



Awl a'huld

Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 23

Summer 2017



St Margaret's, Ipswich. See back page.

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The Guild Social Event

The South East district is looking forward to hosting the 2017 Guild social event. On Saturday 16th September we're organising a Barn Dance. Yes, it's time to dust off that 'hand-me-down-my-can-of-beans' checked shirt (let's admit it, we all have one!), pull on your jeans, don your dancing boots and enjoy the hoe-down – yee-ha! It really doesn't matter if you don't want to wear the gear or even dance; it's a great opportunity to socialise with ringers and friends from across the county. Sproughton's exceptional Tithe Barn is ideally located just off the A14 and is a wonderful 17th century Grade II listed building – there's plenty of room to sit down, stand and chat or dance. There's even a challenge for ringers: find the timbers in the barn that used to be the bell frame until the mid 80's when they were repurposed to replace some rotten timbers! The dance itself will be led by the renowned group 'Inertia Reel'. There'll be a bar (with real ale) open until 10:30pm and your ticket includes a fish and chip supper, served between 8:30 and 9pm. There may also be some surprise additional entertainment whilst you are consuming your supper. Sproughton's bells will be available from 6pm if you fancy a ring before the dance. It'll be great to have the bells welcoming people to the Barn Dance. There is no parking at the Barn itself, but it is available along Church Lane. Get your tickets soon – don't miss out on the social event of the year.
Ralph Earey

From the Editors

Not much room for us this issue, thanks to all the contributions to the magazine that we have received. Please keep them coming in; more photographs would be good. Copy for the next issue by the end of October at the very latest, please, to magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk or by post to Sue Freeman, High Meadow, Martens Lane, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5AG. Just space to remind you of four dates for your diary:

- August 28th Bank Holiday Monday SW District Open Towers
- Friday 15th September in the evening: presentation of the Dorothy Sayers Award to Carmen Wright at Thornham Magna. (See page 12)
- Saturday 16th September Guild Social Event (See above)
- Friday 29th September Cretingham Peace Bell fundraiser (See page 11)

Sue Freeman and Richard Gates

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From the Chairman

What a different story it is this year when we look back over the proceedings of our Guild AGM. No criticism of the 2016 event is intended here but it is certainly true that there were lessons to be learnt, and the North East District did so admirably, with an excellent event. It's a signal of poor continuity that these lessons were not learnt before 2017 as they had all become apparent in the past to a greater or lesser extent.



Attendance at the AGM was encouraging if not good, with a number of normal attendees being kept away by ringing commitments. Many organisations would be happy to have a hundred members present at an AGM but in some respects a turnout representing one in seven members is disappointing given the organisational efforts expended.

The important rule changes proposed by the General Management Committee were voted in with good majorities. These were changes relating to improved governance and clarification of member election processes. As a Guild we have made enormous progress over the years with improvements to the way we do things and with openness and transparency, but we must not let up. If we are to attract new members and especially if we are to attract new members from younger age groups it is essential that against the background of our enduring tradition we present a modern approach. Enjoy the summer; enjoy your ringing.

Alan Stanley



News from the North West

The February meeting of the North West District was held at Bardwell, and a successful quarter peal of Lincolnshire Surprise Major was rung before the practice. While the bells were ringing, the church was a hive of activity as Laura Davies was holding a coffee and cake morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support and bellringers from near and far turned out to generously support this cause and Laura's plan to go on the London to Paris cycle ride.



Over £400 was raised, and a good morning of ringing and friendship was had as well. Laura says, 'I'd like to thank everyone for their contribution to this. I'm thrilled to have raised so much money for such a good cause'.

Since then Laura has undertaken the London to Paris cycle ride in aid of this charity and raised more money.

Ruth Suggett



Bardwell ringers in London

The sign over the entrance to the Whitechapel Foundry tells us that it has been making church bells since 1570, and before then under another name. This makes it the oldest manufacturing business in Great Britain. Sadly, it has now closed so the Bardwell bellringers' visit there in early March was extra special.

In the unbelievably small confines of the site, we were taken through the whole process of bell manufacture. We learned how they make the moulds and then cast the bells in bronze, a mixture of tin and copper with a high proportion of tin to make the bronze harder, which gives the bells a better sound. Every bell is tuned to several frequencies, usually five, on a tuning lathe. It is clearly a skilled job and takes about a day of trial and error to get it right. Next door was the area where the bells are finished and fitted with their clappers and hanging accessories. There was a good collection of bells on view ready for despatch - three were bound for Bangkok! To overcome space problems, a large pit has been dug to enable large bells to be cast. The largest and most famous of these must be Big Ben in 1858.

