

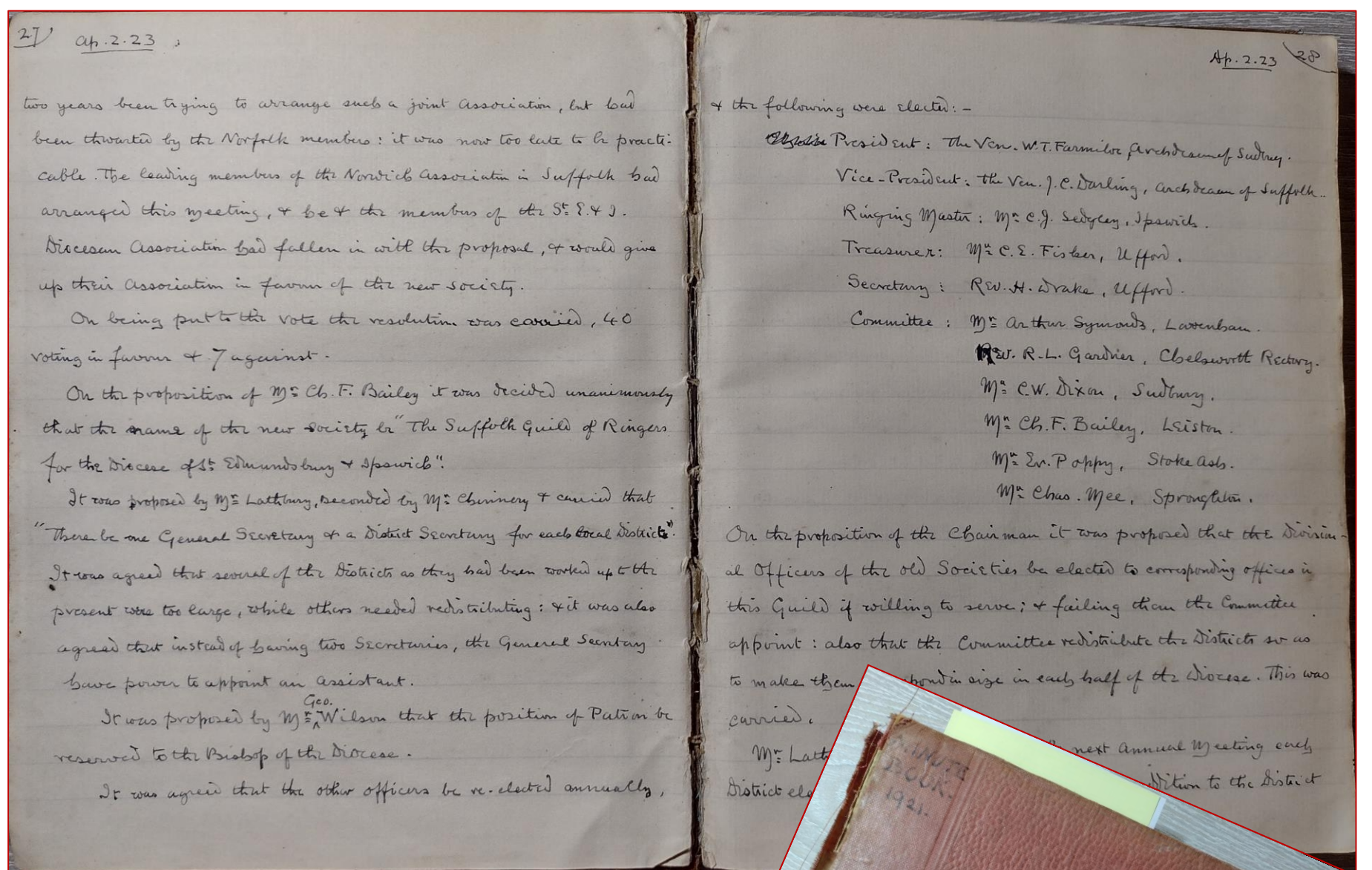


Suffolk Guild of Ringers 1923-2023

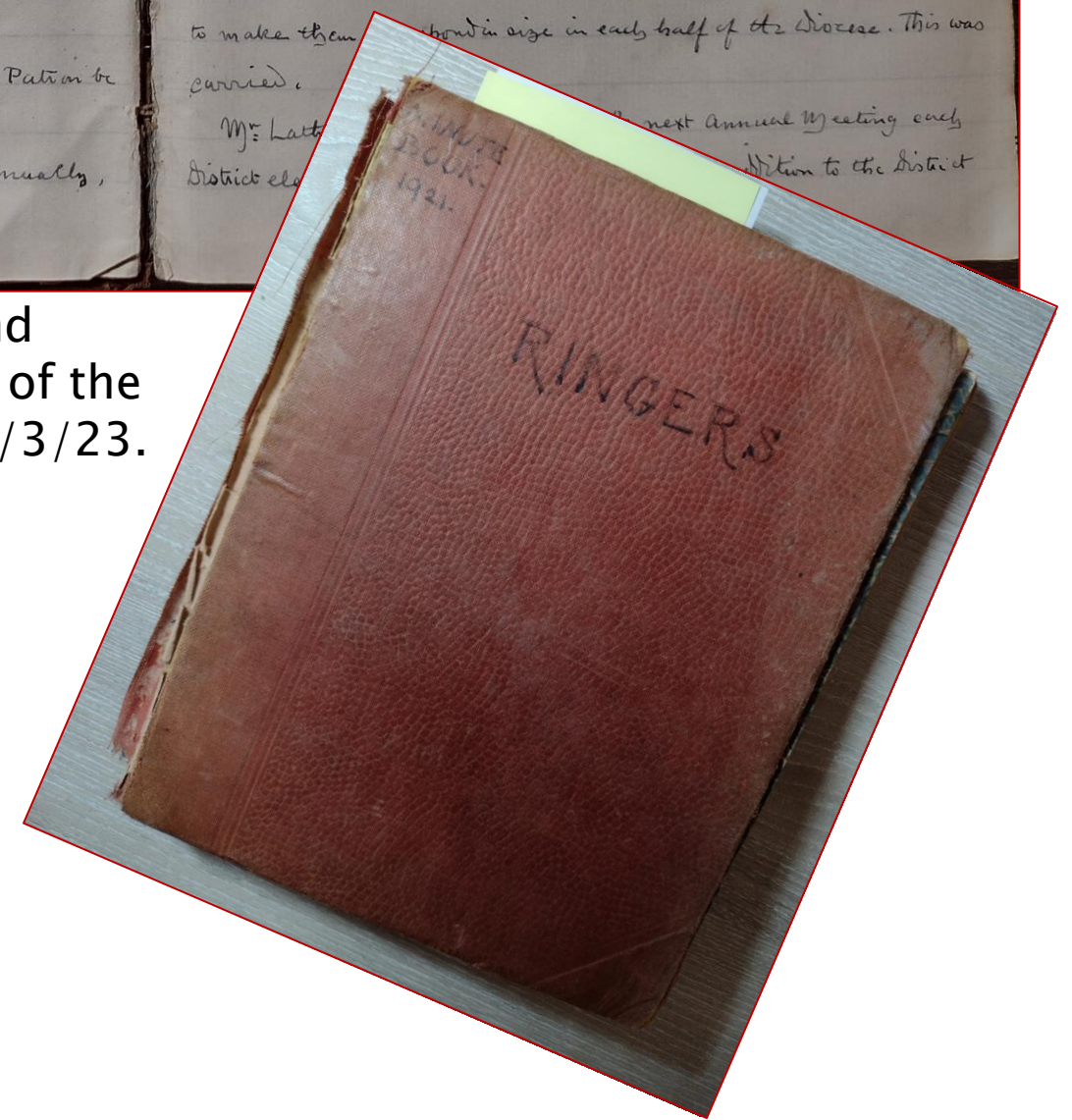
A delve into the Guild Library through the decades...

1920s

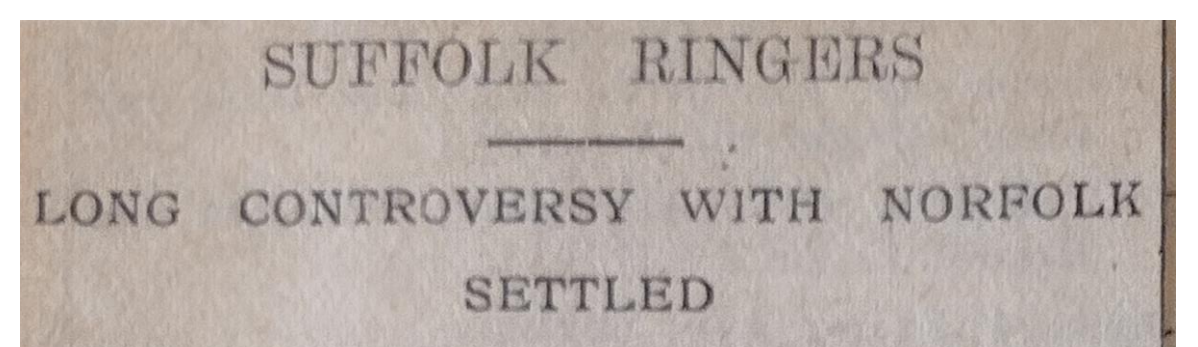
The Guild was formed in 1923, nine years after the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, after much wrangling between the east and west and pre-existing organisations. Initial membership was over 800 and leading peal towers were St Mary le Tower, Ipswich, and Leiston and Helmingham.



SGR Minute Book 1921-1938, and pages describing the foundation of the Guild. Suffolk Archives GC522/3/3/23.



In 1932, the founding Master, C. J. Sedgley, is reported to have expressed a wish to retire from the post. He eventually achieved this in 1957.



Headline from an article from the Woodbridge Reporter, April 12th 1923, posted into the minute book. The article noted the title 'Suffolk Guild' to be a workmanlike one of which members could be proud'.

1930s

Annual peal totals exceeded 100 in three years of the decade, with the Leiston and Helmingham bands prominent once again. In 1934, subscriptions went up to 1/6d from 1/-d.

SUFFOLK GUILD of RINGERS for the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich.

The ANNUAL MEETING will be held at IPSWICH on SATURDAY, APRIL 7th, 1934. Bells available at St. Mary-le-Tower (12), St. Margaret's (8), St. Clement's (6), St. Matthew's (6), Rushmere (6).

3.30 p.m. Committee Meeting in the Tower Vestry.

4 p.m. Service in St. Mary-le-Tower Church. Sermon by the Vicar, the Rev. A. H. STREETEN, M.A., M.C.

4.45 p.m. Tea in St. Matthew's Hall, at 1/-

5.10 p.m. General Meeting follows.

Please let every Member of your band know.

Many bands have this year sent in all their subscriptions for 1934 (1/6) to their District Secretary at the beginning of the year as requested. If your band has not, will you please do so now?

Ufford Rectory, Woodbridge.

HERBERT DRAKE, *Hon. Sec.*

A notice and an extract from the Christmas message from Herbert Drake (Guild Secretary), 1933, pasted into the Minute Book 1921-1938.

