday, 24th May 2019: Stansted Practice – 7.45pm-9.00pm.



NW Annual District Meeting – Saturday, 26th January 2019

The District Annual Meeting took place on Saturday, 26th January 2019 at Waltham Abbey, attended by 41 ringers and friends. There was open ringing prior to the service followed by an extremely delicious tea, and finally, the meeting. The following District Officers were elected:

- Ian Kerwin – District Master, Education Officer, Public Relations Officer;
- Mike Slowe – Deputy District Master;
- Sue Evans – District Secretary;
- Fred Bone – District Treasurer;
- Maintenance Officer – Bill Griffith-Jones, supported by Ian Jolley and Mike Slowe.



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2019 Essex Course – 11th-13th April 2019

This year's Essex Course will take place next month at Honywood School, Coggeshall. As many helpers as possible are needed for all groups and whether you can commit to one day or three, all help is greatly appreciated. If you are able to volunteer or would like to find out more about what is involved, please contact Hilary Donoghue, Co-ordinator of helpers on norseyhound@aol.com or 07540 066789.



Spring Ringing Course

The Spring Ringing Course commenced at Henham on Saturday, 9th February 2019, running for eight weeks, for six students. The course is covering call changes, Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire.



Helpers Needed

Helpers are always required to assist on both the Spring and Autumn courses. There are a good number of extremely knowledgeable ringers in the District and if you are willing to spend some time providing advice and passing on the benefit of your experience, please contact Ian Kerwin on iankerwin@btinternet.com for your name to be added to the helpers list.



Saturday Afternoon Practices

The additional Saturday afternoon practices held by Ian Kerwin at Willingale after the Saturday morning Autumn Ringing Course proved to be very popular and the sessions were extremely well attended. Given their success, Saturday afternoon practices, for the duration of the Spring Ringing Course, are again being run by Ian Kerwin at Willingale from 1.30pm onwards using the simulator to cover bell handling, rounds, call changes and ringing up and down. All welcome.



EACR 140th Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday, 6th May 2019 at Chelmsford Cathedral. There will be ringing prior to the service and refreshments will be served in the Cathedral.



Life Vice President

Mary Bone from Sawbridgeworth was nominated for Life Vice President at the Management Meeting held at Danbury on Saturday, 2nd February 2019. The nomination was unanimously supported by those present and the vote will take place at the AGM in Chelmsford on 6th May 2019.



65th Annual Essex Dinner

This year's dinner will be held at Benton Hall Golf and Country Club, Witham on Saturday, 19th October 2019. Alan Steward of the Rolls of Honour for the Central Council and Paul Watkin, EACR Chaplain, have been confirmed as speakers.



New and Returned Ringers

Are you aware of any new and returned ringers in your towers who are not on my circulation list for the newsletters/information etc? If so, please ask them to contact me to ensure they are kept informed as to what is happening in the District.



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Media

To join EACR notices email: EACR-Notices-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



Southern District Outing

The following was received from the Southern District regarding their next outing, also inviting ringers from other districts to go along:

The Southern District outing date is Saturday 1st June and we will visit the beautiful city of Cambridge. Nigel Taylor, our master, has asked if people would make a commitment now as to whether they intend to come, as the attendance will affect the towers he will arrange to visit, particularly the twelve of Great St Mary's. June is not so far away if you are arranging an outing - and ringers from other districts would be welcome. Please have a look at your diaries and if you would like to join us, let Nigel know on nigelsdtaylor@outlook.com



Central Council of Church Bell Ringers AGM

The following is from David Kirkaldy, Vice President of the CCCBR:

London 2019

*The 2019 Council weekend will take place at Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW on Friday 6th to Sunday 8th September. **All ringers** are invited to attend the weekend and take part in the activities on offer. Full details of the programme are due to be agreed by the Council's Executive in late February and will be published in May, but are likely to include:*

Friday 6th September

- *Ringling at various London towers*
- *Informal hot buffet supper at Goldsmiths College, followed by a quiz evening with cash bar.*

Saturday 7th September

- *Workgroup sessions followed by the Ringing World AGM and lunch*
- *The 2019 Council Meeting*
- *Service/concert for all*
- *The Council's annual dinner, preceded by the President's reception*

Sunday 8th September

- *Service ringing at local churches, focusing on those where limited or no ringing currently takes place.*
- *Conference programme of seminars open to all ringers, further details published in May.*
- *Lunch, followed by keynote speaker events, details of which will be available from May.*

A mini ringing roadshow, involving demonstrations and stands from various ringing suppliers and organisations will be held alongside the formal events on both Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th September.

