

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers)



NEWSLETTER No 134 - OCT 2012



Founded Oct 18th 1909

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TOWER OF THE QUARTER – ST MARY THE VIRGIN, CHASTLETON, OXON



(Photo: Chris Povey)

It's really an Oxfordshire issue this time. The county has had little if any exposure in recent past issues, so perhaps the two towers this time will help redress the balance. Salford features elsewhere in these pages (see p.7) and Chastleton is the first Oxfordshire church to feature in 'Tower of the Quarter'. And what a little gem this church is! As can be seen, it stands beside Chastleton House, which is built from similar stone, so together they form a harmonious and timeless arrangement.

Although small, St Mary the Virgin's Church has a number of very interesting features. A visit gained much information, but the excellent Guide Book provided a great deal more and is recommended (£3 to Church funds - not being owned by the National Trust, it has to fend for itself!). An unusual feature externally is the difference in rooflines between the Nave and Chancel, the latter being higher due to the flat slopes of the nave roof. A pitched high wall, topped by an empty bellcote, divides them. The tower battlements reflect those on the side towers of the House. Which came first, one wonders?

Although its main entrance through the tower is not especially unusual, the size and height of the doorway may be. It is small and fairly low, and is the first indication that the Church has had little updating in the past to make it 'over-grand'. And so it seems when inside: how nice. There is evidence of a Norman North doorway, but this was blocked up many years ago. Notice the font, too, which is thought to be 13th.C or even earlier. A visual treat is the 1623 wood-panelled Jacobean pulpit, which is thought to have been made by the same craftsman who made much of the panelling in the House. Be sure to see the almost certainly 13th.C floor tiles in front of *(cont overleaf)*

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THE FSG WEB-SITE IS: <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>

The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (January 2013) is December 13th 2012

This Newsletter survives only because of the contributions you make to it. Without them it will fail. Articles can be submitted to the undersigned via email or to the postal address shown above, or to any committee member.

Please contribute something, however small (or large). You would be surprised the things people enjoy reading about. A few suggestions: an historical item; a funny story; a quarter peal report; poems; puzzles; tales, events past and to come; a ringing tour, even! Send them in. They will all be welcome.... and don't worry if you think your handwriting is unintelligible. It can normally be translated. Just send the stuff in!

(Caretaker) Newsletter Editor: Chris Povey Postal and email addresses above

If sending articles by email, please use MS Word (not the dreaded Works*) format for written articles, jpg format for photos, and scanned items in pdf or jpg formats. (I have the facility to scan photo prints if you haven't.) Please let me know ownership of photos for acknowledgement where relevant. If you have a long article, you might consider breaking it into parts. (* If you've only got Microsoft Works, then 'Save As' your article into Rich Text Format – ie, suffix .rtf – and send in this form.)

TOWER OF THE QUARTER, ST MARY THE VIRGIN, CHASTLETON- cont. from front cover

the altar in the South Aisle. To the side of this altar, near the lectern, will be seen two floor brasses, both of which date from about 1600. The South Aisle altar is new, having been designed by a Mr Poole from Oddington in 1993. Notice, too, the fragments of the wall paintings on the north wall of the nave at its east end. The windows have themes and provide much interest. There are many other features worth seeing.

The bells were rehung by Whites of Appleton in 1993. The details are: Treble 4-0-20 (John Rudhall, 1811), 2nd 3-2-21 (Matthew Bagley III, 1762), 3rd 3-2-25 (Richard Keene, 1696), 4th 3-1-13 (Henry Bagley III, 1731), 5th 4-3-13 (Henry Bagley III, 1731), Tenor 6-3-8 (John Rudhall, 1825).

EDITORIAL

Ahhhh.... the Jubilee and the Olympics are over. No more special ringing.... for this year at least. Congratulations to those who rang for these events. For reports of towers that rang for the Jubilee and the Olympics (including the torch runs), see 'Around the Towers' on p.11.

The Annual Ringing Tour this year was different: a three-day affair. The Report on p.6 shows it was greatly enjoyed, so Richard Lewis-Skeath gets the laurels for putting it all together. I'd heard about 24 ringers attended, so if attendance is a measure of success, then it was a great success.

Yet another Guild artefact has been discovered. I refer to the photo of the Guild in 1929, which came to light in Carlisle. I'm inclined think this is largely due to the Guild's greater exposure to the ringing scene at large, through the website and through being affiliated to the Central Council. If so, let this exposure remain. I think it fair to say we're all waiting for the pre-War Shield to re-appear. Hopefully it's still in existence somewhere and has not been melted down by some rogue in the distant past. I know various places in the area have been searched, but we've had the Old Minute Book from Swindon and the 1929 photo from Carlisle, both from well outside our immediate area. Should there be a full-blown appeal for a search?

Talking of Minute Books, the first Minute Book of the re-formed Guild has reappeared. In its own way it's as important as the Old Minute Book. It's with me at present, as I've been requested to

photograph its pages as a digital record (as I did with Old Minute Book). It's the first time I've seen the 'new Old' Minute Book, so I've been fascinated to read about the early days of the reformed Guild. As mentioned in the July Editorial, the 40th anniversary of the exploratory meeting at Chipping Campden on March 30th 1973, at which the proposal to reform the Four Shires Guild was made with unanimous support from the gathering, comes up in 6 months time. I believe we should celebrate this. The Committee will consider this at their next meeting. Sadly, some of us won't see the 50th anniversary – and this applies equally to the survivors of that meeting (there are just six at the moment). Whatever the Committee decides to do doesn't stop individual members ringing something for that anniversary. (If I remember correctly, a peal was rung in 1993 to celebrate the 20th anniversary.)

Readers will spot that we are now displaying an advert for John Taylor & Co. This is a commercial arrangement, which is open to all bell-related suppliers. The rates are dependent on size and regularity. Speak to me if interested in advertising. (In case some readers think we are displaying an advert of a financially-ruined company, this John Taylor & Co isn't Taylor, Eayre & Smith, the company that went bust 3 years ago; nor is it that company in a different guise. It is a new company with new directors, new management and either new or carefully

selected and proven employees from the previous disaster zone.)

