

# THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers)



## NEWSLETTER No 148 - APRIL 2016



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

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### ST MARY'S CHURCH, PILLERTON HERSEY, WARKS.



(Photo: Chris Povey)

Three-bell towers generally don't feature in the Newsletter. South Littleton and Barcheston have been mentioned previously, but only because their bells are fully ringable. The bells at St Mary's aren't ringable, but the parishioners are hoping they soon will be once more. Avid readers of the July Newsletter will have noticed the Committee awarded a grant of £500 towards this work at their August meeting. St Mary's has a thriving bell fund, and this is evidenced by the yellow board to the right of the Notice Board in the shape of the church with a 'money thermometer' running up the tower.

What needs doing? Quite a lot. The bellframe needs underpinning and new fittings for the present bells are required. The granting of a faculty for Adlestrop's work has allowed its PCC to sell their redundant 2<sup>nd</sup> bell to Pillerton Hersey PCC, thereby allowing that ring to become four (although it might be in the minor key; but is that a problem?). We wish St Mary's ringers and fundraisers well with their efforts. Another tower for the Mini-Mouse Competition!

# Officers and Committee Members of the Guild

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## **PRESIDENT**

Mr John Nicholls

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## **VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Mrs Phyllis Brazier

The Rev Dr Peter Newing

## **Chaplain**

Rev Dr Peter Newing

## **Accounts Examiners**

Mr Robert Hall

Mr Trevor Hobday

## **GUILD OFFICERS**

### **Guild Master**

Mr Peter Quinn

### **Ringling Master**

Mr Richard Lewis-Skeath

### **Hon Secretary**

Mr Chris Povey

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Mr John Carroll

Mr Stuart Cummings

## **Programme Secretary**

Mr Stuart Cummings

## **Membership Secretary**

Mr Peter Kenealy

## **Child Protection Officer**

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

Subscription rates: £5 adult; £2 Junior

It also has a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1548368912115550/>

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## **The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (July 2016) is June 13<sup>th</sup> 2016**

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. 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!

**Newsletter Editor: Chris Povey** Postal and email addresses above

**It helps me hugely if you send articles to me by email, so I can cut-and-paste.** If sending articles in this way, please use MS Word 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.

**NOBODY CLAIMED THE PIN-TYPE GUILD BADGE FOUND ON THE FLOOR AFTER THE GUILD AGM AT PEBWORTH, SO IT HAS BEEN RETURNED TO STOCK.**

## EDITORIAL

I attended **Andrew Roberts'** funeral on 16<sup>th</sup> January and was pleased to be asked to partner Chris Seers as representatives of the Guild in the quarter peal at Fairford afterwards. The cremation was at Cheltenham, followed by a gathering in the hall next to Fairford Church, at which there was half-muffled ringing open to anyone. The quarter peal, rung by representatives from the various ringing bodies with which Andrew had been associated, concluded the ringing. For a band that doesn't ring together normally, the Q was well-struck. Andrew would have been pleased. The details are:-

**St Mary's, Fairford, Glos,**  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### 1260 Grandsire Triples

- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1 Chris Povey | 5 Barbara Lyne     |
| 2 Alison Grey | 6 Peter Holden     |
| 3 Kay Hodges  | 7 Peter Harris (C) |
| 4 Chris Seers | 8 Rob Clive        |

Rung half muffed in Memory of Andrew Roberts following his funeral, with ringers from areas in which he had been recently associated. Four Shires Guild 1 & 4; Barnwood 2; Cirencester Branch 3, 6 & 8; Fairford Tower 5 & 7.

(See also Q at Fulbrook rung in Andrew's memory: p.14)

You will see (p15) the death of **Doug Carr of Halford** occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> March. His membership of the Guild stretched back to 1986. Unfortunately his funeral was prior to the appearance of this Newsletter, so notice could not be given.

**The Guild's Annual Dinner** was a very pleasant event, with a large number present, but the meal itself was well below the standard we'd received there previously. It is believed this was due to the Hotel overbooking functions. There was at least one other large function there at the time. This resulted in too many guests for the staff to cope with properly. Some of our food was barely warm on arrival and the service was exceedingly slow. The Committee discussed this situation at their last meeting. An email outlining our disappointment has been sent to the hotel and this will be followed up with a visit to speak to the management. We don't know what the outcome will be; we may have to consider another venue. However, the Committee apologises for the disappointment.

**Margaret Clayton's article (P.8)** is very interesting, as it might give

us an insight into what the non-ringing public think of ringers. Is what was said to Margaret really the feeling among the general non-ringing public? My footnote regarding grants from ringing associations does balance the situation slightly, but it's not a huge amount with which to argue the case against. It could of course be said that all this expensive equipment would be sitting there unused if it weren't for ringers. But could we give more? The Gloucester & Bristol D Assn's Management Committee has recently agreed to ask the membership to vote for an increase in subs from £10 to £15 for adult membership (£10 for the retired) from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The extra income is to be channelled directly into the G&B's Bell Fund, from which fairly sizeable grants are given. Sadly such an increase will cause some of the genuine 'tightwads' to throw-in their membership, but hopefully the majority will consider even the new amounts are still small in the great order of things. Is this a warm-up for a Guild sub increase? Not yet, as our income still exceeds our expenditure for running the general affairs at the moment (but not by much: £200) – but our Bell Restoration Fund resources are dwindling and we shall need to top them up if we are to keep our heads high in meeting future grant applications – and to curb the tight-ringer snipes.

**Richard Lewis-Skeath** has once again come up trumps with the Guild's Annual Ringing Tour. You know he always will – and we've had some excellent tours from him – but it's worth a word or two of thanks: thank you Richard, your tour will again please many. See p.6 for details.

**We now have Guild badged clothing** available again. It is with a new, more-local supplier, who does not have restrictions on the number of items in an order (the previous supplier demanded at least 8 items). The new supplier can provide the usual good-quality clothing (Fruit-of-the-Loom, Screenstars and the like). The Committee has inspected a sample of the items and all are pleased with the results. All profits will be channelled into the Bell Restoration Fund. See the advert on p12.

Chris Povey, 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

In the towers where I learnt to ring on the edge of Canterbury we used to 'fire' the bells on special occasions, such as the first ringing of the New Year, and for every wedding and for Royal Occasions.

There will be a royal occasion coming this year, as we mark the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Queen Elizabeth II. Almost all towers will ring their bells, but will not necessarily 'fire' them! There will be other celebrations to mark the event in towns and villages, some more noisy than others.

One of the reasons for ringing bells is to make a loud noise – one that hopefully is good to listen to and one that causes the listener to think for a moment about why the bells are ringing!

I wish ringers well in all their ringing, whether it be ringing on Sundays, peal and quarter peal attempts and ringing for royal occasions.

Rev Dr Peter Newing

**DOES ANY RECIPIENT OF A PRINTED NEWSLETTER WISH TO HAVE THEIR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?  
IFSO, PLEASE LET CHRIS POVEY KNOW AND HE WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES.  
(EMAIL COPIES ARE MUCH CHEAPER THAN PRINTED COPIES, SO GOOD FOR GUILD FINANCES.)**

