



Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 18

Winter 2015

Awl a' huld



St Mary's, Hinderclay. See back page.

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From the Editors

We hope you enjoy reading this, the eighteenth issue of your Guild magazine. First of all, thank you very much for all your contributions. A month ago we had very little material, but a flurry of emails resulted in copy pouring in. The South East District surpassed themselves in the number of articles they contributed. Keep up the good work!

Much of the district news concerns ringing tours, obviously a very popular summer activity. In our own district, the South West, we had a very enjoyable and well supported tour, arranged by David Lee, to Cowlinge, Barrow and Horringer followed by a meal at the Manger, Bradfield Combust. Good ringing, good food and good company, a really successful social occasion. The Hadleigh ringers also had a grand day out on their tour.

We are very pleased to use our pages to air topics that might be termed controversial. Hence the inclusion of Winston Girling's response to Jonathan Stevens' plea for the retention of wooden bellframes printed in the last issue. This highlights the importance of the Belfry Advisory Committee and the fantastic work they do in towers across the Guild. Penny Rose's account of the arduous work involved in the removal of the Lavenham clappers gives a glimpse into the dedication and hard work of the BAC in towers all over the county.

The year has flown by and we will soon be thinking of carol service ringing and ringing in 2016. Ray Banks' poem on page 14 was written in Kersey tower as the bells rang out the old year and in the new at the beginning of this year. Perhaps there are more poets out there. Please send in your verses for future issues.

Easter and, therefore the Guild AGM, is early next year and we would like to have the next issue out before then, so please send in your stories and photographs by the end of February. As always, please email your contributions to magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk or post them to Sue Freeman, High Meadow, Martens Lane, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5AG.

Finally, we wish all our readers a very happy Christmas.

Richard Gates and Sue Freeman

Stop Press Congratulations to Matthew Rolph, who rang his first peal (5040 Plain Bob Minor) on 5th November at St Michael and All Angels and St Felix, Rumburgh.



From the Chairman

The pages of this magazine, over the last two issues have seen some interesting, some would say controversial, views expressed on the subject of bell frames, and their replacement or repair. I am not going to enter the debate, but I would like to record how good it is that we have a magazine where the debate, among other places, can take place. More important though is the fact that we have within the Guild the expertise and the interest to conduct the debate. It serves so well to demonstrate the additional value that the Guild brings, not just to the ringing community, but to the community at large. These communities in Suffolk are very fortunate to have within the Guild a Belfry Advisory Committee that does so much more than give advice. Take some time to look at the BAC minutes on the Guild website. Most if not all of these meetings record inspections and the associated advice and guidance. But in addition details of practical corrective actions taken for no more than the cost of materials (often met in part or in full with grants from the Guild).



Fresh in my memory are the proceedings of a recent General Management Committee meeting, which leads me to share a couple of things that I think may be of interest. We have created a new position and appointed Mary Garner as Membership Secretary. She has been fulfilling much of the role on an unofficial basis for a good while and it seemed right to formalise things. The main drivers have been to introduce a better welcome pack and to strengthen the associated processes so as to provide a better joining experience and also to reflect these changing times by centralising our membership data, and holding it all electronically. In the wake of the Talk Talk fiasco I should reassure you that holding data electronically will not place it in the public domain and that it will be properly protected. Michelle Williams (our Annual Report Editor) attended the meeting as a guest to talk about preparations for the report compilation and to present some ideas for changes. Please do all you can to help her with the timely submission of content.

And finally, enjoy the festive season with plenty of ringing. And here's to a New Year of ringing with old friends, making some new ones and hopefully meeting some new ringers.

Alan Stanley

SE District Quarter Peal Evening

As usual the SE District held a quarter peal evening on the first Saturday in August. Four quarters were attempted; unfortunately the one at Holbrook was unsuccessful. Following the quarters a most enjoyable meal and evening was had at The King's Head, Stutton. My thanks to Kate Eagle for arranging this. Thanks, too, to Ruth Munnings for her assistance in arranging the towers. Yet again this evening continues to be one of the highlights of the SE District's calendar.

