



Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 20

Summer 2016

Awl a'huld



The detached tower at St Andrew's, Bramfield. See back page.

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From the Editors

We hope you enjoy reading the twentieth issue of our little magazine. As always, many thanks to all our contributors. Without you there would be no publication.

We are pleased to include a report of the Young Ringers' visit to London for the Ringing World Youth Contest and congratulate them on their performance there.

It has been a busy summer. Apart from the usual ringing for weddings and ringing tours associated with this time of the year there was the Queen's 90th birthday to celebrate. During the week of the official birthday in June peals were rung at Offton, Aldeburgh, the Norman Tower and Wenhaston while Felixstowe ringers opted to ring their peal in April, on the Queen's actual birthday. We were asked to ring on the day of the Queen's tea party, 12th June, and many towers responded. Quarter peals were rung on that day at the Norman Tower, Rougham, Sproughton, Wickham Market and Woolpit and I'm sure others were rung on other days that week. Many towers made sure they did some special ringing on 12th June.

Two Association of Ringing Teachers training days were held in July, a measure of the success of the scheme in encouraging the learning of good teaching skills and raising the standard of ringing in the county.

We hope to get the last issue of the year out by the end of November, so please send in your articles and photographs by the middle of October in the usual way.

Richard Gates and Sue Freeman

Snippets

Graffiti

I recommend a super book for holiday reading: Medieval Graffiti – the Lost Voices of England's Churches by Matthew Champion. Ebury Press 2015. There are many examples in Norfolk and Suffolk (19 in Suffolk) especially Lidgate, Parham, Troston, Worlington and Weybread.

May I ask all of you to send me belfry examples. These are as precious in their way as wall paintings. Those of you who know Redenhall's wonderful tower and ringing chamber will know what I mean. I would love to hear from you.

GWP

Broken ropes

Kate Banks went to Bildeston practice one Tuesday and a rope broke. On the following day at Edwardstone she was present when a rope broke and on the Thursday at Kersey—guess what! Luckily she stayed at home on Friday.

Proud to be associated with the Suffolk Guild of Bell Ringers



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From the Chairman

The AGM in April saw us at Hadleigh where a well attended meeting had its high points and not so high points. On the plus side, many Guild Officers were re-elected plus Tom Scase as Ringing Master and Neal Dodge as Public Relations Officer. These two are not only excellent candidates, but they have the advantage of youth. The Guild has a richness of talent and experience in so many areas, but there is a general reluctance to stand to fill Guild offices; I have mentioned this before, and no doubt will again. The importance of youth in our Guild and its officers cannot be overstated. We all know that demographically we are top heavy in terms of age, and every step we take toward tipping that balance strengthens the future of the Guild and ringing in Suffolk.

Once again Guild subscriptions were held at the existing level. The most obvious way to protect these levels from increase in the future is to recruit new members, and if there were a points system young members would count double or treble. So this is my challenge to each tower for next year: recruit at least one new Guild member, the younger the better.

The AGM highlights in so many different ways the contribution and commitment given to our Guild by so many of our members both on the day and throughout the year.

More good news. The Guild entry into the Ringing World National Youth Contest went very well with 11 young ringers in attendance. They attained a grade B and were commended by the judges for their innovative use of the call change sequence.

Back to the AGM and the things that did not go too well. We had a full review at the GMC meeting and noted a number of things that needed improvement, most notably audibility of those contributing to discussion.

Alan Stanley



From the Guild Ringing Master

I'd like to take this opportunity to write a few words following my election as the Ringing Master of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers. It's an honour to become only the 12th different Master of our Guild (even if a little metaphorical arm-twisting was involved). I'd like to thank my predecessor, Jed Flatters, for his contribution over the last five years and support since the AGM. I'll endeavour to pick up where Jed left off.