## THE GUILD ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2015

2014	Income	2015	2014	Expenditure	2015
	<b>General Fund</b>				
£485.07	Opening Balance	£505.41	1		
£889.00	Subscriptions	£1,143.00	2	£278.74	£237.35
£30.00	G&B Donation			£292.37	£310.57
	Garments			Garments	£24.00
	Annual Dinner	£200.00	3	£221.00	£22.50
	Donations towards Tea	£35.30		£60.00	£60.00
				Room Hire	£51.00
				Website Domain	£11.98
£164.00	Badges	£44.00		£10.55	Badges & Shields
£630.60	Bell Fund Donations	£761.37		£830.60	Transferred to Bell Fund
					Postage
					£5.30
<b>£1,713.60</b>	<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>£2,183.67</b>		<b>£1,693.26</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>
				£495.41	Closing Bank balance
				£10.00	Cash in hand
				<b>£505.41</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>
					<b>£705.01</b>
	<b>Restricted Funds - Bell Fund</b>		5		
£1,649.75	Opening balance	£1,981.37	1		
£200.00	Mid Week Tours	£100.00		£350.00	Dumbleton
£155.00	Donations	£475.17		£150.00	Whichford
£1.02	Interest	£1.46			Pebworth
£115.00	Newsletter Advertising	£105.00			Stanway
£160.60	Other (Raffles, outing, teas etc)	£81.20			
£200.00	From General Fund	£500.00			
<b>£831.62</b>	<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>£1,262.83</b>		<b>£500.00</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>
				£1,981.37	Closing balance
					£2,544.20
	<b>Creditors at year end</b>			<b>Debtors at year end</b>	
	Subs paid for 2016	£161.00			
	<b>Assets</b>				
£680.00	Badges & Shields	£536.00			
£62.52	Ink & Paper	0			
<p>Other assets of the Guild include: Newing Shield, President's Chain, Brazier Trophy, Spencer Jones Cup, Mini-Mouse Merit Award, Inter-Shires Trophy, peal books and documents. The Award, Shield, Cup, Trophy and President's Chain have been valued professionally and are currently insured by the Guild for £4,153.</p>					
<b>Notes</b>					
1	Opening balances		4	Printing	
	The Guild operates 2 bank accounts, one for the General Fund and the other (which incurs interest) for the Bell Fund.			Covers cost of printing Newsletters. £62.52 was carried into 2015 for unused inks and paper and nothing into 2016. The true cost of all the printing for 2015 was £299.87.	
2	Subscriptions		5	Bell Fund	
	The total membership for 2015 was 217. This includes 11 Life members & 1 who paid in 2014.			The Committee decided that all the nett profit from Teas, Raffles etc would go into the Bell Fund together with any interest generated by the account. In 2015 the committee approved grants: Adlestrop (£500), Pillerton Hersey (£500) and Sherbourne (£150); to be paid in 2016.	
3	Dinner figure This includes a deposit of £200 for the 2015 dinner.				

These accounts have been checked by the two Accounts Examiners and no issues have been brought to the attention of me or other Guild Officers.

**Michael Dane, Hon Treasurer.**



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

The Committee met on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb at Wellesbourne's Church Centre. John Carroll and Michael Haynes presented apologies.

1) The Minutes of the May meeting were agreed.,

2) **Matters arising** were:-

Old Minute Book: Chris and Steve Bowley deposited the Book with Gloucester Archives;

Striking Comp certificates: minor amendments to be done, then accepted for use;

Guild badged clothing: pricing as suggested by Matthew agreed. There to be an advert in the April Newsletter and on the website. Photos showing garments in use required. Chris to do;

Second Accounts Examiner: Robert Hall has agreed to do this and has already checked through the 2015 accounts.

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

Hon Secretary: letters of thanks had been sent to the Vicar of Shipston-on-Stour for the use of the bells for the Inter-Shire Striking Competition in November, and to Len Morley, who had very successfully master-minded the catering side of the event. Letters of thanks had been received from Sherbourne for the offer of a grant towards the clapper refurbishment, and for the payment on completion of the work. Two new members were reported:-

Ian Jervis (Offenham)	Claire Penny (prop)
	Michael D (Sec)
Martin Young (L. Compton)	Stuart C (Prop)
	Peter K (Sec)

The Committee confirmed their elections.

Treasurer: Michael D presented his report. The 2015 accounts had been examined and neither Examiner raised any points of concern. (*These accounts appear on p.4. Ed*). These were no comments or questions and the accounts were accepted.

Ringling Master: reported that Saturday practices are progressing well. A Q of Bob Triples rung prior to the Dinner. He will provide details of the Guild Ringing Tour to Chris for the April Newsletter.

Fixture Sec: concentrating on obtaining the next batch of towers.

Newsletter Editor: the recent slight reorganisation of the printing and distribution details seemed to work well, with no-one receiving their Newsletters late, so this arrangement will continue.

Mid-week Tours: Isobel Murphy said surplus money, which is directed to the Bell Restoration Fund, may reduce in the light of fewer people on the tours and some high charges levied by PCCs.

Peal Secretary: Chris has spoken to Sandra, who will update the peal book when Chris and she arrange to meet to hand over the book.

5) **Bell Restoration Fund**: a new application from Blockley had been received. It will be considered at the May Committee meeting;

Sherbourne update: clapper work now complete and grant paid;

Adlestrop update: the bells came out the day before this meeting and the bellframe during the following two days. Completion is expected by May;

Pillerton Hersey update: no reports on progress at this time.

6) **Items for discussion**:-

2015 Events Programme:-

Inter-Shire competition at Shipston: agreed as an excellent and very successful day;

Xmas Party, Badsey, 12<sup>th</sup> Dec: agreed as a very good evening indeed: 21 attended.

Annual Dinner, White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton: nice location and it was very well attended (51), but was let down badly by the

disappointing quality of the meal and the very slow service. This was mentioned to the Hotel at the time and will be followed with an email. A new location may be sought for next year.

2016 Programme:-

Guild Ringing Tour, 2<sup>nd</sup> July: Richard is arranging. Details in April Newsletter;

Minimus Striking Competition, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept: agreed to ask for Ettington. Chris to speak to Graham Nabb;

Guild Walk, 24<sup>th</sup> Sept: all arranged by Michael Haynes;

AGM & Striking Comps, 15<sup>th</sup> Oct: it was thought Adlestrop might be restrictive to some due the present long, access ladder, so Longborough, Bourton-on-the-Hill and Bledington were considered possible alternatives. Chris to investigate;

Xmas Party, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec: agreed should be at Badsey again. Stuart to enquire.

Request for Guild badges by non-members: another request for a Guild badge from a non-member had been received. A general guidance/policy on this is required. Agreed non-members could purchase a badge if they requested one.

7) **AOB**:

Peter K asked if anybody had a copy of Newsletter 121 for the Guild's collection, as this issue is missing. Richard did and would supply.

8) **Next Meeting: Tues 17<sup>th</sup> May**. Location and time to be announced.

Future Committee meeting dates: 17<sup>th</sup> May, 16<sup>th</sup> Aug, 15<sup>th</sup> Nov.

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

## FROM THE ARCHIVES:-

### 100 YEARS AGO

7<sup>th</sup> April 1916.

A Committee Meeting for the purpose of making arrangements for the Spring General meeting of the Guild was held at the Rectory, Moreton, on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 16 at 8pm.

The Rev Spencer Jones presided over a small attendance. On the proposition of the Chairman, seconded by the Secretary, it was resolved to hold the meeting at Campden, it being the most central Parish in the Guild, there being no Competitions, due to the War still in progress, the Rev Spencer Jones offering to write to the Vicar of Campden inviting his

co-operation, to which the letter kindly acceded.

Owing to the exceptional circumstances prevailing at these times, it was further resolved to ask the General Meeting to agree to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Rules being suspended for this year, the matter to be placed on the agenda.

After thanking the Rector for presiding and allowing the use of the Room, the meeting closed.

(Signed)

Herbert D'Easte-East

### 40 YEARS AGO

Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1976 at The Barley Mow, Chipping Campden.

Members attending: H O Hart (Chairman), Revd J D E Smith, A J Brazier, P S Carter, M F Fairfax, G F Osborn and R H Payne.

Apologies: C E Evans.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: these were read and agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

Banking Accounts: On the proposition of A.J.Brazier, seconded by Revd J.D.E.Smith, it was agreed that Barclays Bank Limited be appointed Bankers of the Guild. That the said Bank be and they are hereby authorised-

1. To honour and comply with all cheques, drafts, promissory notes acceptances negotiable instruments and orders expressed to be drawn accepted made or given on behalf of the Guild at any time or times

2. To honour and comply with all instructions to deliver and dispose of any securities or documents or property held by the Bank on behalf of the Guild. Provided any such cheques drafts bills promissory notes acceptances negotiable instruments orders and instructions are signed by the person holding the undermentioned offices for the time being: any two of the officers listed: i) Guild Master, ii) Secretary & Treasurer, iii) Committee member (M.F.Fairfax)

On the proposition of A.J.Brazier, seconded by R.Payne, it was agreed to open a deposit account, and that with respect to the sum fifty pounds now deposited with the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society, and any sums subsequently deposited, authority be given to any two of the persons (Guild Master, Secretary & Treasurer, and Committee member (M.F.Fairfax)) to request the withdrawal of any capital or interest thereon.

Annual Dinner 1976: The Secretary reported a surplus from the Dinner of £10-80. A discussion followed in which it was generally agreed that the Dinner was a success, but that some form of after-dinner entertainment should be considered for the 1977 function. With the expected increase in numbers to attend, it was agreed to consider both

the venue and limiting numbers.

Outing: Lack of interest in the proposal for combining a ringing outing with the handbell concert on May 8<sup>th</sup> was reported and it was agreed not to pursue the matter further.

Ringling Competition 1976: Arrangements: Michael Fairfax reported on arrangements to date. Difficulties in obtaining suitable judges from the Oxford Guild would probably mean approaching ringers from the Gloucester and Bristol Association, otherwise the previous programme is being followed.

