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Essex Association of Change Ringers

NEWSLETTER

Southern District

No. 105

November 2008

Saturday 15 November DISTRICT MEETING RETTENDON (6)
Preceded by Call Change Competition 2:30 pm
(note earlier start)

**Please consider entering a band for this competition, which is
aimed at encouraging all levels of ringers in their striking.
Numbers for tea to Lyn Benson 01245 400468
Please let the Master know if you are entering a team.**

Saturday 13 December

District Carol Service Bentley Common (6) 3:30 pm

Saturday 17 January 2009 ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING

Prittlewell (10) 3:30 pm

Canewdon Update

Starting at the top and working down Bakers of Danbury have replaced the missing louvers, fitted new anti bird screens, removed the old bell chamber floor, fitted the new 'sound invisible' floor and prepared pads for the first two steel supports for the new bell frame that should be fitted by Whitechapel shortly. They have also made a test opening for the door from the tower stairs to the new ringing gallery.

Unfortunately when the old bell chamber floor was removed it was found that part of the old bell frame around the treble bell has never been properly mounted in the wall and in the same area another part of the frame had been half burnt through by fire. The substantial floor had actually been partly supporting this part of the frame. The old bell frame, with parts that are thought to date back to the early 1420's has been considerably altered over the years from having three large swing chimed bells (2 ton tenor) and a small Sanctus bell to a ring of five lighter circle rung bells by the 1630's. (Total weight about 2 ton.)

The fire was in 1939 long after bell ringing had stopped, and caused £400 of damage in the tower but it had previously thought that it had not effected the bells at all. The treble bell's 1716 wheel, only a couple of feet from the fire damaged frame shows no sign of the fire at all, this was obviously a very lucky escape for the old bells. The large west window, dating from Victorian times has been removed for re-leading and possible alterations to include an opening section for ventilation of the new ringing gallery.

These works have obviously added time to the project and the Christmas completion date is now looking in doubt.

Brian Meldon

BRENTWOOD BELL RESTORATION PROJECT

An update

October 2008

Bell Project nearing completion

Since the last update the project has been moving a steady pace without any major problems presenting themselves. (I hesitate to write this "as many a slip etc. ...").

The bells went initially to Whitechapel for cleaning, removal of canons and re-tuning (carried out by Nigel Taylor of Downham). We have been advised that the bell weights have now changed as follows:

Historic weights as recorded by Mears & Stainbank Ltd.	Weights as recorded by Whitechapel Bell Foundry prior to re-tuning.	Weights as recorded by Whitechapel Bell Foundry following re-tuning.
Treble 5-3-18	Treble 5-3-12	Treble 5-0-11
2 nd 5-3-18	2 nd 5-3-7	2 nd 5-0-27
3 rd 6-3-18	3 rd 6-3-8	3 rd 6-0-8
4 th 7-3-19	4 th 7-3-5	4 th 6-3-19
5 th 9-1-10	5 th 9-0-21	5 th 8-0-2
6 th 10-3-27	6 th 10-3-15	6 th 9-2-26
7 th 13-1-11	7 th 13-0-21	7 th 12-0-5
Tenor 19-3-00	Tenor 19-1-27	Tenor 18-1-15

The keynote (Eb) remains unchanged, although strictly speaking it is D#, it being somewhat closer to D than E. The frequency of the nominal is reported to be 609.7Hz.

The Faculty was granted on the basis of the cast-iron frame being restored which was itself a requirement of *English Heritage*. However, *English Heritage* is prepared to sanction a new frame in the event of the old one not being able to be satisfactorily restored. Such a change at this stage would have serious cost implications.

The work is contracted to Nicholson Engineering Ltd. in whose factory the frame was thoroughly cleaned and re-erected for inspection which revealed a number of cracks and weaknesses previously unable to be seen. The cracks appear to be in the south west corner area of the frame (that which supports the nos. 2 and 3 bells in the lower tier and the no. 4 bell in the upper). Our structural engineer, The Morton Partnership, together with Nicholson's, designed a strengthening scheme which has resulted in additional costs on the bell contract. However, at this stage we expect to meet those costs within the budget having been able to identify anticipated savings within the Belfry floor structure and contingency provisions.

