

# THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central  Council of Church Bell Ringers)

## NEWSLETTER No 143 - JAN 2015

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Founded Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1909

### ST PETER'S, STANWAY, GLOS: BEING REHUNG AND AUGMENTED TO 5.



(Photo: Chris Povey)

Stanway is one of those 'chocolate box' villages nestling under the Cotswold scarp, along with Stanton, Buckland and Broadway. The bells have been effectively unringable for years, but have been rung by experienced bands for special occasions following the maximum make-do-and-mend maintenance Simon Ridley of Cheltenham could apply within their terminally-poor state. The bells are now being rehung and will be augmented to 5, the bellframe having been constructed originally to accommodate 5 bells. Whites of Appleton came as expected in November and removed the four bells. The new treble bell has already been cast. Work to fit tie-bars to the wooden bellframe continues, as does adding steel beams underneath it to better tie it into the tower. Replacing the bells is scheduled to happen in February or March. All the bells will be tuned (*they certainly weren't easy on the ears.... Ed*). Also see Around the Towers, p.12

# Officers and Committee Members of the Guild

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## **PRESIDENT**

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

Subscription rates: £5 adult; £2 Junior

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**The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (January 2015) is December 13<sup>th</sup> 2014**

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 WITH WITH US AGAIN, FOLKS...***

***I AM OF COURSE REFERRING TO SUBSCRIPTIONS, WHICH ARE DUE 1st JAN!!  
PLEASE SEE BACK PAGE ON WAYS TO PAY (RATES ABOVE)***

## EDITORIAL

**Happy New Year to all members!** May your ringing in 2015 – amongst many other things – be pleasurable.

**The Guild AGM in October caused some changes to personnel.** There were five vacancies, but all except two were, or have by now been, filled. I moved into the Hon Sec's chair, Richard Lewis-Skeath has become the Guild Ringing Master, and the Rev Dr Peter Newing is now the Guild Chaplain. Although John Carroll has filled one of the Committee vacancies, we still need another one. We also need a Guild Child Protection Officer. Can you help with either of these? The CPO is unlikely to need to attend Committee meetings, as it's largely a monitoring and updating post. Should there be a problem, a report on the incident to the Committee would be expected. The changes are on page 2.

**You will notice** that our new Guild Chaplain has not let the grass grow under his feet and has provided us with 'The Chaplain's Thoughts', which hopefully will become a regular feature. Thank you, Peter.

**The Guild's Annual Dinner is soon to occur.** Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> is the date, and it will be held at The White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh. See the Notice on p.13. A change of location was discussed in Committee, but the majority felt the Dinner should be in Moreton, it being the place in which the Guild was formed in 1909; but apart from that the Hotel has treated us well previously. This year the Speaker will be **Michael Uphill**. If you've heard Michael speak previously, you'll know we are in for a treat. He's an outstanding speaker, but he's also a very high profile ringer. He's seen a lot, done a lot, and has known and rung with many of the Greats (and characters) of ringing. And yes; he's very witty, too! If you've not heard him speak, I recommend that you come to the Dinner to do just that.

**There are reports this time of two rehangings and augmenting schemes.** One, Leek Wootton near Warwick, is outside our operating area, but a number of Guild members have made significant contributions to the scheme there. It is clear the work will make an extremely good 6. The other, Stanway, is inside our area of operation, but in this case the initiative, drive and on-site help has come from members of the Gloucester & Bristol DA, principally Simon Ridley from Cheltenham. The only time I rang there was for the Guild's Minimus Striking Competition in 1996. After that – and they were dreadful - I had no wish to repeat the experience, although various bits of work by Simon did, I believe, improve them a little. It seems likely these two schemes will be joined sometime later this year by

Adlestrop, which, hopefully will become a delightful and delightfully-light ring of 6.

**The Mid-week Tours have knocked up a tercentenary** (there's one for the X-words, El Pres!). The 300<sup>th</sup> such tour took place in October and visited those towers visited on the first tour. One person who attended that first tour was there, Frank Spiers. Good for you Frank! Three hundred tours are equivalent to 25 years. I believe there has been only one month when a tour did not take place during that time. This is surely one of the most amazing records concerning ringing tours. Not only that, they are very well attended (I liked a recent report that said a particular tour was down on numbers at 14!) The recent re-jigging of the tour reports now brings us a veritable cornucopia of details and writing styles. Marvellous! Keep it up – both the tours and the reports. All thanks, of course, to Isobel for the overall management of this successful enterprise! The article on the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund (p.6) reminds us it was money amassed by the Mid-week Tours that initiated the BRF in 2010.

**'Roger de Flaedenburg'** gives us another of his 'Tales from a tower near you', which describe the nitty gritty aspects of major bell maintenance. These are extremely fascinating, particularly the Tale in this issue, which is all about tubular bells (no, no, not Mike Oldfield's version....!). I wasn't aware that Icomb had a set of these, although such is listed in Dove 3rd Edition (but not later editions); and of course in 'Church Bells of Glos' (Bliss/Sharpe). Please keep these Tales coming, 'R de F'!

**There have been many Quarters and similar ringing** this time; 19 are reported on p.14 (including what I believe is probably the Guild's first 12-bell Q – unless someone knows otherwise).

**Lastly:** please read the article I've written about **Newsletter no 25** on p.5. After you've read it, and if you have old Newsletters, please sift through them to help answer the question: did it/does it exist?

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.)

### THE CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS

Life presents many opportunities to make a new beginning. Advent has marked the beginning of a new Church year. January 1<sup>st</sup> marks the beginning of a new Calendar year. On April 6<sup>th</sup> begins a new tax year.

New beginnings are important for they give us the opportunity to live in hope. Those of us who are older may here become more cynical, but the young people of today, who can easily be ill at ease with the status quo, live in hope. Intuitively they know that there must be something better to hope for in the years to come.

As Christians we have a deep-seated code of values, but there is a danger in that value systems lose their potency when they drift from their origins. This is a real danger today and we do need reminding of it.

Jesus Christ came to teach us about the Kingdom of God. In one sense this is an 'other worldly state', but more importantly it is an open invitation to the human race to enter into an eternal partnership with God. If we do it now with single-minded loyalty we recover a child-like trust. Power is expressed through giving rather than through getting and by acts of service, so that measurements of success and failure are displaced. Rewards and punishments are turned upside-down. "The first shall be last and the last first!"

One day there will see a great upheaval when even the earth will remember. A New beginning!

Rev Dr Peter Newing

## FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER.

The Committee met on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Nov at the Wellesbourne Church Centre. Peter Kenealy presented apologies.

1) Richard Lewis-Skeath and John Carroll were welcomed to the Committee, Richard as Ringing Master and John as a Committee member. Andrew Gunn resigned this post at the AGM. Chris has taken over this duty.

2) The Minutes of the August meeting were agreed, subject to two typographical errors being corrected.

3) **Matters arising** were:-

2014 Minimus Competition feedback: agreed as very enjoyable (next comp in 2016);

2014 AGM & Striking Comps: good, but only two teams competed;

Oxon tower fees: still not yet done. Chris to pursue this;

Guild artefacts database: data reqd from Peter Q;

Old Minute Book: Chris to pursue with Steve Bowley;

Peal books: suggested the new corrected version of the Guild's peals be entered into a new book;

Striking Comp certificates: Peter Q to supply for the forthcoming AGM and competitions.

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

Guild Master: produced a list of the books held in the Guild library. It appears no book has been borrowed or bought for many years. It was agreed that these books be disposed of. Chris to put a note re this in the Newsletter;

Hon Secretary: no issues at present (new to the job!);

Treasurer: Michael D presented his quarterly-

report. No queries on this; both accounts are healthy. It was proposed and agreed that £200 be transferred from the General Account to the BRF;

Ringing Master: no issues either (also new to the job!);

Child Protection Officer: this role is currently vacant, although one member is considering;

Membership Sec: new members reported to the Committee are: Nigel Green, Gerald Philips, Julia Philips, Pam Sutton (all from Quinton), John Tolley, Len Morley, Pauline Morley and Julie Lawrence. Welcome to the Guild to them all;

Newsletter Editor: there have been a goodly number of submissions this time!