Badges: Favourable response had been made to the suggestion for badges to cost £1-00 each and it was agreed to order 100 badges to the design of the Birmingham Medal & Badge Company. The Secretary to proceed with negotiations.

Open Ringing Day: The Secretary reported on the suggestion for a Ringing Festival, it was agreed that the Secretary should prepare a report and proposals for later consideration by the Committee.

Signed:

H O Hart, 12<sup>th</sup> October 1976

## THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD'S

# ANNUAL RINGING TOUR

WHEN?

SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2016

WHERE?

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

### EXPECTED ITINERARY AND TIMES\*

1000 - 1045	Polesworth, 8, 11-2-11 in F
1100 - 1145	Grendon, 6, 11-2-14 in F#
1200 - 1245	Atherstone, 8, 8-1-6 in A

Lunch (no venue arranged as yet)

1430 - 1515	Kingsbury, 8, 17-1-0 in E
1530 - 1615	Nether Whitacre, 6, 10-1-0 in G
1630 - 1715	Coleshill, 10, 14-0-24 in F#

£5 per person to cover tower donations

\*This itinerary is provisional as not all towers are confirmed.

Final details will be circulated at Saturday practices in due course and posted on the website & Facebook group.

ORGANISER: Richard Lewis-Skeath (to whom all thanks)  
[handbell.ringer@btinternet.com](mailto:handbell.ringer@btinternet.com) (07747-802555)

## THE GUILD' 2016 ANNUAL DINNER

Fifty-one members and guests met at The White Hart Royal Hotel in Moreton-in-Marsh on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February for the Guild's Annual Dinner. The White Hart provides an agreeable environment, and Moreton is not only central, but it is the location where the Guild came into being in 1909. The number attending was the most for a few years, so we were a little tight in the room. Nonetheless, the hotel had set the tables nicely.

Sadly, the hotel did not progress happily with the rest of it. The meal was the normal fare, but firstly it took a long time for the first course to be distributed, and then some found their meals were tepid and returned them. Secondly, the roast potatoes with the beef were well overdone, such that they became a test for one's teeth (although I was rather proud and not a little surprised that mine coped!). Thirdly, the clearing away of the first course and the distribution of the second course was woeful, such that by 9.45pm it was felt a start should be made on the speeches even though only half of the meals had arrived. It was disappointing. We have had some very good meals there in the past, one of which was quite memorable in quality, portions and service, but this one was at the other end of the scale. Some discussion with the management took place afterwards and comments are awaited. What happened? We think the hotel overbooked functions (there was a large one downstairs, and there may have been another) and couldn't cope with demand.

However, it was very good to see so many people there.



Our Speaker was Angela Newing, the wife of Vice-President Peter Newing, who was also there. Angela is well-known in ringing circles and has been a staunch worker over many years with Central Council Committees. Angela is also the composer of the brainteasers that appeared in the Ringing World's Puzzle Corner regularly, most of which then appeared in her 'A Bellringer's Book of Brain Benders'. Luckily our brains weren't tested via any of these, but Angela did give us a bellringer's version of Gerald Hoffnung's 'The bricklayer's lament' for our amusement.



The prize-giving followed, with the trophies presented by Angela (what an honour to have The Newing Shield presented by one of the donors). The following received:-

The Newing Striking Competition  
The Newing Shield: Mickleton  
The Spencer Jones Cup Moreton

The Brazier Striking Competition  
The Brazier Trophy Pebworth

The Merit Award  
Awarded to Pebworth

(The tower receiving the Merit Award is, in the opinion of the Ringing Master, the one who has demonstrated the best all-round performance all things considered. Our congratulations to Pebworth for achieving this in the short time since ringing restarted there)





John Kinchin receiving The Newing Shield on behalf of Mickleton



Georgie Roberts receiving the Brazier Trophy on behalf of Pebworth



Richard L-S receiving the spencer Jones Cup on behalf of Moreton.



Elizabeth Spencer receiving the Merit Award on behalf of Pebworth

## A POINT TO PONDER.... A FREE HOBBY?

The man who sat next to me in church one day launched a jaundiced attack on bell-ringers. He said it was quite wrong that people who rang the church bells did not necessarily support the church, yet rang for more than an hour at least once a week, disturbing the whole neighbourhood and giving nothing in return. As an enthusiastic but less than skilled ringer myself, I was taken aback at the strength of his feeling.

In response to my query, he agreed that the bells were an enjoyable prelude to the services and represented part of the church tradition. When I asked him how he thought people could learn to ring without practising other than prior to services, he acknowledged that practice was essential.

His grouse was that ringers who did not attend church were using church facilities primarily to further their own hobby and that they should expect to pay for this use as they would pay to learn any other skill.

Although I strongly defended bell-ringers in the discussion which followed, he gave me pause for thought. I would guess that most bell-ringers do ring as often as they can for services and national celebrations; the reason that they may not attend the service for which they are ringing may well be that they are rushing off to ring at another. Be that as it may, while quarter peals and competitions undoubtedly improve the standard of church ringing, I very much doubt if that is their

main purpose or priority. Few would deny that ringing is a demanding and satisfying hobby in its own right. I can think of no other hobby which can be practised every day of the week without any cost (other than travelling from tower to tower), for which expensive equipment is provided free, and for which tuition is so freely and generously given.

The parlous state of church finances is well-known and the heating, lighting and maintenance of bell-towers is a not insignificant cost. I am sure none of us would wish to make payment compulsory but perhaps those who attend practices, particularly other than at a church they support, might drop a small donation into a clearly labelled box every time they come. This would cost even frequent ringers hardly more than the price of a glass of wine a week. Yet 40,000 ringers contributing as little as £1 a week could prevent parishioners such as the one I met beefing about a free hobby – and maybe remind us how fortunate we are to use these facilities.

Margaret Clayton

*(This article might be considered timely in the light of the article about the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund. Luckily, we ringers can defend such accusations about having deep pockets but short arms by referring to the grants that the Guild and other ringing bodies give, but could we pay more? The answer might be 'probably'. Ed)*



## THE BELLS AND BELLFRAME OF ST EDWARD'S, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

I undertook a belfry inspection at Stow Church a year or two back, to identify any maintenance work that could usefully be done to this decidedly impressive ring (and such was done by Taylors last year). The general feeling is a big improvement to the go of these bells has been effected. Stow's tenor is the heaviest ringing bell in Gloucester Diocese.

I have always been fascinated by the huge weights quoted in the Ringing Room, and indeed inside the church: as follows:

Treble 6 cwt  
 2<sup>nd</sup> 7cwt  
 3<sup>rd</sup> 10cwt  
 4<sup>th</sup> 14cwt  
 5<sup>th</sup> 18cwt  
 6<sup>th</sup> 21cwt  
 7<sup>th</sup> 25cwt  
 tenor 30cwt

How did these come about when the exact weights are known? The report I had to write gave me the chance to find out the history of these bells. Help in solving the puzzle came from John Taylor & Co's records. Their records are a national treasure, as the minutest of details about Taylors' work were (and I assume still are) recorded. It is a truly astounding collection of facts. This article contains many details taken from the records for 1883 and 1954, and I am very grateful to Taylors for being so generous in making that data available.

I shall start the timeframe in 1883, when John Taylor & Co first became involved with Stow. At that time there were six bells (the present back 6, except the present 5<sup>th</sup>) of various founders and dates.

In 1883 John Taylor & Co were asked to recast the 3<sup>rd</sup> bell (the present 5<sup>th</sup> bell) and rehang the 6 bells in a new bellframe. This frame, the current one, was constructed as an 8-bell frame from the outset, so some thought must have been given at that time to adding two trebles. Money for those two bells may have run out, as the bells weren't added then. The augmentation had to wait until Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, when John Taylor & Co of Loughborough cast the two present trebles. By this time Blockley's six bells had been rehung and two trebles added, the work occurring in 1894. Was Blockley's augmentation the impetus for Stow's augmentation? It would be fascinating to know, although I doubt we ever will.

In 1954 John Taylor & Co were asked to rehang the bells with new fittings, as the back 6 bells, at least, were still hung on wooden headstocks with plain bearings. Whether the two 1897 trebles had cast-iron (CI) headstocks from the start I do not know, but the result of the 1954 work left all the bells hanging on CI headstocks, with new wheels, new pulleys, new clapper gear and new standard-pattern stays and sliders. This is the present situation.