Harkstead, Suffolk. 1260
Grandsire Doubles: Janet Looser
1, Pippa Moss 2, Catherine
Looser 3, Ruth Munnings 4, Mike
Whitby (C) 5, John Taylor 6. First
Grandsire Doubles: 3.

Mistley, Essex: 1272 Cambridge In the King's Head, Stutton S
Minor: Elizabeth J Christian 1, Adrienne P Sharp 2, Mary S Garner 3, David I Stanford 4, Stephen J Christian 5, Brian F Whiting (C) 6.

Stutton, Suffolk: 1272 PB Minor: John Pallen 1, Tig Sweet 2, Jenny Warren 3, Eric Brown 4, Kate Eagle 5, Tom Scase (C) 6. First minor: 1.



In the King's Head, Stutton

S

Tom Scase SE District Ringing Master

St Mary le Tower and Friends Venture into Norfolk

A super autumn day, 3rd October – just the day to enjoy lovely Norfolk and some fine churches. There were twenty of us and we visited Yarmouth Minster – great twelve; Happisburgh (HAZEBRO' if you didn't know!), standing so proudly on the cliffs – what a tower and a nice 10 cwt eight.

Lunch at the Lighthouse in Walcott – good food when we eventually got served! Then on to Felmingham, first ring of nine for almost everyone. These two towers – Happisburgh and Felmingham – are wonderful examples of how a ringing gallery should be installed, especially successful at Happisburgh with its 90ft draught.

Across to Aylsham, always worth a visit, old style 10, the highlight an excellent half course of Cambridge Royal. Finally Marsham, sadly not a good choice although such a nice location and church. Belfry and bells desperately need some TLC – the twelve years since we were there seem to have taken their toll.

Thanks to the Tower Captains who gave us permission to ring and we did have some nice ringing and plenty of laughs! It made us realise how fortunate we are to live in East Anglia.

Our special guest for the day was Enid Roberts from St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Methods etc. rung for the day: call changes on 10 and 12, Stedman and Grandsire Triples, Cambridge, Yorkshire, Superlative, London and Bristol S. Major, Grandsire Caters, Cambridge Royal, Little Bob Max. and Stedman Cinques. GWP

Ringing at Great Yarmouth



What's Happening in the South East

As we come to the end of another year in the District, it has been a mixture of highs and lows. Recently, the District quarter peal evening in August was a resounding success once again, with three out of four quarters scored. Come September, the quarterly meeting at Orford saw a handful of members ready to start at 3.30pm, waiting until after 4pm to even think about raising the bells! And at Holbrook, only **nine** members (including a babysitter for Mason and Alfie) turned up.

I may sound like I'm grumbling, but it seems to be an all too familiar occurrence. It is, to say the least, disheartening and frustrating that the largest District in the Guild can only muster nine members for an event that happens on the same Saturday each month, and is publicised through the 'What's On' and on our wonderful website. The South East Committee has therefore decided that something must be done.

At the District ADM on Saturday 5th December, we hope to have a questionnaire to distribute to members to see what members want from the District events. We hope to gain information regarding the times of practices, the usefulness of practices and how members feel about the general purpose of these events. This will be available for a couple of months for members to fill in so that we can have plenty of feedback from across the District, so if you feel you want to contribute to this then please let Ralph Earey know.

Can I please, as one of my last acts as Secretary, urge you to fill in a questionnaire. Without feedback from members, the District practices and events as they stand are in jeopardy of being scaled back, especially if a new Secretary cannot be found by the ADM in December. It takes a lot of time to organise these events, and when a handful of the membership turn out (typically the same faces, for which we are grateful) it is incredibly demoralising. Please support your District, and all of the volunteers who keep it going!

