

Tower Report 2024 Time for some news!

**Something different our band has achieved/tried together this year [2024]
- social, ringing related, community linked**

Something different our band has achieved/tried together this year [2024] - social

Ashbocking: In June we welcomed back visitors from Tarporley, Cheshire, who continue their tradition of finishing their Suffolk Ringing Holiday with a ring for the service, a group photo by the gate and now refreshments and social time in the garden.

Barham: bellsashen joined in 'Ringing Out for Peace' including firing all 8 bells together [as we were at Henley that week]

Bramford: Looking forward to our Annual Christmas Tower Party

Bredfield: Regular migration to the Village Hall monthly Pop-up Bar after practice!

Campsea Ashe: After the practice most of us go for coffee at the Station house. A great thing to do as gives a chance for conversation outside the tower.

Clopton: A band outing to ring at other local towers

Earl Stonham: Join Debenham for Boosters

East Bergholt: We've all been for brunch twice!

Framlingham: Christmas meal

Henley: Being part of a bellsashen team in both Guild and District Call Change Striking Competitions

Ipswich St Mary le Tower: Entered 2024 National 12 Bell Striking Competition

Ipswich St Matthews: In May we got together and cleaned the tower, which had not been done for many years

Woodbridge: We had a spring 'Spring Ring' to Cambridge where we rang at 3 towers. We held an autumn ringing outing to 2 local towers. We 'Rang the Old Year Out, and the New Year In' followed by a party up the Tower, in 2023

Something different our band has achieved/tried together this year [2024] - ringing related

Ashbocking: Replaced rope on 2nd and stretched new ropes for Henley - amazing how useful it is to have a safe in the ringing chamber!!!!

Barham: Lots of very positive reactions to the Saturday Skill Specific Sessions - Bell Handling, Ring up, Ring down!, Foundation Skills for you! and Plain Hunt

Bramford: Quarter Peals rung and Level 3 achieved by several

Bredfield: Nine ringers for D-Day special ringing, with details submitted to BellBoard. Two new members elected to the Guild, both parishioners.

Campsea Ashe: London has been attempted a few times and once been successful!

Debenham: We continue to try to improve and develop our ringing. Individual challenges vary. Some are learning PB Doubles or moving into triples. Other members have been learning Bristol.

East Bergholt: On a Sunday we let our learner have a silent ring in between our two rings to keep his hand in over the winter.

Falkenham: Enjoyed hosting the Guild 6 bell Striking Competition when a good time [and lunch!] was had by all on a lovely, sunny day.

Felixstowe: Enjoyed hosting the Guild 8 bell Striking Competition when a good time was had by all on a lovely, sunny day.

Framlingham: One outing - visiting different Suffolk towers

Henley: Starting to learn Plain Hunt.

Ipswich St Margarets: What we ring often depends on the abilities of those present but we are attempting to progress from plain doubles methods to more complicated methods - currently learning Rev. Canterbury Doubles, for example and sometimes treble bob

Ipswich St Mary le Tower: Launched initiative for installation of training bells

Otley: We entered the striking competition

Pettistree: Very pleased to be teaching handling to a small number. Proud to be holders of the Guild and District 6 Bell Striking Competition Trophies in the same year for the first time since the band was formed in 1986

Tattingstone: Have had some learners this year. Not the easiest bells for teaching, or indeed, ringing in general

Woodbridge: We have taught 3 new ringers

Something different our band has achieved/tried together this year [2024] - community linked

Ashbocking: Our Sunday service band now provides the congregation with a very pleasing eclectic mix of calls and sound

Barham: Hosting Kaleidoscope/Foundation Skill sessions when others come from different towers.

Bramford: Regular Sunday ringing

Bredfield: Joined the congregation for coffee and bacon butties before ringing for Harvest Festival [with 2 giant tractors outside for the children to climb on!]

East Bergholt: We have started training a new learner slightly differently, on a different bell with the clapper tied so we can talk whilst ringing.

Framlingham: Participating in 'Framlingham Gala' event. Participating in the 'Christmas Tree Festival' of St Michael's

Hacheston: Ringing for the Hacheston Church open day on 28th September

Henley: Wedding ringing for some first timers!

Ipswich St Mary le Tower: Regularly supports Sunday & practice night ringing at St Margarets

Parham: Demonstrated ringing to visitors from Mantua, Italy

Stutton: Stutton Church held an Open Day during the summer. Hal kindly brought the Guild's mobile bells over. A lot of interest was shown in these, and trips up the tower to learn about the real bells.

Tuddenham St Martin: Ringing for a wedding

Wickham Market: As well as tower bell ringing, we also have a handbell band who ring at Wickham Market and Pettistree Carol services

Woodbridge: We had a summer BBQ at the Rectory hosted by the Rector and his wife. We rang the bells half muffled on Remembrance Sunday for the Civic Service on the the Market Hill.

Something our band is working towards achieving in 2025

Ashbocking: Keeping in contact with the PCC to ensure we are a part of their plans to develop the ground floor ringing area into a kitchenette and toilet for the church. We wish to keep these bells ringing. There is scope to create a tower ringing chamber in an existing room between the bell chamber and ground floor, if sufficient funds can be raised.

