



Awl a'huld

Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 7

Spring 2012



St Mary's, Woodbridge. See back cover.

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From the Editorial Team

It's spring again, there are wild flowers in the churchyards and the promise of some excellent ringing weather to come. Welcome to the spring issue of your Guild magazine.

This time our centre pages focus on the restoration of the famous Helmingham bells.

We are pleased to include articles by several new contributors, including two members of the Salter family. Katherine writes about a Mothers and Sons peal and David looks through the Guild's peal records. Actually it's three members of the same family if you include George's appeal on page 13 for young ringers for the National Youth Contest.

It is encouraging for the future of ringing in Suffolk to read about new ringers at Eye and Mildenhall and the new ringers' training sessions in the SW District. Clearly much good teaching is being done.

We are of course grateful to all our contributors, for their time and material. Please keep sending it in and please don't forget that a picture makes an article so much richer. In response to a request, we have included the answers to the crossword.

The AGM is coming up in April. Your editorial team will be represented and we are always grateful for feed back or happy to just chat about the magazine. You don't have to wait for the AGM; drop us an email at any time at the address below.

Copy for the next issue should reach us, at either magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk or Sue Freeman, High Meadow, Martens Lane, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5AG, by 23rd June. Maybe we will run something about Jubilee ringing so lots of pictures please.

In the meantime, enjoy your ringing.

Alan Stanley, Richard Gates and Sue Freeman

Suffolk Guild AGM will be held on Sat. 14th April at Boxford
Full details on the guild website under News, What's On.



From the Chairman



What exactly does the General Management Committee (GMC) do? My instant, rather flippant answer to this question, asked of me recently, was “as little as possible”, but on reflection I think that to do as little as possible is a **good** aim. All across the County, bands of ringers ring on Sundays, often at multiple towers, and keep practices going despite the best endeavours of bad weather. If they need help, their local GMC rep is not, usually, the first person they turn to: it is their Deanery Rep and District Ringing Master who are best placed to give, or at least arrange for advice and practical support. Peals and quarters are rung without any GMC involvement. At the next level up,

District officers manage to collect subscriptions, and organise practices and other events without any reference to GMC; again if they need help the Guild Officers are there to advise. Guild Officers are answerable to GMC, but wherever possible they are allowed to get on with whatever they want to do as long as it's reasonable: GMC may ask questions, but will usually support any initiative that is seen to be good for Suffolk ringers.

One such initiative is the national Integrated Teacher Training Scheme (ITTS). The Master and the Recruitment and Training Committee (R&T) are very keen that this should be adopted in Suffolk, and GMC recently gave support to this. A full explanation of the scheme can be found on page 28 of this year's Ringing World, and you'll be hearing more about it as time goes on.

The GMC does have a number of important tasks to fulfil, mostly financial in nature. Most roles are delegated to individual officers so that the Committee's role is just supervisory. If so little is actually done why do the meetings take two hours or more? The answer is that a lot is going on in the Guild, and it takes that long to assimilate everything and form an opinion. All the members of GMC make a contribution to meetings, and matters are debated properly so that informed judgements are made. But we “do” as little as possible!

As a postscript I can tell you that draft minutes will now be published on the Guild website about a fortnight after meetings so that all members can find out what the hot topics are.

Philip

From the arctic wastes of the NE

I thought it wouldn't work. How wrong I was. The ringing master's scheme to open as many little-used 5 bell towers as possible for the ringing element of the NE ADM on 12th November 2011. The bait of "hard to get" towers attracted ringers from Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and beyond. It proved to be a great idea; as a bonus the small charge to ring at each tower benefitted the local fund. (Another idea: how about "steepleage" for every ringing meeting?)

Another highlight of the day was a true "ringers' tea" prepared and served by a local lady in Wenhaston Church Hall. I withhold her name as she could be head-hunted, but she knows who she is! Believe me, if I heard she was preparing a supper for stray dogs I would go!

