

South East Ringing Master's Report

This year has been a busy one for the South East!

The **Guild AGM** was held within our borders in April this year. Our hosts at Debenham treated Suffolk ringers to a wonderful afternoon on their 21 cwt 8, followed by a meeting in a superb venue a stones throw from the church. All of this was preceded by some open ringing at the idyllic five of Winston where some local non-ringers were fascinated to learn about the exercise from ringers all over the county. The occasion was marked [by a host of quarter peals](#) organised by each of the four districts in what resulted in 4 successfully scored attempts (with one failed attempt of Plain Bob Major). Thank you to all the organisers, helpers and band members who made the AGM a great success.

Our **District 6 Bell Striking Competition** was held at Easton - a ground floor six whose percussive pulleys challenged everyone trying to pick out their bell. I'm thrilled that we had 11 teams take up the challenge - we'd get bored if we only rang on perfect bells and everyone got a lot out of the experience (including the wonderful catering!). Special thanks must go to Chris McArthur for all his help and work on the bells, and for Joshua Watkins and Juliet Griffiths from the NW district for judging.

Cecil Pipe Memorial Bell Method Competition

1st: Ipswich Minster - Blue (18)

2nd: Pettistree (22)

3rd: Ipswich Minster - White (39)

4th: Sproughton (56)

5th: Falkenham (-)

David Barnard Memorial Trophy Call Change Competition

1st: Wickham Market (33)

2nd: Bramford (37)

3rd: bellsashen (48)

4th: St Matthews (65)

5th: Clopton (75)

6th: Hollesley (-)

The **Guild 6 Bell competition** showcased the strength of the South East across the Guild. The majority of the bands who descended on Yoxford were from within our borders and I was very pleased to see Debenham and the bellsashen Teaching Hub take the Method and Call Change trophy respectively.

Our efforts for the **Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition** began in earnest at the start of the year. With [a trio of quarter](#) peals scored and most of the band familiar with the Aldeburgh venue, the scene was set for a strong performance. Unfortunately the pressure of the occasion had us off our game and we posted 4th of 5 teams. It serves as a great reminder of why striking competitions are so important - they are the only occasions where ringing under pressure is done amongst friends and supportive peers. When it's time to perform for real - for a wedding, a coronation, or a Sunday service - it's important to know how to make the bells sounds beautiful when butterflies are dancing in your stomach!

I decided to set an ambitious **Surprise Major Practice** agenda this year. Belfast, Double Dublin, & Cooktown Orchid were unfortunately not attempted, whilst Cornwall showed promise earlier in the year. Glasgow proved a step too far for a casual practice, but I wanted to thank everyone who took time to learn it and gave it a shot. Notwithstanding these setbacks, it's been amazing to see those who took their first blows of Cambridge at these practices last year make heaps of progress - scoring quarters, and taking their first steps in Yorkshire and Superlative. Whether it's Glasgow, Grandsire, or Plain Bob, I'm pleased that ambition is the norm growing at every level in our district which is something to be celebrated.

ART Foundation Skills/ Kaleidoscope sessions continue to be well supported – my thanks to Elizabeth Christian for taking the lead on this as I feel that its extremely important to give an avenue for ringers to improve on every level. It can be easy to forget, but the time in your development when you're about to move on from rounds is the most difficult to capture. Some take to it easily, whereas the Foundation Skills sessions are designed to help those finding it tricky to move onto the next level.

The highlight of my month is by far the **District Practices**. Getting to meet new members, ring with you, and give you the best advice on how to improve your ringing is wonderful. Each practice welcomes people at every level of ability, with rounds, call changes, and even some plain hunt being catered to. An additional focus allows ringers further on in their progression to know what to prepare for so that they can get the most out of the practice.

Orford in January was great to ring touches of Grandsire Triples, Stedman Triples, and a course of Bristol. Offton showcased the fabulous baking ability of the whole district, and a ground floor ring made the cake VERY accessible! March saw the district pack out Grundisburgh tower for many people's first blows on 12 bells with some call changes and plain hunt on 11. A Grandsire workshop at Falkenham saw people take their first blows in the method, cement their knowledge of touches, and call multiple extents for the first time. July's [Quarter Peal Day](#) saw a great crowd roam around the Ashbocking area with a nice smattering of QPs scored, with one rearranged after a 'helpful' congregation member tried to get involved. Stutton saw a modest crowd on the Shotley peninsular work on their rounds, call changes, plain hunt and Bob Minor in a picturesque little tower. Pettistree were amazing hosts as people from every ability mixed with each other to give advice on bell handling, plain hunt, and Surprise Minor (as well as an extremely tasty spread).

A special mention must go to the **SE Outing** in and around the District. It was amazing to meet so many people who had yet to come along to a practice and get to ring together and learn about their practice nights. It concluded with many people's first introduction to a mini-ring as we all tried to master the knack of mini-bells. Thank you to Mary and Chris Garner (and in particular their neighbor!) who allowed the Vestey Ring to be erected and rang in their garden whilst a wonderful selection of cakes, teas, and coffees were handed out. Be it mini-bells, hand-bells, or tower-bells, it's all part of the rich tapestry of ringing that is the fabric of the Suffolk Guild.

My thanks to everyone who supports the District and the Guild – I can't take credit for all the amazing work that goes on supporting new and old ringers up and down county. We're an ambitious district with wonderful people and I'm proud to be its Ringing Master.

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