An updated Guild handbook has been produced. It includes the Guild Rules as amended and agreed at last year's AGM, the rules of the Newing and Brazier Striking Competitions, the Guild Bell Restoration Fund constitution and rules, a brief history of the Guild and some photographs to brighten it up. Copies will be available at the AGM at Chastleton for distribution to members. Come to the AGM and get your (free) copy.

The Committee's decision to display the Newsletter on the Guild's website one issue in arrears means that you will need to be a member to read an up-to-date issue. Paid-up members will continue to receive up-to-date hardcopies; and those who until now have taken their Newsletter from the web will in future receive theirs by email. The new arrangement will begin formally with the January 2013 issue. It seems perfectly reasonable to me that paid-up members have an advantage over non-members!

Chris Povey, (Caretaker) Editor

(The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Four Shires Guild or its Committee. The Guild endorses no products or manufacturers advertised within the Newsletter – but would not allow such advertisements where the goods or services are knowingly questionable.)

IMPORTANT LAST-MINUTE AGM DETAILS PLEASE "READ, MARK, LEARN AND INWARDLY DIGEST"

As mentioned in the AGM Notice in the July Newsletter, we are being allocated a car parking area. It is important that we use this car parking area and the route to and from it, to prevent lots of traffic through Chastleton. The National Trust routes car away from the village, otherwise the village would be inundated by cars regularly. I guess even then, some NT traffic ignores the instructions in the NT Handbook and invades. Please follow the instructions below, to convince the residents the FSG contains nice people. Yes, it's a longer way round, but it's done to help the residents.

The car parking area for us is well placed. It is the field adjacent to the churchyard. There is a field gate entrance a few yards up from the eastern boundary wall of the churchyard. It's the only one, so there's no good excuse for missing it. There's a very good chance it will have an FSG notice attached to it. It's got literally acres of room, so there's no need to go too far in. On leaving, turn left out up the hill. Julie Townsend of Chastleton has provided the field, and our thanks go to her for this kindness.

The routes into Chastleton are these. Basically it's follow the NT signs to Chastleton:-

- 1) from west/north/south: follow A44. Ignore the first two right turns to Chastleton, but go up the hill and turn right towards Stow (A436). Take the first right turn to Chastleton (follow the National Trust signs). Don't park in the NT designated car park, because it has little spare room, but carry on slowly down the hill. In a short distance you will see the Church on the right. Turn right into 'our' field just before the Church;
- 2) from Chipping Norton and Stow. Turn onto A436 and either turn right or left as required at the NT signs. Continue down to 'our' field as above.

PLEASE BE KIND TO CHASTLETON BY KEEPING TO THESE DIRECTIONS

AGM 'DOMESTICS'

WC's: the National Trust is kindly allowing us to use their lavatory facilities. These can be found as follows: enter the House grounds through the main entrance arch; continue down the gravelled path and turn left onto another smaller gravel path; continue through a narrow opening towards the courtyard. The lavs are on the right after the narrow opening.

Tea: will be in the Church. We shall be sharing the teas with the House visitors (whom we shall charge), because there are no café facilities there. Please bring food as previously.

Visit to the House: this is by ticket only (available from the ticket office in the courtyard). NT members enter free, otherwise a charge. Please note the House is open 1.00-4.00pm: last admission 3.00pm.

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 18th SEPTEMBER.

The Committee met on Tuesday 18th September at the Hon Sec's home in Ilmington. Stuart Cummings and Sophia Lewis-Skeath gave their apologies.

1) The Minutes of the June meeting were agreed without amendment.

2) **Matters arising** were:-

John still to confirm through investigation that no other Minute Books or suchlike are missing;

The Committee decided that 5 extra Newsletters will be printed, with distribution at the discretion of the Committee. A Newsletter will always be sent to Kineton (HWRC); and this time to Chastleton and Salford, and to Hinton-on-the-Green, where there is a band being taught;

The recent Ringing Tour and the Minimus Competition were both well-supported and judged successes. The Tour was particularly successful, as it was a week-end event, and thanks to Richard L-S were expressed. The Guild Walk on Oct 6th is fully organised (by Wendy Mace);

AGM and Striking Comp arrangements: Chris reported the NT and parking arrangements are organised. Stuart C has arranged the Vicar for the Service, but is having difficulties with contacting a person over using the Church for the teas, but he is persevering. A judge is arranged. Other towers open is unlikely, but rise/method/fall certificates are hopefully being arranged. Keith M agreed to write a brief hand-out for the NT to distribute to visitors on the day. Chris to contact the NT;

Inter Shires Competition: John said neither Longborough nor Naunton were suitable. Brailles was suggested, but Long Compton was thought to be better. Peter K would contact Trevor Hobday;

Past Merit Award, missing dates: only evidence of it being awarded in 2000 was found;

Life Members list: thought now to be complete and will be submitted for ratification at the AGM. New candidates for Life Members were discussed;

Subscription collection of 'long distance'

Unattached members: it is recognised this can be difficult. John agreed to assist with those on the

Mid-Week Tours wishing to renew. Payment by internet bank transfer was suggested, now that the Guild accounts are accessed in this way by the Treasurer. Michael D said this was quite possible. It was agreed that this facility should be given. The account details would be published in the Oct Newsletter;

Review of membership: list updated. Two new members from the Bidford peal were ratified. Some non-payers may have genuinely forgotten: remind the likely ones?

Annual Dinner: 2nd Feb 2013, Moreton. Menu not finalised yet, but cost will be £21. A Speaker is required. Resolved to ask John Harrison of CC;

Christmas Party: Dec 15th. Location to be chosen. Peter Q to obtain details for the Newsletter notice;

Guild lapel badges: the standard badge (*as on the front page. Ed*) required minor alterations, as some detail disappears when it is made smaller. The Committee agreed to the alterations and agreed to the Secretary making an order. Winner's shields; it was agreed that the Sec place an order.