Our District Carol Service, this year at St Peter's, Wenhaston, was again very well attended. The usual Christmas carols, of course, but this year instead of the usual lessons there were readings from such writers as John Betjeman, G.K. Chesterton and Robert Southwell. All gave a new interest to the service as did carols rung on handbells by the Reydon ringers. When all was over, but before the congregation could move, a perfectly rung course of Bob Minor filled the church with a magic sound that only handbells rung in a high vaulted church can produce.

After this there was nothing else to be said.

Don Price

News from the North West The Bells are ringing in Eye

What do 2 refugees from Lancashire do when they fetch up in Eye? How do they spend their time when there's nowhere to "spark clogs" or "wind a bobbin", the Halle Orchestra is far away and Manchester City FC likewise?

Well, as Suffolk boasts miles of beautiful, open, countryside plus some wonderful churches, if you're my husband you become a *Bicyclist* and if you're me, you find yourself ringing bells! Bell ringing is proving to be a fascinating activity as well as a source of new friendships and I feel that I'm helping to keep alive a centuries-old tradition.

I started ringing in April 2011, joining a group of other "apprentices" which means that we've all developed our skills together. Our Tower Captain, St John Perry, has demonstrated patience above and beyond the call of duty but has perhaps, finally, reached the stage where he can say, "By George, they've got it!" We really do feel like a band now – christened unofficially "The Clangers" by one of our members but officially the newly-constituted Eye Company of Ringers. Our band consists of people aged 14 to 70+, natives and "refugees" alike, some with real musical ability and me with a tin ear. But you don't need any qualifications – apart from the ability to get up the 52 steps to the ringing chamber.

On 1st January to mark our first service ring we held a celebratory lunch and one of our band designed a colourful and witty "Thank You" card for St John depicting the

News from the North West District (cont.)

Eye church tower with band members at various stages of ringing (and collapse!) annotated with some of St John's exhortations and homilies e.g. "No bent arm ringing!" This is currently being framed and will soon take pride of place in the ringing chamber.

We are now official members of the Suffolk Guild and have rung for several services, most recently Candlemas. Our next challenge is to ring "Queens".

And finally - as a fellow Clanger remarked, "A floppy rope means an unhappy bell".

Happy ringing!
Susan Robinson



The band for the New Year's day ring: back row L to R; Lucy Jordan, Sara Muldoon, Adrian Beatty, Keith Marlow; front row: Moira Jordan, Valerie Beatty, Susan Robinson, Emily Jordan.

From the Southwest - training

South West District Ringing Master Derek Rose has initiated a series of monthly Saturday training sessions for new ringers. These are aimed at people who have learned to handle a bell and wish to move on, either to ringing rounds and call changes or progressing to plain hunt and then plain bob, whether doubles, minor or triples. It is felt that ringers who are more advanced than this would continue to

attend the monthly District Practices. Now that, happily, there are many new ringers in the district, it was felt that their interests could best be served at training sessions separate from the District Practices which can seem rather intimidating to those just starting out in ringing.

The first of these sessions was held in February at Kersey and attracted 24 people, so the need is obviously there!

South East District News

Happy ringing in 2012 to you all from the South East district. Our centrepiece is Helmingham – what a joy to have them restored and of course we remember the great band there of the 1920s and 30s.

Despite the snow the year has got off to a good start: practice meetings, peals and quarters and some noteworthy conducting achievements. Congratulations for the 'Mums and Sons' peal at Rendham conducted by Katharine Salter – at least the mothers knew what their boys were up to when 'tied to a rope' for three hours!

As I write this we look forward to our quarterly meeting at Earl Soham and Dennington; lovely part of Suffolk where fine churches abound, Dennington worth a full day on its own.

A personal thank you for kind messages received during my two spells in hospital. In lighter vein I'm off to Papworth at the end of February to be fitted with a pacemaker. This should improve my striking!

