



Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 13

Spring 2014

Awl a'huld



St Margaret of Antioch, Cowlinge. See back page.

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From the Editors

First of all a big thank you to all those who contributed to this issue of the magazine. We have never had so much material offered before. This has meant that not everything could be fitted in, so apologies if your article has not appeared this time. We are particularly pleased to include Crawford Allen's account of the augmentation of Elmsett bells from two to soon-to-be five. This has been a remarkable low cost achievement involving second hand bells, one even bought on ebay, and local fundraising and, of course, support from the Guild.

Last November, while the winter issue of this publication was being finalised, there were several notable ringing achievements which just missed being reported:

Richard Knight rang his 500th peal. This was Bristol Surprise Major at Bures.

David Howe rang his 100th peal when he rang Kent Treble Bob Major at Ixworth.

Tom Scase rang his 250th quarter peal as conductor at Brandeston where the band rang Norwich Surprise Minor.

Congratulations to them all.

Looking ahead, we wish the young ringers well as they prepare to go to Worcester to take part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest on July 5th.

As always, please send your contributions, with photographs whenever possible, to magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk or by post to Sue Freeman, High Meadow, Martens Lane, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5AG. Copy for the next issue by the end of June please.

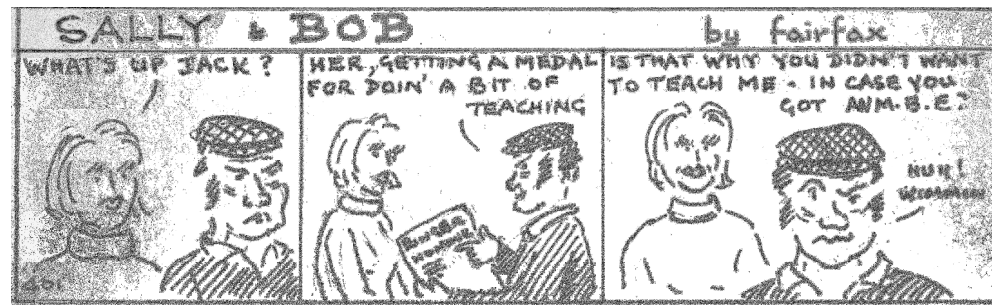


Editors' Quiz.

Where can this face be found? The only clue is that it is in a church in the South West District. If you think you know, contact the editors as above. A prize will be awarded for the first correct answer drawn out of the hat at the end of May.

If there is an interesting face, in glass, wood, stone or paint, in the church where you ring, please tell us about it for possible inclusion in a future issue of the magazine.

Richard Gates and Sue Freeman



From the Guild Chairman

Well that year certainly went very quickly, the year between my being voted chairman and now, when preparation for the next AGM is well under way; but more of that later. As I look back over the year, I have to say there is more that I would have like to have tackled than has been tackled, but I guess that is often the case. The main thing is that the Guild is in good shape: membership and finances are both strong. What should encourage us all is that we are continuing to attract young people to ringing. The Guild can claim only some of the credit for this, the rest goes to ringers young and old members and non members. The role of the Guild is to promote ringing and to do so with a long term view and it is this that makes the recruitment of young ringers so important.



That said I can come back to the AGM. Stowmarket this year with Handbell ringing as the subject of the 'Fringe' meeting and hot food. The 'Fringe' meeting has become an integral part of the AGM and thanks in advance to Jonathan Stevens for once again organising it.

Something new for this year's AGM is a Discussion Forum following immediately after the business meeting. This will be led by Ralph Earey and the topic is 'The Future of Ringing'. Full details of the AGM are on the Guild website and in the panel below.

We usually get a good turn out, for an AGM that is, but we could do better. For those of you who have not attended before, especially new Guild members, please come along; there is something for everybody.

Alan Stanley

AGM Details

Saturday 26th April at Stowmarket Church Hall.