Sally Munnings

Ipswich St Margaret's Outing

On Saturday 10th October the St Margaret's ringers set out on their outing to ring at Bildeston, Kettleburgh, Easton and Campsea Ashe.



L. to R: Roger Coley, Angela Cable, Martin Howse, Shirley Girt, Helen Carter, John Girt, Carina Winget and David Birkby.
Photo taken by Colin Cable outside Campsea Ashe church

Being that time of the year, we were able to enjoy all the churches decorated for their Harvest Festivals.

We were met at Brandeston by Chris McArthur who joined us in a Bob course of Cambridge.

Our ringing throughout the day was kept simple to accommodate our learners, so we rang Plain Hunt, Call Changes, Mexican Wave, Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Bob Minor.

We had an excellent lunch at the White Horse at Easton before going to our final tower at Campsea Ashe.

I think I can speak for us all when I say the sun shone on us and a good day was had by all.

Shirley Girt

News from Bardwell

Ruth Suggett writes

In complete contrast to the March tower outing deep in the Suffolk countryside, the September outing took us to London. Once the major challenge of sorting out the transport had been successfully negotiated, the ringers enjoyed visiting three churches : St Mary's Islington, St Martin's, Gospel Oak and Christ Church, Hampstead. All three were of great interest and provided a great variety of bells, architecture and location. A lunchtime picnic on Hampstead Heath allowed us fabulous views of the city stretched out before us. The walk through the Heath to our final church of the day in Hampstead itself was as rural and idyllic as any in Suffolk - except lots more people - it was hard to believe we were in the middle of London!

Back home, we continue to teach new ringers. Joan Puckey, Karen Nuttall and Sue Cook have all recently achieved their level one certificates in Learning the Ropes. Joan is a returning ringer and wrote the following for the ART website...

'In the second half of the 1950s, I attended Girl Guide meetings on Thursday evenings at the local church with my cousin. As soon as the meeting was over, we ran round to the belfry and up the stairs to be met by a friend who taught us to ring. Eventually we achieved Bob Major, and as well as ringing before services, we occasionally rang for weddings and funerals. I think some of our favourite times were ringing for Christmas and New Year. This all took place in Southport. In the

1960s I moved away and eventually settled in Bury St Edmunds. Fifty years later, not having done any ringing since, I am once again ringing bells, this time in Bardwell along with a friend who has had no previous experience. I hasten to add, I do not run up the stairs any more, but breathe a sigh of relief when I reach the ringing chamber! I found that I could still ring a bell after all those years of absence, but my technique needed some refining and there is a lot more to learn—quite a challenge! I have met some very friendly and supportive people, and we occasionally reward ourselves with chocolate.'

L. to R: Joan Puckey, Karen Nuttall and Sue Cook



From the South West – work done at Lavenham

On 28th September a group of us, namely Winston Girling, Mark Steggles, Derek and Penny Rose, Martin Weaver and Mervyn Cochrane gathered at SS Peter and Paul, Lavenham and set about removing the clappers from all eight bells. The second through to the seventh gave us no real problems and were easily removed, unlike the treble and the tenor, which had both rusted due to condensation gathering in the bells when they were left up. It took a lot of very hard work and determination, but by the end of the day we had removed all the clappers. They had to be physically carried down the long spiral staircase, no mean feat! The next day they were taken to Taylors. There the tenor clapper was tapered as it was too big for the bell and all eight clappers were re-bushed and painted to preserve them for the future.

In the meantime Derek and Penny returned to the tower to clean rust off and prepare for the return of the clappers.



The sixth bell

On 26th October we all gathered again. Martin and Mervyn fixed mesh on two of the windows to reduce the wind and rain that had been driving in over the years, but still allow air to flow freely. The rest of us with the addition now of Carol Girling and Nathan Colman set about replacing all the clappers.