Full details of the weekend programme will be available from May, when registration for the Council Meeting, Annual Dinner and other weekend events will be open via the "London 2019" page on the Council's website at <https://ccabr.org.uk/about/meetings/2019-meeting/>

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- *Conference programme of seminars open to all ringers, further details of which will be published in May*



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- Lunch, followed by keynote speaker events, details of which will be available from May.

Suggestions and contributions to the weekend programme

There is still time to make additions to the weekend programme:-

- If you or your organisation would like to take part in the mini-roadshow, run a conference workshop or seminar event, or simply offer your help to make the weekend a success we would be delighted to hear from you.
- If there is an event or seminar which you would like to see included, please let us know.

To get in touch with any suggestions or offers of help, please email the organising team at London2019Events@cccbr.org.uk

Accommodation details are available on the 'London 2019' website as above.



Whitechapel Foundry

Below is an article from 'Spitalfields Life', featuring Nigel Taylor, Southern District Master and EACR Technical Adviser, also containing information, should you wish to do so, on how to write in to support the idea of re-opening the Whitechapel Foundry rather than conversion into a boutique hotel.

Nigel Taylor, Tower Bell Production Manager

Nigel Taylor worked at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry for forty years, from 1976 until it closed in 2017, managing all aspects of making, casting and tuning bells for the last twenty years.

In this interview, Nigel explains why the foundry closed and twenty-five jobs were lost. Yet as advisor to [UK Historic Building Preservation Trust](#) & [Factum Arte](#)'s scheme to reopen the foundry, re-equipped for twenty-first century, he is confident it can have a viable and sustainable future.

Below you can also read a statement by **Dr Tristram Hunt**, Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum who this week declared his support for scheme to re-open the foundry.

If you have not yet submitted your objection to the proposal to redevelop the Whitechapel Bell Foundry into a bell-themed boutique hotel, instructions follow beneath.

"I do not want to see all the things that England once held dear just die, especially the crafts and industries that we once had" – Nigel Taylor

Perhaps no-one was better placed to bear to witness to the tale of the closure of the historic Whitechapel Bell Foundry – the world's most famous foundry – than Nigel Taylor, who worked there for forty years and was the senior foundry man. At the time, we understood that the closure of the foundry was inevitable due to the decline in demand for church bells, but Nigel Taylor has a different story to tell.

His is a sobering account which reveals that the shutting of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry was avoidable. Nigel asserts that it was a deliberate act by the bell founders who chose to sell up and sacrifice twenty-five jobs, rather than take action to modernise and ensure the survival of Britain's oldest manufacturing business. Yet Nigel's testimony also contains hope by asserting his belief that the foundry can have a viable future as a living foundry, rather than be ignominiously reduced to a bell-themed boutique hotel as has been proposed.

Nigel has been consumed by the culture of bells since early childhood and he is a passionate spokesman for those who make bells, those who ring bells, and all those who love bells.



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"I am a Londoner, born in Hampstead. When I was a boy, my grandparents lived in Warwick, so as a small child I often heard the eight bells of St Nicholas. I was fascinated by the sound. I heard the sound of the bells of St Mary's in Warwick as well. When I was five years old, I identified that they had ten bells not eight and they were a lower pitch. So my passion for bells was already there.

When I was six, we moved to Oxfordshire and the bells at Chipping Norton had not been rung for many years but they were rehung by Taylors of Loughborough. A friend of mine said, 'They're trying the bells out tonight, let's go and listen.' They told us, 'You can't learn to ring until you're eleven.' So when we were eleven, we went along to ring and my friend is still ringing the bells in that tower. Once I started to ring bells, I never looked back.

When I left school, I wrote to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry and asked, 'Do you have any vacancies?' I had an interview with Douglas Hughes – father of Alan Hughes the last bell founder – and he said, 'We'll start you off in the moulding shop.' I had no experience. There were no college course in loam-moulding or anything like that. You could do an apprenticeship in an iron foundry in loam-moulding and some of the bell founders did that after they left school. But I learnt everything I know at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. My feelings about it were quite mixed when I arrived in 1976. I had to get used to a lot of bad language which was not tolerated at school in those days. There were an interesting variety of characters, some ringers and some not. I started off making up the loam which is a mixture of sand, clay, horse manure and all the rest of it. I was the one that introduced Jeyes Fluid into the mix, just to kill off some of the bugs. Then I made moulding bricks, using loam, and dried them in the oven. They acted as packing between the moulding gauge or template and the cast iron flask, filling the space between them. Then I started making cores and, after the head moulder retired in 2003, I got to do the inscriptions. I did the lot and I was running the entire foundry production by that stage as Tower Bell Production Manager, managing the making of the bells, the casting of the bells and the tuning of the bells.