For those who may not be aware, let me detail a little about my ringing life. With ringing parents, it's perhaps inevitable that in 1994, I learnt to ring at Coddendam and Debenham, my home tower. My progress, initially at least, was quite slow and it was not until 1999 that I rang my first quarter peal and 2003 my first peal. Since then, I've been fortunate to have opportunities to progress and develop my ringing further. I regularly support the weekly practices at Debenham and Otley as well as the monthly one at Helmingham. Working in Newmarket makes getting to other practices, further from home, a bit more challenging. I hope to visit district events across the Guild over the coming months as and when time allows. I'll continue with my SE District Ringing Master commitments until December, at which point I'll step down after five years, and then hopefully visits to other parts of the Guild will become more likely.

What's my vision for the Suffolk Guild in the coming years and what's the Ringing Master's role? Perhaps these are open-ended questions which don't (or shouldn't) have definitive answers. The answers, and indeed perhaps the questions, develop and advance over time. Nevertheless, I feel one way to approach these questions is to consider what's been prominent and beneficial to me throughout my ringing life. Looking at my ringing experiences, there's one recurring theme: opportunity:-

- The opportunity to learn to ring (because of the commitment from my parents, Alan Smith, David Barnard and others to encourage me when I could've been doing something else);
- The opportunity to ring my first peal (because James Smith was surprised I'd not rung one);
- The opportunity to ring my first quarter peal of Surprise Major (because John Malster saw potential and arranged quarter attempts);
- The opportunity to ring more Surprise Major and spliced (because Jane Boyle and others, from my time in Sheffield, saw potential);
- The opportunity to realise and appreciate that ringing is much more than just ringing- it's the pub, socialising and making friends (because of my time with the Sheffield Universities' Guild of Change Ringers, as well as the local ringers in Sheffield, and subsequently back in Debenham and Suffolk);
- The opportunity to ring more peals and become part of peal bands (because of the enthusiasm of Simon Reading, Richard Munnings, Stephen Pettman and David Salter, to name a just few).

To my mind, the Suffolk Guild has an overarching role as a catalyst to providers of opportunity. I think sometimes we need to remember this—read the Guild's six stated objectives. It is, without doubt, fair to say there are individuals with fantastic

ringing knowledge and skills- be it teaching, conducting or maintenance, to name just a few- currently providing many opportunities throughout Suffolk. I think, however, there's potential for the Guild to do more, to encourage and support these individuals, as well as others, as a start. I want to evolve a Guild that's providing opportunities. More to come on this...

There is one further fundamental aspect to ringing that it would be remiss to omit: ringing for services. We should, and I hope we do, aim to ring for as many services as possible. There are many ringers throughout Suffolk, and indeed the country, whose primary involvement with ringing is to ring for Sunday services. These ringers are crucial; we should thank them for this commitment. In doing so, though, we should be looking at ways to encourage them to become more involved with ringing and improve; this comes back to the notion of opportunity.

Tom Scase
Suffolk Guild Ringing Master

SW Young Ringers

The young ringers of the South West District met up at Polstead on Saturday, 16th July for a social evening and a ring together. Derek Rose provided an excellent barbecue, the weather was balmy and helpers and young ringers alike enjoyed the evening. It had been hoped that young ringers from other districts would attend. As it turned out Simon Veal and



Some of the young ringers and helpers

Neal Dodge were the only ringers out of the district to come. Their help and encouragement of some very young ringers was much appreciated. Thank you to Richard Finch for the loan of the barbecue and to Karen Alexander for taking the photos.

The chef at work

More News from the South West District

On 24th August the South West District rambled though the Suffolk countryside on their mini tour in brilliant sunshine, 28 in total, not all ringers I'm afraid. Our first tower of the afternoon was Ixworth a very nice 8 but in the heat of the day got a tad warm. Everyone had a good ring, then on to Pakenham where we were met by Neal Dodge. This was a challenge for some as they are a nice anti-clockwise 6 and yes the heat of the day was a talking point. Then we were on our way to Rougham being the last tower of the afternoon. Maurice and Anita Rose opened up the church with welcoming cups of tea and coffee which was very much appreciated by all. With the time slipping away it was time to do some ringing on the lovely 6 they have at Rougham. Well I would say that as that is where I was taught to ring not that many years ago (haha). Our final port of call was Bradfield Manger, and yes you've got it, once again we were well fed and watered. A perfect ending to a perfect day. Three good towers and a good watering hole and very good company— what else could anyone ask for? On behalf of the South West district and our friends from Essex and the North West district may I say thank you David Lee for arranging such a lovely day. I'm still trying to work out how you got the weather to be so good. I would also like to thank Neal, Maurice and Anita for their warm welcome.