The lead on the Belfry floor was partially lifted to expose the wooden structure beneath the south west corner. Following the engineer's inspection the timberwork was considered to be in good condition. However, it was felt necessary to secure more solidly the oak foundation joists, on which the frame will sit, with a number of coachbolts. Furthermore, both the engineer and bellhanger suggested that the whole of the lead covering should be stripped essentially to provide a more solid bearing for the frame. Our church architect agreed. It is no longer considered necessary as a weather protection layer as the sound openings are now largely blocked with oak boarding. As well as being marginally quieter outside one side effect will be that the bells will sound louder down in the Ringing Room, let's hope we don't need ear protectors!

The strengthened and loaded frame is to be tested at Nicholson's factory on 4th November, the test to be witnessed by our engineer and David Sloman, Diocesan Bells Adviser, and if possible the engineer from *English Heritage*. If all goes well the installation is due back in the tower during week commencing 10th November and is estimated to be complete by the end of November.

We have now managed to profitably dispose of all the old bell fittings and wheels. Some are in exhibitions at the local Undertakers and in the Brentwood Museum. Others are features in various back gardens. The remaining headstocks were taken by a professional wood-turner and we look forward to seeing some of the items that he will craft from the elm next year.

We will need to have a formal inspection by the Essex Association's Hon. Technical Adviser as soon as possible after installation to formalise the release of Grant money and to trigger the release of the grant from the Central Council for Church Bell Ringers.

We have been fortunate to draw on the expertise of the David Sloman, the DAC Bells Adviser and other within EACR and The CCCBR and would like to acknowledge the valuable help and guidance so freely given.

The Service of Re-dedication was to have taken place in early February but is now planned to be taken by the Bishop of Bradwell on Sunday 15th March 2009. Watch this space for further details.

Chris Bailey

(Tower Captain, St. Thomas of Canterbury, Brentwood)

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRITTLEWELL RINGING SCHOOL FOR WINNING THE FOUNDER'S PRIZE

As announced at the September meeting, the Prittlewell Ringing Centre has won The Worshipful Company of Founders Prize for the greatest teaching achievement in 2007. Apart from the recognition of the achievements of the Centre, the prize of £500 be very useful for the enhancement of the teaching facilities.

The Centre is a great asset for our district, being very active in recruiting and teaching new ringers and also, through it's philosophy of teaching in a thorough manner in a friendly atmosphere, a great advert for ringing. Here are a few facts and pictures from the centre.

The Prittlewell Ringing Centre was established in 1990 with aims to:

- ❖ Assist in the recruitment of new ringers in the area covered by the Southern District of the Essex Association of Change Ringers
- ❖ Teach new ringers the basics of bell handling, including ringing up and ringing down, paying particular attention to ringing style, listening and bell control
- ❖ Cover the basics of rounds, call changes, using the kaleidoscope system as an aid to progressing to plain hunting and basic methods
- ❖ Increase the number of ringers ringing regularly for Sunday Services
- ❖ Increase the membership of the Essex Association of Change Ringers

Over the years the school has also assisted those learning at other towers. The school has also offered courses thorough the Southend-on-Sea Adult Community College. The College courses run for fourteen weeks in February and September with specific objectives set in agreement with College Authorities – this is basically to gain competence in rounds and ringing up and down singly in the period covered by the course. These courses run with a minimum requirement of eight new students.



A good old theory lesson



Kathryn using the simulator

The use of a simulator, audio equipment and video facilities as aids for listening, style and method ringing.

The Ringing Centre is open each Saturday from 9.00a.m. to 12 noon. These sessions usually have, including the three regular tutors, an attendance of around twenty people. The students are at various stages in their ringing careers and it is a measure of our success that the more experienced ringers from previous sessions return to help their less experienced colleagues whilst also using the simulator and audio visual equipment to advance their own skills.



Saturday morning group

The age range of our students is from ten to a little over seventy.

In 2007 the Centre's activity was extended to St Laurence Eastwood, a 9cwt ring of six installed some twenty years ago, where monthly quarter peals are attempted. Each attempt is specifically for one or sometimes two of the Centre's students for the purpose of consolidating plain hunting, tenor behind, simple methods (plain bob usually), rope sight and striking improvement. Nine of these quarter peals were successful in 2007 with seven ringers scoring their first quarter and two consolidating ringing on an inside bell.

In March 2007 we started teaching fifteen new recruits for the new bells in Canewdon. This is being done on Wednesday evenings from 7.00p.m. to 9.45 p.m. not only to establish a regular practice night for that tower but also because our Saturday classes are full to bursting point. The tuition for the new band includes bell maintenance, organisation and motivation of a band, rope splicing, child protection issues and general safety issues associated with all aspects of ringing and tower maintenance.



