SOUTH WEST DISTRICT REPORT 2026

Following a decision at the 2025 ADM, all District practices have been extended to two hours. These have been well attended. As well as being very sociable occasions, there have been opportunities for members to progress at many levels, especially in ringing 'inside' to Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles and trebling to Triples. We have also welcomed eight new members during the year and it has been particularly pleasing to retain a very high proportion of recently-elected members. There is often a high drop-out rate in this category so this is a tribute to the encouragement and friendship received from local bands.

The SW District lacks the centres of eight-bell ringing enjoyed by other districts. Nonetheless, we were able to enter a band into the Guild Eight Bell Striking Competition at Gislingham on 16th May. Congratulations are due to Woolpit and Drinkstone, who entered the Guild Six Bell Competitions at Wickham Skeith. Woolpit were placed second in the Change Ringing competition for the Mitson Shield and Drinkstone emerged winners in the Lester Brett Call Change Competition. Fantastic achievements.

The District Striking Competition was held on 18th July on the lovely six at Higham and a very warm welcome was received from the local ringers. Six teams entered the Call Change Competition, and two the Method. Much to the surprise of the band, Clare were declared winners in both competitions, narrowly beating Hadleigh in the Method category and Little Cornard by an even smaller margin in the Call Change Competition. Special mention must go to the Little Cornard team, which contained two recently-elected members, who were ringing in their first striking competition. Very constructive feedback was received from the judges, Julian and Cath Colman.

The Secretary organised another Quarter Peal Month in August. Several members were unable to take part this year for health reasons, but six quarter peals were rung and Robyn Slater, Duncan Riches and Christopher Moore are all to be congratulated on achieving personal targets. Also, John Game deserves great credit for ringing his first of Minor for 39 years, in the quarter at Ridgewell. With the help of ringers from the NW District, it was also good to ring a quarter of Grandsire Triples at Horringer. Thanks go to the experienced ringers for their support, and particularly to Alan Mayle for conducting five of the quarters.

Despite adverse weather conditions, we had a very enjoyable outing on 24th October, ringing at Rendham, Badingham, Framlingham, Parham and Hacheston. We were boosted by visitors from other districts, but it is good to report that 19 of the 26 ringers attending were District members.

Three SW District towers are set to benefit from the generous legacy of the late Adrian Knights, which was left for the specific purpose of augmentation to eight bells or above. Both Drinkstone and Haverhill will be augmented from six to eight, and the new trebles for each tower were cast at Loughborough recently. Long Melford has exciting plans to augment to ten. As ever, the officers appreciate the enthusiasm and support shown at District events.

Pauline Brown, SW District Chairman
Richard Knight, SW District Ringing Master
Christine Knight, SW District Secretary