

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers)



NEWSLETTER No 135 - JAN 2013

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Ruby Anniversary
1973-2013

WYCK RISSINGTON'S BELLS RETURN TO THE TOWER.



(Photo: Chris Povey)

The bells of St Laurence Church, Wyck Rissington, are once again ringable after some years of being otherwise. The work to return them to the tower started when the bells arrived back in the village on Monday November 5th, courtesy of Whites of Appleton director and FSG member Graham Clifton and his colleague James Sellick.

The FSG Newsletter's chief home affairs correspondent was there to record the bells coming home. Read all about it and the subsequent work required to prepare for the Dedication Service that occurred on December 16th. And did you know lions roam in the village? See p.9

Officers and Committee Members of the Guild

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The FSG website is: <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>

Subscription rates: £5 adult; £2 Junior

The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (April 2013) is March 13th 2013

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.)

(THAT TIME IS HERE AGAIN.....)

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

SEE 'TAG-END' ON BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS OF RATES AND WAYS TO PAY

(..... and please pay with a smile – you know it makes sense to belong!)

EDITORIAL

The shortest day, and Christmas and the New Year festivities are behind us: 2013 is here. Of course, snow and cold may grace us with their presence, but the days are getting longer, which I find psychologically beneficial.

Bill Hicks. It is sad to record the death of Bill Hicks of Stratford-on-Avon. Charles Wilson's obituary is a lovely portrait of Bill's life and his character. Bill was one of the select few who battled through the snow to attend the 2012 Annual Dinner at Moreton, but, as can be seen from the obituary, that was Bill.

1973-2013. This year is, as I've mentioned previously, a significant year for the Guild. It was re-founded on 30th March 1973, so a ruby anniversary is upon us. You may have noticed a change of colour to the badge on the front page. The Newsletter has to do its bit towards this celebration; and it will carry this badge for the remaining three issues of 2013. The Minutes of that initial meeting at Chipping Campden appear under 'From the Archives (40 years ago)' on p.8. March 30th this year falls on a Saturday. There is to be a celebratory get-together after the Saturday practice at Bourton-on-the-Hill (see Notice box below). There are now just 6 members who were at that 1973 meeting. It would be nice if they were all able to attend this hugely significant occasion.

Congratulations! There have been a few 'firsts' in Guild ringing performances in the last three months. Heading the list is Sara Woodgate, who rang her first peal at Mickleton on September 29th (see p.10). Ringing one's first peal is always special, but ringing it for the Guild is extra-special! There are a number of 'firsts' in the quarter peal columns this time. In chronological order: Stefanie Whittle, who rang her first quarter-peal at Offenham; 14yr old Josh Lowe from Harvington, who rang his first quarter-peal at his home tower; and lastly, Tony Hartwell (Josh's grandfather), who rang Grandsire Doubles inside for the first time. Congratulations to them all. Another 'first' in these columns (certainly within the last 3 years) was the quarter peal of Original Major rung at Ilmington. Success in this simple but demanding principle isn't guaranteed, but then it helps having a conductor who called the first ever peals of Original Royal and Original Maximus...!

Not a first by any stretch of the imagination, but one worthy of great note and our congratulations, was the quarter of Superlative Surprise Major at Salford Priors on Monday 3rd December to mark the 60th anniversary of Freda Cleaver's first peal at Tring. The method then was Superlative, with

Freda, in her teens, ringing inside. Freda's not just a pretty lady.....

Apologies. It was sackcloth and ashes on my part for incorrectly typing El Pres's mind-bender (see below). I could say I thought it was much too easy in original form and thought it needed spicing up, but you just wouldn't believe me. My excuse is I'm just a keyboard-tapper, not a typist, so I hope I will be forgiven. Should anyone feel I should give up this job because of the error, please don't hesitate to let me know.....

Lastly, a point to ponder (for male ringers...). After being chided by Helen (yet again) for undertaking 'ringing duties' before the domestic duties allotted to me, she said, "When you get to the Pearly Gates and have to plead your case, you may find God is a woman – and not a ringer....." Hmm...I thought this was worth passing on.

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.)

EL PRESIDENTE'S OCTOBER'S MIND-BENDER – AN APOLOGY!!

I have to apologise to El Presidente and to others who tried to solve the Brain Teaser published in the last Newsletter. I tried to solve it, and calculated an answer - but it didn't check back. I thought, 'Uh, uh, EP's boobed. The old mathematical magic has disappeared.' But how could I think such a thing! I should have known better, of course, as when I checked back to the source material – unfortunately after the Newsletter's publication - I realised I'd missed out an important word in my retyping. The word, in bold below, makes a big difference. Here it is again, in correct form:-

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 **final** age. What was the man's final age? (Answer in the April Newsletter)

ANOTHER STRING TO HIS BOW – (never underestimate your fellow ringers!)

Ilmington and Mickleton ringers enjoyed their excellent annual luncheon at the Three Ways Hotel, Mickleton, on Sunday 2nd December, with a record turnout of seventeen (which of course included husbands, wives and others – and the singles). It is customary for a brief and entertaining after-dinner speech, and veteran Bill Sabin excelled as usual. His piece about his dog named 'Sex' would entertain the purist of gatherings!

But he was somewhat overshadowed by another stalwart – none other than the maestro himself, Bill Nash! Bill enacted an amusing story alongside Nicola Amphlett. It was a non-speaking part, but his miming set the highest of standards. Mind you, his portly (outsize?) figure greatly enhanced the part, and each required action actually arrived on time (on cue). Now that is a first, surely?! John Kinchin

GUILD 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Guild was re-founded on 30th March 1973 in the Church Rooms, Chipping Campden.

To mark the 40th (ruby) anniversary of this event, there will be a short celebratory get-together in the same Church Rooms on Saturday 30th March 2013. It will start about **8.30pm** (note: the Saturday night practice at Bourton-on-the-Hill will run from 7.00-8.15pm).

Come along to celebrate this momentous anniversary!

GUILD METAL LAPEL BADGES

An order has now been placed for a batch of 100 lapel badges. These will look like the badge on the front of this Newsletter (except that the background colour will be green). It is hoped to have them available to members at the Guild Annual Dinner (and afterwards, of course). They will be priced at £4 each. (Is there any interest in a badge with a **red background** as a special one-off to celebrate our **ruby** anniversary??)

THE 2012 AGM AND STRIKING COMPETITION

Last year's report of this event started with it 'was a sunny day, which is a good thing for a Guild AGM and Striking Competition'. The day this year, Saturday October 13th, was just the same – and in a year noted for its almost consistent rainfall, too. We were truly blessed. Just as last year, too, we had a delightful light 6 to play with. Chastleton's bells were well up to the mark. Not only that, we had magnificent surroundings with the National Trust's Chastleton House literally next door. Once again, the tea tables heaved with food. What a treat it all was!



Various members 'loitering with intent (to ring)'.

Our judge for the competition this year was Alan Hartley, from Redditch, who was booked to officiate last year, but was prevented from doing so then by some minor surgery immediately beforehand. His postponement wasn't such a bad thing, as this time he got to sit in a room at the top of a 400 year old Jacobean Mansion looking down on the Church – a rather grand facility kindly provided by the National Trust.

There was again no Brazier Trophy competition this year, which is a shame, as it seems to indicate that there are few, if any, up-and-coming bands.

There were four 'real' bands competing for the Newing Shield trophies. To give them something extra to fight for, two scratch bands of 'adequate' capability and 'The Committee' team rang, too. As might be expected, the standard of ringing exhibited by the scratch bands was pretty good, composed as they were of the 'fancy' ringers, but 'The Committee' team, with of course a much smaller field from which to choose its members, showed it could do the bizz, too.

Eventually, after sitting around in the sunshine a country churchyard amid



Sue Bacon and Richard L-S transfixed by the quality of the striking.

the ancient yew trees, sipping cups of tea and nibbling on the delights of the food table, the bells came down for the last time and the Service in the Church was due. This was taken by the Rev Andrew Keith, Team Vicar of Chastleton, Little Compton, Salford, Cornwell and Little Rollright, and followed the layout in the Guild's Service sheet. Steve Bowley played the organ. The Vicar said we sang the hymns well. The Service concluded with the well-known ringers' hymn, 'Unchanging God, who livest'.