The advice is, after seeing the difficulties that were encountered, if you are going to leave bells up, check regularly to see that the clappers don't get rusted in.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Winston Girling, to thank everyone who helped with this project.

Penny Rose

Home Thoughts of 'Down Under'

November this year will be 60 years since the directors of my company, the old agricultural engineers, Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, changed my life. After an apprenticeship and the Drawing Office – down on the Ipswich docks in those days – I went into the Export Sales Department.

The plan was to be a Field Engineer in Rhodesia, the Cape or Kenya and Uganda. But the Board asked me to go to Australia instead, set up a manufacturing plant in Melbourne and eventually a sales network for there, New Zealand, Singapore and the Solomon Islands. June 1956 was to be the sailing date and that meant getting engaged and married to Diana. (We were only a courtin' then.)

After all the details had been finalised, works and family- wise I thought, having looked at 'Dove' (then in its 1st edition, 1950 – I still have my copy) I might be able to do some ringing and perhaps 'make a difference'. In 1956 there were only 25 rings in Australia over 3 million square miles, of which 7 were unringable, so, as Paul Daniels used to say, 'Not a lot!'

I realised the company had given me the chance of a lifetime. I've always been glad Diana and I took it – originally a three year contract but we stayed seven and loved every minute of it.

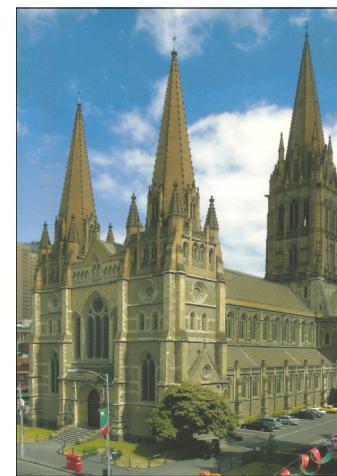
Six weeks on the water, sailing from Tilbury on the SS Orontes, a 20.000 ton liner on the P&O Line, used as a troop ship during the second world war. Ports of call were Marseilles, Naples (3 days), Nevarino Bay, Port Said, Aden – our ship was the last through Suez before Colonel Nasser bombed and closed it – Colombo in Ceylon as it was called then, three days there, the Cocos Islands, Fremantle, Adelaide and Melbourne.

In those days one wasn't allowed to take one's wife to the 'Colonies'. 'We'll give you six months, Pipe to settle in and then we'll send your wife.' It was ten months

before Diana joined me but she had a marvellous voyage via the West Indies, Panama, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand.

We settled in quickly, about twenty miles in the bush from Melbourne city. Ringing was scarce, Grandsire Triples and nothing else; our nearest change ringing tower was Adelaide 600 miles west and they could only manage Doubles. But gradually I was able to build the band up (Jack Roper the old tower captain at the Cathedral gave me a free hand) to what became the strongest ringing centre outside Britain.

ANZAB was formed in 1961/2, we managed to get most of the unringables going again and amongst other things recorded the first peal of Royal in Australia by a resident band, the first quarter of Maximus (10 firsts) and the first peals of Double Norwich and Cambridge S. Major outside Britain. Interstate trips became a regular feature too.



St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne

One lovely early memory was flying in a Dakota to Hobart, Tasmania in 1958 when our elder daughter Sarah (now 57) was a babe in arms. In those days there were only six ringers on the Island so Diana and I would make eight if they all came in from the bush. They did. In charge of the fine Taylor 8 (actually a 12 with 4 hung dead) at St David's Cathedral and the early Whitechapel 8 at Holy Trinity was Sidney Smith. Sid emigrated from Ingham in 1912 and told us we were the first Suffolk people he'd met in 'Tassie' in 46 years. A wonderful weekend in that beautiful island.

Another highlight was the first peal of Major on the magnificent Taylor eight at St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide: tenor 41 1/4 cwt in C just four weeks before we came home. I will never forget that peal, on the heaviest ring in the southern hemisphere, temperature 98 degrees and humidity stifling. The bells are a cross between the back eight of Manchester Town Hall, St Nicholas, Liverpool and Inverary.