Let's make a real effort to ring at all our towers for Easter Day. Perhaps groups can arrange a 'round robin' to make sure every ring is heard at the joyous festival.

Sad news about Tinker (Ephraim) Lockwood's passing. He and Winnie were great supporters here when they lived at Hintlesham, cycling in to Ipswich in all weathers. They served the Guild well.

May he rest in peace.

George Pipe

Rambling Ringers

Because I write from time to time about the Rambling Ringers' tours I organise you will be aware that Alan and I are regular members of this ringing tour. I have been secretary for 5 years and we and Richard and Christopher have been members since 1994 when we first joined a tour in Worcestershire.

From the archives I have discovered the first tour was organised by a group of mainly Midlands based ringers who fancied having a longer than weekend tour. They had applied to join the Roving Ringers only to be told they were taking no new members, so the idea to organise their own was born.

The first tour in 1951 covered quite a

large area of South Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. At the first AGM which took place in Horbling churchyard in S Lincolnshire were the first nine members pictured. Some readers will recognise some of the faces not least a former Ringing Master of the Suffolk Guild, Martin Thorley. Also pictured are Margaret and Nancie Swann, Hugh Longland, Bryan Cope, Patrick Chapman, Janet Simpson, J Robin Worsdall, John E.Cook (elected R.M. Margaret Swann sec).

The AGM is now held in the more civilised surroundings of a hotel, with dinner on the 3rd Saturday of February. It is generally held in the Midlands.

Now we have about 60 members who

Rambling Ringers (cont.)

sometimes join us regularly for a week, fortnight or just a few days if maybe it is close to their home. During the whole two weeks probably about 50 members will have joined at some time, the most being at the meeting, generally in a churchyard on the middle Saturday where the next year's destination is decided. It is lovely to meet up with friends not seen at other times.

On tour about 10 families make their base at a camp site, others being in self catering accommodation or bed and breakfast.

The standard of the ringing is very important and one of the main enjoyments for many is having a go at the many unusual methods on the week sheet generally relating to the area we are in. Other than for partners and children of established members the level is set at a minimum of Cambridge Minor mainly to enable the Ringing Master to give every ringer a fair go on the tour, not easy on the days with over 30 ringers to be fitted in 45 minutes on a six.

Every member pays a levy per day

or a little less for whole weeks. This means that every tower gets a donation if they wish but many opt for our preferred way of giving which means a bulk donation of well over £1,000 to the local Guild Bell Fund or divided between several Guilds if a wide area is covered.

Members come from Lancashire, Yorkshire, Newcastle, Devon, Wales, Eire and Holland to name a few.

Last year the tour was in Northamptonshire. 2012 will have to be Northern because of the Olympics. The tour is always two weeks from the last Saturday in July.

Sally Munnings



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Waterloo bells restored at Helmingham

Helmingham Hall gardens are visited by thousands of people every year. But how many of these visitors to the moated historic home of the Tollemache family, Earls of Dysart, are aware of the church nearby whose sonorous ring of eight was given, in 1816 by the sixth Earl to mark the victory at Waterloo? These bells came to be rung by a famous band, estate workers at the Hall, whose achievements became legendary. By the outbreak of World War II the band had rung almost 400 peals, including 46 different Surprise Major methods.



Nearly 200 years after their casting at Whitechapel by Thomas Mears II in 1815 the bells were in need of attention and, inspired by the approaching bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the village decided it was time for a major restoration. Mrs Doris Haas, secretary of the PCC, was the driving force behind the scheme. Fund-raising began. Local efforts included the sale of 50 small crosses carved by Aubrey Forster from the old timber bell frame. Many different trusts were approached for grants including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Landfill, Suffolk Historic Churches, the Schroder, the Sharpe, the Scarfe, the Fitzmaurice, the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, Suffolk County Council, the Tollemache and the Barron Bell Trust. Even so, the village is still fund-raising to pay off the shortfall kindly underwritten by Lord Tollemache.