THE SUFFOLK GUILD OF RINGERS FOR THE DIOCESE OF ST. EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH.

While wishing you all the blessings of the season, and a successful new year for ringing, I am taking this opportunity of reminding you that the subscription has now been fixed at 1/6. Some of us did not wish the amount to be raised, but now that it is settled we must all pull together and help to make the best of it.

1940s

This was a decade interrupted by war. Cecil (Jim) Pipe was elected General Secretary. Subs were raised to 2/6d in 1946, and in 1947 the Guild Restoration Fund was launched with a donation of £50 from Ernest Pye.



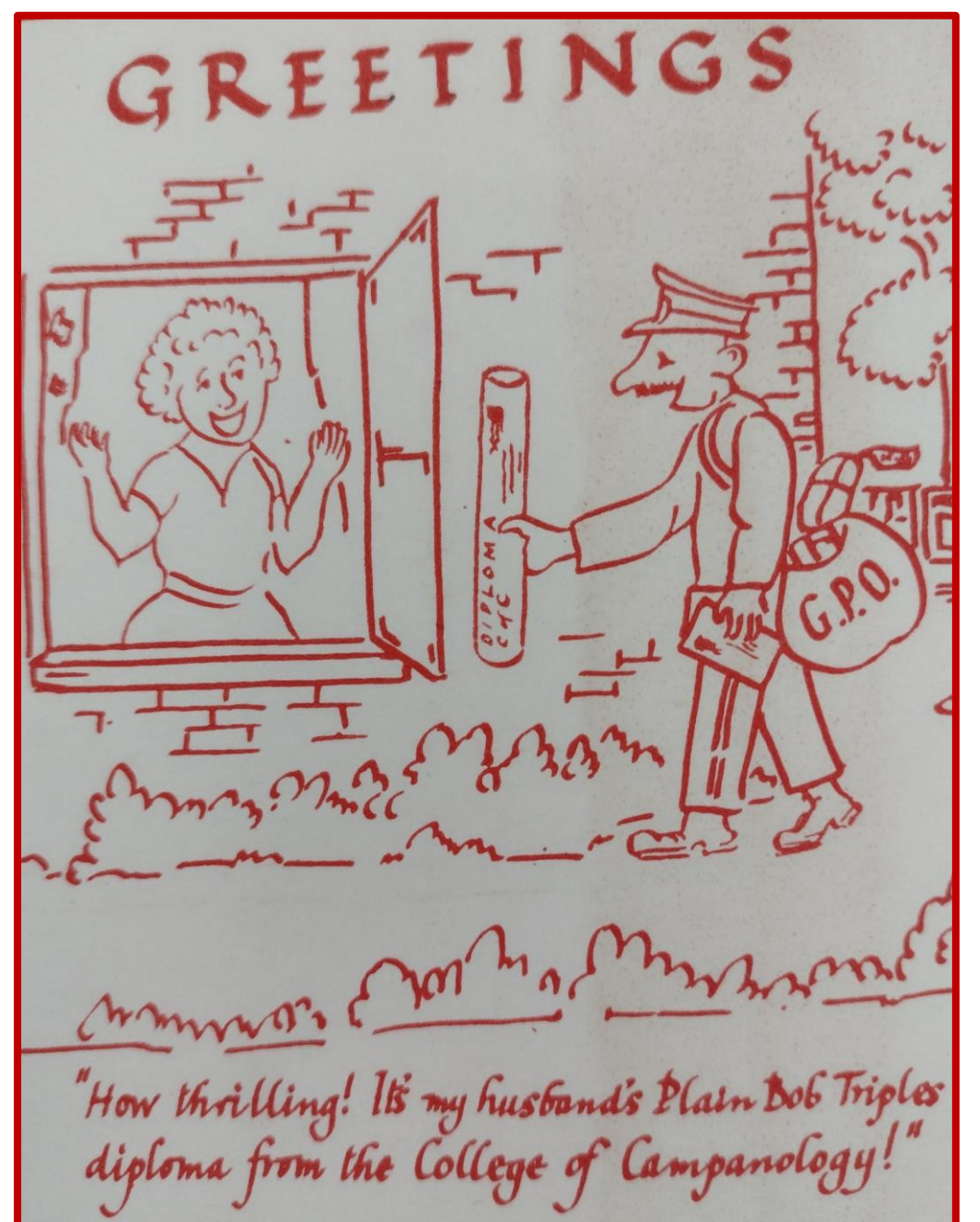
AGM 1946, from one of the Guild scrapbooks GC522/3/3/11. Formal dress was the order of the day for meetings.

1950s

The Annual peal totals exceeded 100 in three years of the decade and the 2500th peal was scored. The district structure was re-organised to six.



Christmas Card to Claude Rush in 1956 from the Golden in Norwich pasted into one of his scrapbooks, GC522/3/3/11.

