



NEWSLETTER

NEXT EVENTS

DISTRICT SURPRISE PRACTICE

Thursday 17 May SOUTH WEALD 7.30pm

STRIKING COMPETITION

Saturday 23 May EASTWOOD 5pm

DISTRICT PRACTICE

Thursday 27 May BRENTWOOD 7.30pm

DISTRICT OUTING

Saturday 11 June Cambridgeshire 9.15am start



St Peter & St Paul – Grays

The tower was added to the original church building in the early 13th Century and has gone through many changes in design after various storms have damaged the structure until it reached its current design in 1846. The current ring of 8 bells was installed into the tower in 1985. The bells came from a variety of sources: the treble (3cwt, 1qrs 7lbs) came from the original church; the other two bells and two of the clock bells from the old Co-op building in Grays were recast to form numbers 2 & 3; the redundant church of St James West Tilbury provided the 3, 4 and 5; and bells from the redundant St Clements of West Thurrock (this church was used in the film *Four Weddings & A Funeral*) made up the 6, 7 & the tenor (10cwt 3qrs 16lbs).

There has been no regular band in place to ring the bells since 2000; ringing has only taken place for special occasions and weddings. A new band of 5 was formed recently comprising mainly new ringers; we are going through a steep learning curve but one that we are very much enjoying! We have 2 new trainees currently learning at Laindon Hills and Fobbing under the tutorage of Gordon Lucas and Andy Martin and it is hoped they will shortly join the rest of us. We are very grateful to all those who have given their time to train and help us. If any experienced ringers would like to assist us with our ringing, you would be most welcome to come to practice nights on Mondays between 19:30 – 21:00 (not Bank Holidays).

Simon Ward, Tower Captain

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DISTRICT OUTING

Make sure you have Saturday June 11th booked in your diaries for the District outing to Cambridgeshire. Ely St Mary is now confirmed for late morning, and will be followed by a 2 hour lunch break to give people a chance to explore the city and the Cathedral. Other towers are: Longstanton (confirmed – others still to be confirmed), Cottenham, Soham, Burwell and Bottisham. Full details will be sent out nearer the date. Last year 40 of us enjoyed the district outing; it would be really good to see a similar number this year. Please let Alison or John if you are planning to come by May 31st.

SURPRISE PRACTICE

The next surprise practice is at South Weald on Thursday 17 May, 7.30pm. The clever ones will be attempting touches of 8-spliced, where as there will be lots of opportunities for mere mortals to ring. If you want to stretch your ringing to surprise, do come along.

Quiz night

(by Bentley Ringers)

Friday July 8th
at the Fane Hall Kelvedon Hatch

7pm for 7:30 start.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles.
Tables of 8.

To book your place contact
Rowena Marshall 01277 222814
or email
rowenamarshall@hotmail.co.uk

Frank Southwood

(26th February 1932 – 8th April 2011)

Frank died in hospital following a car accident a few days earlier.

He was born in the Sidmouth area of Devon which is where he first learnt to ring at his local church in Sidbury. He often told the story that when as a child he lived with his family in a cottage very near to the church and when revising for school examinations, the sound of the bells through the open window made him want to try and learn to ring. The interest shown then developed into a ringing career lasting 65 years. He spoke often about the towers in which he had rung and his experiences bell ringing while in the RAF and other places where he later lived. At the time of writing, we do not have any of his ringing achievements such as Peals or Quarter Peals but feel sure that they must exist.

Before transferring to St. Thomas's, Brentwood, in the mid-1990s, Frank attended St. Paul's, Bentley Common where he was Church Warden for several years including the period in which the church hall was built and dedicated. He was also in post during the Interregnum in the early 1990s. In addition to his parochial duties, he was leader of the choir and a regular ringer. His name appears on several Peal Boards in the Bentley Ringing Room.

As a member of the Brentwood band, Frank was always "Mr. Reliable". He rarely missed a practice night or Service ring and always put himself out to ring for other special occasions. He was a fund of jokes and had the gift of being able to tell a good story. On tower Open Days he was a "natural" to have in the Ringing Room or Belfry explaining the ins and outs of bell ringing to our visitors.