The AGM proved to be straightforward, as the Minutes below demonstrate. The highlight was the way in which the accounts had been presented: lots of detail, but very clear; and all signed off by the Accounts Examiners, too. As might be imagined, there was unanimous support for Michael being re-elected as Hon Treasurer.

The last item was the Striking Competition results. Alan gave his comments on the performance of each team. As will be seen in the Minutes below, Moreton-in-Marsh 'A' team took the Newing Shield and Wellesbourne took the Spencer Jones Cup.

The President thanked everyone for coming and thanked those who had brought food for the gathering. He singled out Maureen and David Adams, and Stuart and Michael Cummings for particular thanks, for working so hard with the teas and the eats. It was not an easy place in which to work, as there were no domestic facilities in the Church and their 'area of operation' was small and crowded. Nonetheless, they made it all happen. Many thanks to you from an ordinary member!

As had been announced in the July Newsletter, copies of the new version of the Guild Rules were available at the AGM for members to take, or to take for other members
CMP

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers was held at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Chastleton, Oxon, on Saturday 13th October 2012. Prior to the Meeting, the Striking Competition for the Newing Shield and Spencer Jones Cup was held at the Church, with seven teams entering.

The Meeting started at 5.50pm, with the President, John Nicholls, in the Chair. About 15 members attended. John welcomed everybody. He took this

opportunity to report that Bill Hicks had passed away on Monday. (*See Obituary, p.2. Ed*)

1. Apologies: were received from Keith Murphy, Trevor Hobday, The Rev Dr Peter Newing and Robert Hall.
2. Minutes of the last Meeting: These were published in January's Newsletter. There

was agreement when the Guild President asked whether these could be taken as read. No points of correctness were raised. The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Ted Copson and seconded by Michael Fairfax. The President signed them as such.

3. Matters arising: Nothing was raised.

4. Guild Master's Report: Peter Quinn said he had nothing to add to his report, which appeared in the July issue of the Newsletter (no 133). No questions arose.

5. Treasurer's Report: Michael Dane reported that the Guild finances are now split between two accounts: the general account and the Bell Restoration Fund. Michael Fairfax thanked those concerned for bringing the accounts into good order: Michael Dane and Andrew Gunn in the early stages, and Michael Dane finally. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Michael Dane and was seconded by Michael Haynes. Adoption was agreed. The Accounts Examiners will sign a copy for the Treasurer's files.

6. Election of Officers:

Guild Master: Peter Quinn, proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Freda Cleaver. Re-elected.

Ringling Master: Sophia Lewis-Skeath, proposed by Peter Quinn and seconded by Ted Copson. Re-elected.

Secretary: one written nomination received: Andrew Gunn, proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Ted Copson. Re-elected.

Treasurer: Michael Dane was proposed by Michael Fairfax and seconded by Michael Haynes. Re-elected.

7. Election of the Committee and Accounts Examiners:

The members of the current Committee were happy to stand again, and were proposed by Michael Fairfax and seconded by David Adams. All re-elected. The Committee members are therefore: Stuart Cummings, Michael Haynes, Jackie Hands, Peter Kenealy, Keith Murphy and Chris Povey. The Account Examiners (Trevor Hobday and Mike Fairfax) were both returned after being proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Peter Quinn.

8. Confirmation of New & Life Members:

The following joined the Guild during the year. It was proposed by Ted Copson, seconded by Chris Povey, that their membership be confirmed:-

John Sims of Minsterworth.
Margaret Smith of Gloucester.
Sarah Thomas of Offchurch.
W.J.Kinchin of Leicester.
Josh Lowe of Harvington.
John Kemble of Audlem, Cheshire.
John Gwynne of Warwick.
Sue Marshall of Kineton, Warks.
Paul Smith of Worcester.
Sam Precious of Bidford-on-Avon.

Life Members

It had been decided by the Committee that the known Life Members be confirmed and ratified,

as there had been some confusion. Only the following are known to the Committee to be such:-

The Rev Dr Peter Newing of Ledbury.
Rob Harvey of Whichford.
Ron Gilkes of Mickleton.
The Rev Fred Rothery of Sherbourne, Dorset.

No other names were offered by the meeting. It was proposed by Michael Fairfax and seconded by Ted Copson, and subsequently agreed by the meeting, that the Life Member status of the members above be confirmed and ratified. Any other claimants to Life Membership will need to supply adequate evidence to that effect.

9. Any other Business:

Freda Cleaver reported that Welford-on-Avon had had a new belfry access ladder installed recently at a cost of about £5,500. She had brought with her two fund raising offers, a quiz and chocolate covers for Christmas presents, and hoped that members might purchase in aid of the fund.

Chris Povey read out two questions on behalf of Mr Robert Hall. Three years ago Mr Hall asked what was being done to produce a list of surviving Guild artefacts and their condition. Andrew Gunn showed a data list he was compiling of such items, but it is proving to be slow progress. A discussion followed about obtaining the outstanding details. As the Committee had now completed many initiatives to update and manage the Guild, it was suggested that completion of this data list should be a priority in the coming year. Steve Bowley pointed out that many peals and other performances are recorded in the Ringing World. A further question arose: who was formally recording the Guild Peals? Currently nobody is responsible. It was revealed there are two peal records: the Guild book as started by the old Guild and one that Tony Brazier compiled, which may well contain additional earlier ones. It was agreed these two aspects need to be followed up by the Committee in the coming year. The second item was Mr Hall's suggestion that a list of towers and their contact details be placed onto the Guild's website. This was noted, but data protection may be an issue concerning contact details. The Committee would look at this.

New issue of the Guild Rules: Andrew Gunn reminded that copies were available and asked everybody present to take a copy on leaving.

Richard Lewis-Skeath asked about progress with the new lapel badge. Andrew replied that an order was expected to be placed very soon with Tower Trophies of Blackminster Business Park, near Evesham. The delay in ordering has been due to the need to update the badge to comply with the now-standard Guild badge, which is as seen on the clothing. Slight adjustments had to be made to compensate for the smaller size. Chris Povey showed Richard an illustration of the new lapel badge. Chris also mentioned that we could have different coloured badges eg a ruby-coloured background for the Guild's 40th anniversary of its refounding next year if there were enough support.

Richard Lewis-Skeath mentioned that the Newing Shield's winners had not been updated since 2007 and asked whether this could be done before the Guild Dinner in February. It was agreed that the Shield should be engraved by the Guild of Handicrafts in Campden by that date. Chris Povey offered to follow this up. The Spencer Jones Cup has not been updated post war and the feeling was to leave it as it stands.

10. Results of the Striking Competition – Newing Shield: This was judged by Mr Alan Hartley.

1 st Moreton-in-Marsh 'A'	Total 12.5 faults.
(Awarded the Newing Shield)	
2 nd Wellesbourne.	Total 22.5.
(Awarded the Spencer Jones Cup)	
3 rd Moreton-in-Marsh 'B'.	Total 48.
4 th Long Compton.	Total 61.
Scratch team 'A'.	Total 4.5
'The Committee'.	Total 10
Scratch team 'B'.	Total 10.5

The Brazier Competition, no entries this year.

The Meeting closed at 6.25pm.. John Nicholls thanked everybody for their input to the meeting. He also thanked all those who brought the food and helped with the teas, the latter in particular Maureen and David Adams, and Stuart and Michael Cummings, for their great assistance in this way.

Andrew Gunn
Hon. Secretary.

Please note that these Minutes are subject to final acceptance at the 2013 AGM.

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 4TH DECEMBER.