The restoration was carried out by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. A new frame was constructed, on one level, rather than the previous two tier design. New headstocks, designed to retain the canons, were fitted, the original clappers were retained and the bells turned and tuned. The sallies of the new ropes are black and silver, Tollemache heraldic colours.

Much building work was needed:

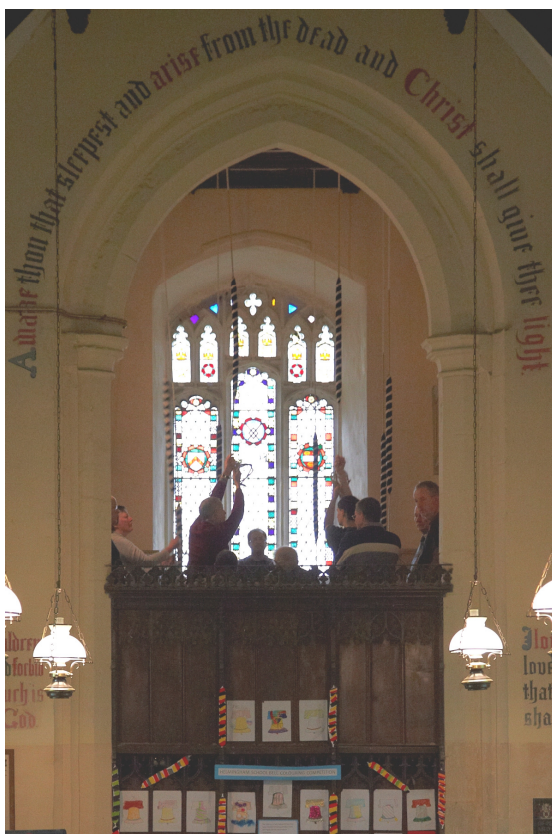
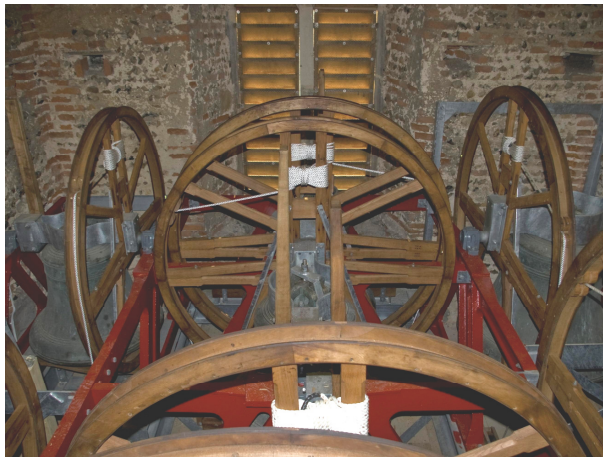


St Mary's, Helmingham

Waterloo bells restored at Helmingham (cont.)

a new trapdoor had to be made at the outset so that the bells could be lowered. John Younger Ltd. of Sudbury did sterling work in the confined space of the tower. They built a new belfry floor and cut out the twelve holes in the masonry needed to take the ends of the new bellframe foundation beams which they then built in.

The Whitechapel team, led by Neil Thomas, included volunteer labour provided by



Suffolk Guild members Jonathan Stevens, Chris MacArthur, John Pereira and Tom Scase.

The culmination of all this work came with the re-dedication of the bells by the Dean of St Edmundsbury, the Very Reverend Frances Ward on October 15th. There was great celebration of the success of the project. The first peal on the newly restored bells was rung on 10th December; 5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major Comp. S D Pettman

- 1 Brian Whiting
- 2 Peter W Harper
- 3 Stephen D Pettman (C)
- 4 Margaret H Ross
- 5 David E Rothera
- 6 Thomas G Scase
- 7 David I Stanford
- 8 Brian G Meads

Thank you to Doris Haas for providing information for this article and to Dan Styles for the photographs of the church.

