

# Suffolk Guild of Ringers



Offton Church

Newsletter  
September 2008

### **Editorial**

Hello everybody, I would normally wish you all a warm and happy summer, but we haven't really had the weather for it. What can I say apart from "better luck next year"

I know that it's a long haul till Christmas but I would like some spine-chilling ghost stories for December. Something that would make the reader afraid to go to bed in the dark! All contributions gratefully accepted.

I haven't heard anything about sponsorship or cartoons, so I'll ask again – has anyone got ideas about suitable subjects for sponsors, and please could someone out there manage a cartoon for the next issue.

**Carol Girling**

**Please note:-**

**Closing date for the next issue— Saturday 29th November**

### **CHANGE OF PRACTICE NIGHTS**

PALGRAVE is now practicing on Thursdays & DISS now practice on Mondays.

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO**

**Delia Golding** who trebled to PBD on the 25<sup>th</sup> May at Buxhall

**Derek Baldry** who rang the Tenor to PBD on the 12<sup>th</sup> June at Reydon

**Graham Bradshaw** who rang the Tenor to Grandsire on the 27<sup>th</sup> July at Kersey. (*Graham is one of the Polstead band of ringers*).

It has been nine months now since Win and Henry Ivings left us to live in South Gloucestershire, and I thought I would pass on their address so that anyone who wished could write, or better still call in and see them.

**Wickwar Carehome**, Castle House, Sodbury Road, Wickwar,  
South Gloucestershire. GL12 8NR  
(Private tel. 01454 2940320) (Carehome tel. 01454 294426).

## Lundy Island – July 2008

The Suffolk ringers holiday got off to a challenging start before even leaving the mainland, with a quarter peal attempt at Bideford on the Monday afternoon.

Louis Suggett, Tom Scase and I had been held up in traffic on the way down, as had several others, so the previously planned Major band was down-sized to a Minor one. They rang Cambridge, firstly hindered greatly by the excessively long tail ends, which the tower captain, who stayed to listen, would not allow them to adjust. Part way through the quarter two pigeons flew into the tower, chaotically colliding with the ropes and ringers before the somewhat elderly local thrust one out and the other quickly followed. However, the quarter peal was successful!

It was a bracing morning on which the Suffolk ringers gathered at the Bideford port, prepared for the 'moderate' crossing to the island which was soon to be embarked upon. I was informed that Richard had been seasick on every crossing so far

(admittedly usually alcohol induced) so he understandably had a rather nervous disposition when we were on deck. The ferry took an hour and a half, crashing heavily on the waves - I don't think I'd like to experience a 'rough' crossing! Richard managed to just about hold his stomach though, his tactic being to stand firm and watch the horizon, despite being continuously drenched in freezing, salty seawater.

We all quickly settled in on the island, which had a very relaxed atmosphere and only a few activities to be undertaken - ringing, walking, bird watching, and spending a lot of time in the pub which serves its own Lundy Island brews on draught. Much of our time on the island was spent in the pub, eating, drinking, playing darts and many silly games, as well as arranging and discussing the ringing, of course. The Egg game and Pictionary Mania were played every night, although they were loud and very 'active', shall we say, and had to be played after many of the other Lundy holiday makers had left for bed!

On the first day, once everyone was settled in their accommodation, we started the ringing in the afternoon with a quarter of Grandsire Caters. It was a brilliant start to the week, and first in method for Mary Allum and first of caters for Jane Harper.

The second day saw gloomy weather to say the least, with thick fog and drizzle all day long. The ornithologists and walkers amongst us were a little disheartened but, nevertheless kept ourselves entertained with ridiculously-hard-many-shades-of-blue puzzles, ringing, and spending time in the pub - so doing what we do best! The ringing was unfortunately not very successful, with many quarter and peal attempts being lost.

Over the next few days the weather was a little better, and many people took advantage of the time we had by enjoying the island's abundant wildlife. There were many butterflies and birds, including Peregrine Falcons, buzzards and, famously, Puffins. Seals were also spotted all around the island and those few

people who went snorkelling in the harbour were lucky enough to see jellyfish, corals, plants, and swim with one of the seals.

Thursdays ringing was more successful with two quarters being scored - one of Grandsire triples and a very speedy one of Norwich and Cambridge by an (only just) under 30's band for Richard's 30th birthday. That evening, those quickest off the mark were treated to apple crumble and custard in the barn, which was toiled over by myself and my assistant chef, Ruthie (who I cunningly conned in to making almost all of it!)

