



# Magazine of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers

Issue 10

Spring 2013

Awl a'huld



St Mary Magdalene, Thornham Magna. See back page.

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## From the Editorial Team

It's spring again. What a difference it makes to be out in the sunshine, with the early bulbs already showing in the garden and in the churchyards. The towers will of course be cold for a week or three yet but in a way that slow entry to spring and summer adds to the charm.

In this edition we have made a slight change to layout to try to keep the magazine current in its look and to reflect modern publishing standards.

We have the first of a four part series on Peal Notation. This came about through a discussion at the GMC about Annual Report content where it became apparent that the part of the Report given over to this is a bit of a mystery to many. If it's not well understood by those with a lot of ringing experience what will be made of it by our younger and, newer readers of the Report? David Salter kindly agreed to shine a light on this quite dry topic. Apart from bringing news to our magazine readers we want (some would say we have a duty) to create and enhance understanding of our great hobby; to be more engaging with our readers, to help make Guild membership a fuller and more rounded experience.

We welcome the return of Jonathan Stevens to these pages with High Maintenance, this time his topic is 'The Ringing Chamber'.

AGM time is approaching; you will find details opposite. Again there will be a fringe meeting arranged by Jonathan Stevens and details are to be found below.

Please let us have more about your ringing at [magazine@suffolkbells.co.uk](mailto:magazine@suffolkbells.co.uk)

Alan Stanley, Sue Freeman and Richard Gates.

### **The Stradbroke Fringe 2-3pm AGM Day.**

This will be the fourth AGM 'Fringe' meeting. Previous topics have included Lottery grant funding; 'Bell Frames, repair or renewal'; and last year's Fringe meeting on teaching ringing led to the adoption of the ITTS scheme in Suffolk.

This year at Stradbroke the question is 'What are Church Bells for?' From the Heritage perspective we have Tamsin Earthy MSc (I met Tamsin at the Church Building Council Conference at Worcester) and for the Church we have Prebendary Basil Jenkyns MA. When they have each finished their 20 minutes, we will have questions and time for Philip to lead us in finding out what we think Church Bells are for.

It should be another interesting and lively 'Fringe'.

Jonathan Stevens, Chairman BAC

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## From the Retiring Chairman - *Philip Gorrod*



It is always satisfying when something that you set out to achieve actually comes to fruition, albeit often a long time later. When I was elected as your Chairman I said that, amongst other things, I would like to see a county-wide training programme for teachers to try to stem the drop-out rate from recruits due to lack of progress. Five years later we now have the national Integrated Teacher Training Scheme, which Jed has masterminded in Suffolk, and I can therefore retire at the AGM in the knowledge that at least one manifesto pledge has been met!

Quite a lot of other important things have happened over the last five years. We have

this wonderful publication for a start! We have our own mini-ring, the Vestey Ring. Membership is up 20%, as is the number of members ringing peals which have increased by 25%. We have an annual social event, debates with high quality speakers before each AGM, the list goes on.

But apart from the visible signs of progress, my main job as Chairman has been to ensure that what members don't see, the administration, runs smoothly, and this is where the effectiveness of the Guild Management Committee is so important. Your officers all have specific jobs, which I am pleased to say they all do well, but the GMC, your parliament, oversees what the officers do, and formulates policy for how ringing can be promoted in our county. What you see is the result of many hours of debate, discussion and hard work.

As my term of office draws to a close I am proud to have been part of such an effective management team, and I trust you will give every support to my successor and his/her fellow officers and GMC members, and I for one wish them all the best of luck!

### AGM Details

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

- 2.00-3.00pm Fringe meeting with two distinguished speakers, see panel opp.
- 2.45pm Open Ringing Stradbroke All Saints (10) IP21 5HU
- 3.30pm Service
- 4.30pm Tea
- 5.30pm **Annual General Meeting**
- Open Ringing at Stradbroke after the meeting until 9.00pm

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## South East District News

The Christmas quarter is always busy in the South East District: our ADM, this year at Pettistree, plus all the Christmas ringing, especially in Ipswich.

At Pettistree Peter Harper our chairman stepped down; he's done a fine job for five years as has Jane who has been our District Secretary. Two for the price of one!

Brian Redgers once again organised our Ipswich shoppers' ringing on the Saturday before Christmas. He has written about it (on page 10) in this magazine.