Derek Rose SW Ringing Master

A Cautionary Tale

Recently Polstead church, along with many others in Suffolk, had an alarm fitted to the roof. I was told by the churchwarden that an electrician was coming to install a power outlet for the alarm in the tower. I duly handed over the key to enable the electrician to go up. The bells were down – what could go wrong?

The following Sunday we raised the bells and the ringer of the tenor said it felt 'odd' and wondered if he had bumped the stay. Nothing daunted we pulled off in rounds and the tenor rope went up, but did not come down again. We rang the front five for service, then lowered them. That afternoon, in fear and trembling as to what we might find, Richard Gates and I went up to the bells to investigate. We found the rim of the tenor wedged tight against a small electrical spur which had been fixed in the exact and only place where this could possibly have happened (our bells swing very close to the wall!) Back in the ringing chamber our combined weight on the rope unwedged the bell which was then safely lowered. We turned off the power, Richard unscrewed the flattened electrical box from the wall and put it out of harm's and the bell's way. Fortunately the wiring was not damaged so we were able to restore the power. A quick phone call to the churchwarden followed, the astonished electrician returned the next day with a new power spur which he installed in a more suitable place and the roof alarm was installed two days later.

Needless to say, the bell was totally unscathed!

The moral of the story is, 'Don't let anyone do anything among the bells unless you are there!'

SF

South West Striking Competition

This year's competition was held on the recently restored bells at Rattlesden (see the full story in Issue 15). It attracted an entry of five teams. David Sparling from Essex was our judge and, as on a previous occasion, he was very encouraging and tactful in his remarks. The method shield was won again by Kersey. It is a pity there are not more entries in the method ringing category to give Kersey some competition! The call change trophy was won by the resident band. This team was mostly made up of comparatively new ringers who should be proud of what they have accomplished in the short time they have been ringing together.

The competition was followed by the usual delicious bring-and-share tea. Many thanks to David and Pat Ward for hosting what was a most enjoyable event.

SF

From the South East district

Sally Munnings celebrates

A quarter peal of 1250 changes of Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung on April 19th at Offton to celebrate my becoming a ringer 50 years ago to the day. Our sons Richard and Chris were in it as well as Alan and me, Brian Whiting, David Stanford, Janet Sheldrake and Gordon Slack. Ruth and Alfie came along as umpires!



Sally Munnings with the quarter peal band

The Ringing World National Youth Contest

Richard Munnings in his blog for 2nd July wrote:

Well done to Suffolk Young Ringers on once again representing the county's ringers so splendidly in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in London, gaining a grade B for their Call-Changes at St Saviour in Pimlico. Such competitions are nerve-racking for even the most seasoned of ringers and yet invaluable experience, so I am delighted not only that we entered a team after missing out last year, but that they did so well!

They were well supported too, at least judging by the photos put onto [Facebook](#) and the Guild's [Twitter](#) feed and the sizeable contingent from within our borders in the band ringing a quarter-peal for the Young Ringers Association at St Botolph, Bishopsgate, which was George Salter's first of Grandsire Triples as conductor - well done George, well done to the Young @ Herts Hot Buns on winning the Call-Change category and to Bedfordshire Young Ringers on winning the Method Ringing category and the Whitechapel Trophy. And well done again to our young ringers on representing the SGR so brilliantly and to all who helped them - I hope that the 2017 contest pencilled in for 1st July in Birmingham is already in their metaphorical diaries!