The Committee met on Tuesday 4th December at the Hon Sec's home in Ilmington. Peter Quinn and Keith Murphy presented their apologies. The President, John Nicholls, took the Chair

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

2) **Matters arising** were:-

Feedback from the Walking Tour and Inter-Shires Comp: both went well, with no apparent problems; Certificates for teams taking part in the Newing Shield comp: Peter Q was to contact Ted Copson about using those Pam devised. Michael D said he would speak to Ted in Peter's absence;

Membership list for Newsletter distribution: Michael D will prepare an up-to-date one for the January printing;

Guild Dinner: all arranged; no problems expected; Christmas Party location and food: Wellesbourne on Dec 15th (as Notice in Newsletter). Food and drink to be taken, as in past years;

Guild lapel badges: Andrew updated by reporting that only the colour shade and a small technical detail are requiring agreement before an order. These were expected to be finalised very soon. The selling price was discussed and £4 was agreed (the first badges were £1 in the 1970s!); The CC letter from Chris Mew re the Future of Change Ringing: it was realised this only applied to territorial associations and therefore not to the Guild. No action would be taken;

40th Anniversary Celebrations: March 30th is the actual date of the re-founding and it's a Saturday. Stuart reported that finding a tower is difficult, because it's Easter Saturday and many towers don't ring then. Bourton-on-the-Hill may be a possibility. The actual re-founding meeting was at the Church Rooms, Campden. It was suggested that there be a short celebratory meeting in there either before or after the practice at possibly Bourton-o-t-Hill. John to enquire about the Church Rooms for March 30th (*see Notice on p.3. Ed*);

Guild Personal Accident Cover: more investigation about this required;

Guild Facebook: Roland Merrick has set up a Guild account for those in this network; AGM feedback: everything worked, and letters of thanks had been sent to the Vicar and the National Trust. Chris suggested a 'normal' venue next year, as this rather special location had taken a lot of arranging.

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

Hon Secretary: Andrew said he was hoping the lapel badges would be finalised in time for selling at the Guild Dinner (*see p.3. Ed*);

Treasurer: Michael D presented his report (circulated prior to the meeting). He and Peter K have been unable to liaise about membership numbers, to tie down a definitive list. He also acknowledged payment for subs from Josh Lowe and Christina Ireland (for 2012/2013). Michael wanted values of surplus inks and paper as at 31/12/12 given to him;

Membership Sec: numbers of members still do not tie up with Treasurer's list. Liaison on this is vital now, to establish correct numbers; Fixture Sec: Stuart is compiling the list for the next Newsletter. He said it would be important to ensure the current tower list goes on the website, even though the Newsletters would be one issue in arrears;

Newsletter Editor: the January issue is coming together and is likely to be 16 sides. He suggested printing on Thurs 3rd Jan.

Mid-week (Vice-President's) Tours co-ordinator: Michael H said he was organising the Feb tour, after Isobel advertised for such;

CCCBR reps: Keith's written report said the CC President had her monthly blog available;

Bell Restoration Fund: Chris reported Wyck Rissington's rehang complete. Their cheque for £350 would be presented at the Dedication Service on Dec 16th. Chris had yet to contact Bill Nash re Hinton. Welford's application for a grant towards their new belfry access ladder was discussed and £200 was to be offered.

4) **Items for discussion**:-

2013 events and locations; AGM and Striking Comp to be on 12th Oct, location to be decided; Minimus Comp on 14th Sept at, possibly, Wyck Rissington; Guild Ringing Tour w/end as last year 5-7th July (Richard L-S to arrange); Wendy Mace unable to arrange the Walking Tour, but Michael Haynes said he would do this (date and location to be agreed); Inter Shires on possibly 16th Nov.

Peal Books and Peal Secretary: an item at the AGM highlighted that no peals are being written up in the Guild peal book. A peal secretary is required. Chris was asked to put a notice in the Newsletter;

Guild artefacts, etc: Andrew has done considerable work on this, but more is required. Chris said we need to consider how we should do this at the next Committee meeting: agreed;

Treasurer's old papers: Michael D said he had been given some very old records and wondered what should be done with them: to archives; and given to Hon Sec.

EIG Guild insurance: Andrew reported that the cost of this had increased unreasonably following a reassessment. As time was short until renewal, it was agreed it should be paid, but other sources be investigated next year.

5) **Any Other Business**:-

Inventory of Guild documents: should have a list of these and who holds them: agreed;

Names on Newing Shield: Chris enquired whether it should be 'Moreton' or 'Moreton-in-Marsh'. Agreed as Moreton (as 'Campden' already used on it)

Next Meeting: 5th March 2013, Ilmington.

(NB: these notes do not supplant the formally-agreed Minutes.)

THOUGHTS FROM A VERY OCCASIONAL PEAL RINGER.

(A follow-up to the peal rung at Bidford-on-Avon and reported in the October Newsletter)

Oh no! the day has dawned: Saturday 14th July. What seemed like a good idea back in December 2011 no longer had the same appeal. Sam (Precious) had wanted to use his ringing as part of his Duke of Edinburgh gold award. He had used it also for the two earlier awards. If this was to be his gold then he really needed a challenge. 2012 was a good year for a peal. We had various good reasons, not least the Jubilee. Our Vicar gave permission for a peal so it was now down to finding a band and more importantly a conductor.

Eventually the date was set and a band was arranged. Having lived in Bidford for nearly 29 years I always had the plan that I might manage to circle the Tower to peals. I only had 2 more bells to ring to achieve this goal. However one of these bells was the Tenor (oh no!). Having broken my wrist some 18 months earlier, would my wrist stand up to this? And my last peal was back in 2002. Would I also be able to stand ringing the Tenor behind to a Doubles method for almost 3 hours? The concentration....!!

Too late to back out now. Surprisingly, once we got started, no problems. The time went by quite quickly even though I could clearly see the clock. Towards the last half hour I started thinking, 'Come on now, keep the striking right; we're almost there. Please don't go wrong'.

'THAT'S ALL!' Hooray we have done it. Well done, Sam; only your quarter to call.

Thanks go to Martin for conducting. The photograph was taken and it was over to The Bulls Head for a drink. Next question is: do I still try and aim to circle the Tower with only the 6th left? The jury is still out.

Sandra Parker

(Of course you should go for the 6th, Sandra!! You will regret it if you don't. Ed)

WILLIAM ROBERT GEORGE (BILL) HICKS (1937-2012)



Bill Hicks was born at Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, on Coronation Day, May 12, 1937. Although initially given the names William Robert by his parents, they were prevailed upon also to add the additional name George in honour of the new King, George VI. Bill eventually moved with his family to live in Clifford Chambers, a small village a mile or two outside Stratford-upon-Avon, which is where he learnt to ring at St Helen's Church before leaving to join the Army for national service in the early 1950's. It would be about thirty years later that he would resume bell ringing after attending a recruiting day for new bell ringers at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon in 1981.

Bill had the misfortune of being ill in the year prior to taking his 11 plus. This sadly meant that he missed out on vital school work and ultimately was not able to achieve the grades he wished for and go on to grammar school. He always looked upon this as his personal failure; ultimately his family recognised it to be a failure of the system! This early disappointment haunted Bill for the rest of his life and he surrounded himself with books to gain for himself as much knowledge as possible. Becoming extremely well read, he often had at least 4 or even 5 books on the go at any one time.

During the thirty years he was a regular ringer at Holy Trinity Church, he initially supported the late Dr Michael Wilcox with the maintenance of the bells, a job he continued to do regularly until only very recently. His care and regular attention has ensured that the bells and their fittings remain in very good order, in spite of them being more than sixty years old.

Bill was able to turn his hand to most things, and whatever he undertook, he saw through to the very end. Whether it was learning a new method, or learning about heraldry, wine making or collecting shells, he would plunge headlong in and would not rest until the subject had been mastered to his

satisfaction. When tracing his family history, he managed to go back to the 16th Century – no mean feat, bearing in mind that his forebears were mainly farm labourers!

Bill was our Deputy Tower Captain and over the years he nurtured and supported many new ringers. I know that the time, energy and encouragement he gave to all of them were greatly appreciated. Bill became regularly involved with the KES Ringing Club, an initiative started by a teacher at King Edward VI Grammar School. I know how proud Bill was of all the youngsters achieved, and how much he enjoyed watching their development and confidence grow week by week. Hopefully these young people will become the ringers of the future and Bill has played a significant part in making sure that they have all received a solid start to their ringing careers.

