

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central  Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 152 - APRIL 1st 2017

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Founded Oct 18th 1909

PILLERTON HERSEY'S BELL RESTORATION WORK UNDERWAY!



Pillerton Hersey's three bells were finally removed on the 21st January as the first step in a project that has been in preparation for several years. Simon Adams from Taylors (FSG member; and seen smiling in the background) and some volunteers from the Coventry D Guild's Towers & Belfries Committee spent all day removing them. The tenor posed a few problems and clearly did not want to leave home, but was eventually conquered very late in the day! Much of the village turned out to see the work and support the helpers. The bells will return in about 6 months' time as a ring of four, augmented by Adlestrop's old 2nd bell, which became redundant after the recent work there and was sold to Pillerton Hersey for this purpose. Ralph Price says he looks forward to ringing this bell in its new home.

The Guild have allocated a grant of £500 from the Bell Restoration Fund towards Pillerton Hersey's bell project. The location of the next Mini-Mouse (Minimus) Striking Competition? Seems very likely.

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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 (July 2017) is June 13th 2017

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.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN, FOLKS.....

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE ON 1ST JANUARY: SEE RATES ABOVE

AND PLEASE MAKE A DONATION (£5 MIN) TO THE GUILD'S BELLS RESTORATION FUND

EDITORIAL

This issue contains announcements of three deaths: Margaret Pratt, Chris Roberts and Ron Gilks. Our condolences to their families. Ron made old bones, he was 90. Margaret, too, had a fairly long life. It saddens me that Chris only made 3-score and 11. I didn't know him long – he and Jackie moved to Moreton from Chester just 2 years ago – but it was long enough to know that we've lost a very capable ringer and a very capable steeplekeeper (he was such at Chester Cathedral). We cannot afford to lose ringers without training more – and Peter Newing's comments below are apposite.

Our Chaplain and Vice-President, Peter Newing, raises a very interesting point in his 'Thoughts' below: that bellringing be classed as a sport to aid recruitment via grants to provide enhanced teaching facilities, coupled with a possible rise in status. This is not his suggestion – it has been bandied around generally for a bit of time now; he is merely mentioning it here in the broader context of the current situation. It is true that recruitment is very much on the wane; and there is also some truth that telling people you are a church bellringer sometimes brings with it the impression they consider you an oddball. Are the two aspects, recruitment and status, related? I believe so. It never ceases to amaze me how ignorant the indigenous population of this country is of a practice that is roughly 400 years old and almost wholly unique to these shores – how the English (and Scots, Welsh and Irish...) ring their bells. The sound of English-hung bells is familiar to just about everyone. We are at pains to preserve old crafts and techniques in this country, even spending vast sums of money doing so in some cases, but 400 year-old English-style bell ringing? Effectively nothing. Do we publicise it well? Not really; it mostly happens behind a closed door at high level. The public generally think we pull strings to play a tune, or ride up and down on the ropes (the Mars advert has much to answer for). Perhaps designating English-style bell ringing a sport would bring it much more into the spotlight of the public and cause a greater understanding of what actually happens. Extra cash could be used to provide more proper training centres, where recruits go for concentrated and well-conducted lessons in learning to ring and at which the trainers are paid. I am convinced proper training in bell handling is the correct way forward, particularly after seeing some of the dreadful (and potentially unsafe) bell handling that occurs in some cases now. As someone said to me recently, "You don't teach your wife and family members to drive any more. You send them to a Driving School." The other side of this problem is having few people coming forward to learn to ring. I learnt to ring when I was 13. There wasn't much to do locally then in rural areas; and no parents wishing or able to take you to activities far afield on a regular basis. If there was somewhere you wished to go, you got on your bike. The local church had a few activities, particularly the choir and the bells, so that was it – and it was 'cool' to be associated with the Church then. Sadly, the Church isn't cool to 13 year olds today. Not only that, they have parents who are willing to transport them to lots of different activities. They can even sit on their backsides at home in the warm playing computer games. Why go ringing? Youngsters are the prize if you can get them: they learn quicker than older people, and they have a much longer 'life' as a ringer. A lot of rabbits need to be pulled out of the hat very soon to stop the runaway train before it hits some buffers. Grants might well help – as would giving the public a different perception of this fascinating art. I shall be interested to hear what other members think about this aspect, which is an important one, and will very much welcome Letters to the Editor on the subject.

The announcement that Chipping Campden is to augment to 12 is great news! This magnificent church, having many parallels with Cirencester, will soon be able to boast a similar ring. While Cirencester has the oldest ring of 12 in the world, Campden will have one of the newest. The news was announced by tower captain and Guild President, John Nicholls, at the end of March. He said it will be expensive, some £150,000 to undertake, but he pledged £10,000* of his own money towards the project to "see it happen at last. I wanted 10, but 12! It's wonderful." He added, "I shall put my heart and soul into moving this forward as quickly as possible. I have boundless energy to devote to it." It's reported that the PCC and all the Campden ringers are solidly behind the project. The ringers are looking forward to progressing to Grandsire Cinques (they say, "It's only Grandsire Triples with just another two pairs of dodges."). It's rumoured the move has been due to Blockley's proposed augmentation to 10, mainly through indignation that the 'Mother Church' of the old Campden Rural Deanery is being usurped bell-wise – and who could argue against that? There were similar feelings after Pebworth's augmentation in 2002, but a second 10 locally was apparently the proverbial last straw. The new 12 will allow Campden once more to stand head and shoulders above all others; and deservedly so. The Guild is pleased to have what will be a fine and melodious 12 – very likely to overshadow the other 12 in the area - available to it in the near future, as the balance of the sum required is expected to be raised from within Campden even more rapidly than were funds raised within Blockley for its bell scheme. (**Note: it is rumoured to be the case that John's contribution to the scheme has arisen through the recent 'Bibury yellow car incident'; that Campden Town Council has offered John this sum to rid the High Street of his yellow car. Ed*)

Equally good news: the 2017 Striking Competitions are to be held at Brailes. The Committee felt our Competitions – rising, ringing and falling – are not only the most demanding of their type, but they wish to prove this beyond doubt, too. Yes, Brailes are a bit heavier than bells used for these competitions in the past, but they are all in good order. Stuart Cummings said, "It's about time Brailes was used for this. These bells have an unfair reputation. They are some right little pussycats really. Our Michael (and there's not much of him) can throw that tenor all over the place if he wants. It's a good thing to happen." John Kinchin, of the famed Mickleton/Ilmington band, said, "No problem for us. Bill Nash will pull up that tenor without even thinking about it. Bill Sabin will have the 5th. with no worries. Those Moreton folk are used to tiddling little bells. We shall still thrash them." This will clearly be a battle of the titans. It will be worth coming to the AGM to witness this.

Lastly, see the powerful warning given on p.12.

Chris Povey, Editor

(The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Four Shires Guild or its Committee. There may be an April Fool article in this edition, so care should be taken when considering the truth of any article. 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

Sunday morning would not be the same without the bells ringing out. The tradition of ringing bells has lasted over 1000 years and most people think that it sounds out a powerful message to all who hear. Tower Captains are finding it harder to recruit new volunteers of any age, especially the young teenagers. Ringers are very much in demand and many now ring at more than one Church on a Sunday morning. It has been suggested that bellringing be classified as a sport, and if it is a sport there might be grants to help meet the costs of teaching. Additionally, it might help raise the status of ringers who had been trained.