3) **Reports:** the following are highlights:-

Hon Secretary: the Guild's EIG Public Liability insurance required strange details for renewal. Peter Q agreed to contact EIG;

Treasurer: Michael D presented his report (circulated prior to the meeting). No issues;

Ringing Master: Sat nights are running OK;

Membership Sec: a slight difference between Peter K's membership list and Michael D's to be sorted after the meeting;

Newsletter Editor: Chris reported that John Taylor & Co have placed an order for a regular advert. The Oct issue was almost complete; printing was agreed as Thursday 27th Sept. This issue would only go to those who have paid the 2012 sub. Chris suggested that the Newsletter be displayed on the Guild website one issue in arrears, so

that only paid-up members would have the up-to-date issue. Those members obtaining it from the web would be emailed the copy. This was agreed;

Mid-week Tours co-ordinator: Isobel reported an average of 21 attending and £100 was given to Michael D for the BRF;

Bell Restoration Fund: no further applications. Chris reported he was unhappy with Hinton's bird netting and requested a second opinion be sought. It was agreed that Bill Nash be asked to inspect. Chris to arrange. Freda Cleaver had asked whether there would be any objections to distributing a fund raising quiz at the AGM, in aid of the new Welford access ladder. No objections.

4) **Items for discussion:-**

Chris made the proposal that all income from advertising in the Newsletter goes to the BRF: agreed;

Chris Mew's CCCBR letter and Ringing Foundation grant: agreed to defer to next meeting, when more info is known;

Guild trophies valuation: to leave as is;

40th anniversary celebrations: defer to next meeting;

Guild personal accident cover: Andrew gave details of other guilds' cover. Do we require this? Will discuss at next meeting;

Bourton-on-the-Hill: a nice 'thank you' letter was received after the June visit;

2013 events: Tour 1st weekend in July; Minimus 2nd weekend in Sept; AGM 2nd weekend in Oct. Walk? Possibly (Wendy Mace to decide).

5) **Any Other Business:-**

None.

Next Meeting: 4th December, Ilmington. In 2013: 5th March, 4th June, 3rd Sept, 4th December (*NB: these notes do not supplant the formally-agreed Minutes.*)

A (RATHER NICE) LETTER OF THANKS.....

I organise the Saturday night tower bookings. I write to each tower contact after the relevant Guild practice has taken place to thank them for letting us ring. I was particularly pleased to receive a reply to my letter to Helen Tuff, the contact for Bourton-on-the-Hill. The Guild rang there on Saturday 2nd June, which happened to be the Diamond Jubilee weekend. The reply was from John Weston, who said:

'Firstly I would like to thank-you and your fellow ringers for coming to St Lawrence on the Jubilee weekend. The ringing was much appreciated and added another dimension to the various activities planned over the weekend in the village.

As one of the Church Wardens at St Lawrence I would like to extend, on behalf of the Church, an invitation to The Four Shires Bell Ringers Guild to climb our tower and ring the bells whenever a suitable occasion presents itself in your ringing programme. If you let me know via this email address if and when you would like to revisit the tower I can arrange for the door to be unlocked and closed again after your visit.'

John took some photos of the Guild members ringing on that occasion.

Here is one of his photos:



L-R: Sue Bacon, Steve Bowley, George Osborn, Michael Cummings, John Nicholls, Ted Copson, myself and Peter Kenealy.

Stuart Cummings, Programme Secretary

FROM THE ARCHIVES (100 YEARS AGO)

The Old Minute Book has unusually full records for this period. This may have been due to a change of Secretary, Mr A White having taken over from Mr F A Case at the Spring Meeting at Campden in April. The Minutes by Mr White following this period are along the same lines, so this seems to have been his style. Although Mr White writes very capably, he has a problem with spelling 'belfrys' (belfrys: see below!). Ah well, perhaps we all have our little weaknesses in this way. I do try to record everything as it appears in the Book. Do remember: pdf copies (9Mb) of the Book are available. Contact me if you want one.

Oct 2nd 1912:

A Committee Meeting was held at The Rectory, Moreton-in-Marsh, to arrange the Programme for the Autumn Meeting on October 23rd. There were present:- The Rev Spencer Jones (in the Chair), Rev J W Stoneman, and Representatives from Blockley, Moreton, Shipston and Longborough. The following resolutions were passed unanimously:-

- 1. That the time of the meeting be at 2-0pm.*
- 2. That the competitions be the same as at the Spring Meeting, viz: Rising & Sinking, Round Ringing, Call Changes, & Method Ringing.*
- 3. That Messrs T Williams & E Pardon be the Judges in the Competitions.*
- 4. That a Special Service be held in the Parish Church at 4-30 and that the Rev W E White, Vicar of Bourton-on-the-Water, be invited to be the Preacher.*
- 5. That owing to the lack of proper hotel accommodation in the Parish, the arrangements for the Tea be left in the hands of The Rev J W Stoneman.*
- 6. The question of monthly meetings in different belfrys, for ringing purposes & friendly intercourse was raised and it was decided to put the matter on the Agenda paper to be discussed at the Autumn Meeting*

It was decided that Mickleton & Ebrington be written to, with a view to persuading their Ringers to join the Guild.

A vote of thanks to the Rector for presiding and for so kindly placing the Parish Room at our disposal closed the Meeting.

(Signed) Spencer Jones, Chairman

Oct 23rd -1912:

The (Autumn) Meeting of the Guild took place at Longborough on Wed Oct 23rd 1912, when a good attendance of members resulted in a very

successful gathering, all the towers in the Guild being fully represented with the exception of Todenham. Four Belfrys took part in the four Competitions, and the Judges (Messrs T Williams & E Pardon gave their awards as follows:-

(1) Rising & Sinking:- Shipston 63 per cent, Campden 59, Moreton 57, Blockley 15.

(2) Rounds:- Campden 97, Moreton 93, Shipston 93, Blockley 90.

(3) Call Changes:- Campden 94, Shipston 92, Blockley 88, Moreton 83.

(4) Method:- Shipston 83, Moreton 81, Campden 79.

After the Competitions was (sic) decided, a special service was held in the Parish Church, the sermon being preached by the Rev Spencer Jones, Rector of Moreton-in-Marsh.

Tea was laid in the Reading Room, to which about 40 sat down.

A Business Meeting followed which in the absence of the President (Canon Houghton) was presided over by the Rev Spencer Jones.