5) **Bell Restoration Fund**: the application from Pebworth for a grant towards a new tenor headstock was considered. It was agreed to offer £200 towards this.

6) **Items for discussion**:-

Bank signatories: require alterations following recent moves. Michael D to organise with the bank;

Guild insurances: agreed to renew with EIG;

Committee vacancies: one Committee member is still required, plus a CPO and a Guild Chaplain. Chris was asked to approach Rev Peter Newing on the latter (*and very happily he has accepted. Ed*). John C to approach a possible candidate for CPO;

Distribution of Guild Rule Books: Chris queried whether new members were being

given Rule Books: possibly not. Chris to check whether the Rules are on the website;

Guild Xmas Party, 13<sup>th</sup> Dec: all arranged;

Guild Annual Dinner, 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015: to be at the White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh, again. Peter Q has engaged Michael Uphill to be the Speaker;

2015 Events Programme:-

InterShire Comp: John N agreed to organise for, probably, 21<sup>st</sup> Nov;

Ringing Tour: Richard agreed to organise another on 4<sup>th</sup> July;

Guild Walk: Michael H agreed to organise another for 26<sup>th</sup> September;

AGM & Striking Comps: suggested at Pebworth (*now agreed with the Church. Ed*). Chris and Richard to organise.

7) **AOB**:

Richard asked whether a QP could be rung beforehand, as in the past. Agreed to try for one at the next meeting, probably at Wellesbourne;

Andrew Gunn had packed up all the Guild's items he held and they were brought to the meeting.

8) **Next Meeting: Tues 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015.**

Location to be announced.

Future Committee meeting dates: agreed as 18<sup>th</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> Aug and 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.

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

## THE GUILD'S LIBRARY – BOOKS TO BE SOLD

At their meeting in November the Committee decided to dispose of the books that are held in the Guild's library. It is not thought any of these books have been borrowed for many years: they are just taking up space. It would be far better if they were converted into some money, however small the sum, which would be put into the Bells Restoration Fund.

No reasonable offer for the books will be refused. Towers wanting a selection of books to be available to its ringers may find this an excellent opportunity to obtain a number at an advantageous price. Should there be an up-and-coming tower that is cash-strapped, the Committee may be minded to donate some of the books if a good case is made. Give it a try: you don't get if you don't ask!

Should there be a member or a tower that wishes to purchase the whole lot, get in touch asap. The books are listed below:-

A Schedule of Regular Maintenance.

Collection of Doubles Methods.

Collection of Plain Minor Methods.

Conducting for Beginners.

Doubles & Minor for Beginners.

Elementary Method Construction.

Elementary Method Splicing.

Guidelines for a do-it-yourself Project.

Judging Striking Competitions.

Maintenance Handbook.

Minor Methods.

Place Notation.

Towards Better Striking.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Central Council.

Tower Captain's Handbook.

Triples & Major for Beginners.

Arranging one day ringing & maintenance courses

Belfry Care & Maintenance.

Bibliography.

Bob Calling for Beginners.

Eight Doubles Methods.

Grandsire Doubles.

Learning Change-ringing on handbells.

Plain Hunting & Plain Bob Doubles.

Rope Splicing.

Sound Control.

Stedman Doubles & Singles.

Surprise Minor-Part 1

Surprise Minor-Part 2&3

Conducting & Coursing Order.

Conducting Grandsire Triples.

Grandsire Doubles & Triples.

Ringing Circles.

Ropesight.

Standard 70 (x 2)

The Follow-on Book for Bellringers (x2)

The Method Ringers Companion.

The "Standard 8" Surprise Major Methods.

Treble Bob Major Variations

Will You Call a Touch Please, Bob?

Central Council.

Central Council.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

Oxford Guild.

John Longridge

Norman Chaddock

J. Armiger Trollope

Chris Adams

William Snowden

John Longridge

Pam Copson

Steve Coleman

Peter T. Hurcombe

John Longridge

Peter T. Hurcombe

Chris Povey, Hon Sec

## WELFORD-ON-AVON RINGERS OUTING, WORCESTERSHIRE 18 OCT, 2014

Thirteen ringers gathered at Powick, Worcestershire, on Saturday 18 October for the start of the 2014 Welford ringers outing, arranged by Freda Cleaver, Rosemary Cole and Ian Sturgess.

**St Peter's, Powick, (6 bells 19-1-9cwt)** stands on high ground above the valley of the River Teme. The majestic tower of Worcester Cathedral can be seen in the distance. During the Battle of Worcester, which took place in the valley near-by, the Royalists used the tower of the church as a lookout post. Whilst waiting for the bells to be raised and enjoying the late summer sunshine and autumn colours, a local ringer showed a group of us the pockmarks up the south side of the tower created by small bore cannon balls, fired by Parliamentary gunners to deter the Scottish Royalist forces using the tower as an observation post. A chilling reminder of a bygone age!

The bells here are challenging due to their weight, but following initial difficulties in getting the tenor up right, a mixture of doubles methods were successfully completed.

**St Mary's, Kempsey (8 bells 15-0-0)** proved to be one of the early challenges of the day, because for several of those present, it was their first experience of ringing anti-clockwise. However, once any initial shock evaporated, ringers soon settled down to this new experience and Stedman, Grandsire and Plain Bob were all successfully scored.

Lunch followed at the Talbot Inn at Kempsey, only a few minutes drive from the church and a welcome opportunity to re-charge your battery in preparation for the afternoon activities.

The first tower after lunch was **St Mary the Virgin, Madresfield (6 bells 13-3-0)**. The pleasing exterior of the church belies the glories that lie within. Once inside, the visitor is transferred into a place of wonder by the enchanting wall murals and striking stained glass. Well worth a visit!! The bells were refurbished and re hung in December 2005 following the recasting of 1 and 2 from the scrap metal of the old 4th and tenor and retuning the other bells. They are easy going and allowed ringers of all abilities to enjoy some really good ringing.

Following a scenic drive around the eastern side of Malvern,

we passed the Three Counties Showground to get to our next tower, **St James Church at Welland, (6 bells 10-2-22)**. The church was built in 1875 and in very recent years the interior has been stripped out to allow it to be more adaptable with regard to worship and use as a local concert venue. The bells seem to go heavier than their weight, and in the view of the writer, they are not terribly inspiring either to ring or to listen to outside.

The final tower of the day was **St Mary's Church, Hanley Castle, (6 bells 14-0-0)**, situated in a lovely village setting just a short distance from the main road, a mile north of Upton-on-Severn. The earliest surviving parts of the current church date back to the twelfth century, but the brick tower which is massive, was rebuilt in 1674, as a result of the fall of its predecessor during the Civil War.

The ring of six bells, all originally cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester in 1699, go extremely well and sound very pleasing within the tower. Hanley Castle proved to be most suitable tower to round off a pleasant days ringing in Worcestershire and our sincere thanks go to Freda, Rosemary and Ian for all their practical arrangements.



*L-R: Freda Cleaver, Ian Sturgess, Linda Gatehouse, Nick Allsopp, Jane Gilbert, Charles Wilson, Jennifer Winslow, Mick Mears, Rosemary Cole, Ted Copson, James Trewin, Michael Homans. (Michael Gray attended, too, but unfortunately missed this photocall.)*

Charles Wilson.