Bill passed away very suddenly on the 8 October and his death left many in Stratford-upon-Avon, not just ringers, deeply shocked and stunned. We have all lost a great friend and I know that I speak for all the Stratford ringers when I say, life up in the tower will just not be the same again.

Well over two hundred people attended the funeral and the bells were rung open both before and after the service. There were many tributes, but perhaps one of the most poignant came from his two daughters, Jane and Sarah. They said that if he were here, he would probably say "*not a bad turn out for Old Bill the Toolmaker*". He would also have followed that up by saying "*that people were there because they just fancied a good cup of tea and a piece of cake after the funeral*".

Bill throughout his life never saw himself as anything special. But to everyone else, he was an extremely kind and modest man, someone who was always around to give help and support, always willing to go the extra mile and we will all miss him dreadfully.

A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples is to be rung within the next few weeks at Holy Trinity Church, a method Bill greatly enjoyed, and I am sure that when it is rung, he will be listening. (*See box alongside. Ed*). Bill's ashes will eventually be interred with his parents in the churchyard at Clifford Chambers, the Warwickshire village he loved throughout his life and where he may now rest in peace.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his daughters Jane and Sarah and their families, partner Annie and to his brother James.

God bless you Bill, you will not be forgotten.

Charles Wilson, Captain of the Ringers

(*This Obituary also appeared in 'The Ringing World' of 23rd November. It was supplied to this Newsletter for publication by Charles. Ed*)

RINGING IN MEMORY OF BILL HICKS

(Coventry Diocesan Guild)
Pebworth, St Peter, Worcs
Monday 29 Oct 2012 in 2h 43 (12)

5056 Plain Bob Major

Composed: J R Pritchard

- 1 Andrew F Alldrick
- 2 Robert Robinson
- 3 Jonathon R Chester
- 4 Michael A Haynes
- 5 Keith Abbott
- 6 Robert Tregillus
- 7 Raymon A Sheasby
- 8 Michael Chester (C)

Rung in memory of Bill Hicks of Stratford upon Avon who died on October 8th 2012.

(Coventry Diocesan Guild)
Stratford-upon-Avon (Holy Trinity),
Warwickshire

Wednesday 7 November 2012

1320 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Michael Gray
- 2 Jo Langford
- 3 Jo Beavan (C)
- 4 Samuel Bridges
- 5 Hannah Hawley
- 6 Matt Jones

Rung in memory of Bill Hicks

Stratford-upon-Avon (Holy Trinity),
Warwickshire

Sunday 16 December, 2012

1260 Grandsire Triples

1. Hazel Mellor
2. Jennifer Winslow
3. Freda Cleaver
4. Edward Copson
5. John Carroll
6. Charles Wilson
7. John Nicholls (cond)
8. Peter Bridges

1st quarter treble for triples: 1

Rung by ringers from Holy Trinity Church and friends to celebrate the life of Bill Hicks, a Stratford ringer since 1982, who died suddenly in October, 2012.

May he rest in peace.

FROM THE ARCHIVES (100 YEARS AGO)

The Old Minute Book records the following for the quarter 1st January to 31st March 1913:-

March 25th 1913:

A Committee Meeting (presided over by the Rev Spencer Jones) was held at The Rectory, Moreton-in-Marsh, to arrange the programme for the April meeting at Blockley.

The following resolutions were duly passed:-

- 1st. That the date of the meeting be 24th April.
- 2nd. That the time be 2.0pm
3. That the competitions be as usual, but that the number of Call Changes to be rung in the 5 minutes allowed must be 10.

4. Proposed by Mr Evans, seconded by Mr Barnes (Blockley) that Mr Brinkworth of Charlton Kings be invited to officiate as Judge in the Competition, and failing him that Messrs Evans & Wigginton of Blockley, be appointed.

5. That a Special Service be held in the Parish Church at 4-30pm and that the Rev Canon Houghton be asked to sanction same, and be the Preacher.

6. That the tea be at 'The Bell Hotel' at 5.30pm. With regard to the Rev Canon Houghton's suggestion that the preliminary Committee meeting be held at the Parish where the Competitions are to take place, it was decided to

defer consideration of the matter until the Half-yearly meeting of the Guild.

It was suggested a concert might be arranged in aid of the Guild Funds, but no decision was arrived at.

The usual vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding and granting use of the Parish room, closed the meeting. There were only 6 delegates present.

(Signed) Edw'd J Houghton

FROM THE ARCHIVES (40 YEARS AGO – THE RUBY ANNIVERSARY)

A momentous meeting took place on 30th March 1973. This was called by Tony Brazier to gauge interest in reforming the Four Shires Guild, which had lain dormant since the beginning of WW2. Tony had become increasingly concerned about the lack of local ringing direction from the territorial organisations in the North Cotswolds area and increasingly interested in the aims, local direction and lack of dividing boundaries the Guild used to offer the area. He felt this was needed again and organised the meeting to determine what support existed for a reformation.

Here are the Minutes of that meeting as recorded in the reformed Guild's first Minute Book:-

Meeting held on Friday 30th March 1973 at the Church Room, Church Street, Chipping Campden to consider the formation of a Guild or Society of Ringers in the North Cotswolds area:

Prior to the meeting, the following notice was circulated as widely as possible to ringers and other interested persons living within the area proposed to be covered:

'Acting upon suggestions from a number of ringers in the North Cotswolds area for the formation of a Guild or Society of Ringers to actively promote Church Bell ringing generally, but particularly Service ringing, and the raising of standards and conditions for ringing in the area, it has been decided to arrange a meeting on Friday 30th March 1973 in the Church Room, Church Street, Chipping Campden (opposite the Eight Bells) at 7.30pm to discuss the idea.

You are invited to attend, together with other ringers who live or ring in the area and to whom you are able to pass on the information.

For anyone finding difficulty in travelling to Chipping Campden, assistance with transport can be made by contacting any of the persons named below.

The area as it is suggested to be covered is broadly bounded by Bledington, The Slaughters, Guiting Power, Didbrook, Offenham, Quinton, Tredington, Brailles, Hook Norton and Chipping Norton. At the meeting, it is also hoped to show photographs and other records of the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers.

A.J.Brazier	J.W.Nicholls	L.C.Dowdeswell
32 Badsey Fields Lane	Guild Cottage	The Lodge
Badsey, Evesham	Sheep Street	Maugersbury Park
Worcs	Chipping Campden	Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos
Tel. Evesham 832589	Glos	Stow-on-the-Wold 30350 '

Present at the meeting were Mrs J.Holden (Bledington), A.C.Berry (Pershore), R.Bindoff (Badsey), H.J.Boulter (Bledington), A.J.Brazier (Badsey), A.H.Diston (Ebrington), L.C.Dowdeswell (Stow-on-the-Wold),

C.E.Evans (Badsey), M.F.Fairfax (Mickleton), G.R.Harper (Moreton-in-Marsh), H.O.Hart (Chipping Campden), C.Holden (Bledington), F.Ingles (Willersey), L.Joynes (Longborough), J.W.Nicholls (Chipping Campden), C.M.Povey (Ebrington), Revd R.F.Rothery (Chipping Campden), F.G.Rouse (Ebrington), M.Stewart (Badsey), and W.F.Wood (Chipping Campden).

Chairman: Mr H.O.Hart was elected Chairman for the meeting proposed by A.J.Brazier, seconded by J.W.Nicholls

The Chairman outlined the reasons for calling the meeting and made reference to the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers which was formed in the early part of the present century, in its heyday sponsoring ringing competitions, but ceasing to function after 1939, when the normal ringing of church bells was not permitted.

A general discussion followed in which reminiscences, and suggestions for a Guild, were made.

Proposed by C.M.Povey, seconded by G.R.Harper:
The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers be restarted.
Carried unanimously.

Proposed by L.C.Dowdeswell, seconded by C.Holden:
A committee be formed to investigate and put in hand the re-formation of the Guild.
Carried unanimously.

