

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS

TOWER REPORTS 2009



1. ST GILES-WITHOUT-CRIPPLEGATE

Secretary: Gwen Rogers

Steeplekeeper: John P W Taylor

➤ Secretary's Report

Service Ringing

Service ringing has taken place on 29 out of the possible 52 Sundays in 2009, which is a small improvement on 2008. The following table shows the monthly breakdown.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2008	3	2	4	1	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	1
2009	1	4	3	2	3	3	3	1	3	2	2	2

Methods have ranged from a Plain Bob Minimus with a cover to Ariel Surprise Maximus. My notes suggest that the striking demonstrated a similar wide variety. Perhaps the best ringing was the half-muffled quarter peal of Grandsire Caters, rung by the Middlesex County Association on Remembrance Sunday, which inspired the Director of Music to write congratulating the band.

Regular support came from St. Vedast's, Foster Lane, Southwark Cathedral, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Middlesex County Association. Visiting bands from the Oxford Society and Hursley rang for Evensong in March and June.

Ringing was also provided for two weddings and the Barber's annual services.

Practices and Quarter Peals

	2008	2009
ASCY	15	16
SRCY	5	4
MCA	4	9
Southwark Cathedral Guild	3	2
ULSCR	1	-
Leeds Parish Church	-	1
St Martin in the Fields	-	1
Alan Pink's Band	-	1

In October we started teaching bell handling to two parishioners, and have received enquiries from two more. Initial practices were organised at Cripplegate and the learners have joined the tied practice at St.Vedast's on a Monday evening.

In 2010 we intend to trial a monthly eight bell practice on first Sundays. This will start shortly after the Eucharist, at 11.45am. The initial plan is to ring a service touch and then close the shutters to practise ringing on the front eight from call changes to right-place surprise major. I hope Society members will be able to help both in teaching bell handling and by providing steady inside ringers at the monthly practice.

Peals

There were 15 attempts during the year, of which 7 were scored 6 by the Society and 1 by the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths.

Mobile Phone Masts

Yesterday I received a copy of a proposal to install antennae in the tower at Cripplegate. The income to the church is significant, £13,750 pa. Subject to CCCBR checks, one of the possible installations is in the lantern above the bells where I believe there will be no danger to ringers.

➤ **Steeplekeeper's Report**

In general, everything is in reasonable condition. My inspection today revealed only one cause for concern:

5th Pulley: The 5th pulley can rub against the pulley block. It will need attention soon.

Summary of Work Done

Clappers

The clappers were painted with anti-slip paint. The *Big Wilf* muffles were used on Remembrance Sunday and none slipped.

Blinds and carpets

New blinds in April and a new carpet and rope mats in October make the ringing chamber a much nicer place to ring.

Whites

Whites came twice this year. On 26 March 2009 for their routine maintenance and on 22 April 2009.

- Twiddle pins added to 5.
- Replacement pulleys on 3, 4 and 10.
- New slider and runner-board on 3 (to cure the difficult handling)

Rope bosses

Eight of the rope bosses had already been replaced with White's quieter bosses, leaving the four most difficult to change: 2, 3, 4 and 12.

On 13 October 2009 the rope bosses of 3 and 4 were changed. Many thanks to Peter Gardner for doing this.

Windows

Not all windows can be fully closed, and not all can be opened. The frames are warped and only a complete replacement will properly fix them.



2. ST LAWRENCE JEWRY

Secretary: Rebecca L Sugden

Steeplekeeper: David G Maynard

➤ **Secretary's Report**

2009 has been a busy year at Jewry. The first half of the year saw a number of peals being rung as ringers took advantage of the empty Church following the retirement of the previous Vicar, David Burgess, in September 2008.

A new Vicar has been appointed, David Parrott, and we are very lucky that he and his wife are accepting of the bells and are happy for them to be rung on a reasonable basis. After experiencing the bells on a number of occasions it was agreed that there can be one peal attempt per month and up to two visiting bands and quarters. The Vicar and his wife have requested that there are no peal attempts in the evenings or on Sundays and that there is no ringing at all on Bank Holidays. I consider what has been agreed to be reasonable, especially considering that they live in the Church.

As well as providing ringing for the usual services and Corporation events, this year saw the Society ringing handbells during the Corporation Carol Service for the first time. This was well received by those who attended the service, with a number of people coming up to us after the service to say how much they had enjoyed the touch and to ask more about ringing in general.

I would like to thank all members who have rung for any of the Services/Corporation events at Jewry over the last year. Your support is much appreciated.

A total of 17 peals have been scored during this year out of 24 attempts, including 1 handbell peal. There have also been a number of quarter peal attempts and practices. I would like to encourage members to make the most of a ringing friendly Vicar and use the bells at Jewry as much as possible.

➤ **Steeplekeeper's Report**

The new ropes, ordered in late 2008 have still not been delivered by Whitechapel. The 14 month period predicted for our receipt of the ropes has now passed. I have emailed Whitechapel again to ask for an update and am awaiting their response. In the meantime the existing ropes are still holding together despite the recent open season on peal ringing at Jewry during the Interregnum. I hope that the new ropes will be delivered and can be put on in the not too distant future.