Rev Dr Peter Newing

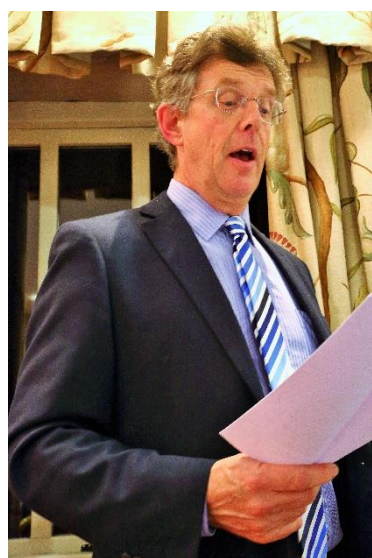
THE 2017 ANNUAL DINNER

It is as much a pleasure to report on this year's Annual Dinner as it was a disappointment to report on last year's. The Committee knew it had to make changes to recover from the poor experience we had at The White Hart Royal Hotel in Moreton-in-Marsh. There was a reluctance to move away from Moreton as a location, as it is very central to the area; and particularly because the Guild was founded there. We did look at the Swan Inn (where, as the Swan Hotel at the time, the actual founding took place), but the facilities didn't fit with what we wanted: shame, it would have been a rather lovely experience otherwise. The idea of The Charlecote Pheasant came up at the July meeting. We had been there before a few years back, so the scene was set for Charlecote. I have to say they did us well: the room was good – well-lit and with a comfortable amount of room - and the service was excellent. Assessing food is always a subjective thing, but I enjoyed mine. I suspect others did, too. It was a welcome change not to have rock-hard roast potatoes, and to receive hot food!

So, what of the Dinner occasion itself? There were 52 people there; not quite the record, but close to it. I must say 'thank you' to the ladies for providing such a high standard of glamour! Weren't we lucky, chaps? They did us proud (but when don't they...).



The Dinner was similar in format to previous years: meal, Speaker, and presentation of trophies. Keith Murphy was our Speaker this year and gave us a poem: quite a long one, based on Albert and the Lion. Luckily the age range present ensured many people had heard of Albert and the Lion, it being made popular in the 1930s onward



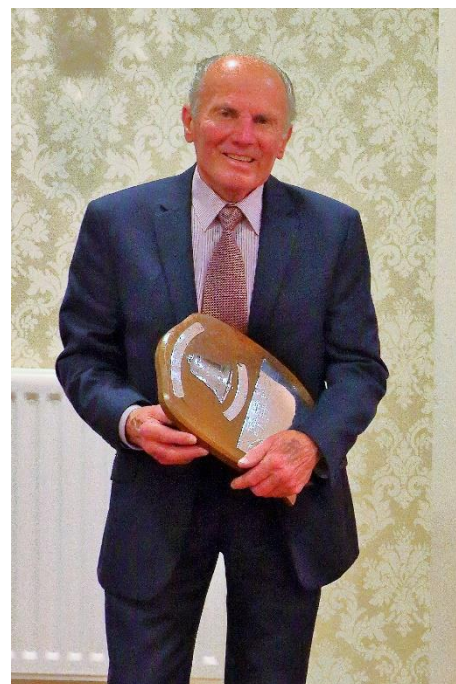
via its recital on record (the round type: bakelite then) by Stanley Holloway, who, although being a Londoner, managed to produce a very passable Lancashire accent in the recording. John Nicholls introduced Keith as 'nearly a Cockney', but Keith amended that by saying his family roots were way up country, in fact in Blackpool. This was a convenient springboard from which Keith launched his poem: Albert the Bell Ringer. For the benefit of those present who were of more tender years, Keith briefly explained the story behind Albert and the Lion, because it formed the introduction and the conclusion to his poem: that Albert had visited Blackpool Zoo with his parents and, through poking a lion in the ear with a stick, found himself pulled through the cage by the lion, which then swallowed him whole. The story concluded with the lion coughing up Albert, whole and still living, just as Albert's parents were due to receive the insurance money, about which loss they expressed good old-fashioned northern

indignation! As Stanley Holloway had recited the poem in broad dialect, Keith felt fully justified, and wholly qualified, to recite his version of events in the same style; and did so very successfully. The poem, a continuation of Albert's life after the lion affair, tells of Albert's foray into the world of bell ringing and appears in full on page 7.

The trophy giving followed. The Guild's silverware shone (Hon Sec's job beforehand). Although entries in the Newing Trophy were down on previous years, the results produced some good ringing. Yes, the major placings were the same as last year, with the teams concerned returning with those trophies they handed in, but it was a real treat to see a team from Pebworth competing, particularly as they only competed in the Brazier Trophy last year. It was impressive to find this tower competing with fresh learners for the Brazier Trophy again this year. It is very pleasing indeed to see how, under Martin Penny's leadership here of just over two years, ringing activity, enthusiasm and abilities have returned to a level not seen there for a long time. The winners of the trophies were:-

The Newing Striking Competition

The Newing Shield:	Mickleton
The Spencer Jones Cup	Moreton



John Kinchin for Mickleton/Ilmington



Richard Lewis-Skeath for Moreton

The Brazier Striking Competition
The Brazier Trophy Pebworth

The Merit Award
Awarded to Pebworth

(The tower receiving the Merit Award is, in the opinion of the Ringing Master, the one who has demonstrated the best all-round performance all things considered. Our congratulations to Pebworth for gaining this Award a second time.)



The Brazier Trophy (with Alison) and the Merit Award (with Pat) went to Pebworth



The Minimus Trophy went to the Bretforton/Welford team

All teams competing in the Newing Trophy competition were awarded certificates, so that when they return the silverware a permanent record of their achievement remains with them.

Stuart and Michael Cummings organised the raffle. There were numerous prizes donated, so many participants had a prize to take home. The raffle raised £122 for the Guild's Bell Restoration fund, an outstanding amount.

Colin Allen did a wonderful job photographing the various stages of the Dinner, and all the photos shown here are his.

Chris Povey, Hon Sec

'THE BELLS THEY SOUND ON BREDON' – (Houseman: 'A Shropshire Lad')

It was our first attempt at running a tour for regular ringing friends from our Benefice and the surrounding towers and we took as a theme that landmark of the Vale of Evesham, Bredon Hill. The lovely villages that circle the hill have some beautiful churches that many of had seen but never rung in. We recruited a band of about 20 of all ages and abilities from churches in the Evesham area (and one from as far away as Packwood, Warks). The tour occurred on Saturday March 11th, which was pleasant weather-wise. It kicked off at **Beckford** (6,13cwt) where we rang a good mix of call changes, Bob Doubles and Grandsire.

Then on to **Overbury** (6,9cwt) that iconic village once owned by the Martin family of bankers and still in private hands. Little has changed in the village, lots of green paint - even the post box! A lovely church with the stream running through the churchyard, chocolate box England! The bells went well and the variety of ringing here was similar to Beckford to ensure everyone had a go. One or two ringers ventured into the Church to see the substantial remains of Norman and early English work here.

The next tower was St Giles, **Bredon**, with its tall, thin spire that can be seen for miles around. These 6 bells were the heaviest of the day, about 18½cwt, but to this was added a long draft, as they are rung from the ground floor in front of the chancel step. Roger Hunt said the old 5 bells were rehung in a metal frame at around the time of WW1 and were originally rung from the room above, but the access via a vertical metal 'rung' wall ladder was a challenge and the church at that time opposed the idea of having ringers 'performing' downstairs in full view of the congregation, so ringing stopped for these reasons many years ago. The national 'Ring in the Millennium' initiative encouraged the decision to ring at ground floor and ringing restarted. The bells were augmented to 6 soon afterwards. We were told that a few of them go up 'wrong', so an

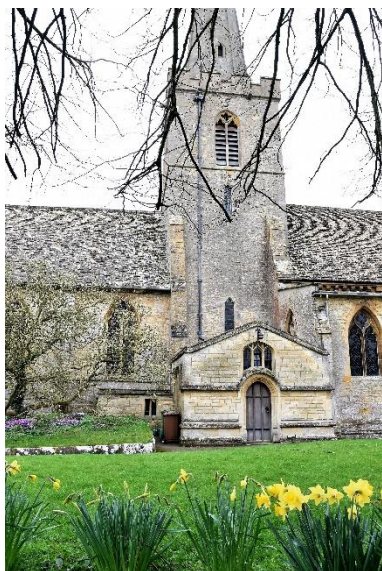
experienced band was selected for the rise, which was accomplished successfully. As there was a bit of stretch in some of the ropes, the ringing here was mostly rounds and call changes, with some Doubles, too. The fancy ringers rang a well-struck touch of Bob Minor; which must have boomed out over Bredon very nicely.

