

# South East District of Suffolk Guild of Ringers

## Annual District Meeting - Agenda

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 4pm - meeting via Zoom

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Remembrances
4. Message from Guild Chairman
5. Minutes of the 2019 ADM (held 7<sup>th</sup> December at Debenham)  
<https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/pdfs/SeDistrict/SeDistrictAmMinutes2019DRAFT1.pdf>
6. Matters arising
7. New Members
8. Reports
  - Chairman, Ringing Master, Treasurer, Technical Advisor (pre-circulated)
  - Ipswich Historic Churches
  - Recruitment and Training <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/RandTminutes.php>,
  - GMC <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/GMC.php>
9. Election of Officers
  - Ringing Master; Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Technical Advisor; Area Reps; Recruitment and Training (2); GMC (5))
10. St Edmunds' Clapper and Charity Fundraising/Ideas for 'virtual' activities/Ringing Room demonstration
11. Christmas Ringing in Ipswich
12. Programme 2021
13. A.O.B.
  - "Shake my hand and I'll show you the ropes" - A biography of George Pipe by John Loveless
14. Next ADM – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021

*Optional – stay to chat.*

## **SE District Ringing Master's Report 2020 – Jenny Scase**

I was pleased to be elected Ringing Master at last year's ADM and looked forward to an active year of district ringing.

January started with the practice at Woodbridge, where its large ringing chamber was useful for accommodating the 40+ ringers in attendance. Quite a daunting start to my role but we enjoyed a variety of ringing from call changes to surprise major, with plenty in between. Particularly pleasing was the election of three new ringers from Holbrook.

In February we met at Monewden for a practice followed by a 'Biscuit Bake-off'. Again this was supported by well over 30 ringers with opportunities for the several learners present and those at a more experienced stage of their ringing development to be challenged and, hopefully, make progress. Socialising is important and the ringing was followed by coffee and sampling of the 13 plates of biscuits pre-cooked for the Bake-off. The Star baker, whose biscuits received the most votes, was, pleasingly, Isis, from Holbrook, who was elected in January, at Woodbridge.

The March practice, held at St Margaret's in Ipswich, was again very well attended and followed by a short meeting. We began the afternoon by ringing 84 changes of Grandsire Triples in memory of George Pipe who sadly died a few days earlier. This was followed by the range and variety of ringing usual at a district practice. I was particularly pleased to see several youngsters joining in and being supported with their progress. The sizable crowd of members were able to socialise and enjoy the refreshments provided by the St Margaret's ringers before we held a brief meeting.

What a pity this was to be the last opportunity for district ringing, on real bells, in 2020.

As we went into lockdown the April walk and May striking competition had been organised. These had to be cancelled. I was hoping that by August the quarter peal and meal event would have been a good welcome back to ringing celebration. Little did I know!

It's good to hear that some bells have been rung for services around the district. We are lucky at my tower to have bells spaced out enough to ring on 4 bells (5 with a household group of 3). We also had a weekly service to ring for. I realise that many of the smaller parishes have not yet opened their churches and of those that are open, many will have ringing rooms that do not allow for more than one or two bells, if any, to be rung under the current guidelines. It is important that while encouraging ringing to take place, COVID-19 rules are followed. As I write this report we are in the second lockdown with no ringing in churches or even on handbells (except, maybe, within households).

Most ringers have been able to access the guidance, agreed with the CofE, given by the central council and available on the Suffolk Guild website. As we come out of lockdown we must continue to be careful about following these guidelines.

I have heard that members at several towers have been able to keep in contact with each other. Some have regular catch ups outside, either in a park or for a walk in the countryside, and some have held handbell sessions. Many have kept in touch virtually e.g. using Zoom or Ringing room. This local communication is important.

Not all towers have been able to do this and as we move into 2021, with restrictions likely to remain in place for many months, the district intends to hold a virtual session each month. Your ideas for these sessions would be welcome.

Thank you all for the support you give to ringing and to this district.

## **Chairman's Report – Mark**

At this time of the year I would normally be reflecting on the activities undertaken during the year and on individual achievements, however this year has been hugely different for all of us.

During the year we had expected a full schedule of district events and the VE & VJ commemorations, unfortunately in March the COVID-19 pandemic struck and although thankfully, Suffolk has seen one of the lowest infection rates in the country, we were still faced with a complete stoppage of all tower bell ringing.