2.00 pm Fringe meeting on Handbells with talk by Neil Thomas of Whitechapel Bell Foundry (in church if the hall is needed by caterers).

2.45 pm - 4.00 pm General ringing.

4.00 pm Service preceded by handbell ringing.

5.00 pm tea in Church Hall followed by AGM.

Ralph Earey will present a discussion on the Future of Ringing after the AGM.

Evening ringing to follow until 8.30pm.

Names for tea to Carol Girling 01449 674425 by Wednesday 23rd please. This is a cooked meal which must be booked – no name, no tea.

Parking: There is some parking in the churchyard and there are 3 public car parks reasonably close. See Guild website for further details.

From the South West

A peal board in the tower at Stansfield gives details of a peal of Grandsire Doubles rung on 13th January 1914, no mean feat for a local village band in those days. When the bells became ringable again in the 1980's, the Clare band started ringing for services at the major festivals. It was discovered that not only was the 1914 peal the only peal on the bells, but the peal board was, then, the only record of it. As the centenary drew nearer, the idea of another peal, on the exact date, was met enthusiastically by the Rector and churchwardens. The bells are a



Peal band left to right: Christine Knight, Richard Knight, Neville Whittell, Stephen Pettman and Alan Mayle.

tricky ground floor five with a sixty foot draught, but a good peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung on 13th January, conducted by Alan Mayle. Several parishioners came along to listen and the centenary was celebrated in fine style with the cutting of a bell-shaped cake, adorned with gold shimmer icing. It was a wonderful village event, in which we felt privileged to take part. A short video, entitled 'Centenary Peal' was placed on YouTube by a local resident.

A peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung at Haverhill on 2nd February to celebrate the 80th birthday of former tower captain, Gordon Adams, who has rung there since 1945. Gordon has been a great source of encouragement to many ringers since then, and we were delighted that both he and present tower captain, Bryan Mills, joined the band in the tower before the peal.

The band was made up of Christine Knight (1), Mary Dunbavin (2), Richard Knight (3), Neville Whittell (4), Brian Whiting (5) and Alan Mayle (conductor, 6).

Christine Knight

Derek Rose writes:

It is with great sadness I write this piece. On Thursday 28th November 2013 Peter Mayle lost his fight for life. He leaves a loving wife Peggy and two sons John and Alan. Peter was very accomplished ringer, ringing many peals and quarter peals in his life, not only a fine ringer but also clock winder and a very good tower keeper. Peter was a very good friend to so many who crossed his path. This is a great loss to his family and friends and to the world of ringing, especially in Suffolk.

More ITTS Success in the North West District

Just before Christmas, Harry Garrod of Bardwell reached level 3 of Learning the Ropes and was awarded his certificate at the Young Ringers Practice at Horringer on 18th January. Level 3 covers basic hunting on the treble and also requires the ringer to ring at least two quarter peals (Harry has rung four!). And at the



neighbouring tower of Great Barton, trainee teacher Neal Dodge has successfully taught new recruit Sue Lawes to Level 1 and the photograph shows Sue holding her certificate with members of the Great Barton band.

Please note that an M2 ITTS course will be held at Bardwell on 11 October.

Ruth Suggett

Left to right: Neal Dodge (teacher), Simon Veal, Jill Rood, Mary Dunbavin (mentor), Sue Lawes (pupil), Alex Brett-Holt, Sally Veal, Doug Rood, Ruth Eyles, Clare Veal, Stephen Munford

And in the North East

In the past few editions we have mentioned ITTS and how well it has worked in our District, so I expect you are all curious to know how some of our learners are doing now. Last November our three new ringers, all learning as a result of ITTS modules, were elected to the Guild at the start of their official ringing careers.

Christine Blunt (home tower Reydon) has pretty much mastered call changes and is currently realising the struggles of Plain Hunt. She tackles each challenge with a broad smile which never fails to amuse.