Lunch was taken at the Fox and Hounds almost next to the Church and very fine it was too. A short drive brought us to **Eckington** and a lovely ring of 8 (14 cwt), this gave us a chance to try some Grandsire Triples and Bob Major. Next on the list was **Great Comberton** (6,8cwt), where we drew our breath on the climb up the narrow and crooked stone staircase leading to a small ringing chamber situated just underneath the 6 bells. We kept the ringing going to plenty of basic fare for the benefit of everyone before it was time to fumble our way downstairs again.

On at last to our final tower of **Elmley Castle** (6,17cwt). A very civilised wide staircase with banisters on either side led to a huge ringing room - luxury indeed after Great Comberton! More call changes and more Bob Minor. These bells are a bit out-of-tune and need some pulling. There is a display board in church detailing a scheme to rehang and remodel the bells, which will cure these problems. The newly-cast bell on display (donated by a local ringer and his wife) will be part of this scheme.

With thanks to all who took part, to the Churches that let us ring their lovely bells. Also to Chris, Roger, Claire and Richard who kept us on the straight and narrow. Here's to the next tour, maybe coming to a 'hill' near you.

We were delighted to give £37 towards Richard and Stef's charity (p.16).
Christina Ireland and Tom Sandham
(Photos overleaf)



Bredon in Springtime



Ground-floor ringing at Bredon: long draft! Note open rung ladder (see text)



Great Comberton, with the delights of tackling the tricky steps to the small Ringing Room!

(All photos by Roger Hunt)

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 15th NOVEMBER.

The Committee met on Tuesday 21st Feb at Church House, Evesham.

1) Apologies for absence: John Carroll (on hol), Michael Haynes.

2) **Minutes of the last meeting:** The Minutes of the November meeting were agreed and signed.

3) **Matters Arising:-**

Insurance renewal: done

Grant offers: sent to towers awarded such

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

Hon Secretary: Chris had received a proposal and seconding for two new members:-

William Boyce (Bretforton)

prop Roger Hunt, sec. Chris P

Gerald Trevor (Wolvey)

prop: Keith Murphy, sec. Isobel Murphy

Membership was agreed in both cases by the Committee.

Treasurer: Michael D reported the General Fund is still healthy and after assessing various aspects the General Fund is about

£200 in credit for the year ending 31/12/16.

There have been a number of donations so far totalling £422. Out of 102 subs received to date, 45 had donated, one of £37 and two of £20. Other subs and hopefully donations awaited.

Ringling Master: the Committee was delighted to see Richard attending once more and best wishes to him and Stef were extended. He'd found that the Saturday practices had continued successfully with various people standing in for him during his absence and thanked them for this. He will organise the 2017 Ringing Tour;

Safeguarding Officer: Peter had received a

report from Chris Mew and read it out. Chris P will put this in the April Newsletter. (see p.13)

Newsletter Editor: April issue is well underway. Hopes to have this out by 1st April;

Mid-week Tours quarterly report: Isobel had reported that donations from this group are becoming more difficult to make due to fewer ringers attending and higher tower fees, although a donation had just been made;

CCCBR: Chris said he is unlikely to be able to attend the CC Meeting this year for family reasons up to late in the previous day. In past years he has set off very early and arrived at the location just before the Meeting started, but this is impracticable with Edinburgh being the location this year. He and Helen had decided to make a weekend of it, but the family requirement prevents that.

Unfortunately, too, Matthew is unlikely to make it, as the demands of his new baby daughter will make this year's trip very difficult;

6) **Bell Restoration Fund:** works completed at Hampton and Bourton-on-the-Water, and both grants have been paid after inspections

Updates:

Pillerton Hersey: the bells were removed recently, so work is in progress.

Blockley: the faculty has been granted and work is due to start late April, with Dedication by the Bishop of Gloucester in September.

Moreton-in-Marsh: clappers and clock hammer work to start in May.

New applications: none received.

Donation Scheme for BRF: now underway

6) **Items for discussion:-**

2016 Events Programme:-

Xmas Party, Badsey, 10th Dec: not as well attended as last year, but enjoyable nonetheless;

Annual Dinner, 4th Feb 2017: judged to be an excellent event, with all facilities and service very good.

2017 programme:

Guild Ringing Tour, 1st July: Richard to arrange

Guild Walk, date not fixed; thought September: it's thought Michael H is considering Oddington/Adlestrop/Broadwell but unsure. Matthew agreed to liaise with him to offer any advice if such required.

AGM and Striking Competitions, October 21st: suggested Temple Guiting. Chris to contact.

Inter-Shire Competition, 18th Nov: John agreed to organise again. Decided to approach Todenham for this.)

Xmas Party, 16th Dec: agreed to go to Badsey again. Stuart agreed to arrange.

7) **AOB:**

Richard asked whether the meetings could have a 7.00pm start, as he doesn't finish work until 6.00pm. Everybody agreed with this, so future meetings will start at 7.00pm.

Chris passed on the suggestion from a member that the BRF become a charity, and asked for comments. Most felt there could be advantages, although the setting up could be tortuous. Chris agreed to find out more about the setting-up of such, and Michael D will investigate the annual returns required.

8) **Next Meeting: Tues 16th May** at Church House, Evesham, 7.00pm start.

Future Committee meeting dates: 15th Aug, 21st Nov.

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

ALBERT THE BELL RINGER.

This is Keith Murphy's poem given by him as the Speaker at the Guild Dinner (see p.4). Although described as 'almost Cockney' by the President, Keith explained this wasn't quite so, as his family roots lay in Blackpool. He was thus well-qualified to give the poem in a traditional Northern accent – which he did; and well. Here it is – and if you can, please give it the Lancashire accent it richly deserves (the land of 'burrings' and squurrs – bearings and squares. I do not, indeed I cannot, mock: my maternal grandfather was from Oldham, and my paternal grandmother was from Blackburn):-

'ALBERT THE BELL RINGER'

Albert were a tinsmith, a man of many talents.
He grew up hard in Northern climes,
With holidays to Blackpool's famous seaside place,
Full of chips and ice cream chimes.

As a grand little lad he went to Zoo
With doting Mum and Dad.
He'd met a Lion, but then slipped up,
All around said it were bad.

A lion had swallowed young Albert.
He never got digested.
The Lion he coughed and up Albert came.
Eh.. his Mum she were disgusted.

'Post-traumatic' the doctor said,
Better find him job inside.
So Albert went to steelworks,
A wage it did provide.

Now Albert had a lifelong mate,
Johnny were his name.
Now Johnny liked to pull a rope,
And bellringing were his game.

He rang at towers both near and far,
Of Bristol Max he had no fear.
Conducted quarter peals for all his mates,
And topped off evening wi' favourite beer.

Now ringing band were facing crisis.
Of ringers short were they.
So Johnny spoke to Albert,
To see what he would say.

Well Albert was not decisive like,
He umm'ed and ahh'ed at first.
But Johnny pressed him long an' hard
Till Albert finally burst.