The accurate weights and notes of each bell after the 1954 work by Taylors are known and these details follow, together with their founders and dates of casting:-

Bell	Note	Weight	Dia (")	Date	Founder
Treble	D	6-3-9	30 $\frac{3}{8}$	1897	John Taylor & Co
2 <sup>nd</sup>	C#	7-1-22	33 $\frac{3}{8}$	1897	John Taylor & Co
3 <sup>rd</sup>	B	7-1-12	33 $\frac{3}{4}$	1620	Henry Farmer*
4 <sup>th</sup>	A	9-1-8	37 $\frac{1}{2}$	1717	Abraham Rudhall I
5 <sup>th</sup>	G	12-2-21	40 $\frac{1}{2}$	1883	John Taylor & Co
6 <sup>th</sup>	F#	14-3-2	43 $\frac{3}{4}$	1620	Henry Farmer*
7 <sup>th</sup>	E	17-3-12	47 $\frac{1}{8}$	1778	Thomas Rudhall
Tenor	D	27-2-24	53 $\frac{3}{8}$	1811	John Rudhall

Total weight: 5t-3cwt-3q-26lb

(\* Henry Farmer operated in Evesham 1600-1622. These two bells must

have been some of the last he cast. They are included in the Church Buildings Council's List of Bells of Historic Importance as particularly worthy of preservation.)

The 1883 record shows that the old 5<sup>th</sup> bell was cracked and that its diameter was 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins and weighed 10-1-21. Comparing these two measurements with those in the data above shows the bell was undersized and underweight. It must have been a thin bell to have sounded the correct note and this may have been the reason it cracked. There is no record of its founder or date. The new bell was cast at 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins dia with canons, and weighed 13-0-5. The 1883 record also states that the canons were removed from the three tenors (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & tenor) at that time.

The weights of the bells as received in the foundry in 1954 are recorded as follows:-

Bell	Weight	Diff pre1954 and post 1954	Notes
Treble	6-3-11	2lb lighter after tuning	no canons when cast
2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-1-25	3lb "	no canons when cast
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7-2-15	31lb "	canons removed 1954
4 <sup>th</sup>	9-3-7	55lb "	canons removed 1954
5 <sup>th</sup>	13-0-3*	38lb "	canons removed 1954
6 <sup>th</sup>	14-3-24	22lb "	canons removed 1883
7 <sup>th</sup>	18-0-11	27lb "	canons removed 1883
Tenor	28-1-14	74lb "	canons removed 1883

\* Noted as 13-0-5 in 1883. Variation in scales the likely cause.

These differences are mostly the weight losses caused by tuning the ring as a whole. Accurate tuning of the back 6 was impossible in 1883, as the first of the iconic tuning machines that now allow this to be done was not installed until 1895 (there are three – small, big and very big. The other two were installed soon after; and all are still used. They are all listed in their own right by Historic England as very important examples of historic machinery). The two 1897 trebles would have been tuned on the small machine, but only as a 'best-fit' against what was noted in 1883 about the tuning of the back 6 bells. Accurate tuning of the back 6 bells may have caused the trebles to be altered slightly; or alternatively, and possibly more likely, they stayed the same (2lb difference in weight could be just a slight variation in the scales between 1897 and 1954 – as seen with the weight of the 5<sup>th</sup>) and the back 6 bells were tuned to them. The tenor's weight loss is a significant amount, but a sentence in the 1883 record explains why: 'The tenor, this seems to be too sharp'. It therefore required a lot taken off to flatten its note to match the others.

As stated above the canons were removed from the three biggest bells in 1883, so their weight losses in 1954 were wholly from tuning and cast-in crown staple removal. The canons on the tenor probably weighed about  $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt, which would have given it a pre-1883 weight of about 29cwt. This corresponds somewhat with the 30cwt noted in the tower. However, the canons on the 7<sup>th</sup> would have weighed less, say  $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt, which would have given that bell a pre-1883 weight of about 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt. Similarly the 6<sup>th</sup>: canons about  $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt, giving about 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt pre-1883. The pre-1954 weights for the remaining bells are therefore those in their original form.

Although there has always been a propensity to exaggerate the weights of bells on an 'our bells are bigger than your bells' basis, the claims at Stow were only a little overdone for the tenor, but substantially overdone for the remainder of the back 6 six bells!

The 1883 bellframe is wooden throughout, except for large cast-iron brackets in the corners and two large cast-iron quadrant stiffeners in the middle of the top layer. The low-side frame itself rests on a wooden

grillage. Two primary beams of very deep and wide proportions span N-S and two main secondary beams of almost similar proportions and two edge secondaries span E-W. The main beam ends are built in to the tower walls. The bellframe itself is then laid on the two main secondary beams and the edge beams. Although 'Church Bells of Gloucestershire' (Bliss & Sharpe 1986) notes the frame is oak, this is not the case. I thought it to be pitch pine and Taylors' 1883 records confirms this. Pitch pine was well-used by the Victorians for many construction projects. However, the westernmost of the lowest-level primary beams seems older than the easternmost beam and looks very much like oak, and I wonder whether it was deemed good enough to be re-used from the previous frame. It certainly looks in good condition. The easternmost (pitch pine) beam is even deeper than its (oak) neighbour. There are

pairs of tie-bars through the inclined struts under each bell bearing position. It is a good-looking and well-constructed frame of mighty proportions – but then it needs to be to hold such a heavy ring. There are no obvious signs of rot.

The bellframe layout reflects old-style practice, as the 7<sup>th</sup> and tenor swing in-line roped opposed. Investigation work post-1883 showed this arrangement causes the 'go' of bells to be adversely-affected by the swinging of its in-line neighbour. Small bells suffer minimally, but large bells can become a handful. Is Stow tenor a handful? Well, er..., it's still a bit that way. Modern bellframe arrangements split the tenors, so that they swing 90° to each other.

Chris Povey

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## THE GUILD'S BELL RESTORATION FUND

Members must now be aware the Guild runs a Bell Restoration Fund. It exists to give grants to towers to assist with the cost of work required to keep bells ringing. Other ringing associations/guilds/societies have similar funds. The Guild Fund has only operated for the last five years, so it is very much an infant among the bigger and longer established funds of other ringing bodies.

The Fund arose from money accumulated by the Mid-week Tours group. This amount, some £1400, had gradually increased over many years, to the point where it was necessary to do something useful with it. The Committee proposed the formation of the Fund at the 2010 AGM. There was agreement, and the rest is history as they say.

If an infant among the bigger bell funds, its record of giving – and paying – grants in those five years is impressive. To date the Fund has offered a total of £3410 to 11 towers. All but two of these towers have completed their proposed works and the grant has been paid. The remaining two have yet to complete their works and their grant offers are categorised for accounting purposes as 'committed', so it is clear to see how much is actually available to offer to future applicants. One grant application is currently pending consideration. It is pleasing to see that while the fund started with £1400 and has paid out or committed a total of £3410, there is still some money to give. About £1400 nett currently remains in the pot. How has this been managed, one might ask, given that the annual subscription is £5? I suspect the Committee would respond 'Good management!' - and that is indeed the case, you will be pleased to know. Additionally, the Guild used to give occasional donations to each of the four major associations covering our area of operation, but these ceased when the Guild's BRF started.

The Fund offers grants towards a wide variety of bell works, from the small-cost items to the larger, full-rehang style, projects. While the big bell funds in some cases give thousands of pounds to major projects (remember: they've been going a long time and have more members who contribute), the Guild has a policy at present of offering a maximum of £500. However, there is some skewing towards the smaller-cost works, where sums offered are proportionately larger. Why is this? The Guild favours a greater emphasis on maintaining installations in good order through regular maintenance with minor replacements and repairs, rather than having to undertake major works through, in many cases, regular neglect. Unlike the major funds, the Guild will consider offering grants towards ropes.

So, your bells need some work. What do you do to apply for a grant? Get a quotation or quotations for the work from the professionals: two of these advertise in this Newsletter; and there are others. Then request a grant form (available from the Hon Secretary). It's emailable if that's

more convenient. Complete the application and return to the Hon Sec, together with the quotations. New applications are presented to the Committee at the first meeting following an application. It is then considered at the following meeting. On that basis, avoid submitting an application immediately after a Committee meeting, as it will be 6 months before it's considered! The dates of Committee meetings are shown in the 'Committee Notes' reports.

**However - and this is the flip side of the story:** while the Committee might pat themselves on the back for 'good management', there is another aspect to all this. We can't just take from the Fund; we have to put something in. There have been donations specifically for the Fund, all of which are gratefully received, and proceeds from Newsletter advertising and raffles go in, too. I'm very pleased to mention that the Mid-week Tours ringers continue to pass-on any surplus funds, as they have contributed significantly to the BRF story.

