

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers)



NEWSLETTER No 149 - JULY 2016



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ST MARY MAGDALENE, ADLESTROP, GLOS.

NOW A TUNEFUL AND EASY-GOING LIGHT 6.



(Photo: Chris Povey)

There could be only one tower for the front page this time. Adlestrop has had a 40 year ringing lay-off. There have been very occasional rings of short duration on the front 4 of the old 5 in recent years, but that ringing was hardly pleasurable. All the ringers needed to face the wall and ring by ear – and concentrate on avoiding skinning knuckles on the stonework. Yes, interesting, but unsustainable. As reported previously, the total rehang included a remodelling of the bells. The old 4th is now the tenor, the old 3rd the 5th, the old treble the 4th and three new-cast bells for the trebles.

A test ring occurred on Thursday 27th May with a few local ringers. All agreed Adlestrop now has a delightful ring of bells - a worthy addition to our area. They are a treat to ring. A bit noisy in the Ringing Room at the moment, but various ways to reduce this will be applied as time goes on. There's no date for the Dedication Service yet, but until that time, there will be no general ringing by visitors. The contact will be Ralph Price of The Post Office, Adlestrop (and Ralph has just become a Guild member). More info on the project inside, p.13.

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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/>

The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (October 2016) is Sept 13th 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.

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.)

NOTICE OF 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND STRIKING COMPETITIONS

ON SATURDAY 15th OCTOBER 2016

**AT THE CHURCH OF ST JAMES, LONGBOROUGH, GLOS
BELLS: 11-0-2 in F#**



ORDER OF THE DAY

2.15pm	Brazier Cup Striking Competition
3.00pm	Newing Shield Striking Competition
4.30pm	Service in the Church
5.15pm	Annual General Meeting in the Church (Chairman: the Guild President)

Evening ringing: if there are sufficient ringers to do so

The **AGENDA** for the AGM is:-

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting (*in January Newsletter*)
- 3 Matters Arising.
- 4 Guild Master's Report (*to be included in this Newsletter*)
- 5 Treasurer's Report (*included in the April Newsletter and on website**)
- 6 Election of President and Vice-Presidents (to serve for 3 years).
- 7 Election of Officers (Guild Master, Ringing Master, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer)
- 8 Election of Committee and Honorary Independent Examiners.
- 9 Election of two Central Council representatives (to serve for 3 years)
- 10 Confirmation of new members during the year
- 11 The proposal by the Committee that the Guild introduces a donation scheme to provide funds for the Bell Restoration Fund (the full wording of the proposal is on page 18 of the July 2016 Newsletter)
- 12 Any Other Business (at the Chairman's discretion)
- 13 Results of the Striking Competitions.

(* available from the website for printing out if reqd: www.fourshires.org.uk; then select 'Newsletters')

Chris Povey, Honorary Secretary

Light refreshments will be available in the Church from about 3.30pm.

As usual, donations of food will be gratefully received.

Stuart Cummings or Jackie Hands can advise on what to bring.

Teams intending to take part in the Striking Competitions should contact the Ringing Master (Richard Lewis-Skeath) about their entry.

EDITORIAL

I was very sorry to hear of the death of **Guild Life Member Clint Evans** of Badsey on 19th May. Clint was there at the start of the Guild and served on the Committee for some of its initial years. He was a 'gentle giant', being tall and well built. He was also a very good ringer and good striker. He was always a pleasure to ring with and be with. I knew him for many years and felt much sadness at being unable to be at his funeral and to ring in his In Memoriam quarter. See his obituary by Hilary Bolton on p.6

There was a fair amount of ringing for HM the Queen's 90th birthday and for St George. Stratford of course had a different slant on 23rd April (something to do with a local lad who made it big); and Evesham, too, with a vegetable called 'Asum gras' (no, not wacky baccy....). Stratford's huge celebrations are covered on p.10 The logistics of organising all the ringing were clearly massive and Jeanette Davey is to be congratulated and admired in equal amounts for undertaking the task. The whole account is worth reading.

You will see this year's AGM and Striking competitions are to be held at Longborough, which was, of course the venue for last year's 'Great International Striking Competition' between call-change and method bands. On that basis the bells will be easy to strike well, because that's what the Devon call-changers did; and not just well, but virtually perfectly. There will be a number of elections this year: for President, Vice-Presidents,

Committee members, CC reps and Accounts Examiners. What elections require are firstly people to agree to stand for the positions; and secondly people to vote. The Guild needs these elections, so please come along to assist the process.

On p.18 you will find details of a proposal to be made by the Committee at October's AGM. This concerns the dwindling amounts of money available for grants in the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund. Details of this situation were outlined in April's Newsletter. Instead of raising subscriptions as other associations have done, the Committee proposes to invite donations to the Fund in addition to subscriptions. Please read through this proposal. The Committee considers this is a better way than increasing subscriptions.

Lastly, I apologise for this issuing appearing later than normal. Helen and I were on holiday until late June, so completion extended into July.

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

Angela and I have just returned from Portsmouth, where the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers met on the late May Bank Holiday. We went over to the Isle of Wight and rang at Shanklin (a heavy 6) and at a 3-bell tower. There were other tours on the Saturday in Hampshire. We all owe a debt of thanks to local ringers who come to 'open up' for visitors. Thank you to Four Shires Guild tower captains who meet and 'open up' our towers for visitors from away. From time to time we all enjoy ringing the bells in Churches in other parts of the country.

To all our ringers who rang bells for HM the Queen's birthday, may I say thank you for making a joyful noise on this unique occasion. We owe Her Majesty respect and gratitude for a long life devoted to our service

Rev Dr Peter Newing

GUILD MASTER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2015– 2016

I am pleased to report that your Guild in the year 2015 to 2016 has been very active again, and your committee which was elected at the last Annual General Meeting has again been working very hard on your behalf, our Treasurer Michael Dane will make his report at this AGM however the accounts will be published in this newsletter

The weekly practices have again been very well attended. The Ringing Master has either run them, or by a deputy. Most of the towers that are usually rung at during the year have welcomed us. Stuart Cummings has done a great job in arranging all the towers. The Ringing Master has also been able to arrange quarter peals on some Saturdays before the main practice and has invited ringers to ring their first.

Again thanks go Richard Lewis-Skeath for organising the 2016 Ringing Tour to North Warwickshire (*Report will be in the October Newsletter. Ed*). At least the weather was kind and everyone who joined the tour said it was an excellent day. The 2015 striking competition held at Pebworth was a great success with a lot of new members entering; also the village hall was a good venue for the AGM with a good attendance.

The Annual Dinner was held on Saturday 6th February 2016 at The White Hart Royal Hotel, Moreton in Marsh, attended by 52 members and guests. Our Speaker this year was Angela Newing, the wife of Vice-President Peter Newing, who was also at the Dinner. The prize-giving followed the

speech, with the trophies presented by Angela. It was good to have The Newing Shield presented by Angela, who was one of the donors of the shield.

The website under Roland Meyrick is still projecting an active Guild to the web world. It also displays the Guild clothing and this can now be ordered in far smaller quantities, as we are now using a local firm company: even one garment.

The Guild's Facebook group is very active and this is administered by Richard Lewis Skeath. Just let him know if you are interested in joining.

Chris Povey is still editor of the Newsletter and our thanks must go to him for producing each year an excellent product; and as I have said in previous years the magazine has taken on a new dimension in editorial content. The printing is still done "in house" by a few members producing a good quality magazine. Published in the Newsletter is always an abridged copy of the minutes of the most recent Guild Committee meetings, so that all members are notified of any important business, and they can inform the secretary of any items they want discussed at committee meetings or on which they need clarification.

Our Bell Restoration Fund, which was set up in 2010, has made a number of grants during the year and these have been reported in the Newsletter

The Committee are empowered to offer grants towards any suitable projects concerning rings of bells within the Guild's area of operation. If you have a project where a grant from the Guild will help please do not hesitate to enquire and obtain the necessary application forms. To continue giving grants to worthy applications we must increase our funding, otherwise our grants will be too small to make a useful contribution to a project, Ways of doing this are being considered by the committee. They are also looking at the ways other guilds are operate the

funding their schemes. A report will be given in due course (*and see the Committee proposal on p.18. Ed*).

Finally thanks should go all members of the committee for their commitment and hard work, and for the time they have given to attending the committee meetings, which were held during this year, also to Isobel Murphy for the work she does in coordinating the FSG monthly tours.

Peter Quinn

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 17th MAY.

The Committee met on Tuesday 17th May at Wellesbourne's Church Centre. Michael Dane and Matthew Kemble presented apologies.

- 1) The Minutes of the May meeting were agreed.
2) **Matters arising** were:-

Striking Comp certificates: minor amendments to be done by Peter Q, then accepted for use;
Guild badged clothing: advert appeared in the Newsletter, but asked to show colours for future adverts. Chris to attempt to do;

Follow-up with the White Hart Hotel: Peter Q said there had been no response to his email to them. He will call in.

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

Hon Secretary: Chris reported that a lady ringer had asked for ringing on 25th June to support her 'Strike Back' campaign against blood cancer. Richard agreed to organise some ringing for that. Two new members were reported:-

Ralph Price (Adlestrop) prop: Chris P
sec: John N

John Hearn (unattached) prop: Stuart C
Sec: Peter K

The Committee confirmed their elections. Chris mentioned that Matthew Kemble was to be married on June 4th in Burton-on-Trent. The Committee wished him and his future wife hearty congratulations and the very best for the future.

Treasurer: Michael D presented his report. There was nothing contentious. It was noted that there was about £1400 of uncommitted funds in the Bell Fund. He mentioned Whites of Appleton have decided not to renew their advert

Ringling Master: reported that Saturday

practices are still progressing well. The Ringing Tour on 2nd July is still as advertised.

Fixture Sec: Stuart said it might be possible to include Kingham in the Saturday listings at some time in the future.

Newsletter Editor: Chris said the July Newsletter would appear late, as he is on holiday until the end of June. He had been told the Stratford ringers had received their April Newsletters in May, but Peter said this was clearly a delay after they left him at the normal time.

