



NEWSLETTER

No. 92

April 2006

ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD AT HUTTON - Saturday 18th March 2006

The Committee Rep Lyn Benson gave a report of the Executive Committee Meeting held at Danbury on 4th February 2006:

The annual dinner has been booked for 7th October, the invited guest is Canon Mason.

The AGM is 1st May at Chelmsford ringing at 9.15, service touch at 10.15, with David Parrot preaching. Afternoon ringing is in the SW District starting at Leytonstone at 2.30 with tea at Chigwell.

The Peal secretary reported that Yvonne Towler had joined her husband in reaching her 1000 peal, which makes them the first married couple to reach this figure.

Bell Restoration: it was decided to give £9000 to Romford and £12000 to Brentwood.

Election of New Members

Ringing Members

From Hutton: Susan McKay & Alexandra Underwood

From Orsett: Victoria Pegram, Deborah Lineker, Rachel Machar, Penny Jack, Judith Church, Katie Allen & Richard Page

From Rayleigh: Sarah Butcher & Lydia Roberts

Friends

From Basildon: Wade Vandenburg

Congratulations and welcome to the Association!

District Programme for 2006 (attached to this newsletter)

The Quiz Night (30th September) – would this year be held at Basildon, 7.00 for 7.30pm at a cost of £5 a ticket. Roger Hobson said that they could arrange a Ploughman's Supper or similar. Ann Beech agreed to produce the tickets for sale at the Striking Competition and Brian Beech was willing to act as Quiz Master.

Association Striking Competition Finals 2007

The Southern District is scheduled to host the Association 6 and 8 bell competitions in 2007 and suitable towers needed to be identified. Great Wakering and Rochford had been mentioned but no decision had been taken. A venue for tea was also required. Please let the District Officers know if you have any ideas concerning this event.

Any Other Business. Chris Bailey mentioned the Carlo Curley Organ Spectacular concert at St. Thomas' Brentwood on 24th June. Proceeds in aid of the Organ Restoration Appeal. Also

the sponsored Teddy Bear Parachute Jump event on 20th May to launch the Bell Restoration Appeal also at St. Thomas'.

The Master stated that the recent district newsletters were looking rather 'thin' and encouraged all members to submit items for the District Newsletter to Mo Venus. Items could include special quarter peals that had been rung, ringers' birthdays, tower outings, and any other news from your tower.

The Master reminded the meeting that the Striking Competition will be at Great Wakering on 20th May.

EACR Discussion Paper - The future and where are we going?

The discussion paper had been circulated with the February Newsletter although it had only recently been issued. The following explanatory paragraph from the Master should have been included:

The Future and where we are going - a discussion paper.

At the back of this newsletter you will find this discussion paper. Adrian Semken (from Coggeshall, N) and Adrian Malton (unattached, SE) have come up with this idea to provoke discussion amongst the whole of the membership as to what we should be looking for in the future concerning ringing in Essex. It was presented to the Executive Committee at their February meeting and it has been asked to cascade it down to the whole of our ringing communities irrespective of whether ringers are members of the Association or not.

Therefore, please make all your ringers aware of this and encourage everyone to read it. We would like to know what your thoughts and feelings are, so, it is planned to have a provisional discussion about this at the next District Meeting - in September at South Benfleet. Please come and make your feelings known.

The Master encouraged all members and towers to read the paper and participate in a discussion at the September meeting. Feedback would be taken to the February 2007 Executive Meeting.

Finally. The Master thanked Derek White, Lay Reader from Hutton, for taking the Service, Roy Simmons, from Brentwood, for playing the organ and the Hutton ringers for the use of the bells and for the splendid tea. The Service Collection raised £38.45, the profit from Teas, donated by the Hutton Ringers, was £38.00 and the raffle made £52.50.



NOTICES

Southern District Quiz Night

Saturday 30 September

to be held at Basildon Church Hall

7:00 for 7:30pm

Cost of £5 per person to include a supper

Tickets will be available from Ann Beech

at the District Striking Competition at Great Wakering in May

See you there!

Keep this date free in your diaries...

Saturday 17 June

DISTRICT OUTING TO SUSSEX

Further details will follow in due course

Please support this event as it has always been a most enjoyable day.



CONGRATULATIONS!!

Brian Beech will be celebrating his 69th birthday on 27th April.



How do ringers celebrate their 60th birthdays?

I decided that I would visit Hampshire and ring a peal of Stedman Caters with 6 friends and family from my distant past, and four more recent associates from Essex. Bishopstoke was the chosen venue, a place where I had practised a lot when I was growing up.

Things began to go wrong before we had left Essex. Two of the Essex contingent had a family emergency and couldn't come so the peal had become Cambridge Major instead of Stedman, as the conductor didn't think he could manage to call Stedman Triples. We started at half past two and the ringing was excellent. Nothing could go wrong with this peal. Nobody anticipated the conductor, a close relative, missing a dodge on the back, and in no time it had gone beyond recall. An early drink and a meal in the pub and back to Essex nice and early. Fortunately I had also arranged a quarter at Basildon as well and the all Essex band managed Cambridge Major with no difficulty at all. Mind you, we had rung half the peal at Bishopstoke before it fired out so maybe its better not draw the obvious conclusion.