As mentioned earlier, the Fund has about £1400 of uncommitted money at the moment. The Committee has imposed a maximum grant sum of £500, which in cases of major projects is a very small percentage of the total cost of the work. On this basis we have only enough at the moment to give to two major projects and some smaller sums to small projects. One fairly major project is awaiting consideration at the May Committee meeting, so £500 could be granted then, which leaves £900 – and there's another major project waiting in the wings. Should you wish to donate something to the Fund, please send it to Michael Dane, the Hon Treasurer, or give it to a Committee member, who will pass it on to Michael.

It is a fact that bell work is thriving at the moment because of the Government's Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS), which allows the VAT element of the cost of eligible work to be reclaimed. Almost all bell work is considered eligible, even the cost of bell ropes, so PCCs are – sensibly – taking advantage of this big reduction in cost.

This means bell funds – and it's not just the Guild's fund, but those of the county/diocesan associations, too – are seeing above average requests for grants. To make the money in the pots go round more projects, the grants are being reduced. This is a shame, as such grants are tangible proof to PCCs that ringers do care about the bells they ring. PCCs love all sort of contributions, but cash contributions are the best!

The constitution and rules governing the Fund may be found in the Guild's Handbook. (If you don't have one of these, let me or a Committee member know.)

Chris Povey, Hon Sec.

## RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

### THE JANUARY TOUR: THURSDAY 21ST (the 315<sup>th</sup>). WORCESTER AREA.

The first outing of 2016 was a cold day with no sun, a change from the previous couple of days, which, although cold and frosty, were beautifully sunny. Despite the cold we had 20+ ringers with a few more turning up for the afternoon towers.

#### Crowle: 8, 10cwt

These have the reputation of being the worst ring of bells in Worcestershire, and they certainly lived up to their reputation. Badges (photo below) were on sale saying "Help save the worst bells in Worcestershire" There was a plentiful supply of these badges so perhaps they had not had many takers wanting to save them!



No details of the founders of the bells were evident; perhaps no one wanted to admit responsibility! I suspect they were a mixed bag given the variety of tones. (*Back 5 by John Martin II, all 1667, and front three by Barwell, 1897. I've never rung there, but keep being told I should, to complete my education! I think I shall continue to avoid them. A prominent local ringer described them as the worst bells, etc, some years back. I can't remember who it was, but it stuck. Not sure whether the Help Save campaign is to preserve them as the worst bells, or to save them from being the worst bells, ie rehang/retune them. Hopefully the latter. Ed*) On the wall was a photo of the ringers from 1897-1920.

All the sallies were of a different colour, the rope on the 6<sup>th</sup> slipped wheel and the tenor was very odd struck. The bells were extremely loud and one ringer reported he had used ear-plugs when ringing a peal, I was told they sounded better outside. There was an old notice in the tower "Warning to Ringers", one bit of which said "He that rings in his hat, threepence shall be paid for that". Having been advised of this Robin promptly put on his woolly hat! After ringing Grandsire, Little Bob and Stedman we decided we had had enough and set off early for the next tower.

### St John in Bedwardine: 8, 15cwt

This is a city centre church, with a small car park; sensibly one of the spaces was reserved for the vicar. A folder on the table in the ringing chamber was titled "St John's Clangers" listed the activities of the local ringers. The original bells were a ring of 6 cast in 1816 by Mears, they were rehung in 1930 with 2 new trebles cast by Taylors. There were photos on the wall of the re-hanging. The walls in the ringing chamber were painted in maroon and cream, some might remember the old railway carriages painted in similar colours which were known as "blood and custard". On the wall was a plaque commemorating T W Lewis who had been a ringer there for 81 years. He also rang in a peal for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the re-hanging. We rang, Grandsire, Bob Major, Yorkshire, Stedman and Double Norwich.

Lunch was taken at an old half-timbered pub built in 1577 called the "King Charles II". Apparently the King escaped his pursuers from there after the Battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651. An excellent variety of unusually named pies with different types of mash were served. However a couple of ringers were disappointed as they only had 6 deserts left.

### St Martin in the-Cornmarket: 10, 6cwt

Also known as 'Old St Martin's', this church is in the middle of the shopping area. The ringing chamber was light and airy, with white painted walls and a yellow carpet. This new ring of 10 was cast by Taylors in 2011, but were hung with local labour. The old bells (6, 13cwt) still hang, but 'dead', in the old frame further up the tower. This installation has long been unringable and the bells are sounded by hammers as a clock chime. A plaque on the wall indicated there was some lottery funding for the new ring. All the sallies were a different colour, lighter colours for the front bells and darker colours round the back. We rang Rounds, Grandsire, Little Bob, Stedman and Yorkshire. I was told that when we rang down we got a round of applause from some workers on scaffolding on a nearby building, I like to think this was in appreciation of our efforts, not because we had just stopped!

### Barbourne: 8, 10cwt

A large church built of reddish sandstone with excellent bells with fat maroon sallies on the ropes

These bells were transferred in 2013 as a complete ring from Halewood, Merseyside, the tower there being too weak to allow full-circle ringing. The whole ring was cast in 1929 by Taylors. We rang Grandsire, Stedman, Yorkshire/Cambridge and Single Oxford, most of which was of a good standard.

### Clive Sparling

### THE FEBRUARY TOUR: THURSDAY 18TH (the 316<sup>th</sup>). WARKS, SOUTH OF BRUM!

The promise of spring sunshine (or was it a new tower?) brought out twenty-nine ringers for our most recent midweek tour to north Warwickshire, arranged by Geoff and Margaret Pratt.

St Nicholas, Beaudesert's augmentation from three to six is now over two years old but it is still regarded as 'new' in ringing terms. However, the motte behind the church underline its Norman roots and this is reinforced by the superbly carved chancel arch. The majority of us took advantage of the



sunshine that made the churchyard warmer than inside but the light easy going bells were most welcome. Ringing ranged from Rounds and Changes through Plain Bob Minor and Stedman but sadly our attempts at London and more ambitiously, Carlisle, didn't succeed.

Two six bell towers within two minutes' walk of each other seems somewhat greedy but make ideal touring fodder – I can only think of Rugby as being more convenient – so we all strolled down the lane to St John Baptist in Henley-in-Arden. Here we were more successful with Cambridge and Norwich but London continued to elude us. Plain Hunt and Rounds and Changes gave our brave learners opportunities to experience different bells from those at their home towers. Having rung down, we left the church and walked up the High St, and were surprised to hear the carillon plain hunting in celebration of midday.

The Black Swan in Henley coped admirably with the enhanced numbers, managing to squeeze us all into one room and efficiently provide us with warm filling meals that set us up for the afternoon.

Outside St Peter Wootton Wawen, a sign proclaims it to be Anglo-Saxon and the earliest



church in Warwickshire, but these characteristics aren't immediately apparent. The ringing room was bathed in spring



sunshine to such an extent that we had to employ human blinds to ensure the ringer of the two was not dazzled. Here London was



abandoned in favour of Northumberland with more Stedman and Cambridge. The ringing chamber was filled with interesting records of the local ringers' achievements and being on a Four Shires tour it was good to see one of the Guild's peal boards on the wall featuring the venerable Walter Large.

The journey to the last tower, St Mary Magdalene, Tanworth in Arden, was complicated by road works and closures resulting in a long detour. This seemed to make our time there quite short but in it Plain Bob Major and Lincolnshire came round and our learners were given opportunities to ring

changes on eight. With the promise of longer days ahead, we set off for home in daylight.

Thank you to everyone for contributing to yet another enjoyable day. New tourists are always welcome: ringing of all standards will be accommodated. If anyone would like to organise a tour later in the year, please get in touch.

**Isobel Murphy**

**THE MARCH TOUR: THURSDAY 17TH (the 317<sup>th</sup>). THE DASSETT HILLS**

Where? I hear you say, yes that's what I thought too, I had not heard about the Dasset Hill tucked away North of Banbury, in gently rolling Warwickshire countryside.

First Up, Leamington Hastings (5), we were greeted by primroses in the spring sunshine. Not such an auspicious welcome, a first for me, was the security camera at the door which announced loudly "warning you are being watched by a security camera" A sign of the times maybe, or necessary due to vandalism issues at the church.

These are a balcony ring, and we were caught unawares by the weight (tenor 15cwt) and the raise left something to be desired. Best rung at a stately pace, slow turning, close to balance, no short cuts on handling here. Usual doubles fare on safe ground, beautiful mellow tones. Ringing at 10 meant a start as early as 7am for some visitors.