Albert never was half hearted.
No challenge made him cower.
He asked Johnny for several weeks
To prepare for first trip to tower.

Now Johnny thought this somewhat strange,
But faith he had in mate.
So between the both of them,
They set the fateful date.

Albert saved some strips of copper,
Unwanted tin and the like,
From jobs around steelworks,
From what was thrown off site.

A bell of his own was what he wanted.
And not afraid of honest toil,
He chucked his metal in works furnace,
And bought it quick to boil.

Kiddie's sandpit was pressed to use.
His mould used looked up data.
Albert poured in metal gloup,
And his Bell emerged few days later.

A washing line and bicycle wheel
Finished off his major project.
He set it up in soundproofed shed,
So no neighbour could object.

What to ring was quite a thought,
So a ringing simulator was wired.
He worked his way, all diligent like
To Bristol Max, eh... he were inspired.

Well the fateful day it did arrive,
And Albert to Tower he went.
Johnny was pleased to see him.
Rest of band, keen to impress, rang Kent.

Johnny took him up to hanging rope
And said "grab hold tight on end son".
He put Albert through backstroke,
Who was not impressed with lesson one.

Albert stood square up to Johnny like
And had his little say,
That he'd like to cut preliminaries,
And go to method ringing straight away.

The band and Johnny were quite astounded.
From a learner this was quite a feat.
For most of band had only just,
Got beyond ringing that tenor beat.

"Well what can you ring?" asked Johnny boy.
Albert glibly replied with smirk on face,
"Well, Bristol Max if you've got the band,
But mind it's at right pace!"

Well, the band collapsed in fits of giggles,
Even Johnny looked fit to burst.
"Before we do that Albert lad,
I flick simulator on first".

Two others said they'd join the band,
Whilst Albert chose his favoured bell.
Jonny and two others grabbed hold,
Convinced it would not go well.

They struck their way through method,
Eight electronic ringers unseen.
Every strike was perfect.
Albert's handling was clean as clean.

Johnny was looking quite amazed.
'How did you do it son?'
Albert replied all confidential like,
'Well after surviving that there ruddy Lion,
anything's easily done!'

©Keith Murphy

FROM THE ARCHIVES:-

100 YEARS AGO

27th April 1917:

The Annual Meeting of the Guild was held at 'The Rectory' Moreton-in-Marsh on Friday 27th April, 1917, the President (H D'Este East Esq) being in the Chair.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read & accepted, after which letters of apology were read from Rev's G.E.Hitchcock, D.J.Kennedy, & D.Lloyd. The attendance was small but it was decided to regard this as the General Annual Meeting (sic), and therefore the Report & Balance Sheet for the previous twelve months was received and passed, which showed a balance in hand of £7-7-5. On the proposition of the Rev Spencer Jones sec by Mr H Evans it was resolved to again suspend the operation of Rules 6 & 67, relating to members subscriptions. Proposed by Mr H.Evans sec Rev S.Jones that all 3 officers be elected. Carried.

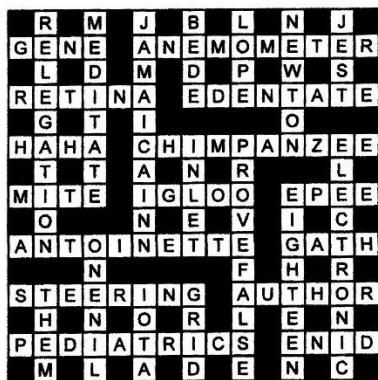
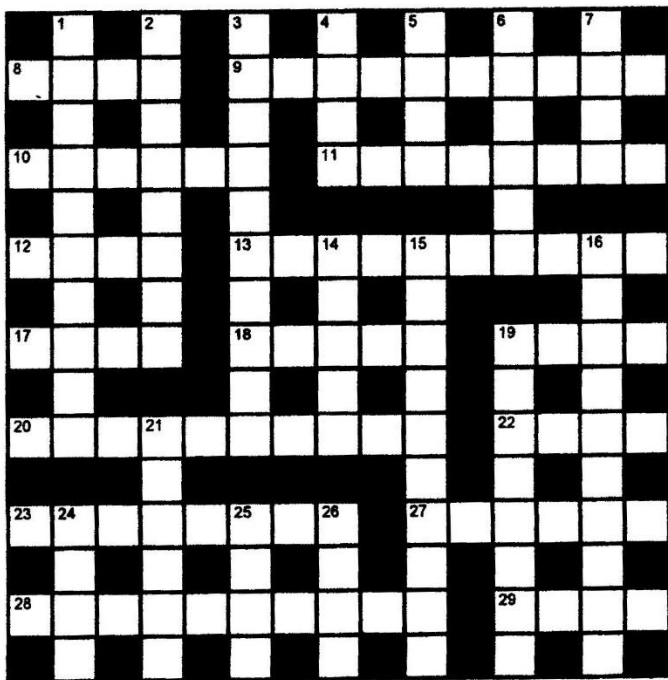
*The President having expressed an earnest hope that before the next Annual Meeting came round, the terrible War now waging would be ended, and which those present heartily endorsed, the usual Votes of thanks were passed to the President for his services in the Chair & to the Rev Spencer Jones for the use of the room. This closed the meeting.
(Signed) Herbert D'Este East
President*

40 YEARS AGO

There was no Committee meeting between 1st March 1977 (reproduced in From the Archives in the last Newsletter) and the Committee Meeting held on 24th August 1977 (to be reproduced in the next Newsletter).

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

Another! El Pres just keeps going. He has boundless energy!



Answers to January 2017 X-word

Across

- 8 Started fowl but turned out smart and fashionable. (4)
- 9 The cricketer who didn't quite make the team. (7,3)
- 10 Choose your answer. (6)
- 11 The treble is normally this. (8)
- 12 An inflamed swelling on the eyelid. (4)
- 13 A feeling that all is not well. (10)
- 17 We might have this in the rope, but we don't want one in the stay. (4)
- 18 A wind just short of a hurricane. (5)
- 19 The front work of Stedman could be this. (8)
- 20 Twenty short of the extent of doubles. (3,7)
- 22 This usually gives one a hint to the date of the church. (4)
- 23 Girl hide. That is literally wrong. (8)
- 27 The split of the Greek church from the Latin. (6)
- 28 See 16 down. (3,7)
- 29 In place of. (4)

Down

- 1 and 14. The Church of St Edmund is in the middle of this Warwickshire town. (8,2,5)
- 2 An unexpected and often unpleasant event. (8)
- 3 Ringers may see examples of this man's work. (10)
- 4 Salesmen. (4)
- 5 King of Mercia in the 8th century. (4)
- 6 A small hot-tasting kind of pepper. (6)
- 7 If you are up to these you are very busy. (4)
- 14 See 1 down. (5)
- 15 In a boastful fashion. (10)
- 16 and 28 across. The G and B. (10)
- 19 We reorganised shall see something in the sand. (8)
- 21 Frank Spires has a medal. (3,1.1.1)
- 24 Scottish island, with an abbey, west of Mull. (4)
- 25 Stedman type method – from Ireland?. (4)
- 26 A gallery founded on sugar. (4)

Retro Ringing Rally

Saturday 13th May 2017

A Gentle Tour Around Bredon Hill suitable for Classic Cars and Bicycles

10.15 - 10.45	Kemerton, St Nicholas (GL20 7HX)	6, 12cwt in F#? Map ref. SO945368
11.00 -11.30	Bredon, St Giles (GL20 7LF)	6, 18-2-2 in D Map ref. SO920369
11.45 -12.15	Bredon's Norton, Chapel of Ease (GL20 7EZ)	6, 6.5cwt in C# Map ref. SO930390
LUNCH: The Bell, Eckington		
2.15 – 2.45	Eckington, Holy Trinity (WR10 3AN)	8, 14-0-26 in E Map ref. SO922414
3.00– 3.30.	Gt Comberton, St Michael (WR10 3DS)	6, 8-2-16 in Bb Map ref. SO954420
4.00- 4.30	Crothorne, St Michael (WR10 3LU)	6, 10 cwt in F# Map ref SP000451

Possible tea and cakes at venue to be arranged

At present we hope that we have at least 9 Classic Cars taking part. If you would like to join us, either with a car or in a spare seat, please contact Isobel.Murphy@btinternet.com
Tower donations dependent on numbers!

