

Minute of the South East District of Suffolk Guild of Ringers Annual District Meeting held on Saturday 5th December 2020 at 4pm via Zoom

Present: Abby Antrobus (Secretary), Lesley Barrell, Chris Birkby, Jill Birkby, Steve Cheek, (Zoom host, Guild Treasurer), Margaret Cherry, Liz Christian, Mike Cowling (NE), Joanna Crowe, Neal Dodge (Guild PR Officer), Ralph Earey, Chris Garner, Mary Garner, Christine Holmes, Melanie Holmes, Alison Looser, Janet Looser, Chris McArthur, Richard Munnings, Ruth Munnings, Mark Ogden (Chairman), Amanda Richmond, David Salter, Henry Salter, Katharine Salter, Jenny Scase (Ringing Master), Mervyn Scase, Robert Scase, Tom Scase (Guild Ringing Master), Tracey Scase (Treasurer), David Stanford, Jonathan Williamson, Sue Williamson (fleetingly!), Peter and Jane Harper.

1. Welcome - at 4:05pm, the Chairman welcomed the district, guild officers and visitors to our first virtual ADM.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Roger Coley, Tess and Ellie Earey, John and Shirley Girt, Sally Munnings, Jacky Savage, Paul Sharples and Rowan Wilson (Guild Chairman)

3. Remembrances - a minute's silence was held for our good friends, members of the district who have passed away since the last ADM. Because of social distancing, funeral congregations were of necessity smaller than in usual times, but the thoughts of the District have been with bereaved families. In our thoughts were:

Eric Bull (Stutton) passed away December 2019 aged 89
Mrs Lilian Caudle (SMLT) passed away January 2020 aged 105
George Pipe (SMLT) passed away March 2020 aged 84
Mrs Anne Haywood (Brandeston) passed away April 2020 aged 73
Mrs Delia Hammerton (Sproughton) passed away May 2020 aged 78
Mrs Coral Fry (Tunstall) passed away May 2020 aged 84
Mrs Barbara Newson (Stonham Aspal) passed away 26 June 2020 aged 68
Alan Munnings (Sproughton) passed away 8 Sep 2020 aged 75
Dick Pegg (Grundisburgh) passed away 15 Sep 2020 aged 92

4. Message from Guild Chairman - this was shared via videolink: <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/ChairmansMessage202011.php>

5. Minutes of the 2019 ADM (held 7th December at Debenham) were agreed: <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/pdfs/SeDistrict/SeDistrictAmMinutes2019DRAFT1.pdf>

6. Matters arising – The Chairman noted that we had subsequently co-opted David Stanford as an area rep.

7. New Members – there were no new members.

8. Reports - see Appendix.

- **The Chairman's report** was pre-circulated. Mark added that whilst we have not been able to ring very much (and hopefully things will get better), the intention is to start virtual monthly district meetings from next month. The social side of meetings and keeping the district together as a group is just as important. Mark invited ideas for sessions, perhaps

based on things individual towers have done successfully - such as quizzes, talks (ringing or non-ringing), chats in break-out rooms.

- **The Ringing Master’s, Treasurer’s and Technical Advisor’s reports** were pre-circulated, apart from the Treasurer’s detailed figures that had been accidentally omitted by the Secretary.
- **Ipswich Historic Churches Trust** – Katherine Salter reported that the family have been able to keep ringing going at St Clement and St Lawrence. The Trust has been working on proposals for St Clements, including vehicular access to the churchyard, extending the gallery and rearranging clock weight cases to create more space and moving the chiming apparatus to allow toilets under the tower. It has been possible to open the Ellacombe chime cabinet.
- **Recruitment and Training** <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/RandTminutes.php>,
- **GMC** <https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/GMC.php/>

9. Election of Officers – the committee was proposed *en masse* by Joanna Crowe and seconded by David Salter. The Chairman noted that the committee have been active behind the scenes. Hollesley, Tunstall and Orford are still without an area rep.