I really liked doing the inscriptions. To begin with I made white metal copies of the inscriptions on old bells to transfer to the new ones when they were recast. Later, I made casts of inscriptions in resin and stamped them into the new mould while it was still damp. We also had various letter sets in different sizes, decorative lettering and stock friezes. We often put friezes on bells, at least one if not two or three. It was a very satisfying job, because a bell is likely to last for centuries. I used to put headphones on and listen to some music while I was working and I thought, 'This is going to outlast me.' I have lost count of how many bells I have made. I could count how many bells I have tuned because I have kept my notebooks, so I could go through and count them. It must be thousands.

Just before the Whitechapel Bell Foundry shut, we had an order for some bells from Thailand which required a special stamp. So rather than make it the old fashioned way, I went to a 3D print shop in Canary Wharf and they printed the design for one fifth of the cost of how we did it before. It was a highly significant moment, three months before the foundry closed down.

I want to see the Whitechapel Bell Foundry re-opened as a foundry. I believe it would be economically viable. The previous business could have been economically viable with the right kind of marketing and the right kind of management.

I would like to see local people involved in foundry work, because there are no other buildings in this locality which are suitable for this purpose. I would like to see apprenticeships and training in all aspects of casting – pattern-making, moulding, fettling, machining, polishing and tuning. There are a whole range of different skills to be taught and there would be employment for those people.

I would like to take an advisory role with regard to how best to make use of the building and set up the various workshops, and especially in the design and making of patterns for bells. The previous furnaces were oil-fired but my preference is for electric which would lower the emissions considerably.

I am in favour of modernising the foundry for the twenty-first century. In the last few years, it became increasingly difficult to obtain traditional materials. Quarries which supplied sand were becoming landfill sites, so we struggled to find sand that was suitable to produce loam.



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If you discard that system and use resin-bonded sand instead, the strength of the mould is no longer reliant upon which quarry the sand comes from and you can have a much higher success rate with your castings. It is cleaner too. We used to have clouds of loam dust floating around everywhere – it was a dirty job.

In the past, patterns were made of wood but now we can design the profile of a bell and digitally print the pattern in high-density polypropylene, which can be reused, making the process far cheaper. You can do it in one day instead of over a matter of weeks and you can make dozens of bells with one pattern that way. It is a huge difference.

There was a dip in sales around 2012/3 as a result of government spending cuts. I think bell founders Alan & Kathryn Hughes misinterpreted this as a terminal decline in bell founding, so when the market picked up they were not ready for it. It was obvious to me that they needed a good marketing strategy, but I saw them carry on with their old policy regardless and the Whitechapel Bell Foundry began to decline rapidly while Britain's other bell foundry, Taylors of Loughborough, picked up the lion's share of the work due to aggressive marketing. The Hughes incurred debts in the region of £450,000 but they were thrown a lifeline by the offer of purchasing the building. By then, the building was worth money and the business was worth nothing. So they took the lifeline and foundry closed in 2017.

In my estimation, Alan & Kathryn Hughes ran out of puff. They had two daughters who were not interested in the business. After three generations of ownership, it seemed the Hughes could only see it as a family business, so if no-one in the family was going to run it that was the end of business. That was certainly how it appeared to us, the staff, and it became apparent in the way the Hughes allowed the business to collapse.

I knew the Whitechapel Bell Foundry needed to put in more competitive quotes and carry out free inspections for prospective jobs. We were the only firm in the business that charged for quotations. It cost us a lot of work. We needed to introduce proper marketing, concentrate on their products and skilled staff – not the fact that it was a family business which was the oldest manufacturing company in England. Customers cared more about whether we could do a good job and how much it was going to cost. The Hughes might have introduced some new directors to bring fresh ideas but their notion of a family business prevented that.

So they did none of these things and twenty-five jobs were destroyed. I think the Hughes tried to block out their responsibility to their employees. I saw how Alan Hughes allowed circumstances to decline until they passed a point of no return. He once said to me, after he had announced that the foundry was going to close and we were all going to lose our jobs, he said 'It'll be quite interesting to dismantle it.' It suggested he had formed a barrier to the emotions that must be inherent in anyone whose is going to close a business that has been in existence for over four hundred years.

