



# Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 1

Spring 2010

## Working Title

See page 2 for the magazine naming competition



St Mary's Polstead. See back page

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## First Edition

Welcome to the first edition of the new magazine for Suffolk ringers. So far we haven't come up with a name for it. What we need is a catchy title that will fit neatly down the side of the front cover. To that end we'll have a competition. We will give a prize, a holiday in the Bahamas, a new Ford Focus, OR a Ringing World diary 2011, for the best name a Suffolk Guild member puts forward, and we decide to use for future editions. All suggestions to Sue Freeman at [sueathigh-meadow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sueathigh-meadow@yahoo.co.uk) by April 31<sup>st</sup> please.

Why a new magazine? What was wrong with the old newsletter that has served us for so many years? Simply, communication technology. By the time you receive your newsletter you will probably have already read 90% of the contents, either on our fantastically up-to-date website [www.suffolkbells.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbells.org.uk), or on Campanophile [www.campanophile.com](http://www.campanophile.com) or in the Ringing World. We considered changing to a web-based news forum, but there was no point in competing with our own website, and in any case there was plenty of evidence that members like to have a hard copy of something to read when loads of people have turned up on practice night and you're sitting out for this touch. A magazine can also provide useful PR.

We hope to have regular articles on such matters as bell maintenance, help with method-ringing and our lovable cartoon characters Sally and Bob. We will, of course continue to cover District events, but it would be great if we could have more photographs and perhaps more personal comments and views. Is there anyone out there who could provide crossword puzzles or other games? All suggestions for content will be gratefully received.

This is the official magazine of the Suffolk Guild, so ultimately responsibility for its production and content lies with the General Management Committee, although the GMC will not actually interfere editorially. The cost of production, estimated at more than double that of the old newsletter, has to come out of our normal income, i.e. subscriptions. To try and offset the costs we are looking for advertisers who might like to pay a modest amount for a regular or irregular slot. If you can think of any organisation who might be interested please let us know.

And finally, thank you to all contributors.

Happy reading!



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## From the Chairman

I am very pleased to write a few words for the first edition of whatever this magazine is going to be called. I hope you find it interesting and useful. I would like to say a big thank you to Sue Freeman, Richard Gates and Alan Stanley who have so readily and with great enthusiasm taken on the roles of editorial committee members. I think the plan is that they do not actually write much (or even anything) themselves, but will be cajoling and encouraging contributions, not just from the District Newsletter Correspondents but also from you!



Thanks are also due to Carol Girling, who has edited our Newsletter for the last two years, and who helped in the initial stages with getting the new publication off the ground, but who will not be seeking re-election at the AGM.

Budding feature writers may want to be sharpening their pencils at the prospect of the next major Guild event, our Annual General Meeting, at Ixworth and Bardwell on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> April. This year we are putting on an additional event, a meeting on "Heritage and Restoration", aimed at anyone who might be considering a major bell project in the foreseeable future, or indeed any church project where heritage considerations may affect both the way in which the project is carried out, and the opportunities for funding. The meeting is open to all, so do come. Incumbents and churchwardens are also welcome, so you may like to mention the meeting to your local parson and wardens.

The AGM will also enable us to ring at both Bardwell and Ixworth, two newly restored and augmented rings of eight that the NW District are rightly very proud of. The meeting itself has the added importance this year of the need to elect a number of new officers, notably a Secretary and a Treasurer. Mary Garner and Keith Ashton-Jones have completed the maximum five years as these officers and have contributed hugely to the Guild over the last five years. This will be your opportunity to say thank you to them, and to elect their replacements.

And, if last year's AGM is anything to go by, we shall have a jolly good day's ringing with friends old and new from across the county, so do come and make this AGM one to remember.