Frank's other passion was archery, a sport he also learnt down in Devon. In the early years he actually made his own bow and arrows! On moving to Brentwood in the 1970s he was initially a member at Hutton Archers before joining Holdens Archers where he remains the holder of several Club records for longbow shooting. He was a member of the British Longbow Society and a Level 1 archery coach, skills he used to teach many club learners and boys at Brentwood School.

Above all Frank was a family man and had been married to Nancy for well over 40 years. He had two daughters and a son and several grandchildren all of whom he was very proud of. Frank worked in the printing industry as trained compositor and proof reader and as such he was meticulous about detail and expected high standards.

In researching this short obituary, several words and phrases kept cropping up from many people – 'a real gentleman', 'a lovely man', 'reliable', 'well respected', 'a man of strong faith', 'someone who lifted peoples spirits', 'a friendly face'. All of these words only go some way to describe someone whose fellowship and friendship we will greatly miss.

Chris Bailey

(Tower Captain, Brentwood)

The photo shows Frank at one of the Brentwood Tower fund-raising Teddy Bears' parachute jumps.



Quarter peal fortnight



June 12th–26th

A final reminder that the quarter peal fortnight starts on June 12th. I hope you are all planning what you want to try to achieve during that time. Please let me know, especially if you need any help. I can't do anything if I don't know!

Don't forget, the aim is to get at least one quarter peal rung in every tower in our district, so if your tower can't manage that by themselves, there are other people willing to help you out or ring one for you!
Just let me know!

Contact Rowena Marshal
on 01277 222814 or
rowenamarshall@hotmail.co.uk
Rowena Marshall,
Bentley Common

NEWSLETTERS

Please send any and all reports, pictures, notices etc., to Beth Johnson at bethjohnson6710@gmail.com, Tel: 01277 205102 or post to 67 London Road Brentwood CM14 4NN.

End August - copy 15 August

End Oct - copy 15 Oct

End of Dec - copy 15 Dec

Distribution

A newsletter is circulated two weeks before each business meeting. Copies are sent to tower correspondents, preferably by email. If you receive a copy by email on behalf of your tower, please confirm receipt to Beth so we know each tower has at least one copy. Any member may request his or her own copy via email by contacting Beth.

HELPERS WANTED! HELPERS WANTED! HELPERS WANTED! HELPERS WANTED!

Essex Country Show, Barleylands -
Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th September 2011

The format for the show will follow the same pattern as it did last year, so if you have read my articles about previous shows, you will know the kind of thing I need your help with. I have arranged to borrow the Suffolk Guild Mini Ring and a set of handbells so that visitors can try their hand at 'lapping', and I will put on a small exhibition.

We really need at least twelve people to help across the weekend, with demonstrations on the mini ring, supervising handbell sessions and taking note of any interest in taking up ringing as a hobby.

If you can help at the show on either the Saturday or Sunday, between 9.30-12.30 and 1.30-5.30, please contact either myself on 01255-507357 or Alison Nash on 01268-490061. Alternatively, please drop either one of us an email. It would be great if you could get in touch as soon as possible.

Tracey Southgate Public Relations Officer

Basildon Events

Sunday May 1st: Basildon Tower's first open afternoon of 2011: 2pm to 4pm. All welcome. Cream Teas in Church.

Saturday May 14th: St Martin's Church, Basildon Spring Fayre 10.30am to 2.30pm. Bell-tower open to visitors. Climb up to the bells, have a go, learn the basics of ringing. All welcome. If you know of anyone who would like to have a go at ringing church bells but is afraid to visit your tower, bring them to Basildon on May 14th. We are especially geared up for novices and along with the many other visitors from the fete, they will not feel out of place or intimidated.

Basildon Tower Open Afternoons will continue on the first Saturday of the month throughout the Summer: June 4th; July 2nd; August 6th; September 3rd; and October 1st.

Basildon Tower has also applied to be part of the **London 2012 Discovering Places Weekend**; this is an annual event leading up to 2012 and this year is on the weekend of July 22nd - July 24th 2011. If any other towers in the district would like to register for this event, we did it last year and can help.