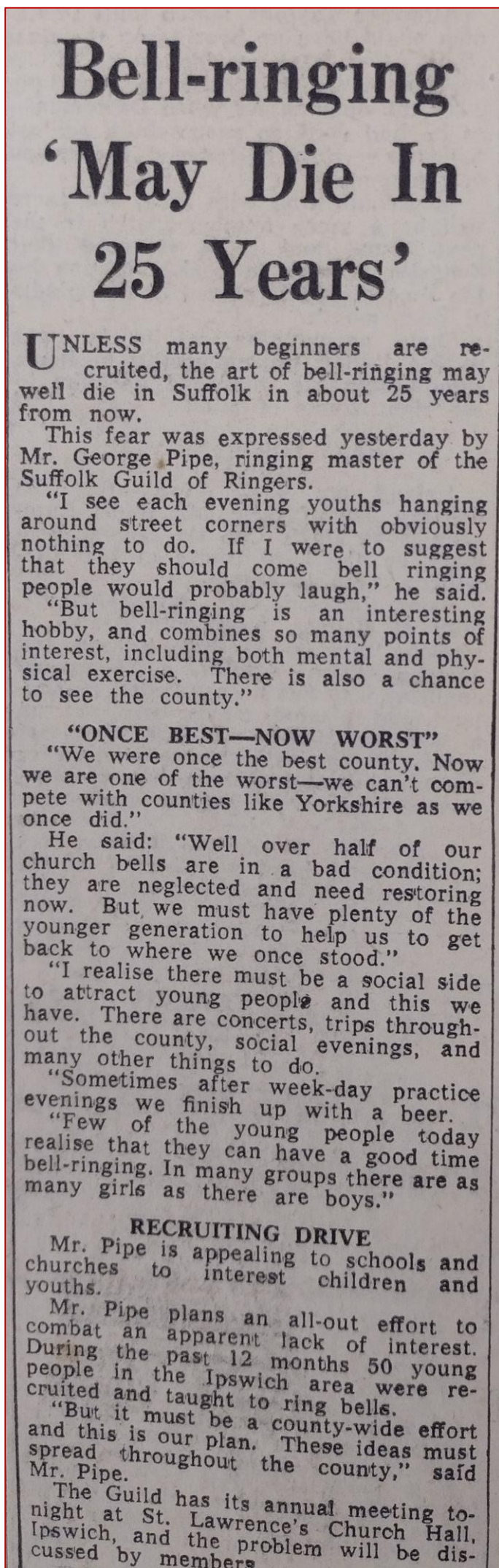


1960s

The new post of Chairman was held by John Blythe for 10 years. George Pipe took over from Leslie Brett as Master.

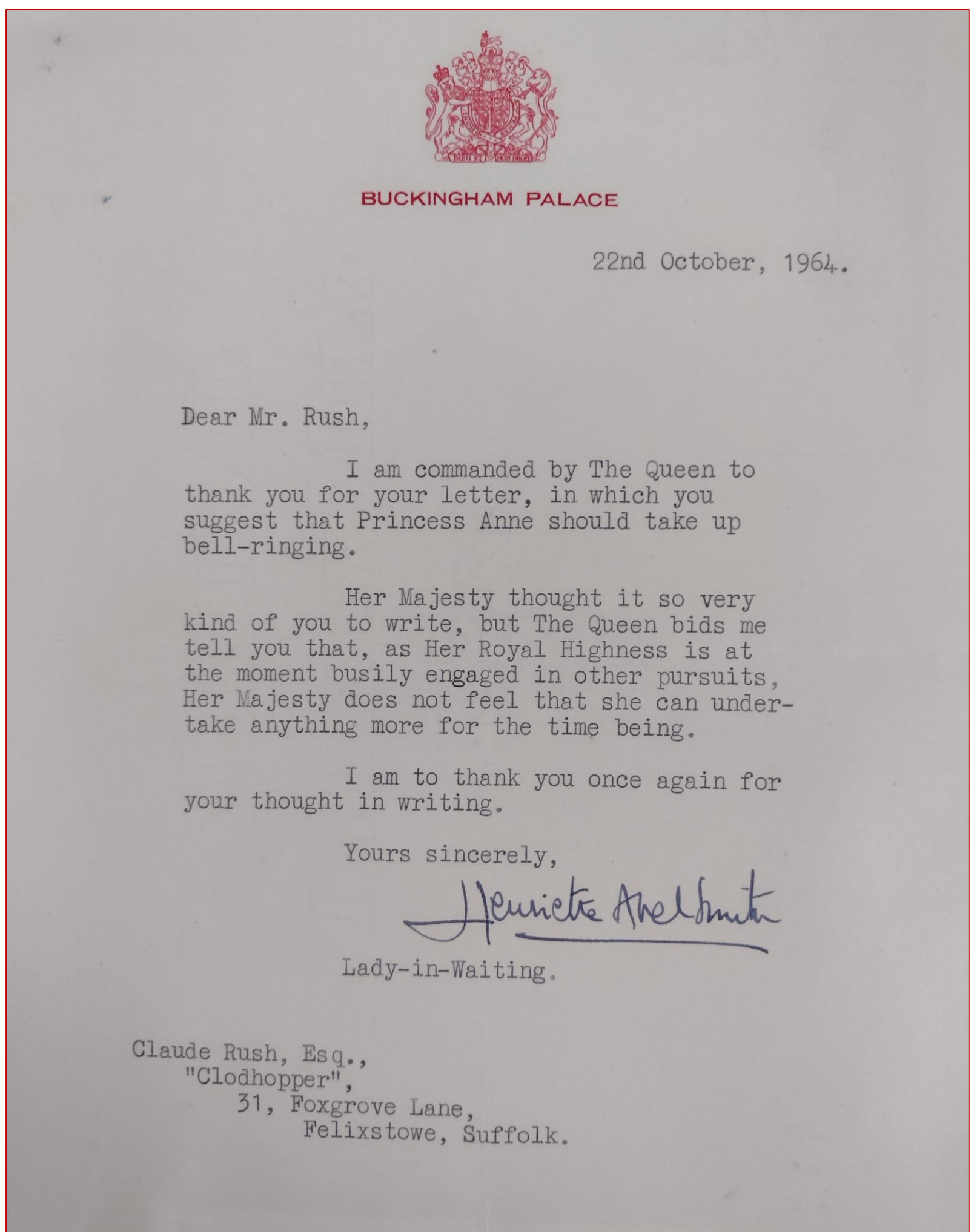


Photo from a Veterans Day in a scrapbook by George Pipe.



