

Rounds & About

(Charity Number 292250)



AGM Day

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Once again the Cathedral bells were kept busy to a variety of methods before our Annual Service on 1 May. The service was conducted by the Precentor, Revd Dr G Tunbridge, with the Master reading one of the lessons and our Chaplain, Canon Roger Mason, leading the prayers. Revd David Parrott, formerly of Rayleigh, gave the address, keeping us amused with references to "Boudicca's chariot" (the pulpit), as well as stimulated and challenged with his references to the various stages of Sunday evening ringing and ringers.

At the AGM the Accounts and Annual Report were approved. The Association officers were re-elected unopposed. Although Andrew Taylor had given notice in 2005 that he wished to relinquish the post of Treasurer, no other candidate came forward and Andrew was re-elected for one final year. Andrew will definitely be standing down next year! Both Peter Sloman (Prittlewell) and Maurice Downs (Rayne) were elected as Life Members.

Ringing after lunch was at a number of South-West District towers, beginning at West Ham and finishing at Epping.

I would like to thank all those involved in the day's arrangements, especially the Cathedral staff, the Boreham choir, Simon Harvey (organist), and those who prepared and served tea at Chigwell.

Once again, the weather was kind to us. So book next year's date in your diary now: Bank Holiday Monday 7 May 2007.

Mary Bone

Ridgman Trophy 2006

This year our Association hosted the Ridgman Trophy at Writtle on 17 June 2006. Originally, we were expecting nine teams to enter, but sadly one had to withdraw the night before. Apparently one member of the Leicester DG band had broken an arm / leg and could not get a replacement or another person to ring !

The day began with glorious sunshine and a specially arranged fly-past over the tower at 12:55 just before the competition started (rumour has it that it was something to do with the Queen's 80th Birthday and Trooping of the Colour).

The test piece was 287 Grandsire Caters that I had specifically chosen (something the hosts get in thier favour). The competition was judged by Phillip Barnes from Sevenoaks and Donald Niblett from Canterbury and the results were as follows :-

		Rang	Faults
1st	Essex Association	3rd	63
2nd	Bedfordshire DA	6th	72
3rd	Suffolk DG	8th	76
4th	Cambridge University GR	2nd	79
5th	Hertford CA	5th	80
6th	Lincoln DG	7th	104
=7th	Ely DA	1st	111
=7th	Peterborough DA	4th	111

There was some controversy with the results, as the Bedfordshire DA were penalised by 10 faults for breaking the rules by ringing in excess of 8 minutes for the practice and rounds prior to starting the test piece. They could have been disqualified.

Congratulations to our band :- 1 Christina Fleckney, 2 Gill Sparling, 3 Carol Brown, 4 Yvonne Towler, 5 Paul Cammiade, 6 David Sparling, 7 Steve Nash (C), 8 Steve Waters, 9 Jim Towler and 10 Brian Meads.

Many thanks to Phil Stephens and the Writtle ringers for their excellent hospitality, beer and use of the bells.

The Dickie Furminger Trophy

The inaugural Call-Change competition of the North East District of the Essex Association of Change Ringers was held at Great Holland on Saturday 24 June. Following the passing of HH "Dickie" Furminger, Life Vice-President of the Association, at the end of last year, the district officers felt that a competition and trophy dedicated to Dickie would be a fitting memorial.

A trophy was constructed from an old hand-bell, (as Dickie had always been keen on handbell ringing), mounted on a beautiful oak plinth made by Michael Mills.

We were delighted that Betty Furminger (Dickie's widow) accepted the invitation and was able to bring along her daughter Jackie and grandson Peter with their partners, and presented the certificates and trophy.

Judging of the three teams was ably carried out by Alistair Donaldson and Dan Smith from the Northern District. The Layer-de-la-Haye band was particularly keen to enter as all of its members had been taught to ring by Dickie. The Layer band was awarded 3rd place, with Wormingford 2nd and Kirby-Le-Soken 1st.

A marvellous barbeque, prepared by Roger Carey-Smith, was enjoyed by all with some additional general ringing continuing into the evening - a fitting celebration of the many years of Dickie's tireless work for the Association.

Thanks to everyone who supported the event, and to Gill Sparling for the excellent organisation. We hope the competition will now be an annual fixture in our calendar. Certainly the Furminger family were very keen to come again next year!

Anne Turner
NE District Master

Essex Ringing Course Review

I grew up in the 50's when men conducted and women got ringers teas so I was intrigued to find that anyone could learn to conduct on the Essex Ringing Course. I filled in my application form and was allocated a place. You could even sign up for handbell ringing, although we were warned that places would be restricted.