The tour concluded with a look at handbells, which accounts for 25% of Whitechapel's business. It was altogether an entertaining and fascinating tour.

After this cracking start to the day, we headed to the Mayflower pub in Rotherhithe on the south side of the River Thames for lunch. This was a great choice of pub: we had a room reserved for our exclusive use and this combined with excellent food, a nice pint of IPA, a great atmosphere and plenty of chat made it really special.

This was where the Mayflower ship was moored and where it started its journey to the New World with the Pilgrim Fathers. Captain Christopher Jones lived in Rotherhithe and was part owner of the Mayflower which, up until July 1620, when it started on its voyage to the New World, had plied its trade around Europe mostly carrying wine. The trip to America was a big step for them and took its toll: Captain Jones only survived another couple of years due to the ill health he suffered during the voyage. We found the blue plaque commemorating Captain Jones on St Mary's Church opposite the pub, where the next leg of our journey took us.

We had arranged to ring at St Mary's church, Rotherhithe – a nice ring of eight similar to our own ring at Bardwell. The ringing room was roomy and light. To me as a beginner, the bells seemed easy to ring and it felt really good that I could ring as part of a group in a different bell tower.

Next, we went to St Mary's in Bermondsey. Again, it was a nice big ringing room with room for the several non-ringers who came to watch the fun. We had to enter the ringing room through a trap door which had to be closed so the ringer on the tenor bell could stand on it, which explained why it was so heavy. I didn't find these bells so easy to ring initially but everyone else seemed to get the hang of them straight away so it was clearly just me! As a new ringer, I found the whole experience a real buzz and gained lots of confidence from the fact that I could ring in a strange tower and make a good fist of it. Our day concluded with a good laugh when we were accosted by a group of young women on a hen party.

They demanded that one of us proposed to one of the bridesmaids (purely as a joke, we all hoped!) - and so one of our eligible ringers, Nick, obliged. We don't know if he got her phone number!

We were met at St Mary's by our trusty coach and returned to Bardwell arriving home at 7.30pm prompt. A really fantastic day organised to perfection! When's the next one?



Tim Cavell – Rookie Bell Ringer

L to R: Carys Frost, Simon Frost, Nick Vaughan, Teresa Colthorpe, Ruth Young, Graham Colthorpe, Jan Tomlinson, John Ramsbottom, David Ruffles.

From the South West

Congratulations to Penny Rose who rang her first quarter peal on the treble to Plain Bob Doubles on the 25th June. The quarter was dedicated to our grandson Vincent Rose born asleep with the angels on 26th December. We would both like to thank Neville Whittell for arranging this at Kersey. The band was as follows:

Treble	Penny Rose	4	Kate Banks
2	Derek Rose	5	Neville Whittell (C)
3	Pauline Brown	6	Peter Ulph

We say goodbye to Arthur Finch of Long Melford who is moving to Burwell to be nearer to one of his daughters. Arthur has supported the district for many years and been a loyal ringer at Holy Trinity, Long Melford, St Gregory's, Sudbury and All Saints, Acton. His last practice at Long Melford was on 21st June and at St Gregory's on 27th June. Both towers gave him a farewell party and a big thankyou with hugs and kisses.

The district striking competition was held this year at the Blessed Virgin Mary, Woolpit. Four teams entered. The call changes shield was won by Hadleigh, with Rattlesden in second place. The method shield was won by Woolpit, with Kersey the runner up. Congratulations to the winners and a big thank you to the runners up. Our thanks also go to our two judges Winston and Carol Girling, who stepped in at very short notice. Special thanks to Pam and Paul Ebsworth for arranging for us to ring at Woolpit tower and for booking the hall for the tea. As always the teams provided an excellent bring and share tea while Penny Rose made countless cups of tea and coffee. In all a very pleasant afternoon: good weather, good ringing but most of all very good company.

Derek Rose SW District Ringing Master

The South West Training Session (handling style and confidence for teachers) at Woolpit on 3rd June was on tied bells. Tutors: Pam and Paul Ebsworth.

Teacher: Derek Rose. Ringers: Penny Rose and Alex Brett-Holt.

Each person had their handling observed by the whole group (using ART Learning the Ropes assessment) and also watched themselves on video. Tutors and learners all found something to work on!!!