## NEWSLETTER No 25. SOS!! WAS IT PRODUCED? (and if so, do you have a copy?)

Various documents about the Guild were passed on to me on becoming the Hon Sec. Among these was a pile of old Newsletters. The Newsletters didn't comprise a full set, so I pondered what might be done with them. After all, Peter Kenealy has the Guild's full set – or does he? Better check. Yes, Peter confirmed he has the full set, except for issue no 25, which would have been produced in mid/late 1984. He said he had never seen a copy of no 25, even though he'd seen one or two other comprehensive sets of Newsletters. He wondered whether no 25 was ever produced.

Ah! I think; I'll bet the Central Council Library have a copy of this issue, because (so I thought) a copy of each Newsletter print run has been sent there for many years. The answer wasn't quite what I suspected. They have all Newsletters from issue 122 to date, but only one solitary copy prior to 122: issue no 40. It seems a copy had been sent to The Ringing World for many years, but unfortunately there had been no passing on to the Library.

That leaves the question of no 25 still unanswered. Was it ever produced? If it's thought not, we could do with proof that this is so. It can then be deleted decisively from the list.

If it was produced, does anyone have a copy of this extremely elusive Newsletter?

If you are a long-term FSG member and have squirreled away your old copies, would you be very kind and dig them out to check on this, please? The Guild will be very grateful indeed to complete its list of Newsletters. Your copy can, of course, be photocopied if you wish to retain it.

Chris Povey

## FROM THE ARCHIVES 100 YEARS AGO

There was no meeting between 25<sup>th</sup> September 1914 and 16<sup>th</sup> April 1915, when the Committee met to discuss the future Annual Meeting at Campden, which was to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1915. The Minutes of these two meetings will be reproduced in the April 2015 Newsletter. Ed

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES 40 YEARS AGO

*Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1975 at the Lygon Arms Hotel, Chipping Campden.*

*Present: H O Hart, Chairman, A J Brazier, C E Evans, M Fairfax, S C Holden, and Revd. R F Rother*

*Apologies: There were no apologies.*

*Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1974 were read and confirmed, and signed by the Chairman.*

*Matters Arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.*

*Accounts for year ending 31st December 1974: The accounts for 1974, previously audited by the Guild Master, were approved for adoption by the Annual General Meeting.*

*Dinner Arrangements: Arrangements for the Dinner to be held at the Lygon Arms Hotel, on 15th February, were considered and details agreed. The Secretary was asked to invite Revd W.A. Bates to present the silver cup and certificates awarded following the Half-Yearly Ringing*

*Competitions, and the Competitions judges to the Dinner.*

*Any Other Business: 1. It was agreed to recommend the election of an Honorary Guild Chaplain at the Annual General Meeting. As this would involve an amendment to the rules, the Secretary was instructed to give the necessary notice and submit an appropriate amendment with the Agenda;*

*2. A general discussion took place concerning a proposed 'instruction course' and it was agreed to give further consideration to this at a later date;*

*3. It was agreed to invite representatives from the Oxford Diocesan Guild to judge the 1975 Half-Yearly Ringing Competitions.*

*(Signed) Henry O Hart*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1976*

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## THE GUILD'S BELL RESTORATION FUND

The Guild has a Bell Restoration Fund (BRF). It was established at the Guild's 2010 AGM and since then has paid or committed grants to various churches for work to their bells.

The BRF originated from a sizeable amount of money the Mid-week Tours had amassed over a few years. That group is still a major contributor. The Fund is administered by the Guild Committee.

This year has seen grants paid out or offered to Dumbleton, Whichford and Pebworth. The full list since the Fund started is:-

<u>St Mary's, Temple Guiting, Glos:</u>	£500
<i>new treble bell to make 6</i>	
<u>St Peter, Welford-on-Avon, Warks:</u>	£200
<i>new belfry access ladder</i>	
<u>St Michael, Cropthorne, Worcs:</u>	£60
<i>six new polyester top-ropes and pulley refurbishment</i>	
<u>St Laurence, Wyck Rissington, Glos:</u>	£350
<i>rehang of the bells</i>	
<u>St Peter, Hinton-on-the-Green, Worcs:</u>	£100
<i>clear belfry of birds and apply netting</i>	
<u>St Michael, Whichford, Warks:</u>	£150
<i>new ropes and pulley refurbishment</i>	
<u>St Peter, Dumbleton, Glos:</u>	£350
<i>pulley and clapper refurbishment, and bellframe repair</i>	
<u>St Peter, Pebworth, Worcs:</u>	£200
<i>replacement of cracked tenor headstock</i>	
<i>(not yet paid: awaiting imminent completion of work)</i>	

The amounts of the grants paid out always appear in the Guild's accounts; and to date they total £1,910 (including the grant offered to Pebworth for the replacement of the cracked tenor headstock, which work is imminent).

While not in the league of the grants given out by the Diocesan and county associations/guilds, this total is nonetheless a goodly sum from only four years operation by an organisation that has far-fewer members than the big established bodies.

One grant application is currently before the Committee for discussion at the February meeting.

The Guild's financial assistance towards the installation of the new treble at Temple Guiting is recorded on a brass plaque in the Church itself, along with similar from the Gloucester & Bristol DA, and of course the donor of the bell, the Rev Dr Peter Newing.

The BRF is a Restricted Fund within the Guild's accounts and is therefore accounted separately. The Committee has agreed that certain income will be accredited to the BRF automatically. Sometimes money from the General Fund is transferred when there is sufficient to do so, but this needs a formal proposition and a majority in favour.

The Rules of the BRF appear in the Guild Rule Book. A Notice about the availability of grants to churches with ringing bells within the Guild's area of operation usually appears in the Newsletter. Contact the Hon Secretary for details and/or an application form.

Should you (singular or plural) wish to contribute to this extremely worthy cause – it is the Guild's very visible contribution (other than actual ringing or volunteer work) to bells within the area: giving money is always 'good currency' with PCCs – then the Committee would be very delighted to hear from you. All donations to the Guild are automatically accredited to the BRF account.

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Old age is like lying too long in the bath. It gives you wrinkles and it's increasingly harder to get up...

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## LEEK WOOTTON'S NEW TREBLE: dedicated to honour all who perished in WW1

We started in June 2014 with a programme to raise £40,000 to replace the ancient tenor and to add an additional treble to make a ring of 6 bells.

To date we have raised just over £29,000 from Gift Aid Donations via individuals in our village and many of the bell ringers in the Coventry Guild.

The replacement tenor has been purchased from Woolpit in Suffolk, it being the old 7th Bell from the ring of 10 at St. Mary's, Cambridge. The Keltek Trust assisted us with help and guidance and grateful thanks is due to the Trust for this. The 'new' tenor is at present in Taylor's workshop awaiting tuning, a new headstock and all fittings.



*The 'new' tenor in Taylors' tuning shop.*

The lettering on the new treble will be as follows:

**TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
HONOURING ALL WHO PERISHED  
IN WORLD WAR ONE  
LEST WE FORGET**

The Coventry Guild has just given us a most generous donation of £5,000 from their Bell Restoration Fund, which, when added to the £29,000 already raised, gives us a running total of £34,000 (not bad for a start up in June this year).

We still have to raise the remaining £6,000, but the good news is we will be proceeding with the full works, starting in January 2015, based upon various promises of donations and support of labour being given by local ringers. The labour will reduce the cost of taking the bells out and re-installing the new ring of 6.



*The metal being poured from the furnace prior to pouring into the mould.*

We would also like to thank Four Shires Guild ringing members from the towers of Wellesbourne, Barford, Snitterfield and Sherbourne, for donations and the support of various fund raising events over the last 4 months.



*The visitors to the cast ringing on the Bell foundry's ring of 12.*

My own appeal to all Four Shires Guild Members is that it is not too late to donate to this campaign, as all donations will be recorded in the "Book of Benefactors". For further details of the gift Aid Appeal please visit our web site of [www.leekwoottonchurch.co.uk](http://www.leekwoottonchurch.co.uk) or ring me on 01926 859389.