On Friday it was the Ruby wedding anniversary of Gill and Dick Waterson. Many attempts were made to get Gill to ring in a surprise celebratory quarter peal, but we never quite managed it! Instead a band-minus-Gill rang a quarter peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major to mark the event. Dick had bought a homemade fruit-cake with him to celebrate their anniversary, which we all gratefully received that evening at the pub! Once

again we'd like to offer them our congratulations.

This day was much more successful in terms of ringing, with a North-West district band ringing Cambridge Surprise Minor, and an over 60's band ringing Grandsire Doubles proving to the previous day's under 30's band that they are by no means past their best!

We had almost all of Saturday before the ferry in the afternoon so after some more failed attempts, continuing the unfortunate streak of luck; we finished on a high note with a superb quarter peal of Little Bob Royal. This was a first of Royal for Anne Buswell on the Treble so well done to them.

Richard, in his wisdom, had packed his ferry ticket into the depths of his bag this morning. However, being an almost you-know-how-old grown man, he went to see the authorities who equipped him with a written ticket. Louis, however, had done something similar but, as usual, was his chilled out self and decided it

would be OK. The ferry crew decided that as he did not have his ticket, he would have to wait until everyone else was on board before allowing him on. A good half an hour later and after telling Louis, from on board the vessel, that we would post his GCSE results and see him next year, they found his name on the list and let him on board.

The ferry back was much less traumatic for everyone, with it being a much calmer sea and good weather to enjoy the hour and a half return journey. When we were to arrive in Ilfracombe, many people would need to take the coach to Bideford. The crewmember in charge of this service decided that it would be much easier for all concerned if I obtained a list of coach passengers' names and their fee for the transfer. I was equipped with a clipboard and a list of passengers - I felt like a teacher calling out a register on a school trip!

The end of the holiday saw everyone go their separate ways, worn out but content from a good week on Lundy

Island, and already looking forward to next year. A big thank you must go to Kate Eagle who superbly organised the trip, and to Richy

who coordinated the ringing with great success!

*Claire Monk*

## **The Society of Rambling Ringers**

*(Est 1951)*

On behalf of the Society of Rambling Ringers I would like to thank all the local ringers and incumbents in North Suffolk and South Norfolk for their help, and making us so welcome on our Annual Tour .

As a touring Society we have adopted a policy of bulk donations, collecting a levy from all members on tour and then giving a donation to the BRF of the Guild in the area we have visited.

Separate donations totalling £456 were given to towers in both areas and a bulk donation of £564 was divided between the Suffolk Guild and Norwich Association Bell Funds

We had a very enjoyable two weeks in North Suffolk and South Norfolk.

Sally K Munnings  
*- Honorary Secretary*

# **Results of the 2008 Striking competition held at Wingfield, sat.10<sup>th</sup> May**

We could not have had better weather, better judges, (Neil and Nicky Thomas from Norwich) or better ringing. Nor a better place.

If you have ever wondered what Wingfield looked like a hundred years ago simply look around it now. Perhaps the field crops have changed, perhaps the inhabitants have different jobs , but not much else has changed. Even the Mason's Lodge, built by them to live in whilst they worked on the Church, is still next to the churchyard.

An enjoyable day produced the following results:-

## **Change ringing**

- 1) Halesworth 57 faults (Pat Bailey shield)
- 2) Sweffling 69 faults (Harry Archer Trophy)
- 3) Southwold 70 faults
- 4) Aldeburgh 71 faults

## **Call Changes**

- 5) Reydon 86 faults
- 6) Wingfield 96 faults
- 7) Fressingfield 99 faults

## Rededication of the Stradishall Bells

The Suffragan Bishop of Dunwich, The Right Revd. Clive Young came to St Margaret's, Stradishall on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April to conduct a service of rededication for its ring of five bells, the oldest of which was made in 1578, and the latest in 1775.

This followed extensive restoration work, which included attention to the bell frame, work on the crowns of four of the bells, welding of the cracked tenor

and the turning of the bells, This was undertaken by Whites of Appleton, assisted on site by local volunteers headed by Adrian Lee. The funds to do this work were donated by members of the local community, together with the assistance of a grant from the Suffolk Guild of Ringers.