We had one broken stay during the early part of last year, courtesy of a visiting band, which was kindly replaced in my absence by the Master and Dr Humphreys prior to a peal attempt. My thanks go to them for this.

The only other item of maintenance that has been required this year was as a result of an incursion into the clock chamber by an inquisitive pigeon. Becky and I removed the pigeon and I blocked the entrance they were using to access the tower with chicken wire.



3. ST MAGNUS THE MARTYR

Secretary: Dickon R Love
Steeplekeeper: James H Foster

➤ Secretary's Report

In 2009, 12 new bells and framework were hung in the tower and rung for the first time on Easter Day. Since then there has been ringing on 131 occasions in 2009 (which averages out to every other day). In 2009 there were 27 quarters, 3 peals, and the bells have been rung every Sunday except for one.

Refurbishment in the ringing room has happened at a slower pace, with the acquisition of chairs and restored peal boards, which are due to be hung in 2010. Air conditioning has also been installed.

A new ring of bells can take 18 months or more to bed in, and the intrinsic and relative volumes of the bells, as well as their oddstruckness, have varied considerably over the year. This makes balancing them very difficult, but as they settle down, I have started to put in place measures to make the whole ring clearer, particularly the front end.

I have been very pleased with the work carried out by Whitechapel and Bakers, our contractors. Whitechapel is due to return to conduct its one year maintenance inspection in April.

Next year we will focus on completing the ringing room, improving the internal acoustics and improving the effectiveness of the sound control. There is still another £4½k of work to be completed which will be funded by ringing donations. In 2009 we collected £1,529.84 of which £1,036.40 was gift aided.

Relations between the Parish and the Ringers is extremely good, and they are extremely grateful for all the ringing that takes place. A showpiece was the ringing last Sunday during the Blessing of the Thames while both Magnus and Southwark congregations were shivering on London Bridge. We were also pleased to host the inaugural London 12-Bell Competition. I am also pleased to note that our friends in the Middlesex are making extensive use of the bells and they are seeing an improvement in the standard of their 12 bell ringing.

Visiting bands		Service Ringing		Quarter Peals		Peal attempts	
Southwark	11	Sunday services	36	Scored	26	Middx	1
ASCY	8	Other services	7	Lost	3	ASCY	1
University of London	6	Total	43			Kent	1
Middx Practice	5					Total	3
SRCY	5						
Middx Quarters	3					Lost	0
Cambridge University	1						
Derby	1						
Docklands	1						
Fire Services Guild	1						
Friends of Dorothy	1						
Guild of Medical Ringers	1						
Hampstead	1						
High Wycombe	1						
Hursley	1						
Kingston	1						
Leeds	1						
Llandaff	1						
St Albans	1						
Staines	1						
Sussex	1						
York	1						
TOTAL	22 bands						



4. ST MICHAEL CORNHILL

Secretary: Antony R Kench

Steeplekeeper: William Dawson

➤ **Secretary's Report**

The bells have again been rung after 44 of the Sunday services in 2009, and on Christmas Day; also for all 5 major midweek choral services plus the Drapers' livery service, the patronal festival and 3 parish weddings, so we've met the church's service ringing commitments pretty well, and created a lot of good will for the Society. Service ringing has generally been to a high standard, and much appreciated by the church. My personal thanks to all those who have been kind enough to take part.

As well as the usual Society practices, we have also entertained a Cumberland practice and visiting bands from Leeds, Colchester, Amersham and Spelhurst (Kent). We've also held a couple of practices based on the midweek service band, aimed at attracting back some ringers who don't otherwise do much ringing these days. There were 4 peal attempts during 2009, 2 successful: Cambridge Max by Richard Allton's ASCY band, conducted by Roy LeMarechal, and Stedman Cinques by Michael Uphill's non-association band, conducted by John Pladdys.

Net income to the Society Bell Fund from peal attempts, visiting band donations and excess from weddings etc in 2009 was £384, which was 45% up on last year.

Our proposal for a new ring of bells still remains with the Chancellor of the Diocese of London for decision. There has however been significant progress in 2009. In September the Chancellor wrote advising that he declined to admit the recent fresh objections, and had decided against holding a full Consistory Court hearing, with the result that he would now proceed to make a decision. As before, we remain quietly hopeful of a positive outcome.

A copy of this report is being lodged with the Ringing Records binder in the ringing room at Cornhill.

➤ **Steeplekeeper's Report**

The first half of the year was very quiet at Cornhill. This all changed in September. On the 12th, a week before my return from Aberdeen, the stay of the 4th fell off during a peal and was discovered upon the ringer attempting to set the bell afterward. After finding replacement nuts at Southwark the stay was replaced.

I have long desired to take a more pro-active approach to steeple-keeping at Cornhill and to this end a working party attended to St Michael's on Saturday 3rd October. My thanks to: John Taylor, Clare Dyer, Ed Gosden, Rachel Aland and Saskia Palmer.

With all the bells down we found 3 of the bell bolts on the second fairly loose, and 2 on the 11th. Everything else seemed to be in good order ready for a peal attempt on Saturday 31st October.