Philip Gorrod Guild Chairman

### AGM details

Towers en route open for ringing 2.30 - 3.30 Gislingham and Pakenham  
3.00 - 3.45 Bardwell tower open for ringing 4.30 Service at Ixworth  
5.00 Tea in Ixworth Village Hall (names to Mandy Shedden 01359 270596)  
5.45 approx. Meeting followed by ringing at Ixworth until 9.00pm

## On the lighter side - The gardeners' hymn

All things spray and swatable, disasters great and small.

All things paraquatable, the Lord God made them all.

The green fly on the roses, the maggots in the peas,

Manure that fills our noses. He also gave us these.

Chorus

The fungus on the goose-gogs, the club root on the greens,

The slugs that eat the lettuce and chew the aubergines.

Chorus

The drought that kills the fuchsias, the frost that nips the buds,

The rain that drowns the seedlings, the blight that hits the spuds.

Chorus

The midges and mosquitoes, the nettles and the weeds,

The pigeons in the green stuff, the sparrows on the seeds.

Chorus

The fly that gets the carrots, the wasps that eat the plums,

How black the gardener's outlook though green may be his thumbs.

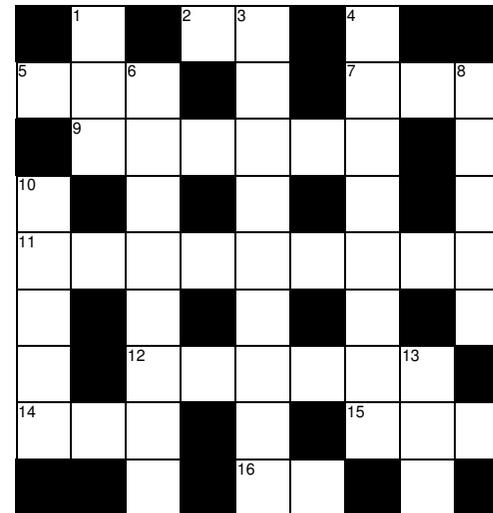
Chorus

But still we gardeners labour midst vegetables and flowers

And pray what hits our neighbour's will some how by-pass ours.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,

All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.



### BELL RINGERS' CROSSWORD

Compiled by Gillian Wakefield

#### Clues across

- 2 First and last in belfry (2)  
 5 This electronic kit sounds very small (3)  
 7 Donkey (3)  
 9 Fits and ..... (6)  
 11 Supports bell (9)  
 12 Pushed by the stay (6)  
 14 Fib while ringing at the back (3)  
 15 Edge (3)  
 16 Abbreviate the queen (2)

#### Clues down

- 1 Short sibling (3)  
 3 Do they ring this in the three Ridings? (9)  
 4 Jewish festival (8)  
 6 Bell stops swinging because? (2,3,3)  
 8 Part of 10 (5)  
 10 Sounds like a rope burn (5)  
 13 Tear (3)

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## The atheist in the woods

An atheist was walking through the woods.

'What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!' he said to himself.

As he was walking beside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes. He turned to look. He saw a 7 foot grizzly bear charging towards him.

He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him. He tripped and fell to the ground.

He rolled over to pick himself up but saw that the bear was right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw and raising his right paw to strike him.

At that instant the atheist cried out, 'Oh my God!'

Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent.

As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky.

'You deny my existence for all these years, teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?'

The atheist looked directly into the light. 'It would be hypocritical of me suddenly to ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps you could make the BEAR a Christian?'

'Very well,' said the voice.

The light went out. The sounds of the forest resumed.

And the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed his head and spoke: 'Lord bless this food, which I am about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.'

## Overheard on Practice Night

"I knew I was lost when I didn't know where I was."

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### Advertise in this magazine

To advertise in this magazine in full colour from as little  
as £10 per quarter page e-mail  
[magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk](mailto:magazine@suffolkbells.org.uk)

Assistance with artwork can be provided  
if required

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## The View from the North East District

Something new and good happens in this District at a bewildering rate these days. A record number of bands enter the District Ringing Competition, new ringers are trained to high standards in greater numbers, ringers move into the area, un-ringable bells are re-hung. Blink and you miss something!



