



The Essex Association of Change Ringers

6 Bell and 8 Bell Striking Competitions

9 July 2016

1 6 BELL COMPETITION

At 2pm on a blustery, sunny Saturday eleven teams met at Mistley in North East Essex for a draw. The Master of the Association, John Harpole, fanned out his run of Hearts in a practiced hand and with a winning smile invited the competitors to 'pick their place'. They did so.

A few reshuffles later, to take account of teams running late from prior ringing commitments, the competition began. The judges, Simon Rudd, Ros Keech and Faith Pearce betook themselves to a table in the adjacent churchyard and everybody else settled down to wait their turn.

The judges views on the bells were that they were reasonably easy to ring, not too oddstruck and could be clearly heard in the ringing chamber.



The first team up the tower were Great Bardfield and Great Easton who rang Plain Bob Doubles to a peal time of 3.08. This was quite a slow speed with some hesitations.

Nevertheless it was a creditable performance in the nervewracking role of ringing first and enjoyable to listen to for those outside.

During the waiting many people took advantage of Mistley Park Place across the road for refreshment and a steady stream of smiling and relieved ringers appeared in the churchyard with ice creams after their test piece to chat and listen to the remaining teams in the sunshine.

The second team to climb the steps were West Ham



This was a quicker speed and the team rang Grandsire Doubles in what would be a peal time of 3.02

Initially the changes were a little uneven but smoothed out later. The judges felt that faults were caused by hesitations.

Again, this was pleasant to listen to

Mistley's bells were tuned by Peter Rayner (3rd from left) when he was at The Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

Third onto the ropes were Saffron Walden, who along with West Ham may have travelled the furthest to



compete. This team rang Grandsire Doubles and with a quicker speed than the previous teams, ringing a pace that equated to a peal time of 2.43

There were initial inconsistencies and unevenness which evened out after the first minute and occasionally the tenor was marginally too close. Very nice to listen to.

The fourth team to ring were Hornchurch who wasted no time in the two minutes of practice time. Straight into doubles at a cracking pace until their time was up.



The test piece, Grandsire Doubles, was much more measured, coming in at what would have been a peal time of 2.58

After slightly uneven rounds the test piece itself was very smooth. Described by the judges as 'controlled ringing, especially later on' it was very good.

The fifth team were Prittlewell



The test piece was Plain Bob Doubles rung to an approximated peal time of 2.52.

There were good even changes, with the tenor not too close. The judges commented that it was 'let down by quick and slow blows' but that it was 'nice ringing'

Team 6 were from the nearby tower of Kirby-le-Soken



They too had a fast practice piece before ringing Plain Bob Minor to an equated peal time of 2.48.

The judges described this as a 'confident and controlled piece of ringing... foot tappingly good'

Certainly there was a round of applause after it finished. Although that may have had something to do with the cricket match on the adjacent ground!

Kirby-le-Soken were followed by the team from Chelmsford Cathedral



Another fast-paced practice before ringing a very even Grandsire Doubles.

Coming in at a pace that would have given a peal time of 2.45 it was very smooth ringing with 'just a few inconsistencies'

Team 8 were the local band from Mistley itself



Mistley rang Plain Bob Minor to a slightly slower pace which would have given them a peal time of 2.52

The judges thought this was a 'very enjoyable piece with a few inconsistencies'

The ninth team were a joint band from Coggeshall and Kelvedon



After a quick and even practice piece the test piece started well. There were marginal gaps when the tenor came to lead and after 3 ½ minutes the pace slowed slightly. They rang an approximated peal time of 2.57

The judges felt this was a 'solid, clean piece of ringing (but it) didn't quite flow'

The penultimate team were Sawbridgeworth



They rang Grandsire Doubles to a speed that would have given a peal time of 2.45.

It sped up slightly and then slowed again and the judges felt that 'it didn't really settle down. Lots of quick and slow blows'.

The final team up the tower were Writtle



Writtle were by far the fastest team, ringing Grandsire Doubles to a peal time of 2.40.

It zipped confidently along and the judges commented that the second half 'had style and flowed'. They also praised the good tenor ringing of this piece.