Offton's repertoire advances apace – now ringing Ashstead and Uxbridge so 10 spliced is on the cards soon. Well done Brian and his band. Wickham Market is active and there are welcome beginners at Bredfield, Pettistree and Rushmere. Marlesford and District will miss Alan Rogers and his enthusiasm.

I shall mention this again during the year but **do** start planning for the Diocesan centenary in 2014 – not long now. It would be good if EVERY tower in our District could record a peal or at least a quarter peal for that important anniversary. Have a word with our new chairman Mary Garner, Tom Scase the ringing master or Ruth Munnings the new secretary.

Thanks for all your activity during 2012.

George Pipe.

## The Mid Week Ringing Group

We had a very successful Mid Week ringers gathering on the second Tuesday of December, with 25 ringers and families gathering at Henley for an hour and a half of a variety of ringing on the 8 bells there.

Those not ringing had the chance to warm up in the excellent kitchen and thanks, to the local key holder, enjoy warming cups of tea and coffee.

At 12.30 we moved on



The mid week ringing group at Offton and opposite, lunch at The Sorrell Horse, Barnham.

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## South West district news

**R**ather than covering district events I thought this time we would look briefly at what a few of the individual towers in our district are up to.

At Nayland Rolie Whiting runs a popular practice on a Monday afternoon. Some ringers come from the other side of the Stour, in Essex, to join in. They ring a variety of doubles and minor methods, from St Simons to Cambridge and Norwich and are hoping to tackle London this spring. In January a SW district band rang a peal there as an 85<sup>th</sup> birthday compliment to Rolie.

In Boxford Richard Gates is teaching a family of four to ring: half a band all at the same time! They have just begun to ring for services so Boxford bells will now be heard more often. The Wednesday practice now alternates with Hadleigh, which has been a great help to both bands.

At Preston St Mary David Howe

arranges a quarter peal once a fortnight. The aim is to try to ring something new for at least one member of the band. They often work as a band at practices beforehand to try to ring something that will be a first for all of them. Recently the band has begun a regular quarter peal once a month at Edwardstone. They often arrange days out to ring a number of quarter peals at towers out of the local area.

At Polstead new ringer Johann Tasker has joined the Sunday band and has completed Level One of the Learning the Ropes progressive ringing scheme linked to the ITTS. Trainee ringing teacher Sue Freeman has completed Module 1 of the scheme and has become an associate member of the Association of Ringing Teachers.

We hope to cover the activities of other SW towers in future issues of the magazine.

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to the Sorrell Horse at Barham where we enjoyed some excellent food once again. Although we have a meal between morning and afternoon ringing every month this pre-Christmas one is ordered in advance so it runs a bit more smoothly.

After lunch we moved to Offton for ringing and enjoyed tea and coffee and an excellent cake thanks to Peta Whiting. All in all it was an enjoyable gathering enjoyed by members from all four districts and our friends from over the border in Essex.

Sally Munnings



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## North West District– Belfry Maintenance Day

On Saturday 10th November 2012, a group of approximately 20 bellringers gathered at St Mary's Church, Rougham for a training day on belfry maintenance. The day was led by Jonathan Stevens supported by Maurice Rose and was very informative.

We began outside for an explanation on noise levels and then climbed up to the bellchamber for a very detailed explanation on the working and maintenance of the various frames and methods of bellhanging that we were likely to encounter. Questions and answers flowed freely and the session passed all too quickly despite the cold winds blowing through the tower.

Thanks to Jonathan and Maurice for their tuition and not forgetting Anita for the very welcome hot drinks and biscuits. Thank you also to the young bellringers from Great Barton who climbed up and down the stairs to ring bells to order.

Graham Colthorpe

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## Notes from the North East

Supporting young ringers in the North East has been a particular focus and the list of achievements for the District's young ringers continues to grow. Of particular note, is the successful peal attempt of 5040 Plain Bob Minor on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at Reydon – Nicole Rolph's first, aged 14. Very well done Mole! The peal was also for Suffolk Guild Peal Week and to celebrate Alex Rolph's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It has been good to see the first results of the ITTS scheme in the District too. At Reydon there has been a flurry of activity already this year with Lewis Jackson and Christine Blunt both achieving their Learning the Ropes Level 1 certificates, and Ambrin Williams achieving both her Level 2 and Level 3 certificates. We also welcomed back Henry at Wissett to help swell the ranks of young ringers. Meanwhile Halesworth had an open evening and recruited new ringers to start off on their learning journey, including young Matthew Rolph who was determined to follow in both his sisters' footsteps. Well done to you all, and keep ringing!