St Andrew's Wissett

The latest notable event was the dedication of the repaired tower and re-hung peal of six at Wissett near Halesworth. This sweet and long neglected peal in its round Saxon tower has been restored and goes very well. Sound control is probably the next job on the list. Local people with money from the Lottery Fund have done a job to be proud of.

At the Dedication Service on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, Bishop Clive gave an interesting and humorous address to the hundred or so people packed in the high, narrow Church.

As we worked our way through the service leaflet, I read once again the words "craftsman's art and music's

measure for Thy pleasure all combine" and thought that we take bell founders and hangers for granted. Consider the work. Mixing the sand and other additives for the bell moulds. Making and fixing inscriptions for each bell. Pouring molten bell metal into the moulds at a temperature that can cook you if it spills. Breaking the new bell out of the mould. Paring off surplus metal to get the exact musical note. Fabrication of the metal for bearings and headstocks. Then along come the woodworkers to make from hardwoods the strong wheels for the ropes that turn the bells, and rollers in boxes that guide the ropes. The rope maker is called upon to twist natural fibres and coloured wool into the long lasting ropes we need. Next the "magicians" who take the parts of a rectangular bell frame and coax it into a round tower – fixing the girders into unyielding flint walls. The next task is to hoist the heavy bells to great heights then fit each one into its predestined pit in the frame, moving bells up, down, or sideways as required. To think that at Wissett we nearly lost these craftsmen and the whole firm part way through the job.

Many of us who spend our working lives in construction can only marvel at the combination of so many skills that produce such a unique thing as a peal of British church bells – produced in the cold/hot/draughty and dangerous conditions usual in foundries, machine shops, and at the top of church towers. Thank you all.

Don Price

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## News from the North West District

The full programme of District Events can be found on the Guild website and on the North West District website. May I make a plea for Tower Captains to put a copy in the tower and draw everyone's attention to it? All the events on the programme are organised for our members so please make the most of them.

Our Secretary Mandy has set up a fun website for our District which we'd like lots of people to join so we can share our news and successes. The address is [www.nwdistrictringers.co.uk](http://www.nwdistrictringers.co.uk) Why not have a look and sign up?

With so many of our members taking an active interest in quarter peal ringing we are hoping that this year's Quarter Peal Week (10 - 18 April) will be as successful as previous years. This year we hope to raise the profile of ringing as a voice of the community by encouraging parishes where quarters are being rung to sponsor them in aid of the charity Help For Heroes. There's a link to a Just Giving page on the NW website.

Most of our members have notched up some important achievements recently. The newly formed Redgrave band are gaining in confidence and rang a quarter peal's length of Devon call changes, while the improvers band from Wickham Skeith and Thornham Magna are branching out into new methods. The regular 8 bell practices held at Elveden are very successful and an additional practice will be held at Stowmarket on the 1st Wednesday of even months (odd ones at Elveden). Ringers from the Stowmarket Deanery have made excellent progress and the Great Barton band are now well established with Alex in particular going from strength to strength.

The Ixworth band are also now finding their feet with 8 bell ringing - don't forget the Dedication Service there on Sunday 18 April at 3pm. It is hoped to start practices at Bardwell soon, probably on a Wednesday. There is an enthusiasm among ringers in our District to progress and improve, so let's encourage all our new ringers to take part in what ringing has to offer. We have 3 towers with simulators (Bury, Bardwell and Stowmarket) and these provide many opportunities for ringers to practice at any time they like!

With 2 new 8s in our district we are very fortunate - and soon there will be another! In early March work will start at Hopton to re-hang and augment these bells. Please see if you can lend any support to this team. Any help would be appreciated!

Ruth Suggett



All Saints Hopton

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## Notes from the South East

A great deal has been going on in the South East District since bells were rung in many towns and villages to welcome in the New Year.