The service was attended by a substantial congregation, which included a number of Guild mem-

bers, some of whom had travelled from other parts of Suffolk. The bells were blessed by the Bishop during the service of Evensong in a form of dedication involving the Churchwardens, Whites, and the



Tower Captain, following which they were rung for him by the local ringers.

During his sermon, the Bishop told a number of amusing anecdotes relating to his experiences with bells and ringing during his time in the Church, and was able to refer to members of the family of Whites of Appleton, Brian White being present to represent them.

Following the service the bells were rung for a considerable time

by both the local band and by members of the Guild.



## Across the Ether

When one of my Mothers' Union members died recently, the St Margaret's Ringers decided to ring a quarter in her memory.

Her daughter was delighted and wrote the following to me.

I sat in the park to listen to the bells, and I know that some of my mother's friends were listening out for them too. I may have mentioned that mum loved church bells, and she always listened to the brief programme on Radio 4 about 5:45 on Sunday mornings.

My mother was one of ten children, and she was particularly close to her sister Bessie who lived in Norfolk. One of their routines was to watch Songs of Praise on TV on Sundays and then to phone each other for a chat about the programme – they both loved hymns, words and music.

Aunt Bessie died about eight years ago and since that time her daughter Margaret took over the Sunday afternoon phone calls with my mother. I am telling you all this to explain why I took my mobile phone to the park this afternoon.

When I knew Songs of Praise had finished I phoned Margaret and we stayed connected on the phone until the Quarter Peal finished. Although the breeze made the sound a little unpredictable from time to time,

Margaret said she could hear the bells very well and thought they sounded beautiful. She was as touched and moved as I was.

So my warmest thanks to you and all the ringers for such a lovely tribute. I am very grateful and will always remember it.

A small gesture on our part to ring the Quarter, but it obviously gave pleasure elsewhere.

**Shirley Girt,**

*(a St Margaret's ringer  
and Branch Leader of St Margaret's  
Mothers' Union).*

## Great Barton

The Tower Correspondents for Great Barton are now Jacky Savage and Wendy Jones. Their emails are :- [jacky@thesavages.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:jacky@thesavages.eclipse.co.uk)  
[peterwendydia@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peterwendydia@tiscali.co.uk)

Jacky has sent me a plea for anyone that can help to be at the Tower on Sat. 13<sup>th</sup> September for a Tower open day. She also says, "we hope to have enough teachers and helpers to hold a ten week course for the new recruits. This would start on Thursday Sept 18<sup>th</sup> and finish on Thursday November 20<sup>th</sup>, with beginners learning from 7:30 – 8:15pm and method ringing from then until 9pm. Please please if you are able to help at all, contact Jacky or Wendy by email" (as above).



## SUFFOLK GUILD OF RINGERS BELFRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 6, Cavendish Road, Stowmarket,  
on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2008 at 7.0p.m.

**Present :** Carol Girling, Winston Girling (Chairman) Christopher Nunn, Jonathan Stevens, Dr. Bruce Wakefield, Neville Whittell, David Salter, John Pereira, Richard Coe, John Taylor.

**Apologies for Absence:** David Moyes, David Greenfield, Chris McArthur, Julian Colman.

**Confirming Minutes:** The Minutes of the previous Meeting, held at Bildeston in October 2007, were confirmed and signed.

**Matters Arising:** Bruce Wakefield asked about the bell in the porch at Charsfield. Winston Girling said that he had written to the authorities at the Church pointing out the risk of theft but had so far heard nothing back.

Also, Chris McArthur had attended as requested at Framlingham. He had carried out much needed maintenance and tightening and advised as to what

was required to keep things in order. Also Jonathan Stevens has assisted Bruce at Woodbridge to tighten the clappers on 5 and 6.

### District Reports:

**North East:** Jonathan Stevens mentioned that Nigel Dempster had attended at a trial ring at Cratfield. Graham Pledger wishes to have an ancient windlass, present on the floor above the ringing chamber, preserved. Current plan to restore and use 5<sup>th</sup> as tenor of peal of 6. Jonathan has also visited Sternfield (unringable 4) there

are 4 people there who would like to learn to ring and arrangements will be made to do this elsewhere.

**North West:** Winston Girling reported that an 8 bell simulator had been ordered for Stowmarket, the Guild have agreed to pay £150 towards the cost.