After the Minutes had been given Letters of apology were read from H D'Est East Esq, the Revs Canon Houghton, W E White and A W F Norton. Certificates were then handed to the winners of the Competitions held at Campden the previous April, Longborough being victors in all 4 events. The Hon Secretary gave his Report, but this being his first term of office could not give much progress numerically, but it gave him much pleasure to be able to announce the addition of two Hon members (H D'Est East Esq & H Wixey Esq of Campden). He also appealed to the meeting to do all in their power during the period that intervened before the Spring meeting, to assist him in securing more Belfrys & Incumbents to join the Guild. Before sitting down, the Secretary proposed that "a hearty vote of thanks be passed & sent to the late Hon Sec (Mr F A Case) for his valuable services to the Guild during the last 5 years". This was duly seconded and carried with acclamation. A discussion took place regarding the question of holding monthly meetings of Ringers at the various Towers, when it was pro(posed) by Mr Bird, jun, sec(onded) by Mr Bird, sen, that the suggestion of holding monthly meetings be adopted, and that the first meeting be at Blockley, the last Wed in November at 7-30pm. Carried unanimously. It was further resolved that all future monthly meetings be arranged at the previous one, the Hon Sec to be notified accordingly, so as to make the necessary arrangements. Blockley was chosen as the place

of meeting in April next. Mr Wixey then addressed the meeting, saying he should be pleased to become a subscriber, and promised to do all he could to induce other Gentlemen he knew in the Campden district to become members of the Guild. He also proposed a Vote of thanks to the Rev J W Stoneman & his Lady helpers for their services at the tea-tables, this was seconded and passed with acclamation. The Rev J W Stoneman duly responded. The usual vote of thanks to the Chairman closed the meeting.

A few touches were rung on the Bells after the Meeting.

(Signed) Spencer Jones, Chairman

This record is interesting, as it indicates the level of patronage by non-ringer gentlemen at the time. Mr D'Est East and Mr H Wixey (both given the suffix 'Esq') were welcomed as Honorary members. Mr Wixey is recorded as saying that he will 'induce other Gentlemen he knew in the Campden District to join the Guild'. I wonder what the ringers – mostly of 'worker' stock, no doubt – thought of this? Perhaps they were quite used to this happening, as it must have happened in all aspects of life then (England before the First World War, with the rich men living in their castles and the poor men doffing their caps); and perhaps it was welcomed, as the Honorary Members greatly subsidised the activities of such organisations if they could be encouraged to join them.

It is worth returning to the inaugural meeting in October 1909, where it is recorded that subscriptions were set at one shilling (5p) for ringing members, but 'not less than five shillings' (25p) for Honorary Members. The internet tells me inflation since 1909 has risen by about 100%, so the one-shilling (5p) for ringing members equates to about £5.00 today (hmmm; our present sub is about right then!), whereas that for Honorary Members equates to about £25 (the least amount expected!). How many Gentlemen now would be happy to pay that amount to belong to a ringing society purely for the delight of taking no part in the action? Ed

A MIND-BENDER BY EL PRESIDENTE

El Presidente confided to me in hushed tones that he had provided an easy (in EP's words, 'the easiest I've produced') crossword this time (p.8). It was clearly against his better judgement on such things, and the pain this had caused him was quite visible. After stooping so low (figuratively, of course; his great age now prevents him accomplishing such physically), he felt the need to produce a mind-bender to compensate. Here it is:

A man passed one-sixth of his life in childhood, one-twelfth in youth and one-seventh more as a bachelor. Five years after his marriage a son was born, who died four years before his father at half his father's age. What was the man's final age? (Answer in next Newsletter)

ONLY FOR THE WEEKEND....., THE ANNUAL RINGING TOUR, 6th – 8th JULY.

In a summer remarkable for its many deluges it would be good to report that the first weekend of July bucked the trend and our annual tour took place amid blue skies and blazing sunshine. Sadly this was not the case and the Friday that marked the start of the Four Shires Guild's first extended weekend tour also witnessed some of the more spectacular deluges of this exceptional summer. The chosen destination was the South Wales borders and as the advance party of tourists began their journey, the main route into the area, the M50, was closed due to torrential flooding. After a detour they successfully reached the first tower of the weekend, SS Dinigat & Mary, Dingestow (6, 8cwt), and afterwards enjoyed a sumptuous meal at the village inn.

with the assistance of some of the local ringers, it proved to be the ringing highlight of the day with a well-struck touch of Plain Bob Royal.

Another remote location with deep-set bells that were quite difficult to hear provided us with a challenging forty-five minutes.



Ringling at St Mary's, Abergavenny



St Clement's, Cwmcarvan

We continued down river to St Bartholomew in Llanover (5, 6cwt) where we were able to change the tune to St Simon's Doubles. Here we also found an historic ringing connection, as it was the site of the grave of Sir Benjamin Hall, a local worthy and politician after whom 'Big Ben' was named. As befitted a renowned 'larger than life' character the mausoleum dominated the pretty churchyard.



Sir Benjamin Hall's tomb at St Bart's, Llanover

The remote setting lacked a hostelry suitable for lunch so the majority made their way to Usk to find refreshment in close proximity to the first tower of the afternoon. St Mary's in Usk (8, 14cwt) tripped along beautifully to the regular triples and major repertoire, most notably Stedman and Plain Bob and it was good to meet up with the tower captain, a fairly regular visitor to the Four Shires area because of his connections with the Fire Service Guild.

Sadly we were not able to make any comparisons with the next six as this proved to be the curse of all tour organisers: we found ourselves locked out. Fortunately for both tourists and the local landlord this setting was less remote and, while fruitless attempts were made to gain access, a source of refreshment was readily available. After a short break and before a convivial meal at the local Weatherspoon's, the last stop was St Mary the Virgin in Monmouth (8, 17cwt). The following morning this tower benefited from the attendance of nine hardy tourists to boost their Sunday Service band.



St Mary the Virgin, Monmouth

Our thanks to Richard for all his efforts in organising this successful event and having the foresight to plan a flexible tour to suit everyone's availability and budget.
Words: Isobel Murphy
Photos: Stuart Cummings

(Is this to be a template for future tours? Will Richard serve up something similar for 2013? If members thought this an excellent tour, perhaps they might encourage Richard to organise another along these lines by telling him so! Ed)



SS Dinigat & Mary, Dingestow



The 'advance party' at Dingestow

It was an early start on the Saturday for those who decided to take the day trip option. The first tower was St Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey (6, 12cwt) in a picturesque riverside setting beneath the Skirrid Mountain, where Grandsire and Stedman were successfully completed. An attempt at Cambridge Minor was of somewhat questionable quality.