MARGARET PRATT: 1940-2017



Margaret Pratt passed away peacefully in the George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton, on Monday 23rd January 2017 with her husband Geoff by her side. Diagnosed with cancer less than a year ago, she had faced her illness with her customary positive attitude and great fortitude. Indeed many people have said that they didn't even know she was ill. Her demise came unexpectedly and sooner than anyone anticipated.

Margaret was born and brought up in Cambridge, the elder of two children. She trained as a Nurse at Addenbrooks' Hospital – a fact she was very proud of, the expectations and standards of which she maintained through all her professional appointments – from the very young in the nursery at Exhall Grange School to the elderly sick at High View hospital and her various ventures into Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry. She was not just any Nurse but was one of the old school of vocational nurses.

In her teens she responded to an appeal (no pun intended) for new ringing recruits at St Andrews Chesterton, Cambridge and there met Geoff. Following their wedding in 1962 they moved to Coventry where Geoff was working for GEC Telecomms. Margaret was never completely happy with the move away from her family and friends in Cambridge, but like all wives of that

era, had very little say where work placements were concerned. They lived initially above a Doctor's surgery on the outskirts of the city and Margaret carved herself a niche as a Nurse/Receptionist in the Doctor's surgery. At that time, Stoke St Michael became their home tower. In 1964 they moved to Bulkington where they have lived ever since, and became part of the band at St James' Church. Bringing up their three sons, Margaret had little spare time for ringing but immersed herself in village activities such as The Mothers' Club, and latterly, the Art Club.

After the family flew the nest Margaret would ring for Sunday Evening Services at Bulkington and, in more recent times, after the morning service at Coventry Cathedral. She knew what she was capable of ringing and stuck religiously to those methods! She wasn't interested in ringing 'Fancy Stuff'. Never a great enthusiast or ambitious ringer, she was a loyal member of the bands she joined, and rang a number of quarter peals. It is thought her last quarter was at the Cathedral where she was 'bullied' by Peter Border into ringing Grandsire Cinques.

Margaret's greatest contribution to the ringing fraternity was her steadfast support for her husband and his ringing. "He's been out ringing every night this week," she would say, not with bitterness but with incredulity that anyone could find such a hobby so fascinating! She doggedly accompanied him to the Coventry Guild Meetings, to the monthly Four Shires Thursday outings, to the Birmingham area on the last Wednesday of each month, and, horror of horror, a whole 6 days of ringing on the 'Easter Tour'. She would have a couple of rings and then slip off to read the paper or find a coffee shop, her contribution complete! But she was fascinated by the Architecture and History of the Churches she visited, and, as a keen gardener, by everything that grew in the Churchyard.

As testament to her popularity as a ringer, as a highly respected 'villager', as a work colleague,

as a wife, mother and grandmother, sister and aunt, some 150 people packed the Church at Bulkington for her funeral service on Tuesday 21st February; there were people from as far north as Bradford, as far south as Hampshire, as far west as Mid-Wales and as far east as Norwich, to say nothing of her sons and their families flying in from California and Toronto. Muffled bells greeted the congregation and a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung as she left the Church for the last time. A second quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles rung by the 'locals' replaced the usual Tuesday practice in the evening.

She will be sorely missed by many people – not least of whom are Ruth and myself, close friends for over 50 years.

Rest in Peace Margaret and Rise in Glory.

Ruth Border & Joy Pluckrose

RINGING IN MEMORY OF MARGARET PRATT

Radford Semele, Warks, 25 Jan, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: 1 Pat Aylward, 2 Isobel Murphy, 3 Sue Roderick, 4 Keith Murphy, 5 Anne Franklin (C), 6 Tom White. In fond remembrance of Margaret Pratt, who passed away on Monday: a loving friend to many in the Coventry and Four Shires Guilds.

Wellesbourne, Warks, 6 Feb, 1312 Rutland Surprise Major: 1 Michael Dane, 2 Peter Quinn, 3 James Ingham, 4 John Keddie, 5 Karen French, 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Christopher Mew (C). Rung in memory of Margaret Pratt of Bulkington.

Todenham, Glos, 12 Feb, 1260 Mixed Doubles (1p, 2m): 1 Isobel Murphy, 2 Chris Seers, 3 Dan Glyde, 4 Keith Murphy, 5 Robin Green (C), 6 John Nicholls. In memory of Margaret Pratt of Bulkington.

RONALD (RON) C. GILKS – GUILD HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

Ron was a well-known village character that many now claim are non-existent (what rubbish!). He was a great personal friend of mine, insomuch that we shared many identical hobbies/pastimes, particularly in our retirement years. He originally lived in Quinton (across the border!) and moved to Mickleton when in the employment of the Webb market gardening company – in its heyday.

He was of a sizeable family and would relate to me many, many stories of his early childhood, his schooling, the period of early manhood, etc.

He was always expressing his admiration of his children – Pam, Martin, Nigel and Val. He led a simple life, worked hard and was satisfied with his 'lot'. I could relate pages of interesting news regarding his life - many stories very humorous! He was taught to ring by his father and joined the Ilmington team. He never showed an inclination to learn change ringing, but was very happy ringing the tenor behind - and how good he was with that, too: probably the best in the area at his time! Inevitably time and ill-health caught up and he could no longer ring, but that didn't stop him visiting on Sunday mornings to watch, listen and

chat – and he was not averse to offering his criticism!

The Mickleton and Ilmington ringers offer their condolences to his family. YES, he was a great village character!

John Kinchin

Having rung two or three peals of Doubles with Ron tenoring behind, I fully support John's assertion that Ron was probably the best in the area. His tenoring was metronomic. Truly a real – and rare – treat. Thank you, Ron. CMP

‘BRETWICKHAM’ – A CHRISTMAS ‘HAT TRICK’.

For the third year running our 29th December morning ring this year was at **Salford Priors** where we were joined by several ringing friends from Offenham and Pebworth. A somewhat frosty hue greeted us at the church but we enthusiastically set about raising the eight bells to keep warm and stayed within the comfort zone of Doubles and Rounds and Call Changes. All too soon we found ourselves outside and sampling the bacon baps and other refreshments kindly prepared by Nick Gibson (the church readily agreeing to our request to hold a mini BBQ in the car park). Thanks go to everyone who attended and made it an enjoyable morning, especially for Fiona on her birthday.

Roger Hunt



l to r: Fiona’s mum, Georgie Roberts, Phil Milward, Fiona Gibson, Ray Waldron, Rose Waldron, Bill Wadsworth, Bob Topp, Nana Hirayama, George Jelfs, Claire Penny, John Cleveland, Rob Davis, Kirsty (Fiona’s sister), Martin Penny, Anna Sanderson, Roger Hunt and Fiona’s father – in front: Nick, Xenia and Heidi.
(photo – Roger Hunt)

TALES FROM A TOWER NEAR YOU (10) A FARMER’S HELPING HAND

As I watched a tractor busily mounding up the asparagus beds occupying a 40 acre field the other side of my rear garden hedge recently I recalled some of the occasions that farmers had lent a hand handling bells and materials during the many bell restoration projects I’d participated in.