Proposed by L.C.Dowdeswell, seconded by J.W.Nicholls:
The Committee be H.O.Hart (Chairman), A.J.Brazier (Secretary) with members C.E.Evans, M.F.Fairfax, G.R.Harper, S.C.Holden and Revd.R.F.Rothery.
Carried unanimously.

After further general discussion, the Chairman closed the meeting.

And so, the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers came into being once more. Two committee meetings followed later that year, in April and October, plus the 1973 AGM in Ilmington on 27th October.

Until recently the date for restarting the Guild was taken as 1st January 1974, but this is clearly an error, as the Guild functioned with an elected committee and an AGM from the 30th March meeting onwards to the end of 1973. January 1st 1974 was the date from which subscriptions were first taken.

CMP

WYCK RISSINGTON: BELLS NOW RINGABLE.

Wyck Rissington's project to rehang their bells was first mentioned in this illustrious journal in July last year (issue 133), under the title 'A tale of two fours'. Whites of Appleton had just removed the bells. As can be seen from the front page of this issue, the bells have returned. It's pleasing to report that everything is now up and running again.

As might be imagined, much work has been done since July. Not only have the bells received new fittings (which includes such niceties as ball bearings to swing on!), but their canons and cast-in crown staples have been removed. In addition the bells have been tuned. They were all well off-key, to the point that some unkind person described them as 'musically chronic' – although it was a fair assessment! The 2nd and 3rd were substantially sharp of the tenor's note, and the treble horrendously so. Whites packed them off to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, wherein modern tuning equipment and much expertise was brought to bear on them.

Some work was undertaken to the bellframe. This was considered to be in good enough condition to continue in use, although tie-bolts were inserted to squeeze the vertical joints tight, and steel cleats were coach-screwed to the horizontal joints. The major problem concerned the frame's support. Although the outer bottom sills rest on the tower off-set, a single wooden main beam straddling the centre of the belfry provided support to the middle of the frame. Unfortunately this beam is very old and very wizened, and it was considered unable to continue supporting the frame. It had to stay, of course, but two steel Universal Beams were inserted underneath the bellframe to take the weight off the old beam. A belfry floor has been provided (good addition: no floor previously; just a 12ft drop to next floor!).

With work to the bellframe complete, the bells were delivered on Monday 5th November. The previous day had seen lots of rain and even snow! However, Monday was bright and sunny: ideal conditions to unload four bells and their associated fittings.

Start time was 9.00am, but Whites were there earlier. It didn't take long to get the bells off the truck and lined up in front of the tower door ready for a photo opportunity. The various hoists were soon in place and the treble was taken up and placed in its pit.



The 2nd bell back in the belfry



All four bells ready for the try-out (compare with photo in July Newsletter)
The others soon followed, after which their fittings were attached. At

the end of the day there were four bells in their pits complete with wheels, clappers and stays, but minus sliders and pulleys.

Whites returned later in the month to fit the remaining fittings and a new rope guide assembly. The ropes were put on and a try-out occurred on Thursday 29th November. The local ringing band is quite new, having been recruited in preparation for the bells to be ringable again. Jeremy Meyrick has tutored them at Great Rissington, with able assistance from Sue and Steve Coleman of the G&BDA. The try-out was therefore a new experience for the Wyck Rissington ringers – it was the first time they had rung their own bells. Everything worked perfectly - and the bells were transformed musically, too.



W-R ringers & friends, L-R: Elizabeth Ransom (treble), Jeremy Meyrick, Sue Coleman, James Ross (2nd), Roger Jones, Steve Coleman, Pippa Simon (3rd), Churchwarden Anne Smith, Andrew Ransom (tenor)

The Dedication Service was on Sunday December 16th as part of the Morning Service. It was clearly a very joyful occasion, as it probably represented a fitting conclusion to the major work to the church that has cost about £350,000 in the last few years. This small community knows a thing or two about fund-raising! The Guild handed over its grant cheque at the Service, as did the G&BDA. It was a good result.



Andrew Gunn (Hon Sec) handing over the Guild's grant cheque.

(Photo: Elizabeth Ransom)

An augmentation to 5? It was considered, but too late in the project to deviate from the intended work. It seems possible, but it isn't straightforward. However, after their mammoth fundraising episode the PCC has decided they need a break – not unreasonably. Perhaps when the local band is proficient and wants new challenges..?



OK; what about those lions in Wyck Rissington? Here is one. It is, of course, a 'Cotswold Lion'. It's always a joy to see a flock of genuine Cotswold sheep in the Cotswolds that don't reside in the Rare Breeds Farm Park.

CMP

CONGRATULATIONS MICHAEL!

Most people, at some time in their life, have an ambition to succeed – perhaps to become a leading politician (Heaven forbid!), dare I suggest a bishop, a gold medal winning Olympian, the boss of a business conglomerate..... The list is endless.

There are those in life who look to succeed in lesser activities, nevertheless of great importance to them as an individual, or in team participation – objectives that maybe appear to the masses as absolute non-starters! Think back: as a child I'm sure you wanted to learn to ride a bicycle, to tie your own shoe laces (in my day to pass the eleven plus), learn to drive a motor car and own one, to purchase your own home and later in life to have children and grandchildren to love and adore.

And there are those, too, who have varying hobbies, setting themselves the highest of standards. Gaining an award(s) in the local gardening show is just a simple example.

Campanologists, too, have ambitions that vary considerably. There are those wishing to ring at 100, 150, etc, different towers, and those fanatical ringers who aim to ring 50, 100, etc, full peals in varying methods. And there are those who wish to attain objectives on a local basis.

Very recently Mike Fairfax succeeded in perhaps what no other Mickleton ringer has ever attempted – or probably even thought of doing.

Mike started his ringing career at St Lawrence, Mickleton, in 1954, when the bells were rehung. He became Tower Captain, taking over from his tutor, Fred 'Roger' Kinchin, and held the position for 28 years. During that time Mike had rung a succession of peals in his home tower, but wished to ring all eight bells to peals of Grandsire Triples. By the beginning of this year he needed one more; he had never pealed the 7th bell. A peal attempt for September 29th was therefore organised.

A 'tester' in the form of a quarter peal was organised, and, with Mike ringing the 7th, this was duly rung on 17th September without problem. (See *October Newsletter*, p.11. Ed)

It is good to report that Mike achieved his ambition, as the peal attempt was successful. Well done Mike and the other seven ringers, for one of whom, Sara Woodgate, it was her first peal (*Congratulations. Ed*). Your 'après peal' refreshments in The Kings Head were well earned.

John Kinchin

The details of the peal are:-

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

Mickleton, Gloucestershire

Church of St Lawrence

Saturday 29 September 2012

in 2 hours 49 mins (tenor: 15-3-16 in F)

5040 Grandsire Triples

Groves' variation of J J Parker's 12-part

- 1 Sara Woodgate
- 2 Peter J F Quinn
- 3 William J Sabin
- 4 Richard Lewis-Skeath
- 5 Christopher F Mew (C)
- 6 Jaqueline A Hands
- 7 Michael F Fairfax
- 8 Christopher M Povey

Compliment to Michael and Glenys Fairfax on their 39th wedding anniversary today.

Circled the tower to peals of Grandsire Triples: 7
First peal: 1

THE GUILD CHRISTMAS PARTY.

The evening commenced with ringing at St Peter's in Wellesbourne, attended by approximately 20 people. Unfortunately the ringing was not up to our usual high standard, as we seemed to be beset with gremlins. These manifested themselves by ensuring not one of the methods attempted was completed successfully, and culminated with the rope breaking on the 7th!

The rope, however, was soon repaired and at 8-30pm we moved over to the Church Hall for the Christmas Party. Here we were met with a magnificent spread, the setting up of which was organised by Veronica Quinn and Linda Dane.



Having eaten, we settled down for Carol singing, led by Sophia Lewis-Skeath, with accompaniment from Linda Dane on piano and Benjamin Lewis-Skeath on tuba. There followed a raffle with tickets being sold by Stuart Cummings and Eliza Lewis-Skeath.