The second tower was the esteemed St Mary's in Abergavenny 10, 25cwt), an ambitious choice for a daytrip without guaranteed numbers. However,



St Mary's, Usk

After the treats provided by Usk, the second afternoon tower, St Clement, Cwmcarvan (6,8cwt) brought us all back down to earth.

A VERY OLD PHOTOGRAPH



The power of the internet never ceases to amaze – whatever would we do if it all stopped! The Guild's web-site invites queries. One came in recently (they all go initially to Roland Merrick, who

looks after the website), and it was passed to me. A Carlisle Cathedral ringer asked if the photo here had any interest for the Guild. It certainly did. The 1930 photo of the Guild is well-known, but I had never seen this one from 1929 before. The absence of the Shield in this photo – and we know it was with the Guild well before 1929 – suggests this photo is either of the occasion when the Spencer Jones Cup was donated to the Guild, or the occasion when it was first presented at a Striking Competition. (The hallmark dates the Cup to 1929.) The location is the West Door of St James' Church, Chipping Campden.

The correspondent said her neighbour across the road was sifting through some old family photos and came across this one. He believed the dark-haired man with a moustache seated behind the Cup was his Great-Uncle. The man in the photo is George Hiatt – and the neighbour's name is also Hiatt. Nice to have the photo and to be able to confirm the relationship.

Chris Povey

THE MINIMUS ('MINNIE MOUSE') STRIKING COMPETITION, SALFORD, 8th SEPT

The Minimus Competition took place in lovely sunny evening weather on the delightful light 5 at St Mary the Virgin's Church, Salford, Oxon.



St Mary the Virgin, Salford, Oxon

The event attracted six teams this year, which was twice as many as last year. The event is essentially a fun event, with simple rules. There's no rising or falling involved. Nonetheless, the judging must be even and fair, as there is a trophy to be awarded. John Carroll did an extremely good job in this respect: thanks, John.

The 2011 winners, 'The Committee' team, faced stiff opposition this year, as Mickleton fielded a team. Further opposition came from Moreton and Wellesbourne, and two teams composed from those attending. Benjamin Lewis-Skeath, who is probably the Guild's youngest member, assembled one of these, the 'BJ and the ringing band' team. In all, about 18 members took part.

The draw for position put Wellesbourne into ring

first; then Moreton, 'the Committee', a 'scratch' band, Mickleton and the 'BJ and the ringing band'. Three minutes were allowed for a practice, then five plain courses of Minimus (120 changes) for the test piece. As might be imagined, it didn't take long to get through all six teams. Some teams decided to ring just four bells instead of five, but this was entirely valid for a Minimus competition!



The Minimus ('Minnie Mouse') Trophy

We congregated in the Church for the results from John, and his placing was as follows:-

1 The Committee	8 faults
2 Mickleton	12 faults
3 BJ and the ringing band	22 faults
4 Moreton	24 faults
5 Scratch	26 faults
6 Wellesbourne	27 faults

'The Committee' therefore retained the Minimus Striking Competition trophy, but only by a very small margin. Had Mickleton included its full fire-power in their team, the result could well have been different.



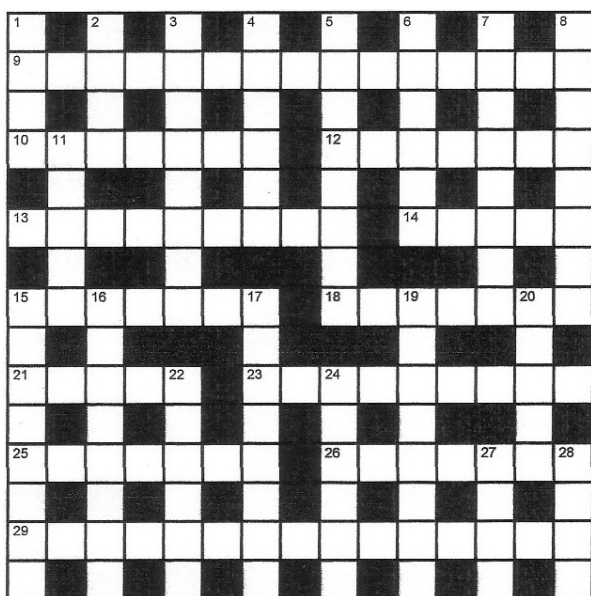
Sophia L-S accepting the trophy from John.

The best bit? Probably Benjamin L-S, when he realised his team had done quite well and then exclaimed in total astonishment, 'I've beaten my dad's team!!' Priceless! Sorry Richard; it's what happens eventually. Been there, had that...

This Competition is a delightful event. It doesn't take long to get through, so there's little hanging around. It's nicely simple, too. Give it a try next year (which might be on a genuine ring of 4). CP

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

A cruciverbalist, I have discovered, is a crossword enthusiast. The term applies equally to compilers and solvers alike. El Presidente is therefore (among his other substantial and well-known talents) a cruciverbalist. How long before CRUCIVERBALIST appears as the answer to a clue for you cruciverbalists out there?



Answer to crossword in the July 2012 Newsletter



Across

- 9 C17 National Trust property seen by many Guild members (15)
- 10 Felt by most after that first peal. (7)
- 12 & 26 Evesham bell founder (7)
- 13 Refined luxury. (9)
- 14 Sung drama. (5)
- 15 Saw a motto. (7)
- 18 Revolved. (7)
- 21 Bonus. (5)
- 23 They just missed the win. (9)
- 25 The period when people changed the material for their tools and weapons. (7)
- 26 See 12 above. (7)
- 29 Award for the best four. (15)

Down

- 1 Felt by muscles after that first peal. (4)
- 2 Unusually the first word spoken! (4)
- 3 Mindset (8)
- 4 Union to meet the spirits. (6)
- 5 Ordinary person. (8)
- 6 Unkind epithet for a limited person. (6)
- 7 Capital of Hungary. (8)
- 8 Group with over 5000 in mind. (8)
- 11 An outcast? (5)
- 15 Charges to insure. (8)
- 16 Achieve a higher score. (8)
- 17 Followed the river-trip. (8)
- 19 Riches. (8)
- 20 Balanced. (5)
- 21 Startles. (6)
- 24 Captured – to ring at Kineton? (6)
- 26 Notice. (4)
- 28 Songs (archaic). (4)

RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY TOURS REPORT

The July Outing, organised by Geoff Pratt, took us into North Warwickshire. Our first tower was St James, Bulkington, with its 8 bells (12cwt) a mix of modern Taylor and two ancient bells by Newcombe. We noticed some tower movement here when the bells are rung. The next tower, the 6, 12cwt, at St John the Baptist, Wolvey, went well. The 5th is by Johannes de York and dated about 1400. We had lunch at the New Inn, Bulkington, before motoring to the first tower of the afternoon, All Saints, Bedworth, with its 8 bells, 14cwt. These are a complete ring by Taylors, 1891, except for the 6th by Hugh Watts dated 1629. Our last tower of the day took us into the outskirts of Coventry, to St Giles, Exhall, where its light 6 (6cwt) awaited us. Thank you Geoff for an enjoyable day.