Ambrin Williams



Peal band – left to right, front then back: Michelle Williams (1), Nicole Rolph (2), Alex Rolph (3), Craig Leach (4), Maggie Ross (5) and Philip Gorrod (6).

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## Young Ringers' day by Ambrin Williams



On Thursday 21st February, young ringers from around the Guild gathered and spent the day together, ringing and socialising. In the morning two (simultaneous) quarter peals were organised, one at Monewden conducted by David Howe and the other at Brandeston conducted by George Salter. Both bands rang Bob Minor and both achieved their quarters. Meanwhile, the other young ringers met at Rushmere St Andrew and had an enjoyable practice on the 6 there. A leisurely picnic lunch in the church hall was accompanied by the handbells that the Salter brothers had brought along with them. These were relished by the young ringers, who got the hang of them very quickly. As we sat and ate, it was obvious there was a good turnout as the tables filled up and the buzz of conversation filled the hall. It was possibly the most that have ever attended.

The afternoon was spent at Grundisburgh (pictured above) with the chance to ring on the light 12 there. This seemed to be enjoyed by everyone (even if it was a bit of a squash to sit down!) We rang rounds and call changes, Plain Hunt on 11 and had a couple of attempts at Grandsire Cinqes so that people at all different levels could have a go at ringing on 12. In between ringing there were opportunities for young Matthew Rolph to practice. He is following in the footsteps of his sisters, Alex and Nicole by learning to ring and it was that very day that he put both handstroke and backstroke together, so that's another young ringer for the Guild!

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## New bells for Fabian Stedman

Sue Freeman describes a link to Herefordshire ringing.

I hope you're sitting comfortably as I have a tale to tell.

Deep in rural Herefordshire lies the small village of Yarkhill. In 1625 a certain Francis Stedman became rector of the parish. He eventually had seven children, the eldest of whom, also Francis, went into the church, becoming rector of the neighbouring parish of Stoke Lacy. The second son, Fabian, born in 1640, and baptised at Yarkhill church, took a different path in life. At the age of 15 he was apprenticed to a master printer in London and it was there that his career in bell ringing took off. He was accepted into the Society of College Youths (not Ancient in those days, having been founded in 1637) at the age of 23. In 1667 he and Richard Duckworth published the first book on change ringing: *Tintinnalogia*.

Ten years later Stedman alone produced *Campanalogia* and in 1682 he became Master of the College Youths. Of course his most well known claim to fame is the principle which bears his name and which is rung in towers throughout the change ringing world.

We do not know if Stedman learned to ring at Yarkhill as a boy, but it is quite possible. Be that as it may, when, in 2010, the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers was planning to celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary the following year, it was felt that some special project was called for. At that time four bells were hanging in the tower. These

17<sup>th</sup> century bells were of poor tone and impossible to bring into tune. The fittings and frame were in a derelict state. Ashley Fortey, tower captain at a neighbouring village church came up with the idea of having a complete new ring of bells for Yarkhill, to celebrate the Guild's anniversary and the birthplace of the Father of Change Ringing. The scheme was an ambitious one: to rehang the old bells in the existing, but repaired, medieval frame and, below them, to provide a new frame containing eight new bells. Fundraising commenced and soon there were donors for all eight bells. This is where the Suffolk connection eventually arises: my brother Colin Ward, known to many Suffolk ringers but resident in Herefordshire, and I, donated the second bell in memory of our parents. In spring 2011 we, and the donors of some of the other bells, went to Whitechapel Bell Foundry to see five of the new bells being cast. This was a memorable and hugely enjoyable



St John the Baptist church Yarkhill

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## New Bells for Fabian Stedman - cont.

experience.

There followed a period of further fundraising before Nicholsons of Bridport hung the new bells in their new frame in the autumn of 2012. The first quarter peal, of Stedman triples naturally, was rung in December, Colin ringing 'our' bell. By the time you read this the first peal on the bells will have been rung. On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January this year I journeyed to Yarkhill to attend the dedication of the new bells by the Right Reverend Anthony Priddis, Bishop of Hereford. This was a great occasion, it being the first new ring of eight bells to be installed in Herefordshire in over sixty years. The church was packed with ringers and their families. Andrew Nicholson had come up from the engineering works in Dorset for the occasion. A short touch of Stedman triples was rung during the service and there was open ringing afterwards. At last I got to ring 'our' bell!