Letter in response to a suggestion that there was a good group of ringers at Benenden, and it would be welcome if a member of the Royal Family were to take up bell ringing.

Article in East Anglian Daily times May 1st 1965, from one of the scrapbooks.



1970s

John Girt became secretary, a post he would hold for 15 years. The Objects, Constitution and Rule were revised, and the Guild became a registered charity. District were reduced from six to four, on a Deanery basis. The Jubilee Fund was set up.

An article in the Mercury in July 1974 celebrated new recruits at Hollesley, especially young ringers (scrapbooks).



THE Rev. Lawrence Pizzev and Mr. Neville Andrews train three young bellringers (left to right) Lynn Stevenson, Nicole Warburton and Caroline Shelcott.

REVIVED INTEREST IN BELL-RINGING

A revived interest in bell-ringing at All Saints' Church, Hollesley, should mean a return to the Sunday morning peal, long absent from the village.



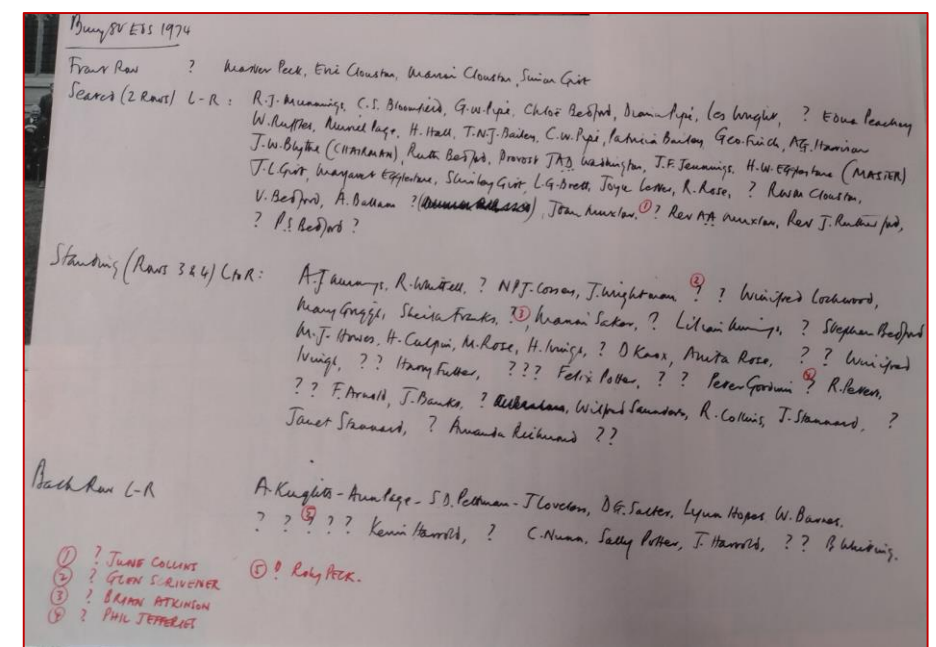
Seven of the eight-woman band pose for a picture at St. Mary's Parish Church, Grundisburgh. (Left to right): Mrs. W. Lockwood (tenor); Mrs. J. Muzlow (4th); Mrs. S. Pipe (5th and conducts); Mrs. M. Page (treble); Miss P. Clarke (2nd); Mrs. D. Feaver (6th); and Miss K. Thorley (3rd). Mrs. R. Last (7th) completes the group.

Women gain place in Suffolk history of bell-ringing

CAMPANOLOGISTS in Suffolk, already renowned for their high

exactly 100 years of ringing between them. Grundisburgh church was chosen because it has the lightest bells in a bell tower

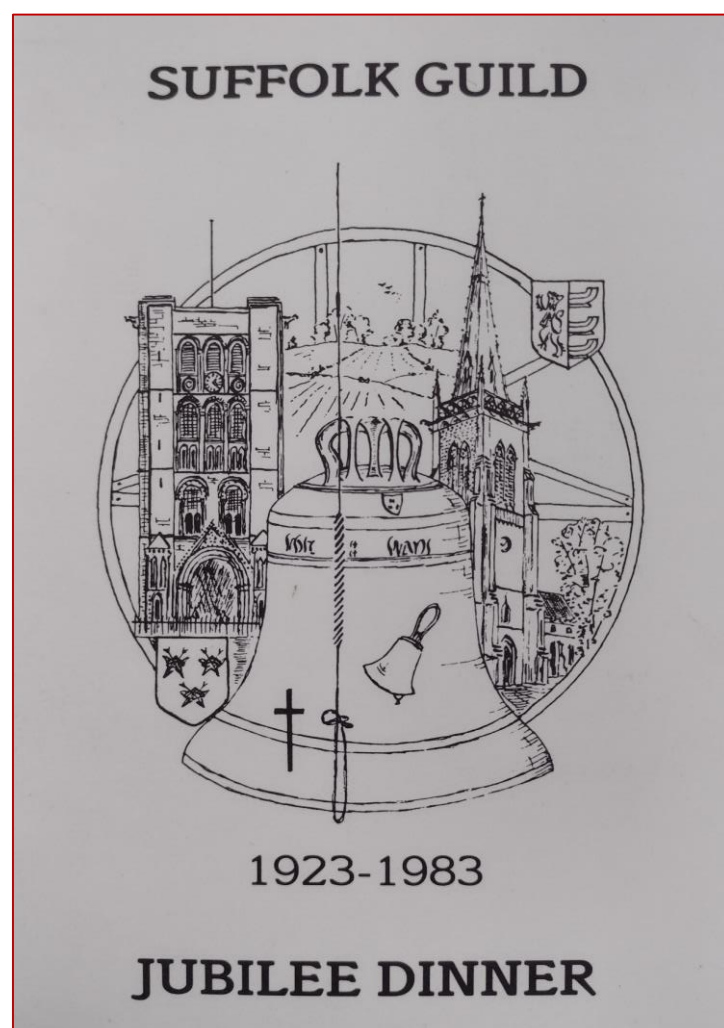
An article in the East Anglian Daily Times in April 1971 celebrated the first ladies peal in the county, rung for the Ladies Guild (scrapbooks). Mrs Lockwood became interested because her husband rang: 'I thought if he can do it, so can I'.