The excellent project to retune and re-hang the bells at Dennington has been completed by Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The rededication service was held on 31<sup>st</sup> January, the rather cold church packed with the congregation and many ringers.

Another restoration project, at Campsea Ashe, continues at a great pace. Work is being done on the gallery and the bells will come out of the tower starting on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Fundraising continues, the next event being Faure's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria from Scratch to be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. For details contact Glenys Fear 01728 747177.

Fundraising is also taking place at Hollesley where work is needed to the tower as well as to the bells. Money has been raised for the maintenance of the bells and the work is scheduled for April/May, during which time the bells will be out of action.

The Woodbridge bells and ringers made a brief appearance on a programme about the life and work of former Woodbridge resident Brian Eno of Roxy Music. The recording, done last summer, took the whole of a practice night and wasn't without its anxious moments when camera people came very close to moving ropes. The end result was a good piece of PR.

Recently some of us have been helping Don Price celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Don rings regularly with us at SMLT and Grundisburgh, so it was fitting that a peal was rung at Grundisburgh and a quarter at Offton to celebrate and wish him well on his birthday, followed by a small post peal party at The Turk's Head, Hasketon. Have no fear, Don, we have put the date in our diaries for 2020 and 2030!

Kate Eagle

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## Problems With Call Changes

In my own tower, and at others I regularly ring at, it is clear that some ringers have problems with call changes. Understanding how to ring (and indeed call) call changes is not helped by the various methods of calling them, but here I will deal with only two, which are calling them either 'up' or 'down,' both of which have exactly the same effect and both of which are used regularly, sometimes both in the same tower.

The purpose of using call changes is to change the order of the bells by instruction, only affecting two adjacent bells at a time. If you were calling the changes, and you have six bells in rounds, let's look at what happens when you change (or reverse) bells 2 and 3. Your intention is to change rounds into 1 3 2 4 5 6. If you call 'two over three' (calling up), this means that two takes the place of three, and goes 'up' one place, and three takes the place of two behind the treble. Prior to the call the

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## South West District - A New Band at All Saints, Acton

I became involved with Acton bells in December 2008, ringing a quarter peal of Bob Doubles for the late Reverend David Rutherford, who was very poorly at that time. The next time I rang at Acton was 22nd May 2009 which was unfortunately for his funeral. A quarter peal of Bob Doubles was rung on 23rd May 2009 to celebrate his life and good work.

I kept in contact with Mr. Chris Moss (Churchwarden) for weddings if the bells were required. Chris informed me about a forthcoming event of a Book Sale they were holding in the church. Knowing Acton had not had its own band of ringers for some 6 to 8 years, I asked Chris if I could have the tower open the same day. He agreed to this idea and re-named the day as 'Books & Bells.' This was held on the 26th September 2009.

Chris suggested a TV with VCR and my good friend Colin Cooke kindly provided a VCR tape which explained how bells were made and how they were rung.

About 50 people came and had a go and were asked, if they were interested in forming a band, to leave their names and telephone numbers. Chris Moss and I contacted all those who had signed up and the band was formed. Now they have seven Guild Members, and two more in the process of signing up.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Linda, David and Louise from Long Melford, for their help on the Books and Bells afternoon. Thank you to Colin Cooke, for his aid with teaching the Acton band and also his endless help with the maintenance. I am also grateful to Mr Chris Moss, Acton Churchwarden, as without his help this would not have got off the ground. Last but not least, thanks to the Reverend Caroline Hallett.

Derek Rose

(Deputy Ringing Master SW District)

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ringer of the third should know that two is following the treble, and if two is called to follow three, then three will move down one place to follow the treble. Four will have been told by the call that two will move to follow three, so this bell follows two and remains in fourths place. If you, however, called 'three to one' (calling down) this still changes 2 and 3 over as before, but here four has to have remembered that the bell ahead of him was following two.