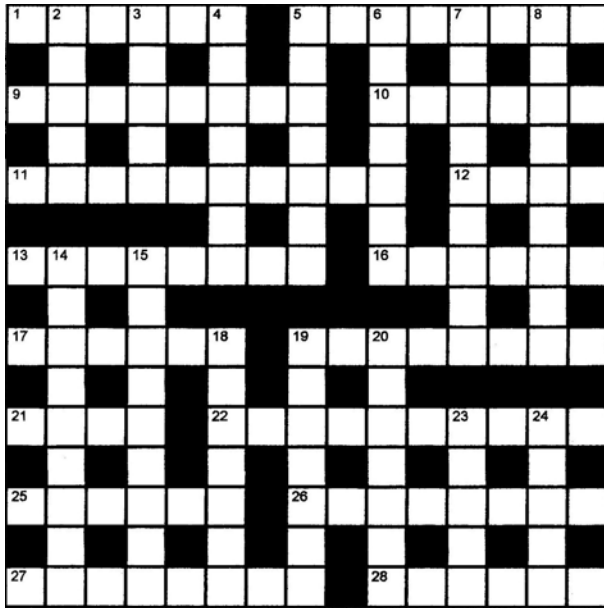


The party finished at 10-30pm, when John Nicholls thanked everybody for attending and making it a very successful evening.

Peter Kenealy.

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

El Presidente has triumphed again in supplying yet another crossword – but it was only to be as expected! I know not whether this offering is easy or hard, being only a simpleton in the art and science of crosswords.



Answer to the crossword in the October 2012 Newsletter



Across

- 1 Confused. Bad egg? (6)
- 5 Needed to hit the target. (8)
- 9 Position of sally before the back-stroke. (8)
- 10 & 3dn Four Shires Guild member No.1. (6)
- 11 Blend a case for tower steps. (anag) (10)
- 12 Ringers have to hide rejection. (4)
- 13 Take steps to achieve this. (3,5)
- 16 Home of the Eye. (6)
- 17 They say it is the best form of defence. (6)
- 19 The utmost Grandsire calls? (7)
- 21 & 18dn The Mickleton tower captain (4)
- 22 City, County and Forest (10)
- 25 The Rector's community. (6)
- 26 Our ringing brothers. (8)
- 27 Controlled. (8)
- 28 Paid attention to. (6)

Down

- 2 & 23dn..List of towers (5)
- 3 See 10 across (5)
- 4 City of china! (7)
- 5 In the case of bells this is usually an understatement. (7)
- 6 This example of the founder's art moves from pasture to pasture. (7)
- 7 Cane lever had suitability. (anag) (9)
- 8 Sternum. (9)
- 14 A controversial issue. (3,6)
- 15 Nipped air and down came the water. (anag) (9)
- 18 See 21 across. (7)
- 19 Lured. (7)
- 20 Great success (7)
- 23 See 2 down. (5)
- 24 E.U. rag dispute. (anag) (5)

RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

The monthly outings continue to be well supported and enjoyable.

The October Outing, organised by Hilary Aslett, found us in North Buckinghamshire. Our first tower was St Mary, Bletchley (Milton Keynes), with its 8 bells (15½cwt), which are an interesting mix of Abraham Rudhall, Robert Stainbank, 'old' Taylor, modern Taylor and early G&J! The next tower, the 8, 12cwt, at St Faith, Newton Longville, were almost equally mixed, with John Briant, 'old' Taylor, 'old' M&S and modern M&S. We had lunch at The Swan Inn, Stewkley, after which we travelled to St Mary, Great Brickhill. The bells, 8, 14cwt, were a 6 until 2009. We ended a good days ringing on the light 6 (9cwt) at Holy Trinity, Drayton Parslow, where the tenor is a rare bell by Bartholomew Atton, 1591. Thank you Hilary for a most interesting day.

The November Outing was organised by Sandra Parker and brought us comfortably close to home in Worcestershire and Warwickshire. The first tower was All Saints, Church Lench, with its 6,

14cwt. The 5th here is dated 1600 and is the earliest known bell cast by Henry Farmer of Evesham. St Egwin's, Norton, was the next tower. Its 8 bells (13cwt) were soon ringing away. The '2-for-1' lunch deal at The Norton Grange, a few yards away, was most useful – and good value! The two afternoon towers contained complete rings. The first was the pretty little 6, 8cwt, at St James, Harvington. These bells, all Taylor 1947, were hung as a chime in the base of the distinctive copper-clad spire until 1998. They are now in the belfry of the very ancient tower. The last tower was St Matthew, Salford Priors, which has an 8, 15cwt, by Gillett & Johnston, 1945. They provided a good end to a pleasant day's ringing. Thank you, Sandra!

The December outing, organised by Paul Evans, took us to the North Worcs/West Warks area. The first tower was St Giles, Packwood, with its 8 bells (7cwt). Then it was on to the 8 (12½cwt) at St Mary Magdalen, Tanworth in Arden. *(I remember being told*

these bells - a complete ring by Mears & Stainbank, 1949 - are known as 'the Mears' Mistake', because they are outstandingly good! Ed) We had a pleasant Christmas lunch at the Rose and Crown, Portway. After lunch we rang on the 8 bells (10½cwt) at St Leonard, Beoley, Redditch. We ended a very pleasant day on the 8 bells (12cwt) at St Lawrence, Alvechurch, which have just been rehung by Whites with recast trebles and a recast tenor. Thank you, Paul.

We all went off wishing each other a Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year.

These outings always seem to bring out the best in ringing and Friendship amongst many of us from many parts of the Four Shires, or even more Shires.

Frank Spiers

GUILD WALKING TOUR SATURDAY 6TH OCTOBER.

After heavy overnight rain our luck with the weather held for the 6th year running and the day was gloriously sunny but without the heat wave conditions (nearly 30C) which we walked in last year (thank goodness).

This year we were very pleased to welcome Cameron, Alex, Lorna, Becky and Chris from Kids in Charge who have learnt to ring at the Harry Windsor Ringing Centre in Kineton and very proficient ringers they are, too. They have a monthly meeting and this year incorporated the walking tour into their programme. Also to Catherine Jamieson and Fiona Dyson who accompanied them. This brought the total numbers to 17, which was a big improvement on previous years.

The tour commenced with the bells of St Thomas a Becket at Sutton-under-Brailles, a ground floor ring of 5 located (unusually) in the porch. Thank you to Jean Bryant for opening up and making us welcome and helping with the obligatory group photo.



The 'obligatory group photo' at Sutton-under-Brailles

Because of the muddy conditions many of the group opted to walk the first stage to Brailles along the road, but those with suitable boots opted for the field route. We all joined up at Brailles and ascended the tower where we were able to go out onto the leaded roof and admire the views and also, as it was just before 12, we were able to go above the ringing chamber to watch the 12 o'clock performance by the mechanical chiming barrel. Dating from 1710 it was a real treat to see.



On the roof of Brailles Church tower

Sandwiches were then eaten in the churchyard and those who wanted a pub lunch repaired to The George and very tasty the meals looked too. To avoid anyone having to hang about, the sandwich eaters were able to set off with the map on the next leg to Cherington.

This time it was all on grass including a stretch on the Golf Course. By the time the Pub Lunchers reached Cherington we could hear the bells being raised and then the final ringing took place on the lovely bells of St John the Baptist, a ground floor ring of 6, where some good touches of Bob Doubles and Bob Minor were rung. Then it was just a short walk back to the cars at Sutton.

A big thank you to Jean Bryant of Sutton, Paul Marriott of Cherington and Stuart and Michael Cummings of Brailles for making the churches available for us and to everyone who came along and who made it such a happy friendly day.

David and Alex Rogers, Lorna Jackson, Chris Langford, Isobel Murphy, Stuart and Michael Cummings, Allen Turner, Claire and Benedict (and Stanley) Kimpton, Cameron Townsend, Rebecca Hawkins, Fiona Dyson, Catherine Jamieson, Matthew Arnold and Ginny White.