Matthew Rolph (young ringer from Halesworth) is becoming proficient in his bell handling and working on understanding call changes. Although a lot of learning to ring is done by guidance given by an experienced ringer, the challenge of learning to ring for Matthew has also been helped (or hindered perhaps?) by support from his father, Ed, and older sisters, Alex and Nicole.

Richard Stevens (young ringer from Rendham) is at a similar stage to Matthew. Both Matthew and Richard look ready to master the next set of skills preparing them for change ringing, and we look forward with interest as they learn and grow in skill and confidence.

Ambrin Williams

South East District—a focus on Ipswich

One of the highlights of our District's year is the ringing in all eight of our Ipswich churches the Saturday before Christmas for the shoppers and general public.

For several years our Brian Redgers ('Rev. B.R.') has co-ordinated this; no mean task, involving over 50 ringers. We thank him warmly for what he has done (and indeed St Margaret's for providing refreshments) and to say it IS greatly appreciated by the townsfolk. So much so, the mayor of the Borough had expressed a wish to come and see us ringing at St Lawrence's.

Brian would now like to hand over this job — we do hope someone will be prepared to carry it on.

G.W.P.

London Young Ringers Visit Ipswich



Left to right: Jasmine from Bardwell, Emma, Jack and Geoffrey from Kilburn and Henry Salter.

On Saturday 22nd February, a small group of young ringers from St Mary's Kilburn in London travelled to Ipswich by train to meet up with some of the Suffolk young ringers for a day of ringing and exploring. The day began with a visit to the fine old town centre church of St Lawrence with its impressive tower to ring the historic 'Wolsey' bells, the significance of which was not lost on the group, who had been asked to name important historical events that the bells might have rung out for over the centuries. This was followed by a walk through the bustling town centre, with its market stalls and calling traders, to the quiet setting of St Matthew's for some first practice at Plain Hunting, ably and enthusiastically instructed by Ruth Suggett. The final tower was the mini-ring at The Wolery, where, after what seemed like an epic trek the group were warmly welcomed into the Salters' family home and enjoyed their first experience of ringing on mini bells. The day was rounded off

with a meal in Ipswich before heading back to the big smoke. Our thanks go to Ruth Suggett and the Salter family for arranging the day. This is the first of a number of meet ups being planned this year, the aim of which is to bring young ringers together from across the country to share in the enjoyment of ringing and make new friends. A similar meet up is being planned in London for 6th April, and in Worcester for the National Youth Striking Contest in July.

Michael Royalton-Kisch

The Mayor of Ipswich visits the Ringers at St Lawrence.

As I am sure you all know, the redundant church of St Lawrence in Ipswich contains a complete ring of five pre-reformation bells. Four of the bells were cast around 1450, with a fifth being cast and added around 1480, and they are claimed to be the oldest remaining ring of church bells in the world. They have never been recast and still have their original clappers, and so sound just as they would have done in the 15th century when the young Thomas Wolsey, later to become Cardinal Wolsey, lived in the town. Consequently locally they are known as the 'Wolsey Bells'. A few years ago, because the tower was in a poor state of repair, a tower restoration project took place. This included rehanging the bells in a new frame somewhat lower in the tower with new fittings, but leaving the bells themselves untouched.

Because of the historic nature of the bells, the Ipswich Borough Council were very supportive of the restoration project and provided a good sum of money towards it. As a result of their financial involvement with the project, the Borough Council are keen that good use is made of the bells. Since the restoration of the tower, quite a number of peals and quarter peals have been rung on the bells. But perhaps the most audible and visible way in which the bells are used takes place every Wednesday lunchtime.