I turned up on the first morning having hurried up the A12 passing over a dead pigeon near Hatfield Peverel. I signed in and met my tutor, Fred Bone. We soon moved to our classroom where we met both students and helpers, and settled down for the initiation into what conducting was all about. After an hour of so of theory were soon out into the first belfry and starting our own conducting. Thursday was devoted to Bob Doubles, Friday to Bob Minor and Saturday to Grandsire Doubles. We called our first touches from the observation bell and then penetrated the mystery of 'in, out and make the bob'. On Friday I discovered what wrong and home was and penetrated the mystery of the written out touches in my ringing book. Now I could look up and call anything in my book! I even learnt about place notation! By Saturday we were initiated into half hunt bells and we tried all sorts of touches of Grandsire. I found one in my book that came round at handstroke but failed to make it do so.

Then there was the handbell ringing. This was another thing that was only done by the much cleverer than me when I was young. I was amazed to find that you could ring rounds, long places and multiple dodges without it being difficult at all, and the plain hunt was easy to master. We soon reached the change ringing, Plain Bob Minor on two bells at the same time. The learning curve was extraordinarily steep here and everybody's capacities were strained to the uttermost as they tried to keep themselves right as well as me. However we did get to the end of the course once or twice, and became very proficient in ringing the first lead.

All too soon it was Saturday teatime and it was all over. I had learnt a lot about conducting. I had started on ringing Plain Bob Minor on handbells. I had formed friendships with people on my course and shared a lot of pub meals with them.

I had made the acquaintance of quite a few other people in the association that had previously been only names. I had rung on seven new towers and in between the conducting had turned in a couple of tenors. I had learnt to look for much more when ringing than I ever did before and I had put one or two people right. I had driven quite a few miles up and down the A12 and passed the dead pigeon three times.

When I got back I discovered that I was in charge of the tower for the next fortnight and suddenly I had to conduct everything including the singles in Stedman Doubles. Now I get to call Bob Doubles every week and am about to embark on calling all the possible touches of Grandsire Doubles.

Would I recommend the course? Certainly, there's a class about most things you might like to learn and a seminar about everything else. The tutors were knowledgeable and patient and everyone was friendly. Everything was well organised and there was endless cups of tea. You can learn a lot and if you know everything you can always go and be a helper instead.

Hilary Donoghue

Life Membership

Any nominations for life membership must be submitted in writing to the Secretary by 1 December (rule 7(iii)). The proposer and second should include details of the candidate's Association activities. Do consult your district officers for advice on the criteria: "... To honour a member for work undertaken throughout the district and promotion of work throughout the Association."

Mary Bone

It's Dinner Time!

The Association's Annual Dinner will be held at the County Hotel, Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford on Saturday 7 October 2006 at 7 for 7.30pm. The evening promises fine surroundings, good food and good company. Our guests will be Revd Canon Roger Mason, Colin Newman, and our newly-elected life members.

The meal will be followed by the speeches - who will win the sweepstake this year? - and entertainment by members of the Writtle band, with plenty of time for socialising informally while the bar is open. As usual there will be a raffle in aid of the Bell Restoration Fund and donations of prizes will be very welcome.

The menu will be Watercress, Apple, Walnut & Stilton salad; Roast Sirloin of Beef accompanied by Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables; Sticky Toffee pudding, and coffee. A vegetarian menu is available and special diets (eg gluten-free) can be catered for - please specify when ordering your tickets.

Tickets are available from Mrs Mary Bone, 11 Bullfields, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9DB at £24.50 each (£9.50 for those who have already paid a deposit). Please enclose your payment (cheques payable to EACR) and SAE with your order, and include names for the seating plan. The deadline is **29** September.

The 'Belles' of Bentley

On Saturday 24th June the Great Bentley ringers entered a float into the village carnival. All manner of bells were represented, including a diving bell, a bluebell, a dumbbell, a cowbell, a doorbell, and even Tinkerbell! Imagine their surprise when it emerged that they had won 1st prize as the best Adult Float.

The weather was good, there were lots of people lining the route and a considerable amount of money was raised for local beneficiary groups.

A lot of hard work goes into village carnivals, but once the procession got going everybody agreed that it had been worth it and that they should enter a float again next year.

Roger Carey-Smith

Striking Competition Finals

The 6 bell striking competition finals were held on Saturday 1 July at Inworth. Nine teams competed and the results were: 1st Great Totham (23 faults); 2nd Kirby-le-Soken (26); 3rd Coggeshall (47); 4th Dagenham; 5th Prittlewell; 6th Downham; 7th Sawbridgeworth; 8th Hornchurch; 9th Danbury. A “scratch band” organised by the Master was placed 4th by the judges.