Central Council: Chris said the two CC reps need to be elected at the AGM this year. They serve for 3 years. He will continue if wished. Nothing has been heard from Andrew Gunn.

Peal Secretary: Chris hasn't seen Sandra recently, but will hand over the peal book when he does.

Bell Restoration Fund: the application from Blockley was considered. Chris updated: the PCC are progressing very rapidly with this scheme and it is likely work will start early next year. The contractor has been won by Taylors. It was proposed by Peter Q, sec by Richard, that £500 be offered. Agreed nem con (Chris abstained from this vote due to his involvement with the scheme.)

New application: from Moreton-in-Marsh to rebush clappers and reposition the clock hammer. This will be considered at the August meeting.

Adlestrop update: the bells are in and a try-out is imminent;

Pillerton Hersey update: the redundant Adlestrop bell has been sold to Pillerton Hersey.

- 6) **Items for discussion**:-

2016 Events Programme:-

Guild Ringing Tour, 2nd July: all organised and ready to go

Minimus Striking Competition, 10th Sept: agreement to running this at Ettington. Peter Q agreed to manage this, as Chris unavailable that day

Guild Walk, 24th Sept: all organised by Michael Haynes and ready to go;

AGM & Striking Comps, 15th Oct: Chris has obtained in-principle agreement to Longborough. He reminded that the President, Vice-Presidents and CC reps need election this time;

Xmas Party: agreed should be at Badsey again, but Stuart said the date will have to change to **Dec 10th**, due to a clash of events. All agreed to the date change;

Pig roast: John C agreed to investigate the pros and cons of this. As it was late in the season to organise such this year, it was suggested arrangements could be made for 2017

- 7) **AOB**:

Peter Q reported Ted Copson had had a fall and a subsequent heart attack. He was in Warwick Hospital for the foreseeable future. He also reported the death of past member Russon Thomas.

Chris suggested a brief details of a scheme to put money into the BRF. It was agreed he would circulate some details by email.

- 8) **Next Meeting: Tues 16th Aug**. Location and time to be announced.

Future Committee meeting dates: 16th Aug, 15th Nov.

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

A RING IN CORNWALL

I've taken holidays in St Agnes, North Cornwall, on many occasions but have never given a thought to the possibility of joining practice ringing at the local Church. This year I decided to make the effort, and made contact with Tower Captain Annie Holland well in advance. 'We will welcome you with open arms', she said. Ringing commenced at 7.30pm, but Annie stated that it was often 7.45pm before things got started.

The delay, it turned out, was quite simple – but unusual! Chairs were placed in a semi-circle facing the ringing chamber for non-participating ringers to use. Cups, tea and coffee emerged, and an urn was water filled. This was hospitality at its best. Annie enquired after my ringing abilities.

When I mentioned Bob Minor (amongst other methods), she exclaimed, 'Oh, good.'

Touches of Grandsire Doubles and Plain Bob Doubles were rung, and of course Bob Minor – six bells in the tower, tenor a mere 6 cwt. The ringing was excellent – fast and furious as in Cornwall.

The ringing chamber was no more than 10 feet x 8 feet, with ringers literally touching shoulders. Not my ideal as fellow ringers well know.

I had no intention of outstaying my visit, despite a chorus of 'Have one more ring.' It was their practice night and while the ringers consisted of six very capable ringers, there were several others in various stages of learning. It is my opinion that everyone, irrespective of their capabilities, should be given equal time to learn and improve their handling of a bell.

John Kinchin

CLINTON (CLINT) EDWARD EVANS – 1938-2016



Clint as most of us never saw him!

On Thursday 16th June St James' Church, Badsey, was full with standing room only for 210 mourners attending the funeral of Clint Evans. Prior to the moving and lovely Farewell Service an open quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung in celebration of Clint's life, conducted by Guild President John Nicholls, with friends from around the area. This was followed by Paul

Green (Badsey) tolling him into Church and out again on the way to the Crematorium. Afterwards Roger Hunt conducted two touches of Grandsire Triples for other ringers present before the bells were lowered.

St James, Badsey, Worcs

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Roger Hunt
- 2 Bill Newman
- 3 John Kinchin
- 4 Patrick Wooster
- 5 George Osborn
- 6 Jackie Hands
- 7 John Nicholls (C)
- 8 Tom Sandham

A Thanksgiving for the life of Clinton (Clint) Edward Evans, a lifelong Badsey resident and ringer, by some of his many ringing friends from around the Four Shires and South Worcestershire.

Clint started school as a very reluctant pupil at the same time as Robert Hall. From the very beginning he looked for any excuse and ideas on how not to be there. The fields beckoned very strongly and the growing of crops were of much more interest to him, along with the tractors and machinery used, a passion he took with him into later years, which, in his eyes, seemed to serve a much better purpose. He preferred to further his education in many other ways. Game keeping was high on the list, along with fly-

fishing, sheep and donkeys. He was a wizard at training not only gun dogs, but any dog that had a sign of a problem.

His main career path took him along and through many years with the GPO and its successor British Telecom until retirement.

He was introduced to bell ringing by Tony Brazier, ringing at Badsey and the local churches, especially Hinton-on-the-Green with the Newman family, where he learnt most of the methods he rang. Touring the Cotswolds with the Four Shires Guild, having served as a Committee member. Helping with the ringing to make the Saydisc record 'Bells of the Cotswolds', featuring eight towers from Burford, Oxon, to Ilmington, Warks. Clint was always ready to help with whatever came his way, from teaching ringing and much more. He was Tower Captain and steeplekeeper at Badsey for several years, as well as helping with churchyard maintenance. With his cheerful disposition, you name it and he did it. In later years he involved himself with helping keeping Service ringing going at Broadway Old Church and Buckland, amongst other places, filling in for weddings and commemorations when needed.

Hopefully we did you proud today, Clint, helping to bring solace to Sheila and family. RIP.

Hilary Bolton, Tower Captain, Badsey.

FROM THE ARCHIVES:-

100 YEARS AGO

18th May 1916.

The Annual Meeting of the Guild was held at Campden on 18th May 1916. Owing to the War being still in progress the attendance was again small, nevertheless the Meeting passed off very pleasantly. The proceedings opened with a special Service at the Parish Church at 3-30pm when those present listened to a very earnest and inspiring address by the new Vicar of Campden (Rev G.E.Hitchcock). At 4-30 the members with a few friends sat down to a Meat Tea, which was provided at the Swan Inn, the number present being 16, following which the business meeting was held. The Chair was occupied by the President (H D'Este East Esq) who after the Minutes had been duly passed, read letters of apology for inability to attend from the Rev O.F.Jacson and Canon Houghton.

The Secretary produced the Balance Sheet which showed a balance in hand of £9-9-6.

The Sec next gave his report in which he could not in consequence of the Great War record any progress in the Guild numerically, and he also regretted the departure from our midst of the Rev O.F.Jacson, of whose devotion to the best interests of the Guild they were well aware, and which he was sure they fully appreciated.

The Sec also sincerely hoped that ere the next Annual Meeting became due those of its members who were absent Fighting the Country's Battles would have safely returned, and again participate in the work of the Guild.

These sentiments were fully endorsed by the President and all present. The Report and Balance Sheet were then adopted.

It was proposed by the Secretary and seconded by Mr Wixey that owing to the special circumstances created by the War, Rules 6 & 7 relating to the payment of Annual Subscriptions, be suspended for this year. This was carried unanimously.

The next business was the election of Officers, viz, President, Secretary and Treasurer, the present holders of which were nominated and re-elected. It was decided on the proposition of the President seconded by the Rev Spencer Jones that the Secretary write to the Rev's Canon Houghton and O.J.Jacson acknowledging their letters and thanking them for past services rendered so ungrudgingly to the Guild.

Votes of thanks were passed to the Vicar of Campden and to the President for the Kindness shewn by them to the Guild that day, at the same time extending a hearty welcome to the Rev's G.E.Hitchcock, D.J.Kenedy, and E.Spencer Jones, who were present for the first time. The Vicars of Campden and Longborough joined the Guild as Honorary members. The meeting then terminated.

(Signed)
Herbert D'Easte-East
President

40 YEARS AGO

Committee Meeting held on 24th August 1976 at The Barley Mow, Chipping Campden.

Members attending: H O Hart (Chairman), A J Brazier, P S Carter, M F Fairfax, and R H Payne.

Apologies: C E Evans, G Osborn and Rev J.D.E Smith

Memorial Fund – F Sharpe & Canon Wigg: A circular letter from K.J.Wakefield, Chipping Norton Branch Secretary, was read to the Committee. Following discussion it was agreed to recommend for approval by the next Annual General Meeting, a donation of five pounds to the Joint Memorial Fund.

Ringling World Correspondence: The meeting considered the letter from M.D.Fellows, General Secretary of the Worcestershire & Districts Change Ringing Association, published in *The Ringing World*. It was agreed that a reply should be drafted by the Secretary for approval by the Committee, and to be forwarded for publication in *The Ringing World*. Points to be taken into account were 1) consultation with the Southern Branch Ringing Master Mr J.E.Newman, 2) the good relations presently being enjoyed with all five local branches. In addition, correspondence in the Guild's favour by others should be encouraged.

Badges: It was reported that, despite a written order stating precise quantities and delivery arrangements, 111 badges had been supplied and invoiced. It was agreed to make every effort to pay the account in full after

clearance of credit for chromium plated finish which, after previous consultation with Committee members, it had been decided was not required.

Members' Loans: In view of the decision to accept the total quantity of badges supplied by the manufacturers, it was agreed to make informal approaches to members for interest-free loans to be made to the Guild's funds. Loans to be for five pounds each and repayable within twelve months.

Open Ringing Day: The Secretary gave outline details of proposals and it was agreed to proceed with the suggested date, 18th September. Following a general discussion, authority was given for the necessary expenditure. The Secretary was instructed to make the necessary final arrangements, maintaining informal contact with other members of the Committee, and to liaise with L.C.Dowdeswell regarding Stow Church and bells.