We made many friends in Oz and it really was a privilege to be part of the ringing scene there. Today there are 58 rings and no unringables and Diana and I have been back teaching three times. (I reckon we hold the record of travelling 800 miles to teach Bob Minimus and Doubles at Griffith Cathedral in the Riverina!)

Going down under nowadays is almost like going to, say, Scarborough in the 1940s; the world has shrunk, but what an experience for a couple of 21 year olds. We still keep in close touch although of course, nearly all our earlier friends have passed on.

They still pull my leg about taking the entry in the 1950 Dove for Yass (mis-spelt Tass) seriously. It was listed as a 26½ cwt 5 (to be made 6). Well, I've always loved heavy sixes and in the fifties was determined to take a band there and ring a peal on them. Diana and I went, 860 mile trip – sheep town in New South Wales. What did I find? A 6 ½ cwt six! Oh well, can't win 'em all. We scored the peal but I was so disgusted I rang the treble! The Aussies still laugh about it.

Seven of the happiest years of our life and the opportunity to sow a few seeds for the Art.

GWP

Congratulations

To George Pipe who, at the 378th Anniversary Dinner of the Ancient Society of College Youths on 7th November, was presented, by Katie Town, Master, with a certificate marking his 60 years' membership of that august body.



St Peter's Cathedral,
Adelaide

Wooden Bellframes: Replace or Repair?

For a good few years now churches with peals of bells hung in timber bell frames often find themselves involved in all sorts of complications when they decide to have their bells restored. Preservationists will deliberate on the wooden bell frame and are likely to make decisions which do not necessarily agree with what the church and ringers are seeking to achieve. What you can or cannot do with an old wooden frame will be the subject of many complicated reports and it is likely that disagreement will arise between the various parties, particularly between the ringers and the conservationists.

My experience over the years has taught me three main lessons. The first is that you cannot generalise over old wooden frames; they come in all conditions and designs and you can only deal with each case individually. Secondly, that the preservationists are often misunderstood by ringers. Thirdly, those ringers are frequently misunderstood as well.

If I may be allowed to quote Mark Regan in his report to the Suffolk Guild in 2014: 'Bellframes are part of something bigger and should not be looked at in isolation. They have a functional purpose and a context. Some are archaeologically important; only some. What's more important is the practice, heritage, history and archaeology of bellringing. This is something which is alive and dynamic and helps define 'Englishness.' Mark goes on to describe how everything we now take for granted was once new. The railways caused great controversy at first. Everything we have today, even steel bell frames, will one day be archaeologically interesting. Bellframes are crude pieces of engineering hidden away in Church towers. If wooden frames are not fit for purpose then they should be replaced or sensibly preserved if they are important archaeologically. Preservationists presently seem to favour repairing frames which should be preserved to allow bells to be returned to them. This may well be possible. At Wickham Skeith a wooden frame well over 100 years old built by Days of Eye continues in use despite only having pegs to hold it together and it still works very well. However, at Redgrave an estate frame built in the late 18th century has suffered badly from decay. Here the Churches' Conservation Trust want the frame repaired so that six bells can be put back into it for full circle ringing. Almost 50% of the frame will have to be replaced, and much steelwork added to even begin to make it fit for purpose. Accessing suitable 14 foot lengths of timber suitably seasoned, and repairing the frame will cost a vast amount of money on its own (probably approaching £50,000) Here a plan to move the old wooden frame down one level and keep it in its entirety, thereby preserving it, has so far been refused point blank. It would allow the bells to be put in a steel frame at the original level and heard by the village a mile away. This has been requested by every household in the village.