Although the church is redundant, it does not lie empty. It now contains a cafeteria which serves meals during the daytime. The bells are rung from a gallery overlooking the cafeteria, so that, should they care to look up, the diners can watch the bells being rung. At the request of the Ipswich Borough Council, ringers from in and around Ipswich gather every Wednesday at St Lawrence and ring from 12:30pm till 1:00pm, and we all consider it a privilege to ring on these historic bells. On Wednesday January 22nd, The Worshipful The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Hamil Clarke MBE, resplendent in his mayoral chain of office came to St Lawrence to see for himself how the bells were rung. Accompanying the Mayor was the Town Sergeant of Ipswich, Mr Andrew Beal. The Mayor was greeted at the bottom of the tower by Dr Bruce Wakefield, the leader of the St Lawrence Wednesday ringers. After a short introduction to the history of the bells, Dr Wakefield escorted the Mayor and his Sergeant up to the Ringing Chamber to meet the ringers who had already assembled there. There he was treated to extents of Grandsire, Plain Bob and Stedman Doubles and ringing down in peal. The Mayor spent his time watching and listening intently to the ringing, and asked numerous questions about bells and bellringing. He stayed asking questions long after the majority of ringers had departed. During the Mayor's visit, his Town Sergeant took many photographs, some of which were later published on the Mayor's Facebook pages. The St Lawrence Wednesday ringers were delighted to have had the opportunity of welcoming such an important visitor to their tower, and one who had taken such an obvious great interest in their activity there.

Bruce Wakefield

A Tale of Two Gotches

At the rear of St Mary's church, Hadleigh is a display case containing a bell ringers' gotch, a beer jug, which once resided in the Eight Bells Pub. Dating from 1715 and holding 16 quarts (approx 18.2 litres) the gotch bears the names of eight ringers and also the following rhyme:

*If you love me due not lend me,
Euse me ofton and keep me clenly,
Fill me full or not at all,
If it be strong and not with small.*

A newspaper cutting from the 1850s states: 'The ringers of Hadleigh have in their possession a curious jug of earthenware, which is kept by the landlord of the Eight Bells Inn, and is brought out on occasions of local weddings among the upper classes. At every Christmas too it is filled with strong liquor by mine host of the Eight Bells, at the ringers' annual frolic, when every stranger who goes into the

room is forced to pay a fine towards replenishing it as it passes around the company.'

Over the years Hadleigh ringers have often thought about filling the gotch at our own frolics but it is somewhat battered and already sports an old repair to one of the handles, so good sense has prevailed and, until recently, we left it in its glass case.

Now there aren't so many gotches, at least not bell ringers' gotches, around these days and so George Pipe asked us to photograph it for a book he was writing on the subject. We had to remove it from its display case to take the pictures and pondered again about filling it up. Tempted as we were we resisted the urge to potentially destroy a three hundred year old pot and instead the Hadleigh ringers decided to make a new one we can use.

Hadleigh has, of course, a wealth of talent living within its borders and

among the eight thousand and odd (some very odd) souls we are blessed with a potter with a special interest in medieval earthenware. Murray, the potter, knew of the gotch and had admired it many times at the back of the church so was pleased to take the commission to make a new one.



We wanted our new gotch to resemble the original as closely as possible in size and shape so the first task was to measure, draw and weigh the old one. Murray than made a small gotch, just to get his eye in as it were, and we all had fun adding our names, and our own rhyme, into the wet clay. The practice piece turned out to be a success so the full size version was thrown and with great trepidation the gotch was fired; this is a big piece of pottery, but all went well.



Holding 12 quarts this magnificent pot has been signed by all the ringers of Hadleigh and also has a verse as well as the weights and musical notes of our bells inscribed upon it. On Christmas Eve we christened it, several ringers drinking beer from its spout. We hope it can be displayed in a glass case at the back of the church adjacent to the old one but this one can be brought out for our frolics. The rhyme reads:

*Ringing bells is thirsty work,
But if this gotch be full,
The ringers thirst can then be
quenched,
And joyfully they'll pull.*



The new gotch is christened by Peter Ulph, while other Hadleigh ringers wait their turn.