Left: Canewdon band, with tutors

Below: Attention to good handling

Following attendance at a Scripture Union event in a local park in 2007, where children in the top year of their Primary Education were introduced to handbells – both tune ringing and change ringing – we have attended three local Primary Schools to give demonstrations on handbells. At these sessions the children are given the opportunity to ring. These events have proved to be very successful and, with the agreement of local head teachers and parents, we are hoping to hold some sessions in the tower with the aim of introducing children to tower bells.



Although in its eighteenth year, the Prittlewell Ringing Centre is still flourishing with plenty of newcomers as well as more experienced pupils. We attribute this to the way we teach and the friendly atmosphere created which we hope will continue for years to come.

Left: Peter Sloman with the Chairman of The Worshipful Company of Founders

NOTES ON EACR COMMITTEE MEETING 11 Oct 2008

Matters arising from meeting 2 Feb 2008

2009 Carol service confirmed as being at Writtle on 5th December

Annual Dinner

There were 86 attenders this year; agreed that a dinner should be planned for 2009 and a provisional booking made at the County Hotel, Chelmsford.

The District reports were presented

Report editor's report

The report editor requested that any amendments to the report should be forwarded to Colin Chapman via the District secretaries and not sent to him directly

Technical advisor's report

Work at **Chelmsford Cathedral** is complete; Work is in progress at **Brentwood**: Nicholsons are the main contractors with re-tuning being carried out by Whitechapel. It is hoped that bells will be back in action by Christmas with rededication on 8 Feb 2009;

Rickling: maintenance is underway; **Harwich**: there are gudgeon problems with the 4th and bells are in generally poor condition through age; **Felsted**: Also had gudgeon problems on the 4th which have been temporarily resolved pending a re-hang in January 2009;

Althorne: Has two bells; one is badly cracked in the crown but the other can be made suitable for chiming;

Willingale Doe: There has been an approach made about making this 5 ringable; however, the 5th is in a separate frame and has insufficient space to ring full-circle; **Kelvedon**: are still not ringable and resolution of the problems is slow. Advice from Taylors is that only the bells on the upper tier (2, 4, 6 & 8) should be rung, but the structural engineers' report advises that there should be no ringing;

Theydon Garnon: There have been delays in completing this project but work is now progressing and a local band is being taught; **Writtle** are proposing a sound lantern to improve sound control

Terling: Work is being done on the frame to address odd-struckness of the bells

Education officer's report

There is an association training day at Stebbing on 22nd November; details are on the Association website The Essex Course will run 16-18th April 2009. Ideas for new teaching groups are welcome!

Web Master's report

The web site is being updated and improved after moving to a new hosting company. News items for the website should be sent to Fred Bone (and to the Newsletter editor)

Child Protection

A letter has (at last) been received from the Diocesan Child Protection Officer, agreeing a new policy for bell ringers. This letter is available on the Association website. In summary:

- In each tower the Tower Captain and anyone teaching to ring must be CRB checked
- One other adult in each tower must also be CRB

checked to provide cover in case of the Tower Captain being absent

- There must always be a minimum of two adults present in a tower

In response to a question, Steve Nash confirmed that this means that every ringable tower must have two or more CRB checked ringers. He also confirmed that when applying for a CRB check the organisation should be given as the Diocese and that he will then need to validate IDs before the paperwork is returned.

From 12th October 2009 the policy will change in line with that described in the Ringing World of 12th September 2008. Under this scheme individuals involved in activities involving children will be vetted by and registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and this registration will be totally portable to cover work and leisure activities.

A questionnaire is to be circulated via all Districts to establish how many ringers currently have CRB clearance.

Grant Applications

Writtle: a sound lantern is to be installed at a cost of £19K + VAT; it was agreed that the Association would contribute £2.5K

Terling: maintenance is required; clarification of the work required was to be requested and the grant application held over to the next meeting

Kelvedon: The agreed grant to be carried forward and payment made when the work is completed satisfactorily

'Looking to the Future'

Volunteers from the Districts have been identified to take forward the work proposed in the letter from the Association Master

Change Ringing in Essex (book)

There are no immediate plans to update this book, but Fred Bone will continue to collect and store any relevant material

Any other business

Any nominations for Life Membership of the Association should be sent to Vicki Chapman by 1st December 2008

There was discussion as to whether an odd-struckness meter may be a useful asset to the Association (at a cost of £225); Adrian Semken will look into this

Clothing: A new range of EACR clothing is to be made available; District secretaries have catalogues and price lists and information will be available on the website.