Mothers and Sons

For some while my husband, David Salter, had been wondering if a peal could be organised with the band made up entirely of mothers and their sons. One night after a peal we mused as to who we knew that fell into this category. We quickly realised that there were several to choose from in Suffolk. The conversations which followed established four pairs of mothers and sons who would like to participate. That was the easy part; it took several months and many e-mails to establish a mutually convenient date.

The mothers and sons were Jenny and Tom Scase from Debenham, Ruth and Louis Suggett from Bardwell, Diana and Andrew Leach from Carlton Colville, Katharine and George Salter from Ipswich. Diana was in the luxurious position of being able to choose which son to bring; her other son Craig is also a competent peal ringer.

We opted to ring Plain Bob Major in order to give us the best possible chance of ringing a good peal. The composition was a contraction of the famous 10,080 Plain Bob Major that Rod Pipe composed for a peal rung at

Debenham in 1967. Rod was the obvious choice as composer as he was born in Suffolk and rang peals with his mother.

On 7th January we finally achieved what had been so long in the planning. It was an enjoyable peal, with a slightly different pre peal atmosphere in the tower. (It is not often that there are four of us ringing with our children or more unusually four of the band all ringing with their mothers!)

Thanks must go to David Salter who worked so hard to make it happen, the rest of the band without whom it would not have been possible, the Rendham band for the use of their bells and Bill Butler for his research. We hope at some point to ring another one, perhaps surprise major with one of the boys calling.

Until a few days ago we believed that ours may have been the first mother and son peal attempt, but Bill Butler has uncovered an earlier one, rung at Feltham on September 22nd 1951, conducted by Dick Price.

Katharine Salter



Sons and Mothers from the left: Andrew Leach, Diana Leach, Louis Suggett, Ruth Suggett, Tom Scase, Jenny Scase, George Salter, Katharine Salter.

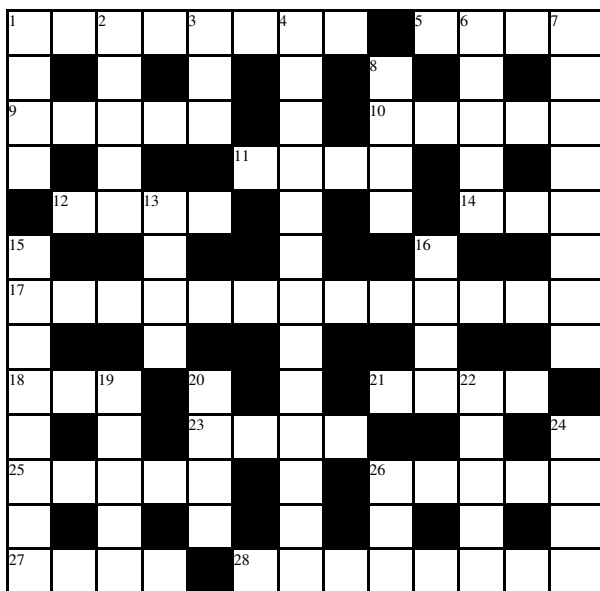
Crossword by Richard Gates

Clues across

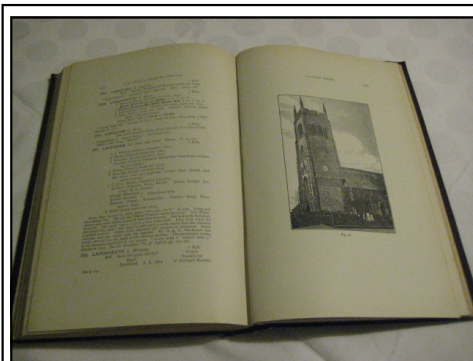
- 1 Newspaper watcher (8)
 5 An instrument sounds like beautiful French (4)
 9 An animal be added to where the sun rises (5)
 10 Move slowly when sucking up to someone (5)
 11 Top performer in the sky (4)
 12 Flash youth conceals the remains of a fire (4)
 14 Melancholy part of this advice (3)
 17 Definite article for a man who drops explosives (3,10)
 18 Get a weapon for a body part (4)
 21 Partly hamper my hair do (4)
 23 Caters for tailors (4)
 25 Rearrangement rated for commerce (5)
 26 A port over-flown by Vera's blue birds (5)
 27 Singer Johnny in the money (4)
 28 As Seen On Screen around best fibrous material (8)