Richard Finch

Diocesan Centenary Celebration

This year sees the centenary of our diocese (but not that of the Guild). To help mark this I intend to cycle around the diocesan border and ring at selected towers on the way. The logistics are such that I cannot make it to all of the churches with rings of bells that make up the border parishes and so there will be some places where I hope that local ringers and their friends will help and ring at the times I list so as to form 'A Ring around the Guild'.

Starting on Monday 4th August I will cycle from Ipswich to Felixstowe, I then hope to ring my way to a B&B in Leiston. The next day I want to get as far as Beccles via our most remote tower at Covehithe.

On the Wednesday I will be riding along the Waveney valley and should reach a guest house just over the border in Diss. Next is a long day ending at Mildenhall, then on the Friday via the Newmarket spur into the South West to finish in Sudbury.

The final day is a run along our southern border via the Shotley peninsula and then to Ipswich for a train journey home.

Obviously I cannot do this unsupported so I am looking for ringers to either come along with me (you don't have to cycle) or pop in and out for a while or, failing that, just help out at their own tower. I have a tight schedule so it is key to get in and start on time though others are welcome to stay slightly longer.

Please support me either on foot, bicycle or car/motor cycle for as long as you can.

Jed Flatters

St Peter's, Elmsett Bells

St Peter's, Elmsett is a plain, peaceful church set in a quiet corner of Suffolk, three miles from Hadleigh. The church today was built of stone and flint, and there is positive evidence that the major part of the nave existed in the 12th Century. Since then, the tower and porch (13th Century) and chancel (14th Century) have been added and the early thatched roof has been replaced by a tiled roof.

The bell-frame is medieval and in 1553 housed four bells. It is very unusual in that it is very tall and the bells hung not on the top members but half way up. There are only two other frames of this design in existence – one at Dalham and the other at Hitcham.

By 1956 there were only two bells. The treble founded by Thomas Gardiner and dated 1726 weighed 5cwt and the tenor which was cracked and founded by Miles Graye of Colchester in 1636 weighed 6cwt. By 1993 it was decided by the parish that something had to be done.

The rarity of the medieval frame required it to be retained in situ and because of its weakness there would need to be a new frame hung below the old frame. The tower is not strong enough to take full circle ringing with a 6cwt tenor without a ring beam which would be too expensive and so it was decided to aim for a ring of bells

with a 3cwt tenor hung in a grillage frame putting less stress on the tower. The old Miles Graye tenor was recast by Taylors to form the tenor bell of a ring and hung in 2003. With the help of the Keltek Trust the Thomas Gardiner bell was found a new home at Bacton in Norfolk. Shortly after the tenor bell was installed we were approached to have a bell cast in memory of two parishioners and so in early 2005 the second bell was installed, again cast and hung by Taylors.



The tenor bell

Two years later a suitable bell for augmentation to three became available

from the Keltek Trust who very kindly donated the bell to us and with other donations, a Suffolk Guild grant and promises of loans the 'new' treble to the three was hung by Taylors and dedicated in December 2008.



The back three bells

Ringling Plain Hunt Three becomes a bit monotonous after a while, so when the Keltek Trust found a treble on ebay to make a ring of four there was a flurry of fund raising and with further donations and grants Taylors were able to hang the bell in 2013 in a two bell frame extension.

Shortly before the bell was hung one of our ringers sadly died. He was very keen for a ring of five to be completed and a new bell will be cast by Taylors bearing the

inscription Howard and Rosemary Fox. Rosemary is part of the Sunday Service band.

We are extremely grateful to the Keltek Trust without whose help this project would not have got so far and also to the Suffolk Guild for their generous grants and support for our fundraising efforts.