Position	Name
Chairman	Mark Ogden
Secretary	Abby Antrobus
Ringing Master	Jenny Scase
Treasurer	Tracey Scase
Technical Advisor	Chris McArthur
Area reps	
<i>Brandeston, Bredfield, Campsea Ashe, Hacheston, Kettleburgh, Marlesford, Parham, Pettistree, Ufford, Wickham Market, Easton</i>	Mary Garner
<i>Barking, Earl Stonham, Henley, Stonham Aspal, Coddenham</i>	Margaret Cherry
<i>Ashbocking, Badingham, Cretingham, Debenham, Dennington, Helmingham, Otley, Mondewden, Earl Soham, Framsdon, Winston, Framlingham</i>	Robert Scase
<i>Falkenham, Felixstowe</i>	Leslie Barrell
<i>Copdock, East Bergholt, Harkstead, Holbrook, Stutton, Tattingstone, Woolverstone</i>	Janet Looser
<i>Bramford, Ipswich St Margaret, Ipswich SMLT, Ipswich St Matthew, Offton, Rushmere St Andrew, Sproughton, Tuddenham</i>	Jonathan Williamson
<i>Burgh, Clopton, Grundisburgh/Hasketon, Woodbridge</i>	Mark Ogden/David Stanford
<i>Ipswich St Clement, Ipswich St Lawrence, Ipswich St Nicholas (IHCT), The Wolery</i>	Katharine Salter – nb IHCT rep appointed by the IHCT
Magazine correspondent (currently no magazine)	David Stanford
Recruitment and Training committee	Jenny Scase, Mark Ogden
GMC reps	Mary Garner, Mark Odgen, Jenny Scase, Abby Antrobus, Tracey Scase.

10. St Edmunds’ Clapper and Charity Fundraising/Ideas for ‘virtual’ activities/Ringing Room demonstration

The chairman invited ideas for fund raising and encouraged towers to take part, with suggestions such as: virtual coffee mornings; virtual ringing tours; donating of pub, travel and peal fee money; cakes sales with bidding and later drop off. Both St Mary Le Tower and Offton have held quizzes, and Steve Cheek reported that the SE District currently is currently top of the leaderboard (having raised £150 out of the total £170).

Mark Ogden, Mike Cowling, Mary Garner and Richard and Ruth Munnings demonstrated the ease of use of Ringing Room, which the Pettistree band use regularly for ringing and socialising. Mark noted that Ringing Room is free, and a free Zoom session to run alongside is 40 mins long.

11. Christmas Ringing in Ipswich – Katharine Salter made tentative arrangements, but as we are in COVID alert Tier 2, ringing is not possible. The Salter family will ring at St Lawrence at 11am on Saturday 19th December.

The Guild Chairman has also organised a virtual Christmas ringing event.

https://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/pdfs/VirtualChristmasRinging2020Poster_1.pdf. David Stanford sought clarification that notification should be given to the Guild and District Treasurers.

12. Programme for 2021 – The Ringing Master and Chairman outlined that we are looking for ideas for monthly sessions – perhaps Zoom meetings with break out rooms, theory sessions, talks on ringing and non-ringing related topics (e.g. Morris Dancing, historic churches). The proposals so far are:

- **Saturday January 2nd 2021 4pm** - a short quiz and an opportunity to chat and think about what people would like to do in future months.
- **February 6th 2021** – a meeting with break outs for Ringing Room.

13. A.O.B.

- Mary Garner commented in support of digital meetings, and added that by their nature they do need a focus to work.
- Mark recommended "Shake my hand and I'll show you the ropes" - A biography of George Pipe by John Loveless.