Mark Sayers

*And a piece that appeared in The Ringing World on this:-*

**Mark Sayers enters the Great British Bake Off!**



*Mark stirring up the ingredients - the molten metal in the mould - assisted by Mary Barrass of Taylors. (The metal is at 1100°C. Ed)*

On Wednesday 8th October, over 30 parishioners and friends from Leek Wootton travelled to Taylor's of Loughborough to see their new treble cast. The vicar blessed the molten bell metal before it was poured into the bell mould: a surprisingly spiritual experience. He blessed those who made the bells, those who would ring them and also those who would hear them ringing. The picture shows Mark Sayers stirring the bell metal to help in the cooling process. It was a great day out and raised over £500 towards the Leek Wootton bell restoration fund. Well done to all the Leek Wootton ringers.

Annie Hall

## THE GUILD'S CHRISTMAS PARTY, 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

The party was held on the last Saturday evening practice before Christmas with ringing at St Peter's, Wellesbourne, beforehand, from 7.00 until 8.00pm. Approximately 16 people, a few less than the last year, attended the party. However, all who attended had a good time.

The Christmas Party itself was held in St Peter's Church Centre. The setting up of the food was organised by Linda Dane while the ringers rang. People were very generous in what they brought and it made an excellent festive spread

Having eaten, we settled down to some carol singing, which were at members' request, and we accompanied by Linda Dane who played the piano. There followed a raffle with numerous prizes, all the proceeds from the raffle will help to the swell the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund.



*Linda Dane once again tickling the ivories*

The party finished at 10.30pm, when John Nicholls thanked everybody for attending. Special thanks were given to Linda Dane for playing the piano and to Peter Quinn for the organisation of the venue. It was again a very successful evening despite the low numbers attending this year



*If the Devil were to cast his net...*



*Some of the others there.*

Peter Quinn

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## MICKLETON & ILMINGTON RINGERS' LUNCH

The Mickleton (St Lawrence) & Ilmington (St Mary) ringers and their partners enjoyed a traditional Christmas lunch at The White Hart, Newbold-on-Stour, on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December. As usual, Bill Sabin provided an amusing after-lunch speech.

Following Bill, an impromptu Conjuror visit to our table (he was celebrating his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday) was greatly enjoyed. One of our female ringers appeared to lose some underwear, while another was requested to keep her mouth tightly closed for a while!

Fran Chapman (the lunch organiser) ably supported Bill's speech with an amusing (and true!) limerick, which began:-

*"There was a man with a beard,  
and concluded with these two lines:*

*He usually has no cash,  
You've guessed it, it's .....!" \**

A good time was had by all!

John Kinchin

*\* I am reliably informed the full text is pinned up in one of the Ringing Chambers, where those interested may study the in-between lines and assess the truth – or otherwise –of the Limerick!  
Ed*

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*Subscriptions, subscriptions, subscriptions.....!!*

*See back page for advice on how to pay yours.....*



## RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

### THE OCTOBER TOUR (the 300<sup>th</sup>)

The weather for the October outing started off in a rather gloomy way, but by mid-morning the sun was shining and the Worcestershire country lanes were looking at their autumnal best, with leaves resplendent in many hues varying from gold to green, to red, orange and russet.

This outing was a very special one: it was the 300<sup>th</sup> mid-week outing since they were first started as the brainchild of Tony Brazier 25 years ago. Paul Evans recreated the four six bell towers of the original tour for the occasion. Frank Spiers MBE who had been on the very first outing, came along to see everyone. Frank has not been too well recently and it was a great pleasure to see him again.

The first tower was Belbroughton; ringing here was ably run by Robin Green. Very short ropes made it hard for the more vertically challenged ringers to do the bells justice, but they did their best. The next challenge for everyone was to find a route to Stone: a lorry had shed its load along the most obvious route and the road was closed, so Satnavs and maps came into their own. The longer ropes at Stone meant the bells were easier to ring and Geoff Pratt kept the ringing going here with a variety of methods. The ringing chamber was quite small, so ringers overflowed into the church. Here there were some interesting stained glass windows: one very colourful modern one was there to mark the closing of the village school in 2007. Another one was in memory of Peter Collins a racing driver who had died at the young age of 27. There was also a banner, which had a lot of bells on it and the word 'Kidderminster' and the number 900, but we could not find out what it commemorated.

Lunch was taken at the Brinton Arms. It was a very popular venue. So popular that the car park was full and the food, which was very good value, took a very long time to arrive. This caused several ringers to miss their puddings and meant we were very late starting at the next tower, Areley Kings. Here Brenda Dixon ran the ringing and Alnwick was safely brought round in fine style. Brenda ensured that all had a ring in spite of the lack of time. The last tower of the day was the ground floor ring at Shrawley. Here several group photos were taken by local ringer John Westwood, so this special outing could be well recorded. The place of honour was given to Frank Spiers, who had a chair to sit on at the front of the group. In honour of the special occasion, Isobel Murphy, Sandra Parker and Margaret Pratt had made some delicious cakes, including one which had been iced by Keith Murphy to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first outing. Franks Spiers MBE cut the iced cake and John Nichols thanked Paul Evans for making the day's arrangements. As well as the cakes, there were cups of tea made by Margaret and Ruth Border. Paul ran the ringing, but had some difficulty in tearing the ringers away from the cakes to ring. It really was an excellent day out, much enjoyed by all who went. Lastly, many thanks to John Westwood and Don Barton (churchwarden at Shrawley) who gave up their afternoon to accommodate us.

Pat Halls

### THE NOVEMBER TOUR: 20<sup>th</sup> NOV (the 301<sup>st</sup>)

On a relatively mild day for November the group met first at Hinton on the Green (8) in the Vale of Evesham. The Ringing Chamber was accessed by a long ladder and overlooked the Church. The first priority for everyone at the first tower is to order lunch so the start was a bit sluggish! However the pace soon picked up and well-struck Grandsire, Yorkshire, Stedman and Cambridge were rung. Isobel decided, inadvertently, to see if stuffed owls really could fly but Keith came to her rescue, returning the said owl in its rightful place on the edge of the balcony!

Great Hampton (8) is not the place to ring if you wish to 'escape' and not stay for the Service – sneaking out without being noticed would be extremely difficult. The spiral staircase rises from the centre of the Church and the resultant peal is worth the climb. Claimed by some to be 'the best

ring of 8 in Worcestershire' their ease of handling and their glorious sound made the ringing an absolute pleasure. (*Hampton has, of course, serious competition in this respect from Hanbury and Dodderhill, two other magnificent 8s within Worcestershire. How lucky that county is to have such rings! Ed*) Starting with Grandsire, the assembled company progressed through Double Norwich, Stedman, 8 spliced, and finally Stedman and Grandsire spliced. The standard of ringing hopefully did justice to this beautiful ring.

We were well looked after at the pub at Charlton and treated to 'After 8s' with our coffee in celebration of Margaret's birthday – don't think the 8 was significant in her birthday number!!

On to Cropthorne (6) next and yet another ladder climb with a bit of a twist at the top. For some, getting up was bad enough but the thought of having to go down again dominated their ringing! Grandsire, Stedman, London, Cambridge and Grandsire were well achieved, but the Alnwick succumbed to jitters about the staircase!

Our last port of call was at Fladbury (8) which again was upstairs. As always the last tower suffers from people having to leave early due to other commitments but enough ringers were left to achieve Plain Bob, Stedman, Grandsire, Bristol and Superlative.

Our thanks to Sandra for arranging the outing, and for her choice of towers. The standard of ringing for the day always amazes me when you think that we all only ring together once a month and all come from such diverse backgrounds!