The bell details are as follows:

Treble	Gillett and Johnson 1935	1-1-4 in B flat
Second	Taylors of Loughborough 1900	1-2-25 in A
Third	Taylors of Loughborough 2004	2-1-10 in G
	In memory of Sybil Ladbrook 1907-1997 and Christine Ladbrook 1911-2002	
Tenor	MILES GRAYE MADE ME 1636	3-0-24 in F
	Recast by Taylors of Loughborough 2003	
	Helen's Bell	

Betty Baines honoured

What a joy it was to welcome in 2014 with the news that Betty Baines had been awarded an MBE for her services to bellringing in South Norfolk and North Suffolk. Many of you will know Betty, having rung with her or having been fortunate enough to be taught by her. Betty's immense involvement covers many different aspects of the craft and the impact she has had and continues to have is immeasurable. In particular she has made a real and positive difference to the Ladies' Guild and members often travel many miles to attend one of her practice mornings. She has been our Ringing Master for many years during which time membership in the Eastern Region has grown dramatically, along with enthusiasm and skills.

Betty started ringing when she was eleven, but it was in the 1980s that her ringing activities steadily increased as she became involved in the teaching of new recruits and the formation and encouragement of many new bands of ringers. At the same time her involvement in the Ladies' Guild was increasing and she achieved high status in both the LG and the Norwich Diocesan Association of Ringers. Betty also organises extra activities. Known as Ringers' Rambles, these focus on a different area of East Anglia each year, walking footpaths that link churches where bells may be rung. The ringers take a picnic and enjoy walking/ringing and good company.

Another annual fund raising event for the NDA is a programme of Open Days for ringing in up to 30 towers which, as we all know, takes a great deal of organising!

The notion to nominate Betty for an award came out of a conversation with Pam Wakeling when we both realised that instead of just talking about our unsung hero, we should take action. There followed many months of research

and secret gathering of bits of information from other ringers. Sadly during this time Betty's husband Tony became seriously ill and died in January last year. He would have been so proud of her. His memory will live on in the many towers he worked upon in East Anglia, and with the newly cast bell to be hung at Cromer. It has been a privilege to be involved with Betty's nomination for an award which is richly deserved. Betty herself had this to say, 'It's just fantastic - I couldn't believe it, it's such an honour'.

Angela Packer



Betty celebrates with Ladies' Guild members at Gislingham

Suffolk Young Ringers' Hallowe'en Day

On the Thursday of October half term 16 young ringers plus some slightly older ringers were involved in a Hallowe'en ringing extravaganza. The fun started at the complete Thomas Mears 17 cwt eight in the fine perpendicular church at Helmingham where the eight members of the York band gathered for an ultimately failing quarter peal attempt which I'm sure would have been scored if not for the commitment to get to our next tower. But we did ring some nice spliced doubles and a cracking ringing down in peal which you can view on YouTube and the Suffolk Guild of Ringers website.

The next tower was Winston, a light five, situated in a village of only 100 souls. Here we were joined by the other young ringers and we rang a mixture from rounds for the people taking their first steps in the noble art up to the chosen method of the day: All Hallows Place Doubles.

After this characterful tower it was on to Debenham, a tower steeped in Suffolk's ringing history. How appropriate it was that we were met by Radio Suffolk's Rob Dunger who discussed the merits of change ringing with Ambrin and me. He's very keen to keep in contact with what we're doing in the county so you'll probably be hearing or seeing more of our dulcet tones on the airwaves as people watch the radio according to Ambrin! Thank you to Michelle for organising the coverage. It could turn out to be highly lucrative when it comes to the Ringing World National Youth Contest in the summer. The ringing at Debenham was of a high standard, with a great range of ringing from those who had their first chance of ringing on eight up to a lovely course of Stedman Triples and of Bristol Major; a portion of the former can be seen on YouTube. Everyone should be proud of what they rang.

Now it was time for some fun and games in Dove Cottage. First though some food was in order, all prepared, in a Hallowe'en style, by the self-styled four witches of Suffolk. I can confirm it was all very tasty and consumed with great gusto. Then on to the games which included a trick or treat version of pass the parcel which included impressions of 'famous' Suffolk ringers and an incident with a box of flour. I'll leave you to imagine what was involved!