The August Outing was organised by Guild Committee member Stuart Cummings. It kept us in North Oxfordshire and South Warwickshire. The first tower was the heavy 8 (24cwt) at St Mary, Adderbury, which made some of us concentrate on

the task in hand at that time of the morning. These bells are a complete 8 by John Briant of Hertford dated 1789, although the 3rd and the 6th have been recast since. The next tower, SS Peter & Paul, Swalcliffe, was very similar. Its 6 (13cwt) is a complete ring by Matthew & Henry Bagley dated 1685, with the 3rd recast subsequently. We went to The George Inn, Brailles, for lunch, but our first tower in the afternoon was not the heavy 6 opposite, but the light 6 (6cwt) at St John the Baptist, Cherington. (*Guild member Paul Marriott gave the treble to augment to 6 in 2006. Ed*) The last tower of the day was the 8, 12cwt, at Whichford, home of the Guild's oldest member, Rob Harvey (*who gave the treble when the bells were augmented to 8 in 1998. Must be something in the water round those parts. Ed*). A good day, Stuart.

The September outing, the 275th, took us between Coventry and Rugby, and was

organised by Ian Thompson and Ruth Border. This was familiar country, but the first tower, St John the Baptist, Brinklow, provided us with a difference. The bells have recently been augmented (*by Taylors. Ed*) and are now 8 (8cwt). They are a very good light eight. From here we went to the heavy 8 (25cwt) at St Edith, Monk's Kirby, the 5th of which is by the Worcester Foundry dated about 1400. Lunch was taken at The Old Smithy, Church Lawford. The first tower afterwards was here at St Peter's Church, where the light 6 (8cwt) was put to good use. The last tower was St Margaret's Church, Wolston, where the 8 (11cwt), are rung from the chancel crossing. The 6th here is very old, being dated at about 1360. This was another good day. Thank you Ian and Ruth.

Frank Spiers

AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF OUR LONG-DISTANCE MEMBERS



(Photo: Allen Turner)

Allen Turner met George Riseborough (known to many FSG members as 'Norfolk George') when he was down in our area recently. Allen conducted a brief interview with George. Here it is:

Allen: Where did you learn to ring church bells?

George: In 1979 I began to ring at All Saints' Church, Catfield. I was born in this village, christened in its church and lived there for a while. I continued to practise at St Mary's Church, Happisburgh, where I rang my first quarter peal, aged 50. My first peal was rung shortly afterwards at SS Peter & Paul, Knapton, and I have rung six peals in total.

Allen: At 80 years old, are you still enjoying ringing as much, and do you feel capable of carrying on for a while?

George: I do enjoy it very much, and as long as God spares me I will carry on while physically able.

Allen: When did you first come into contact with the FSG?

George: In 1994, when I found the Camping & Caravan Club site at Dorn. I have used this site each July since. My wife Ivy always accompanied me up to her death in May 2010 (see FSG Newsletter 128). We were in Bourton-on-the-Water one Saturday night when the bells started ringing. When they stopped after a short spell, I went to see if I could have a pull and was made very welcome. I've rung with the Guild when I've been here ever since.

Allen: Do you enjoy ringing around the FSG area?

George: Very much so, as bell ringing is my sole hobby; and I enjoy seeing all my friends, who make me very welcome.

SAINTBURY: THE PRE-REHANG DAYS REMEMBERED.

It all started when we were waiting for the last ringer to turn up for evening ringing at Broadway Old Church. Saintbury was mentioned for some reason and one of the number (I think it was me) said, "Saintbury belfry was in an awful state before they were rehanged. I bet you remember it, Clint. Twigs everywhere and the bells were encased in them. Weren't you one of the brave men who went with Tony to clear it out?" In Clint's understated way, "Yes. (pause) It was bad; filthy." Then, "Reckon I've got some photos of it." And so, prior to wedding ringing at Broadway, three photos appeared.

I'd seen Saintbury in 1966 or '67, when I'd cycled over there from Ebrington. By some chance the door to the belfry was unlocked and I made my way up. There were twigs over the stone staircase up to the first room, which had twigs over the floor. Then it was up a creaky ladder to the belfry. What a sight it was. Five of the six bells were literally encased in twigs, up to the crowns. The other bell had a little room to swing, which must have been the one used as the service bell. Everything was derelict. I remember at least one of the stays still having the bark on it. How long the birds had been able to pile up the twigs I don't know, but it wasn't a few years. It was many, many years. What a fire risk. However could a little village get this lot ringable? Definitely no hope.

Tony Brazier somehow obtained permission to clear out the belfry and carry out a test ring. Clint was one of the volunteers, as was Malcolm Stewart. (Neither Clint nor Malcolm can remember when this occurred, but I think the Guild had just been reformed: so mid 1970s.) Clint tells me the work was a case of chucking as much as possible into a sack, and then heaving the contents out over the side of the tower. The dust was terrible. Tony wore a straw hat to stop debris falling on his head (see photo). This was an epic undertaking. Perhaps I was lucky in living elsewhere at the time, otherwise I'm sure I'd have been roped in.

When the belfry was sufficiently clear to swing the bells, ropes were attached and a test ring commenced. Apparently everything shook around much too badly to consider any chance of the bells becoming ringable. They were left, with every thought that the village had no chance of raising the money required for a complete rehang.

We all know things didn't quite go like that afterwards, as there are now 8 very ringable bells up there – but that's another story. (Would you like to relate that, David H or Robert C?)