On to Kineton (8), also known as the Edgehill Ringing Centre, where the tenor was only just heavier than the treble at the last tower. An entirely different kettle of fish. As you would expect easy handling, tapping round quite nicely with CCTV from the belfry in the corner. Lots of activity evident in this tower with teaching aids and whiteboard. The 8-spliced did not, however, come up to the required

standard and was substituted with a superb half-course of Yorkshire to finish.

Lunch at The Wharf, Fenny Compton, with its good value, two mains for £10, and some glorious bread and butter pudding, meant we were well set for the afternoon.

Next, a scenic meander through Burton Dassett country park; it's not often I am stopped by a sheep totally unmoved by a car, feeding its lambs in the middle of the road. Then another not so conscientious mother not keeping an eye on her wayward offspring. A truly delightful spot, with Burton Dassett (6) up next. We were warned about the acoustics here, but I am pleased to report we did not need hand signals for the calls, as sound proofing measures have been carried out. That didn't make these bells easy to ring. I had forgotten about the plain bearings of my youth, but here they were again, the bells dropping likes stones unless you paid rapt attention to them. A fair draft from the ceiling, a rope guide would have been useful. The steps to the tower a little worn, but worth the visit to ring these rural towers for the view and mellow sound.

Last up Farnborough (6) only 6cwt, with a short ladder for access. Could have done with a grab rail at the top, but we all managed the trap door, despite the bread and butter pudding! A low ceiling here, the bells tapped round well, and we had some creditable Norwich, Cambridge and St Clements. An interesting touch of Bob Minor called by Clive with nothing but singles, lead to the comment there were a couple of loose women about, so watch out!

Thanks to Robin for some interesting, characterful bells, in a beautiful setting, and now you know where the Dasset hills are.

**Chris Seers**

**GUILD-BADGED CLOTHING IS BACK!!**

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE:-**

Polo shirts:	£15.00	Full-zip ladies fleece	£25.00
Sweatshirts:	£17.50	Half-zip fleece:	£22.50
Full-zip fleece:	£25.00	Lambswool V-necked sweater:	£35.00

Colours available (except lambswool sweater): Navy, Red, Bottle Green, Black, Royal Blue  
Ditto, but for lambswool sweater: Red, Black, Navy Blue, Charcoal

Orders to: Matthew Kemble, contact details on page 2

Payments to: Michael Dane, contact details on page 2 (cheques to be made payable to 'Four Shires Guild of Bellringers'. Payment via BACS may be possible: check with Michael first).

There are no extra carriage charges on the prices above.

All profits from the sale of this clothing will go to the Guild's Belfry Restoration Fund

## 'BRETWICKHAM' – A CHRISTMAS 'DING DONG'

It was that time of year to sally forth and enjoy a morning together. **Saintbury** provided a convenient and ideal location for the ringers of our two towers and the somewhat cheeky request for a B-B-Q was readily agreed to (it would be Fiona's birthday after all on the proposed day).

So a rather cool but dry 29<sup>th</sup> December duly arrived and we rang mostly call-changes with everyone getting the measure of the 8 bells. We sang Happy Birthday to Fiona of course. Brian and Christina Ireland joined us although Christina resisted the temptation to ring as convalescence from her hip surgery demanded. Our 45 minute slot passed all too quickly before moving across to the cattleyard car park for hot rolls and beverages (courtesy of Nick Gibson) where a truly happy hour was spent!



Thanks to Robert Chadburn for meeting us and helping with our ringing  
**Roger H Hunt**

L-r: Nigel Ladds, Robert Chadburn, George Jelfs, John Cleveland, Rob Newman, Phil Milward, Xenia, Fiona Gibson, Bill Wadsworth, Alan Curry, Heidi, Nana Hirayama, Ray and Rose Waldron, Roger Hunt.  
(photo: Kieran Hunt)

## TALES FROM A TOWER NEAR YOU (7) ..... BELFRY ART



(Photo: the author)

How often do we stop and enjoy the sights in our belfries?

Most ringers get involved with home decoration etc to choose shapes and colours we like and for many of us the sight (and sound) of a fully restored stationary engine gives us a buzz, yet little attention appears to be given to the vast resource available in our belfries where engineering, architectural and natural materials co-exist with shapes and colour - albeit only brought to prominence when the light is right.

A bellframe repaint some 5 years ago at Huntley, near Gloucester, provided such an opportunity as the early morning winter sun poked its way through the ornate wooden window boards. At first it appeared my paintwork was a bit patchy but then as the sunlight strengthened a richer and more defined 'shadow' grew and the sun moved from east to west to give a symmetrical 'collage' as my photo above shows.

So why not explore your own tower from within if you can and record your own photographic memories.

*'Roger de Flaedenburg'*

*(..... and I shall be very pleased to publish any photos that find their way to me. However, unless it's 'your own' belfry, please obtain the necessary permission; and above all, be careful up there, particularly if you're on your own (which you ought not to be). Belfries are not the safest places sometimes if you're not used to them – in fact some are downright dangerous – so have safety in mind at all times. Even 'belfry-savvy' people have accidents sometimes.*

*Oh, one last thing: if bells happen to be 'up' when you're there, don't even bother going into the belfry. Much, much too dangerous. Ed)*

# AROUND THE TOWERS

## PEALS, QUARTER PEALS AND OTHER RINGING

**Wellesbourne, Warks**, 25 Jan, 1250 Lincolnshire S Major: 1 Simon Oram, 2 Barbara Howes, 3 Chris Mew, 4 Karen French, 5 Robert Reeves, 6 Peter Quinn, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C).

### Fulbrook, Oxon

Friday 29 January 2016

#### 1296 Plain Bob Minor

1 Isobel Murphy      4 Daniel Glyde  
2 Chris Seers        5 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C),  
3 Keith Murphy      6 Clive Sparling.

Rung in fond remembrance of Andrew Roberts of Fairford who died on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015. Andrew was an enthusiastic and valued member of our regular quarter peal band.

**Freeland, Oxon**, 5 Feb, 1320 Cambridge S Minor: 1 Michael Probert, 2 Anthony Williamson, 3 Billy Clarke, 4 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 5 Neil Ephgrave, 6 Alison Merryweather-Clarke (C). 1st surprise, and 75th QP, as conductor, celebrating Alison's first 20 years of ringing.

**Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos**, 6 Feb, 1344 Plain Bob Triples: 1 Rob Newman, 2 Jeanette Davy, 3 Jane Gilbert, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 Len Morley, 6 Roger Hunt, 7 Nick Allsopp (C), 8 Peter Kenealy. Rung on the Guild Dinner Day. Also remembering Tony Brazier former Guild President, who passed away 20 years ago (01/02/96) An S@S quarter peal.

**Harbury, Warks**, 8 Feb, 1280 Superlative S Major: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Lucy Gwynne, 3 Karen French, 4 John Keddie, 5 Robert Reeves, 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Nick Allsopp.

**Pebworth, Worcs**, 13 Feb, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Claire Allen, 2 Sandra Parker, 3 Georgie Roberts, 4 Roland Merrick, 5 Martin Penny (C), 6 Claire Penny. Rung half muffled in memory of Sir Terry Wogan. (Rung on the back 6)

**Chipping Campden, Glos**, 22 Feb, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Peter Quinn, 3 Robert Reeves, 4 John Nicholls, 5 Matthew Kemble, 6 Nick Allsopp, 7 Chris Mew (C), 8 Jackie Hands. Birthday compliment to Jackie.

**Great Rissington, Glos**, 25 Feb, 1320 Norwick S Minor: 1 Steve Coleman (C), 2 Keith Murphy, 3 Sue Coleman, 4 Jeremy Meyrick, 5 John Nicholls, 6 Bill Nash. An 80th birthday compliment to Jeremy Meyrick.

**Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos**, 29 Feb, 1280 Cambridge S Major: 1 Nick Allsopp, 2 Roger Hunt, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Robert Tregillus, 5 Raymon Sheasby, 6 Mark Sayers, 7 Chris Povey, 8 Mike Chester (C). Rung on the 20th anniversary of installation of Revd Stephen Wookey as rector of this church.

**Wellesbourne, Warks**, 29 Feb, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 John Nicholls, 3 Simon Oram, 4 John Carroll, 5 Peter Quinn, 6 Michael Dane.

**Stratford-on-Avon, Warks**, 6 Mar, Oct, 1260 Plain Bob Royal: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Simon Adams, 3 Jane Gilbert, 4 Rachel Page, 5 Sue Roderick, 6 Jeanette Davy, 7 Steve Bowley, 8 Roger Hunt, 9 Nick Allsopp, 10 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C). First of Royal: 3.