Ringling Competition, 30th October 1976: M.F.Fairfax reported on arrangements. The following points were agreed: i) cups of tea only to be provided for a reasonable charge, ii) Service to commence at 4.40pm with the competition to continue afterwards if necessary, and iii) Village Hall booked 4.00pm to 7.00pm. M.F.Fairfax to liaise with P.S.Carter on final details.

(Signed) H.O.Hart.

THE RETRO RINGING RALLY, SATURDAY 21st MAY

Like many innovative ideas, that of having a bell ringing tour in classic cars has been conceived over many months, possibly years, during the pub lunches that are an integral part of the Four Shires Monthly Tours. During these it became apparent that a number of us had an interest in classic cars and a few of us had ones tucked away at home. Initial calculations reckoned that we may be able to source about ten cars but were aware that other commitments and distances may render a more modest final total. With this in mind the route was especially chosen by Chris Seers to provide six bell towers in close proximity, linked by a quiet road. For the perfectionists amongst us, the route also circumnavigated Bredon Hill.

Plans made for summer events are invariably hostages to meteorological fortune and the fine dry weather of early May ominously boded for a downpour in time for the proposed *Retro Ringing Rally* on 21st May. Thunderstorms and heavy downpours were predicted by the forecasters in the days beforehand but it became increasingly apparent that the actual locations of these were unpredictable.

The day dawned grey and drizzly but only one Classic was confined to barracks. Six others, one having come all the way from Ashbourne in Derbyshire, their owners and ringing passengers assembled at the first tower, Overbury in Worcestershire, where they were joined by one much-loved slightly younger model.



L-R: 1990 BMW, 1978 MGBGT; 1969 Morris 1000, 1971 Triumph Stag, 1967 Austin Healey 3000, 1967 MG Midget.

Overbury's bells proved an 'interesting' start but the village had a lovely Cotswold wall against which to line up the cars for a team photo, while it remained dry.

The remaining towers were Beckford, Ashton under Hill, Little Comberton, Elmley Castle, all sixes and the eight at Eckington making a late guest appearance due to problems at Great Comberton. In all there were ten ringers with the ringing ranging from Plain Hunt to Stedman Doubles and Cambridge Minor.

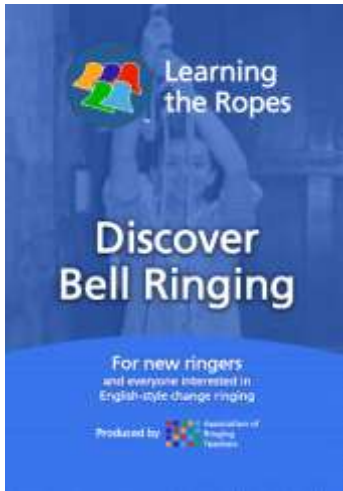
Lunch was enjoyed at *The Star* in Ashton under Hill and the day concluded with tea and cake at *The Queen Elizabeth* in Elmley Castle. On the whole the weather stayed on side until the late afternoon but sadly all but one of the soft tops remained firmly in place. Thank you to Chris for being the driving force and for her superb organisation of the day. It is hoped to repeat the event – there are some more towers around Bredon Hill to be explored! If you have an interest in classic vehicles and ringing, please get in touch.



L-R: Isobel Murphy, Ian Thompson, Peter Dickinson, Clive Sparling, Chris Seers, Imogen Murphy, Joy Brooks, Mike Brooks, Christina Ireland.

Isobel Murphy

BOOK REVIEW:-



Discover Bell Ringing - published by Association of Ringing Teachers (£4) - www.ringingteachers.org

This is the latest in a number of useful books and booklets published by ART aimed at helping towers to recruit new ringers, or to improve the ringing of recent and established campanologists.

ART describe the booklet as follows: "Introduce your new ringers and potential recruits to the world of bell ringing with the new Discover Bell Ringing booklet. In easy language it gives background information on

bells and bell ringing along with a taste of who and why people ring."

And like that well known wood preserver - it does what it says on the tin!

The booklet is laid out in an easy to read format and the pictures add colour to a mixture of historical facts, explanations of the workings and ringing

of bells, and ARTs 'Learning the Ropes' approach to teaching ringers.

I found the booklet fun to read and, having started it, read it from beginning to end in a single session. Much of the contents will be familiar to experienced ringers, but even they may find one or two facts they had forgotten or not come across before (unless they have read all of Steve Colman's books from end to end!)

Where I think this booklet is most useful will be in the recruitment of new ringers or for those new to bell ringing. This is the sort of booklet that you should keep a copy of in your tower and offer to potential recruits to browse through to get a flavour of when, where, how and why we ring. Once you have a learner in the team I would recommend they get their own copy - for easy reference in the early stages and for somewhere to keep a non-electronic record of their own ringing.

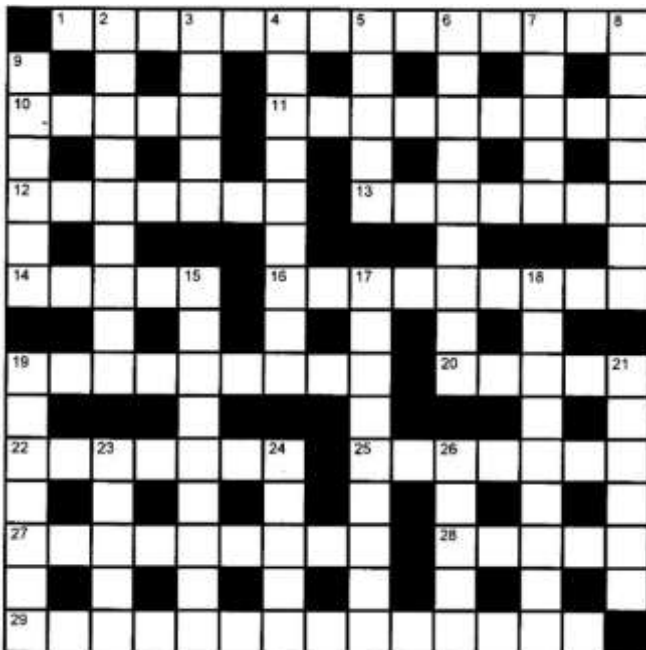
ART offer the booklet as a pack of 5 for £5 - so for a small investment I think you could have a useful information booklet to hold in your tower and something for new ringers that is cheap and easy to digest.

Martin Penny

(Thanks to Martin, who rose to my request for a review in the January Newsletter. It's clearly a good book. Ed)

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

Whether El Pres has toughened up his crosswords, as reported last time, I don't know. Only you cruciverbalists will know when solving this one!



Answers to April X-word

Across

- 1 Village of extermination? Jollity in the end. (5,9)
- 10 Death masquerade gave resentment. (5)
- 11 From the lands of the fiords. (9)
- 12 He did not believe one could remodel a fine lid. (7)
- 13 Decorative forms of the 20's and 30's. (3,4)
- 14 Black and White are on the danger list. (5)
- 16 It may not exist but you can get a drink in Tredington. (5,4)
- 19 We all hope this never happens when the ringing is going well. (4,1,4)
- 20 An exhibition of cowboy skills. (5)
- 22 Irish missionary to Scotland in the sixth century. (7)
- 25 Sampson's lover betrayed him. (7)
- 27 An enlargement. (9)
- 28 An unimaginative clue. (5)
- 29 The beautiful North-Eastern National Park. (9,5)

Down

- 2 Jobless. (3,2,4)
- 3 Concluded. (5)
- 4 The large-headed. (9)
- 5 From the heart this is most important. (5)
- 6 Ursa Major. (5,4)
- 7 A repeated answer. (5)
- 8 Ramshackle! (7)
- 9 Does the small person like edible crustaceans? (6)
- 15 Could be chips. (9)
- 17 This is a bit of a cheek. (9)
- 18 Once led in to the ringing chamber disorganisation will lead to lazyness. (9)
- 19 In words or gesture this is unhelpful in a ringing band. (7)
- 21 Waiting for a more convenient time. (2,4)
- 23 This is to come. (5)
- 24 A good justification. (5)
- 26 The Roman pound - a seventh sign. (5)

ROPE MAINTENANCE TIPS

The bell ropes at Moreton-in-Marsh are natural fibre (flax) above the sally and last Spring we had a rope break. On getting the rope spliced it was decided before putting the rope back into the tower to give it a treatment of Pritchards rope treatment. The motivation for this was twofold. Firstly, the rope was seen to be “quite dry”, in that the fibres were beginning to unravel from the weave and losing their flexibility. This is quite important especially around the garter hole area where the rope is continually reversing direction as the bell rotates. Secondly, the bell chamber at Moreton-in-Marsh is open to the spire and rain-driven wind comes through the lucarne windows set high in the spire and this can make the ropes quite wet.

There are various types of rope treatment. The one we decided to use is supplied by Ellis & Pritchard's, the bellrope makers near Loughborough. It comes in a 1 ltr tub and has the consistency of Vaseline. Applying the treatment is straightforward, as it is rubbed onto the rope starting 3 foot above the sally and then all the way to the top. Don't be tempted to get too close to the sally or put it on the tail-end below the sally, as it will make the rope too greasy for ringing. I suggest a pair of “marigold” gloves on your hands as the treatment is quite oily. Leave in a warm dry place and the treatment will absorb into the fibres. I repeated this process a couple of times until no more treatment was absorbed and wiped off the excess. The whole process took a couple of days and I found the greenhouse, before being used for plants in the Spring, was an ideal place to do this. You could use anywhere such as a garage or shed that is warm and dry. On completion the top end of the rope is smooth (no fibres sticking out) and has very subtle inflexibility.



Seeing the effect on this rope I decided to treat all the remaining seven ropes in the tower last year. Having inspected the rope again this Spring there is no obvious wear and they look as good as new. I had never used such rope treatment before, but having seen its effects I would definitely recommend you putting some on your ropes if they are flax. I'm now intending to repeat the process every couple of years on the Moreton-in-Marsh ropes. It's a relatively simple process; and it does extend the life of expensive ropes.