During this peal attempt the clapper of the 6th sheared on the shaft just above the ball. The following Tuesday, David Maynard and myself removed the remaining shaft and crown staple. This was delivered to Whitechapel the next day who did a quick turnaround for us and with the help of Saskia Palmer, the new clapper was fit on Friday 6th November ready for the

dinner weekend and practice on Tuesday 10th. After the Sunday service ringing it was commented that the 6th was not shouting down the stairs as much as it used to. I expect this will change with time as the shape of the ball matches the shape of the bell, but indicates the potential for a quick fix to go towards improving the acoustics.

On Tuesday 10th November during the ASCY practice the tenor clapper sheared about 1/3rd way up the shaft. With help from Saskia Palmer and Nick Smith the remainder of the shaft and crown staple was removed the following day and replaced 8 days later. Unfortunately all the bells had been lowered so the three of us had to get them all up again. Comments on this new clapper have ranged from "I still don't like it but it's no worse than it was before" to "I can't believe how good the tenor sounds now".

In both cases Whitechapel performed a fast turnaround enabling both clappers to be replaced within days, and my thanks go to all the help I have had with this.



5. ST SEPULCHRE-WITHOUT-NEWGATE

Secretary: Katherine L Town

Steeplekeeper: Martin L Cansdale

➤ **Secretary's Report**

In 2009 St Sepulchre had 14 peal attempts, 9 of which were successful, of which 6 were rung for the Society. In addition, three successful handbell peals took place, one of which was rung for the Society. 22 practices, quarters and outings took place.

Most of the ringing took place in the first half of the year; the latter months being somewhat problematic for a number of reasons. Ringing did not take place for reasons including: the builders locking out a number of bands out of the ringing room; a snapped rope; the Cumberlands thinking a tube strike was a suitable reason to have an evening off; and, most recently, the tenor clapper breaking and taking some weeks for the new one to be ready to be fitted.

At the start of the year the Bell Fund held by the PCC stood at £4,020.30. The income for the year has been £774. The one piece of expenditure was replacing the tenor clapper which cost £847.55 (£737 + VAT). Therefore the fund currently stands at £3,946.75. There is an outstanding loan from the bells fund to the church main fund of £13,100.

During the year service ringing was organised before Tuesday practices or specials. This was somewhat of an easier task than in previous years as in the autumn the church closed for building works.

After doing the tower secretary post at St Sepulchre for 6 years I have decided not to seek re-election. I would like to thank all those who have supported service ringing during this time and also to thank all those who have patiently stood in the cold when waiting for the services to finish on Tuesday evenings. Our ringing is very much appreciated by the congregation and by Peter and Lynne Mullen. I my successor well.

➤ **Steeplekeeper's Report**

The last year at St Sepulchre has seen two mechanical failures. The first, a broken rope, occurred during a Society special practice. A complete new set of ropes has been ordered, with delivery expected within the next two months. Later on in the year, during a peal attempt, the tenor clapper broke just above the ball. Whitechapel Foundry produced a replacement clapper to match the dimensions of the original, and this appears to perform very satisfactorily.

My thanks go to Tony Kench for lending a spare rope from Cornhill to replace the broken one and for collecting the new tenor clapper from the foundry, to the IPM for assisting with the changing of ropes, and to Henry Coggill for assisting with the installation of the new clapper.

The longer term business at St Sepulchre is the replacement of the ringing room floor. This has been approved by the PCC, and I had intended to have the work complete in 2009. However, the current building work in the church has included work on the tower and roof, with builders, tools, and materials variously in the ringing room over the last seven months. In light of this the work on the floor has been postponed, but will recommence when the roofing work is complete.



6. ST MARY-LE-BOW

Steeplekeeper: Simon S Meyer

St Mary-le-Bow is not a Society tower, but we have strong links and are grateful to receive their annual report.

There has been a lot of ringing at Bow in 2009. The society was welcomed on 13 occasions for practices and there have been 14 peals during the year, 11 for the society. We have also rung for all the feast days that we were asked to ring for, which is a major factor in maintaining the excellent relationships we have with the church authorities.

A number of the services for the festivals were moved to the evening in 2009 and getting bands for these was not a success. Thankfully in 2010 most of these have returned to lunchtime (I presume they were not a success from the congregations perspective either), and for the 2 occasions where there will be evening ringing I will be organising a quarter peal.

A last minute request for handbells during the carol service on 18 December was satisfied by members & I thank messrs Hughes D'Aeth, Moreton & Uphill for successfully steering me through a course of Stedman Triples. Many people commented to me after the service about how wonderful an addition this was and I received a formal & enthusiastic note of thanks from the rector; unfortunately also saying how wonderful it would be to do this every year (I'm not sure my nerves are up to it!).

I have probably made my single greatest contribution to Bow this year – the ropes have been replaced. I firmly believe that the standard of ringing went up overnight when these were fitted.

And I think it has been nice to see the rector join us, not only for the anniversary dinner, but also for the London ringers' carol service, which underlines how warmly the society is viewed by St Mary le Bow.

So I look forward to welcoming the society to St Mary le Bow on many occasions in 2010 which I am delighted to say will include the London striking competition in October.