Whilst the judges deliberated the teams enjoyed a very good tea in the nearby church hall. It's hard work catering for 70+ people and the tea team did a great job. The judges were then introduced and the places given. Unusually, this was via a grade system and the judges felt that no team fell below a B-

The final scores were:

1 Kirby-le-Soken	15 faults
2 Mistley	23 faults
3 Writtle	26 faults
4 Chelmsford	31 faults
5 Coggeshall / Kelvedon	35 faults
6 Prittlewell	42 faults
7 Hornchurch	51 faults
8 West Ham	68 faults
9 Saffron Walden	70 faults
10 Sawbridgeworth	80 faults
11 Gt Bardfield / Gt Easton	85 faults

And here are the winning team with their trophy and the judges.





Ian Culham receiving the second place certificate from John Harpole and Andrew Brewster receiving the third place certificate for Writtle

Many thanks go to Lesley Barrell for her effort in organizing the event.

2 8 BELL COMPETITION

Kirby-le-Soken

Five teams chose to compete this year in the inter-District 8 bell competition and this meant a quick dash for many people who were ringing earlier, including the judges and Master, from tea at Mistley to try and make the 6.30pm draw time that was announced.



The test piece for this competition had been announced at the AGM in May as Westminster Bob Major. Talking to the teams taking part it became apparent that although everyone had practiced – which was a challenge in its own right to get everyone in a team together - some teams had practiced more than others. Everyone had found the method challenging, with more than a few people citing the front work as more difficult than they expected. Others commented that the plain treble work meant that everything happened much quicker than they were used to!

So it was always going to be an interesting competition. Added to that the bells of Kirby are challenging too, being a quite light 8 (Tenor 9-3-1) that zip along and with some oddstruckness to contend with. They can be clearly heard in the ringing chamber however as the judges noted when they rang

beforehand.

Unlike Mistley, here the teams had no choice but to wait outside. It was a nice, cool evening and the teams were lucky enough to share it with the resident mosquitoes and midges as they waited under the trees.

The first team drawn were the North Western District



with a regular band can be quicker.

North Western set off very quickly both in their initial practice ring and the test piece

There was a major slip at 4.30, a slightly lesser one at 6.52 and unevenness throughout with the tenor blows too close. Still, the mistakes were quickly recovered and they came into rounds after 7.33 minutes. A speed that equated to a peal time of 2.50, although peals here

The second team to ring were the Northern District.



They took a minute to settle down and achieve even-ness. There were no major slips, but plenty of quick blows although by the 6th minute there were some nice changes, it had evened out and they had a handle on the oddstruck-ness of the bells too. The judges commented that the leading was inconsistent.

They rang to a peal time of 2.54

The third team were Southern District and this was very nice ringing. This was a good competition pace,



even striking and no major slips. There was some occasional clipping but generally it was clean with consistently open handstroke leads.

The judges commented that it was confident with not many faults.

The equated peal time was 3.00

The fourth team up the tower were the North Eastern district. And yes, many of you may spot that this



is the local band! Unsurprisingly then this was very good. It was nicely paced and very well struck. There was a good rhythm, open handstrokes most of the time with only the occasional quick blow.

The judges described it as a 'solid, nice piece with minor faults'. Those listening outside really enjoyed it, with a rival team-member commenting that it was almost faultless to

listen to.

The time the test piece was rung in gave them a peal speed of 3.01 hours.

The final team to compete were South Eastern District who had some unevenness and hesitation at the



beginning. There were some minor slips and close blows but by 2 ½ minutes this had improved.

The judges noticed a mistake in the middle but this was rapidly recovered.

It was a good pace – giving a peal time of 2.59 and there was some very nice ringing.

The results for this competition took much less deliberation for the judges. Perhaps the midges encouraged them as only a few minutes later, after the bells had been lowered, they were ready to deliver their comments and the scores.

They noted that there were varying degrees of success in mastering the method as well as the striking.

- 1 North-Eastern 13 faults
- 2 Southern 33 faults
- 3 South-Eastern 38 faults
- 4 Northern 87 faults
- 5 North-Western 139 faults



North Eastern ringers receiving their trophy from the Association Master.

Congratulations go to the North Eastern District on their clean sweep this year.



Southern and South Eastern Districts receiving 2nd and 3rd place certificates respectively.

That left the judges to be presented with thanks and wine before those still present gave a boost to the adjacent pub's takings for the night.

Again thanks to Lesley Barrell for organising and to the judges for a long day's listening.