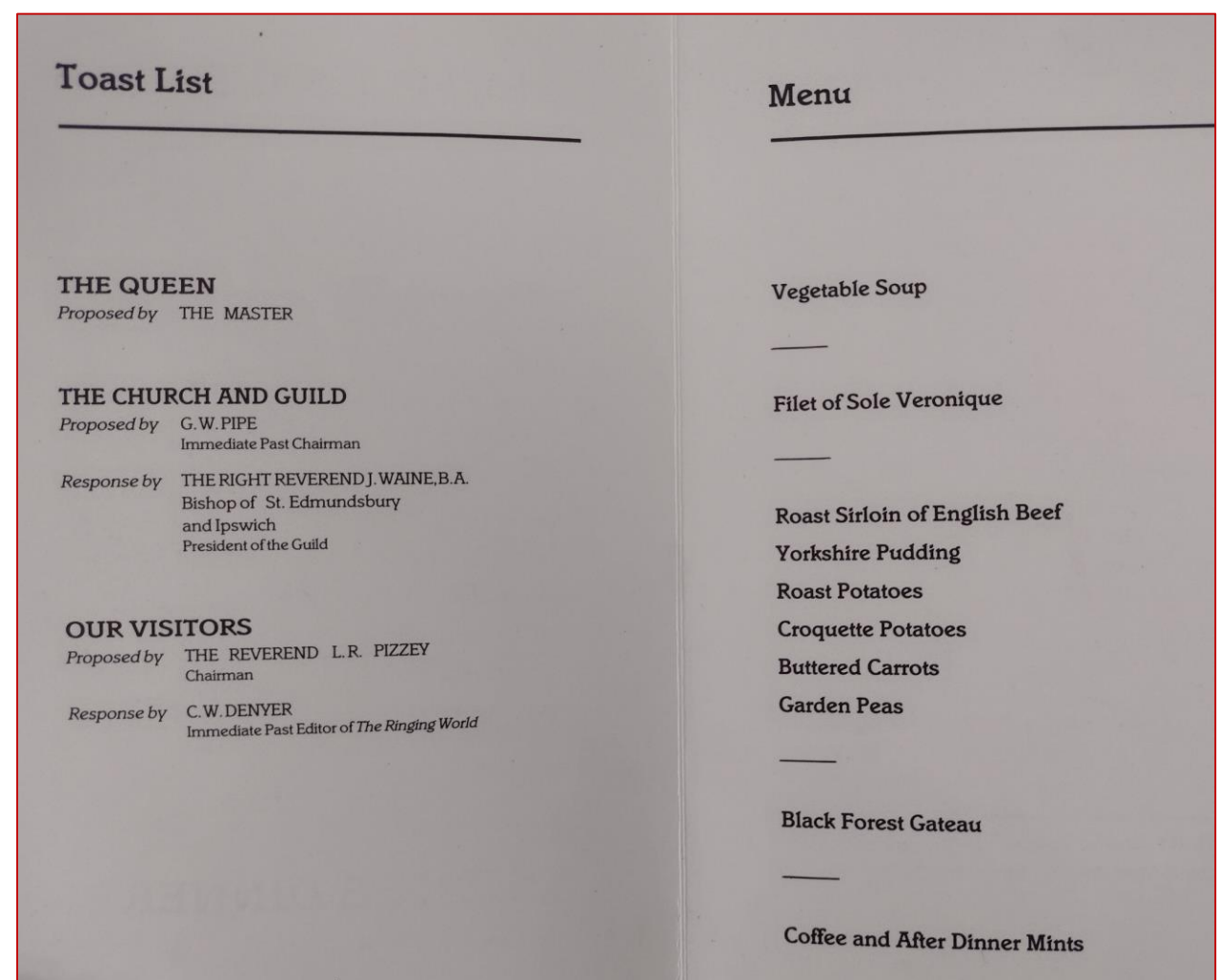
Guild AGM Bury St Edmunds 1974 (scrapbooks).

1980s

An all-time high of 211 peals was recorded in 1988 and annual peal totals exceeded 100 in all years bar 1980. Lawrence Pizzev became Chairman, a post he would hold for 16 years. Early in this decade the 5000th peal was achieved.