After a break we worked on handling improvements and also tried the following:

- Effects of shortening and lengthening the backstroke
- Setting the bell at backstroke 10 times
- Ringing without touching the sally
- Taking a rope from another ringer while a bell is in motion
- Regaining control of a dropped and moving rope. Paul demonstrated this but there were no volunteers!

We thought that it would be a good idea to hold a training session at Woolpit once a quarter, with September being another handling session for people who couldn't attend in June.

Pam Ebsworth

From the North East - A Birthday Quarter Peal

We recently had the pleasure of ringing a quarter peal for the 90th birthday of Heather Phillips at Wenhaston. Having been approached by a local couple and friends of Heather earlier in the year, we were asked to gather a band to ring specifically for this prominent member of the village and to make sure that we kept arrangements secret from her.

As a small girl, Heather was always told by her parents that the bells rang for her on her birthday, but it was only when King George V died that the truth came out. Fortunately, Heather continued to love the sound of bells even though she now understood that they were not ringing for her personally and it was an honour to gather with five others on her birthday this year and ring for her properly.



We had been informed beforehand that there would be a few people who wanted to sit and listen in the church, including the birthday girl herself. What we didn't expect as the band gathered was a full on party - tables set out with canapes, Pimms and strawberries

and a good-sized birthday cake set on

another table by itself - with approximately 30 people milling in and out to enjoy the hot weather whilst we rang. A little off-putting? Certainly, but we made it through.

As we were plied afterwards with glasses of Pimms and cake, we calculated that perhaps there were some benefits to ringing in a noisy and distracting environment after all. What we didn't realise was the longer term publicity that would come from the event: we have been stopped in the street several times since by appreciative villagers saying how much they love the bells, we received compliments on the standard of the ringing that afternoon, there has even been a donation made to the bell fund which makes replacement ropes achievable now. Coupled with being the centre page, double spread article of the local village magazine, we have found ourselves to be quite the stars!

Many thanks to Hilary, Mike, Philip M, Philip G and Ed for making it possible.

Michelle Rolph



On Saturday, 3 June 2017 in 42 min

Wenhaston, Suffolk

St Peter

Tenor: 12-0-6 in F#

1290 Doubles (5m)

330 Grandsire, 240 each Rev Canterbury, St Simon's, St Martin's, Plain Bob

- 1 Hilary Stearn
- 2 Mike Cowling
- 3 Michelle Rolph
- 4 Philip Moyse
- 5 Philip Gorrod (C)
- 6 Ed Rolph

90th birthday compliment to Heather Phillips. When she was young Heather's parents told her that the bells always rang for her birthday, and only when George V died did the truth come out. But today they DID ring for her.

Pettistree Bells at 30

Yes, it really is thirty years since the bells at Pettistree were rededicated, having been silent for more than 40 years. It was a wonderful weekend of celebrations in 1986. The church hosted a concert on the Saturday evening and on Sunday afternoon Bishop John Dennis rededicated the bells at a packed service. It was 14th December, the culmination of so much hard work undertaken in fundraising, tower restoration, bell hanging and teaching a band to ring.

Mike Whitby had been teaching, along with a good number of loyal helpers, between fifteen and twenty enthusiastic locals. This was a twice weekly commitment for Mike starting six months earlier so locals could ring at the service, which they did

Where are we now? Pettistree is so so lucky that Mike Whitby is still our Ringing Master and, although many of the personnel have changed as the years have rolled by, it is flourishing as a centre of ringing, highly valued for its Wednesday practice night. Mary and Chris Garner are still with the band and others have been part of the team for twenty five years or more.



14th December 2016 fell on a Wednesday. About twenty ringers were at the practice, which was busy as usual with a break for cake and fizz. A small exhibition enabled those present to delve into some recent history and be amused by photos of early outings. Of that original band of learners Mary Garner is Tower Captain and her husband Chris is

Steeple Keeper. Several others have moved away and are still ringing. Of the original Fundraising Committee of three, Jeff Hallett is the only surviving member and we celebrated his 70th birthday on this day too.

Of course the current practice night and Sunday service ringers did much to celebrate the occasion. Saturday 10th was the annual anniversary peal, the quarter on Sunday 11th was included and of course the quarter on the day itself.

SS Peter and Paul, Pettistree
Saturday, 10 December 2016 in 2h37m
5040 Minor (7m)
One extent each: Bourne S., Double Oxford
Bob, Ipswich S., St Clement's College Bob,
Cambridge S., Plain Bob and Norwich S.
1 Suzanne M J Stevens
2 Richard J Munnings
3 Peter W Harper
4 Mary S Garner
5 Katherine J Eagle
6 Michael G Whitby (C)
Rung to celebrate the 30th anniversary of
the re-dedication of the bells: 14th December
1986.