Clues down

- 1 Orbits are spherical without it (4)
 2 Country mansions where people can sit (5)
 3 Backward tar leaves a sinking ship (3)
 4 Religious period for playboy rabbits (6,7)
 6 North and South with Adam's wife makes bets level (5)
 7 Los Angeles in short begins confused pry aid of stones (8)
 8 An area of a city that fell in the last crusade (4)
 13 Central points for bush reorganisation (4)
 15 Clan Tait forms this ocean (8)
 16 In a daze about a wood working tool (4)
 19 Ways and this makes this to an end (5)
 20 Afresh or wean in another way (4)
 22 Rampart wall a severe veteran encloses (5)
 24 Little Arthur's skill makes him an MA (4)
 26 Fourth letter is a river (3)



Crossword answers on page 13



For Sale:

A copy of The Church Bells of Suffolk by J. J. Raven D.D. A Super Royal Octavo Edition (1 of 500 copies) published 1890 The binding is unbroken and all eight plates are intact. Price £100 o.n.o.
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The Suffolk Guild Peal Records

It is always interesting to look back at the close of each year at the "Top Tens" in relation to peal ringing to see if there are any trends. At the 31st December 2011 the Guild had rung or had rung for it 8888 peals. These go back to 1923 and the period could be calculated as 88 years. That's an average of 101 per year which is pretty good.

The leading towers show little change with the classic towers of the past still dominating.

Grundisburgh St Mary the Virgin	661
Ipswich St Mary-le-Tower	401
Aldeburgh Saints Peter & Paul	273
Framsden St Mary	267
Debenham St Mary Magdalene	261
Helmingham St Mary	206
Stowmarket Saints Peter & Mary	186
Ashbocking All Saints	170
Leiston St Margaret	165
Old Stoke, Ipswich The Wolery	138

Aldeburgh has been slowly making its way up the list. Ashbocking remains the most pealed six in the county.

The conductors' list is again consistent with recent years.

Pettman, Stephen D	1,033
Salter, David G	990
Thorley, J Martin	595
Mayle, Alan P	321
Brett, Leslie G	247
Bailey, Trevor N J	186
Blythe, John W	171
Pipe, George W	163
Egglesstone, Howard W	158
Rudd, Simon A	144

Only six conductors were born in

Suffolk and no ladies in the top ten. Stephen and I have called 22% of all peals rung for the Guild. Interestingly there are six past Masters in the list. Overall 490 different people have called peals for the Guild.

The ringers' list is much as would be expected.

Salter, David G	1,419
Pettman, Stephen D	1,243
Thorley, J Martin	1,200
Brett, Leslie G	1,128
Mayle, Alan P	894
Pipe, George W	892
Salter, Katharine J	865
Knights, Adrian	857
Bailey, Trevor N J	760
Bailey, Patricia M	743

20% ladies in the top ten, both Suffolk born & bred. All are overall 1000 pealers. It could be viewed that the top four have between them rung in 56% of all the Guild peals. Again five past masters of the Guild.

Perhaps the most interesting table is the favorites in terms of methods rung.