One such project about 8 years ago at **Edgton** in Shropshire involved removing two turret bells to have the cast-in crown staples drilled out and new wooden headstocks and clappers (metal ones!) fitted.

The job was straightforward with a driveway into the churchyard and the west end of the building suitably scaffolded to enable manual chainblocks to be used for moving the bells and equipment.

Come the day of removal a local farmer (he may have been a churchwarden) arrived by the field gate opposite the gable end with his telescopic handler and as my photo shows made light work of bringing the bells down to terra firma – he had even put bales of straw in the handler bucket to park the bells on to stop them slipping about - Arthur Berry took great delight in reclining on them whilst the bells and he were lowered together to the ground! Obviously we took advantage of the farmer’s offer to repeat the exercise when the bells were returned.



‘All are safely gathered in’



The bell on the left is dated 1678 and the Abraham Rudhall bell on the right is dated 1713.

‘Roger de Flaedenburg’

RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

THE JANUARY TOUR (the 327th): THURSDAY 19th: OXFORD OUTSKIRTS.

Four Shires January Tour, Thursday 19 January It's the third Thursday in the month so it must be the Four Shires Midweek tour. Do consider joining us if you can spare the time for a relaxed day out with four towers and a lunch together at a convenient pub. Joining the lunch party is not compulsory, nor is it necessary to make it to all towers. We usually number from high teens to mid twenties. Unfortunately, that's not our age, it's the number of ringers and we will ring within our capabilities which means nobody is stretched to breaking point, so come along and don't worry.



For January, Oxfordshire had the pleasure of our company. Our first tower was Yarnton and although I have to say our ringing was pretty good, it was completely eclipsed by two memorials to the Spencer family that can be found inside the Church.

Many times have I driven into Oxford and thought I was driving through Yarnton on the A44 from Woodstock, but I was being deceived. The bulk of the village is set away from the main road into Oxford and unexpectedly has a church with this and another amazing memorial. It's well worth a visit.

For the record we rang Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles, Cambridge and Plain Bob Doubles on bells presented to the church by Sir Thomas Spencer shortly before his death in 1622.

Having dragged ourselves away from admiring the interior of Yarnton church we travelled closer into Oxford to Old Marston. Parking seemed to be a bit of a problem and also arriving on bin collection day didn't help. After dropping off my passengers, I seem to spend most of my time circling the village looking for a space and at the same time annoying the bin men who always

seemed to be blocking the route to last available space in Old Marston. Still, eventually they successfully collected all the rubbish and I found somewhere to park so all was well.



It seemed that height as well as space may be an issue in Old Marston. The ringing room has a low ceiling, ringers over 6' 6" beware! The bells were nice enough and we kept the bin men entertained with Ipswich, Stedman Doubles, Plain Bob Major and appropriately, Oxford Treble Bob.

Just to demonstrate that Murphy's law is alive and well and living in Oxfordshire, when we came out there were enough spaces to park several more cars and the bin men had vanished.

Lunch was served to us The Victoria Arms in Old Marston. It's a popular pub on the River Cherwell and although we were all tempted to sit outside, the January temperatures drove us into our lunch venue pretty quickly.

Our tower after lunch was Headington and by now I was getting used to limited and controlled parking in the Oxford area. Is it me or are other people reluctant to pay to deposit their collection of materials and technology known as their car on the public highway? Having come up with the answer, it's probably me, I again dropped off my passengers and found a space with a bracing walk in the weak afternoon sunshine of the January afternoon.

St. Andrew was much in evidence around the exterior and interior of the church. The church web site informs us that this was a place where *the King of England once worshipped when Headington was a seat of royal government and administration*. The site doesn't tell us which King, but I suspect it's a fair bet it was Charles I when Oxford was the royalist centre in the Civil War. So the King of England and St Andrew side by side!

We rang Grandsire Triples, Cambridge, Stedman Triples, Yorkshire and Little Bob. Shortly before the end I, donned my hiking boots and set off for the car and the only available free parking in this part of Oxfordshire.

Our last tower was Horspath which we did ring

in but due to a necessary prompt departure, I'm unable to list the methods rung. Once again we brushed with history. The oldest existing bell, at present the fourth in the ring, was cast in 1602. Thanks this month was given to Isobel Murphy for arranging this particular tour and we all look forward to February when we are off to the Witney area. Do come along.

Keith Murphy

THE FEBRUARY TOUR (the 328th): THURSDAY 16th. AROUND WITNEY

What a lovely start to the day after all the cold weather we had had over the last few days, a touch of spring was in the air and the sun was shining.

The first tower of the day was the 16cwt ring of 8 at Witney with a larger green in front of it. A warm ringing room welcomed us to this lovely ring. Whilst I was in the Tower Richard sought out the bookshop on Church Green, where he spent a very pleasant 15 minutes talking to the proprietor who, amongst other things, stocks bell ringing books. I am sure you have all seen his advert in *The Ringing World*. Richard was informed that the Bishop of Winchester was responsible for the current Church and I had noticed a large property, now in the hands of Oxfordshire County Council, was called Bishops Palace. Having been round Witney on the A40 many times it looks as though Witney needs a further visit to look around this market town.



St Nicholas, Asthall (photo: Isobel Murphy)

Some of our group found themselves stuck on the M40 following a crash so were meeting us at Asthall, our next ring of the day. This is a lovely little village with the Church sitting below The Manor House at one end of it. This interesting Church has a ring of 6 bells with a tenor weight of 6cwt and the small ringing room is accessed by wooden stairs which were a little dark. It was basically a question of one band up and one

band down which made things a little difficult for organising the ringing. Although the Church was a little cool there was some heat in the tower, you just had to be careful where you stood.

Now on to lunch at The Dovecote at Minster Lovell with wide sweeping views over the Windrush Valley. This catered for all tastes although the beer drinkers were not so keen on the beer which was being kept.

Refreshed it was on to Aston, our only ground floor ring of the day, a 12cwt ring of 6. Of interest were the stained glass windows. In the main it was clear glass with circles depicting various things but looked as though these were made from fragments of glass, a little different. My initial thoughts were that this glass may have come from an earlier church built on the site but I don't think this can be the case having looked at various websites. One describes them as C20 memorial windows.

Our final tower of the day was Bampton, ring of 8 23cwt, in a central tower with a spire or perhaps I should say that this is Downton, the Village/Town used for the filming of Downton Abbey. Small wonder that there were a few tourists around.

Thanks go to Chris Seers for organising this interesting day out even taking in Brize Norton on our travels and to those who organised at the ringing at the various towers. Our standard methods were rung with the addition of Morpeth being called for at Aston.

Sandra Parker

THE MARCH TOUR: THURSDAY 16TH (the 329th). AROUND STRATFORD

A great turnout for our first tower Stratford, 30 of us with some new faces, as well as the welcome return of Pat Halls, and Geoff Pratt so soon after the loss of Margaret, ringing ranged from rounds and call changes to Cambridge Royal. Yours truly found the stairs at Stratford extra terrifying as I have broken my arm, making them difficult to negotiate.

Today's report will not feature the bells, as I was unable to ring any, although I had some useful? lessons on how to ring one-handed. I can still write, hence the report.

Next to Alveston, easy stairs with a large function room next to the ringing chamber, the bells almost inaudible, but a good socialising space. Carlisle, Stedman and St Clements the order of the day here, a definite spring buzz in the air.

The Kings Head Wellesbourne did an excellent job turning around such a large number of us. We also had some birthday celebrations, Isobel has a significant birthday and we shared a lovely cake made by ringer Nicki Unwin from Taynton Oxon. Not only does she make fantastic cakes, she has raised £85,000 for the rehang of the bells at Taynton, currently out at Whitechapel, well done Nicki! Watch out for these on a tour in due course.