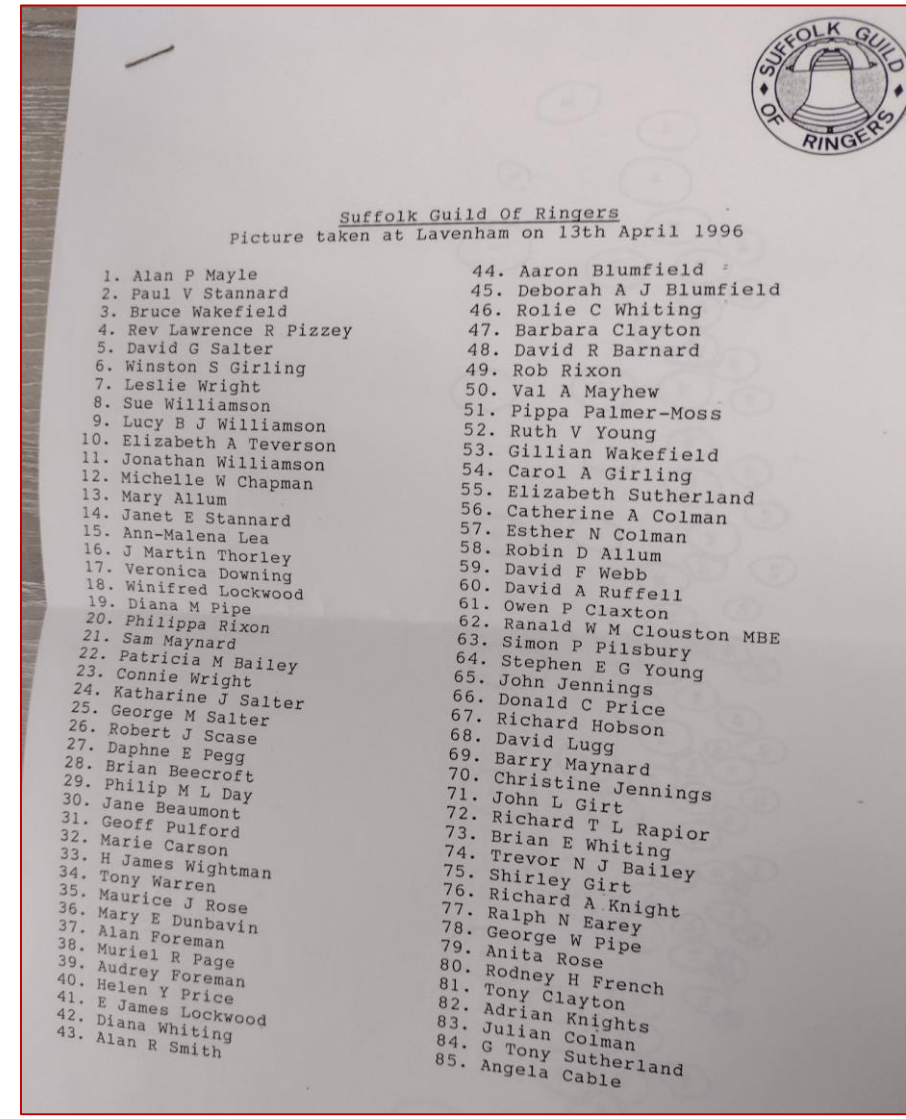
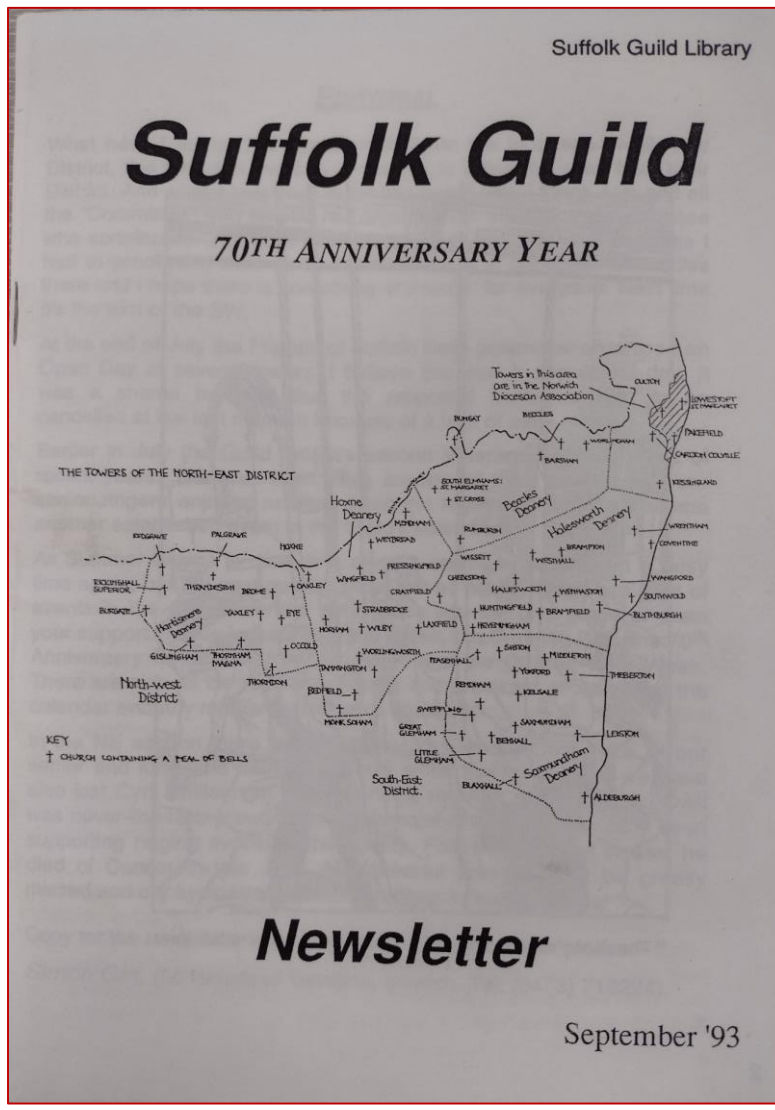