Roger Hobson, 07836 310109

Striking competition

The Striking Competition this year is being hosted by Eastwood on Saturday 21st May. Don't feel that you can't enter unless you're the best in the district - it's an opportunity for all bands to try their best, and to get some feed back from the judges. You need to ring 240 changes of any method and you can either ring doubles with the tenor behind or minor. The choice of method does not affect your chances of success.

The draw is at 5pm prompt. Names for teas to Peter Knight on 01702 551906 by Wednesday 18th May, please.

Why don't you come along? The more the merrier!

GREAT WAKERING MAKES A PROMISE

Great Wakering ringers offered up a quarter peal as their contribution to an Auction of Promises held to raise money for St. Nicholas church and this was bought by our churchwarden Marion Lewis.

26th April 2011 - 1260 Plain Bob Doubles in 40 mins

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Judy Rolfe | 4 - Mo Venus |
| 2 - Sally Baskett | 5 - Phil Harrison (c) |
| 3 - Tim Baskett | 6 - Paul Southward |

An 80th birthday compliment to Winston Lewis from his wife Marion Lewis.

left-right: Mo Venus, Sally Baskett, Marion Lewis, Paul Southward, birthday boy Winston Lewis (seated), Tim Baskett, Judy Rolfe, Phil Harrison



PRITTLEWELL'S DIAMOND COUPLE

Saturday 12 March 2011 was a special day for Bernard and Jose Sadler of Prittlewell. It was the day they renewed their wedding vows and had their marriage blessed at St. Mary the Virgin, Prittlewell, the same church in which they married some 60 years previous.

A large gathering of family and friends were in attendance to witness this solemn occasion. Prior to the service, a quarter peal of Plain Bob Royal was rung on the recently installed new ring of 10, this being only the second quarter rung on the new bells, and the first of Royal.

Details as follows:

1260 Plain Bob Royal

- | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. John Grainger | 2. Lawrence Beal | 3. David Field | 4. Allen Cansdale | 5. Peter Sloman |
| 6. Tom Sharp | 7. Stephen Halliwell | 8. Gerry Bacon | 9. Oliver Cross | 10. David Sloman (c). |

Following the obligatory picture taking after the service, we then headed to the church hall at Christ Church, Thorpe Bay, where a sumptuous afternoon tea awaited for all the invited guests.

One of the highlights of the day was meeting up with so many old ringing friends, who, under the care of Bernard and Jose, spent their formative years under their care and protection. Amongst the many photographs taken on this memorable day, was a picture of the ringers who were associated with them in the late 1950's and early 1960's. We wish them well for a long and continuing happy life together, and thank them for all their kindness over many years.

With thanks to Gerry Bacon



From left to right, Stephen Halliwell, Peter Sloman, Jen Watts (nee Emms), Gerry Bacon, Jose and Bernard Sadler, Christine Moles (nee Lewis), David Sloman, Penny Sloman (nee Halliwell) and Janet Gasson (nee Rowe).

The Ringing World Centenary Celebrations

The Ringing World, the ringer's weekly journal and affectionately known as "The Comic", celebrated its 100th anniversary recently. 100 years after John Goldsmith published the first edition on 24th March 1911, the current board of directors planned a day of celebrations in London on Saturday, March 26th. This is a personal account of my day.

My day started by catching the 8:37 train from Billericay, where I bumped into Peter, David and Penny Sloman (Prittlewell), and Marion Squier (Canewdon). During the morning many towers all around London were open, along with tours of the Whitechapel bell foundry and guided walking tours of the City. There was also the first ever National Youth Striking Competition, which was held at Pimlico and Essex was represented by a band from the south-east district.

OFF TO ST PAUL'S...

While the Sloman's and Marion went off to meet their City tour guide, I made off down Bishopsgate on my way to a special event. A draw had been organised for a chance to ring at St Paul's Cathedral, and I was one of the lucky 20. I'd heard various stories about the ring of 12 bells; their weight (the tenor weighs 61 cwt), the long draft, the boxes varying from a few inches for the trebles through to 4 foot for the tenor, as well as the history and prestige of the tower. After a nerve settling coffee in the crypt I met up with the rest of the victors, along with a number of members of the St Pauls' Guild, who were all very friendly and put us at our ease. Just before 10:30am we started our ascent up to the bells, first climbing the south-west tower before crossing over to the north-west tower; we had an amazing view of the nave, and also went through a vestments workshop and a graveyard for old pulpits!

