

Trustees' Annual Report

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019

Charity

The Suffolk Guild of Ringers was registered with the Charity Commission on 10 December 1975, registration number 266869. The Charity's registered address is Denton House, Colchester Road, Ardleigh, Colchester, CO7 7NS. It is governed under a constitution originally registered in 1977 and most recently revised in 2019

Principal Objectives

The main purposes of the Charity are: to promote and encourage the practice of bellringing within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich; to recruit, train and encourage bellringers in the practice of their art; to cultivate the art of scientific change ringing; to promote and advise on the preservation, renovation and augmentation of bells in an efficient condition.

Trustees

The Trustees during the period were:

1st January to 27th April

Chairman - R P Wilson Treasurer - S A Cheek Secretary - C N Melville

27th April to 31st December

Chairman - R P Wilson Treasurer - S A Cheek Ringing Master - T G Scase

Review of Progress and Achievements

Bellringing

The total number of quarter peals rung has increased again this year to 517 (450 in 2018) and encouragingly the number of people has also increased slightly to 383 (374 in 2018). The number of towers has significantly increased to 115 (from 97/98 in the last 3 years) with 5 of these towers hosting a quarter peal for the first time in 10 years. The peal total has decreased from 108 in 2018 to 87 in 42 Suffolk towers (and 3 out of county towers) but promisingly includes 4 peals of Surprise Maximus which were the first for the Guild since 2016. Three of these peals were rung at the Norman Tower, Bury St Edmunds and, with 11 resident members ringing Yorkshire Surprise Maximus in April, indicates that more members are having an opportunity to ring on 12. Another successful peal week enabled 3 ringers to ring their first peals, with another first being achieved later in the year.

The Recruitment & Training committee has built on the successes of last year with attendance at the Gather event at the Cathedral for a second year which provided another excellent opportunity to promote the Art to young church-goers. In an attempt to focus some resources on the recruitment of new ringers county wide, the Guild held its first Taster Day at Halesworth in September linking with a Heritage Open Day event; linking with a larger (unrelated) event proved to be beneficial so these Taster Days will become an annual event in future. Current members of the Guild have also been encouraged to make use of the resources available on the website and to visit the new training facilities at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich; this has been communicated using regular all-member email updates.

The Guild also hosted the Ridgman Trophy 10 bell striking competition at Bury St Edmunds in June. Eight teams competed for the Trophy and the Suffolk Guild achieved a creditable 3rd, our highest placing for a few years, with the Hertford County Association retaining the Trophy.

Restoration

The Belfry Advisory Committee members have been kept busy again this year with major work being completed at Hitcham, Yaxley, Cotton & Hintlesham. Much of this hard work has enabled the bells to be rung again with two peals being rung at Cotton, the go of the bells being improved at Yaxley and Hintlesham and the Hitcham bells being removed from the tower ready for Taylors of Loughborough to install them in a new eight bell steel frame.

Other projects in the pipeline include Combs, Laxfield, Fornham St Martin, Buxhall, Hoxne and Stowmarket where work to restore and augment the bells will start in April 2020.

Guild Finances

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have formulated a Reserves Policy, in which The Guild will expect to hold at the bank a surplus of approximately one year's running costs.

Policies

All money in the Guild's funds not required for day-to-day purposes is invested or deposited by the Treasurer, as directed by the Guild Management Committee (GMC). Grants from the Restoration Fund are authorised by the GMC, but are only paid after completed work has been approved by the Guild Ringing Master and the Technical Adviser. Grants are normally only offered for work to restore bells and their fittings for full-circle ringing, but may include augmentation and other ancillary work associated with any such project. In order to respond to the short-term need to provide financial support to training activities, the GMC introduced a process to enable grants of up to £50 to be made immediately, at the discretion of the Ringing Master, and grants of up to £500 to be made within seven days at the discretion of the Guild Executive, in both cases subject to appropriate records being kept and presented to the GMC. As an enabling measure, the Public Relations Officer has been given a budget, the purpose being to enable greater flexibility, and faster reaction, to PR recruitment opportunities when they arise.

General Fund

Net income to the General Fund was marginally up on 2018. Administration costs were higher, but these were somewhat compensated for by a reduction in insurance costs. Savings were also achieved in the cost of producing the annual report. Subscription income was slightly up, bolstered towards the end of the year by some members paying their 2020 subscriptions early.

Restoration Fund

At year end the Restoration Fund totalled £67,931.08, including £43,550.00 already allocated for approved grants and those awaiting payment. This leaves £24,381.08 available for new grant applications.

During the year new grants totalling £15,754.18 were approved (Combs £8,000), Hitcham (£6,700), Hintlesham (£600) and Yaxley (£434.18).

Other Restricted Funds

The Golden Bottle Trust Fund, Library Fund, Handbell Fund, Jubilee Fund, Pipe Family Trust Fund, and St Peter's Sudbury Fund all have positive balances.

R P Wilson	S A Cheek	T G Scase
Trustee & Chairman	Trustee & Treasurer	Trustee & Ringing Master
December 2019	December 2019	December 2019