One last observation; if you are doing this to the ropes I suggest putting a thin leather tube over the rope where it goes through the garter hole. This will give it additional protection where it's getting the most wear. They are minimally priced, but save early wear on the rope at the garter hole, at which point the rope is constantly being bent one way and then the other in quick succession, and being pressed hard against the wooden surfaces at each stroke. As flax ropes are roughly £100 each, this makes a lot of sense. It is necessary to tie the tube on to the rope, otherwise it will slip

down to the sally. If the tubes you buy don't have a string attached, punch a small hole near one end and attach string through it. When tied onto the rope, the string end of the tube should be within the wheel, ie the end that stays stationary.



Nick Allsopp

(The lubricant Nick refers to is called 'Pritchard's Rope Lube' or 'Rope Treat'. As Nick mentions it is sold by Ellis & Pritchard. The tub says there is sufficient to treat 8 ropes, but this is all dependent on the length of the ropes to be treated. Moreton ropes are very short – about 11 feet from the top of the salleys to the garter holes for the lower tier bells – and a tub is enough to treat them a few times over. I treated a set of 'normal length' ropes recently and managed only 6½. I've used Rope Lube for 15 years now at Broadway and in other places, and found it really 'does what it says on the tin'. It weatherproofs the ropes, thereby reducing the tendency of dry ropes to absorb moisture in wet conditions, and this is what makes ropes go up. The Broadway ropes, which at 40ft between the tops of the salleys and the garter holes, aren't tiddlers, but since they've had Rope Lube on I've never adjusted them between summer and winter. They go up a little in winter and come down a little in summer, but at no time have they been too high or too low. None of the ropes show any wear – two are almost 20 years old and the remainder between 12-15 years. Rope Lube puts natural oils back into the fibres and will plump them up - but it can't add new fibres. If the rope is worn such that it's round and smooth in various places and the windings have effectively disappeared, it's worn out and that's it. You got there too late. Don't waste the lube in such cases. If you buy brand-spanking new ropes, don't stick them straight on the bell. Give them a chance; Rope Lube them first. I don't have a greenhouse, so I wait for a hot, sunny day and hang the rope between a couple of trees in the garden. Don't be stingy with the lube either. Just gob it on! New ropes won't take quite so much as old, dry ropes, which, as Nick says, just soak it up. If there is still excess lube showing at the end of the day, coil the treated length into a poly bag and put it on the top of the central heating boiler for some extra warmth to encourage everything to be fully soaked in. A tub of Rope Lube is currently £20.40 inc VAT.

A few places sell leather garter hole tubes, including Ellis & Pritchard.

Should you wish to contact Ellis & Pritchard, their phone number is 01509-852178, email ellispritchardropes@ntlworld.com, and web-site, which has prices of all their goods, including ropes ellisandpritchards.co.uk. Carriage is payable on orders less than £50, so if your order is less than that, it will be worth finding someone else who wants some items to raise the order value above £50.

One last thing: don't waste your time applying Rope Lube to polyester-topped ropes. It doesn't work on polyester! However, I do use garter hole tubes on poly-topped ropes.

The Guild endorses no products or manufacturers advertised within the Newsletter – but would not allow such advertisements or endorsement where the goods or services are knowingly questionable. Ed)

THE STRATFORD EXPERIENCE.....

As might have been expected, there were big happenings in Stratford-on-Avon this year on 23rd April, as it was the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. The local newspaper, The Observer, carried an article about the arrangements for the ringing that weekend, with a photo of the ringers in the Ringing Chamber, including Guild members Jo Langford and Charles Wilson (*my thanks to Peter Richardson for sending me a copy of this. Ed*). Guild members were well involved. Jeanette Davey wrote an article that appeared in both the Ringing World and the Coventry Diocesan Guild's newsletter, but as some of you don't take RW and aren't members of the CDG, it's worth repeating the article here:-

As I write this, I am still laughing at my own naivety that I thought it would be a fairly straightforward task to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death with more ringing than usual at our church: Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon. It is the church where Shakespeare was baptised and is buried and so was inextricably linked to the Festival that was being organised in the town. The church and its near neighbour, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, were at the centre of much of the celebration and commemoration for the days surrounding the date of his birth and death: 23rd April. The Festival ran for about a week instead of the usual weekend and many others embraced it too, from the local branch of the Ramblers Society organising daily Shakespeare-related walks, to the BBC's Countryfile, whose sheep running amok in Sheep Street and the adjoining riverside gardens were highly entertaining.

We have a very fine ring of ten in Stratford (19cwt tenor: 1948 Taylors), not only to ring but also to listen to. Shakespeare (1564-1616) would have heard bells ringing at Holy Trinity church when he was alive because records exist of a donation being given for the restoration of the bells in 1502 and for the purchase of five bells in 1550. His two Stratford homes, one where he was born and raised, and the other to where he returned after living in London, as well as the school where he was educated, were all in the town centre and in earshot of the bells.

So it seemed entirely fitting that the bells should be heard in all of their glory during our special festival this year. All that was needed was to arrange some more ringing before some of the many additional concerts and services being held in church on the surrounding few days: 'Simples', as the meerkat would say. My naivety centred not only on how long it would take to organise a team of ten for each, including wanting to invite ringers from many local churches, but also what hurdles I'd have to jump en route.

It would have been far too scary to keep a record of how much time was spent organising it, but it must have been equal to two working weeks and quite probably more. Some new ropes were ordered and spare stays lie prominently in the ringing chamber. Hurdles included worry about the disturbance for neighbours and the ubiquitous ringing politics. Reactions to the idea from ringers ranged from indifference to considerable help and advice and delight at being invited to take part. Unforeseen tasks included the church office asking for a press release and photocall, a church website update and co-ordination with each concert or service's organiser, including with the RSC's PR department, the BBC's Production teams so that we didn't clash with sound checks, the Town Council as organisers of the main annual procession, the Parish Office and clergy, churchwardens, vergers and Musical Director, two orchestra managers to ensure that we could fit in around rehearsals and pre-performance talks, Birthday luncheon organisers (a rather formal affair in a marquee adjoining the church, with prominent speakers who couldn't be drowned out by bells) and a visiting organist from Canada. In addition, discussions were held with our vergers to ensure police checks of the church undertaken for the visit of Prince Charles during the celebrations, including checks of our ringing chamber and bell tower, were undertaken supervised and safely, and with our regular pub to ask if we could use the landlord's parking facility. BBC Radio 3 took up residence for three

days and various other radio and TV channels popped into town during the week but we knew we weren't being broadcast at any time: a big relief.

Parallel to the celebrations was a considerably larger voluntary organisational task by another team in town who had invited the Stratfords of the World to join us for seven days of celebrations, from NZ, Australia, Connecticut, Prince Edward Island and Ontario. As a host to two of the visitors and so on the receiving end of those organisational emails, I could only marvel at the enormity of their task, putting this ringing festival well and truly in context. Unlike the Stratfords of the World organisers, we didn't have to provide free accommodation in local homes for 160 visitors, nor book coach trips, meals, entertainment or pre-meetings for hosts; it was a good way to look on the bright side when the ringing festival work was piling in. Myself and a chorister swapped notes on how our guests were going to have to do their own thing at times and my workplace also took it on the chin really well when I had to tell them that I wouldn't be able to work full time for a couple of weeks, and that I'd fit in some work when I could – they are due a huge thankyou.

The outcome for the ringing festival was that 57 ringers from the local area were invited to ring in ten events over six days and 110 ropes and reserve places were filled, plus a peal which was rung a week beforehand.

All was just about sorted when a late email came in from the church. The RSC had decided to put on an extra event late at night and, in capital letters in that email was 'PLEASE HELP'. Could we ring late at night to mark the start of a vigil on the day that Shakespeare died? Co-ordination meetings between church and RSC came and went, resulting in the live BBC2 broadcast from the theatre being followed by fireworks off the roof of the theatre and from the opposite side of the river. It was decided that, after the fireworks, the RSC would have a 'line of light', lighting up trees along the river and church path to encourage an informal procession into the church for the vigil. That line would continue with the church being lit by candlelight only, all bar a single light on Shakespeare's grave. Could we do some suitable ringing straight after the fireworks to accompany this?

It was decided that 15-20 minutes of half-muffled ringing would take place to call some of the watching crowds (estimated by the RSC in advance as being 10,000+), plus the theatre cast and audience to the vigil. The bells would turn the mood from one of celebration to one of commemoration and once in the church, the choir would be singing complicity to continue that mood. The main extra issue was lowering and raising the bells at various suitable times for muffling and unmuffling, including being ready to ring unmuffled for the annual Shakespeare Sunday service the following morning. The Beeb overran with their broadcast and so our ringing started rather later than expected at 10.55pm and finished at about 11.15pm. The vigil ended at midnight with 12 tolls of our tenor bell, by this time with muffles off. The atmosphere was incredible for that part of the evening, with some 3,000 people being drawn towards the church first by the lit-up trees alongside the river and along the path into the church, all accompanied by the sound of the half-muffled bells, then the additional lighting for the church (all lighting having been put on by the fireworks company), the candles in church leading the procession from the west door to the high altar where Shakespeare's grave lies and the distant sound of the choir singing in monastic style at the high altar, followed by the perfume of the many flowers and wreaths laid at Shakespeare's grave. Our festival ringing wasn't yet over, as listed below, but this was a hugely atmospheric end to that day.

Thankfully we got all four quarters and the peal and it was a privilege to be part of the celebrations and commemorations. We've received plenty of praise from locals and tourists who enjoyed the sound of our bells and huge thanks is due to all who took part in the ringing, including those who were reserves.

RINGING FOR THE OCCASION:

Coventry Diocesan Guild
Holy Trinity, Stratford upon Avon, Warks
Saturday, 16 April 2016 in 3h20 (19)

5400 Grandsire Caters

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Roy LeMarechal (C) | 6 Roger H Hunt |
| 2 Nicholas K Allsopp | 7 Michael Chester |
| 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath | 8 Andrew C Ogden |
| 4 Robert Tregillus | 9 Peter W Hill |
| 5 Simon E Adams | 10 Graham J Wright |

Rung to mark the start of the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare and also the forthcoming 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Wednesday 20th April 14.45-15.30 Open Ringing for BBC Choral Evensong.