The above gives two examples of wooden frames at opposite ends of the spectrum. It also highlights the intransigence of some people involved in preserving our heritage. It would be nice to see a move towards all parties involved being prepared to discuss preservation issues by getting together round a table and negotiating sensible compromises with each other. One day, perhaps!

Winston Girling

A week in the 'Life of Brian'

Once again Brian and Peta Whiting arranged a super quarter peal tour – this year in the lovely peak District of Derbyshire and the Staffordshire border. They have now given us between twenty and thirty tours, every one impeccably arranged: excellent accommodation, churches, bells (mostly!) and above all good company, good food and the occasional G & T or beer.

Eleven of the thirteen quarters were successful, the conducting shared and a nice welcome everywhere. The highlights were David Stanford's conducting Stedman triples for Eleanor (Ellie) and Tessa Earey. (There haven't been that many husband-wife-daughter quarters of Stedman since the Guild was founded) well done them; and the wonderful six (29cwt tenor) of the majestic Church of the Holy Angels, Hoar Cross.
Thanks Brian for a fine tour and we look forward to 2016.
George



L. to R:
Top: Ralph Earey, James Smith, Roger Lubbock,
Pat Lubbock,
Middle: Gill Sparling, David Sparling, Diana
Pipe, Tessa Earey, Claire Haynes, Tristin Shaw,
James Sparling, Adrienne Sharp,
Bottom: George Pipe, Lizzie Sparling, Ellie Earey,
Matthew Earey, Brian Whiting, Peta Whiting,
David Stanford & Max
After our final quarter peal of the tour on Thursday
27 August at Hope Derbyshire

Guild Social

On an autumnal September afternoon, people gathered at Little Glemham for a chance to ring the rather taxing bells. The bells proved to be a challenge when you combine the anticlockwise ring, the slightly worn ropes and the vast amount of debris coming from the chamber above. They were a tricky set of bells to ring but not nearly as awkward as Great Glemham. This little tower in the backend of nowhere presented a different set of issues. They lumped and bumped in noises sounding vaguely like rounds with the occasional change, but it was fun and a new challenge nonetheless.

Thank you to Philip Gorrod for running the ringing at Little Glemham, to Jonathan Stevens for oiling the bells and running the ringing at Great Glemham, and to Michelle Williams for organising the day despite a poor turnout.

Ambrin Williams

Owning a mini ring

We first thought about owning a mini-ring when we demolished a large decrepit wooden greenhouse in our garden in Claydon and wondered what to put in its place. In the best tradition of boys' toys, a super-shed housing a mini-ring of eight bells, tenor 15lbs, cast by (the late) Richard Bowditch and supplied by mini-ring specialist Matthew Higby was the answer. We named it appropriately The Folly.

We held open days annually in the first few years and have welcomed District practices, visits from local towers and other interested parties, including groups of tower grabbers from all over the country.

Most people, even non-ringers, can learn to handle a mini-ring bell in ten or fifteen minutes, although even with some experience there is a never a guarantee that control won't be lost at a critical point in a touch or even a peal. The bells have proved especially useful for teaching youngsters to handle a bell as the attached



photograph of Lizzie Sparling, then aged four, shows. Most people ring with one hand on the tail and use the other for the sally. Some of the more eccentric insist on ringing two-handed at both strokes or purely one-handed. Mini-rings don't need a lot of maintenance but they do perform better when rung regularly. It's not unusual for bells to be odd-struck and it's a constant battle to try to even out the volume so both the light and the heavy bells can be heard with a similar clarity. Solutions to balancing the volume include sticking plaster and bicycle inner tubes; some solutions wear better than others, hence the need for regular adjustment and experimentation. Although the bells can be heard outside, the noise is not intrusive and we haven't had

any complaints from our neighbours in spite of occasionally ringing at a late hour.

Ropesight is a little more tricky than on tower bells and the speed is quicker so practice is required to ring them well. Although we have rung quarter peals and a handful of peals we certainly can't compare with the wonderful achievements of the Salter family and their friends at the Wolery.