It is a very light ring, the tenor weight being only 4-1-27 but the tone is wonderful. They are all hung on one level in the narrow tower and the rope circle is excellent. A really fine job has been done.

Bells 1 – 5 and 7 were all donated by individuals or families while the 6<sup>th</sup> was given by the Moreton family and the Hereford Ringing Course in memory of Wilfrid Moreton, organiser of that course for 40 years. The tenor was donated by the Hereford Guild and bears the inscription:

'Given by the Bell Restoration Fund who named me FABIAN STEDMAN 1640 - 1713'

There is still work to be done. Three of the old bells have been rehung in the old frame, but the fourth, which has been found to be cracked, stands in the church awaiting a trip to Soundweld. A ringing gallery is to be built so that a kitchen and toilet can be put in the space beneath. These facilities will make the church more suitable as a bell ringing teaching centre. It is hoped that a simulator will be installed and a dumb bell and computer teaching aids. A programme of teaching ringing will be offered to the local band as well as the Hereford Guild. Local schools have been contacted with a view to teaching children. It has always been envisaged that the church of St John the Baptist, Yarkhill will become a place to teach ringing, since it has such a strong link with the history of bellringing. I look forward to returning there to see what further progress has been made and to have a longer ring on these delightful bells.



Sue and Colin at the foundry with 'their' bell

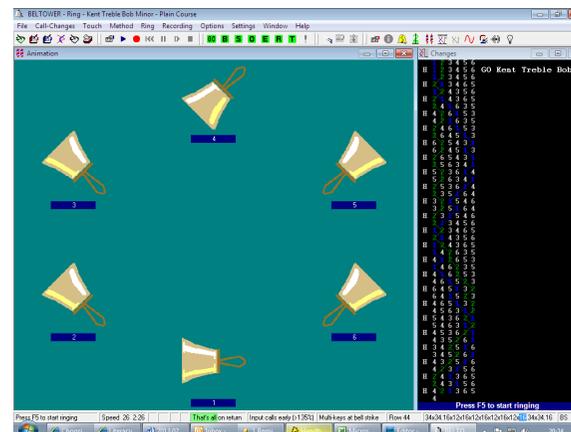
## Handbell Manager a software review by Suzanne Stevens

I first learnt to ring handbells in my early twenties and progressed as far as ringing Plain Bob Minor on 1-2 and Grandsire Triples on 7-8. Then came many years when I didn't ring handbells at all. Coming back to it in my early forties, I found that what I had learnt in my twenties was fine, but trying to learn anything new was a struggle. Handbell ringing once a week was good for progressing slowly but then life intervened and handbells stopped again. Now, we ring about once a month, and while I enjoy it hugely, my progress is very slow.



I was delighted to be given Handbell Manager as a Christmas present in 2012. This is a ringing programme, used in conjunction with Beltower or Abel (I use the former), which allows two motion sensors (ActionXL Made-for-Motion Motion Controller FP100) to be used with the same action as handbells. I find this more helpful than trying to use keyboard

keys. The sensors themselves are very light and their cables plug into the USB ports in the PC. To make it even more like ringing a real handbell I have the sensors taped to pieces of wood, with an M12 bolt at the far end and a nut that moves up or down with each stroke. Beltower allows you to choose which pair of bells you ring, the method and the speed. The screen shows both the line, row by row as the method progresses, and animated bells. I began by watching the line and then moved on to watching the bells. You can restart the method at any time and the computer never loses patience as more advanced fellow handbell



ringers may do. To start with, I couldn't even manage the first 1-2 dodge in Kent Treble Bob Minor; now I can get through the first two leads! I can also, for fun and at speed, ring Plain Hunt 10 and I like to ring a touch of Plain Bob Minor, just to keep my hand in. Buttons on the sensors give the commands to start ringing, begin the methods, put calls in and finish ringing. There are also programmed touches so

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## Handbell Manager (cont.)

the calls are put in automatically, great for those of us who are not conductors. Negative points are that I have not yet discovered how to start ringing at a particular point in the method; I would like to be able to learn the third lead in Kent without having to plough through the first two. When I tried inputting the change where I wanted to start the bells did not follow the correct pattern afterwards. I do not always find that the 'help' is helpful.