And here is the view of Neal Dodge and Ambrin Williams, present on the occasion:

On Saturday 2nd July, an intrepid group of young ringers and adults travelled down to London to compete in the sixth annual Ringing World National Youth Contest.



The complete party

After months of practice, we eagerly gathered at St Mary Le Bow, home of the famous 'Bow Bells' to register and then went off to ring our test piece at St Saviour's Pimlico. These bells were reasonably challenging for a band that hails from a county dominated by bells much weightier than the 7 cwt ring of eight that they found themselves performing their piece on.

Despite that our test piece, of 160 rows of call changes, went well, according to the judges who awarded a grade B and gave these comments:

- The band really went for it and were confident and assertive.
- The little bells were exceptionally well rung although sometimes it felt a little frenzied.
- There were no major errors only accumulated faults because of mainly backstroke clips.
- They also praised our creative use of the call change sequence.

The band comprised:

Treble- Ellie Earey
(Sproughton)
2nd- Matthew Rolph
(Halesworth)
3rd- Colin Salter (Ipswich)
4th- Simon Veal (Gt Barton)
5th- Clara Gostling
(Sproughton)
6th- Ambrin Williams
(Wenhaston)
7th- Nicole Rolph
(Halesworth)
Tenor- Richard Stevens
(Rendham)



The band outside St Saviour's, Pimlico

Another exciting feature of the day was the chance to have a guided tour of the St Paul's Cathedral bells. Teams were invited to see the Ringing Room and the prestigious belfry. After climbing over 150 steps, the aerial views of London and its inhabitants was well worth it. We were also given a brief history of the bells by one of the Cathedral's younger ringers, which was both informative and entertaining.

Thanks must of course go to all those involved in making the day such a success including those who helped arrange the day itself, helped out at practices, and everyone who donated money. Thank you!

Next year's contest is in Birmingham on the 1st July.

As the contest has an age limit, next year several of the current band will be too old so we need new young ringers to get involved if we have any chance of entering a band. So if you know of young ringers of any level of experience who would like to get involved please contact the Young Ringers Coordinator Ruth Suggett on yrcoordinator@suffolkbells.org.uk 01359 20251896

Half Wheels

I have recently returned from a holiday in the South West of Ireland near to Bantry and a wonderful part of the world it is with stunning scenery, when the weather is not a “soft day”, meaning a misty drizzle with no view at all. In the course of my travels I was keeping an eye out for churches that might have bells and as a result saw a number of bells that were hung for chiming. Amongst these there were some half wheels.



It is generally accepted that the half wheel was a step towards full circle ringing and from the examples I saw it can be easily seen how this change came about. The accompanying photograph is of a church at Durrus and I think is an excellent example of a half wheel.

The disadvantage of chiming is that the ringer has little control over the striking speed of the bell, thus it is the genius of full circle ringing that allows us to control the speed of ringing which in turn gives us so much pleasure today.

Richard Gates

Obituaries

John Pilgrim, son of Michael and Ann at Bredfield. What an amazingly talented man but taken from us before he was 50. John learned his ringing from parents, granddad and uncle, all members of the Guild, but there seemed nothing he couldn't do. Working in South America and Europe, mastering eight languages, great family man. We shall miss him and all he did with customary cheerfulness for others.

Dr Benedict Pavell from Theberton, originally Shipmeadow, in contrast died aged 100. A Woodbridge schoolboy then at Selwyn college Cambridge, later St Thomas' Hospital and Great Ormond Street, Benny was tower captain at Theberton well into his nineties; a great village community man.

And Winnie Lockwood, wife of Ephraim (Tinker) a lifetime ringer at Offton, St Mary le Tower, Hintlesham and Hadleigh and carer of children, she herself an orphan. Winifred was made a Life Honorary Member in 1987, a lovely lady. May they rest in peace.

GWP

Plans for a Memorial Ring of Bells at Ypres

Ypres stands on the western border of Belgium and occupies an important strategic position. In October and November 1914 it was the scene of a major battle and in subsequent war years there was much fighting in and around the ruins of the town. Indeed, 500,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers died in the three battles for the Ypres Salient. For many people today, the mere mention of the name Ypres conjures up pictures in the mind of the total desolation caused by the First World War.