This sounds complicated, but really it is straightforward. If you follow the rule that you need to watch carefully which bell is in front of the bell you are following, you will know where to go if a bell is called into your place. If you take the time to write out some changes for yourself, changing two bells at a time, this will also help you to work out what is happening. Try getting the bells to 'Queens' (1 3 5 2 4 6) and 'Tittums' (1 4 2 5 3 6) and back to rounds as an exercise, and you will soon be confidently calling the changes as well as ringing them. Winston Girling

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## Pages from the past - Memories of Victory Day

Quite naturally with the passage of time there aren't many ringers in the guild today who learned to ring before W.W.2. Looking through the annual report I have counted only two. I started in late 1943 and like them was frustrated by the ban on ringing.

Thus the Declaration of Victory on May 8th 1945 was "music to our ears" literally and metaphorically. The ban had been lifted the year before, enabling me to ring my first 720 on the old back six at Grundisburgh.

It is interesting to record that the last peal on tower bells before the ban was April 28th 1940 at Thornham Magna conducted by Sidney Arbon. Then from January 29th 1944 up till May 5th 1945 the following peals: 4 at Helmingham, 2 each at Debenham, Burgh and Woodbridge and 1 at Haverhill (the first on the bells), Hasketon, Leiston, Hollesley, Ipswich St.Margaret and Ufford.

V.E. Day as it became known provided the opportunity to sound our bells all over Suffolk, and locally we jumped at the chance. My father was quickly into action, and on Grundisburgh Green at 8am six of us assembled on bicycles. Frederick Crapnell the village blacksmith, Charles Clarke the builder, whose Father Fred, also a ringer, had served in the Boer War, Jack Gilbert a farmer from the village bordering on Swilland, my mother, father and me. Charlie did own a car but petrol rationing meant it was for his business only.

I shall never forget that day – my first excursion and first towers outside Grundisburgh. We started on the back six there – Oxford T.B. then on to Burgh for a course of Woodbine, and call changes with Ernie Cook the Churchwarden. Onto Clopton, ringing in those days from the tower floor. A drink at Clopton Crown (sadly gone), lemonade and Smiths crisps at twopence a packet for me, then on to Otley. We were there joined by George Pryke the local saddler and harness maker, and a member of the famous Helmingham band

"Hid"(head ) wind then across to Monewden – a course of Kent and met by Jack Arbon. Downhill into Akenfield country to Pettistree for Double Court and other Suffolk delights. The whole Pettistree and Wickham band met us there including the George "twins" – George Finch and George Berry. Not only the joy of seeing the locals, but a super post-war tea at the Tuns. Well Joe Prentice was a grocer at Wickham after all!

We cycled back to Grundisburgh tired but elated – not a bad day's work on bikes. A day I shall never forget. George Pipe



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## Norwich v. Eye 1729

When the bell ringers of Eye met the bell ringers of Norwich at Bungay in 1729 they were unable to agree on the rules of the competition, so a series of advertisements followed with each team accusing the other of lying, and being unreasonable. Eye put their case first in a reasonably polite 300 word advert. The following is just part of a 500 word response.

*Sir – the Eye ringers (by their lying advertisement concerning the meeting at Bungay) have made a truth equal to an axiom that impudence and ignorance are inseparable companions for they would bear the world in hand that we refused to engage them either at ringing or picking...and after they had denied everything, and rung a blundering peal or two, the “heroes” packed up their bundle of conceit and sneaked out of town in the dark, wisely preventing being hissed at by all the people.*

The ringers of Eye were not about to take that without a reply. What follows

is a taste of their advert that, this time ran to over a thousand words.