Eventually we got to the ringing chamber – it was smaller than I expected and relatively modest compared to the rest of the Cathedral. I saw all the boxes, and noticed all the historic peals painted on to the walls. John Cousins had asked me to look for his late father's name, and I found it on a marble tablet listing deceased members of the Guild. Before we were allowed to ring on the 12, we were all asked to ring a few rounds on the middle 6 to make sure we could handle the bells; this also helped to calm nerves. Having passed this test, I was allowed to ring on the 12! I had several rings, including a course of Stedman Cinques and ringing the 10th (30 cwt) to call changes.

We were also taken up to see the bells; even with ear defenders the sound was deafening and you could feel the tower shake every time the tenor sounded. The views of London were also pretty amazing!

...AND THEN THE ABBEY

Eventually it was time to go, and I then went off to "grab" St Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield; the 5 cwt anti-clockwise 5 brought me back down to earth! I also had the quickest of rings at St Katherine Cree in Leadenhall Street, before heading off to Westminster. The main event of the day was a special Ringing World celebratory choral evensong at The Abbey. Before the service I met up with my sister, Pat, and her husband, Ian, in the Dean's Yard, where Taylors had set up a beer tent. At this much-needed refreshment I bumped into many old ringing friends, as well as various ringers from Essex. There were many famous ringers standing around, and it was fun trying to put names to people you normally only see in the comic. Writing this two weeks after the event it's sad that one of the well-known ringers I recognised was Rod Pipe from Birmingham, who died suddenly on April 1st.

By 3 pm the Abbey was full with more than 2,000 ringers and the service started. The Abbey choir sounded amazing, and the address was given by the Dean. I couldn't escape the history of the building, as I was sitting close by statues of William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli. After the service the Abbey bells rang out; there had been



another draw for a chance to ring at The Abbey (even more difficult to get a ring at than St Paul's), and Paul Cammiade from Downham was one of the lucky 30 to ring there.

HAND BELLS AND TEA

We all walked over to the Methodist Central Hall for tea, carefully minding the hordes of police who were on standby for the massive TUC march going on at the same time. Time to catch up with old friends again, and then we were treated to a world record breaking performance of change ringing on 24 handbells. The music was amazing, and the room erupted with applause when it ended (I have found this recording on the internet http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx_cTkvpqbk). The results of the youth striking competition were then given out; it was won by Hertfordshire, with the Essex band coming a very creditable 4th in the call change category.

It was then time to leave the Central Hall and head back to the City for some more ringing. We got to ring on the 12s at St Mary le Bow in Cheapside, and St Giles, Cripplegate in the Barbican.

All too quickly the day was over and it was time to say goodbye to Pat and Ian, and walk back to Liverpool Street. This will be a day that will live long in my memory, and I hope generations to come will be able to celebrate future anniversaries of The Ringing World.

John Harpole

MINUTES

District Meeting at Bentley Common Saturday 19th March 2011

1. Welcome and Thanks

The Master welcomed all present. We had one visitor earlier on in the day – John Everett from Boreham.

The Master thanked the Rev. Mark James for taking the service and for the use of the bells, the organist Alan Ball, and to the Bentley Common ringers for the wonderful tea.

The service touch was a Plain Course of London and was rung by John Harpole, John Cousins, Stephen Nash, Simon Greenwood, Maria Jorysz, and Paul Truman.

2. Sign the Roll Book

The Master invited everyone to sign the roll book and to indicate on the sheet provided those who had been asked to record apologies for absence.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held at Thorpe Bay on 22nd January 2011 were printed in the March 2011 District Newsletter and circulated at the meeting. There was one alteration to the Minutes. In Any Other Business – Ray Jones reported September 2011 would be the centenary of Shenfield bells. Subsequent information received has revealed that the bells were dedicated on 23rd December 1911. As the Minutes had been reworded already they were signed as a true copy.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

An email has been received from Tracey Southgate, PRO, concerning the Royal Wedding. If anyone is ringing for the Royal Wedding, be it a peal, quarter peal or just ringing in general could they let her know as she is hoping to compile a commemorate booklet to send to the royal couple.

