

South East District of Suffolk Guild of Ringers Annual District Meeting 1st December 2018 - Reports

Chairman – Mark Ogden

I would like to start my report by thanking all who were able to take part in the Armistice 100. Through your efforts, there was ringing at all the towers in the district, where ringing was possible. A fantastic achievement from our entire membership.

On a more general note, I am pleased to report good attendances at district events, including the outing to Norfolk. Jonathan's leadership on these and his efforts for the Armistice 100 are much appreciated. Additionally, there were good attendances at the Veterans afternoon and for the 2nd Tuesday ringing. My thanks to Jenny and Peter for their organisation of these events.

The district events bring together ringers of all abilities and provide an opportunity to practice your ringing, try different bells and socialise with fellow ringers. I would encourage you to take part and if you have ideas for next year's programme, please share them.

There was a dedicated Guild organised outing for young ringers last December. Unfortunately, subsequent outings for the Summer and this December have had to be cancelled, as there are insufficient ringers. If you have any young ringers, even if not yet Guild members, could you please encourage them to take part. The longer-term aim is to nurture the ringers to that we can one again take part in the National Young Ringers competition.

In addition to regular Sunday and practice ringing, the district continues to be active in quarter and peal ringing and this year there have been five first peelers in the District.

This year has seen the successful completion of two major projects in the district, St Margaret's Ipswich and Cretingham. Without the active involvement from district members, these would not have been possible.

As we near the end of the year, could I please ask that anyone who still hasn't paid their subscription, to do so ASAP; currently District membership appears to be down around 8%. Regardless of the reason for the membership dip, it would be good if we could encourage all ringers to join, especially younger ringers, as over half of current members are over 65. On a positive note we have had several new members this year and a further five proposed for the ADM.

At today's Annual District Meeting we will need to fill a number of vacant posts and I would urge you to consider if you could fill one of those posts. The vacancies include representatives for GMC, area and the magazine.

Just a reminder, the next Guild AGM will be held in Ipswich. To make sure that the day is a success, we will be looking for volunteers, if you can help please let us know.

I will close by thanking all of those officers in the District who have given freely of their time over the previous year.

District Ringing Master's Report- Jonathan Williamson

We began the year with our January District Practice at Pettistree which was well attended, though not as well attended as the practice in February at Felixstowe where nearly 40 people were present. It was difficult for me to gauge just how many were actually there because not everyone could fit into the ringing chamber at the same time (so thanks to those who did do a head count for me)! It was pleasing to see these two events, still in the cold and dark of winter, so well supported.

On Saturday 27th May we ran an ART Module 1 Course at St. Matthew's, Ipswich and 11 of the 12 who attended were SE District Members. It was a fun and informative day and has provided valuable support to those teaching new ringers at several towers in our District. I know that at least 3 of those who attended have already reached ART Accreditation at Module 1 and one of those also now at Module 2. Several of the others are actively teaching and should also reach accreditation in due course as long as they keep up with the necessary ART paperwork which seems to be the biggest stumbling block. It's a bit of a chore, but not hard to do.

Sadly, our March practice (which was due to be at Barking & Coddendam) had to be cancelled due to lingering snow and ice brought to us by The Beast from the East. It was an unfortunate decision to have to make, but probably the correct one. We will try and get those two towers included in the 2019 programme. The first Saturday in April is traditionally a District Training Session though this was also the date of the 2018 Guild AGM so that took priority. However, I took the opportunity to run a small "Raising & Lowering" session at Holbrook on the following Saturday. This was aimed at those ringers who it was not possible to accommodate on the previous Raising & Lowering Course. Please make a note of the date of the 2019 District Training Day in your diary now - Saturday 6th April. More on this later... Both our District and the Guild Striking Competitions are held in May annually and it was the turn of the Guild competitions to be held in our District this year. We met at Rushmere St. Andrew for our District competition on 5th May which was a gloriously sunny afternoon. Ten teams entered with St. Mary-le-Tower 'A' winning the Cecil Pipe Memorial Bell for the Method Competition and Hollesley winning the David Barnard Memorial Trophy for the Call Change Competition. The judges were Phillip Gorrod and Matthew Rolph and the Rushmere ringers provided a magnificent tea afterwards.

The Guild Competitions were held on Saturday 19th May at Earl Stonham (6 bell) and Debenham (8 bell) with St. Mary-le-Tower 'A' winning the Mitson Shield for 6 bell method ringing. For the first time in many years the South East District won the Rose Trophy for the 8 bell competition which was particularly pleasing. SMLT also entered a band into the new regional 12-bell competition held at the Norman Tower for the George W. Pipe Trophy and finished second behind the home band.