Words: Wendy Mace; photos: Stuart & Michael Cummings

(Wendy tells me she is unlikely to be able to organise more walks in the future, as calls on her time in other directions are increasing. I am sure everyone will join with me in thanking her for those she has organised.

At the Committee meeting on December 4th Michael Haynes offered to arrange the 2013 tour. Thank you Michael; it's over to you..... Ed)



1710 technology at Brailles

Despite some initial trepidation about ringing bells much heavier than those most of us were used to, everyone did indeed ring at some stage and we were able to leave them 'up' ready for Harvest Festival the following day. At this point the more intrepid were able to ascend right to the tower roof to get truly panoramic views. A special thank you to Stuart and Michael for being such hospitable hosts and allowing us to experience all that this unique tower has to offer.

TO LOUGHBOROUGH FOUNDRY BY 'CP GLOBAL TOURS'

Eighteen ringers and family from the Offenham and Evesham area went to Loughborough on December 6th to visit John Taylor & Co's bell foundry and museum. Claire Penny made the arrangements, and Chris Povey organised a minibus and drove it.

We were given a guided tour of all parts of the foundry, the rope walk where ropes are now being made, and the Museum. We also had the excitement of seeing a casting in the casting hall (it was for cast-iron fittings: Taylors are once again casting their own pieces). Claire had booked us in to ring on the Bellfoundry's private ring of 12 bells. As the tenor is only 6cwt and the treble a mere 1cwt, these bell were a challenge to some! Nonetheless, we did manage to ring rounds on 12 eventually! With thanks to JT & Co for a very interesting and enjoyable visit.

Happily, we arrived back to the Vale without mishap!
CP & CP



Fire, hell and brimstone! The scene in the casting hall.

THE 2012 INTER-SHIRES STRIKING COMPETITION.

The Guild's Inter-Shires striking competition took place on Saturday 17th November on the far from easy 6 at Long Compton (*quite right: give them something to work at! Ed.*). The judges, Lorna Curtis (representing Oxfordshire), Alan Roberts (representing Worcestershire), George Osborn (representing Warwickshire), Ann Jessop (representing Gloucestershire) and Ken Wakefield (representing the Guild) were seated in the room over the lych-gate suitably warmed on a chilly afternoon.

The first team to ring was last year's winners Drayton St Leonards, representing Oxfordshire, followed by Tewkesbury Abbey for Gloucestershire. The third team was Ilmington representing Warwickshire, nobly stepping in after the late withdrawal of Warwick. Finally, Pershore represented Worcestershire. The Rules were as the Guild's competition, ie, rise, 120 method and lower, all marked.

given. Tewkesbury's Captain, Malcolm Taylor, was presented with the trophy.



Ilmington, (for Warks)



Pershore (for Worcs)

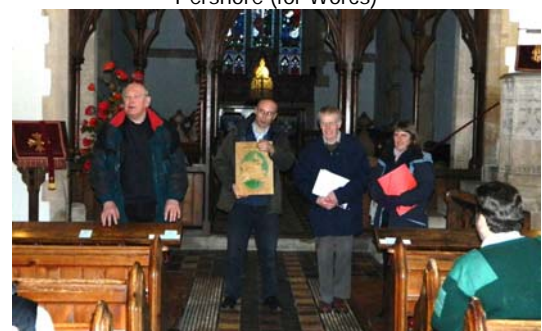


Last year's winners, Drayton St Leonards (for Oxon)



The eventually victorious Tewkesbury Abbey team (for Glos)

As expected the ringing was very good and after the faults were averaged out it was found to be a very close contest. Tewkesbury were the winners and Drayton the runners-up. As is our custom, 3rd and 4th places were not



Malcolm Taylor receiving the Inter-Shires Trophy

Thanks are due to Peter Kenealy for the church arrangements, Jackie Hands, Stuart Cummings and Andrew Gunn for their support and, most importantly, for the copious amount of food – and subsequently the washing up. Finally, I must say that the afternoon would not have been a success without our Ringing Master, Sophia Lewis-Skeath, who helped with everything.

Words: John Nicholls. Photos: Andrew Gunn

(Andrew G was encouraged to take a photo of El Pres with a floor mop in his hands. I have not used the photo here, as El Pres seems unsure what the object is, and how and for what it should be used. Ed)

JOHN TAYLOR & CO.

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PEAL SECRETARY REQUIRED!

Arising from an item at the AGM, the Committee now asks whether anyone would like to take on the role of Peal Secretary. The job is to write up in the Peal Book the details of peals rung for the Guild. This needs to be done by hand, as the Peal Book is pre-printed, so 'acceptable' hand-writing skills would be an advantage!

There is a small backlog of peals, but, with only about 3 peals a year, this isn't onerous.

If interested, speak to Andrew Gunn, the Honorary Secretary.

GUILD ANNUAL DINNER SATURDAY, 2nd FEBRUARY 2013

The Annual Dinner will be held at The White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos
7.00 for 7.30pm.

MENU

Tomato and basil soup served with crusty bread

or

Chicken liver parfait served with toasted brioche and red onion marmalade

Roast beef served with roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, seasonal
vegetables and gravy

or

Roasted hake served on lemon and thyme risotto and a white wine and cream sauce

or

Mediterranean vegetable Gnocchi topped with goat's cheese and cherry tomatoes

Sticky toffee pudding served with sticky toffee sauce and vanilla ice cream

or

Passion fruit crème brûlée served with home-made short bread biscuits

Cost of Dinner £21.00

Please let either John Nicholls on 01386 841084 (email: john.nicholls18b@tiscali.co.uk), or Peter Quinn on
01789 840827 (email: peterquinn22@googlemail.com) know your choice of menu
by Saturday 19th January 2013

There will be a guest speaker

The striking competition trophies will also be presented.

AROUND THE TOWERS

PEALS, QUARTER-PEALS AND OTHER SPECIAL RINGING:-

Blockley, Glos, 30th Sept, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Isobel Murphy 1, Steve Coleman (C) 2, Sue Coleman 3, Jeremy Meyrick 4, John Nicholls 5, Keith Murphy 6, Michael Haynes 7, Jonathan Tallis 8. Following the final service of the Rev Grahame Humphries after 10 years' ministry in this parish and to wish him and his wife Mary a long and happy retirement. (G&B Q, but locally newsworthy and contains FSG members)

Salford Priors, Warks, 1st Oct, 1280 Superlative S Major: Michael Gray 1, Peter Quinn 2, John Gwynne 3, Alan Hartley 4, Jonathan Tallis 5, Chris Mew (C) 6, John Nicholls 7, Mark Sayers 8.

Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, 8th Oct, 1280 Cambridge S Major: Chris Mew (C) 1, Robert Reeves 2, Richard Lewis-Skeath 3, Alan Hartley 4, Jonathan Tallis 5, Karen French 6, John Nicholls 7, Peter Quinn 8.

Offenham, Worcs, 21st October, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Martin Penny 1, Claire Penny 2, Sandra Parker 3, Matthew Kemble 4, Chris Povey (C) 5, Stefanie Whittle 6. 1st Q: 6 **Congratulations Stefanie!!**



Chris, Stefanie (1st Q), Martin, Claire, Sandra and Matthew

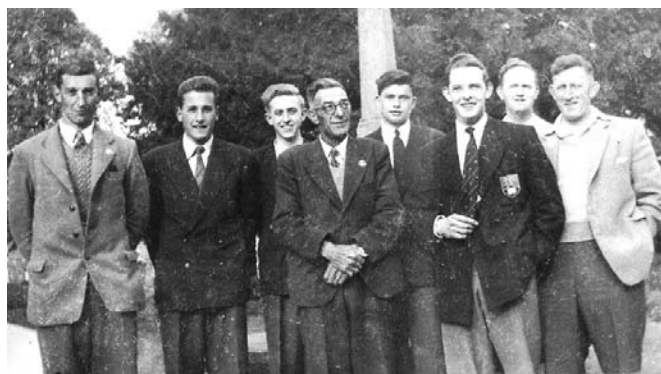
Ilmington, Warks, 22nd Oct, 1280 Original Major: Julie Doyle 1, Alan Hartley 2, Chris Mew (C) 3, Robert Reeves 4, Peter Quinn 5, Mark Sayers 6, John Nicholls 7, Richard Lewis-Skeath 8.