An initial minimum order of £200 is required (about £40 per District). Any profit will go to the Bell Restoration Fund.

Minutes of the **SOUTHERN DISTRICT** meeting at Basildon
Saturday 20th September 2008

Welcome The Master, John Harpole, welcomed all present and invited everyone to sign the Roll Book. 45 members were present. Brian Meads, the Association Master, and Rosemary Wright were welcomed as visitors to the meeting, and Barry Peachey, Chairman of the Central Council Ringing Centres Committee, had joined in the ringing before the meeting.

The Master thanked the Reader, Phyll Wood, for taking the Service. Thanks went also to the organist (Michael Lowe) and the Basildon ringers for the use of the bells and for the provision of an excellent tea. Thanks were extended to the Service touch band (Penny Sloman, David Sloman, Mark Robins, Paul Cammiade, Hilary Donoghue, Mike Hallett, Steve Nash & Phil Harrison) who rang Stedman Triples.

In Memoriam

The Master asked everyone to stand in memoriam of District members and friends who had died since the last meeting (Jessie Kippin, Ken Smith and Rita Michell).

Apologies for absence were received from Roger and Ann Dorking, Robin and Renee Page Jones, Jean Dunne, Beth Johnson, Gordon Lucas, Vic Dale, Jennifer Derby, Jessica Mead, David Timmins, Christine Allman, Sally Ann Elkington, Lynne McEwan, Lauren Spooner, Rowena Marshall, Peter Knight and Martin Newman.

Minutes of the previous meeting, held at Great Wakering on 15th March 2008 had been circulated in the April Newsletter. There being no amendments, they were signed by the Master as a true record.

Matters arising

Prittlewell had come second in the six bell striking competition and Downham 5th. Unfortunately the District had come last in the eight bell striking competition.

The Master would welcome comments on why so few people went on the District Outing to Bedfordshire. It was agreed that the same Saturday in June would be retained for future years.

Correspondence

A letter had been received from Chris Bailey, former District Secretary/ Treasurer of the Association thanking members for their gift on his retirement from office in January 2008.

Mary Bone had also written to thank those who had acted as Sidesmen at the Association AGM in May.

Finally, correspondence had been received from Brian Meads and circulated for discussion prior to the meeting. This concerned the future of change-ringing in the face of an ageing membership profile and it was requested that District Officers attend the October Committee Meeting with a named representative ready to take on a consulting and surveying role, in the first instance, throughout their district. Hilary Donoghue volunteered to perform this role and it was agreed that the assignment would be shared by others to assist her.

Election of new members

New Ringing Members, Helen McBride of Eastwood, proposed by Peter Sloman, seconded by Brian Meldon and Mike Goodman of Basildon, proposed by Roger Hobson and seconded by John Harpole, were unanimously elected to membership.

Update on bell restoration projects

Canewdon wood floor has been stripped out and a new stainless steel one is ready to go in. It is hoped that the project will be finished by Christmas. The bells might be installed by the end of November.

Brentwood bells have been tuned and there are four elm headstocks left over if anyone would like them.

Training

On 18th October there is to be morning training at Basildon focusing on Plain Bob Triples and hunting on seven. Steve Nash volunteered as a trainer. Afternoon practice will be at Rayleigh but this is to be confirmed by the Master.

Diary of forthcoming events

- A quiz night is to take place at North Ockendon on Saturday 27th September from 7pm
- The Association Dinner takes place at the County Hotel, Chelmsford on Saturday 4th October, 7.30pm.
- 18th October District Training Day / afternoon practice Basildon / Rayleigh.
- Wednesday, 29th October at 7.30pm. The Master announced that a beginners' eight bell practice will be held at Basildon. Everyone will be welcome.
- 15th November the call change striking competition will be held at Rettendon from 2.30pm. (Draw 2.15pm)
- 22nd November Association Training Day Stebbing.
- 13th December Carol Service Bentley Common
- 17th January 2009 ADM Prittlewell

Any other business

The Worshipful Company of Founders Prize had been won by the Prittlewell Ringing Centre for the greatest teaching achievement in 2007. The centre started 20 years ago and runs every Saturday between 9am and 12.30pm. The meeting congratulated the members of the centre for their achievement.

Finally:

There was no Service collection.

The collection from teas, was used to cover the cost of providing the tea.

The profit from the raffle for which the prizes were kindly donated was £126.50.

Further ringing was available until 8pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7pm.