**Willersey, Glos**, 8 Mar, 1260 Doubles (Grandsire, Plain): 1 Chris Gooding, 2 Mark Newbury, 3 Roger Hunt, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Robert Chadburn (C), 6 Bob Topp.

**Willersey, Glos**, 14 Mar, 1260 Doubles (Grandsire, Plain): 1 Bob Topp, 2 Roger Hunt, 3 Claire Penny, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Robert Chadburn (C), 6 Mark Newbury.

**Badsey, Worcs**, 15 Mar, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Tom Sandham, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Patrick Wooster, 4 Rod Carless, 5 Georgie Roberts, 6 Chris Povey (C), 7 Roger Hunt, 8 Rob Newman. Rung following the Induction Service of The Rev'd Philip John Morton as Priest in Charge of the Benefice of Badsey with Aldington, Bretforton, Cleeve Prior, Offenham, North and Middle Littleton, and South Littleton by regular ringers in the benefice who are also Southern Branch members of the W&DCRA.

**Offenham, Worcs**, 20 Mar, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Claire Penny, 2 Georgie Roberts, 3 Annette Carless, 4 Rod Carless, 5 Martin Penny (C), 6 Bob Topp. Rung on Palm Sunday following the first Benefice Service of The Rev'd Philip John Morton as Priest of the Parish. Rung by ringers from the Sunday Service Bands of Offenham & Cleeve Prior.

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

### THE QUEEN'S 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

HM the Queen will be 90 on April 21<sup>st</sup>. There is likely to be much ringing to celebrate this happy event

A section in the 'Around the Towers' part of the July Newsletter will be devoted to such ringing by Guild members.

### SAINT GEORGE'S DAY

Also in April – the 23<sup>rd</sup> – is St George's Day. We ringers have been requested to celebrate this by ringing bells on the day.

Please do so again. A section in the 'Around the Towers' part of the July Newsletter will report such ringing by Guild members.

### GUILD WALK ADVANCE NOTICE

This will take place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Sept in the Wiggington – Hook Norton area. The expected route is:-

Meet at **Whichford** (ring here)  
Walk to **Wiggington** (ring here)  
Lunch at The White Swan Inn  
Walk to **Swerford** (ring here)  
Walk back to **Whichford**

There may also be a visit to Hook Norton Brewery (£12.50 each) if there is demand.

Michael Haynes is the organiser of this. Hopefully his ankle will be healed by then.





I am very sad to report the death of **Doug Carr of Halford**, who died on 10th March, aged 92. He joined the Guild in 1986 and was therefore one of our longer-serving members. He acted as one of the Guild's Accounts Examiners for many years. Guild members rang a quarter peal at Halford to celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday (reported in the Jan 2014 Newsletter). Doug's funeral was on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for all you did for the Guild, Doug. We pass on our condolences to his wife.

As a result Peter Richardson has agreed to become the tower correspondent for Halford. His address is The Old Rectory, Queen St, Halford, Shipston-on-Stour, Warks. CV36 5BT; tel 01789-740024.

**Bourton-on-the-Water** bells and bellframe are soon to be given a refurb by Taylors. This will involve clapper rebushing, checking bearings and repainting of the cast-iron and steel bellframe. As this is probably the first major maintenance work to be undertaken since the bells and bellframe were installed in 1957, the intervening 60 years might be seen as something of a 'good run'.

**Blockley** PCC have voted to rehang their 8 bells in a new cast-iron and steel bellframe with new fittings throughout and to augment to 10. Adjustable sound control is also to be fitted, as there have been noise complaints in the past. Why 10? It may not be generally known that the front 6 of a 10 is a genuine 6, but much lighter than the back 6 (the 4<sup>th</sup> of an 8 would be the tenor). Blockley ringers find the two tenors too heavy to handle, so only use the front 6 of the 8. This isn't a particularly musical scale, so the new lighter 6 will benefit them greatly – and very much their learners (they have three at the moment). They still have, of course, the 8 bells to ring; and will be able to ring 10 if the opportunity presents itself. There has been a generous offer towards the cost of augmenting. All this work is likely to happen in early 2017.

**Evesham Bell Tower** is on the verge of returning! At the time of writing

the scaffolding is almost down and ringing will probably restart for a large event on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, which will be exactly a year of inactivity. The bells have been in hibernation under covers for this time, not even being struck by the clock or carillon. They will soon be exhumed for the ropes to be refitted. The Tower looks absolutely splendid after its stonework refurbishment and the regilding of the weathervanes and the clock faces. The weathervanes literally glisten from a mile or so away.

**Adlestrop**: a lot has happened here since the last Newsletter. Whitechapel Bell Foundry took the bells out (through the roof, as no access hatches in the tower) on Monday February 15<sup>th</sup> and the old bellframe over the following two days. All but one of the bells went off to the foundry. The cracked tenor is to be scrapped and the treble, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> to be tuned as the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and tenor of the new light 6, which will be about 4-3-0. Go to Stow to the heaviest ring in the Diocese and then trickle down the hill to one of the lightest!



Adlestrop's bells: the three bells in the foreground are those being retained: L-R old 4<sup>th</sup>, old treble and old 3<sup>rd</sup>. The old 2<sup>nd</sup> and old tenor (which weighed 7-0-3) are in the background.

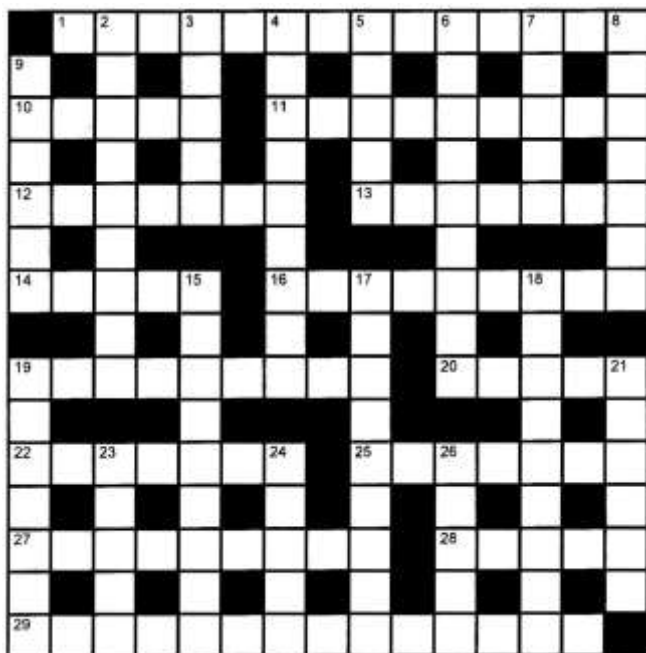
The redundant 2<sup>nd</sup> bell from Adlestrop's rehang has been sold to St Mary's PCC, **Pillerton Hersey**, to enable those bells to become 4. The bell crossed the Gloucestershire border northwards on Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup> en route to Loughborough Bellfoundry, where it will be stored until that work gets underway.

Work to **Sherbourne's** clappers is now complete and the new leather linings of these old-style clappers are bedding in.

The metal thieves have struck again. In the last Newsletter it was reported that lead from Cherington Church had been taken. This time it is reported they have taken the copper roof coverings off the Old Church at **Oddington**. Unfortunately, such thefts are not realised until the rain starts – there's been a lot of that recently – and rainwater pours into the church. And sadly, that's what happened at Oddington. The leaks have affected part of the ancient wall paintings. Repairs to the roof and for the specialist repair of the paintings will cost about £100,000. There is a temporary roof over the affected parts, which will allow certain parts to dry out quickly (eg, the roof timbers) and some parts to dry out slowly (the wall paintings). The church is being kept locked throughout this time, as there is some disarray inside. There will be no ringing at Oddington for most of this year. The metal thieves are still about. Please be vigilant.

## EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

Here is El Pres's gem for this issue. He says they are too easy and will therefore toughen them up a little....



