



# NEWSLETTER

No. 91

February 2006

## ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD AT BASILDON - SATURDAY 21st JANUARY 2006

The Master, Andrew Beech, reviewed the main events of the past year and congratulated Downham on winning the Association 6 bell final. He also mentioned the personal achievements attained by many ringers, be it mastering the basics of bell control through to achieving Quarters and Peal milestones. He thanked the Officers and Members for their support during the past year, and also thanked the towers and local ringers where we held events for their welcome and hospitality. Andrew thanked Mo for her service to the District for many years, in particular in her role as Deputy Master from 1998 to 2003 and thereafter as Committee Representative.

Secretary/Treasurer Chris Bailey thanked those towers that had responded to the request to host District events. A copy of the District Income and Expenditure details was circulated. North Ockendon had kindly donated a splendid trophy for the Call Change Competition and officially donated it to the District at this meeting. Phil Harrison expressed the thanks of the District for the generous gift.

### District Officers for 2006:

Master:	Andrew Beech	☎ 01708 440939	☪
	andrewbeech@supanet.com		
Deputy Master:	Phil Harrison	☎ 01702 711193	
Secretary/Treasurer:	Chris Bailey	☎ 01277 226614	☪
	cmb@pway.wanadoo.co.uk		
Committee Rep.:	Lyn Benson	☎ 01245 400468	
Education Officer:	Steve Hunter	☎ 01268 767948	

### Election of New Members

Ringling Members. The following were proposed and unanimously elected to membership:

From Basildon: Lawrence Harris

From Downham: Megan Allen (Junior member), Gareth Bayard (Junior member), Cynthia Costello,

Jean Mugridge

From Great Wakering: Carolyn-Jayne Vincent

From Rayleigh: S. R. Croucher, Sarah Pye

From Prittlewell: Sally Browne, Deborah Coady, Anne Porter, Paul Southward

Two nominations for Life Membership had been received: Maurice Downs of Rayne (Proposed by Terry Earle, Seconded by Peter Wood) and Peter Sloman of Prittlewell (Proposed by Bernard Sadler, Seconded by Cathryn Corns). The Master read out the proposals to the meeting.

**The 2006 District programme** was circulated and is attached to this newsletter.

### **Any Other Business.**

Stephen Nash (Association Master) urged members to apply for the Essex Ringing Course (6th to 8th April). Andrew Beech added that full details were on page 6 of the December issue of Rounds and About and that junior members benefit from a £10 reduction on the course fee. Stephen Nash also congratulated Basildon on hosting its first District event and it was good to see that they were growing in number and ability.

The Master thanked the Rev. Esther McCafferty for taking the Service, Michael Lowe for playing the organ and the Basildon Ringers for the use of the bells and for providing a splendid hot tea. The Service Collection raised £85.91, the profit from Teas donated by the Basildon Ringers, was £61.00, the profit from the raffle was £55.00.

## NOTICES

### Message from Chris Bailey (District Secretary):

Subscriptions are now due ! Please consider completing a Gift Aid Declaration Form - some members still have Covenants in place which cease when the member attains 65 years of age whereas the Gift Aid declaration has no age limit and applies to any donation made to the Association, not just the subscription. I have plenty of forms for those who are interested.

Chris



A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of PATRICK W. SALTMARSH will be held at St. John the Baptist Church, Danbury on Saturday 11th March 2006 at 2.00pm. Ringing from 1.00pm.



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  
 April, 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>			
Saturday 18 March	DISTRICT MEETING	Hutton (5)	3.30 pm
Thursday 6 April	Essex Ringing Course	Coggeshall	6,7,8 April
Saturday 22 April	CONSOLIDATION TRAINING DAY	tbc	3.00-5.00 pm
Monday 1 May	Association AGM - Chelmsford	Ringing 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	tbc	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 Preceded by Call Change Competition	Downham (6)	2.30 pm (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
<b><u>PLEASE NOTE:</u></b>			

**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.

## **Consolidation Training Day**

**Saturday 22nd April 2006**

If you would like to consolidate your knowledge on a particular topic or method please contact Steve Hunter, the district's Education Officer on 01268-767948.

This event will be a two-hour session mid afternoon from 3:00pm to 5:00pm, and is for consolidation rather than learning something new.

Helpers will be needed as well so if you will be available to help please also contact Steve.

So, if you want to consolidate – let us know sooner rather than later.

## **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 fulfil 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.

The Essex Association of Change Ringers  
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