

## SE Ringing Master Report 2024

One of the things that I absolutely love about ringing is that no matter where you are in the country, there is usually a belfry full of ringers to welcome you with open arms into their tower. In my case, the whole of the South-East District has made being your Ringing Master an absolute pleasure. I'm delighted to have met so many wonderful people and to introduce new members to the vibrant and convivial Guild community.

I've found my year as Ringing Master very similar to our visit to Great Bromley in July - tricky to get into, challenging, but ultimately extremely rewarding and a pleasure to be a part of. I want to give a huge thanks to everyone for your support, encouragement, and patience this year.

Our district practices have encouraged people to do something they've never done before. Whether it is ringing Plain Bob Major at Ipswich St Margaret's in February, or calling April Day at Sproughton in March, I've wanted the district practices to create opportunities for others. There are many ringers who don't get the chance to explore a wider repertoire of skills beyond their usual tower - the district is the perfect venue to try something new with a the benefit of the wonderful camaraderie that comes with it.

One aspect I've been keen to encourage this year is more advanced eight bell ringing. The Surprise Major practices have been a huge success by providing a venue for many ringers to grapple with Cambridge and Yorkshire for the first time. Courses of Bristol, London, Cornwall and Lessness have also made an appearance with the occasional touch of spliced. There is no shortage of eight bell enthusiasm in our district, however (with the *notable* exception of one or two towers) it is tricky to find a regular practice where Surprise Major is regularly rung. Despite this, we were the only band in the Guild 8 bell competition to ring Major (much to the delight of the judges) where we achieved a very respectable third place. Thank you to all those who have been able to support these practices and I hope to continue them in the new year.

Paul and Anne Bray very kindly came to judge the SE District Striking Competition at Clopton in May where Pettistree and Hollesley won the method and call change trophy respectively. Special thanks to Paul and Anne as they also were instrumental in recommending towers for a North-East Essex outing in July and my sincere thanks to other neighbours who have come and supported practices and quarter peals within the district. Being near a border allows ringers to easily play in both backyards to the benefit of both societies - I urge others to cross pollinate if they are able!

Finally, to those members who I have not had the pleasure of meeting this year... I hope to see you at a practice soon, and to hear what we can improve on as a district. Nothing would bring me greater joy than to be the first to congratulate you on doing something new, in a unfamiliar tower, with the best people in Suffolk.

Hal Meakin