SS Peter and Paul, Pettistree
Sunday, 11 December 2016
1260 Doubles (4m/1p)
1 Chris McArthur
2 Pippa Moss
3 Gill Waterson
4 Mary Garner
5 Mike Whitby (C)
6 Derek Martin
Specially arranged to celebrate the
visit of Bishop Martin to morning
service and with the Pettistree ringers'
best wishes to Mary Hallett for her
40th birthday.

SS Peter and Paul, Pettistree
Wednesday, 14 December 2016
1260 Doubles (5m/1p)
1 Jane Harper
2 Elaine Townsend
3 Mark Ogden
4 Mike Cowling
5 Mike Whitby (C)
6 Chris Garner
Rung to celebrate the 30th anniversary
of the rededication of the bells by some
of the many regular ringers at
Pettistree.

Mary Garner, Tower Captain

Song of the Bluebell Angel

Open wings WELCOME enfold you
Closer, closer NOW in Infinite Joy
Bestowing healing fragrance - the Peace of Serenity
And thus Heaven's bells ring amazing praise
Reason's Bright Resonance sharing Heaven's gaze
Neither young nor old
Outside of time
To the Awakened Soul
All Is Sublime
Amidst Life's manifold fleeting changes... the Universe rings true
The Ring of Eternal Spirit we give to you
The Kiss - Circle of Comprehensive Delight, where
Being Aware of Eternal Day - there is no night
Live to Love
The Only Law
The Law of Eternal Life
To Give

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Commemorative Peal for 1st World War Soldier

Edward George Cooper was born in Pettistree in the summer of 1885 and was baptised at Pettistree Church on 27th September 1885. He was brought up at Cooper's Cottage in Stump Street by his grandparents John and Jane Cooper. By 1901, aged 15/16, he was a telegraph messenger. Early in 1909 he married Elsie May Moore, born in Framlingham in 1888. They lived in Woodbridge where he was a postman. Their first child, Frederick John was born in the summer of 1910, and their third, George, early in 1915.

E. George was still listed as a Pettistree ringer when he went to war. He enlisted at Bury St Edmunds and served in the Middlesex Regiment at the Battle of the Somme, losing his life on the last day, 17th November 1916.

It was written in the 'Woodbridge Reporter' that 'Mrs. E. George Cooper, of 14, Brook Street, was officially notified in January, 1918, that her husband, Private E. George Cooper, who had been posted 'missing' since November 17th, 1916, had been assumed to have been killed on that date. He left a widow with three young children under nine years of age.'

He is commemorated on both the Thiepval Memorial in France and the Woodbridge War Memorial.

The Pettistree Bellringers marked the hundred year anniversary of his death with a peal on 17th November 2016. The details are listed below:

Suffolk Guild of Ringers
SS Peter and Paul, Pettistree
Thursday 17 November 2016 in 2h38m
5040 Surprise Minor
One extent each: York, Durham, Surfleet, Ipswich, Bourne, Cambridge and
Norwich.

1 David I Stanford
2 Mary S Garner
3 P Mark Ogden
4 Peter W Harper
5 David G Salter
6 Michael G Whitby (C)

Mary Garner Tower Captain

Charity Golf Day



at Seckford Golf Club

on Friday 29th September 2017

TEAMS of 4: men, ladies or mixed

From 1pm

18 Hole Stableford competition
2 best scores per hole to count
all scores on par 3's

Followed by a 2-course meal

Team Prizes
plus other prizes around the course
£35 per person

Entry closes **14 September 2017**
Further information please contact: Carol Brown
tel: 01728 685520 email: caric@tesco.net

Bring a partner or
friend to learn to play
Professional Tuition
for approx. 2 hours
Equipment provided
Food as for Golfers
£28



To raise funds for The Cretingham Peace Bell project

In 2014 the country remembered the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War. Cretingham has decided to commemorate the centenary of the end of that War by having a special bell cast for its Church tower. It will be dedicated to "Ring Out For Peace" on Remembrance Sunday 11th November 2018. Funds are still needed to update the fittings of the five existing medieval bells at this time so that we will have an upgraded ring of 6 bells that should last well into the next century.