However, these are minor points. I would recommend Handbell Manager as a very useful additional program to enhance the use of Beltower or Abel.

<http://handbellmanager.changeringing.co.uk/index.php>

[www.beltower.co.uk](http://www.beltower.co.uk)

[www.abelsim.co.uk](http://www.abelsim.co.uk)

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## Christmas shopping ringing *by Brian Redgers*

**E**ach year since 2004, the South East District has attempted to ring all the bells in the eight churches of Ipswich at the same time. We do it as a gift to the shoppers to enhance the festive feeling but also as a reminder of the Christian nature of Christmas. On only two occasions have we managed all eight towers, building works or forgetful key holders sometimes frustrating us. It requires at least 51 ringers but generally about 70 take part each year. Ringers from anywhere are welcome; some have come from as far as Devon, Somerset and Lancashire here in the past, to get a tower they haven't rung at. Some of the bells are challenging but usually those who can manage call changes cope quite well. The ringing starts at 11.45am and finishes at 12.15. What is rung depends on who is there.

Hazards have been encountered as when the manager of the Diocesan Information centre attached an aerial to the 5<sup>th</sup> at St. Nicholas so he and his staff could watch the world cup! A visiting band left a broken rope at St. Stephens so a quick repair with a reef knot had to be effected to start ringing on time. The tenor there strikes twice so you hear four rings from three bells!

We meet by kind permission at St. Margaret's church at the end where Shirley and her helpers have provided mince pies and hot drinks. It affords an opportunity to catch up with friends.

Each year I worry about finding enough ringers; we always have, but do join us, we can always do with more.

If you have any ideas as to how we might vary the format to keep it fresh please pass them on. We have tried firing all the bells together but of course we don't hear it as it sounds across the town. So join us, the date is usually the Saturday before Christmas.

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## Peal Compositions part 1 by David G Salter

In the first of a four part series, David Salter sets out to de-mystify the complexities of peal records and compositions.

### Publication of compositions.

**W**hilst the peal report shows what was rung it is the composition that shows how it was achieved, its musicality, complexity and integrity. It acts as a historical marker to the ability of the band, the conductor and composer. It is also a fair measure of what was achievable at the time and the trends in musical taste.

Early compositions were sometimes recorded on peal boards. You will see “Grandsire Triples with 180 bobs and 32 Singles” or the composition given in full “W 2H W 3H repeat”.

In the late 1800's Guilds and Associations started to be formed. Most Guilds and Associations included the composition with performance in their reports. Also about this time major works such as Shipway's, Bannister's, Hubbard's and Sottanstell's were published and compositions became more widely available. Snowden's Treble Bob and the Central Council's first collections appeared at this time. The Bell News (superior forerunner of the Ringing World), carried compositions with much scrutiny. You could pay a fee to have them proved before publication. Publication also helped to establish correct authorship, there being many disputes in the pages of the Bell News.

With this wider availability, Guilds and Associations changed the format of publication. Instead of adding the composition a reference was added, e.g. 'Snowden page 58 peal 3' from which the composition could easily be found. Compositions that were local or not in the standard books were given in full or at the end of the report.

With the advent of books on ringing, compositions became more widely known and passed around the country and certain compositions began to establish themselves as “standards”. These valuable tomes provide clues to the limits of the exercise at that time with several notable false compositions confirming a lack of the full understanding of falseness.

Gabriel Lindoff, Suffolk's most prolific composer, was active at this time. He produced hundreds of compositions that have formed the basic building blocks of modern works, producing with mathematical accuracy callings that produce the best of the music for the method within the accepted boundaries of the time.

In the case of the Suffolk Guild, references were mostly quoted early on sometimes referring to an NDA (Norwich Diocesan Association) report and peal. Those compositions completely new to the Guild, were given in full. The Guild Master also kept a book of all compositions rung for the Guild. This book was still going in the 60's but then went missing and has yet

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## Peal Compositions part 1 (cont.)

to be found. It is such a shame as a huge amount of history is missing because of the loss of this book. From 1923 to date there have been stacks of new and innovative compositions rung for the Guild composed by local ringers of which the Guild can be justifiably proud. Charles Sedgley, George Symonds, Rod Pipe, Harry Lister, Leslie Melton, Edwin Goate, Stephen Pettman, and Brian Whiting to name just a few. And for our younger, newer ringers, publication of their compositions in the report offers great encouragement and a historical statement for the future.