A further email was received from Tracy Southgate concerning "Essex Ringing - London 2012". "The general idea is to challenge visitors to try something they have never done before. It would be an excellent opportunity to promote bell ringing by opening towers on Saturday 23rd July, 10am to 1pm and on Sunday 24th July, 2pm to 5pm." If towers would like to take part please contact her direct.

An email has been received from Fred Bone, Webmaster, which had been discussed at the Executive Committee Meeting in February, in which he requested if any tower/tower correspondent wished to have an email address inserted onto the Essex Association Website, please contact him direct.

6. Election of New Members

(a) The following new ringing members were elected to the Association:

John Merivale (Holy Cross, South Ockendon, Catholic Church) proposed by Simon Greenwood, seconded by Philip Denton.

Catherine Merivale (Holy Cross, South Ockendon, Catholic Church) proposed by Simon Greenwood, seconded by Philip Denton.

Clare Merivale (Holy Cross, South Ockendon, Catholic Church) proposed by Simon Greenwood, seconded by Philip Denton.

Liam O'Sullivan (Holy Cross, South Ockendon, Catholic Church) proposed by Simon Greenwood, seconded by Philip Denton.

Anna Biddulph (Bentley Common) proposed by Rowena Marshall, seconded by John Cousins.

(b) There were no Friend members of the Association elected.

(c) There were no non-resident members of the Association elected.

7. District Programme for 2011

The Master ran through the District Programme for 2011:

The District Training Day on 2nd April is being held at Downham from 10am to 3pm. The day will consist of Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire both moving on from plain courses. If you can volunteer to be a helper for the morning or afternoon sessions, or all day please contact Cathryn Corns.

Our Quarter Peal Fortnight is from 12th - 26th June. As stated in the March Newsletter, please forward details to Rowena Marshall. If you cannot provide a full band and need an extra ringer(s), please let her know. Alternatively, if you are willing to ring in other quarters, again, please let Rowena know.

The District Outing is on 11th June to Cambridgeshire. Please place this date in your diary.

21st May is the (Method) Striking Competition which is to be held at Eastwood.

The Essex Country Show is being held at Barleylands on 10th and 11th September. The arrangements for the day are similar to last year. Tracey Southgate, PRO, has arranged a mini ring for the two days and there will also be handbell sessions. Each mini ring session is 9.30-12.30pm and then 1.30-5.30pm. Any help you can give will be much appreciated. Admission to the show will be free of charge for those helping and a car parking pass will also be available.

The next District Surprise Practice is on 19th May at South Weald. The next District Evening Practice at Brentwood is on 26th May.

The next District Meeting will be at Prittlewell on 17th September, 3pm start.

Stephen Nash reminded the meeting there is a Child Protection Course on Saturday 2nd April, 9.30 to 12.30pm, at Writtle and Jean Halliday, the Diocese Child Protection Officer, will be the speaker.

8. Apologies for Absence

There were 11 apologies for absence. These can be seen in the Attendance Record.

9. Any Other Business

Peter Knight advised it is Eastwood's 25th anniversary since the bells were installed in April 1986. The bells were first rung on 21st April 1986 and they were dedicated in October of the same year.

The Essex Course is on 14th-16th April. Three students are attending from our District and there are also three tutors, namely Stephen Nash, John Harpole and Andy Martin. All levels of helpers are always needed so if you can help on any part of the course please contact Janet Edwards on 01376 573412.

The Annual General Meeting held in Chelmsford Cathedral is on Monday 2nd May 2011. The proposed new rules will be voted on. The ringing starts at 9.30am and the afternoon ringing and tea is in the North West district.

Holy Cross, South Ockendon, Catholic Church, bells are due to be installed the first week of September 2011.

Thank you once again to Beth Johnson for producing such a very good newsletter. Congratulations to Ann and Brian Beech, North Ockendon, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. The next newsletter is due out the end of April. Any material – anniversaries, birthdays, outings, etc. will be gratefully received.

The service collection was £27

Profit from Teas was £57

Profit from Raffle was £34

The meeting closed with the raffle.