Suitably refreshed full of cake, Wellesbourne next. The cake must have had an effect as the 8 spliced just would not go. One of the ringers was delighted to discover some family history

on one of the peal boards.

El Presidente thanked Sue Bacon for organising, not being able to resist quoting Shakespeare as we were in his locale, "the Ides of March" the previous day not applying to the ringers as we were all having a great day.



At the last tower, Lighthorne we were greeted by spring blossom just out, and some lovely primroses. London was well rung here, and a comment that breaking my arm was a bit of a drastic way of getting out of learning the harder 4 of the standard 8. They will just have to wait for now.

Chris Seers

THE MID-WEEK RINGERS WOULD BE DELIGHTED IF YOU JOINED THEM

As has been mentioned in these reports previously, the numbers on the Mid-Week Tours have dwindled slightly in recent years. Ringers, particularly FSG members (it is a Guild event), are very welcome to join us – it isn't a select group. We enjoy ringing in towers in both local and a-little-less-local parts – and we have a pleasurable time. These tours started in October 1989 and have continued monthly ever since, with just one cancellation due to very bad weather: quite a record. Tours aren't arranged way in advance, so future tour details can't be advertised in the Newsletter, but details of the next tour to occur can be found by looking on the web-site that is specific to these tours: see <http://homepages.which.net/~paul.evans12/4shires/html/bracket.htm> or contact me (details on page 2).

Isobel Murphy

LADIES IN PARTICULAR TAKE NOTE OF THIS SAD TALE

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS OCCURRED, BUT IT CAME FROM THE G&B GENERAL SECRETARY TO THE BRANCH SECRETARIES. IT'S WORTH VERY WIDE COVERAGE (AND NO, THIS ISN'T AN APRIL FOOL)

Please can you make ringers aware that I had my handbag stolen whilst ringing for evensong last Sunday evening. A man came into the tower pretending to be interested in ringing, we made him welcome and gave him a brief explanation about the bells and ringing. When we were all ringing he took my bag from under one of the seats and left with it down the spiral staircase. I didn't notice that it was missing until we finished ringing. It's been a real pain: my iPhone has gone, my credit/debit/store cards/ my purse/ my glasses/ keys etc. We have just paid out to get our house locks changed.

I am normally really careful with my possessions but I suppose I had a false sense of security in the belfry. I want to publicise this so we can all be more aware of this risk.

Ann

WELCOME VISITORS

Midway through the Mickleton ringing practice on Tuesday 14th March our outer ringing belfry door opened and the entrant enquired whether he could join in the ringing. We always welcome visitors, though in our innermost minds we wonder as to the ability of a stranger – it can differ greatly! Our concern was unfounded – he rings regularly on the ring of 12 in New York! He was originally from Birmingham, but was working in the US.

His presence enabled us to ring a selection of 8-bell methods – oh! what joy. There was a plus factor – could his family join us on Sunday morning? The fact that there was no 11.00am Service that day was quickly overcome with permission obtained to ring for approximately one hour.

The family, consisting of mother, father, son and daughter-in-law, were staying at April Cottage in

Church Lane, only a few footsteps from the tower. They were celebrating the arrival of a grand-daughter, Harriet (she quietly sat in her pram within the ringing chamber), and had invited some 40 family members to a reunion at the Butchers Arms. They could not express their gratitude enough to all our local ringers who gave their time for this special occasion.

John Kinchin

THE EDITOR PAYS HIS DEBT

In the April issue last year I set some quiz questions about the earliest known written instructions for casting a bell. I offered a bottle of French fizz to the person who gave the correct answers. In the following Newsletter (July) I gave the answers and congratulated Paul Marriott, the RM at Cherington, for getting amazingly close to those answers, and said I would be very happy indeed to give him the prize.

The Guild met for a Saturday practice at Cherington on 14th January, so I went to present Paul with the bottle. For those who haven't met him, Paul is a lovely man. His appearance hides a massive fund of knowledge, intelligence and education – which obviously includes the ability to translate Latin.

The photo proves my debt has been paid, but after receiving it Paul said, 'I shall open it after the practice for all here to have a drink.' And he did! Wonderful night; wonderful man.

Chris Povey



A GOOD-BYE QUARTER PEAL

In 2007 Pam and Bruce McFarlane uprooted from their lifelong Scottish home, when along with Pam's cousin Lindsay they acquired the Ilmington 'Folly Farm' bed and breakfast business. They quickly integrated into the local community and their involvement in so many village activities was readily accepted by both villagers and people from a much wider area. All the voluntary work they carried out (how they fitted it all in is just unbelievable) was met with gusto and professionalism.

Pam decided to learn bellringing and within a short time became proficient in handling a bell. She rang with both Mickleton and Ilmington ringers, and became a regular ringer at Sunday Services, weddings, tours, festivals, etc.

Pam and Bruce have decided to go back to their grass roots in April – they will operate a B&B business in Inveraray, not far from the famous Bell

Tower that houses Scotland's heaviest ring of bells, the magnificent 42cwt ring of 10 cast by Taylors in 1920. Pam and Bruce will be greatly missed.

The ringers agreed they could not let the occasion pass without showing their gratitude to Pam. A quarter peal was duly rung at Ilmington, the details of which are below. A splendid meal at The Howard Arms was taken afterwards.

Ilmington, Warks, 17 Mar, 1260 Plain Bob Triples: 1 David Clark, 2 John Kinchin, 3 Fran Chapman, 4 Bill Sabin, 5 John Nicholls, 6 Jackie Hands, 7 Michael Dane (C), 8 Michael Fairfax. A Goodbye to Pam (a ringer at this tower) and Bruce leaving Ilmington to run a new guesthouse in Inveraray.

Bob Voyage Pam and Bruce!

John Kinchin

FROM THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

I had a meeting with C of E in Westminster last week and the key things to note are as follows:-

Anyone holding a DBS certificate for their local parish will be recognised if they are teaching/helping with young people at a Parish IN THE SAME DIOCESE. Where someone is helping across a Diocesan Boundary, their certificates will be acceptable PROVIDED THEY ARE SIGNED UP TO THE CONTINUOUS UPDATING SERVICE. This means that any Parish could just check on-line that their Certificate remains clear. There is NO

relaxation on portability of any certificates from other activities (such as school teaching, hospitals etc), these being regarded universally as organisations external to the church.

Finally, members who are tower captains may have been already asked to have a formal Role Description by their church and to be "formally appointed" by the PCC. A sample "Role description" can be found on the CC website under Tower Stewardship Committee.

Chris Mew

NOTICES AND ADVERTS

GUILD ANNUAL RINGING TOUR

SATURDAY, 1st JULY 2017

HEREFORDSHIRE/GLOUCESTERSHIRE/WORCESTERSHIRE BORDERS

0930 - 1015 **Cradley**, Herefs (St. James), 8, 13-2-20 in F# WR13 5LH

1045 - 1130 **Coddington**, Herefs (All Saints), 6, 10-1-20 in G HR8 1JJ

1145 - 1230 **Colwall**, Herefs (St. James the Gt), 10, 10-1-5 in G WR13 6HJ

Lunch - Own arrangements

*suggestion, Prince of Wales pub, Ledbury (next to church)
(there are also several other pubs & eateries in the town)

1415 - 1500 **Ledbury**, Herefs (S. Michael & AA), 8, 22-0-27 in Eb HR8 1DR

1530 - 1615 **Eastnor**, Herefs (St. John Bapt.), 6, 9cwt in A HR8 1RA

1630 - 1715 **Bromsberrow**, Glos (St. Mary V), 6, 7-1-0 in B HR8 1RU

Tower donations £5 per person.

There may be one or two slight changes before the day, so check with the organiser before the event.