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

Mickleton, Glos, 12th Nov, 1270 Spliced Triples & Major (Grandsire, Cambridge, Little Bob): Chris Mew (C) 1, Peter Quinn 2, Alan Hartley 3, Richard Lewis-Skeath 4, Mark Sayers 5, Robert Reeves 6, John Nicholls 7, John Gwynne 8. Rung to mark the 70th anniversary today of Alan Hartley's first ringing lesson.

Offenham, Worcs, 1st Dec, 1260 Doubles (Stedman, Grandsire, Plain, April Day): Robert Hall 1, Claire Penny 2, Tom Sandham 3, Roland Merrick 4, Chris Povey (C) 5, Anthony Wheeler 6. Rung as part of the Christmas Tree Festival in the Church. Also Happy Birthday to Phyllis Brazier (2nd Dec).

PEOPLE AND PLACES:-



Robert Hall came across an old photo of a peal band that had successfully rung a peal of 6000 changes of Bob Major at Badsey. The band were local ringers, including the composer and conductor, Roger Savory. The peal, rung on 9th May 1956, is still the longest peal rung there. The ringers are, L-R: Gerald Hemming, Robert Hall, Colin Longmore, Geoff Hemming, Harry Wheatley, R Roger Savory, Tony Brazier (*with hair! Ed*), Wilf Newman.

Robert also reports that his son, William (a past member of the Guild, and now living and working in Portsmouth) was recently awarded a 2/1 BA (Hons) degree in Development and Business Studies from the University of Northumbria. Congratulations, William!

Quarter peal day in the Vale

Matthew Kemble organised three quarters around Evesham on Saturday 10th November, to give Josh Lowe of Harvington his first Q, and his grandfather, Tony Hartwell, his first inside to Grandsire Doubles. The 'back end' at Evesham happened to be up at the time, so the last Q gave Matthew his 'treat': a chance to ring Evesham's 36cwt tenor. Andrew Gunn had also wanted a Q on the big bells, so 2 hits for 1 throw! This Q was originally to be multi-Doubles, but, being on the heavy stuff, it was changed to SWAK (Something We All Know), to keep everything nice and steady. It was a successful day, with very creditable striking throughout.

Harvington, Worcs, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Josh Lowe 1, Martin Penny 2, Chris Povey 3, Claire Penny (C) 4, Matthew Kemble 5, Anthony Wheeler 6. 1st Q: 1 **Congratulations Josh!!**

Offenham, Worcs, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Andrew Gunn 1, Matthew Kemble 2, Tony Hartwell 3, Roland Merrick 4, Martin Penny (C) 5, Chris Povey 6. 1st Q inside to Grandsire: 3.

Evesham (Bell Tower), Worcs, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Andrew Gunn 1, Claire Penny 2, Roland Merrick 3, Martin Penny 4, Chris Povey (C) 5, Matthew Kemble 6. (On the back 6)

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS, FREDA!!

Salford Priors, Warks, 3rd Dec, 1344 Superlative S Major: Michael Dane 1, Freda Cleaver 2, Alan Hartley 3, Robert Reeves 4, Chris Mew (C) 5, John Nicholls 6, Mark Sayers 7, Richard Lewis-Skeath 8. Rung to mark the 60th anniversary of Freda's first peal, Superlative at Tring, Herts, on 29th Nov 1952 (*in which she rang 'inside! Ed*).

Pebworth, Worcs, 8th Dec, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Mike Fairfax 1, Andrew Baker 2, Keith Abbott 3, Chris Povey 4, Alan Griffin 5, Michael Haynes 6, John Nicholls 7 (C), Michael Dane 8. Rung – most unusually – in the Dorian Mode. Originally to have been PB Royal, but the tenor was found to be poorly. Probably first in the Dorian Mode for all!

Wellesbourne, Warks, 17th Dec, 1280 Newbold-on-Avon S Major: Michael Dane 1, Chris Mew (C) 2, Alan Hartley 3, James Ingham 4, Richard Lewis-Skeath 5, Robert Reeves 6, John Nicholls 7, John Gwynne 8.

Saintbury, Glos, 27th Dec, 1260 Plain Bob Triples: Jenny Chadburn 1, Sarah Chadburn 2, Robert Hall 3, Claire Penny 4, John Kinchin 5, Chris Povey 6, Robert Chadburn (C) 7, George Osborn 8. For Christmas. 1st on 8: 1

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

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Jan 5 th	BARFORD , Warks	6, 4-3-22 in B
Jan 12 th	EVESHAM , Worcs	10, 14-2-26 in F# (10-bell practice on the light 10)
Jan 19 th	ALDERMINSTER , Warks	6, 12-0-26 in F
Jan 26 th	HARVINGTON , Worcs	6, 8-1-14 in A
Feb 2 nd	GUILD ANNUAL DINNER, MORETON-IN-MARSH (see Notice p. 14)	
Feb 9 th	WINCHCOMBE , Glos	8, 11-2-11 in F#
Feb 16 th	LOWER QUINTON , Warks	6, 13-0-27 in F# (GF)
Feb 23 rd	BIDFORD-ON-AVON , Warks	8, 14-0-24 in F (GF)
Mar 2 nd	LANGBOROUGH , Glos	6, 11-0-2 in F# – <u>NOTE: 7.00-8.30pm</u>
Mar 9 th	MICKLETON , Glos	8, 15-3-16 in E (GF) – <u>NOTE: 7.00-8.30pm</u>
Mar 16 th	SNITTERFIELD , Warks	6, 16-1-13 in F
Mar 23 rd	MORETON-IN-MARSH , Glos	8, 10-0-14 in G
Mar 30 th	BOURTON-ON-THE-HILL , Glos	6, 11-1-27 in F – <u>NOTE: 7.00-8.15pm</u>
<u>AND AFTERWARDS, 8.30-9.30pm, AN ANNIVERSARY GATHERING IN CHIPPING CAMPDEN (see p.3)</u>		
Apr 6 th	BADSEY , Worcs	8, 15-0-4 in F – <u>NOTE: 7.00-8.30pm</u>
Apr 13 th	GREAT WOLFORD , Warks	6, 11-3-7 in F#
Apr 20 th	WELFORD-ON-AVON , Warks	8, 9-3-1 in G#
Apr 27 th	OFFENHAM , Worcs	6, 10-3-2 in F# (GF) – <u>NOTE: 7.00-8.30pm</u>

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.

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The Guild carries Public Liability insurance through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group for all its activities. Non-members attending these activities are also covered by this insurance, 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 non-members.)

TAG-END:

!! SUBSCRIPTIONS !!

Yes, folks, it's that time again: FSG subs are due on 1st January 2013. The rates are £5 for members and £2 for Juniors (under 18). Please pay as soon after this date as possible, as it benefits the Guild. (Please note: there is no Non-Resident Life Membership category. An annual subscription is required to retain membership.)

Payment may be made to Peter Kenealy, Membership Sec, or to Michael Dane, Hon Treasurer. It would assist greatly if, when paying by cash, you use the payment slip attached to this Newsletter.

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO PAY SUBSCRIPTIONS BY INTERNET BANK TRANSFER, which is a very convenient service if you are internet-connected and have internet banking. 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!! You will not need a receipt, as the bank transfer process allows a copy of the transfer document to be printed off. (*I have used this system and it works well. Ed*)

Events for 2013: book the dates:-

Guild Annual Dinner	Sat Feb 2nd, White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh (see details p.14)
40th Anniversary gathering	Sat Mar 30th, 8.30pm in the Church Rooms, Chipping Campden
Ringing Tour	Fri 5th- Sun 7th July (location and other details to follow)
Minimus Striking Comp.	Sat 14th September at (surprise, surprise!) Wyck Rissington.
Guild AGM & Striking Comp	Sat 12th October. (location to be advised).
Inter-Shires Comp.	Sat 16th November. Details to be confirmed.