*Forasmuch as the Norwich Society of Ringers have in their late scurrilous advertisement, falsely and maliciously aspersed the Eye Ringers with a misrepresentation of the proposals that were introduced at the Bungay meeting, and have genteely given us the lie, designing thereby to bring an odium upon our characters. We think it justly deserves our highest resentment lest the world should be imposed upon to believe the scandalous and no less infamous suggestions of a parcel of rascals, whose insolence and arrogance...false and groundless...void of truth and good manners...whose ringing was so odious, that all the little petty ringers of the country towns adjacent hissed at their performances...*

Don Price who sent this article says “we don’t take ringing competitions quite so seriously these days” – or do we?

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For information that’s bang up to date.....



## Suffolk Guild Mini-ring

The Mini-ring was purchased in 2009 from Matthew Higby, the Somerset based bellfounder, thanks to a donation from the estate of the late Edmund Vesty (1937—2007) who was Patron of the Guild until his death.

The ring is insured for public liability, theft and damage anywhere in the UK provided that nominal control is exercised by a member of the Suffolk Guild, and that the Suffolk Guild is promoted and or acknowledged clearly. In practice we ask that a sign is prominently displayed showing that the ring is the property of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, and giving the website address [www.suffolkbells.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbells.org.uk)

Unlike Tower bells there is a limit to how much serious damage you can do to someone with a mini-ring . There are no stays because they are not needed - if a bell goes over the balance you just pull it back again. However the installation is quite heavy and it is important that it is stable at all times as there is the risk of injury if it were to fall. It is also an expensive piece of kit, that would cost about £5000 to replace so it needs to be treated with care. If you do plan to make use of it, do have enough people involved in erection and dismantling to avoid dropping any thing important on any thing important.



L to R : Diana Pipe, Richard Knight, Maggie Ross, Mike Whitby, Philip Gorrod, George Pipe, Kate Eagle.

### Borrowing the Mini-ring

The Mini-ring can be borrowed by anyone for any reasonable purpose, subject to the insurance proviso that nominal control is exercised by a member of the Suffolk Guild

A donation to the Suffolk Guild Bell Restoration Fund is normally required. The level of donation can be discussed with the trustee.

Preference will be given to Suffolk Guild members and for use to promote bell restoration projects, teaching or public awareness of ringing.

Apart from its ease of handling the other great advantage is the portability, no trailer is necessary. It will fit comfortably into a VW Golf or similar sized hatchback car with the front seats down. This leaves no room for passengers. (Will we see the mini-ring featuring in TV advertising in cars that are similar to a Golf but not a Golf - *ed*) When erected the mini-ring takes up an area of about five feet square and is about nine feet high.

Contact Brian Whiting on 01449 6677766. Details and a list of bookings are available on the website. [www.suffolkbells.org.uk/miniring.php](http://www.suffolkbells.org.uk/miniring.php)

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## High Maintenance - Changing a Stay

So what are stays? In the belfry context? They are the safety valve that stops important bits of the installation being damaged when you set the bell a bit vigorously. They also, with a slider, keep the bell mouth up when we want a rest between bits of ringing. Sometimes they get broken and then, when the dust has settled and you've bought the drinks, someone has to put on a new one.

Safety First. Do remember that working at heights is dangerous. Keep three points of contact whilst moving about on the bell frame and do make sure all the bells are down before you start work. A sign on the ropes in the ringing room saying "don't touch, people working on bells" is a good idea, as is having a help mate. Telling a third party where you are and when you expect to get back is good too. Try not to put tools where they could fall and hurt someone. Allow plenty of time.

There are two sorts of stay; conventional and Hastings. On the latter, the length, section and vertical alignment are critical. You will know if it is a Hasting stay as it has a Dingler on the top. **BIG HINT.** Don't throw the old stay away until you have made and fitted the new one!



Stays (the sort you get to replace) are made of straight grain Ash, air dried if possible. Conventional ones are best tapered with a chamfer down the arrises. *The picture above shows some good ones.* Sometimes they live in sockets. Don't make



them a tight fit. If you do, some poor soul will be up there with a drill, hammer and chisel some day, trying to get the stump out. If you do have headstocks with sockets, use spacers so you can get a spanner on the heads. *See Picture.* I use hex heads on stays always; rusty nuts can turn a coach bolt in the stay and you have to cut them off. You may have to drift the old bolts out as they often seize in the wood. Use big washers under the nuts and try not to tighten so tight you crush the wood.