It is also hoped that the ancient art and science of Campanology will be encouraged and preserved by teaching a new band of ringers. PLEASE SUPPORT US

The Friends of St Peters Charity No. 1061885



The Ladies' Guild of Change Ringers

The Dorothy L Sayers Young Lady Ringer of the Year Award is open to Ladies' Guild members under the age of 18. Applicants are invited from all the districts of the Guild and must be supported by the secretary of that district. The applicant must write no more than 300 words saying why she enjoys belonging to the Ladies' Guild and why she would like to attend a Training Course such as Hereford or Bradfield.

Betty Baines of the Eastern District is very pleased to write:

The Dorothy L. Sayers award has been won by Suffolk ringer Carmen Wright of Yaxley. Carmen started ringing in June 2013 at the age of 9, with the aid of several boxes. She accompanied her mother Zoe to the Thornham Magna practices, where they both learned together, taught by Sylvie Fawcett. They were both enrolled in the 'Learning the Ropes' progressive learning scheme and Carmen rapidly advanced from level 1, ringing rounds in February 2015, trebling to her first quarter peal in April 2016 for level 3, ringing her first quarter inside to Plain Bob Doubles in January 2017 for level 4, and in two weeks time she will be attempting to ring her first quarter inside to Plain Bob Minor for level 5, which will complete the final stage. In between times, she has rung several quarter peals of doubles, inside, in various methods and has become something of a perfectionist, getting very cross with herself if she makes a mistake. Carmen has a tremendous talent for the art of bell ringing. She is not put off by ringing at new towers and has a special ability to be able to look at the line of a method and go ahead and ring it. Both Carmen and Zoe are valued members of the Ladies' Guild and we hope they will continue to enjoy the challenge of learning more advanced methods and visiting lots more towers within our district and hopefully further afield.

The Dorothy L Sayers award funds a place on a three day training course and the Ladies' Guild will pay for a parent, mentor or chaperone to accompany the winner. This means that Carmen and Zoe will both be able to go on a suitable training course.

Now for an important date for your diaries: the presentation of the Dorothy L Sayers award will take place at Thornham Magna church on Friday, 15th September in the evening.

Boxford Clappers

There is always something to learn and my ringing education has been advanced by learning about clappers.

It began with a survey of the frame and bells in the Boxford tower after which I was advised to get a full inspection, particularly as one of the staples was loose and could not be tightened any further.

So a short time later a bell hanger and assistant arrived from Taylors to make a detailed inspection and produce a report. Taylors were chosen as they had been responsible for the re-hanging of the bells in 1996.

The result of this visit was that we were told the clappers needed to be re-bushed and it transpired also would benefit from the clapper shafts being slimmed down as they were thicker than they needed to be. I have since learnt that the way to check if a clapper needs to be re-bushed is to put your hands under the bottom of the flight and see if the clapper can be lifted vertically upwards. If there is no play then all is well but any movement upwards needs to be carefully looked at.

Taking the clappers out was a relatively simple job and only needed two of us although with a tenor weighing 21 cwt the tenor clapper was not the easiest thing to move round the belfry.

Once delivered to Taylors the work was done within a couple of weeks and the refurbished clappers together with a new wooden shafted tenor clapper were collected and brought back to St. Mary's.



Richard with the new wooden shafted tenor clapper

Putting the clappers back in was a much trickier job. The apparently simple process of pushing the staple up through the bell and headstock requires accuracy and if not properly vertical it needs some jiggling about to find the bolt hole in the headstock. Not very easy with a heavy clapper to manage. With three of us, Steve Tye, Tony Rand and myself we finally managed it.

A few days later Neville Whittell checked and adjusted the staples so that the clappers hung centrally. The work was finished just in time as we had a wedding to ring for a couple of days later and this gave us the first opportunity to hear if the bells were ringing true.

Peter Thomson of Taylors outside the foundry. Steve Tye is wondering if Sue's car will ever be the same again!

Richard Gates

Photo of Richard by Tony Rand

Beginning Conducting 4

Having given you the basics it is now time to look at how to keep it right. There are several systems:

- Controlling by place notation.
- Controlling by lead ends
- Controlling by coursing order

Controlling by place notation is a favourite of handbell ringers who ring by place notation. It is very difficult to do but place notation can give valuable clues as to what happens when. For example do all the bells cross or lay still at a particular row? In Yorkshire, all the bells cross for the first row and bells in 3rds and 8ths lay still for the second row.