Although the restrictions meant that the planned VE day celebrations did not occur, I know a number of towers managed limited socially distanced ringing for VJ day and subsequently, until the second lockdown, a small number of towers had been able to restart limited, socially distanced ringing.

To address the lack of tower bell ringing, several Guild members took to using virtual ringing, using the Ringing Room and similar facilities. From personal experience I know that these virtual ringing sessions are different from tower bell ringing, however it can be fun and does keep up social interaction with other ringers. My home tower, for example, now holds a weekly practice night using Ringing Room and Teams. The meeting allows us to share news and we have a small weekly non ringing related quiz, in addition to actual ringing.

Other ringers took to socially distanced hand bell ringing, which was easier in the warmer weather when they could comfortably sit outside. These too are supported by Ringing Room and it is possible to purchase dummy handbells, to make the experience more realistic.

As it is likely that tower bell ringing will be limited for several months, despite the imminent vaccine, I would encourage you to try the virtual meeting tools, as the social contact they support, is as important as the ringing.

Going forward, monthly District meetings will restart in January, although until we can ring in towers again, these will be held online. In addition to any planned activity, we will make sure that there is time for you to catch up with other ringers. If you have any ideas on activities we could run, please let Jenny know.

Hopefully by now most of you have heard that Rowan relaunched the St Edmunds' Clapper challenge for Guild fundraising. The award, which in recent years has been won by towers in this District, will now go to the District that raises the most funds. With the limits on physical meetings, this challenge will need some creative thinking on what can be done. If you are organising something, please let me know and do share your ideas with others, as it would be good for the SE District to win.

The fund raising, along with your subscriptions allows the Guild to continue its work in helping towers from across the county with ongoing restoration work. Some of which has still been able to continue.

On a sadder note, this year we have lost a number of ringers including George Pipe, who lived in Ipswich but was one of the most well-known ringers globally. For those who knew or knew of George, you may be interested in purchasing a copy of his biography "Shake my hand and I'll show you the ropes" by John Loveless. It can be purchased via the Ringing World web site.

Finally I would like to thank the officers for their continued work and to all of you for your ongoing membership to the Guild. Have an enjoyable festive season and I hope to see you in the new year and at some point in the year, join in ringing in a tower.

### **Treasurer's Report – Tracey Scase**

The District funds were £100 at the beginning of the year. Over the course of the year I have transferred £39.31 to the Guild, leaving me with £100 balance currently. My accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December will be submitted to the Guild Treasurer and the proposed summary is attached.

Please note that subscriptions for 2021 become due again on 1<sup>st</sup> January. To be able to vote at the AGM in April, your fees must have been paid beforehand. Thank you to those members who have already paid or set up standing orders to facilitate a prompt payment.

For 2021, I still have 55 subscriptions as of 26<sup>th</sup> November that remain outstanding.

### **Belfry Advisory Committee – Chris McArthur**

The members of the group have very active with works during the earlier part of the year, but these have been outside the district. Namely Hitcham and Stowmarket installations.

The following district matters have been dealt with:

Akenham – Single bell inspection and improvement plan drawn up for that parish.

Barham – Bells removed to Taylors for rehanging, expected back very shortly. A fledgling band is being taught.

Henley – Pulley, rope and stay repairs, to keep bells operational for learners.

Stonham Aspal – Loose headstock rectified.

Pettistree – Clapper refurbished and reinstalled.

Framsden – Local discussions and an inspection regarding a local fund-raising initiative to rehang them.

Ipswich – The Salter family have undertaken ongoing maintenance at various towers, that is much appreciated. St Mary at the Elms were going to be hung dead/safe by committee members and Nicholson's, as lockdown occurred. It is now deferred.

#### Other matters

At the last meeting of the BAC and subsequently agreed by management, the Chair of BAC has now passed to Chris Davies with effect from the guild AGM. Also ratified were the two new Technical Advisors for the guild, Alan Moulton and Ged Flatters, a shared post. This follows the retirement of Winston Girling from those positions, after many years of sterling service, we all thank him for his efforts and great enthusiasm for bell restoration projects. Christopher McArthur remains District Technical Advisor and Secretary to the committee.

One meeting only was held during the year on 6/2/20 at Haughley.