Barham: Establishing a larger group from Barham

Bramford: District Striking Competition 2025. Progressing with Plain Bob Doubles

Brandeston: Just need to keep the occasional Sunday service ringing going. I have tried to recruit a new band, but not successful.

Bredfield: Making progress in teaching Plain Hunt Doubles and Plain Bob Doubles.

Campsea Ashe: Improving the ringers' range of methods we can ring

Clopton: Further progress with hunting and change ringing. Calling changes. Ringing Master duties

Cretingham: A lot of new younger people have moved into the village since "Covid" and it would be good to get some of them involved.

Debenham: Continuing to extend individual's skills at appropriate level.

Earl Stonham: Join in SE District Events

East Bergholt: Getting more people ringing no 4 bell. Getting 1 round consistently right. Progressing to 2 round when we can.

Framlingham: Improving ringing skills of the youngest members in the team [3]

Hacheston: Start on Bob Doubles

Henley: By focussing on our bell handling skills, we will have sufficient bell control to be able to ring well whichever Foundation Skills Bell control exercises come out of the 'lucky dip' envelope! Getting to grips with Plain Hunt

Ipswich St Margarets: We regard ourselves as a teaching band but cannot aspire to advanced methods as yet!

Ipswich St Mary le Tower: Advancing beyond Cambridge and Yorkshire Surprise Maximus

Ipswich St Matthews: Taking part in the district striking competition

Kettleburgh: Just need to keep the occasional Sunday service ringing going

Otley: Still being here! It would be good to give people the opportunity to ring a quarter in the method they are learning [but not all would want to]

Parham: Teaching basic bell handling after Christmas to new recruits to ringing, one from Parham and one from Marlesford, as well as two more potential from Parham who intend to start after Christmas. Start on Bob Doubles. Possible tower open day to increase local awareness of what we do and possibly attract new ringers.

Pettistree: To enable everyone who rings at Pettistree to improve their skills

Tuddenham St Martin: Get new members

Wickham Market: Primary goal is to complete the training of all of our beginners so that they can competently ring for Sunday and special services

Woodbridge: Advance our ringing ability

Easton: Just need to keep the occasional Sunday service ringing going

Ufford: Getting more local recruits

What would our band members like to see the SE District offer their members?

Ashbocking: More of the same as in 2024 please!

Bramford: We enjoyed the Centenary Ball in 2023. We would like an annual event similar. To continue supporting our ringers.

Brandeston: Occasional support in keeping bands going for service ringing. I [Chris McArthur] work hard to keep Framingham band going on a regular basis at the practice night, with Ray Lewis

Bredfield: Perhaps some more regular help for a while to get us over the hurdle of not having enough experienced ringers to make it possible to achieve aim set ourselves for 2025

Campsea Ashe: Often the SE District Ringing sessions clash with our Saturday practice!

Clopton: The opportunity to ring at other towers with experienced ringers to facilitate the best opportunity to progress with called changes and change ringing.

Hacheston: Perhaps some training support, otherwise we do not know what may be available.

Henley: An outing to include Henley [when the structure allows!]

Ipswich St Margarets: Personally I would like to see the return of 'proper' quarterly meetings with a tea - the social side of ringing seems to be neglected [but very necessary] these days. From a wider point of view I think the Guild should be paying much more attention to training teachers of ringing so that there is a co-ordinated approach to things. The work that Hal is doing is something the whole Guild should be doing [regrettably I've not been able to attend his sessions for several reasons]

Ipswich St Matthews: The district is supporting all levels of ringing. At a guild level it is level is offering courses in other areas such as steeple keeping. Keep it up!

Kettleburgh: Occasional support in keeping bands going for service ringing.

Otley: Continued support with bell maintenance. Training opportunities. It would be nice to have more of a level playing field for all call change bands at the striking competition.

Parham: Perhaps some training support, otherwise we do not know what may be available.

Pettistree: Every monthly district practice to provide opportunities for all skill levels and to create several opportunities during the year for socialising after a District Practice, eg. Ringers' Tea.

Tuddenham St Martin: Technical and educational assistance, especially bell maintenance.

Wickham Market: Fine as it is.

Woodbridge: We would welcome some help from the Guild so that we could advance our ringing ability.

Easton: Occasional support in keeping bands going for service ringing.

Additional news we would like to share with the rest of SE District Guild members, about our tower during 2024

Ashbocking: Our Sunday service band, with additional support from Henley, rang at 2 weddings this year and asked to ring both before and after the service. Busy year for us

Barham: Barham [me!] feel exceptionally lucky to be included in the bellsashen group to bring life to our bells

Bramford: Bramford would like to officially thank the Guild for their support in helping our ringers progress to Level 3. Particular thanks to Amanda Richmond & Jonathan Williamson who attend weekly to teach. Also the excellent support given to our beginners. We appreciate their patience, knowledge and experience, helping to build our bands strength and skills. The band at Bramford has become a strong friendship group, members enjoy attending weekly to meet up and ring.