Controlling by lead end involves learning the lead ends either by rote or by transposition or simply learning where certain lead ends occur. You can do this for part ends: 23645, 23564, 23456 or for course ends. I know one conductor who can transpose all the lead ends as he goes along. He would tell you that from rounds MBWH gives 42356 just like that but he has been doing it for years. Whilst useful to know where lead ends are they only allow partial control as they only relate to one change. That's one in 24 for Minor or one in 32 for Major not exactly keeping your finger on the pulse.

Controlling by coursing order is by far the most acceptable, the most constructive and most usable system.

Knowing the coursing order and what it should be, tells you exactly what is right and if it is wrong errors can be spotted very quickly. Additionally you should know who is doing what at a call.

I have explained coursing order many times before and there are several good sections in books. Simple transformations, ABC becomes BCA and so on make it very easy to learn and follow. Most methods follow the standard coursing order: 53246 but some have inversions such as Superlative where you go through the standard coursing order 53624. There are other methods where this inversion happens. For example Carlisle: in a plain course you encounter the plain coursing order 53264; that's the normal with the last two bells in reverse order.

Whilst it is very good to transpose coursing orders as you ring you should have points in the composition where you know what the coursing order should be. Easiest to remember are the three 56 courses, 53246, 52436 and 54326. Some conductors name coursing orders to help recollection. Martin Thorley referred to 36452 as Hutton's, 364 being Len Hutton's highest cricket score and 52 the year he was appointed English Captain.

23456 is easily remembered and is sometimes referred to as a poor conductor's coursing order, implying that it is the only sequence they can remember. Then it can be reversed 65432. However you do it, knowing the coursing order is the key to good conducting. It is totally unacceptable to be calling a quarter or peal and not know what the coursing order is at some point. Or worse still, in one piece of ringing, the conductor was asked what the coursing order was, only to ask back, 'What is a coursing order?' Inspires confidence.

The coursing order also tells you which bells will do what at a call. So for a bob wrong 53246 becomes 32546. 4&6 are unaffected. The 5th makes the bob, 3rd runs out and 2nd runs in. This all helps you control what is going on.

Another good example is Kent or Bristol. If you know who is going to make the call they will be seconds place bell the lead before. They are easily spotted on the front. Having left the front a call at the next lead will cause them to make the bob.

Knowing who makes the bob is a good guide where there are multi calls at one position. 3H, 2W and so on. Just learn who makes the last bob.

Whichever system you use to control what is going on will require practice and quite a bit of work but it is worth it in the end.

David Salter

No Firing Here!

On a recent ringing outing we stopped at a church that I knew to have a good peal of 10 bells and a very high winding staircase to the top. I stopped at the bottom of the staircase to let the young and able ringers rush past. When the way was clear I set off and about half way up met one of the local ringers coming down. I had seen him years ago and I stopped for a few words. At this moment the bells pulled off in perfect rounds which were soon followed by the start of surprise royal. The local ringer explained that he had been sent by the church warden to take a new fire extinguisher to the ringing room above, and had to hurry back as there were other jobs to do. We both moved to allow each other to pass on the narrow stairs but still enjoying the sound of the ringing. As he passed me he said, 'You know, I don't think that band up there will have any use for 'firing' extinguishers today!'

Don Price

St. Margaret's, Ipswich.

Standing on St Margaret's Plain outside the medieval boundary of Ipswich and described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'certainly the most spectacular church in Ipswich', St. Margaret's is best approached from the south from where the rich flint and stonework can be viewed at its best. Around the mid 12th century a priory was founded where now stands Christchurch Mansion and close by the Augustinian canons built St. Margaret's to serve the town when the priory church was no longer big enough.

There are many attractions within the church – a magnificent Royal Arms of Charles II at the west end; above the south door the Prince of Wales' Feathers, dated 1660; the much mutilated 15th century font on which angels hold scrolls, now sadly indecipherable; but finest of all is the double hammer beam roof with the late 17th century baroque painted ceiling panels. Look for the WM monogram on the south side and the sad putti on the north panel – painted after Queen Mary died in 1694.

The 17th century box pews were replaced by the current pews in 1846. Each pew end has a different poppy head – can you find the one with a pelican ? Bomb damage in 1940 destroyed much of the Victorian glass which now leaves the church with plenty of interior light via the modern clear glass.

In the mid 18th century there was a musicians' gallery but just over a century later this was removed 'in consequence of the irreverent conduct of individuals who occupied it' ! Current restoration work includes the re-instatement of the gallery to house the band of ringers. There were six bells in 1630 – 1655 (Miles Graye of Colchester); two were added in 1899; all were re-hung in 1958 and the present work will see all eight being hung lower in the tower.



The pelican pew end

John Girt