In more recent years the position has been inconsistent. Sometimes lots of compositions would be published and at other times, very few. The result is a very incomplete picture of the Guild's competency.

In the late 1990's the Guild Management Committee agreed that only compositions new to the Guild should be published in the report. This proved very difficult as no full record existed of compositions rung. However in the last ten years I have assembled by research and speaking to the conductors the vast majority of compositions rung for the Guild. Some of the missing ones we may never find which is a huge shame. I am preparing an electronic document of all the rung compositions. I hope this will be available in the next year or two.

There is no doubt that with the advent of internet storage and availability of

compositions, most ringers can find compositions for anything they may wish to ring. Even the Central Council has decided that they are unlikely to publish any further collections of compositions in book form.

Two of the oldest Associations, the Yorkshire and Kent, have very complete and accurate collections of all compositions rung for them and they continue to publish new ones in their reports. These are a priceless resource for all generations of ringers.

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## A message from the Guild Librarian

We have collected general ringing books and non-Suffolk aspects of the Guild Library from the Records Office, and moved them to the Norman Tower where they will be more accessible. I will update the catalogue so that it contains details of what can be found where. Following on from that, I'd also like to issue a plea: if anyone has any spare free-standing bookshelves and would like to donate them, they would be gladly received. Please do get in touch.

Abby Antrobus

[librarian@suffolkbells.org.uk](mailto:librarian@suffolkbells.org.uk)

### Crossword answers

**Across:** 3. Triangle 7. Porker 8. Ageing 9. Brie's  
10. Recte 11. Isis 13. Eat 16. Anil 18. Opener  
19. Remove 20. Elects 21. Uprush 22. Tasterful  
**Down:** 1. Boards 2. Skiers 3. Trestle 4. Argues 5.  
Gridiron 6. Eagle owl 11. Immodest 12. Idleness  
14. Tearful 15. Admire 16 Invest 17. Seethe

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## High Maintenance - The Ringing Chamber

Sometimes known as the Ringing Room, it may seem obvious, but this is where, though often invisible, ringers are on the stage. This is where we perform, where we work to share our music with our (involuntary) audience. Sadly, once we've shifted the lawn mower and its petrol, moved the flower pedestal, shunted that old pew outside, the environment is still not really conducive to a thrilling performance. Just because we are working in a, perhaps, fifteenth century room, doesn't mean we have to be in fifteenth century conditions. With a little diplomacy, a little hard work and maybe the odd fundraising event, things can be a lot different.

So, what do we need to ring at our best? Let us start with the sound, often overlooked, but being able to hear your bell clearly amongst the others and to hear the conductor's instructions does make a difference! A target of between 68dBA and 74dBA is usually achievable though you may need a little guidance to get there. There is no need to shout, or conversely, strain to hear.

Any study of a workplace would likely start with Heat, Light and Ventilation; these are all key to any worker's comfort and any ringer's too. A quiet, and I emphasise quiet, fan heater can quickly build up a little warmth without introducing any more moisture into the often already damp tower. You will need a decent power supply for this; and power is also useful if you desire a simulator.

Whilst simulators are excellent for teaching, other teaching tools are a lot cheaper. A white board, one of those with squares marked on already, can be really useful for the odd spot of theory, especially for those who learn visually and need to picture what they are doing.

For lighting, I look for a couple of uplighters on one wall, well away from ropes, and a bulkhead light on the opposite wall. (I'm not a fan of fluorescent tubes, certainly not hanging from chains.) Lights need to be high enough not to catch your eye whilst ringing, low enough for the bulb to be easily changed. 2.4m/eight foot is about right. You can get bulkhead lights that double as emergency lights these days, a real joy when the power goes off near the end of a long touch.

West and sometimes south windows give lots of lovely natural light; they can also have direct sunshine to get in your eyes. I expect any experienced ringer will tell of peals where they rang a few courses blind, relying on rhythm and the hope in no one going wrong. A movable curtain or blind is not hard to rig up, but boy, what a difference.



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## The Ringing Chamber (cont.)



A carpet on the floor might seem like luxury, but where you can use one without damp floor-bricks rotting it, a good pure wool carpet can prolong the life of the ropes, keep otherwise cold feet warm and take some of the strident tones out of the bells. If you fancy rope mats, they need to be wool too. Why wool? Because synthetics wear the tailend whereas wool doesn't.