14. Next ADM – 4th December 2021

The meeting finished at 16:40 and several members stayed for informal conversation, joined by Peter and Jane Harper. Jo Crowe noted that she will give ringing room a try. There was talk of lock-down haircuts. Chris McArthur gave an update on Barham, where the six bells will shortly be installed and there is a band who have trained at other towers. Mark mentioned the Golden Bottle fund and installation of a simulator on four bells at Felixstowe which would hopefully allow some social distancing. David and Katharine Salter talked about the Guild History project, including ongoing research into the founding meeting of the Guild and ongoing collection of recollections. Neal Dodge mentioned a successful initiative at Stowmarket for inter-tower quizzes using the break-out rooms function of Zoom, and Pettistree and others may take up the challenge.

Appendix - Reports

SE District Ringing Master's Report 2020 – Jenny Scase

I was pleased to be elected Ringing Master at last year's ADM and looked forward to an active year of district ringing.

January started with the practice at Woodbridge, where its large ringing chamber was useful for accommodating the 40+ ringers in attendance. Quite a daunting start to my role but we enjoyed a variety of ringing from call changes to surprise major, with plenty in between. Particularly pleasing was the election of three new ringers from Holbrook.

In February we met at Monewden for a practice followed by a 'Biscuit Bake-off'. Again this was supported by well over 30 ringers with opportunities for the several learners present and those at a more experienced stage of their ringing development to be challenged and, hopefully, make progress. Socialising is important and the ringing was followed by coffee and sampling of the 13 plates of biscuits pre-cooked for the Bake-off. The Star baker, whose biscuits received the most votes, was, pleasingly, Isis, from Holbrook, who was elected in January, at Woodbridge.

The March practice, held at St Margaret's in Ipswich, was again very well attended and followed by a short meeting. We began the afternoon by ringing 84 changes of Grandsire Triples in memory of George Pipe who sadly died a few days earlier. This was followed by the range and variety of ringing usual at a district practice. I was particularly pleased to see several youngsters joining in and being supported with their progress. The sizable crowd of members were able to socialise and enjoy the refreshments provided by the St Margaret's ringers before we held a brief meeting.

What a pity this was to be the last opportunity for district ringing, on real bells, in 2020.

As we went into lockdown the April walk and May striking competition had been organised. These had to be cancelled. I was hoping that by August the quarter peal and meal event would have been a good welcome back to ringing celebration. Little did I know!

It's good to hear that some bells have been rung for services around the district. We are lucky at my tower to have bells spaced out enough to ring on 4 bells (5 with a household group of 3). We also had a weekly service to ring for. I realise that many of the smaller parishes have not yet opened their churches and of those that are open, many will have ringing rooms that do not allow for more than one or two bells, if any, to be rung under the current guidelines. It is important that while encouraging ringing to take place, COVID-19 rules are followed. As I write this report we are in the second lockdown with no ringing in churches or even on handbells (except, maybe, within households).

Most ringers have been able to access the guidance, agreed with the CofE, given by the central council and available on the Suffolk Guild website. As we come out of lockdown we must continue to be careful about following these guidelines.

I have heard that members at several towers have been able to keep in contact with each other. Some have regular catch ups outside, either in a park or for a walk in the countryside, and some have held handbell sessions. Many have kept in touch virtually e.g. using Zoom or Ringing room. This local communication is important.

Not all towers have been able to do this and as we move into 2021, with restrictions likely to remain in place for many months, the district intends to hold a virtual session each month. Your ideas for these sessions would be welcome.

Thank you all for the support you give to ringing and to this district.

Chairman's Report – Mark Ogden

At this time of the year I would normally be reflecting on the activities undertaken during the year and on individual achievements, however this year has been hugely different for all of us.

During the year we had expected a full schedule of district events and the VE & VJ commemorations, unfortunately in March the COVID-19 pandemic struck and although thankfully, Suffolk has seen one of the lowest infection rates in the country, we were still faced with a complete stoppage of all tower bell ringing.

Although the restrictions meant that the planned VE day celebrations did not occur, I know a number of towers managed limited socially distanced ringing for VJ day and subsequently, until the second lockdown, a small number of towers had been able to restart limited, socially distanced ringing.