In the evening each district entered a team for the 8 bell competition at Goldhanger, ringing a touch of Grandsire Triples selected by the Master. The South East district retained the trophy with 54 faults; 2nd Northern (56 faults); 3rd North-East (64); joint 4th Southern and South-West; 6th North-West.

Thank you to the South-East officers for the arrangements, to Yvonne & Maureen for the refreshments at Inworth, to the Goldhanger ringers and WI for a lovely tea and for the football results service, and to our judges Adrian Malton and Colin Chapman. My apologies to all the teams for forgetting to bring the certificates - these will be available in October.

The Essex Trophy competition will be hosted by the Guildford Diocesan Guild at Haslemere on Saturday 9 September.

Mary Bone

NE District Practice Night Changes

Great Tey are now having regular practices again on alternate Tuesdays. However visitors should check beforehand that the practice is on before attending.

Also Thorpe-le-Soken have also started practising again on the third Monday of each month.

Association Training Day

This years training day will be on the 25th November and will be held in the North Eastern District. The exact location in the North Eastern District is to be confirmed.

St. Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood Teddy Bear Parachuting

The event on 20th May 2006 that launched the Bell Restoration Appeal

Back in the darker days of winter when this project was first mentioned, we thought about when the best time might be to hold it. We needed a reasonable guarantee of dry, warm and not too breezy conditions and late May seemed a good idea at the time. However, the British weather never fails to throw up a surprise or two and this May has certainly done just that! The weather charts showed a deep low pressure system gathering over the Atlantic which gave us the wettest drought for many years and strong blustery winds to go with it.

Back at the site we needed to decide where the best placed would be to launch the intrepid bears. To the north of the tower there is a great tree, some 60 feet high, (which later claimed several victims), to the east and south there are the church roofs, so it had to be the west elevation – but from where? We tried several locations some safe but not very spectacular, some not so safe but more interesting. The prime place would be from the external walkway some 80 feet above the ground but this had some potential problems. From that height the surrounding properties look quite close and we had concerns about exactly where the parachuting bears might eventually be blown. Could we really go to our neighbours and ask “Please can we have our bears back?” However, the spectacle of bears parachuting from such a great height would be by far the most enjoyable for the spectators.

When organising such an event there is no way of knowing how many participants there might be. Will there be 50 bears or 100 willing to take the challenge? To our great joy and relief we had 151 entrants, large and small, who had decided to take the plunge. On arrival, the bears were checked in before being passed over to the Ground Crew. Their job was to ensure that the bear was fit to jump before being fitted with a proper silk parachute and raised to the launch platform in a basket. If the bear could survive such a scary experience then the jump would be a cake walk! At the top the Air Crew put the bear at ease before launching it. A check for wind speed and direction and then heave ho, the bear was on the way down.

This is the bit for which the owners had all been waiting - a graceful descent and a soft landing. For many bears this was the case but for some a much more adventurous experience was in store. A sudden gust of wind might catch a parachute and whisk bears around the side of the tower to land either on the church roof to the south or in the tall tree to the north. Trained rescuers recovered those which landed on the roof but the fate of the tree-bound parachutists was to prove to be more problematic.

The local fire brigade did attend at the time but were only able to recover one bear before being called away. As for the other eight bears, they were to spend several very wet and windy nights suspended in the branches. Sadly too, one poor bear did get impaled on the railings at the foot of the tower but has lived to tell the tale.

The bears which landed safely were carried or stretchered back to the recovery tent to receive any first aid before collecting their Certificate of Bravery to mark their achievement.

The event proved to be very successful, not only financially but also from a social point of view. There was a great atmosphere amongst the spectators and even passers-by joined in with necks craned to watch the parachuting bears. People in Brentwood High Street too were intrigued by the laughter, the Ohs! and Ahhs! coming from St. Thomas'. Maybe the windy conditions added to the excitement and unpredictability of just where the bear might land.

An event such as this requires the help and assistance of so many people. A very big 'Thank you' to ALL who helped on the day and to all who entered their bears. Our hope was to raise £1000 towards the Bell Restoration Fund but it looks like we will achieve a significantly better result once all the outstanding sponsorship money comes in, perhaps exceeding £2000. It proved to be a really magnificent result from a most enjoyable day. We have already had requests to run it again next year.

What of the eight bears stranded in the tree? One fell out later the same day and landed on a parked car and was returned by a Traffic Warden (thereby proving that some of them actually do have a heart!). The remaining seven bears were rescued by Brentwood Firemen some five days later. Two fire tenders and twelve firemen spent one hour getting the

bears down from their lofty resting place. We are extremely grateful for their help.

All bears are now returned to their owners and the Bell Restoration Fund is fast approaching the financial half way mark. Isn't it good to have a happy ending?