Such was the severity of the battles and such was the impression that the name Ypres made upon English people, that a church and school were built in the late 1920s to serve the English community that had settled in Ypres. Both church and school were opened by the Bishop of Fulham on March 24th 1929. Unsurprisingly the church was constructed in English style, complete with a splendid western tower surmounted by a spire. All that the tower lacked was a ring of bells.



The omission is soon to be put right by the bell ringers of England. The tower structure having been inspected for strength and stability, it is proposed to install a ring of eight bells with the tenor weighing 6 cwt. They will be hung for full-circle ringing, the first ring to be so hung in Belgium and they will ring out over “some corner of a foreign field that is forever England”. We very much hope that it will be possible to recruit a band of local ringers to ring them. It is likely that a good many bands of ringers from the British Isles will come to ring there. Variable sound control will be installed. Great care will be taken to ensure that the tranquillity of the church as a place of remembrance is maintained. To provide a ringing room of beauty and purpose, fine oak panelling and fittings will be installed. A display cabinet will house the Memorial Book to record donations towards the project which will be created by professional illuminator and calligrapher Timothy Noad.

It is envisaged that the bells will be ringing by November 11th 2018 to mark the centenary of the end of the war. Donations will be welcomed by Alan Regin, one of the project leaders: cheques made payable to Bells4StGeorgeYpres should be posted to Alan at 39 Maud Road, Plaistow, London, E13 OJT. Or donations may be made by Bank Transfer to CAF Bank, reference (your name), account No 00028479 Sort Code 40-52-40. It is anticipated that many people will wish to be associated with the project. All donations will be gratefully received and will be acknowledged. Bells4StGeorgeYpres is a registered charity (number 1165567) and donations may be Gift Aided where possible. Please indicate that you are a UK tax payer and are able to Gift Aid. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK tax payer. For more details, you can contact Alan on 020 8471 7045.

John Barnes

ART Training Days

Two training days were held in the Guild in July, encouraging news for the future of teaching ringing in Suffolk. One course was held in the North East district, the other at the Norman Tower.

Pam Ebsworth of Woolpit writes:

A Module 1 course of the ART Training Scheme was held at Bury St Edmunds on 8th July. It was attended by eight students and two observing mentors all of whom found it extremely useful, helpful and encouraging.

Here are some of the comments made afterwards by attendees:

'The day for me was a success. I was pleased with the techniques that were demonstrated and I would definitely recommend the course to others so that we can help and encourage new ringers to come into the fold and make their basic handling skills develop more quickly so that they gain interest in going further.' (John, Newmarket)

Fiona from Laxfield commented, 'This course made me think about and pay more attention to the nuances to include when teaching good bell control and equipped me with an extremely valuable set of teaching techniques.'



Pauline Brown with course tutor Graham Nabb



Some of the group listening intently

Mentor Derek Rose said, 'I personally found the course very interesting and would promote it to anyone who wants to take up teaching. We all strive for safer towers and better rope control which lays the foundation for better ringers and ringing. Module 1 can also be used for correcting bad habits (which may already be in your tower!) and when corrected will make ringing interesting and more enjoyable.'

NG WORLD.

May 5th, 1916.

FIRE AT FAMOUS BELFRY. IPSWICH BELLS GIVE WARNING OF OUTBREAK.

An outbreak of fire in the belfry of St. Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich, early on Thursday of last week threatened the famous tower and bells with destruction, but thanks to the curious fact that the bells themselves gave the warning, and to the prompt action of the police and fire brigade, the fire was quickly extinguished and the damage limited.

Between three and four o'clock in the morning the neighbours were aroused by the ringing of one of the bells. Mr. F. C. Corder, the church surveyor, who lives near by, on looking out of his window, saw smoke belching from the louvres of the bell chamber, and immediately communicated with the police and fire brigade. The latter were quickly on the spot with the first aid and ladder truck, followed by the hose-cart and escape. Connecting up with a hydrant, the brigade quickly extinguished the flames.