Guild events rotate around the four Districts and next year we will be hosting the AGM on Saturday 27th April. This will be in Ipswich, but help will be required to make it a success. Volunteers will be needed to help provide and serve the pre-meeting tea as well as man the towers in Ipswich so that there will be enough to ring at these beforehand. Names please... In June we met at Dennington and Framlingham on another wonderfully sunny day where we rang everything from rounds and call-changes to Surprise Minor and Major. Pleasingly,

attendance was also good. I feared a potential shortage of ringers at our July practice at Orford because it clashed with England's quarter final World Cup match against Sweden, but we still managed Surprise Major, Stedman Triples and more.

Traditionally our August meeting is a quarter peal and meal event which this year took place on the Shotley peninsular. All three QPs were successful (at Holbrook, Harkstead and Stutton) and we enjoyed a meal at the King's Head at Stutton afterwards. In September we met in Ipswich, ringing at St. Clement and St. Lawrence. Ahead of this event an ART "meet up" event for teachers and pupils alike was held at St. Margaret, Ipswich on their simulator. It's great to see these bells back in action now and with the added bonus of a simulator to assist with teaching.

I brought our District Outing forward from November to October this year since this option had overwhelming support in the online poll I ran earlier in the year. I organised a trip to Norfolk to Aylsham (10) Reepham (8) North Elmham (8) Fakenham (8) North Creake (8) and Little Walsingham (6) with lunch at the Blue Boar at Great Ryburgh. With my business partner recovering from heart surgery I had to work that morning and was unable to join the outing but I am grateful to Mark Ogden for running things in my absence which I understand was a successful day and much enjoyed.

On 3rd November we met at Cretingham for a first trip to this recently augmented ring, sneaking in a visit before their Dedication on Armistice Day. Sunday 11th November was a busy day, not just in our District but across the whole of the Suffolk Guild. The Guild's stated aim was to ring the bells at as many of Suffolk's ringable towers as possible at some point that Sunday to mark Armistice 100. It was a busy day for many ringers with plenty ringing at more than just their home towers in order to cover as much ground as possible. Over 200 towers throughout Suffolk rang on Armistice Day and our District managed complete coverage of those towers where ringing was possible. This was a fantastic effort from our entire membership and it just shows how much can be achieved with everyone playing a part.

I promised you more on the 2019 District Training Day on Saturday 6th April so here it is... I have booked the Mancroft Ringing Discovery Centre (MRDC) in Norwich for this. It's a purpose made training facility for the whole of East Anglia for ringers of all abilities. Having visited the MRDC on their launch day and seen it for myself I am convinced that it is something that we should make use of. There is a ring of 8 training bells, each with a dedicated laptop, which can be used together, or individually. The point here is that it doesn't matter what stage of learning you are at (and we should all be learning, however much we have learnt already) taking part in this event can help you progress. Ideally, I'd like people to work in pairs, this could be as teacher and learner, or two people learning the same thing together. That means we have space for 16 people. Names please...

If you would like another 12 months of me as your District Ringing Master I would be happy to stand for election again. However, I am finding it increasingly difficult to make all of the first Saturday events in our District calendar; I already know that I will not be available on 2nd March and 7th September 2019. If re-elected this year it would therefore not be my intention to seek re-election in December 2019.

Finally, may I take the opportunity to thank all of those who work to organise our District events, particularly Abby who arranges all the towers, but also Mark, Tracey and the rest of the district committee who all play an important part. Much like the ringing on Armistice Day, no task is that big if many people take on manageable responsibilities and share the workload.

Treasurer – Tracey Scase

The District funds were handed over to me in the sum of £100 at the beginning of the year. Over the course of the year I have transferred £237.78 to the Guild, leaving me with £100 balance as of yesterday. My accounts to 31st December will be submitted to the Guild Treasurer once all the transactions from today's meeting have been finalised.

Please note that subscriptions for 2019 become due again on 1st January. To be able to vote at the AGM in April, your fees must have been paid beforehand.

For 2018, I still have 21 subscriptions as of today's date that remain outstanding.

Technical Advisors Report - C I McArthur

The Belfry Advisory Committee has met on three occasions during the year and the minutes are placed on the guild website.