Tools you may need to get the old one off: hammer, hacksaw, drift, mole wrench, spanners, drill, chisel. Remember, the Belfry Advisory Team is on hand to help.

Jonathan Stevens.

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## Ipswich Jingle Bells

The attempt this past festive season to ring the bells in all eight ringable towers in Ipswich simultaneously on the Saturday before Christmas met with mixed success. Snow, crime and lockouts hampered our best efforts. Some struggled valiantly through the snow only to find they could not get into town. Woodbridge Road, marked off as a crime scene following shootings in a club, was closed causing traffic chaos. Thanks to those who tried but had to turn back, among them the Pettistree ringers. St Clements disappointed the Gislingham ringers by proving to be a lockout. St Nicholas cancelled late on Friday being unable to open for us.

But those who made it and rang, some sixty or more, acquitted themselves in true spirit starting the event with simultaneous firing of all the bells. Refreshments were enjoyed courtesy of St Margaret's school. Especial thanks to Shirley Girt, Angela Cable and Sue. All agreed it was a worthwhile occasion, an opportunity to catch up over a coffee and mince pie and to remind the shop-

pers of Ipswich that it is not only shop tills that jingle!

Let's hope next year proves snag free! I would like to see more made of our tower bells at significant points in the church year to remind people of the religious dimension to life and to our culture. To promote this we will attempt to ring the town centre church bells half muffled on Good Friday. I hope this can be arranged for 3pm to honour the death of Jesus showing both sorrow and joy as is appropriate. Not all eight towers will be included but, I hope, the three main ones.

If any of you have ideas for future ringing at festival times please let me know. Perhaps quarter peals rung at the same time in the town centre churches might be another option.

My thanks to all who took part in the pre Christmas ringing. My apologies to those who encountered difficulties. I hope they are not deterred from taking part this year.

Revd. Brian Redgers

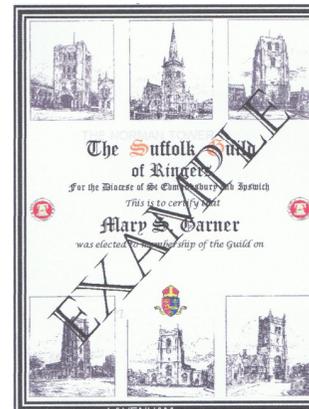
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## From the website - an occasional feature in which we take a look on-line [www.suffolkbells.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbells.org.uk)

Would you like a membership certificate? The format will be similar to one shown. A4 size, printed on cream card. The certificates will be printed with your name, date and place of election to the Suffolk Guild, and signed, where possible, by the Chairman and Master at that time.

Price: £2 each. Please contact: Mary Garner on 01728 746097 [marysgarner@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:marysgarner@tiscali.co.uk)

Remember to include your name as you would like it on the certificate, together with the date and place you were elected. Proceeds to the Bell Restoration Fund.



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## Polstead Ringers' Outing

The annual Polstead ringers' outing was held last year on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September. We stayed within Suffolk, visiting the N.E. District. This is an all day coach outing of 50 people, about 20 of whom are ringers from Polstead and neighbouring towers. The other seats are taken by families and friends of the ringers.

We left Polstead at 8:15. Our first stop was Bramfield. The sun shone on the newly thatched roof, we rang the bells in the detached round tower, marvelled at the wonderful rood screen and were mightily amused by the memorial stone to Bridgett Applewhaite. The Queen's Head, opening at the early hour of 10am served delicious coffee to sustain us.