Bredfield: One member of the band suffering from Long Covid, another from an 'industrial accident, so at present our numbers have fallen so low that we are almost unable to make any progress. Publicity has failed to attract any recruits from any more local residents.

Campsea Ashe: Our tower needs urgent repairs. We are hoping this will happen in the Spring of 2025. We don't know whether we will be able to practice at Campsea Ashe during the repairs. We may have to move elsewhere.

Clopton: The band maintains a good relationship with the Churchwardens and congregation and participate in some services and church events. The Churchwardens and congregation express appreciation that the bells are rung regularly and for the financial contribution the ringers make.

Cretingham: We do have the "Boosters" sessions on a fairly regular basis organised by Jenny.

Debenham: We have a busy practice and try to welcome everyone. We run the monthly practice and service ringing at Helmingham. We ring at Winston, Framsdon [our other Benefice rings] for special services as required. We run a group mainly for members of the Debenham and Otley practices where we are improving basic skills in a relaxed/enjoyable way. This group meets fortnightly, midweek at local 6 bell towers. We usually ring a quarter peal at least twice a month. As usual we had a successful Easter Monday outing - this year to NE Essex. We had our Autumn Walk & Ring in the SW District. Our post Christmas Meal was held at Thorndon Black Horse.

Earl Stonham: Regular Sunday ringing. Hosted a SE District Event. Thank you for the support of ringers from other towers.

East Bergholt: If anyone would like to come and watch a different way of ringing, we always have a warm welcome waiting

Falkenham: As with both Felixstowe and Falkenham, an extra pair of experienced hands would help considerably and all visitors will be most welcome to support our happy bands of ringers. We briefly stopped ringing recently due to falling stones from the exterior of the tower, we have resumed again with entry through the south door and this seems to work well. £40,000 needs to be raised for the tower repairs and I have been assured by the PCC and the 5-yearly survey that the bells are not exacerbating the problem.

Falkenham's band is small but reliable and keen to improve. We are able to ring for the Sunday services, albeit not always the full six. I am currently teaching two new learners and looking forward to including them fully in the practice nights. As with both Felixstowe and Falkenham, an extra pair of experienced hands would help considerably and all visitors will be most welcome to support our happy bands of ringers.

Felixstowe: Felixstowe currently have 6 learners and improvers, one of whom is able to handle and ring rounds unassisted. The recent District Ringing event here proved to be a valuable lesson to all student both with practice ringing rounds, helped by more experienced ringers, and giving the the opportunity to see how the District Ringing events, and the Guild work. A very generous collection was donated to Falkenham's tower repair fund, for which the PCC was extremely grateful.

Harkstead: Our main problem, by no means unique to us, is having enough experienced ringers to be able to move the less experienced on to the next stage.

Henley: Thank you to our experienced ringers for their help - Lizzie, Simon & Caroline. We couldn't do it without you!

Holbrook: A joint practice is usually held at Holbrook, but sometimes at one of the other towers - Stutton, Harkstead, particularly during the summer. We have lost some of our young ringers this year, as they move on to the next stage in their lives. We wish them well and hope they will continue with their ringing. Our main problem, by no means unique to us, is having enough experienced ringers to be able to move the less experienced on to the next stage.

Ipswich St Matthews: Sunday ringing. For many years there was no ringing for Sunday services. With the blessing of the current Rector and enough ringing support we are now ringing for Sunday service most weeks. Some ringers are now able to ring quarter peals, whilst others are moving towards ringing method through the ART course. We are massively supported by Amanda Richmond, Jonathan Williamson and David Lugg

Offton: Service ringing continues to be on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays at 9.00am and 10.30am respectively, together with other special services. Tuesday night practices continue and are generally preceded by a quarter peal attempt, 21 being scored in the last 12 months at the time of writing. This ensures that we normally have resources available to offer opportunities to ring the "standard 8" surprise major methods and I am very grateful to the stalwarts whose attendance allows this to be the case.

Pettistree: We are pleased to welcome all visitors, particularly on practice nights, which are rounded off with a visit to the pub next door.

Sproughton: A younger person has been taught to ring as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award and now is continuing to advance and is an active member of the band.

Stonham Aspal: We struggle to ring because the bells are not the best! and no one really wants to ring them! The access up the ladder is also off-putting to some people. Hosted a SE District Event in June that was well supported.

Tattingstone: A quarter peal was rung here on SE QP day. I believe those participating found it an interesting experience!

Tuddenham St Martin: We would like to thank the Guild for their constant support and guidance. The re-introduction of bell ringing in Tuddenham has made a great contribution to village life.

Wickham Market: Our practices are always well supported and we are frequently joined by ringers from other towers. Over the year we have built a reputation for being able to teach ringing skills from absolute beginners to improvers who want to extend their repertoire.

Woodbridge: We are a happy, welcoming and friendly band. Some 6 of our band regularly go to Campsea Ashe to their practice on Saturday morning to give them assistance.