Thursday, 21 April 2016 in 50m

1259 Grandsire Caters

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Jane Gilbert | 6 Steve Bowley |
| 2 Jeanette Davey | 7 Roger Hunt |
| 3 Michael Chester (C) | 8 Richard Lewis-Skeath |
| 4 Tim Haslam | 9 Nick Allsopp |
| 5 Sue Bacon | 10 Robert Newman |

First on 10: 5 & 10.

Rung to celebrate the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II and also to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare.

Friday, 22 April 2016 in 49m

1260 Plain Bob Royal

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Jo Langford | 6 Julia Lucas |
| 2 Jeanette Davey | 7 Raymon Sheasby |
| 3 Janice Sheasby | 8 Martin Penny |
| 4 Rachel Page | 9 Charles Wilson |
| 5 John Perry | 10 Michael Chester (C) |

Rung prior to the Shakespeare Masque Concert, attended by the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. Also as part of the Shakespeare Ringing Festival.

Saturday 23rd April 11am start - Open ringing for Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations to coincide with the unfurling of the first flag at the start of the parade.

Saturday 23rd April 10.55-11.15pm - Half-muffled ringing for the vigil.

Saturday 23rd April midnight - Tolling the tenor for the end of the vigil.

Sunday 24th April 10.30-11.15 Open Ringing for Shakespeare Birthday Service.

Sunday, 24 April 2016 in 52 mins (19-0-2)

1296 Plain Bob Caters

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Jennifer Winslow | 6 Steve Bowley |
| 2 Sue Roderick | 7 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) |
| 3 Jeanette Davey | 8 Martin Penny |
| 4 Jane Gilbert | 9 Charles Wilson |
| 5 Rachel Page | 10 Nick Allsopp |

Rung for the "Stratfords of the World" service welcoming 160 guests from the Stratfords in Connecticut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, New Zealand and Australia. Also rung as part of the Shakespeare Ringing Festival.

Monday, 25 April 2016 in 54 mins (19-0-2)

1296 Grandsire Caters

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Tim Haslam | 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) |
| 2 Jo Langford | 7 Mick Mears |
| 3 Jeanette Davey | 8 John Perry |
| 4 Annie Hall | 9 Roger Hunt |
| 5 Rachel Page | 10 Rob Newman |

Rung half-muffled before a service held to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's funeral this day and as part of the Shakespeare Ringing Festival.



L-R: Mick Mears, Tim Haslam, Richard L-S (C), John Perry, Rachel Page, Roger Hunt, Jo Langford, Annie Hall, Jeanette Davey, Rob Newman.



Roger Hunt's stunning photo of Holy Trinity lit up at night.

Jeanette Davey

RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

THE APRIL TOUR: THURSDAY 21ST (the 318th), NORTH GLOS AREA.

At the start of the day it was decided that all ringing would be to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday. Our first tower was Stanway, with

the recently rehung bells and the additional treble. All admired the coloured sallies, what variety! If all sallies could be these colours there would be no problem in pleasing your band of ringers, Joseph's dream coat. The bells were

put to good use here with standard doubles methods. Walkers were around the village and some commented on how nice it had been to hear the bells.

After 30 minutes at Stanway ringing it was on to Didbrook for 30 minutes. This was quite an experience in more ways than one. Firstly the ropes for bells 1 to 4 were in a straight line one side of the door with the rope for 5 being on the other side of the door. In addition to this they were rung anti clockwise. These bells rung from the ground floor ring were hard to hear inside and silence was called for, you could hear a pin drop!! Here we ventured into St Osmund's as well as the standard doubles methods.



Toddington was our next tower where the central wall of the spiral staircase seemed to slant. Up in the ringing chamber were the six ropes spaced around the wall with their number written on the stone wall behind each rope. No problem here knowing which bell was which. The bells here seemed to rumble a bit, various noises going on up above but sounded better outside. This tower saw the first surprise of the day being London Minor, along with Plain Bob Minor, Stedman Doubles as well as rounds and call changes to name a few. Here there was interest in the Manor visible from the Church. Is there a link between this and the motif on the notice board inside in the Tower?



Cambridge, Plain Bob, St Clement's, Norwich and York Minor and Erin Doubles were successfully brought round.

Now it was time for lunch at The Corner Cupboard in Winchcombe which all enjoyed. Since parking was a little tight in Winchcombe most walked from the pub down to the Church. Since I last rang here the bells have been augmented to 8 and for Chris the last time she rang there they were a ground floor ring. Once again the bells were put through their paces to our normal repertoire but the Surprise method here was Superlative. What took my eye here was an embroidery worked in Aida fabric with one of the ringer type rhymes, very nicely done and presented. Someone had spent a lot of time doing this.

With the addition of Grandsire and Stedman Doubles, some of these methods reappeared later in the day in the two other six bell towers, Brafield on the Green and Clifton Reynes, where the village verges were brimming with beautiful irises.



Our final Tower of the day was up over the hill and down to Bishops Cleeve. This was the best ring of the day, nice to finish on a high. Access to the ringing chamber was up a wooden 15th century staircase thought to be the oldest in the country. We were all given prior warning about this and asked not to wear heels or flipflops!! Once again the bells were put to good use with Double Norwich and 3 leads of Bristol being called for.

Having rung at three very compact chambers, the spacious ringing chamber at the final eight bell tower, Newport Pagnell, was quite disorientating.

Thank you Chris, for a very good day out with some unusual and interesting towers.

Sandra Parker

Thank you to Hilary Aslett for arranging the tour together with the excellent lunchtime pub at Lavendon.

THE MAY TOUR: THURSDAY 19TH (the 319th). SPRING DAY OUT IN NORTHANTS AND BEDFORDSHIRE.

May's excursion to Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire began at Cogenhoe, locally pronounced as "Cooknoe". Here we admired some lovely bell-related needlework with a range of tapestry cushions featuring the blue lines of well-known methods.

These monthly outings are open to all. If you would like more details or to be included in the circulation list, please email Isobel.Murphy@btinternet.com.

Isobel Murphy

THE MARCH TOUR: THURSDAY 17TH (the 320th). (THE VALE OF ASUM)

The Around the Gras tour, aptly named, Gras

being the local vernacular for Asparagus (gras), and a round being a bundle, a speciality, took us to the Vale of Evesham.

We like a challenge first thing on a Four Shires Tour, and this was no disappointment. First up the stairs at Willersey were such a challenge, narrow, steep and even with the rope rail, hard to negotiate, I later came down backwards like a ladder. £18,000 was spent on these bells 3 years ago, and it shows. The bells go well enough with the tenor taking some effort and the 3rd deep set, otherwise worth the climb up the stairs. Respectable Plain Bob, Cambridge & London was rung here.

Next up, for our somewhat depleted numbers this time (14 ringers), was it the football or something we said? It was good to see Geoff and Margaret Pratt this month, especially as Margaret has not been well. Bretforton with specific instructions that the ringing needed to be a high standard due to the proximity of the local school. Not that the Four Shires tour is ever anything but high standard!

An 8 bell ground floor ring, with a compact ringing circle, with numerous obstacles, we moved the bench outside and negotiated a large ladder against the wall. The 1, 2 & 3 in a straight line, the Cambridge was superb, the Double Norwich not up to today's required standard initially, but then improved. The ringing must have been good, a local resident took the time to visit and declared the ringing "very slick" in such a loud voice, that those ringing the bells inside found it difficult to concentrate and hear the bells.

Just as we were about to go, assistance was requested to measure a yew tree in the churchyard, a whopping 5 metres, and apparently you can go on-line and find out how old the tree is, which makes this one 800 years old.

(see <http://www.tree-ring.co.uk/Research/Yew%20Trees.htm>.)

There was also an interesting slit in the church wall, which made us ponder what its original function actually was? (*Any ideas Roger? Ed*)



Off to the aptly named Round of Gras for lunch, with guess what, asparagus specialities where quiche was enjoyed amongst other traditional choices.

A change of schedule came after lunch as Offenham was substituted for Badsey. There was a funeral at Badsey for ringer and Four Shires Guild Life Member Clint Evans. Quarter peals were planned for before the service.

toilet facilities. A lively 6 bell ring, with some good London & experimental Bamborough. The church has an unusual dedication to St Milburgh who died in c715, and who founded the monastery of Wenlock.

of organisers to celebrate Ladies Day at Ascot, minus the hats of course. The ground floor 8 lent itself to Yorkshire, & Double Norwich amongst others, and finished off an excellent tour. Thanks go to Sandra & Richard Parker for the efficient organisation.

Chris Seers

At Offenham a ground floor 6, we were in competition with the builders installing kitchen &

The final tower of the day, Bidford on Avon, ably supervised by Isobel, the last of the ladies team

“YES, I REMEMBER ADLESTROP.....”

....so starts Edwards Thomas’s famous poem. Those ringers who rang there pre-1975 and occasionally since have cause to remember ringing there, too, as the ropes were about 4 inches from the walls, which meant you had to face the wall (I kid you not). All the five bells were ringable until 1975, when the tenor cracked and the bells then remained unringed until Ralph Price, a life-long native of the village, decided something should be done. Ralph used to ring at Adlestrop. In 2005 the bells were inspected (by me) and the advice I gave was, ‘They need a full rehang’. I shall not go through the history of the intervening 11 years, but suffice it to say there were a number of ups and downs, some timewasting and some going backwards once or twice, but definitely joy in the form of working with Alan Strickland, the Gloucester DAC Bells Advisor, who supported to the hilt the need for a full rehang and the form it was to take, and the two major donors, who provided the money that allowed the project to happen. They were all a very big shot in the arm.