In my opinion, he closure was avoidable. With the right strategy, I believe the foundry could have survived, or they could have sold the building and the business when it was a going concern and walked away with a nice amount of money in the bank. But their actions revealed they could only contemplate it as a family business. At present, there is a lot of work about. The bell market and the art foundry market are both very buoyant and I believe the new proposal is perfectly viable.

I am District Master of the Essex Association of Bell Ringers, and I still ring bells at least three nights a week and quite a lot at weekends. I am a traditionalist, I do not want to see all the things that England once held dear just die, especially the crafts and industries that we once had."



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STATEMENT OF SUPPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

"The re-established Whitechapel Bell Foundry would add significantly to the creative offer in East London. As the V&A East establishes a substantial presence at Stratford and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and develops particular links with the adjacent boroughs, we would welcome the opportunity to promote the Whitechapel-based art and bell foundry. Combining traditional skills with innovative technology and the offer of apprenticeship and further training in this specialized field will enhance the interpretation of the V&A's important collection of works of art in bronze. Continuing the centuries-old tradition of bell founding in London with its global outreach will enrich the cultural presence and attract national, regional and international interest."

Dr Tristram Hunt



You can help save the Whitechapel Bell Foundry as a living foundry by submitting an objection to the boutique hotel proposal to Tower Hamlets council. Please take a moment this weekend to write your letter of objection. The more objections we can lodge the better, so please spread the word to your family and friends.

HOW TO OBJECT EFFECTIVELY

Use your own words and add your own personal reasons for opposing the development. Any letters which simply duplicate the same wording will count only as one objection.

- 1. Quote the application reference: PA/19/00008/A1*
- 2. Give your full name and postal address. You do not need to be a resident of Tower Hamlets or of the United Kingdom to register a comment but unless you give your postal address your objection will be discounted.*
- 3. Be sure to state clearly that you are OBJECTING to Raycliff Capital's application.*
- 4. Point out the 'OPTIMUM VIABLE USE' for the Whitechapel Bell Foundry is as a foundry not a boutique hotel.*
- 5. Emphasise that you want it to continue as a foundry and there is a viable proposal to deliver this.*
- 6. Request the council refuse Raycliff Capital's application for change of use from foundry to hotel.*

WHERE TO SEND YOUR OBJECTION

You can write an email to planningandbuilding@towerhamlets.gov.uk

or

you can post your objection direct on the website by following [this link to Planning](#) and entering the application reference PA/19/00008/A1

or

you can send a letter to Town Planning, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG.



Peals and Quarter Peals

There has been a marked decrease in the number of peals undertaken during 2018 – 43 peals were rung for the Association in 2018, 25 fewer than in 2017. A full analysis of peals and quarter peals will appear in the 2018 Annual Report.



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My Birthday Outing: by Ian Kerwin

If you're a bit of a bell ringing nut, like organising things and getting about the country, there's nothing better than a bellringing tour in Dorset with a nice bunch of family and friends.



So off we went and having an easy journey down, found ourselves in the White Horse at Stourpaine for lunch. I had a quick bite to eat and leaving the others to it, rushed off to Durweston to give my old plumbing mate, Steve, a two hour lesson [he's only just started to learn the art]. Once lunch had settled down the rest of the gang turned up for our first ring of the afternoon, then back to Stourpaine for a completely different experience on their bells and a well earned pint in the pub again. Back to the Premier Inn at Ferndown



where we met the rest of the group, had a good dinner and a pint or two and to bed.

Next day, with as much breakfast as we could eat, off we went to our first tower for 9 o'clock. We rang at Hampreston, Corfe Mullen and Spetsisbury - a heavier set of 6 bells with a font in the way so good practice! We had a buffet lunch at the Quay Inn at Wareham and then rang the 10 bells in Wareham Church. All was going well until my old mate and I allegedly broke the stay on the eight - I think it was already broken but just fell out when we were ringing it!



Then to a lovely set of bells in the church at Corfe Castle, finishing the day off with a funny little set of six at Worth Matravers. As it had poured with rain all day the wood burners and real ale in the lovely unusual square and Compass pub were most welcome - I could have settled down



in there for the rest of the night!

Next day, after another good help with the service ringing at sorted themselves out. We then marvellous weather walked enjoyed coffee and cake and Altogether, a thoroughly



breakfast, four of us went off to Canford Magna whilst everyone else drove to Sandbanks and in along the beach of Millionaires Row, then headed off for home. enjoyable weekend!



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Sue Evans

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