**South East:** Winston Girling said that the bell frame and supports had now been repaired at Stonham Aspal. He had been asked to attend to advise on where to fit the slider runs on 7 and 8 as the replaced materials no longer indicated the previous positioning. John Pereira said that the clapper had fallen out of the tenor at Stutton and was found to be slightly bent. It was straightened and replaced. Bruce Wakefield mentioned that when they had recently gone to St. Mary at Quay, Ipswich, to ring they had found that the ropes were pulled up to the floor above the ringing chamber and had problems getting the sallies back down.

**South West:** Winston Girling said that he had been in touch with Tony Baines who has found a piece of timber large enough for the 7<sup>th</sup> bell headstock. Unfortunately the Church have not obtained a Faculty to do the work and do not appear to be particularly interested in getting the bell done. He has written to the Churchwarden. Neville Whittell said that one

of a set of handbells at Monks Eleigh seems to have been given away by the vicar. He is going to establish which one is missing. Alan Moulton had reported that he is going to inspect Stradishall following the recent restoration but bells may have to be 8 or 7 because of present frame.

**Applications for Grants:** St. Lawrence, Ipswich, discussed. Whitechapel to carry out work. Also Dennington, Whitechapel also to do work there. Committee happy with suggested work at both towers. Grant aid recommended to GMC. Long Melford had also asked about grant aid. They have apparently already spent £20,000 on strengthening the existing wooden frame and wish to rehang the bells in this frame with all new fittings etc. Winston Girling said that he had written to the tower captain pointing out that there were still doubts about the stability of this high diagonally placed frame, and that the Guild would need to have a test ring to establish present movement before considering grant aid. Wissett were also working towards restoration but there are problems with an ancient floor and bell frame, both of which have to be removed. Winston Girling had spoken to Peter Eagle-Bott and it seems that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings are objecting to removal, although English Heritage are

in agreement. The Parish are recommended to apply for a Faculty as soon as possible and will do this.

**Technical Advisor's Report:** Advisor not present and no report received from him.

**Any Other Business:** Winston Girling said that he was concerned that the Guild Insurance arbitrarily refused to insure BAC members over 65. David Salter said that he thought that the insurance actually reduced incrementally from 65 to 75. Winston said that he considered that all BAC Members should be fully covered

and that there were Members who were over 65 who still worked on bells. This was surely the most important part of the insurance. He would ask Keith Ashton-Jones to clarify the cover so that the matter could be considered at GMC.

**Date and Place of Next Meeting:** Cratfield, to have a short test ring, subject to agreement by Church and ringers.

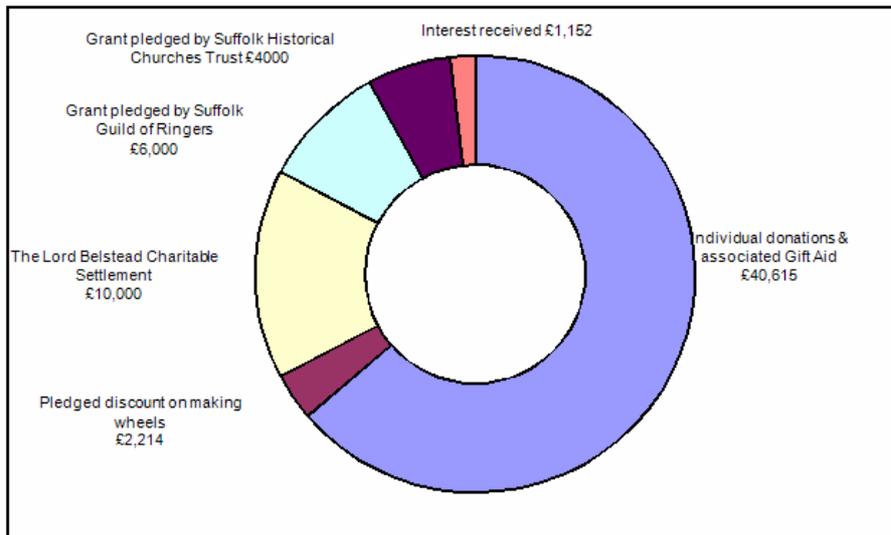
The Meeting closed at 9.0p.m.