You will see from the front page of this Newsletter and the snippets in past Newsletters that it has now happened. There are 6 very ringable bells in the tower. They were test-rung on Thursday May 26th and then for the wedding on Saturday June 4th that became the target to have the bells ringable. One of the reasons for the rehang was to lighten the ring and then re-arrange the bells in the new bellframe to reduce the horizontal forces that arise when bells are rung full-circle. Both these aims have been achieved very successfully, with the total weight being reduced by a sixth and the forces in the tower’s weak direction being reduced by nearly two-thirds. Not only that, the new steel bellframe ties all four walls together very firmly. So what are the weights of the bells now? They are:-

Treble	2-1-11	(new bell)
2 nd	2-2-12	(new bell)
3 th	3-0-22	(new bell)
4 th	3-1-22	(old treble retuned)
5 th	4-0-7	(old 3 rd retuned)
Tenor	4-2-21	(old 4 th retuned)

They are delightful, just dropping into place with ease. Whitechapel Bell Foundry has done a wonderful job. In case anybody is wondering, the ropes are arranged so that all ringers are looking at each other now: very novel! Yes, the bells are light, but at no time do they feel in the least bit flighty. Other than St Christopher’s, Warden Hill in Cheltenham (tenor 0-2-7), which might be regarded by some as a mini-ring (although they do have stays and sliders), I believe Adlestrop’s tenor is the lightest in Gloucester Diocese – but I’m open to correction on that. The heaviest tenor in Gloucester Diocese? Just up the hill from Adlestrop. What a contrast!

At the time of writing, no date has been set for the Dedication Service. The bells will become available to visitors after that event. Ralph Price, now the Ringing Master, is aware there may be floods of enquiries.

The long ladder up to the Ringing Room still exists and will remain so until the PCC’s proposals for a new internal porch become reality. However, Buster, the Church cat (a big Ginger tom, who lives over the road, but who frequents the church regularly) is very adept at climbing the long ladder; and the next one up into the belfry, too. He went up on numerous occasions to inspect the bellhangers’ work, although wasn’t particularly attracted to the builders. The only problem he had was getting back down

again, and the bellhangers had to carry him down. I carried him down from the belfry on one occasion. He came up to see us at the test-ring. We’d set the bells after some Plain Bob Doubles and then heard miaow from under the trapdoor. Buster was immediately underneath. He climbed in and wandered about seemingly unconcerned while we dropped the bells. Those interested in cats might like to know that he doesn’t climb up the wooden side rails, but goes up the rungs as humans do. Remarkable. He is a very affectionate cat, so even those who don’t like cats will be charmed by him. And he seems to know who doesn’t like cats, too, as he sometimes makes a bee-line for them. Apparently he attends the Services and wanders along the pew backs – and he also attended the wedding, in which he lay down stretched out in the nave aisle throughout the Service. I predict his fame will spread when visiting ringers start arriving.



Buster up with the bellhangers (Photo, Neil Thomas, WBF)



A general view of the installation (ropes were pulled up out of the way at the time by the bellhangers to avoid other works): tenor bottom right, treble middle, 2nd middle left, 3rd middle far left, 4th middle top and 5th middle right. A huge – and smart – improvement to that which existed previously!

Chris Povey

SNOW IN MAY IN BLOCKLEY

Imagine the surprise the ringers received last Thursday evening, when they arrived for Practice night, to find that there had been a recent snow fall!

There was a covering of snow on the Churchyard, tombstones, paths, trees and nearby cottages. It was all very picturesque and made everyone feel a bit chilly. Thursday night ringers saw it in all its glory as the filming was on Friday, but visiting ringers on Saturday morning only saw the mess and all the clearing up.

Blockley returned to winter for two days and these were two of the hottest days of the year so far!

The reason for all this snow was that the B.B.C. had come to Blockley to film a Christmas episode for the Father Brown series. This should be shown this Christmas.

Ann Bourne



L-r:- Maggie Hill, Alan Hill, Sarah Hermer, John Nicholls, Michael Cummings, Stuart Cummings (and I guess Ann Bourne took the photo. Ed)

THE 2016 CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

I attended the Central Council Meeting on your behalf on 30th May (Bank Holiday Monday). It was held in Portsmouth. Unfortunately, Andrew Gunn was again unable to attend. The meeting followed the general outline of the previous ones. The Council has come in for considerable criticism over the last few years as being out of touch with, and irrelevant to, the majority of ringers, and a 'talking shop' in which little gets done. While this criticism does have some truth, the Council does actually provide – albeit slowly – the general framework in which all ringing operates. Its power to progress things has been likened to that of the Church of England, a body that was once described as having the power of a lawnmower engine and the brakes of an HGV. It has become clear for a few years now that major reform is long overdue.

There were various motions put forward, mainly to tidy up various rules, but this year some of us were pleased to see a motion to set up 'a Group' that will actively gather together ideas for change and to present them for consideration by the 2017 Council meeting. Ooh, this timetable worried one or two: was it possible to do this in one whole year?? Luckily, the majority of representatives thought it could – and should – happen and it got carried, so there will be a flurry of activity by certain people in the next few months. Thank Heaven something is happening. I have my thoughts on how a new-style Central Council should look and will be passing those thoughts on. I have been concerned about the size of the Council (about 200 people) for some time, and about the significant number of reps who are not part of any of the committees (it is the committees that do the Council's work) – so why are these reps there? I also feel it's more of a social occasion to which a meeting is attached. I think the Council needs to be smaller, leaner and more business-like, and I want it to be primarily a business meeting, to which some small social events may be added. We shall see....

Another bombshell, but of a different style, occurred in the afternoon. The Ringing Trends Committee had last year organised a survey of a representative proportion of ringers, but a letter to the Ringing World soon after criticised this move as possibly being in breach of the Data

Protection Act. Very sadly, the Chairman of this Committee, a very active, very experienced and very clever 'doer' of a lady, took this badly and resigned her position straightaway. One or two other resignations followed, thereby severely weakening the Committee. This was a great shame, as I thought there was much merit in collecting the information that was being sought by the survey. We all want to see more and younger people taking up ringing, don't we? This survey could have provided some good data. Whatever... The bombshell came when the report of that Committee was being presented to the Council, as it was reported that the remainder of the Committee had decided to resign en bloc. Sadly, too, nobody came forward to restart the committee, although this might need a few people to think about what to do in these circumstances before it happens. What can be learned from all this? Be careful if criticising volunteers publicly, particularly very capable ones.

There were two bright spots though. The first was the fairly easy acceptance of the Methods Committee's proposals for tidying-up various rules concerning peals and what constitutes peals. Believe me, most people dread the proposals that arise on this subject. There have been some real horrors in the past, in which many start losing the will to live.

The second bright spot, and it was a very bright spot, concerned the Ringing World. The AGM of the Ringing World Ltd always occurs first thing in the afternoon. The paper has been thoroughly bedevilled by falling numbers and rising costs for some time, with debts taking the place of profits over the last seven years. Reserves have been used to bolster it. The Board has been under new, vigorous leadership since 2014 and various new initiatives have been tried. The Chairman, Nigel Orchard (an interesting character is Nigel), was very upbeat this year, when he reported a profit. There was much joy at this, and much applause. Sadly, circulation is still dropping, now down to just under 3000 copies, but who knows with this Board? They may restyle the paper to increase circulation. Let's hope so! The CC meeting next year will be in Edinburgh. Perhaps we shall have two FSG reps there then.

Chris Povey

AROUND THE TOWERS

PEALS, QUARTER PEALS AND OTHER RINGING

RINGING ON 21ST APRIL

FOR HM THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Badsey, Worcs, Bob Doubles & Call Changes: 1 Hilary Bolton (C), 2 Andrew Stewart, 3 Christina Ireland, 4 Tom Sandham (C), 5 Paul Green, 6 Gordon Hill. Rung in celebration of Her Majesty's 90th Birthday.

Bretforton, Worcs, 15 mins of call changes: 1 Rob Newman, 2 Nina Hirayama, 3 Alan Curry, 4 John Cleveland, 5 Rob Davis, 6 Roger Hunt (C). Rung to mark the 90th birthday today of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Ilmington, Warks, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Bill Sabin, 2 John Kinchin, 3 Fran Chapman, 4 Bill Nash, 5 John Nicholls, 6 Jackie Hands, 7 Michael Dane (C), 8 Mike Fairfax. Rung by the combined bands of Mickleton and Ilmington, who afterwards repaired to 'The Howard Arms' for welcome refreshment.

Wellesbourne, Warks, 1290 Doubles (Grandsire & PB): 1 Veronica Quinn, 2 Simon Oram, Michael Dane, 4 Michael Haynes, 5 Peter Quinn (C), 6 Brian Nuttall.

RINGING ON 23RD APRIL

(ST GEORGE'S DAY, 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE'S DEATH, ASPARAGUS FESTIVAL)

Badsey, Worcs, Call changes: 1 Hilary Bolton (C), 2 Phyllis Brazier, 3 Tom Sandham, 4 John Bolton, 5 Paul Green, 6 Gordon Hill. Rung in recognition of St. George.

Evesham, Worcs, rounds and call changes on 10: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Merry Privett, 3 Roger Hunt, 4 Tom Sandham, 5 Frances Smith, 6 John Smith, 7 Ian Povey, 8 Robert Hall, 9 Steve Bowley, 10 Martin Penny. Rung as part of a Service of Thanksgiving for the completion of the Bell Tower renovation work, for St George and for the start of the Evesham Asparagus Festival. The first ringing since 23rd April 2015.

Bretforton, Worcs, 1260 Doubles (Stedman, Plain Bob, Grandsire): 1 Rob Newman, 2 Steve Bowley, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 Stef Whittle. Rung on St George's Day to celebrate the 90th Birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II and to mark the 400th Anniversary this day of the death of William Shakespeare. An S@S Quarter Peal and birthday treat for Steve (19th April).

GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATION

Great Hampton, Worcs, 30 April, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Martin Penny, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Rob Newman, 4 Patrick Wooster, 5 Matthew Kemble, 6 Chris Povey (C), 7 Steve Bowley, 8 Roger Hunt.

A compliment to local ringers John and Frances Smith celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary today; and rung by some of their local Vale of Evesham friends.

A pleasant time was spent afterwards celebrating with John and Frances with a glass (and only a glass) of very nice wine.

RINGING OVER HM THE QUEEN'S OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

Barford, Warks, 6 June, 1260 Doubles (RCPB, St Nich, Double, PB, Winchendon): 1 Ruth Border, 2 Peter Quinn, 3 Richard Turner, 4 Michael Dane, 5 Mark Sayers (C), 6 Richard East.