Joy Pluckrose

### THE DECEMBER TOUR: 11TH DEC (the 302<sup>nd</sup>)

The last outing of 2014 was on a cold winter's day with frequent squally showers, so not a particularly pleasant drive when I set off from Stow-on-the-Wold around 9-00am for the suburbs of Birmingham. Thank goodness for "sat-nav" to find the towers in the metropolis

The first tower was Yardley. Two of the Moreton-in-Marsh ringers who come from the Birmingham area had already told me that the bells at Yardley were very good. They were quite correct; a very melodious 12cwt ring of 8 recast by Taylors in 1950. The church, built largely of sandstone, is at the end of a cul-de-sac in what was probably a village many years ago. Next to the church was a large, old, half-timbered building, which was originally a Trust School for the Parish council. The entrance to the ringing chamber was through a very low door, which I expect has had several heads bumped on it over the years, probably also by some of the 25 or so ringers on this outing! It is clearly a popular tower for peal ringers judging by the number of small peal notices on the wall. We rang Cambridge, Stedman, Double Norwich, Grandsire, & Superlative.

We then went on to Shirley. This was a light-weight 6cwt ring of 8 in a white-painted rendered tower with a more modern red brick extension to the church. The details on the wall of the small ringing chamber indicated that 5 bells were installed in 1854, which were augmented to 6 in 1929 and then to 8 in 1947. One of the peal boards gave a time of 2hrs 18mins, which seems quick even though the bells are very light. We rang Grandsire, Plain Bob, 8-spliced (which came to grief after 4 leads) Stedman and finished with 3 leads of Bristol.

Lunch was taken at the Woodman's Rest in Union Rd, Shirley, the steak and ale pie proving a popular choice on a cold day. A very busy pub with what looked like an office Christmas lunch going on in

a separate room, judging by the long table, seasonal food and Christmas cracker hats.

Suitably fortified by lunch we set off for Moseley for the first of two towers in that area. The first was an 18cwt ground-floor ring of 10, installed in 2012. The front 7 were cast by Taylors in 2012, the back 3 were part of a chime that came from Greenock in Scotland. *(The back 3 were cast by Gillett & Johnston in 1950. I believe Taylors cast the other 7 bells to G&J profiles. This ring might therefore be described as genuine G&J. Ed)* I understand these replaced a previous ring of steel bells. A musical ring, but not that easy to ring on account of the springy ropes, which had been fitted only two weeks previously. Apparently these had been fitted as the previous ropes were too springy! We rang Grandsire, rounds and call changes (by an all ladies band) and Cambridge. The church was very cold, with several ringers putting coats back on between rings. An optimistic thermometer on the wall read 21C. If the "1" had been omitted it would have been nearer the mark.

On the wall next to the ringing chamber there were two rather threatening looking "Beadles" staves dated 1856–1883. Maybe they were used to encourage attendance at services!

Our last tower was the 12 cwt ring of 6 in Moseley, a few minutes' walk from the previous one. This was a large imposing church with a spire in a busy residential area. It had a bright ringing chamber with white painted walls, on one of which hung a partial wheel, headstock and stay from an earlier installation. The three heaters that were turned on when we arrived were most welcome. The bells are all by different founders, the second dates from 1638 and the third from 1650. They were augmented from 5 to 6 in 2008. We rang Stedman, rounds and call changes, Cambridge, Little Bob and Beverly.

Our thanks go to Ian Thompson for a very well organised day  
**Clive Sparling**

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## THE HISTORY OF THE GUILD'S ANNUAL WALK

Some years ago, before our current editor (he says he's only temporary), I was asked by Pam Copson to write up a walk to put in the FSG Newsletter, as it was getting a bit on the thin side. Pam asked me, as she knew I was the Rights of Way inspector for South Warwickshire and that walking the footpaths was also a hobby. After some thought I decided that the walk should connect with some churches, and not be too long for the average person, including children. This is how I arrived at the proposal for the first walk, which included three churches, Brailes, Sutton-under-Brailes and Cherington, in a circuit of approximately six miles.

Some time after it was printed in the Newsletter, Ted Copson asked me when I was actually going to do the walk, and so I arranged the first one of what is now an annual event, with ringing in each church. I did arrange a couple more, but my health has deteriorated to the extent that I can no longer walk any distance in order to write them up.

Each time a walk is done I am reminded of Pam and how much she contributed to the Guild, so I hope the walks will continue.

It would be nice if someone, perhaps in the Worcestershire or Oxfordshire area, could sort out one using the public rights of way and quiet minor roads (I cannot see any obvious routes on my maps).

I have suggested another one in South Warwickshire, but it is a large figure

of eight although with some nice views, woodlands and a hill or two – and what is good for walkers: no stiles. It would mean, however, that it would mean two rings at the same church unless cars were used to another close-by tower. Refreshments could be arranged in the one church, or there is a pub nearby for lunch.

In conclusion and from a very personal view, these walks will always be in memory of Pam.

Allen Turner

*(Wendy Mace put together a very pretty walk along the boundary between Worcs and Glos a year or two back, visiting Willersey, Broadway and Saintbury churches. The weather that day was utterly glorious, which, when walking along the Cotswold ridge, afforded lovely views over the Vale of Evesham and beyond.*

*Pam did, indeed, contribute much to the Guild and I hold her in high esteem, too. I'm inclined to think that she was the one who propelled it up through a few gears to give us much of the foundation that we have today. She certainly revolutionised the Newsletter. I have always said that I have largely followed Pam's design on this. Had she continued I feel sure Pam would have developed her Newsletters to the current standard and, very probably, to well beyond. Ed)*

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## TALES FROM THE TOWER

*The following is a note John Kinchin wrote for the Church Magazine of St Lawrence, Mickleton. There are many parts in it that will strike a chord in other towers in the area, and I reproduce it here for that reason. Ed.*

It is a pleasure to report that the St Lawrence ringers notched up a win in the recent Striking Competition of the North Cotswolds Branch of the Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers. The event was held at St Nicholas, Saintbury, on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October. Seven teams participated on the six heaviest bells. These bells are an absolute delight to ring – everything in their favour. No wonder teams visiting the area always wish to make their mark at this regrettably-redundant church. The St Lawrence ringers had only three faults; their nearest rival, Great Rissington, had just five faults. PHEW!

On the previous Saturday we were unable to raise a team for the Four Shires Guild's striking competition – absolutely shocking. We have

participated in this competition annually over the past forty years and have regularly won it. What is going wrong?

In my opening sentence I purposely omitted the word 'MICKLETON ringers'. We are just two now, with one in the learning stage. Without friends from Ilmington, Quinton and Ebrington, all would be lost. Mickleton bells would be silenced for Service ringing and special occasions. Longborough entered three teams and Great Rissington two, with mostly young people in the bands. What is wrong with young Mickletonians? Come and help us maintain this wonderful tradition.

*All praise to Longborough (essentially Denzil Spear) and Great Rissington (essentially Jeremy Meyrick) for raising the bar in this way. I can attest to the excellence of Great Rissington's ringing. I was the judge. Ed*

## Tales from a tower near you (2):

### THE BELLS OF ST MARY'S (or how long is a piece of string...?)

My first encounter with tubular bells in a church was in the late 1990's assisting Arthur Berry (the bellhanger from Malvern) with the removal of a set of 10 from St Johns, Dudley (closed 2002), which the church no longer used and wished to dispose of. Such bells are usually cumbersome to handle, being in this instance some 6 feet long (or 2 metres for those of you with a bent for psychometrics...) and bearing a resemblance to a steel scaffold pole - only 10 times as heavy (*note the thickness of these things in the photo below! Ed*). Tubular bells are best carried horizontally, which generally means it is impossible to do so in the tower or on a staircase - I recall the grazed knees and elbows at Dudley as we handballed them to ground level and the expectancy, given the area we were in, that when we took the next bell out to the pick-up vehicle parked on the roadside that the previously loaded bells (and perhaps the vehicle) might not be there! Tubular bells are not strictly made from bell metal but of a similar but brassier concoction and therefore still attract a high scrap value.