7 methods Minor	732
Plain Bob Major	491
Plain Bob Minor	428
Cambridge Surprise Major	393
Yorkshire Surprise Major	383
Double Norwich Court Bob Major	321
3 methods Minor	292
4 methods Minor	291
Kent Treble Bob Major	262
Bristol Surprise Major	228

Seven methods minor has been in the lead for many years now showing it

The Suffolk Guild Peal Records (cont.)

retains its popularity in providing a diverse and interesting peal to ring. The legacy of 3 and 4 method peals hangs over from the pre 1960s prior to which 3 or 4 methods minor were very popular. The same is true in that Yorkshire is still lagging behind Cambridge, but in the early days there was no Yorkshire and Cambridge was the standard. DNCB remains resilient, much maligned today

but a very good and worthwhile method. Most surprising is that Kent is still above Bristol. Notice that odd bell methods do not feature.

There is nothing to beat a good peal of Kent !!!!

David Salter



Some of you may have read or heard that the Ringing World is asking every Guild/Association to provide an 'ambassador' for the journal. I have volunteered to do that for Suffolk because I believe it is a vital part of the Exercise and it would be a great loss if it were to cease.

There is a strong lobby for it to go online. Well, not everybody is online but more importantly the visual impact would in my view be greatly impaired. There is something about the journal dropping on the mat every weekend. And it is a better magazine with all round appeal than it ever has been and

I've read them all. (My parents had bound copies from 1911 to when I started ringing in 1943.)

Do please support it. After all, it's about ¾ pint of beer a week and you can't even get a glass of wine in your local for £1.85!

At least every tower should have a copy; beginners especially are better catered for than ever.

George W Pipe.

Crossword answers

Arts 26 Dee
Atlantic 16 Adze 19 Means 20 Anew 22 Revet 24
Bunnies 6 Evens 7 Lapidary 8 Acre 13 Hubs 15
Asbestos Down 1 Orbs 2 Seats 3 Rat 4 Easter
21 Perm 23 Nine 25 Trade 26 Dover 27 Cash 28
Star 12 Ashy 14 Sad 17 The Bombardier 18 Arm
Across 1 Observer 5 Bell 9 Beast 10 Creep 11

The Ringing World National Youth Contest Saturday 30th June 2012

St Paul's Birmingham

If you are under 19 on the 30th June 2012 and would like to join other Guild members in this competition please contact George Salter on 01473 602407

georgemsalter@virginmedia.com

or Alex Tatlow

alexatlow@hotmail.com

Recruitment and Training in Action at Mildenhall

Eighteen months ago, the future of ringing in Mildenhall was looking gloomy. The band had dwindled to a mere two, and even with the help of ringers from neighbouring towers, practices could only be held once a month. A turnaround began after an Open Tower Day attracted several recruits at once, and not long after, a local Explorer Scout who had been learning to ring for a couple of years persuaded two of his fellow Scouts to join in. Mary Dunbavin, who has tirelessly helped the bands in this area for a long time, selflessly agreed to take on the teaching of the new recruits and I joined her in this task. Tuesday practice nights are now jolly, sociable occasions with all members of the new band making excellent progress. They have already rung for several weddings during last summer and hope to start Sunday ringing again soon. As you can see from the photograph, many of the new ringers are young and it is their presence and attitude which undoubtedly adds to the team spirit and progress of the band. If any ringers are free on a Tuesday evening to come along and help, your presence would be warmly welcomed by this friendly and enthusiastic group, who have the potential to become excellent ringers. The geographical location of Mildenhall and its surrounding towers has always presented a problem to us in the North West District as it is so isolated from the rest of the district, so it gives us a lot of pleasure to be able to do something positive to get ringing on its feet again here. Want to



Left to right standing: Simon Redgrave, Spencer Pettitt, Mark Palmer, Mary Dunbavin, Ruth Suggett, Marion Turner, Terrie Jaggard. Sitting: Adam, Jack, Peter, Peter, Alex.

Recruitment and Training in Action at Mildenhall (cont.)

help? Want more information? Then why not give Marion Turner, the Tower Captain, a call on 01638 717149. She would be delighted to hear from you, or see you on a practice night.

Ruth Suggett

Where are your new recruits?