Mr. William Motts, the tower keeper, informs us that on Bank Holiday the Ipswich ringers had had a pleasant day's ringing with their Coggeshall friends and others, and, at the close, they as usual left the larger bells up. It is to this happy circumstance that the early discovery of the outbreak was made. It appears that on Wednesday night the verger had gone to the top of the tower, and, the gas being off at the meter, he had struck a match. When, as he thought, this went out he dropped the remains, and it fell into the sawdust which covers the floor under the bells to deaden the sound in the ringing room. The sawdust smouldered for some time, and when it burst into flame it burnt the pulley block and part of the 7th bell wheel, the stay and slider, pulley block and 8th bell wheel, and also the floor under these two bells and part of the frame. When the stay and slider gave way the 8th, of course, ran itself down, and this was the fortunate warning that was given. Several of the bells got very hot, including the one cast in 1607 by Miles Gray, but the tone of the bells has not been affected, neither have the headstocks been damaged. Mr. Fred Day, of Eye, has been called in to estimate for the repairs, and it will be about a month before the twelve bells can be rung again. It was only about a month ago that the St. Mary-le-Tower Society were able to resume ringing for the Sunday evening services.

At the Easter Vestry meeting, which was held the same morning, Mr. F. S. Corder referred to the fire, and said that but for the fact of the bells being in the position they were, it was his opinion that the whole belfry at least would have been destroyed. He thought their appreciation was due both to the police and the firemen for their promptness and efficiency. He could not estimate the damage himself, but was of opinion that it was confined to the woodwork connected with the bells. He advocated the firm who had been concerned in their erection being communicated with at once.

Beginning Conducting Four

In the same way that we looked at Plain Bob Doubles I am now going to explore the standard minor calling. The most used minor 720 is WHW both for plain methods and for treble Dodging. This is because it is easy to ring and keep right. For calling at all levels it provides basic knowledge and can be used at all levels. What the composition is in reality, is a round block WHWH with the last call omitted to triple the length.

Firstly note that the part ends are the same (with the 6th added) as in Bob Doubles just in a different order.

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
W 23564	W 34562	W 42563
36245	46325	26435
64352	62453	63254
45623	25634	35642
H 45236	H 25346	H 35426
W 45362	W 25463	W 35264
56423	56234	56342
62534	63542	64523
23645	34625	42635
34256	42356	23456

It is worth learning this extent fully as it can be applied to many other callings and many other compositions. And it is not that difficult if you learn it in bits.

The important points are:

The 5th & 6th are fixed (they return to their respective home positions at the end of each part).

The 6th is not involved in any bob work.

There is a call every time the 6th is in 56 except when it is dodging with the 5th.

The fifth has a fixed work in each part. F,O,O.

The 2nd,3rd & 4th. Each bell rings three different works.

2nd: In,F,H

3rd: O,H,F

4th: H,In,In

The 5th & 6th dodge together in 34 the lead before the two consecutive bobs. The first bob wrong comes at the lead after 56 dodge in 56.

The bell that makes the last bob wrong in each part, will be seconds place bell at the part end. All of these points need to be learnt. You only need to be able to recall the first part then transpose 2,3,4 for parts two and three.

For example in part two the 2nd does what the 3rd did in part one. In part three the 3rd does what the 4th did in part one.

Another good point to remember is which bells run in when the 5th runs out twice. 4,2,3 is the part order.

As to keeping it right, knowing who does what at each call helps considerably. You can use coursing order. The 56 courses come up in the order 54326,52436,53246.

The coursing order after each first wrong is 32546, 43526, 24536. Again all worth learning and remembering. More on coursing control later.