Menu card (scrapbooks)



1990s

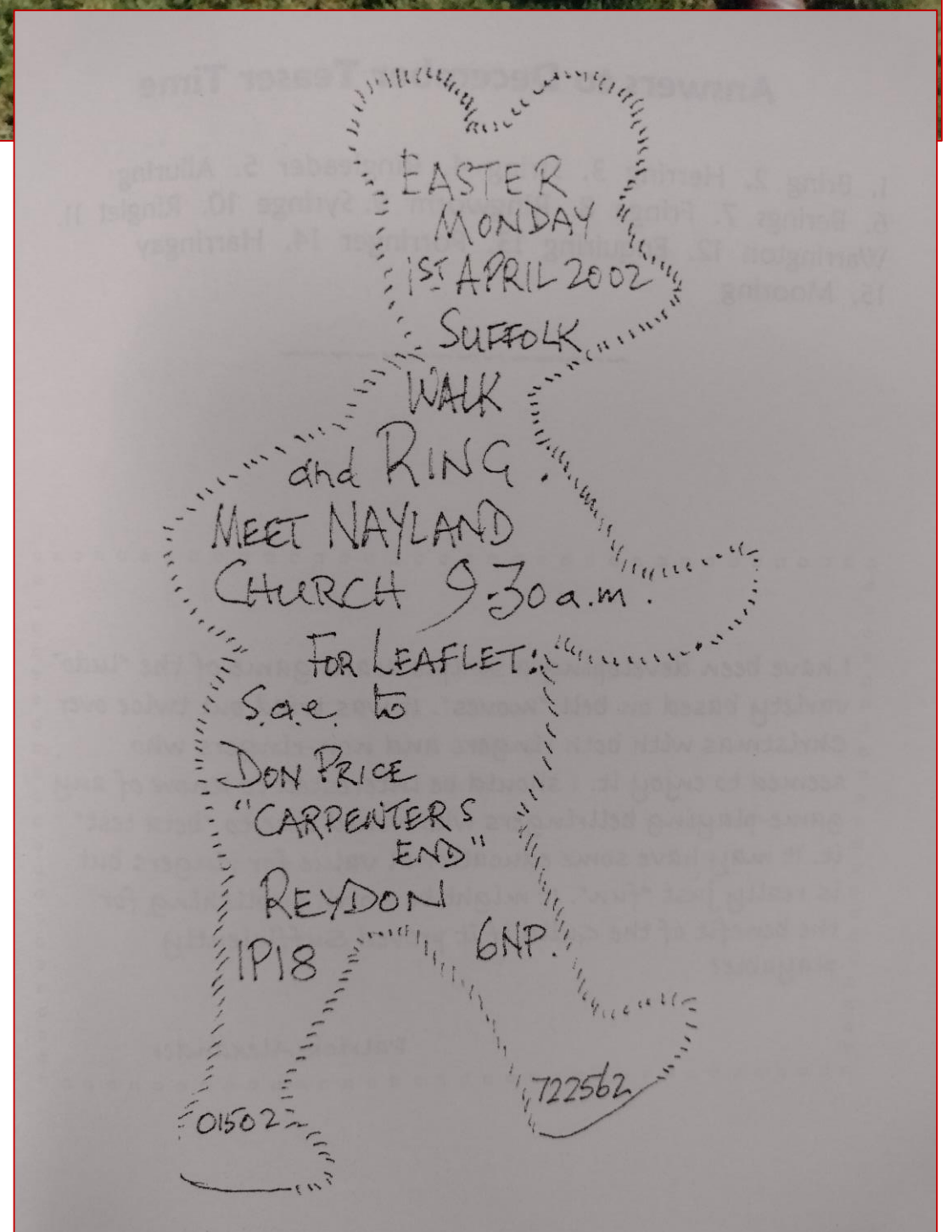
At the end of the decade, the five year rule for executive officers was introduced and the Objects, Constitution and Rules underwent further revisions. The Guild website was created and subscriptions reached £10. The 7500th peal was achieved.



Guild AGM 1996, Photograph donated to library by David Salter

2000s

The Guild hosted the Central Council of Church Bellingers Annual General Meeting. Quarter peals were rung in 187 different Suffolk Guild towers for the jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II over an 18-week period in 2002.



From Guild newsletter March 2002. The postal service was still useful to Guild communications



Source: SGR website

2010s

The Guild acquired the Vestey mini-ring, named after our patrons, the Vestey family, and won the High Sheriff's Suffolk Heritage Award (2018) in recognition of the Guild's role in cherishing the history and heritage of our county. Annual membership exceeded 700 in all years... not quite reaching the 800 members of the 1920s. The magazine *Awl A'Huld* was launched in 2010.

2020s

Covid-19 decimated general ringing as a whole at the start of this decade and peal ringing was slow to recover, but the 10,000th peal for the Guild will be recorded in the 100th Anniversary year, when the Guild will also host the Central Council meeting again. Subscriptions reached £20. The Restoration Fund has now made grants of over £300,000.

Certificate for the most recently elected member of the Guild at the time of going to print



Ringling, recruitment, restorations, promoting and furthering the art, competitions, teas, trips, keeping in touch, encouraging young ringers, celebrating veterans, chasing subs, pleas for funds, management, friendship and fun... Many of the aspects of Guild life that are reflected in the archives are familiar today, and perhaps they will continue to be so over the next 100 years.

Thank-you to Bridget Hanley, Suffolk Archives, for access to the material, Mike Cowling for printing and the display boards, and Brian Whiting for notes on the history of the Guild.
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