When we decided to move house we had to accept that our purpose-built shed with light and power was not going to accompany us and it wasn't unusual during our house-hunting for me to take more interest in the dimensions of the joists of the garage than the comfort of the living rooms.

We did choose a house in Shilland (near Stowmarket) which met our needs and also appeared to have adequate room in the rafters of the garage.



With assistance from Jed Flatters, the transition to the new site was completed and the bells became the Millbeck Ring. We now ring surrounded by paint pots, bicycles and other possessions which won't fit in our smaller house and in winter the wind blows through the garage doors, but we hope our welcome is as warm as ever. See the Guild report (NW District) for contact details and do feel free to arrange to visit us.

Gordon Slack

From the New Guild Treasurer - Owen Claxton

When deemed too old for Sunday school, the choice thereafter was ringing or the choir. Through luck rather than judgement I chose ringing, and have never looked back.

I was taught to ring by Harold Culpin and Ray Fordham at Great Barton in the early 1960's.

I became a member of the Suffolk Guild in 1966 when I rang my first peal, at Redgrave. At the end of it I was left wondering, why all the fuss about peal ringing? All I had achieved after two hours and forty minutes was seven successful attempts at ringing an extent of 'Plain Bob Minor', and an impressive collection of blisters on each hand. However, the more ringing I did, the more apt became the axiom 'the more you learn the more you realise how little you know'. Ringing offers an endless source of interesting avenues to explore and I feel I have barely scratched the surface.

Twelve bell ringing is one such avenue. My first regular experience of this was in 1970, the start of three years spent in York. Ringing at the Minster (twelve bells; three ton tenor; eight and half hundred weight trebles), was a steep learning curve. Ringing from the clock room, about twenty five feet below the present ringing room, demanded perfect bell control, something I thought I had but found I hadn't. Raising and lowering all twelve in peal, a loose term in this instance, was also an experience!

1985, I was back in Suffolk, ringing at St Mary le Tower. New avenues again, Stedman on all numbers, Surprise on all numbers, spliced Surprise Maximus, conducting, running practices. The possibilities still seem endless, and I have been ringing there for thirty years.

One avenue I had never considered was becoming Suffolk Guild Treasurer. But with some smooth talking and subtle prompting from Ralph Earey, here I am. I am aware I have a tough act to follow, but as Gordon had every thing under control, and all accounts in order, the transfer was straight forward. I intend to follow his example and carry on from where he left off.



Old Year/New Year

W here silence lay, and the midnight cold
Spread like a silver tide across the night,
Ran glistening rims round thatch and tile
And set the star struck window panes alight,

From up on high the laboured echoes
rang,
The muffled tones of solemn bells,
Their slow and sober measures playing
out,
An old year's requiem, the last farewells.

They tolled a vocal elegy,
An end, a muted final sigh,
The abacus of Time's enigma moved
And gone forever, rest in peace, goodbye.

But like the dawn that comes each day,
The joy of life springs ever fresh and dear
Revitalised and eager now the bells
Flood out on peals precise and
clear.



From treble's chime to tenor's blow
Hear out our rounds all ye below.
They bring you tidings of good cheer,
A midnight song 'New Year, New Year!'

The stone walls trembled with the pulse
And promise of their floating symphony,
And all the waiting shadows joining hands,
Dance with the moonbeams lest they flee.

It touched the fading embers in the hearth
And caught the circling strains of 'Auld Lang
Syne'
An incantation's spell that, raising glass and
bell
Then slowly whispered down in soft decline.



At last the sallies fall and toasts
To this and that are mooted from the floor.
Bed calls the weary; one by one
They slip from sight,
Gone where the night
Holds all within her velvet hand once more.

Ray Banks Kersey 31.12.14

Beginning Conducting Part 3

Having now mastered the basics of calling Plain Bob Doubles it is time to move on. Plain Bob Minor is the basis for all methods. The lead ends created form the standard lead ends and what goes for minor applies all the way up to Maximus. So it is well worth mastering Plain Bob Minor.