Many who set out to teach people to ring have only their own learning experience on which to base their own teaching and I believe that it is this aspect of teaching which often ends in failure and in the loss of “would be” ringers. Teaching is learning a second time! With these ideas in mind I offer some thoughts on teaching someone to ring church bells.

In all cases the primary consideration must be for the safety of both pupil and instructor. Most, if not all, errors and failures of the pupil arise because of the lack of understanding of what is being asked for by the instructor – probably a different demonstration or explanation is needed. The pupil must have absolute confidence in the ability of the instructor. This implies that the instructor has complete confidence in his/her own ability and from this is the implication that the instructor has done everything possible to foresee any and all problems which could arise. A very tall order!

Where does one begin this mammoth task? Ideally the pupil should have a look at a real bell and its various working parts and receive an explanation of “what happens and when” together with actually seeing a bell ringing. Following this one would hope that a similar demonstration and explanation would take place in the ringing room so that the two demonstrations could be linked

together. However, before any real teaching is done, the instructor needs to be aware of any physical limitations that the pupil may have and his/her age and strength, and an understanding of the pupil's mental capabilities. Choose a suitable bell for the particular pupil, clear of obstacles such as clock cases and tables and avoid intimidating situations like working in front of perceived “experts.”

The instructor must decide on his method of teaching. Should it be on a raised bell, one stroke at a time, or on a lowered bell? If the latter, how far should the pupil go at first, just chiming, to “double tonguing”, or all the way up? These ideas may have to be rapidly changed according to the response of the pupil. Whichever method is used there arise the questions: “How much explanation do I give? How much demonstration? How much physical help should be given? How much verbal prompting?” (Beware of overloading the pupil's brain with information.) In each teaching session the pupil should be given an ‘aiming point’ so that he knows what he has achieved at any one time. It is vital to end a session with the pupil having a sense of success *every time*. As soon as the pupil can competently handle a bell he should join the regular practice to learn how to ring with others. That is another story.

John Girt

St Mary's Woodbridge

This beautiful 15th century church has an impressive urban setting. Steps lead up from the churchyard to the Market Square with its 18th and 19th century houses. The tower, supported by octagonal buttresses, rises up some 110 feet and dominates the landscape of Woodbridge.

The church has many fine features including a 15th century Seven Sacrament font with panels depicting: Ordination, Matrimony, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Mass, Last Rites and the Crucifixion. The font was damaged by the reformers, but the panels are still all recognisable.

There are interesting 17th and 18th century memorials, such as the one to Jeffrey Pitman, a tanner and haberdasher, and one-time High Sheriff of Suffolk. The memorial also includes his two wives and two of his sons. But the most unusual one is not in the church but in the stable of the Bull Hotel (on the opposite side of the market place). This is to George Carver, an ostler, who preferred to be buried there.

The beautiful stained glass east window by Martin Travers shows the Adoration of the Magi and was installed shortly after World War 2.

Because the land on which the tower is built legally belongs to the Rector, each year the Church Wardens are required to give the Rector a single rose as rent for the continued use of the land. There is also a requirement to keep this medieval building in good repair. There were originally five bells in the 16th century, then six in the seventeenth century. In 1799 they were recast and augmented to a superb eight with a 25 cwt tenor, giving a total weight for all the bells of nearly 5 tons. In 1934 they were rehung some 14 feet lower in the tower. This reduced the movement of the tower, making the bells easier to ring. In 1953 the 4th and the 7th were recast. Although still not the easiest bells to ring, they sound glorious when rung at the right pace by experienced ringers and are considered by some to be the finest eight in Suffolk.

A climb of 52 steps takes you up to the ringing chamber. The walls are decorated with peal boards, but an unusual board records an event that took place when one "Andrew Fosdike went up and down this steeple 7 times in 27 minutes in the 67th year of his age March the 15th 1753". Woodbridge ringers regularly climb the steps to ring on Sundays, and on the Tuesday practice nights, (but do not time themselves.) Visitors are always welcome to join them.

Bruce and Gillian Wakefield