Next stop was Wenhaston where again there was plenty for non-ringers to look at, in particular of course the Doom. Then on to the splendid 8 bells at Halesworth. A phone call received on the coach, told us that no one could meet us, and that the keys were in an envelope. This was a little alarming as we didn't know the whereabouts of the envelope. We needn't have worried – it was prominently displayed, and ringing commenced straight away.

We stayed in Halesworth for a couple of hours so that people could find lunch in the various pubs and cafes there. Then on to Chediston, the main reason for choosing this area for our outing, as few of us had rung the newly restored bells. (It was an interesting challenge for our coach driver too.) We were met by the Downings, who are rightfully thrilled with the success of the restoration project. We all enjoyed our ringing here. Our next tower was Weybread

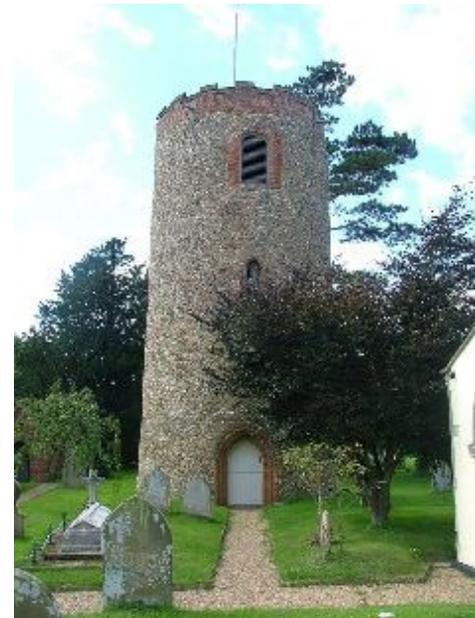
where again we were made most welcome.

Back to Metfield for our sixth tower and for the high spot of the day: tea made by the Women's Institute. W.I. tea has become a tradition of our outings, and this one was truly up to standard!

One more tower at Wickham Market on the way home. This is traditionally the "pub stop." The only problem is getting everyone out of the pub and back into the coach.

I see I have not said very much about the ringing. Suffice it to say that call changes were rung, and various methods to suit the varying abilities of the ringers. I would like to thank those who organised the ringing in each tower and all the tower correspondents/ captains who made us so welcome.

Sue Freeman



Bramfield tower

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## St Mary's Polstead

St Mary's is sited on a gentle hill overlooking the Box valley. This splendid position gives visitors to the church a view across typical "Constable country" to the great tower of Stoke by Nayland church set on its hill on the other side of the valley.

In the grounds of Polstead Hall, next to the church, are the remains of a mighty oak tree, a 'Gospel Oak'. It is said that the early Christian missionary, St Cedd, preached beneath this tree in the seventh century. An outdoor service is still held in August every year, near the stump of the old oak.

The church itself is far older than it looks from outside. Built at the end of the twelfth century, it has the Norman rounded arches typical of this time. The arches are built of tufa blocks and of brick. These are some of the earliest known English (rather than re-used Roman) bricks. The pillars of the nave are made of dressed stone and the Norman capitals are each carved in a different pattern. The quality of the work and the

fact that the church had side aisles in the Norman period, suggest that this was a very important little church.

There are three fifteenth century brasses. One of these, showing a priest in his vestments has been placed on the wall. The other two, representing a man and his wife, with the tiny figures of their five children, are still on the floor, protected by a carpet. The woman's face is rather worn but she is very elegantly dressed, while her husband wears a striking tasselled belt.

The tower with its spire, one of only two medieval stone spires in Suffolk, was built around the original main entrance to the church - the magnificently decorated Norman arch. Visitors to the church often miss this wonderful feature because you have to go in to the ringing chamber to see it. Ringers, of course, have a perfect view.

This brings us to the bells. The 9cwt six were cast by Mears of Whitechapel in 1825. They were retuned and rehung on a new frame and with new fittings by Taylors in 1955. They are an easy going ring, used frequently for SW District events. Practice night is Monday, including bank holidays. Visitors are always made very welcome.

Sue Freeman

