

Master – Andrew Kelso



It is an honour, and a pleasure, to have been elected as Master of the Essex Association at our AGM. Since moving to Essex in 2013 from the East of London, I have felt more included and welcomed in ringing than at any point since I left Scotland. While your heart often lies in the places where it grew and developed, it can find new homes as well.

There are many of you that I don't yet know, and I look forward to meeting you over the coming months (more details to follow). As a brief introduction to me, keep reading.

I was taught to ring in 1986 by Chris Frye at Dunblane Cathedral, which has a 24cwt ring of eight plus a sharp 5th semitone. Early ringing forays took me around Scotland, initially to Alloa and Dunkeld, and then further afield to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Moving to Edinburgh for university heralded one of several breaks I had from ringing, none of them intentional, but life does that sometimes. I later became Ringing Master at St Cuthbert's in Edinburgh, another E flat ring, this time of 10 bells.

I qualified as a doctor from University of Edinburgh Medical School in 1998, and postgraduate training took me initially to Newcastle (where I enjoyed ringing with the Cathedral and student bands), and later to London. Living in London, I learnt how to ring on 12 in Michael Moreton's Monday night peal band at South Croydon, rang with the College Youths at their practices on a Tuesday, and ultimately became a member of the band at St Paul's Cathedral. This was one of the most exciting times in my ringing life, and as well as being regularly challenged I had a lot of fun.

Moving to Essex in 2013, I joined the band at Goldhanger. As I live almost directly across the road, within sight of the church, that was always going to happen. As with everyone in Essex, they immediately welcomed me warmly, and together we have continued to develop the band, teaching a clutch of new ringers from scratch who regularly make me proud as they develop into great ringers and good friends. I was also invited into the peal bands at Inworth and Terling, and amongst others, Jim and Yvonne Towler have bent over backwards to make me welcome, opening my eyes and brain to the mental challenge of multi-spliced minor at the same time.

Now working as a Consultant Neurologist at the Royal London Hospital, life is busy commuting in and out of London, made more complicated by a parallel life as a cellist, playing regularly with orchestras in London and Essex. However, it's ringing that grounds me, brings me home, and reminds me about the value of friendship, neighbours and community. We are all drawn to ringing by different motivations, and these can change over time. As a 12 year old, I was drawn to ringing by its mystique and tradition. I developed as a ringer because of the mental challenge (and occasionally physical challenge - ask me about the Inveraray Triathlon sometime). I still learn new things all the time. In 2017 I challenged myself to learn to ring change ringing on handbells - that's still a work in progress. However, as well as having the opportunity to ring these new pieces of fun, I've continued to ring because of the more generic benefits it offers me, and that I can return.

Our territorial societies (of which the Essex Association is one of the oldest and largest) are some of the most important ringing groups that we can belong to. They are our ringing "home", they nurture and support us as we are learning, they train us when we need education, and the friends we make through them will support us (personally and campanologically) when we need it. If I can do one thing in my time as Master, it will be to keep the Essex Association relevant to its members, making sure that our offer is both practical and, if you like, spiritual. Over the next year, it's my ambition to come out to as many local practices as I can, and I look forward to meeting as many of you in person. But don't wait for me to come to you. I'd be delighted if you want to contact me directly, at master@eacr.org.uk, with any suggestions, or comments, or requests for assistance that you might have.

Andrew Kelso - Master
7th May 2018

General Secretary – Tracey Southgate



I'd like to start by saying what a privilege and honour it is to have been elected as your General Secretary. For those of you that don't know me, my father taught me to ring at All Saints Writtle, back in the late 1970's and I was soon accompanying him to SE District meetings and services. From a very young age I gained an understanding of some of our most beloved traditions, in the form of our services, meetings, competitions and ringing for important festivals. I also observed how the meetings were run, and got to soon realise who the influential officers and ringers of the day were. Ringing is a huge part of my life and that of my family. The fellowship I have enjoyed and the friendships I have made have helped me through many of life's ups and downs.

I moved to the NE District in 1995 and I was determined to settle well domestically and professionally and saw continuing to ring as a vital step in the process. I first went ringing at Kirby-le-Soken and I fondly remember the lovely welcome I received. My personal ringing development really took off from there, as I became more confident in ringing Triples and Major, I attended my first Essex Ringing Course and developed my passion for Stedman Triples.

I went on to support my local band at Harwich, and that's when I became very interested in bell restoration as the bells at St Nicholas certainly needed some care and attention. I was tower captain there from 2005 to 2015 and throughout my time there promoted Sunday service ringing and regular practices. I became really involved in running the NE District during this time, serving as a Committee Rep and worked my way up towards becoming District Master in 2001. I remained a member of the NE District Committee right up until I left the area in 2016.

My major achievements I think could be described as serving as EACR's Public Relations Officer not once, but twice. The first time was back in the late 1990's and into the new Millennium. It was a tremendously busy and exciting period for ringing in Essex. I took up the role once more in the early 2010's to help spearhead publicity and ringing recruitment in the run up to the 2012 London Olympics. The other event that I'm particularly proud of is helping Harwich have some major restoration work done on 4 out of the 8 bells back in 2012/13 to make sure that they could be kept ringing. I moved back to Chelmsford and SE District in 2016 and now ring at Danbury and Boreham, among other towers. I have rung a few peals, but I'm by no means prolific. However, they have been rung at the towers, with the people and in commemoration of the things that have mattered most to me.

Professionally, I have worked for Essex County Council for almost 10 years in various posts, and there are a lot of procedural panels and meetings of varying degrees of significance. I've had to learn to work with the most senior officers and politicians within ECC, the Health Service, Essex Police, district and town councils as well as the voluntary and third sector. My experience in this line of work is what I feel sure will help me in my new role as the Association's General Secretary. When I'm not ringing I can be found up the gym, reading, cooking or gardening or visiting places of historic interest. I'm a big history, architecture and literature fan and that's why you'll find me admiring our beautiful churches and their individual histories as well as the bells contained in them.

I have already had some meaningful conversations with many Association members, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all in the same open and honest fashion. I am under no illusions about what is expected and I know that the role of General Secretary comes with a great deal of responsibility. I aim to carry out the role to the very best of my ability. I have always been tremendously proud of EACR and everything it stands for and I'm very excited about what the future has in store for us all. This is your Association, and I'd very much like you to feel free to come and talk to me or contact me at secretary@eacr.org.uk if you have any ideas, suggestions or comments that you'd like to make. Thank you for this amazing opportunity and I hope to visit as many towers as possible over the coming months.

Tracey Southgate – General Secretary
7th May 2018