The 720 given is for Treble Dodging methods. For Plain methods either call a single for the first wrong in parts 1&4 or 2&5 or 3&6. Or call a Single at the part ends of parts 1&4 or 2&5 or 3&6. Once you have called the Single the following 360 changes will all be "out of course" that is with two bells coursing the opposite way to normal. So the coursing orders of 52346, 53426, 54236 will be rung and 23546, 42536, 34526. All points apply but just in a different order so for the "out-of-course" section if the single is called at the first wrong the bells running in when the fifth runs out will be 4,3,2 rather than 4,2,3.

A word of warning, do not try to commit all the above to memory at once. Add it to your memory bit by bit and try to notice what is going on when you are ringing it. Listen for 56 dodging behind or dodging in 34. Then slowly build up your knowledge base.

David Salter

The Fire Service Guild comes to Suffolk

As the only Suffolk Member of the Fire Service Guild of Bellringers I was asked to organise an outing to Suffolk. We are a nationwide organisation, although very small.

I decided that we would ring at Wenhaston on Friday evening, with a meal at the Star, Wenhaston afterwards.

Saturday saw us ringing at Blythburgh, Halesworth, with a lunch stop in Halesworth and afternoon ringing in Reydon. We stopped whilst some of our members did the Adnams Brewery Tour with the rest of us going to have a cup of tea and cake in one of the tea rooms in Southwold.

Our last tower of the day was Southwold and then we adjourned to the Red Lion for our evening meal.

On Sunday morning we rang at St. Margaret's Ipswich and then I provided the usual tea and cake before everyone went home.

As you see our meetings are not about Tower Grabs but socialising to a great part. We are only together three times a year and our next meeting will be in September when we ring in London for our Fire-fighters' Memorial Service with wreath laying at our statue by the Millennium Bridge.

Angela Cable



At the Red Lion, Southwold

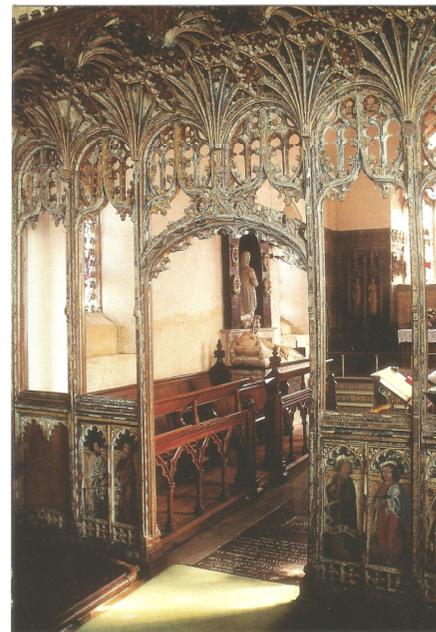
The Church of St Andrew, Bramfield

When we have visitors who don't know Suffolk, we may take them to the coast, to Aldeburgh, or Shingle Street, or we might take them to Sutton Hoo. On the other hand, we might take them on a church crawl to the North East District, calling at Blythburgh for the angel roof and the wonderful light, at Wenhaston for the Doom and Bramfield for so many reasons.



This splendid little 14th century thatched church is tucked behind the village street opposite an excellent example of a 'crinkle crankle' wall which surrounds the grounds of Bramfield Hall. In the churchyard stands a detached flint round tower, the only such in Suffolk. It was built in the 12th century, probably as a local stronghold and has never been attached to another building. Inside is a 12 cwt ring of five bells three of which were cast in 1440.

When you enter the church and look towards the altar your view is of a wonderful rood screen. At the base are painted panels showing the four evangelists and Mary Magdalene. Above these rises the delicate carved wooden tracery of the late 15th century screen all of which apart from the top canopy is original and carefully preserved. Another of the highlights of the church is the large number of memorial stones, or ledger slabs, many of them to the Rabett and Nelson families. When you visit, stand in the chancel and read the stone commemorating Bridget Applewhaite, nee Nelson. There is not room to quote it here, but the joys of married life are not given a very good press! A modern addition to the interior is the large embroidered wall hanging depicting the village. This was stitched in sections, then assembled as appliqué and was worked on by more than sixty people. Every building in the village is shown— a real labour of love.



The screen, photographed by Richard Tilbrook