Answers to January X-word

### Across

- 1 A Somerset 12. No murders here! (8,6)
- 10 Most elevated. (5)
- 11 Tree chart diverted nuisance while the ringing is going on. (9)
- 12 Lord Nelson. (7)
- 13 The expert. (7)
- 14 Black and White are on the danger list. (5)
- 16 Ring this method on November 1<sup>st</sup>. (3, 6)
- 19 Canine from Warsaw. (6,3)
- 20 Flavoured wine contains the king of Northumbria. (5)
- 22 Go again. (7)
- 25 Dealings. (7)
- 27 You will find this clue hard to read. (9)
- 28 Seen in a mirror? (5)
- 29 The bells may be in the minor key, but you can see the stone circle. (5,9)

### Down

- 2 Be open-minded about this. (9)
- 3 Bait for a mackerel. (5)
- 4 The old man had a farm. (9)
- 5 Describes our land. (5)
- 6 It is declining. (2,3,4)
- 7 Cards for fortune telling. (5)
- 8 Please remember that some beginners may be this. (7)
- 9 Martin the reformer. (6)
- 15 This clue needs an attack. (9)
- 17 Should not cause one to put on weight. (5,4)
- 18 A quick bulletin. (9)
- 19 The usual trouble with ringing tours. (7)
- 21 Coin material? (6)
- 23 The sun shone on the Great Day and I am sure you got the answer. (5)
- 24 A forbidden clue. (5)
- 26 I wasn't there. (5)

## THE APRES-XMAS/NEW YEAR QUIZ (omitted from the Jan Newsletter for lack of room!)

The following is a significant piece of historical writing:

### DE CYMBALIS FACIENDIS

AD CYMBALA FACIENDA TOTA VIS ET DIFFICULTAS EXTAT IN APPENSIONE CERAE EX QUA FORMANTUR. ET PRIMO SCIENDUM QUOD QUANTO DENSUS EST TINTINNABULAM TANTO ACUTIUS SONAT, TENUIUS VERO, GRAVIUS. UNDE APPENSAM CERAM QUANTAMLIBET EX QUA FORMANDUM PRIMUM CYMBULAM DIVIDES IN OCTO PARTES ET OCTAVUM PARTEM ADDES TANTAE CERAE SICUT INTEGR A FUIT, ET FIET TIBI CERA SECUNDI CYMBALI. ET CEATERA FACIES AD EUNDUM MODUM, A GRAVIORIBUS INCHOANDO. SED CAVE NE FORMA INTERIOR ARGILLAE CUI APTANDA EST CERA ALIQUANDO MUTETUR, NE ETIAM ALIQUID DE CERA APPENSA ADDAT AD SPIRAMINA. PROVIDE ETIAM UT QUINTA VEL SEXTA PARS METALLI SIT STANNUM PURIFICATUM A PLUMBO, RELIQUA DE CUPRO SIMILITER MUNDATO PROPTER SONORITATEM. SI AUTEM IN ALIQUO DEFECERIS, CUM COTE VEL LIMA POTEST RECTIFICARI.

Can anyone provide the correct answers to all these questions, which are:-

- 1) what is it about?
- 2) who wrote it?
- 3) when?
- 4) why is it significant?
- 5) from where was the writer?
- 6) provide the English translation?

Answers to the Editor before 30<sup>th</sup> June. Answers, and names of those providing all the correct answers, will be in the July Newsletter.

## NOTICES AND ADVERTS

### **JOHN TAYLOR & CO.**

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Tel: 01509 212241 Fax: 01509 263305  
Email: [office@taylorbells.co.uk](mailto:office@taylorbells.co.uk)

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

The Guild has a Bell Restoration Fund, from which the Committee is 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 emailable.)

Chris Povey (Hon Sec)

### **GUILD MINIMUS STRIKING COMPETITION FOR THE 'MINI-MOUSE TROPHY'**

**TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016, AT ETTINGTON, WARKS, (4, 10½cwt)**

The 'Mini-Mouse' Striking Competition is to happen again this year. Remember, it's intended to be **FUN**, so come along to have some fun. Yet again, it will be held on a genuine 4, so no messing about with a tenor covering.

It's an early evening event, with the competition just before the evening practice, so the programme will be as below.

- 6.00-7.00pm:** Striking Competition
- 7.00-7.30pm:** results in the church (or churchyard if nice), with cheers and groans as appropriate
- 7.30-8.15pm:** evening practice ringing for those who haven't rung in the competition.

Teams can be associated with a tower, or any four FSG paid up members can form a team with a name. No ringer can ring for more than two teams. All teams get a warm-up practice of 3 minutes. A maximum of about 10 whole pulls of rounds before the test piece, which is to be of at least 96 changes in any Minimus method. Rounds before and after not marked. No rising and falling in this event. That's it for the Rules!

Names of teams and ringers names in them to me by Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August if possible; otherwise turn up on the day and 'fit in'.

Organiser (*to whom all thanks, Ed*): Peter Quinn 01789-840827 ([peterquinn22@googlemail.com](mailto:peterquinn22@googlemail.com))

ISOBEL AND KEITH MURPHY ARE ARRANGING A

### **RETRO RINGING RALLY**

We are currently planning the first 3Rs tour. The Retro Ringing Rally is being planned for:-

**Saturday 21 May 2016**

around scenic Bredon Hill, Worcestershire. We plan to take in around 6 towers with a pub lunch and a late afternoon tea.

So what's Retro about that? Well it's all to do with your mode of transport. We will be collecting together in older vehicles please. At the latest count we could be seeing an MG Midget and B, a Triumph Stag and 1500, Morris 1000s plus the possibility of an Austin Healey 3000 thrown in for good measure.

Please contact [keith.murphy2@btinternet.com](mailto:keith.murphy2@btinternet.com) if you would like to pre-register for this tour. This will help us determine demand and make sure we have a viable number. Bringing your retro ride would be preferred but at the very least, you need to bring along your passion for the vehicles of yesteryear. The tour is being devised so the distances between the towers are small and the traffic light. All you have to do is get to the start and join the 3Rs!



# DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

APR 2 <sup>ND</sup>	MICKLETON, Glos	8, 15-3-16 in E (GF) <b>(*NOTE* 7-30PM. TILL 8-45PM.)</b>
APR 9 <sup>TH</sup>	Longborough, Glos	6, 11-0-2 in F#
APR 16 <sup>TH</sup>	ALDERTON, Glos	6, 9½ cwt in A
APR 23 <sup>RD</sup>	BIDFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 14-0-24 in F (GF)
APR 30 <sup>TH</sup>	ASTON CANTLOW, Warks	6, 14-0-14 in F
MAY 7 <sup>TH</sup>	STRATFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	10, 19-0-2 in E
MAY 14 <sup>TH</sup>	bledington, Glos	6, 8-0-13 in G <b>(*NOTE* 7-30PM. TILL 8-45PM.)</b>
MAY 21 <sup>ST</sup>	LOWER QUINTON, Warks	6, 13-0-7 in F# (GF)
MAY 28 <sup>TH</sup>	NORTON, Worcs	8, 12-3-26 in F# (GF)
JUNE 4 <sup>TH</sup>	ALVESTON, Warks	6, 7½ cwt in A
JUNE 11 <sup>TH</sup>	GREAT RISSINGTON, Glos	6, 11-1-3 in F# (GF)
JUNE 18 <sup>TH</sup>	PEBworth, Worcs	10, 11-3-09 in F#
JUNE 25 <sup>TH</sup>	LITTLE COMBERTON, Worcs	6, 13-1-18 in G
JULY 2 <sup>ND</sup>	<b><u>NO PRACTICE. ANNUAL RINGING TOUR (North Warwickshire area: see details on p.6)</u></b>	
JULY 9 <sup>TH</sup>	CHURCHILL, Oxon	8, 10-3-9 in G
JULY 16 <sup>TH</sup>	HALFORD, Warks	6, 7-2-16 in A (GF)
JULY 23 <sup>RD</sup>	WELFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 9-3-1 in G#
JULY 30 <sup>TH</sup>	EVESHAM, Worcs	12, 35-2-20 in C# <b>(T.B.C.)</b>

For any alterations to this programme, check the FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>), or Campanophile's diary. & also **BELLBOARD website [bb.ringingworld.co.uk](http://bb.ringingworld.co.uk)** (diary section)

**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, reminder time again: FSG subs were due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. The rates are £5 for members and £2 for Juniors (under 18). If you haven't paid yet, please do so soon – 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 the last 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. I suggest those who pay subs for a group of ringers follow it up with an email to the Treasurer listing those names. Ed)

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

## **Events for 2016: book the dates now:-**

<b>Guild Ringing Tour</b>	<b>Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016: see Notice p.6</b>
<b>Minimus Striking Comp</b>	<b>Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Sept at Ettington: see Notice p.17</b>
<b>Guild Walk</b>	<b>Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Sept: Hook Norton area. Full details in July Newsletter (see p.14)</b>
<b>Striking Comps &amp; AGM</b>	<b>Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Oct: venue to be announced (probably Longborough).</b>
<b>Guild Xmas Party</b>	<b>Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Dec: venue to be confirmed (but likely to be Badsey)</b>