Many thanks to all those who came along. Please do keep supporting these events in any way you can, whether by informing your young ringers of these events or bringing them along. They really do make a difference as they give us an opportunity to ring something more advanced and mix with fellow ringers which is a great factor in retaining these ringers. If you know of any young ringers who don't currently attend our events do get in contact with us.

Thank you to the small but dedicated team that makes these events possible; long may these high calibre meetings continue. They are all listed in What's On. The future is bright if we maintain this enthusiasm for the young ringers of Suffolk.

I'll leave you with this quote from Ralph Emerson: 'Enthusiasm is the mother of effort, and without it nothing was ever achieved.' Food for thought!

Neal Dodge

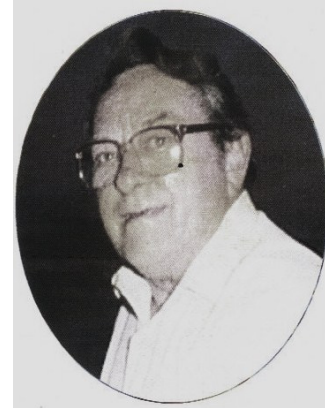
Roger Peters – an appreciation

On the 21st February I attended St Mary's church, Benhall for the funeral of Roger Paul Peters. Roger was born on the 12th December 1925 and lived his early life in a house his father Alfred built at Barking Tye. Alfred was tower captain at Barking and he would cart young Roger around on the back of his old bike to the churches he went to ring at, hoping that Roger would take up the art, but Roger resented being propped on window sills in the cold – no way was he going to learn to ring.

After leaving school he joined the Merchant then Royal Navy, serving until the end of the Second World War, after which he transferred to the Royal Engineers. Based at Chatham he learned his trade as a bricklayer. While there he met a young wren called Joan Elizabeth Ely. They fell in love and remained happily married for the next 65 years, raising four sons in the process. Roger spent 12 years in the army, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant and became a qualified Clerk of Works. This brought him back to Suffolk where he became Clerk of Works for the Blyth District Council in Saxmundham. He bought a house at Benhall.

At about this time Roger's father died and Roger deeply regretted never having rung with him and finally decided to learn. In January 1969 Roger and second son Michael came under instruction from Peter Bedford of Aldeburgh. Peter liked to start his learners off on backstroke only, in rounds. Roger told me the only time he touched the sally was when Peter wasn't looking and he poked it twice with his finger. Roger never did anything by half and, wanting to know about the Guild and who was who, he decided to go to a SE District meeting at Sproughton. There he met the Revd. Brian Redgers and was invited to ring. Roger explained he was only a learner so Brian said he'd look after him. They pulled off, Brian told Roger to catch the sally and after a few pulls told him, 'You'll be alright,' then walked off and left him to it - Roger survived.

I met Roger when I moved from Kelsale to live in Benhall. He asked if I could give a hand with a new band he was hoping to start at Benhall, as he'd heard I was a ringer. (I'd been taught by Les Ludbroke 12 years before and rang with the call change band at Kelsale.) When I went along to practice on Thursday I found the band ringing all funny stuff like plain hunt and plain bob doubles and minor – something I knew nothing about. With a lot of help from the Aldeburgh band, Benhall progressed quite quickly, ringing at both towers on Sunday and two practices during the week. Roger and I were both a little crazy about ringing. In the early days we got the bug and in our innocence (or naivety) we'd jump in the car and drive around the villages with the windows down trying to hear bells ringing so we could join in. Invariably we'd end up in a pub to drown our sorrows, not having found anywhere to ring. Roger struggled to acquire rope sight in the early days and rang his first couple of quarter peals entirely by numbers, but he soon progressed.



