

The Essex Association of Change Ringers

Founded 1879

President: The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford



1. What training is provided at Society level (type, frequency and level) and what programme for enhancing these facilities is envisaged and over what period?

The Association runs its own 3 day non residential course covering rounds and call changes to surprise methods, teaching and bell maintenance. There is also an annual training day in the autumn specialising in a few topics as requested.

Most districts arrange their own training days, for example:

Monthly 2-hour district 8-bell practice Saturday afternoons (none in October/November/December owing to other events)

Monthly district 6-bell practice at Gt Bromley, 2nd Friday in the month

Monthly Surprise Major practice at Gt Holland (temporarily suspended October-December)

Twice-yearly 10-bell practice at Coggeshall

Monthly training in advanced methods (eg Double Norwich, Surprise Major) and intermediate methods (eg Double Court, Single Oxford, Surprise Minor). Until recently, a weekly school had been held covering Grandsire, Plain Bob Doubles and Minor, but this has stopped due to lack of take-up and the overloading of a small number of helpers

District Practices. Seven such practices appear on the 2012 District programme. These practices, held in local towers, can raise the standard of ringing in those towers (and thus the district as a whole) and encourage local ringers to attain a personal standard which by providing interesting progressions can encourage ringers to continue. b. Surprise practices. In 2012 nine

2. Is there a dedicated youth officer to seek out and progress the training of younger ringers (10-25 years of age)? If not, is there a proposal to create such a responsible person?

There is no post for Youth Office currently within the Association and no current proposal to create one.

Recruitment is generally organised by individual towers gain new members with assistance if required from either district officers or the Association's PRO and Education Officer.

3. What specific ringing centres exist and are there any proposals to increase the number in operation? Where there are centres of excellence based on existing tower activities how are these utilized in progressing ringers?

We currently have 3 ringing centres: Prittlewell, Coggeshall and Chigwell. Each runs specific courses and are advertised across the association.

4. What external contacts have been made with such bodies as schools in the interest of new recruitment and are there any proposals to extend the areas of opportunity to recruit?

A few towers are teaching new recruits but the only real evidence we see of this is in our new members. It is not known how many of these new ringers continue to learn to ring. It is known that many towers hold occasional open days at which time young people and their parents are encouraged to come up to the tower to chime bells, see a demonstration of how they are rung and take a look at the bells (with all necessary precautions). Leaflets on bellringing are handed out and encouragement given to anyone who would like to come along to a practice to have a go at ringing a bell.

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Some recruitment takes place when ringing parents bring their children to learn, or young ringers bring their siblings or friends to learn. Older ringers also recruit new ringers from amongst their circle of friends and colleagues. Some new ringers have been gained from Association publicity at Country fairs and other events, and CCCBR posters have been placed on noticeboards with a welcoming paragraph or two, but without a great deal of success.

5. What resources does the society need from the Council, Ringing Foundation or other agencies to ensure adequate replenishment of ringers in the future? Are there measures which these agencies could provide which are not being provided at present?

Funding to assist with promotional material for open days, events, etc

6. What proportion of annual society expenditure is spent on training and recruitment? How much would be required to carry out all aspirations for training new ringers and how should such monies be raised? Is there support within the membership for paying more for ringing to ensure its future?

Training days and the Essex Ringing Course are funded via student fees. Our PRO has an annual budget of £450 for promotional events and materials.

7. It is recognized that many societies already have advanced training programmes and a feedback on good practice would be useful to share.

Some districts run advanced practices for example:

The methods to be studied are planned to provide a steady progression from Plain Bob Minor through to Surprise methods and related more advanced work is provided for the more proficient ringers. Prior to the practice, theory notes are circulated. Issues or queries arising from these form the first part of the training session. This is followed by practical work. Depending on the level and progress of the learners or the number of those attending, the practice may become 'An Evening of,', or a quarter peal of the designated method is rung.

Surprise practices appear on the programme. These practices provide opportunities for more able ringers to consolidate their knowledge and progress to new methods and allow newer ringers to be part of a band of 'good ringers', ringing methods for which their local band may be unable to provide sufficient help.