- Ipswich St Clements – Repainting of the frame and other matters prior to installation of the new carillon this spring. Thanks to local volunteers for undertaking this important work. New ropes installed thanks to a local donation.
- Ipswich St Margaret's - Nicholson's have reinstalled the bells and they are now generally agreed to be a much improved and fine ring. Thanks to John Girt and his team for facilitating this project.
- Ipswich St Mary at Elms – We have an outstanding parish request for the BAC members to facilitate lowering of the bells to the ground floor.
- Brandeston - No 4 bell has been welded by Taylors and reinstalled thanks to help from local guild members.
- Debenham - One clapper fell out and crown bolt welded to affect the repair.
- Marlsford – Local concerns about the go of the bells, as a result many of the ground pulleys were significantly improved with M Rolph leading a team.
- Crettingham – New treble installed and all bells rehung on new bearings. Original frame cleaned and painted by locals. All work led by J Flatters with local support and now a fine light six.
- Hollesley – Defective clapper, crown bolt spliced by local welding.
- Framingham - Inspection and general adjustments with clapper tightening.
- Campse Ashe – Structural issues with the tower and limited ringing prior to repairs in due course.
- Tuddenham – Inspection and adjustments by the Salter family. New ropes are planned although the bells are in ringable condition.
- Bredfield – Issues with No 1 bell go, and the cause is one loose gudgeon, this will be repaired.

Updates from Deanery Reps

Loes East

David Clough reports for **Hacheston** that 2018 saw Simon Allsop come forward to learn to ring under the 'Ringing Remembers' campaign. He joined two other family members to ring on Remembrance Sunday on half-muffled bells at 10.15am and open bells at 12.30pm and again at 7.05pm. Simon will be proposed for membership of the Guild at the forthcoming SE District AGM on 1st December. Winston and Carol Girling kindly helped us at our Tuesday practices over the summer. We were also honoured that Winston chose to ring his 600th Peal at Hacheston on 2nd October. This date was especially significant as it was the Centenary of the death of William Hatcher, the third of the ten Hatcher brothers serving the King in 1914 who gave their lives.

David Clough reports for **Marlesford** that efforts have been made to improve the running of the bells which had steadily got more difficult to ring and with much increased rope noise. Chris McArthur checked over the bells and fittings and found several of the rope pulleys were seized or partially seized and the clapper bushes needing greasing. Michael Rolph did the work on May 25th and freed and lubricated most of the pulleys and greased the clapper bushes. The bells now ring much more freely and with much less rope noise.

Ray Lewis reports that practice nights at **Wickham Market** have been particularly busy this year with lots of teaching and skill development for our new recruits. Our aim this year was to recruit new ringers both to boost the band size but also to attract new ringers to learn to ring for the 'Ringing Remember' campaign. With this in mind, we held an open day in the spring from which we were able to recruit 4 new ringers. They have all worked hard since and have made excellent progress and are now regular Sunday service ringers. Importantly, they achieved their goal of ringing for Remembrance Sunday service (half muffled), the signing of Armistice and for Peace. They will be proposed for Guild membership at the AGM. We are also very pleased to welcome Revd. Leslie Siu and his family as new vicar for Wickham and Pettistree. To mark the occasion a quarter was rung prior to the service of Institution, Induction and Installation in November.

Chris McArthur reports for the following towers:

Brandeston - Regular Sunday ringing continues with a strong band although a practise night during the week is not possible for various reasons. No 4 bell had a crack that was welded by Taylors and a quarter peal on the repaired bells was undertaken on 8th February. WW1 ringing half muffled took this place on 11th November of this year.

Kettleburgh – Regular service ringing continues with a strong band and included armistice celebrations this year. No practise night however.

Easton - Brandeston and Kettleburgh bands ring for the major services at this tower and this included armistice ringing. We wish the tower captain a speedy recovery as he is unable to ring currently. Local recruitment is urgently needed in this parish, as minimal ringers exist.

Glenys Fear reports that the **Campsea Ashe** practices on Saturday mornings have mostly been lively affairs this year. We welcome ringers of all abilities and many of our ringers come from the Woodbridge area to ring. Last Saturday we rang Kent TB and Cambridge. I would like one or two more ringers from the village to join us, but on the whole, I think we do well.

Mary Garner reports of another busy year at **Pettistree**, with practices well supported, although it is often difficult to ensure there are enough ringers for Sunday services. 64 quarters have been rung, almost entirely by local bands, and two peals since the last ADM. The peal in March marked the 100th anniversary of when Private David Leggett fell, a Pettistree ringer serving in the Suffolk Regiment. The bells were rung both half-muffled and open on 11th November. We were disappointed that our tower open morning in the spring did not result in any recruits despite much local interest and feasting on coffee and cake. Our shared outing with Hollesley was a great success. We are so lucky that Mike Whitby continues as our Ringing Master: running practices and finding different methods for us to try as well giving plenty of time for ringing rounds and call changes, cover, trebling, Plain Bob, Grandsire etc. We all miss Gill Waterson so much. She was a very loyal service and practice ringer, a highly skilled member of the band and a good friend.

Alison Robinson reports from **Framingham** that 'we are pleased to say that we now have two enthusiastic new ringers, which is helping to boost our band. Though we have occasionally not had enough people to practice on Tuesdays or to ring on Sundays, with support from ringers from surrounding villages, we continue to make progress.'