Hilary Donoghue
Downham



Brentwood Bell Restoration Project.

The St. Thomas of Canterbury PCC of Brentwood has given its support to the refurbishment of the bell installation. The present ring was installed by Mears and Stainbank in 1887 and was dedicated by the Bishop of St. Albans on 19th October that same year.

Apart from the re-hanging of a bell and replacement oiling boxes in the late 1920's nothing much has been done to the installation. Problems have occurred with various bells over the

last few years and specialist reports have commented on their poor condition, one even questioning whether they should continue to be rung !

The time for a major refurbishment has now come. The estimated cost of the overall project is £80000. The plan is to have the bells removed, cleaned, re-tuned and fitted with new modern headstocks and bearings and re-installed in a new frame. The estimate includes cost provisions for creating access for the removal of the installation, the temporary removal of the turret clock, structural work in connection with the new frame, professional fees and increased costs to completion.

We have made a good start to raising the money and have also been fortunate in securing support from the Association from the Bell Restoration Fund and the Tovell Bequest, a magnificent £12000 in total. We are very grateful for such generous support.

The official launch of the fund is being marked by a Teddy Bear Parachute event on 20th May at 10.30am. – let's hope for a fine day. If you think your bear is up to it then please bring him (or her) along to enjoy the experience.

Chris Bailey



St. Thomas of Canterbury
Brentwood

Bells Restoration Appeal

TEDDY BEAR PARACHUTE JUMP
Saturday 20th May

Give your Teddy the opportunity
of a lifetime to parachute from the
Church Tower.



All bears must be fit and not
afraid of heights

A minimum entry fee of £1 per
jump but please try and obtain
Sponsorship where possible