So, closer to home, there is a delightful little village named **Icomb** (now Glos, previously Worcs) near Stow-on-the-Wold with its own church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin: see below.



A phone call from the churchwarden to Arthur Berry in 2008 suggested a bell was broken as it was not working. The tower contains a tubular bell chime of 8 hung in a purpose-built loft in the roof space carried on a crossbeam and only accessible by a long wooden ladder.



Such bells in the UK were inevitably made by the company of Harrington, Latham & Co of Coventry, who only produced their Patented Tubular Bells

during the period 1890 to 1920. The accompanying photographs show the installation and their trade-mark with the number and note of the 2<sup>nd</sup> bell (the 4<sup>th</sup> was marked G so the octave is in the key of C).



Investigation showed one bell had fallen from its rope suspension harness, which had broken due to strain and decay.

*And the how long is a piece of string?* Further observation revealed that the majority of the bells were precariously supported and that several strike hammers had life-expired leather strapping and fasteners together with all pull chords (extending down into the vestry where the clavier board was situated) that had all but given up the ghost having very obviously been broken and patched up with sundry varieties of string and rope over a period of time. Even the rubber handgrips were totally decayed or worn away. Unfortunately there is no readily available parts stockist for such items these days and so, over a period of months, suitable materials were procured and fashioned to effect an overhaul.



Manufacture of stainless steel cable suspension harnesses in the workshop to precise length enabled the bells to be securely hung once again.

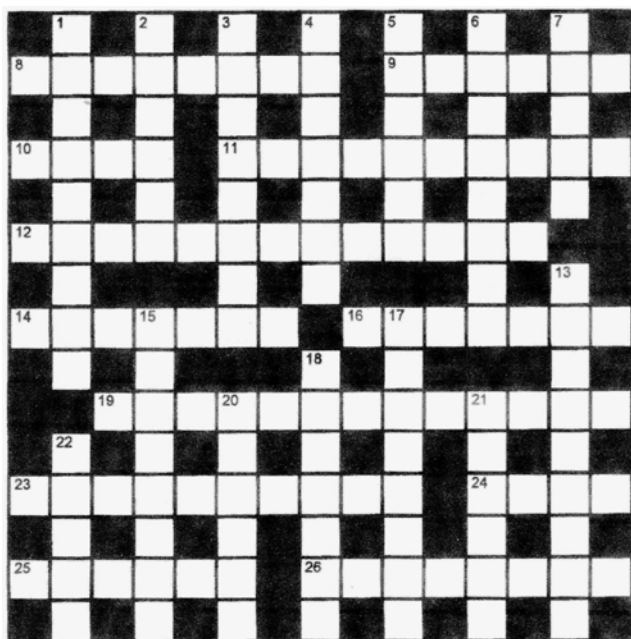
The tryout of the completed work was extremely satisfying with renditions of the only piece of music available tucked behind the clavier board - yes, you've guessed it - 'The Bells of St Mary's' sounding beautifully across the village!

Some months later I successfully bid on a small brass tubular bell tabletop set of 8 on eBay, enabling me to re-create The Bells of St Mary's sounding across the Four Shires hills whenever I wish. (Who knows, I may try for a quarter of Minimus one day just to keep RL-S company on Campanophile - see *Quarters, last Newsletter. Ed*).

*'Roger de Flaedenburg' (and all photos are by him)*

## EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

HLMs need to work for their living – and El Presidente does. Here he comes again.



Answers to the crossword in the October 2014 Newsletter



### Across

- 8 This demands consideration. (8)
- 9 i.e. (4,2)
- 10 Bell ropes were made of this. (4)
- 11 The front bells in a Stedman Single. (10)
- 12 Worcestershire market town famous for carpet manufacture. (13)
- 14 A parody. (7)
- 16 Vegetable with an edible carrot-like root. (7)
- 19 The oldest of the Royal Residences. (7, 6)
- 23 It houses Big Ben. (5,5)
- 24 Ash Wednesday to Easter. (4)
- 25 Pertaining to the fundamental unit of length. (6)
- 26 4<sup>th</sup>s place bell at a single in Stedman Doubles. (4,4)

### Down

- 1 Ringing is much easier when you get this. (9)
- 2 Three feet for stability. (6)
- 3 An answer is needed. (8)
- 4 A high-powered clue. (7)
- 5 Poles for the county. (6)
- 6 Manipulate scan, reap the source of insulin. (8)
- 7 Police lead the Queen to drink. (5)
- 13 It will take a thousand years to answer this. (9)
- 15 Seniors' cheaper way to travel. (8)
- 17 Good ringing demands this striking. (8)
- 18 Cathedral city in East Anglia. (7)
- 20 Disconnect. (6)
- 21 Yourself. (6)
- 22 You have been reading them. (5)

## AROUND THE TOWERS

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

**Pebworth.** The replacement for the cracked headstock is likely to be fitted in January. There have been other changes here, too, with Martin Penny becoming the Ringing Master. *(Martin is the 'other half' of Claire from Offenham. Claire is passionate about teaching people to ring and regularly helps at Kinton's Teaching Centre. Pebworth's light front 6 will clearly be put to good use in this respect – which is one of the two main reasons why the ring was augmented to 10. Ed)* All future enquiries regarding Pebworth's bells should be directed to him on [pebworthbells@btinternet.com](mailto:pebworthbells@btinternet.com). Pebworth will be the venue for the Guild's AGM in October.

**Evesham Bell Tower.** The Guild's practice here on January 10<sup>th</sup> will be the last until at least the end of 2015. The Tower is due to have stonework restoration work from Feb/March to about November. More about this in the next Newsletter.

**Lower Quinton.** The stonework repairs to the spire have been completed and this has allowed the damaged wheel, hit by a falling lump of stone, also to be repaired. Taylors supplied and fitted a new top half-wheel in November.

**Adlestrop.** Things continue here towards a rehang. A Faculty is in the process of being obtained and a deposit has

been paid to secure the WBF quotation.

**Stanway.** The four bells have been removed and the new treble bell has been cast. The tenor's weight, as removed, was 11-0-8 *(but it felt more like 21cwt! They were dreadful to ring. Ed)*, but this will reduce after tuning. A photo of the team that removed the bells, together with (I suspect) the tenor is below:



L-R: Graham Clifton (WofA and FSG member), Simon Ridley (the person who has been pushing for the rehang for many years), Malcolm Taylor and Mike Seagrave.

## NOTICES AND ADVERTS

### **FOUR SHIRES GUILD ANNUAL DINNER** **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb at the White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh**

#### **Starters**

Tomato & Basil soup with fresh bread  
Chicken liver parfait with warm bread  
Smoked salmon and cream cheese roulade with beetroot compote and salad leaves

#### **Main Courses**

Roast beef with duck fat roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables and Yorkshire pudding  
Pan-fried chicken breast, mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables  
Mushroom risotto and parmesan shavings

#### **Desserts**

Sticky toffee pudding served with toffee sauce and vanilla ice-cream  
Warm apple crumble and custard  
Crème broulee with short bread biscuit

THE GUILD MASTER HAS BEEN EXTREMELY FORTUNATE TO PERSUADE THAT WELL-KNOWN,  
ELOQUENT AND WITTY SPEAKER

### **MICHAEL UPHILL**

TO ENTERTAIN US AFTERWARDS WITH MANY OF HIS CAMPANOLOGICAL THOUGHTS AND  
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(NOT TO BE MISSED!)

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Michael Dane: 01789-470491; [landm.dane@btinternet.com](mailto:landm.dane@btinternet.com),  
Stuart Cummings: 01608-685576; [stuartcummings@madasafish.com](mailto:stuartcummings@madasafish.com)  
John Nicholls: 01386-841084; [john.nicholls18b@btinternet.com](mailto:john.nicholls18b@btinternet.com)

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### **FOUR SHIRES GUILD** **BELL RESTORATION** **FUND**

The Guild has 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 are in the Guild Rule Book, and application forms are available from me. (These forms are available.)