Always busy, while learning to ring he was extending his bungalow and before the walls were plastered they were covered by numbers and blue lines – his way of learning. Roger had a rare talent for being able to blend in wherever he went and he soon got to know all the local towers and beyond. It was not long before several guild officers and other good ringers seemed to creep into Benhall practice. I could never make out whether it was the glorious ringing from the 8 ½ cwt six or Roger's famous home brew that brought people so far. One of the visitors was Howard Egglestone, then Guild Ringing Master and tower captain at Henley. Roger would often visit Henley practice and afterwards Claydon Crown for a drink. One night it was rather crowded and the only seat Roger could find was a three legged stool. He brought it over to the table, plonked it down and said, 'It's like milking cows.' Howard replied, 'That probably accounts for your particular style of handling.' The two towers became quite close and an outing and strongly contested football match were organised each year.

Roger decided a record should be kept of the exploits of Benhall tower. It started as an A4 handout but of course it could not stay like that and within the year it was a ten page quarterly magazine which turned into The Headstock and Gudgeon, a truly marvellous production. There were stories of large sums of money changing hands in Ipswich and elsewhere, just so that outsiders could get a glimpse of it and spy on the NE District. Another project, The Society of East Coast Ringers of which the Headstock and Gudgeon became the official journal, was launched by Roger and co-founder Peter Bedford. You had to ring for service six times a year in an East Coast tower between Lowestoft and Orford to be eligible.

Howard wrote an ABC of ringing for the Gudgeon:

A is for Aldeburgh, Adnams and ale

B is for Benhall where rounds never fail

C is for Cambridge which never will come.....

'We'll see about that,' said Roger. It did and much more.

Roger served as District Chairman and on the Guild Management Committee. He was Benhall tower captain and correspondent for many years and was the driving force behind the tower. He rang just on 300 peals, from doubles to royal, including half a dozen handbell peals.

Aside from his ringing he had other talents like drawing, painting, sign writing, making stained glass windows, wood carving and turning and of course making teddy bears. He spoke six languages and his diary entries were in Arabic!

Roger was an unassuming man who led a relatively simple life. He never sought any reward, content that people got pleasure, as he did, from the things he did or made. I know that I, like many others, would not have achieved the things in ringing that I have, without his influence.

Rest in peace old mate, you deserve it.

Trevor D. Hughes

The Church of St Margaret of Antioch, Cowlinge

The Church of St Margaret of Antioch in Cowlinge (pronounced 'Coolinje') serves a large but scattered parish in the far west of the county. It has stood for over 650 years in a fine position on rising ground to the north of the village and is surrounded by a churchyard containing a large number of beautiful 18th century gravestones. The sturdy tower is a comparatively late addition, being built in 1733 by Frances Dickins of nearby Branches Park. It is bold rather than beautiful, but is a good example of Georgian Classical architecture in brick. It houses a ring of five bells with a 10 cwt tenor. Three were cast in 1734 and the other two in 1809. Much of what can be seen outside the church is about 400 years older than the tower. The nave and aisles took their present shape in about 1330. The aisles are lit by beautiful Decorated two-light windows all with elegant tracery.

The atmospheric interior is a treasure house of ancient and interesting things which is why it caught the eye of Simon Jenkins when compiling his book 'England's 1000



Best Churches'. St Margaret's escaped major Victorian restoration which might well have altered it out of all recognition. Instead the restoration came in 1913-14, by which time 17th and 18th century fittings which the Victorians often threw out were being conserved and treasured for their own sake.

Features well worth a visit to see include:
the wealth of graffiti stretching back to mediaeval times carved on the stonework of the piers;
the area where the inmates of the Correction House used to sit;
the 15th century, exquisitely carved, parclose screen around the Lady Chapel;
the remains of a large wall painting above the chancel arch. This was restored in 1991, but it is still useful to have a guidebook in your hand to help you make out the figures in this slight variation of the Doom, or Last Judgement.
There is plenty more to see and you would be most welcome. The church is kept unlocked during daylight hours.

David Wedgwood