Ropes are often drawn, that is they drop at an angle from their ground pulleys in the belfry through the sound room, to make a nicer rope circle; this can mean they shoot out at an angle from the ringing room ceiling. Rope guides can help re-direct the fall of rope and tame the trickier ones. If the ceiling is above 5m/ sixteen feet then rope guides should have been fitted, if not, it is worth the time and effort of having them installed.

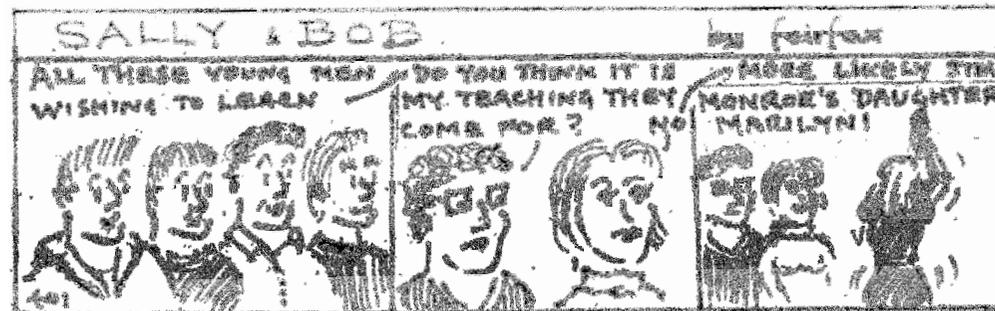
The Good Lord made us all different. One big joke is just how different we all are in height. Having sturdy boxes, preferably at least 500mm/20inches square, of various heights will help the shorter amongst us reach the sally and save too frequent adjusting of the tailend. Please don't condemn tall ringers to bent arms and eye-flicking long tails. Remember, anything that affects the concentration affects the performance that we should be taking pride in.

Working to make the ringing chamber a home from home will ensure you look forward to being there, and so will all those nice recruits we are seeking to encourage.

If you would like help or advice on setting up your ringing chamber do ask; helping with this is just one of the services your friendly Technical Advisor freely offers.

Jonathan Stevens

[bac@suffolkbells.org.uk](mailto:bac@suffolkbells.org.uk)



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## St. Mary Magdalene, Thornham Magna

The church at Thornham Magna has been described as one of the most welcoming churches in Suffolk and this has been attributed possibly to the philanthropy and generosity of the Henniker family, of nearby Thornham Hall. This is the Henniker church. If you walk westwards of the tower, you will see Thornham Hall over the fence, across a field. You will also find yourself standing among the Henniker graves, which are as understated and restrained as the Hall itself.

The church is attractively set above the lane on a cushion of green, littered with snowdrops at this time of the year. The 14th century tower is rather forbidding, not least because of the flat effect of the east wall caused by the buttresses being flush with it. Something similar exists at Rendlesham.

The porch is very elaborate, with its three alcoves. These, presumably, would have contained a rood group before the Anglican reformers removed them in the 16th century. The porch doesn't predate the Reformation by much - and notice the way it abuts the window.

You enter what is inevitably a rather dark church, thanks to the few windows and ranges of coloured glass. St Mary Magdalene has none of the treasures of Thornham Parva, (more details of these in a later issue perhaps), but it is a delight nonetheless. The Hennikers have their memorials here, and what a contrast they are to the triumphalism of the Tollemaches at Helmingham or the Poleys at Boxted. The best of them is to Edward Henniker, who died in 1902. It is the window in the south-west of the nave, and features glass by Morris & Co. The figures are by Edward Burne-Jones, and depict a gorgeous St Mary Magdalene, a mournful St John and the rather sombre Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross. Along with glass at Shimpling and Hopton, it is one of the best Pre-Raphaelite windows in Suffolk.

Another of the memorials on this wall is by William Woodington, who, Sam Mortlock tells us, was responsible for the bronze reliefs around the base of Nelson's Column. Even more striking in the nave are the seven hatchments, an unusually large number even for Suffolk, which, we are told has more than any other county apart from Kent.

The bells are an easy going eight hundredweight 6 rung from the ground floor. Unusually they have deliberately unmatched sallies, each one being of a different colour. And this carries through into the theme used for the badge on their ringers' clothing.

Additional material from Simon Knott  
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