Words: CMP.

Photos: Clint Evans



Tony Brazier and Malcolm Stewart in the room below the belfry (the line across is a crease)



A huge pile of twigs.



Another view, with (probably) Malcolm in the background (Clint taking the shots).

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FOUR SHIRES GUILD BELL RESTORATION FUND

At the 2010 AGM the Guild established a Bell Restoration Fund, from which the Committee are empowered to offer grants towards suitable aspects concerning rings of bells within the Guild's area of operation. Such aspects may include a range of needs, from maintenance to augmentations.

Rules and Constitution of the Fund and application forms are available from the Honorary Secretary.

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REMEMBER!!

2012 GUILD WALKING TOUR

Saturday October 6th.

Start at **Sutton-under-Brailes**, ringing
10 - 10.45am, (please park carefully
around the village green area)

Walk to **Brailes** and ring 12 - 12.45pm

Followed by Lunch at 'The George' or
bring your own sandwiches (approx 1 - 2
pm)

Walk to **Cherington** and ring 3 - 3.45pm

Return to cars by 4 pm

COME FOR A PLEASANT WALK AND RING

INTER SHIRES STRIKING COMPETITION

This will take place at **LONG COMPTON, Warks, on SATURDAY NOVEMBER 17TH**. This is the competition between the highest-placed team in the striking competitions of the Gloucester & Bristol DA, the Worcs & Dists CRA, the Oxford DG and the Cov DG whose tower for which they ring lies within Glos, Worcs, Oxon or Warks.

John Nicholls is helping to organise this and he will greatly welcome help for a variety of tasks. See page 2 for John's contact details.

GUILD CHRISTMAS PARTY SATURDAY DECEMBER 15TH

TO BE HELD IN WELLESBOURNE CHURCH HALL, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SATURDAY EVENING PRACTICE THERE.

AS PREVIOUSLY, DRINKS AND EATS REQUIRED. PLEASE BRING WITH YOU.

GUILD ANNUAL DINNER 2013 – ADVANCE NOTICE

The Guild's Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday February 2nd 2013 at the White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh. The venue proved very satisfactory for a second time, in location, surroundings, quality of food - and in consideration when a number of late cancellations were caused by snow. Such satisfaction is expected again.

This is an advance notice, to allow entries to be made in diaries. No details of the menu are available at present, but cost will be £21 per person. Full details will be given in the January Newsletter and on the Guild website.

AROUND THE TOWERS – PEALS, QUARTER-PEALS AND OTHER SPECIAL RINGING:-

MORE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE RINGING

Todenham, Glos, 2nd June, 180 PB Minor: Stuart Cummings 1, Isobel Murphy (C) 2, Chris Righton 3, Jane Gilbert 4, Michael Cummings 5, Keith Murphy 6. Also for Todenham Flower Festival.

Todenham, Glos, 2nd June, 120 Call changes to Queen's: Isobel Murphy (C) 1, Daphne Hersey*/Keith Murphy 2, Chris Righton 3, Stuart Cummings 4, Jane Gilbert 5, Michael Cummings 6. *First public performance since learning to handle a bell.

Todenham, Glos, 2nd June, 120 Call changes to Queen's: Jane Gilbert 1, John Wood*/Keith Murphy 2, Chris Righton 3, Stuart Cummings 4, Isobel Murphy (C) 5, Michael Cummings 6. *First public performance since learning to handle a bell.

Welford-on-Avon, Warks. June 3rd, 60 changes plain hunt, 60 changes Queens & back and 60 changes Welford Bob Doubles (thanks to CP for named methods p.10 Newsletter No.132). Ringers: Freda Cleaver (C), Rosemary Cole, Ewart Harper, Edward Timmins and Sandra & Richard Parker.

Long Compton, Warks, June 3rd, general ringing.

Badsey, Worcs, 3rd June, Call Changes were rung by the usual band, including the beginners, for the service of 'Thanks Giving' A card was placed inviting everyone to sign. All the ringers taking part as well as the choir were recorded for the occasion. A lovely reply was received from the Palace, thanking everyone for taking part.

FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

BIDFORD-ON-AVON, Warwickshire

Church of St Laurence

Saturday 14 July 2012 in 2hours 47mins (tenor: 14-0-24 in F)

5040 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Claire Penny
- 2 Matthew Kemble
- 3 Paul R Smith
- 4 Sam Precious
- 5 Martin B Penny (C)
- 6 Sandra B Parker

Rung for the Diamond Jubilee. First Peal: 4



Back row L-R: Sam Precious, Martin Penny, Matthew Kemble
Front row L-R: Sandra Parker, Claire Penny, Paul Smith

Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, 9th July, 1280 Spliced S Major (Lincs, Yorks, Cambridge): Chris Mew (C) 1, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 2, Alan Hartley 3, Peter Quinn 4, Robert Reeves 5, John Nicholls 6, Richard Lewis-Skeath 7, Mark Sayers 8.

(Please let me have details of quarters. I cannot guarantee to see them on Campanophile, Bellboard, or wherever. I do some, but not all. Ed)

TOWER NEWS

Evesham Bell Tower: I'm pleased to report ringing has restarted. The Church Surveyor used a 'cherry picker' to access the outside of the tower, to inspect the external fabric and to remove any loose bits of masonry.

RINGING FOR THE OLYMPICS

Evesham, Worcs, 1st July: general ringing on the back 8 while the Olympic torch came through the town. Ringers taking part: Chris Povey, Matthew Kemble, Merry Privett, Martin and Claire Penny, John Booth, Barrie Wheeler, Peter Forder and Robert Hall. (It was reported it was hardly heard above the general razzmatazz!)

Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, 27th July: 3mins rise and rounds between 8.12 and 8.15am. Richard Lewis-Skeath 1, Isobel Murphy 2, Benjamin Lewis-Skeath 3, George Riseborough 4, Caroline Murphy 5, Rob Stansbury 6.

Evesham, Worcs, 27th July: rise half-way, hold and fall on the light 6 over 3 minutes to 'ring quickly'. Chris Povey, Peter Forder, Tom Sandham, Merry Privett, John Booth, Barrie Wheeler.