To address the lack of tower bell ringing, several Guild members took to using virtual ringing, using the Ringing Room and similar facilities. From personal experience I know that these virtual ringing sessions are different from tower bell ringing, however it can be fun and does keep up social interaction with other ringers. My home tower, for example, now holds a weekly practice night using Ringing Room and Teams. The meeting allows us to share news and we have a small weekly non ringing related quiz, in addition to actual ringing.

Other ringers took to socially distanced hand bell ringing, which was easier in the warmer weather when they could comfortably sit outside. These too are supported by Ringing Room and it is possible to purchase dummy handbells, to make the experience more realistic.

As it is likely that tower bell ringing will be limited for several months, despite the imminent vaccine, I would encourage you to try the virtual meeting tools, as the social contact they support, is as important as the ringing.

Going forward, monthly District meetings will restart in January, although until we can ring in towers again, these will be held online. In addition to any planned activity, we will make sure that there is time for you to catch up with other ringers. If you have any ideas on activities we could run, please let Jenny know.

Hopefully by now most of you have heard that Rowan relaunched the St Edmunds' Clapper challenge for Guild fundraising. The award, which in recent years has been won by towers in this District, will now go to the District that raises the most funds. With the limits on physical meetings, this challenge will need some creative thinking on what can be done. If you are organising something, please let me know and do share your ideas with others, as it would be good for the SE District to win.

The fund raising, along with your subscriptions allows the Guild to continue its work in helping towers from across the county with ongoing restoration work. Some of which has still been able to continue.

On a sadder note, this year we have lost a number of ringers including George Pipe, who lived in Ipswich but was one of the most well-known ringers globally. For those who knew or knew of

George, you may be interested in purchasing a copy of his biography "Shake my hand and I'll show you the ropes" by John Loveless. It can be purchased via the Ringing World web site.

Finally I would like to thank the officers for their continued work and to all of you for your ongoing membership to the Guild. Have an enjoyable festive season and I hope to see you in the new year and at some point in the year, join you in ringing in a tower.

Belfry Advisory Committee – Chris McArthur

The members of the group have been very active with works during the earlier part of the year, but these have been outside the district. Namely Hitcham and Stowmarket installations.

The following district matters have been dealt with:

Akenham – Single bell inspection and improvement plan drawn up for that parish.

Barham – Bells removed to Taylors for rehang, expected back very shortly. A fledgling band is being taught.

Henley – Pulley, rope and stay repairs, to keep bells operational for learners.

Stonham Aspal – Loose headstock rectified.

Pettistree – Clapper refurbished and reinstalled.

Framsden – Local discussions and an inspection regarding a local fund-raising initiative to rehang them.

Ipswich – The Salter family have undertaken ongoing maintenance at various towers, that is much appreciated. St Mary at the Elms were going to be hung dead/safe by committee members and Nicholson's, as lockdown occurred. It is now deferred.

Other matters

At the last meeting of the BAC and subsequently agreed by management, the Chair of BAC has now passed to Chris Davies with effect from the guild AGM. Also ratified were the two new Technical Advisors for the guild, Alan Moulton and Ged Flatters, a shared post. This follows the retirement of Winston Girling from those positions, after many years of sterling service, we all thank him for his efforts and great enthusiasm for bell restoration projects. Christopher McArthur remains District Technical Advisor and Secretary to the committee.

One meeting only was held during the year on 6/2/20 at Haughley.

Treasurer's Report – Tracey Scase

The District funds were £100 at the beginning of the year. Over the course of the year I have transferred £39.31 to the Guild, leaving me with £100 balance currently. My accounts to 31st December will be submitted to the Guild Treasurer and the proposed summary is attached.

Please note that subscriptions for 2021 become due again on 1st January. To be able to vote at the AGM in April, your fees must have been paid beforehand. Thank you to those members who have already paid or set up standing orders to facilitate a prompt payment.

For 2021, I still have 55 subscriptions as of 26th November that remain outstanding.