The first things to learn are the five lead ends: 35264, 56342, 64523, 42635 & 23456. The first is like Queens with 64 instead of 46. The third is reverse rounds with 45 & 32 over. The fourth is like tittums but with 635 over. If you compare these with PB Doubles you will note the connections. Learning the plain course will reveal that each bell dodges with a different bell unlike PB Doubles where they dodge twice with one bell.

The next clue is knowing where the roll ups occur. In a plain course there are 4 56s. They occur two changes after the first lead (just one), four changes after before the fourth lead end (just one) and there are two at the course end. In Plain Bob Minor there are therefore 6 possible courses with 56 fixed where 56 are kept the right way round. 24 roll ups or 24 combinations of 1234 followed by 56.

This can be achieved by calling the sixth home, being BBSBBS when the tenor is 6th place bell. Because 56 are unaffected these six courses should be easy to keep right and ring. As practice, shorter touches like: SSH, BBBH or BSBSH can be used just to get the hang of watching the front bells move round. Half of the courses are 'in course' and half 'out of course'. What does that mean? 'In course' courses are ones that can be reached by calling Bobs only. There are three of these: 42356, 34256, 23456. 'Out of course' are where a single is needed to change the nature of the rows. Again there are three: 32456, 43256, 24356.

This is easier to see with coursing orders but more of that later.

Before we go on we need to establish the rules for calling positions. These apply for all even bell stages. Home is when the observation bell is in its home position. So in minor 6th place, in major 8th place. Wrong is N minus 1. So in minor 6-1, 5th place in major 8-1, 7th place. Middle is N minus 2. It is not really applicable for minor as middle would be 6-2 fourths place which in minor is in. In major it is 8-2, 6th place. Additionally there are In: when the observation bell runs in, Fourths, when the observation bell makes the bob and Before, when the observation bell runs out. Note Singles thirds should be described as Single In, there is no thirds position. In major there is also fifths, when the observation bell is fifths place.

In minor there are therefore five positions, Wrong, Home, In, Out or Fourths. In Major seven, add Middle and Fifths to the minor positions.

David Salter

St Mary's, Hinderclay

The present church is of Norman origin, as can be seen from the stout pillars of the aisle and the blocked North doorway. There are many mature trees in the churchyard, the remnants of an avenue of ash and oak planted in 1733. As with many churches in our county, changes have been made over the years. The roof was thatched until 1842, when it was changed to blue slate. Extensive restoration work was carried out at the beginning of the twentieth century. The tower is pretty and perpendicular, with little chequerboard dressed flints set into the bases of the bell windows. The letters SSRM in the battlements probably stand for Salve Sancta Regina Maria, Hail Holy Queen, suggesting that the medieval dedication of this church was to The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

The windows, mainly from the 1980's, the one illustrated here depicting the Nativity, are by Rosemary Rutherford, sister of Rev John Rutherford who was Rector of nearby Walsham-le-Willows. John moved to Hinderclay on his retirement and was a ringer and member of the North West District of the Suffolk Guild, an active member until into his nineties. The church has a splendid gotch, a large, leather beer pitcher holding two gallons. It has a dedicatory inscription: 'By Sam Moss this pitcher was given to the Noble Society of Ringers at Henderclay in Suffolk.' The ringers' names are inscribed and the date 25 March 1724, which makes it contemporary with gotches at Clare and Hadleigh (see Issue 13). It is also inscribed, 'From London I was sent, As plainly does appear, It was with this intent, To be Fild with strong beer, Pray remember the pitcher when empty.'



Both the gotch and the exterior of the church along with the village windmill, are depicted on the village sign which stands by the crossroads in the village.

Ruth Young

Photos of the window and exterior of the church by Simon Frost