**Winston S. Girling** - *Chairman.*



## The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dennington Bell Appeal 2008

<b>TOTAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR THE BELLS</b>	<b>£75,000</b>
<b>FUNDS RAISED/PLEDGED AS AT 20 AUGUST 2008</b>	<b>£63,981</b>



### Amounts pledged

The grants from the Suffolk Guild of Ringers and from the Suffolk Historical Churches Trust have been approved and authorized by the respective bodies. The monies will not become due and payable until the work has been done. Albert Lain of Mendlesham Chairs has offered to make the wheels at a special price.

### Individual gifts

We owe nearly 2/3 (63.79%) of the sums raised to date to the generosity of individual donors. This sum includes the associated Gift Aid which is available only on donations by individuals. Included within the total are –

	£
Monies raised by events organized within the village	2,953
Delightful Companions concert in the church	83
Mick Pearce Half Marathon	1,150
Roy Tricker guided tour	310
Open Day	462
Dennington Hall open day	100
Rosie Starling & Roy Tricker lunch & guided tour	389
David Catchpole cycle ride	248
Sale of Hay	211
Monies given by family & friends in commemoration of the lives of late villagers Kenneth Johnson, Keith Wyatt, Felix Watts	1,626

We would also like to mention the very generous donations by Baroness Alison Fowke of Piel Island. Several years ago Alison gave an initial gift of £10,000 which seed-capital was instrumental in giving us the confidence to launch the appeal. Alison has now given us a further £15,000 which takes us within sight of raising the funds needed.

Diane Cook  
01728 638 209

Lisbeth Jensen  
01728 638345

**Press Information Wednesday, 20 August 2008**

## **The Dennington Bell Appeal**

In June 2004 The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dennington, received a gift of £10,000 towards work on the church tower. This generous donation became the seed capital that gave us the confidence to launch our bell appeal. The target of our appeal is £75,000.

The tower of St Mary the Virgin rises to an overall height of 82 feet and has had a ring of bells since 1553. The present peal of 6 is the second heaviest in Suffolk, with the Tenor weighing 19cwt. The bells were last rehung in 1915, and cracks had started to appear in the tower masonry walls. The bells are rung regularly at church services and used to train new ringers. It was time to take action.

The donor of the seed money is Baroness Alison Fowke of Piel Island, The Baroness has lived in Suffolk almost all her life, first with her parents at Weston Hall near Beccles. Since suffering a stroke she now resides at a nursing home in the County. The Baroness has always taken a great interest in history and ancient buildings and was a gifted drafts-woman. She strongly supported the Church's wish to restore the bells and has followed the progress of the project with great interest.

Alison Fowke has most generously decided to donate a further sum of £15,000 towards the Dennington Bell Restoration which will bring the total funds raised through individual gifts and grants to nearly £64,000. The Parochial Church Council is thus able to instruct Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London to commence work. Preparatory work in the Tower will start this autumn, and the actual bell restoration is scheduled for June 2009.

The presentation of the cheque takes place in the Church of St Mary the Virgin at noon on Wednesday, 20 August.

**Lisbeth Jensen**  
**Churchwarden, Tel 01728 638345**

## SOUTH WEST DISTRICT STRIKING COMPETITION

The winning team from Kersey



This years completion was held at Nayland on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June. The sun shone and everyone milled about in the churchyard listening to the bells.

Seven teams entered this year and the competition was intense.

The winning band was Kersey, very closely followed by the Hadleigh 'A' team who were last year's winners. Joint third were Nayland and Hadleigh 'B' team.

The competition was judged by Winston and Carol Girling. They encountered only one problem when an overzealous gardener arrived with a motor mower, determined to cut the churchyard grass immediately behind the bench where the judges

were sitting. He was fortunately persuaded to go away!

We were pleased to welcome the new Guild Chairman, Philip Gorrod, who presented the trophy to Kate Banks of the Kersey band.

As has become the custom, the evening ended with a supper contributed by all the competing bands. The standard of catering was excellent.

Richard Knight thanked Chris Hunt and the Nayland ringers for organizing the event so efficiently and gave small presents to Winston and Carol to express the District's thanks to them for judging the competition

**Sue Freeman**

## **'GUESS THE CHURCH' COMPETITION**



Entries to the editor by email to :-

[winstongirling@talktalk.net](mailto:winstongirling@talktalk.net)

A box of chocolates for the 1st correct answer received.

Closing date 1st November.