Wellesbourne, Warks, 9 June, 1260 PB Minor: 1 Sue Bacon, 2 Simon Oram, 3 Stewart Heritage, 4 John Carroll, 5 Michael Dane, 6 Peter Quinn (C).

Vale of Evesham Society

St Edward, Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos

Saturday, 11 June 2016 in 3h20 (27)

5056 Cambridge Surprise Major

1 Nicholas K Allsopp	5 Robert Tregillus
2 Christopher M Povey	6 Simon E Adams
3 Roger H Hunt	7 Michael Chester (C)
4 Stephen Bowley	8 Gordon R Birks

Mickleton, Glos, 11th June, 1260 PB Minor (with tenor cover): 1 David Clark, 2 Bill Sabin, 3 John Nicholls, 4 Bill Nash, 5 George Osborn, 6 Michael Dane (C), 7 Mike Fairfax.

Wootton Waven, Warks, 12 June, 1296 Cambridge S Minor: 1 Geoff Randall (C), 2 Julie Tarling, 3 Annie Hall, 4 Peter Quinn, 5 Robert Reeves, 6 Mark Sayers.

Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, 12 June, 1290 Grandsire Doubles (7-6-8 covering): 1 Margaret Clayton, 2 Jackie Roberts, 3 Jane Gilbert, 4 Chris Roberts, 5 Nick Allsopp, 6 Elizabeth Royle, 7 Rob Stansbury, 8 Isobel Murphy. First Q: 1 & 6. By the Sunday Service band. David Adams and Keith Murphy are to be associated with this Q.

Tredington, Warks, 12 June, 1260 PB Doubles: 1 Hazel Davies, 2 Jane Gilbert, 3 Isobel Murphy, 4 Nick Allsopp, 5 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C), 6 Mike Rees.

Offenham, Worcs, 12 June, 1260 PB Minor: 1 Tom Sangham, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Roland Merrick, 4 Matthew Kemble, 5 Georgie Roberts, 6 Martin Penny (C). Also for Offenham Wake.

Pebworth, Worcs, 3 April, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: 1 Freda Cleaver, 2 Roland Merrick, 3 Georgie Roberts, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Claire Penny, 6 Martin Penny (C). Rung as a farewell compliment to Rev Debbie Forman after her last benefice service. With thanks from the ringers for her support and best wishes for her ministry in her new parish in Addington. (Rung on the back 6).

Broadway, Worcs, 3 April, 1500 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Mark Newbury, 2 Murry Newbury, 3 Matthew Kemble, 4 George Osborn, 5 Chris Povey (C), 6 Mike Fairfax. Rung in fond memory of Joan Newbury, who died on this day in 2015. Joan learnt to ring at this church and arranged the ringing here up to the time she passed away.

Harvington, Worcs, 26 April, 1320 PB Doubles: 1 Rob Newman, 2 Judith Baxter, 3 Steve Bowley, 4 Anthony Wheeler, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 Mike Baxter. Rung to welcome Bebee Grace Hunt (b.17 April) of Harvington, a granddaughter to Roger & Val Hunt; and as a 1st Wedding Anniversary compliment (30 April) to her parents, Gareth & Katie. Also a 90th Birthday compliment to HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Pebworth, Worcs, 7 May, 1300 Plain Bob Doubles: 1 Roland Merrick, 2 Claire Allen, 3 Georgie Roberts, 4 Claire Penny (C), 6 Martin Penny, 6 Kate Collingwood. First inside: 2. Wishing Margaret Clayton a Happy Birthday

Saintbury, Glos, 8 May, 1344 PB Major: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C), 2 Jeanette Davy, 3 Georgie Roberts, 4 Claire Penny, 5 Roger Hunt, 6 Martin Penny, 7 Chris Povey, 8 Steve Bowley. First Q of Major: 3.

Pebworth, Worcs, 8 May, 1296 Grandsire Caters: 1 Georgie Roberts, 2 Steve Bowley, 3 Jane Gilbert, 4 Jackie Roberts, 5 Matthew Kemble, 6 Martin Penny (C), 7 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 8 Nick Allsopp, 9 Chris Povey, 10 Chris Roberts. First in method: 5. First of Caters: 1.

Wellesbourne, Warks, 9 May, 1344 Cambridge S Major: 1 Chris Mew, 2 James Ingham, 3 Douglas Kempton, 4 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 5 Robert Reeves, 6 Simon Oram, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Michael Dane (C). First Cambridge Major as conductor.

Salford Priors, Warks, 16 May, 1260 Stedman Triples: 1 Michael Dane, 2 James Ingham, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Karen French, 5 Simon Oram, 6 Chris Mew (C), 7 John Nicholls, 8 James Trewin. First Stedman: 5. Rung as a get-well compliment to Ted Copson.

Pebworth, Worcs, 21 May, 1260 Stedman Doubles: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Nick Allsopp, 4 Georgie Roberts, 5 Martin Penny (C), 6 Stef Whittle. 1st Stedman Doubles: 4

Mickleton, Glos, 23 May, 1280 Piacenza D Major: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 James Ingham, 3 Robert Reeves, 4 Peter Quinn, 5 Douglas Kempton, 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Mark Sayers. First in method for all.

Bretforton, Worcs, 30 May 1260 Doubles (Grandsire, Plain Bob): 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Mark Newbury, 3 Ron Newman, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 John Cleveland. To entertain the visitors to the Asparagus Family Fun Day at The Fleece Inn.

Bretforton, Worcs, 30 May, 1260 Doubles (Plain Bob, Grandsire): 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Mark Newbury, 3 Rob Newman, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 John Cleveland. To entertain the visitors to the Asparagus Family Fun Day at The Fleece Inn.

Bidford-on-Avon, Warks, 31 May, 1260 PB Triples: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Freda Cleaver, 3 Tracey Newbold, 4 Albert Williams, 5 John Newbold, 6 Sandra Parker, 7 John Nicholls, 8 James Trewin.

Salford Priors, Warks, 2 June, 1260 Stedman Triples: 1 Chris Povey, 2 James Ingham, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Karen French, 5 Sandra Parker, 6 Chris Mew (C), 7 John Nicholls, 8 James Trewin.

Great Wolford, Warks, 9 June, 1260 PB Minor: 1 Annie Hall, 2 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 3 Chris Seers, 4 Isobel Murphy, 5 Keith Murphy, 6 Daniel Glyde (C). First PB Minor as conductor.

Harbury, Warks, 10 June, 1280 Cambridge S Major: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Simon Oram, 3 James Ingham, 4 Karen French, 5 William Jones, 6 Robert Reeves, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Mark Sayers.

Whichford, Warks, 13 June, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 James Ingham, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 John Nicholls, 5 Robert Reeves, 6 Keith Murphy, 7 Mark Sayers, 8 Peter Kenealy.

Freeland, Oxon, 24 June, 1260 Stedman Doubles: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C), 2 Julie Minch, 3 Alison Merryweather-Clarke, 4 Michael Probert, 5 John Pusey, 6 Anthony Williamson. Rung to 'Strike Back Against Blood Cancer', with best wishes to Les Ford to keep striking back. First Stedman: 2. First with undiagnosed broken hip: 3!

Warwick (St Nicholas), 27 June, 1344 Yorkshire S Major: 1 Michael Dane, 2 Robert Reeves, 3 James Ingham, 4 Peter Quinn, 5 Karen French, 6 John Nicholls, 7 Chris Mew, 8 Mark Sayers.

Bourton-on-the-Water, Glos, 29 June, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Steve Coleman (C), 2 John Nicholls, 3 Rob Kilbey, 4 Jeremy Meyrick, 5 Sue Coleman, 6 Keith Murphy, 7 Bill Nash, Mark Travers. First Grandsire Triples: 3.

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

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Some will know **Ted Copson** had a couple of falls recently and some other complications. He was taken to Warwick Hospital. One of the falls broke a bone, so his stay in Warwick has been a long one, as he is still there. He is doing regular exercises to get him back on his feet, but he had another fall while doing this. Returning home may be difficult in such circumstances, so options for Ted's future care are being explored by his elder brother and others.

Blockley PCC is surging ahead with their rehang plans. Part of the proposal is to augment to 10. The one fly-in-the-ointment is the possibility that the bottom timbers of the old wooden bellframe, which was built with the tower in 1729, are historically worthy of retention. These timbers, to which the present pulleys and sliders are attached, are in the location at which the new bellframe should go, and a clash between history and good engineering sense might be expected. A belfry inspection by an acknowledged specialist in historical matters has suggested the timbers are not as significant as he initially thought, as only a small proportion of the timbers remains. It is hoped the findings of this survey may encourage Historic England (previously known as English Heritage) to have no objections to removal. A faculty has been applied for. The PCC also propose to have the existing tenor (by C&G Mears, 1854) recast, as the tonal qualities of this bell are noticeably worse than the others. It is likely to be recast with much the same profile as the four bells cast by the Bagley bellfounders (the 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th), so there is some uniformity. It will be recast to 'a goodly weight'. It is expected work will start on the rehang/augmentation early next year. Not only a new sound at Adlestrop, but a new one awaits at Blockley! Exciting times. Which will be the next tower to undergo extensive work? I can think of one that's a prime candidate for following Adlestrop's lead in remodelling and augmenting...

Moreton-in-Marsh are to have their clappers rebushed and the clock hammer repositioned to strike on their 'dead' bell (the 3rd from the pre-1958 ring). How wonderful to be able to get a clock hammer off a swinging bell! It's never a good combination. All will happen later this year to keep this glorious little 8 up to scratch.

Similarly, **Bourton-on-the-Water** are to have their clappers rebushed and the bellframe painted fairly soon. Another PCC taking advantage of the current VAT refund scheme to keep their superb 8 in good condition.