Welford-on-Avon, Warks. 27th July: treble bob hunt on 4 bells with tenor behind = 5 rings, plain hunt on 5 and lowered the bells = 'ring as fast & loud as possible' & final catch in rounds = 5 rings. Ringers: all seven regular Sunday service ringers arrived at 8am and all took part. We joined Welford cub scouts on the Maypole Green for bacon butties. We supplied gingerbread bells tied with olympic coloured rings. A good, lively, enjoyable start to the day.

Badsey, Worcs, 27th July: our beginners rang some very creditable call changes, which were very much enjoyed.

Long Compton, Warks, 27th July: chimed the bells at 8.13am, plus 5-year old Mia chimed the sanctus bell assisted by Elaine Hobday, as photo below:



Wellesbourne, Warks, 16th July, 1280 Yorkshire S Major: Chris Mew 1, Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) 2, Sue Bacon 3, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 4, Alan Hartley 5, Lucy Gwynne 6, John Nicholls 7, Robert Reeves 8. Rung as an 80th birthday compliment to David Towers, father of 3. First touch of Yorkshire – 3

Badsey, Worcs, 25th July: the annual peal could not take place for the Flower Show due to a lack of ringers, so, after hasty recruitment, 30 minutes of call changes were rung by the Sunday Service band.

Harvington, Worcs, 31st Aug, 1260 St Simon's Doubles: Andrew Gunn 1, Claire Penny (C) 2, Matthew Kemble 3, Tom Sandham 4, Martin Penny 5, Roland Merrick 6. 1st in method: 4

Wellesbourne, Warks, 10th Sept, 1280 Kenworthy S Major: Richard Lewis-Skeath 1, Peter Quinn 2, Chris Mew (C) 3, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 4, Robert Reeves 5, Mark Sayers 6, John Nicholls 7, John Gwynne 8.

Mickleton, Glos, 17th Sept, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Sophia Lewis-Skeath 1, Richard Lewis-Skeath 2, Alan Hartley 3, Chris Mew (C) 4, Jackie Hands 5, John Nicholls 6, Mike Fairfax 7, Robert Reeves 8.

Wyck Rissington: the bells are due back from Whites of Appleton very soon. The Guild has been asked if some able-bodied volunteers could assist with the installation, and this is likely.

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Oct 6 th	ILMINGTON, Warks	8, 12-3-26 in E (GF) (ALSO GUILD WALK IN BRAILES AREA: see last Newsletter and p.10 for details)
Oct 13 th	GUILD AGM AND STRIKING COMPS AT CHASTLETON, Oxon. <u>details in last Newsletter</u>	
Oct 20 th	EBRINGTON, Glos	6, 12-2-12 in F#
Oct 27 th	HOOK NORTON, Oxon	8, 20-2-13 in E
Nov 3 rd	CHIPPING CAMPDEN, Glos	8, 22-1-18 in Eb
Nov 10 th	CHERINGTON, Warks	6, 5-3-22 in B (GF)
Nov 17 th	INTERSHIRES STRIKING COMPETITION AT LONG COMPTON - <u>NO EVENING PRACTICE</u>	
Nov 24 th	MIDDLE LITTLETON, Worcs	6, 12-2-27 in G (GF)
Dec 1 st	BLOCKLEY, Glos	8, 16-0-27 in F
Dec 8 th	LONG COMPTON, Warks	6, 12-0-22 in F
Dec 15 th	WELLESBOURNE, Warks, 8, 10-0-24 in G, <u>afterwards Guild Xmas Party (see details p.10)</u>	
Dec 22 nd	<u>NO SATURDAY EVENING PRACTICE</u>	
Dec 29 th	<u>NO SATURDAY EVENING PRACTICE</u>	
2013		
Jan 5 th	BARFORD, Warks	6, 4-3-22 in B (to be confirmed: check website)
Jan 12 th	EVESHAM, Worcs	10, 14-2-26 in F#
Jan 19 th	ALDERMINSTER, Warks	6, 12-0-26 in F (to be confirmed: check website)
Jan 26 th	HARVINGTON, Worcs	6, 8-1-14 in A

For any alterations to this programme, check the FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>), or Campanophile's diary (<http://www.campanophile.co.uk>). Meetings are from 7.30pm until 9.00pm unless otherwise stated. All are welcome. You do not have to be a FSG member and we are especially pleased if members of the local band wish to come along and ring.

Meetings are from 7.30pm until 9.00pm unless otherwise stated. All are welcome. You do not have to be a FSG member and we are especially pleased if members of the local band wish to come along and ring.

The Guild carries Public Liability insurance through the EIG for all its activities. Non-members attending these activities are also covered, providing they abide fully by the Guild's Health & Safety and Child Protection policies. (Both policies now appear on the FSG web-site, so their contents are available to all, whether members or not.)

TAG-END:



Michael Cummings, John Nicholls and David Adams stand underneath The Hon C S Rolls' Memorial Statue at Monmouth (see p.6).

NEWSLETTERS & PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

SHOULD ANYONE MENTION THEY'VE NOT RECEIVED THEIR NEWSLETTER THIS TIME, ASK WHETHER THEY'VE PAID THEIR 2012 SUBSCRIPTION. **IF NOT, THEIR NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN PENDING PAYMENT OF THEIR 2012 SUB.**

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO PAY SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INTERNET BANK TRANSFER. THE GUILD'S BANKING DETAILS ARE: Bank, HSBC; Acct No, 71118668; Account name, FOUR SHIRES GUILD; Sort Code, 40-41-26. For 'Reference', please insert your name and tower (or unattached), otherwise you and your payment will be untraceable!!

THE NEW GUILD HANDBOOK, CONTAINING THE RULES AND OTHER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION, WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE AGM AT CHASTLETON ON SATURDAY 13TH OCTOBER. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE A (FREE) COPY.

Events for 2012: book the dates:-

Guild Walking Tour	Saturday October 6th. (See July Newsletter and notice on p.10)
Guild AGM	Saturday 13th October at Chastleton. (See July Newsletter and p.3)
Inter Shires Competition	Sat 17th November at Long Compton. (See details in notice on p.10)
Christmas Party	Sat 15th December, Wellesbourne (see p.10)

2013 – put in your diaries now!

Guild Annual Dinner	Saturday 2nd February, at Moreton-in-Marsh. (See advance notice p.10)
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