Chris Bailey
(*Brentwood*)

Woman's Hour 60th Anniversary

Following on from the excellent coverage of the ringing course on Woman's hour (arranged by Libby Lawrence), a peal attempt is being arranged for Radio 4's Woman's Hour 60th Anniversary on 7th October. It has been agreed to ring and name a method for them in October.

It would also be good to have as many quarters rung as possible (any excuse) to celebrate the anniversary.

Please contact Libby for more information about the peal and any associated quarter peals.

Association Register

Birthdays: Congratulations to: David Collins, Manuden (80); Gerald Pearson, Hatfield Heath (70); Annette Hall, Steeple Bumpstead (40); Sue Rothera, Chelmsford; Maurice Downs, Rayne (70); Margaret Waller, Inworth (70).

Wedding Anniversary: Congratulations to Andrew & Carol Taylor on their 20th wedding anniversary.

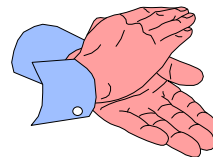
Deaths: We regret to report the deaths of John Collins (formerly Harlow); Stanley Jarvis (Librarian 1973-1987); Frank W Tomlin (Loughton); Bill Nurse (Writtle) and Charles Tranter (Romford).

That's a First

Congratulations to the following ringers

First Quarter :

Charlie A Martin (Fobbing 07/01)
Harry L Martin (Fobbing 07/01)
Simone Webb (Gt Ilford 25/02)
Anne Slater (Rayne 26/02)
Sam Buick (aged 11) (Coggeshall 26/02)
James Watkins (Saffron Walden 09/04)
David Shillito (Chigwell 18/05)
Peter Milledge (Clavering 04/06)
Jenny Milledge (Clavering 04/06)
Ian Valentine (Goldhanger 22/04)
David Newman (Goldhanger 22/04)
Alan Hampshire (Gt Totham 23/04)
Frances Holliday (Wethersfield 10/06)
Rebecca Newman (Kirby 30/04)
Deborah Coady (Prittlewell 18/06)



Congratulations!

First as Conductor :

Nick Eldred (Ashdon 12/02)
Bill Griffith-Jones (Clavering 04/06)
Libby Laurence (Gestingthorpe 21/04)
Debbie Hill (Braintree 30/04)

First Quarter inside:

Harry L Martin (Fobbing 07/01)

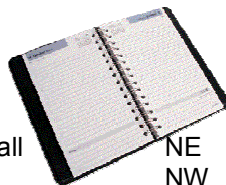
First peal :

Lucy Jerram (Colne Engaine 18/02)
Matthew J Bayley (Witham 22/04)
Debbie Hill (Braintree 22/04)

First as Conductor :

Richard M Dunhill (Braintree 22/04)
Jake C Suett (Witham 22/04)

Dates for your Diary



Sept	2	District 10 Bell Practice & Curry at Coggeshall	NE
	8	District Practice, Stansted	NW
	9	Essex Trophy Competition, Haslemere, Surrey	
	16	District Meeting, South Benfleet	NW
	16	Advanced Practice, Braintree	N
	22	Learners Practice, Arkesden	NW
	23	Walking Treasure Hunt, Frinton	NE
	28	Surprise Major Practice, Great Holland	NE
	30	Practice, Sawbridgeworth	NW
	30	Quiz Evening, North Ockendon (tbc)	S
Oct	6	District Practice, Rayne	N
	7	Association Dinner & Dance (County Hotel, Chelmsford)	
	13	District Practice, Stansted	NW
	14	Executive Committee Meeting, Danbury	
	21	District Practice, Stanford-le-Hope	S
	21	District Meeting, Thorrington	NE
	21	Advanced Practice, Braintree	N
	26	Surprise Major Practice, Great Holland	NE
	27	Learners Practice, Roydon	NW
	28	District Meeting, Saffron Walden & Radwinter	NW
28	District Meeting, Kelvedon & Feering	N	
31	Practice, Saffron Walden	NW	
Nov	4	Quiz Evening, Tendring	NE
	10	District Practice, Stansted	NW
	18	Call Change Competition & District Meeting	S
	18	Advanced Practice, Braintree	N
	24	Learners Practice, Clavering	NW
	25	Association Training Day—NE District	All
30	Surprise Major Practice, Great Holland	NE	
Dec	2	Carol Service, Bocking	N
	8	District Practice, Stansted	NW
	9	CAROL SERVICE, Lt Horkesley	NE
	9	Carol Service, Eastwood	S
	9	Carol Service, Manuden	NW
	9	Carol Service, Loughton	SW

The next edition of **Rounds & About** is planned for December 2006. Please send contributions to Bryan Morrissey at Jireh, 30 Turner Avenue, Lawford, Manningtree CO11 2LG or by email to