Chris Povey (Hon Sec)

## AROUND THE TOWERS

### PEALS, QUARTER PEALS AND OTHER RINGING

**Aston Cantlow, Warks**, 9<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Chris Mew (C) 1, Bertie Williams 2, Sandra Parker 3, Michael Gray 4, Phil Stevens 5, John Martin 6. Rung in memory of Carol Davis, ringer at this tower.

**Dumbleton, Glos**, 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, 1260 PB Minor: Freda Cleaver 1, Paul Smith 2, Chris Povey 3, Claire Penny 4, Matthew Kemble 5, Martin Penny (C) 6.

**Stratford-on-Avon, Warks**, 19<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1296 Grandsire Caters: Nick Allsopp 1 (C), Keith Abbott 2, Richard Lewis-Skeath 3, Rosemary Hemmings 4, Bob Tregillus 5, Rod Bickerton 6, Michael Haynes 7, John Nicholls 8, Simon Adams 9, John Carroll 10. Rung as a 'thank you' to Michael Haynes for his help in reinstalling the recently re-bushed clappers. 1<sup>st</sup> Caters as conductor.

**Freeland, Oxon**, 24<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1440 Kent Treble Bob Minor: Ron Burgess 1, Michael Probert 2, Alison Merryweather-Clarke 3, Anthony Williamson 4, Neil Ephgrave 5, Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) 6. 1<sup>st</sup> in method: 2 & 5. Wishing Jenny Tognola a happy birthday, and hoping she will ring more Kent.

**Offenham, Worcs**, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov, 80 call changes in 45 mins: Claire Penny 1, Matthew Kemble 2, Bob Topp 3, Margaret Clayton 4, Chris Jeffries 5, Martin Penny (C) 6. Longest continuous ringing for 4 & 5. First for all the band.

**Wellesbourne, Warks**, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1260 Stedman Triples: Richard Lewis-Skeath 1, Peter Quinn 2, Chris Mew (C) 3, Karen French 4, Michael Dane 5, Robert Reeves 6, John Nicholls 7, John Wheeler 8. Rung as a 40<sup>th</sup> birthday compliment to Sophia Lewis-Skeath.

**Freeland, Oxon**, 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1272 Cambridge S. Minor: Jenny Haviland 1, Anthony Williamson 2, Alison Merryweather-Clarke 3, Michael Probert 4, Neil Ephgrave 5, Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) 6. Rung to congratulate Shaza Elsiddig on becoming a British citizen yesterday. Also birthday compliments to Sophia Lewis-Skeath & Anne Skeath.

**Willersey, Glos**, 15<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1260 120 called changes in 42 mins: Helen Chadburn 1, Jenny Chadburn 2, Christopher Gooding 3, Bob Topp 4, Robert Chadburn (C) 5, Mark Newbury 6. Rung by the Sunday service band as a compliment to David Hammond, in thanks for 36 years as tower captain.

**Willersey, Glos**, 15<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Stefanie Whittle 1, Doug Bott 2, Robert Hall 3, Sarah Chadburn 4, Robert Chadburn (C) 5, Mark Newbury 6. Rung as a compliment to David Hammond, in thanks for 36 years as tower captain.

**Evesham, Worcs**, 29<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1320 Plain Bob Cinques: Chris Povey (C) 1, Margaret Smith 2, John Smith 3, Roger Hunt 4, Robert D C Richards 5, Nick Allsopp 6, Claire Penny 7, Matthew Kemble 8, David Roskelly 9, Bill Nash 10, Stuart Piper 11, Martin Penny 12. 1<sup>st</sup> of Bob Cinques: 1, 8, 10. 1<sup>st</sup> of Bob Cinques inside: 7. Probably the first 12-bell Q for the Guild.

**Mickleton, Glos**, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Chris Mew (C) 1, John Kinchin 2, Alan Hartley 3, Karen French 4, Jackie Hands 5, Robert Reeves 6, John Nicholls 7, Richard Lewis-Skeath 8.

**Offenham, Worcs**, 13<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Doubles (St Simon's, St Martin's, Plain, April Day & Grandsire): Bob Topp 1, Roger Hunt 2, Richard Lewis-Skeath 3, Matthew Kemble 4, Martin Penny (C) 5, Stef Whittle 6. Rung for the Christmas Tree Festival.

**Offenham, Worcs**, 18<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Bob Topp 1, Claire Penny 2, Tom Sandham 3, Chris Povey 4, Matthew Kemble (C) 5, Chris Jeffries 6. Rung before the Macmillan Cancer Support Christmas Concert. Remembering Judy Morris, long-time Macmillan committee member and friend to many in the audience.

**Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos**, 20<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1288 Grandsire Triples: Nick Allsopp 1, Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) 2, Jeanette Davey 3, Matthew Kemble 4, Alison Merryweather-Clarke 5, John Nicholls 6, Steve Bowley 7, Stef Whittle 8. Birthday compliments to Jeanette, Alison and Stef. 1<sup>st</sup> Q on 8: 8. Circled tower to Qs 4 times: 2

**Warwick (St Nicholas)**, 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec, 1250 Lincolnshire S Major: Chris Mew (C) 1, Alan Hartley 2, Richard Lewis-Skeath 3, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 4, James Ingham 5, Michael Dane 6, John Nicholls 7, Peter Quinn 8. In memory of Revd P Michael Freeman, previous incumbent at this church.

**Bledington, Glos**, 27<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Richard Lewis-Skeath 1, Michael Probert 2, Michael Haynes 3, John Nicholls 4, Alison Merryweather-Clarke (C) 5, Stef Whittle 6.

**Broadwell, Glos**, 27<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Michael Probert 1, Richard Lewis-Skeath 2, Michael Haynes 3, John Nicholls 4, Alison Merryweather-Clarke (C) 5, Stef Whittle 6. Most Qs as conductor in a day. Most Qs in a day: 6

**Saintbury, Glos**, 30<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1344 Plain Bob Major: Jenny Chadburn 1, Richard Lewis-Skeath 2, Claire Penny 3, James Allen 4, Martin Penny 5, John Nicholls 6, Sarah Chadburn 7, Robert Chadburn (C) 8. 1<sup>st</sup> Major: 1. 50<sup>th</sup> Q this year: 2. A 16<sup>th</sup> birthday compliment to Benjamin Lewis-Skeath.

**Evesham, Worcs**, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Georgie Roberts 1, Christina Ireland 2, Martin Penny 3, Robert Hall 4, Chris Povey (C) 5, Matthew Kemble 6. 1<sup>st</sup> Q Grandsire Doubles inside: 2.

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

## AND FINALLY (opposite page)..... 'IN PRAISE OF A TREE'

As you will see, this article appeared in a previous Newsletter – the October 2001 issue to be precise (just a mere 50 issues ago!). I was looking back through some past issues and it caught my eye. It caught my eye back in 2001, because it is a very clever and well-crafted poem about that most important tree for steeplekeepers - the ash. Yes, wheels, (old) headstocks and bellframes are made from oak, elm and in some cases iroko, but those items don't get the punishment that stays get (and what dreadful, awful punishment stay bumpers mete out. Perhaps they wouldn't if they had to make the replacement stay...).

Yes, I know my name is mentioned in the poem; and yes I know my tower is mentioned in it, too; and yes I could be accused of being a little bit biased. But I'm not; and I make no apologies. The poem sums up everything about ash and stays in superb verse – and a message about not bumping stays!

I've made many stays over the years (including the famous/infamous

Hastings type), so I've handled lots of ash. It's a lovely wood; clean and straight-grained, and a delight to work with. As you will see, I have a power plane. This makes everything so much easier. If you use a hand plane to make stays, take my advice: get a power plane. You won't regret it!

