

THE BELLS OF ST MARY'S (AND THEIR RINGERS)

Valerie Banwell writes

About three years ago I decided to return to the bell-ringing fold. This is an activity enjoyed by a few friendly people of Boxted and Langham and it occurred to me that others may be interested in what bell-ringers do, since most of the time we are out of sight, if not out of sound. St Mary's Church has a ring of six bells which are rung for practice on Tuesdays, for service on alternate Sunday mornings and to mark significant events. When I attended my first practice in 25 years, I was warmly welcomed and invited to join in. Things had changed in my absence but not the custom amongst ringers of making strangers welcome.

There are six bells in St Mary's tower; ranging in size from the Treble weighing around 4cwts to the Tenor weighing 9cwt. The oldest bell is dated 1618 and the youngest 1906. At the moment the ringers themselves number barely more than the bells, which makes it difficult to keep the bells ringing as it only takes one or two to have other commitments to prevent us from having enough to ring. We range widely in age and experience, with ringers whose ringing began back in the last century to those who have barely been handling a rope for a year. There is much to learn in this arcane art and becoming friendly with the rope is only the start. There are opportunities to engage in change-ringing to whatever level you wish. Several of the Langham ringers are members of the Essex Association of Change Ringers.

Due to the general shortage of ringers in rural areas, we find that a nucleus of ringers moves between several churches. I find myself ringing for service at four churches in the area and practising in several more.

We aim to achieve a good standard of change-ringing and to continue this uniquely English tradition which gives us physical and mental exercise and opportunities for social contact – in fact, everything we need to keep us healthy!

If you think you might like to learn more about this ancient and fascinating art, contact the Captain of Bells, Stephen Garner, on 272599 (email s.garner.22@btinternet.com)

STOW MARIES AERODROME

Near Maldon there is a unique relic of the Great War in the site of Stow Maries Aerodrome, used by the Royal Flying Corps and then the Royal Air Force in the defence of London against raiding airships and bombers from 1916 to 1918. At the Boxted Airfield Museum, Langham Lane, on 17 September at 7.30 pm, the Curator of Stow Maries, Roger Smith, will be giving an account of the history of the aerodrome and its current restoration. Entry is by donation of £3. Further details are available at 07885 657255 or (email) jezzyh@btinternet.com.

LANGHAM WI

The Summer Garden Party was held in the garden of Langham Lodge, the home of Robin and Tricia Gooding. The tea was delightful and the weather perfect. The special guest, Paralympic medal-winner from East Bergholt Zoe Wilson, was given a very warm welcome. Members were amazed to find that a person who could lift no less than 88 kilos weighed only 40 kilos herself!

LANGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Items from the 2 July meeting

Planning

The Council sees no major difficulties for Chilvers Automatic on Lodge Lane but echoes the concerns of residents. Regarding two applications for Willow Grove, Grove Hill, the Council is now unclear as to which parts of the building are used commercially and which are used as part of a domestic residence; it considers that the planning authority should now inspect the property to verify the use of its component parts.

Recreation Ground

The former community shop building has been painted and the goal-mouth areas re-turfed. The Council will try to repair the broken children's table in the playground and the sign for the adult exercise equipment. The stile at the south of the recreation ground will be replaced by a gate provided by the County Council's public rights of way department.

Village Handyman

Mike Rich of Wick Road has been appointed and has made a start on the outstanding jobs.

BOXTED HISTORY GROUP

The first of two summer expeditions consisted of a cruise on the Stour from Sudbury Quay to Cornard Lock, followed by a visit to the Bulmer Brick Company. At Bulmer the owner, Peter Minter, talked of the history and art of brick-making before conducting the party round the works.

LITTLE OWLS PRE-SCHOOL

Little Owls provides 3-hour morning or afternoon sessions or 6-hour all-day ones from Monday to Friday in term time. 3- and 4-year olds qualify for government funding for up to 15 hours a week; funding is also available, subject to family circumstances for 2-year olds.

Under the enthusiastic and well-qualified staff, the children have in the past few months enjoyed many and varied activities, including growing sunflowers, making imaginary gardens, baking cookies and bread and playing indoors and outdoors with the huge range of toys. There are vacancies in the autumn term for children aged 2 to 5. Email:

littleowlsboxted@live.co.uk

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