More information from
Chris Bailey on 01277 226614

~~~~~

Do you have any news for your newsletter?

Rung any special quarter peals, any birthdays or anniversaries to be mentioned?  
 Going on a ringing outing – send in a report with a photo!  
 Having any fundraising events that need advertising?  
 Know any (clean) bellringing jokes?

Send your contributions for this newsletter to Mo Venus (address in Annual Report),  
 hand to me or a District Officer at any ringing event,  
 or e-mail me at [mo.venus@bbc.co.uk](mailto:mo.venus@bbc.co.uk) or [movns@aol.com](mailto:movns@aol.com)  
 Newsletters for 2006 will be published during the first weeks of  
 July, October and the second week of December.

## The Essex Association of Change Ringers

### **SOUTHERN DISTRICT**

#### *2006 Diary of Events*

| DATE                  | EVENT                                                   | VENUE                    | TIME                            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b><u>2006</u></b>    |                                                         |                          |                                 |
| Monday 1 May          | Association AGM - Chelmsford                            | Ringling in SW District  |                                 |
| Saturday 20 May       | STRIKING COMPETITION                                    | Great Wakering (6)       | 5.00 pm                         |
| Saturday 17 June      | DISTRICT OUTING                                         | Sussex                   | from 10.30 am                   |
| Saturday 1 July       | Association Striking Competition Finals                 | South East District      |                                 |
| Saturday 16 September | DISTRICT MEETING                                        | South Benfleet (6)       | 3.30 pm                         |
| Saturday 30 September | QUIZ NIGHT                                              | Basildon Church Hall     | 7.00 for 7.30 pm                |
| Saturday 7 October    | Association Annual Dinner                               | County Hotel, Chelmsford |                                 |
| Saturday 21 October   | District Afternoon Practice (8-bell)                    | Stanford-le-Hope (8)     | 3.00-5.00 pm                    |
| Saturday 18 November  | DISTRICT MEETING<br>Preceded by Call Change Competition | Downham (6)              | 2.30 pm<br>(note earlier start) |
| Saturday 9 December   | DISTRICT CAROL SERVICE                                  | Eastwood (6)             | 3.30 pm                         |
| <b><u>2007</u></b>    |                                                         |                          |                                 |
| Saturday 20 January   | ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING                                 | Rochford (8)             | 3.30 pm                         |

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**JAN / MARCH / SEPT** - District Meeting arrangements (*times for Tea, Meeting & Evening Ringing are approx*):

3:30pm: Afternoon Ringing, 4:30pm: Service, 5:00pm: Tea, 6:15pm: Meeting, 7:00pm: Evening Ringing

**NOVEMBER** - District Meeting arrangements (*times for Tea, Meeting & Evening Ringing are approx*):

2:30pm: Competition Ringing, 4:30pm: Service, 5:00pm: Tea, 6:15pm: Meeting, 7:00pm: Evening Ringing

**MAY - District Striking Competition arrangements:**

**5:00pm:** Draw & Competition Ringing, followed by Tea, Brief Meeting, Results

**DECEMBER - District Carol Service arrangements:**

**3:30pm:** Afternoon Ringing, **4:30pm:** Service, **5:30pm:** Seasonal Refreshments

**Any changes to the programme will be announced at district meetings  
or via the district newsletter.**

## The Essex Association of Change Ringers

*Registered Charity No. 292250*

### **The Future and where are we going.**

The "2A's" discussion paper.

The formation of the Association in 1879 is well documented. It is a "territorial Association" and as such was amongst the first to be formed, pre dating the diocese of Chelmsford by a good number of years. The boundaries have been well defined now for some time.

The objects of the Association are:

1. To further the work of the Church by the ringing of bells and to promote all aspects of the same.
2. To provide financial assistance to Churches within the boundaries of the Association for the purpose of maintaining and improving their bell installations.

Since the Southend and District Guild was wound up in 1969 and for administrative purposes the Association was divided into six "Districts" (previously 5) very little has changed in terms of structure - only occasionally has a tower been transferred from one District to another and then only to meet local requirements. Even then the northern Districts were not affected. Historically the district structures were based on railway routes and stations of which many are now demolished and, to a lesser extent, bus routes all of which has little relevance at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. century.

Districts are not balanced in terms of the number of towers, the largest District having more than twice the number than the smallest. The workload of District Officers is thus proportionately imbalanced.

For about the last thirty years - say since the centenary celebrations in 1979 - the Association has been one of the leading territorial ringing organizations although this may have been the result of the earlier work carried out by the "Ginger Group". The Association has benefited from a series of high quality, motivated officers all of whom have contributed to forwarding the objectives.

Over the last decade or so a great deal has been achieved. We have seen the "Ring In 2000" campaign introduce a considerable number of new people to the art of ringing and more recently the successful 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations year.

However all of this is history. The challenge the Association faces now is where are we going from here? There are no special events on the horizon upon which we can focus. It is worth noting here that at least 50% of the current Association membership has been elected since 1979.

Since the Ginger Group reported the pace of life has changed quite dramatically not least in terms of communication with electronic communication coming increasingly to the fore.

There are massive and exciting challenges ahead for all association members if we are to fulfill our objectives, not least in passing on to the next generation the skills that our art requires.

A number of fundamental questions must be asked such as:

- 1 How are we to meet the objectives if indeed they are still relevant?
- 2 Is the District structure now correct?
- 3 Is a programme of district meetings and other events relevant today?
- 4 Has the Association outlived its purpose?

There are of course many more questions that could, and indeed should, be asked but the object of this discussion paper is not to put them forward but to provoke discussion amongst all of the members.

There are two fundamental questions and these are:

## **Does ringing in Essex need any organisation i.e. the Association? Do we need to change anything?**

It must be stressed here that there is absolutely no point in changing anything unless it can be clearly demonstrated that by introducing change significant improvements in the efficacy of the Association can be made.

It has been said that "Districts are Divisive". This may well be true in as much as there does seem to be this invisible wall around them that prevents, or at least seems to restrict the free movement of many ringers about the Association area. Perhaps this is the crux of the whole issue - movement is so much more readily available to the vast majority of members than it was say 40 years ago.

Are District Meetings of any relevance? With good modern communications groups of ringers can easily arrange to meet up as and when they want to without the formal structure of district officers, services and meetings. Would other groupings be more efficient? However beware a Deanery based set-up as this may well be more divisive than the present Districts and of course the Deanery boundaries are subject to change beyond our control. There are already many non-Association based mid-week ringing groups that meet regularly.

If there were no districts would the whole Committee have to be elected at the Annual General Meeting? This in turn depends upon the Committee structure - is this correct?

Should the Association be leading the way with recruiting and teaching? The Essex ringing Course is now fully incorporated within the Association structure and there are two recognised Ringing Centres as well as a number of towers equipped with ringing simulators so that a much more structured approach to recruiting and teaching should be possible. If this is the way forward should the Association set any standards with regard to instruction in the absence of any lead from outside bodies such as the Central Council?

The present "management structure" places a considerable workload burden on the officers. Should subscriptions be increased and a secretary be paid to run the affairs say on a one day a week basis? This would be of considerable benefit should districts be abandoned.

Should discussions be held with Diocesan management with a view to getting a joint approach to ringing, the way forward and where ringing fits within the church?

How about actively promoting ringing in schools and colleges - in particular aiming to get more young people involved? Many youngsters perceive the church very far removed from being "cool". What should we be doing to address this?

The way forward would appear to be to hold far reaching discussions amongst the membership and this must include as many members as possible not just the active minority (about 10%). One object of any changes would be to create a structure that would encourage all members to become more active.

Ringling has a future but it is up to us all now to act to determine how bright that future is.

Adrian C. Malton  
January 2006

Adrian G. Semken.