'Remigius' was Philip Hunt, who rang at the Bell Tower for a few years. Philip was originally (I believe) from Welford-on-Avon, but left there, joined the navy and did other things in other places until he returned to the area to live in Blockley. A few years ago he and his wife, Pat, left Blockley to live nearer their sons near Guildford.

Just a little interpretation of some words in the poem: 'Aisam' (or more correctly 'Asum'), is the local name for Evesham; 'BT' is of course the Bell Tower; and Abigail rose above us after a stay failed. CMP

(Read somewhere in a country tower)  
Oh! Woe to thee  
Thou brave Ash Tree,  
Thy wood the supple'st of all,

Yet miss ye Sallie by mystake,  
Ye swinging bell will o'ertake,  
And then, with loud protesting bawle,  
Will save itself. - thus wounding thee.

Yet know you still, we have no friend  
Could take such punishment - yet bende!  
Thus, English Ash for aye will be,  
Ye Steeplekeeper's favoured tree.

**THE ASH TREE REPLIES**

**IN PRAISE OF A TREE**

"ASH I am, and ASH I be...  
So please don't then lament for me  
They make the best Bell-stays from me  
That I please Chris Povey, 's plain to see"  
(He has a power-plane you see!)

The stays in Aisam's tall B.T.  
Are cared for well by C.M.P.  
The fourteen bells that there swing free  
All bear a little piece of me,  
I am the Brave and True Ash Tree,  
So please don't then lament for me

I am a most resilient tree,  
And I can bend and take the shocks  
Of many a Learner's bangs and knocks,  
I stop the Bell from toppling o'er,  
And jerking ringers off the floor  
Without me there - things might get fraught,  
(You could become an Astronaut!)  
And, if you would learn how high you'd sail,  
... then have a word with Abigail!  
Who holds the record solo flight  
(She made it one dark winter's night,  
By holding on a bit too tight)  
She made a perfect landing tho'  
For Chris and Ian caught her, so,  
She didn't hit the floor below  
And after such an epic flight,  
Went on to even greater height,  
And proved her ringing technique well,  
By ringing a much heavier bell

But any other wood but Ash,  
Would ne'er survive the Learner's crash  
Of stopping, say, a half-ton bell,  
And cracking - so that later on,  
When being rung by Jo or John,  
Comes now the time to set at "STAND"  
But as the Sallie comes to "Hand"  
Stays can let go, - and if a turn  
Is round your hand... a nasty burn,  
Can be your lot... so, do "LET GO"!

But I can take much more than most,  
Though clumsy bangs may make me 'bent',  
I have a high 'co-E-ffish-ENT  
Of elasticity - just let us say,  
I make a better type of Stay...  
Than Oak, - and I'm a good reactor,  
'Cos I've... gotta-betta-bending factor'!

Though fate can sometimes deal to me,  
An unfair blow that breaks the key,  
I know the Steeplekeeper's hour,  
As wearily he climbs the Tower,  
Is brightened by his knowing well,  
That I'm still growing in the Dell,  
Though replacing stays can be a chore  
When working on the bellry floor,  
There's knowledge there that break I should,  
(For I am merely *flesh and wood*)  
He cannot heal my break with salve  
I'm *meant* to be a 'safety valve',  
(For after all I'm there to 'give'  
That gudgeons, bearings, frame - might live,)  
Yet proudly I'll go on to be  
The Steeplekeeper's favourite tree

So, up in Aisam-Town's B T  
You'll find there's quite a lot of me,  
The bells all wear a piece of tree,  
That shows they hold respect for me,  
I save them much indignity,  
From toppling ig-nominously  
They bear my extra weight with Zeal,  
As I follow them - through Touch and Peal,  
And when "THAT'S ALL" is called with glee  
They rest their weary heads on me.

And Englishmen have always known,  
You cannot better Ash (or Rowan),  
For taking punishment you'll see,  
There's none that can compare with me,  
Oh! ASH I am Aye - ASH, I be,  
And all the Four Shires folk agree,  
I'm a rather *special* sort of tree,  
And spicy woods from Araby, Pah!  
There's none as valuable as me,

But don't diminish all my stocks,  
With clumsy bumps and nasty shocks,  
And Visiting Bands - take *extra* care,  
To see that only *natural* wear.....  
Should be my fate, - 'tis understood,  
There'll come a day - "Can't get the wood"!,  
They'll maybe turn to Carbon-fibre,  
(But that's not a wood of my calibre!)  
I'll still be preferred by C.M.P.....  
(Well... he has a power-plane you see!  
E'er Helen calls him in for tea,  
He'll shape a Hastings Stay from me.

REMIGIUS

# DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

JAN 3 <sup>rd</sup>	LONG COMPTON, Warks	6, 12-0-22 in F	
JAN 10 <sup>th</sup>	EVESHAM, Worcs	12, 35-2-20 in C#	(10/12 BELL PRACTICE)
JAN 17 <sup>th</sup>	BARFORD, Warks	6, 4-3-22 IN B	
JAN 24 <sup>th</sup>	CROPTHORNE, Worcs	6, 10cwt in F#	
JAN 31 <sup>st</sup>	CHIPPING CAMPDEN, Glos	8, 22-1-18 in Eb	
FEB 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>GUILD ANNUAL DINNER (MORETON-IN-MARSH)</b>	<b><u>SEE NOTICE IN NEWSLETTER, p.13</u></b>	
FEB 14 <sup>th</sup>	WINCHCOMBE, Glos	8, 11-2-11 in F#	
FEB 21 <sup>st</sup>	DUMBLETON, Glos	6, 11cwt in G	
FEB 28 <sup>th</sup>	STOW-ON-THE-WOLD, Glos	8, 27-2-24 in D	
MAR 7 <sup>th</sup>	HARVINGTON, Worcs	6, 8-1-14 in A	
MAR 14 <sup>th</sup>	ALDERTON, Glos	6, 9½ cwt in A	
MAR 21 <sup>st</sup>	BIDFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 14-0-24 in F (GF)	
MAR 28 <sup>th</sup>	LANGBOROUGH, Glos	6, 11-0-2 in F#	
APR 4 <sup>th</sup>	BOURTON-ON-THE-HILL, Glos	6, 11-1-27 in F	<b>- TO BE CONFIRMED (EASTER SAT)</b>
APR 11 <sup>th</sup>	MICKLETON, Glos	8, 15-3-16 in E (GF)	<b>*(NOTE 7-30PM. TILL 8-45PM.)</b>
APR 18 <sup>th</sup>	ALVESTON, Warks	6, 7½ cwt in A	<b>- TO BE CONFIRMED</b>
APR 25 <sup>th</sup>	TBA		

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.

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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. 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.

**YOU CAN PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION 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*)

**(Please note: those who haven't paid their subs by June 30<sup>th</sup> will cease to receive the Newsletter)**

## **Events for 2015: book the dates now:-**

<b>Guild Annual Dinner</b>	<b>Sat 7<sup>th</sup> February at The White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh</b>
<b>Guild Ringing Tour</b>	<b>Sat 4<sup>th</sup> July. Organiser is 'El Tour Supremo' (Richard L-S!). Details tba</b>
<b>Guild Walking Tour</b>	<b>Sat 26<sup>th</sup> September. Organiser is Michael Haynes. Details tba</b>
<b>Guild AGM, etc</b>	<b>Sat 17<sup>th</sup> October; Pebworth, Worcs. Details to be confirmed</b>
<b>Inter Shire Comp</b>	<b>Sat 21<sup>st</sup> November. Organiser 'El Pres'. Details tba</b>
(Note: no Minimus Comp this year, as this and the Inter Shire Comp now alternate.)	
<b>Guild Xmas Party</b>	<b>Sat 12<sup>th</sup> December, probably Wellesbourne</b>