Evesham Bell Tower has returned to the land of ringing. The bells were rung for a special event on April 23rd, even though a third of the scaffolding was still up. However, all that has now disappeared, leaving the Tower glowing in the sunshine. What a sight; it looks absolutely splendid after its stonework refurbishment. The regilded weathervanes and clock faces glisten from literally a mile or so away. The bells had nothing done to them. The ropes were removed and poly bags put over the pulleys. The clock and carillon were stopped from striking and the whole lot was covered up, in which state they stayed for a year, effectively hibernating. Somebody asked me what it was like ringing them again after so long. I replied, 'It was like discovering a huge amount of long-lost and extremely valuable treasure.' Did I mind not being able to get into the Tower during the work? Not really, because my son, Ian, was the Project Manager for the project, and I knew everything internally would be looked after. He maintains he was awarded the job by the PCC (he was competitively interviewed, but not by me) just to keep the Old Chap happy....! Whatever; it all worked well. There's a Guild practice here on 30th July.

THE APRES-XMAS/NEW YEAR QUIZ – the answers!

This attracted only one entry (some said 'they were working on it...') – but what an entry! See below. Here are the answers:-

- 1) what is it about? The casting of bells
- 2) who wrote it? Walter de Odyngton
- 3) when? About 1280 AD
- 4) why is it significant? It's the earliest known written instructions for casting bells.
- 5) from where was the writer? Walter de Odyngton was a monk of Evesham Abbey; and he always referred to himself as 'Walter de Odyngton, Monk of Evesham' (however, it is thought he came from Oddington, near Oxford, not Oddington near Stow-on-the-Wold).
- 6) provide the English translation? See below, which is the translation the renowned bell historian H B Walters gave in his book 'Church Bells of England' (1912). He was employed in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, so his translation is very likely correct.

The instructions are part of 'SUMMA DE SPECULATIONE MUSICAE', a treatise on musical instruments, written by William de Odyngton, monk of Evesham, in about 1280. There is only one complete manuscript of this treatise known to exist. It is in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and is thought to be a copy of the original taken a century later. As you have seen, the instructions are in latin; and here is the translation (directly from H B Walters' book).

On making a bell

For making bells the whole difficulty consists in estimating the wax models from which they are formed, and first in knowing that the thicker a bell is, the higher its note, and the reverse. Starting with any given amount of wax for the model of the first bell, you divide it into eight parts, and the addition of one eighth part will give you the amount required for the second bell. If you start with the heavier bells the principle is similar. But take care lest the inner mould of clay, to which the wax is to be applied, is changed in any different proportion, and also that none of the allotted wax gets into the vents. Further, a fifth or sixth part of the metal should be tin purified from lead, the rest copper similarly cleansed, with a view to greater sonorousness. If any defects should be apparent, they can be set right with a file or whetstone.

The answer I received was from Paul Marriott. As this dropped through my letterbox on April 13th, Paul clearly wasted no time in working out the answers. He differed only fractionally from those above – he attributed the writing to 1240, but what's 40 years in that length of time and who knows what the accuracy is anyway? – and I believe he hammered out the translation from the latin himself, which in my book is no mean feat!! Paul's reply is worth repeating here in full, and as you will see his translation is very close to that of H B Walters. Paul wrote:-

Dear Chris,

This is a strange and sketchy account of bell-casting, with no mention of the cope. He concentrates on the 'lost wax' procedure, but some of it does not make much sense to me. Perhaps as you have more knowledge of this, you could make more sense of the third sentence in particular.

Walter's (*de Odyngton; not H.B. Ed*) syntax is questionable: he flits casually from jussive subjunctive to indicative mood which makes his narrative tricky to follow and translate. Perhaps being an Evesham boy explains his disdain for grammar! I guess early English was his first language. (His grasp of the theory of music was excellent.)

My translation is only an amateur effort and leaves much to be desired. Hopefully you will receive a more professional submission.

Very best wishes,

Paul Marriott

On Casting of Bells:

In the casting of all bells, there is effort and problems in the molten state of the wax from which they are shaped. First is the skill of how the bell sounds, how flatter or sharper, thinner or thicker. Next you shall apportion sufficient quantity of molten wax from which the first bell is shaped into eight parts and you shall add the eighth part of such wax so as to fill and there you will have the wax for the second bell. And you shall construct the remaining bells in the same way, beginning with the heavier. But take care that the inner clay mould, which the wax adheres to, is not altered afterwards, nor also that any of the molten wax rises to the vent holes. See to it that a fifth or sixth part of the bell-metal shall be pure tin unadulterated by lead and the rest copper also cleansed, on account of the tone. If however you fail to achieve the correct note, you can make good with a whetstone or file.

Paul richly deserves a prize for his magnificent effort and I am pleased to offer him a bottle of French bubbly (the real thing: purchased in France) when I see him next.

Chris Povey

(PS: Paul, thank you for your kind comments at the end of your letter – and you are probably right....)

NOTICES AND ADVERTS

PROPOSAL TO BE MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT LONGBOROUGH ON OCTOBER 15TH:

The Committee is aware the Government's Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme (whereby VAT can be refunded on a range of works to Listed churches, including bell work) is encouraging PCCs to undertake such work quicker than they might otherwise have done. The Committee is delighted that work to bells is being accelerated, but it also recognises that this acceleration will cause the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund to run out of money at the present rate of grant giving. Rather than reduce grants or delete certain aspects from the range of works that is open to Guild grants, the Committee proposes to introduce a scheme that invites members to make annual donations specifically to the Fund. Donations will be discretionary, not compulsory, although it is hoped all members will recognise the overall intention of this scheme is for the benefit of ringing as a whole. The list of donors will also be confidential, so no member may feel forced to donate. Parochial Church Councils, who own the bells we ring and can, if they wish, dictate whether we ring or whether we don't, are always very grateful to have any donations towards bells. The Committee considers any reductions in the levels of the grants the Guild offers will be counter-productive, as PCCs may gradually consider ringers to be uncaring in this respect. The Committee therefore will make the following proposal at the 2016 Annual General Meeting:-

'The Guild Committee proposes the setting-up of a scheme that invites Guild members to donate £5 (or more if wished) annually towards the Bell Restoration Fund. This donation to be additional to membership subscription amounts. A list will be kept by the Guild Treasurer of the donors and amounts for accounting purposes and the list will be confidential to relevant Guild personnel. If agreed by the membership at the AGM at which the proposal is made, the scheme will come into operation on 1st January 2017.'

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I fully endorse this Committee proposal - I know how much good work the fund has encouraged in our district and I am certain there is much more to come.

John Nicholls

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

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 (so it's a good idea to buy some garments).

Colours: a wide range is available (except lambswool sweater): mainly Navy, Red, Bottle Green, Black, Royal Blue

Ditto, but for lambswool sweater: Red, Black, Navy Blue, Charcoal

The range of colours can't be shown in this advert to any reasonable extent, but the range can be accessed via the Guild's website. Please see the advert on <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>.

JOHN TAYLOR & CO.

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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, 10th 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 the undersigned by Saturday 30th 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)

This is the opportunity to knock 'The Committee' team off their winning perch. They could do with a good thrashing – particularly as I can't be there to ring in the team this year! Ed)

FOUR SHIRES GUILD'S RINGING & WALKING EVENT

This will take place on **Saturday 24th Sept** in the Wiggington – Hook Norton area. The route is:-

- Meet at **Whichford** 9.30am, then ringing 10.00-10.45am
- Walk to **Wiggington** - ringing 12.00-12.45pm
- Lunch at The White Swan Inn 12.50-1.20pm
- Tour of **Hook Norton Brewery** (£12.50 each) if sufficient demand 1.30-2.30pm
- Walk to **Swerford** - ringing 3.00-3.45pm
- Walk back to **Whichford**-arrive back about 5.00pm

Michael Haynes is the organiser. His ankle is now healed and he's raring to go. Contact him on hynmicha6@aol.com

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

JULY 2 ND	NO PRACTICE, ANNUAL RINGING TOUR	
JULY 9 TH	CHURCHILL, Oxon	8, 10-3-9 in G
JULY 16 TH	HALFORD, Warks	6, 7-2-16 in A (GF)
JULY 23 RD	WELFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 9-3-1 in G#
JULY 30 TH	EVESHAM, Worcs	12, 35-2-20 in C#
AUG 6 TH	WHICHFORD, Warks	8, 12-3-23 in G (GF)
AUG 13 TH	BRETFORTON, Worcs	8, 8-3-11 in F# (GF)
AUG 20 TH	SHERBOURNE, Warks	6, 11-1-17 in F#
AUG 27 TH	CHILDSWICKHAM, Worcs	6, 11-3-26 in F#
SEPT 3 RD	SAINTBURY, Glos	8, 11-0-24 in F# (GF)
SEPT 10 TH	ETTINGTON, Warks (MINIMUS COMPETITION)	<u>SEE DETAILS IN THIS NEWSLETTER</u>
SEPT 17 TH	BRAILES, Warks	6, 29-0-19 in C
SEPT 24 TH	OFFENHAM, Worcs	6, 9-2-20 in G (GF) (<u>NOTE: 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM.)</u>) <u>AND GUILD WALK: SEE DETAILS ON P.19 OF THIS NEWSLETTER</u>
OCT 1 ST	HOOK NORTON, Oxon	8, 20-2-13 in E
OCT 8 TH	FLADBURY, Worcs	8, 12-3-03 in G#
OCT 15 TH	Longborough, Glos	A.G.M. & STRIKING COMPETITIONS (<u>SEE NEWS LETTER</u>)

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 (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:

ELECTIONS REQUIRED AT THE 2016 AGM

As the Guild rules dictate this year we must elect people to fill the following posts:-

Guild President and up to two Vice Presidents

Guild Master, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary and Ringing Master

Six Committee members

Two Central Council of Church Bell Ringers representatives

There are again no proposal slips this time, because nobody seemed to use them.

Firstly, please consider standing for these posts.

Secondly, if not you, please propose candidates (with their permission!).

Events for 2016: book the dates now:-

Minimus Striking Comp	Sat 10th Sept at Ettington: see Notice p.19
Guild Walk	Sat 24th Sept: Hook Norton area. (See p.19)
Striking Comps & AGM	Sat 15th Oct: Longborough (See Notice p.3).
Guild Xmas Party	Sat 10th Dec: Badsey