ORGANISER: Richard Lewis-Skeath (to whom our thanks): handbell.ringer@btinternet.com, or 07747-802555

GUILD-BADGED CLOTHING

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. **Payment 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

Colours: 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>.

Some idea of sizing can be gauged from the following:-

Chest size in inches:-

	Small	medium	large	X-large	xx-large
Polo shirts	36-38	40	42	44	46-48
Sweat shirt	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49
Men's full zip fleece	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49
Half zip fleece	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49
Dress size:					
Ladies' full zip fleece	10	12	14	16	18

AROUND THE TOWERS

PEALS, QUARTER PEALS AND OTHER RINGING

PEALS IN THE LOCALITY THAT INVOLVED A LARGE PROPORTION OF FSG MEMBERS AND/OR LOCAL REASONS FOR RINGING THEM.

4

Vale of Evesham Society

Evesham, Worcestershire; The Bell Tower
Saturday, 28th January 2017 in 3h 38m (35-2-20)

5040 Plain Bob Caters

Composed by H J Tucker (arr)

1 Christopher M Povey	6 Steve Bowley
2 Roger H Hunt	7 Simon E Adams
3 Neil Garner	8 John W G Gwynne
4 Rachel D Page	9 Michael Chester (C)
5 Robert Tregillus	10 Nicholas K Allsopp

Rung, on the Pentatonic 10, to mark the start of the Chinese New Year. First peal on this 10. First in method for all, except 9. First Caters as conductor. Circled the tower 4 times: 1.

RINGING IN MEMORY OF BABY JACK WHITTLE

Pebworth, Worcs, 22 Jan, 1296 Grandsire Caters: 1 Freda Cleaver, 2 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 3 Jeanette Davey, 4 Jane Gilbert, 5 Georgie Roberts, 6 Claire Penny, 7 Roger Hunt, 8 Steve Bowley, 9 Nick Allsopp (C), 10 Martin Penny. Rung half-muffled in memory of baby Jack Whittle; with the deepest sympathy of the band and the other local ringers to Stef and Richard.

Harbury, Warks, 30 Jan, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 James Ingham, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 John Keddie, 5 John Nicholls, Peter Quinn, 7 Mark Sayers, 8 Robert A Reeves. Rung in memory of Jack Whittle, son of Richard and Stefanie, 16.11.2016 - 16.01.2017.

A MILITARY IN MEMORIAM: EXACT CENTENARY

Bishampton, Worcs, 7 March, 360 Plain Bob Doubles: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Christina Ireland, 3 Andy Harris, 4 Anthony Wheeler, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 Martyn Palmer. Rung for the 100th Anniversary of the death of local soldier Private Henry (Harry) Stephen Crouch, 1st Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment - (died 7th March 1917 of wounds received during The Action of Bouchavesnes in one of the Battles of the Somme - he is buried at Maricourt, France).

RINGING IN MEMORY OF RON GILKS

Wellesbourne, Warks, 13 Mar, 1344 Spliced Surprise Major (3m): 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Peter Quinn, 3 James Ingham, 4 Douglas Kempton, 5 Lucy Gwynne, 6 Karen French, 7 John Nicholls, 8 John Gwynne. Rung in memory of Ron Gilks of Mickleton.

Mickleton, Glos, 27 Mar, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 John Kinchin, 2 Frances Chapman, 3 Bill Sabin, 4 Karen French, 5 Simon Oram, 6 Chris Mew (C), 7 John Nicholls, 8 Jackie Hands. Rung in memory of Ronald C Gilks.

RINGING IN MEMORY OF CHRIS ROBERTS

Fladbury, Worcs, 18 Mar, 1280 Cambridge Surprise Major: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Lucy Gwynne, 3 Rachel Page, 4 Neil Garner, 5 Margaret Smith, 6 Steve Bowley, 7 John Gwynne, 8 Roger Hunt (C). Rung to the memory of Chris Roberts of Moreton-in-Marsh who passed away 7 March. An FSG S&S quarter peal.

Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, 31 March, rung immediately prior to, and immediately after his funeral Service: 112 Double Norwich Court Bob Major. His favourite method. By a mixed band of local, Cheshire and family ringers

Stanford in the Vale, Oxon, 30 Dec, 1344 Plain Bob Major: 1 Isobel Murphy, 2 Denise Hughes, 3 Chris Seers, 4 Keith Murphy, 5 David Rake, 6 Tim Hughes, 7 Robin Green, 8 Dan Glyde (C). In memory of Jane Nicholas, niece of 1 and 4, on what would have been her 39th birthday. First major as conductor

Mickleton, Glos, 2 Jan, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Peter Gordon, 2 Rachel Page, 3 John Kinchin, 4 Chris Mew (C), 5 Peter Quinn, 6 Simon Oram, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Robert Reeves. First away from cover: 1

Evesham, Worcs, 7 Jan, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: 1 Georgie Roberts, 2 Roger Hunt, 3 Claire Penny, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Matthew Kemble, 6 Martin Penny (C). To welcome Chloe Rose Kemble, daughter of Matthew and Georgina, born New Year's Eve 2016.

Wellesbourne, Warks, 12 Jan, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Sue Bacon 3 Stewart Heritage, 4 Simon Oram, 5 Len Morley, 6 John Carroll, 7 Michael Dane, 8 Peter Quinn. To welcome the Bishop of Warwick to Wellesbourne

Adestrop, Glos, 14 Jan, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Jane Gilbert, 3 Nick Allsopp, 4 Claire Penny, 5 George Osborn, 6 Martin Penny (C). 1st Q of Minor on the bells and in the tower.

Pebworth, Worcs, 21 Jan, 1296 Grandsire Caters: 1 Jackie Roberts, 2 Jeanette Davey, 3 Claire Penny, 4 Jane Gilbert, 5 Nick Allsopp, 6 Martin Penny (C), 7 Rachel Page, 8 Roger Hunt, 9 Margaret Smith, 10 Matthew Kemble. Rung half-muffled in memory of Julia Morris, retired Head Teacher of Kineton High School and former Governor of Stratford upon Avon College. First in method: 3.

Sherbourne, Warks, 25 Jan, 1260 Mixed Doubles (Stedman, Reverse Canterbury, Winchendon Place, St Martins, St Nicholas, St Simons, Plain Bob, Grandsire): 1 Isobel Murphy, 2 Sue Roderick, 3 Pat Aylward, 4 Tom White, 5 Anne Franklin (C), 6 Keith Murphy. Continuing the BIG 60 celebrations for all the band

Radford Semele, Warks, 25 Jan, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: 1 Pat Aylward, 2 Isobel Murphy, 3 Sue Roderick, 4 Keith Murphy, 5 Anne Franklin (C), 6 Tom White.. Continuing the BIG 60 celebrations for all the band.

Barford, Warks, 25 Jan, 1260 Doubles (Grandsire, Plain Bob): 1 Tom White, 2 Keith Murphy, 3 Pat Aylward, 4 Isobel Murphy, 5 Anne Franklin (C), 6 Sue Roderick. Continuing the BIG 60 celebrations for all the band

Bretforton, Worcs, 18 Feb, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Peter Gordon, 2 Jeanette Davey, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Neil Garner, 5 Rachel Page, 6 John Nicholls, 7 Roger Hunt (C), 8 Steve Bowley. An S@S quarter peal.

Lighthorne, Warks, 20 Feb, 1260 Minor (4m): 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Lucy Gwynne, 3 Simon Oram, 4 Karen French, 5 John Nicholls, 6 Robert Reeves.

Evesham, Worcs, 27 Mar, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Tom Sandham, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Patrick Wooster, 4 Roland Merrick, 5 Matthew Kemble (C), 6 Chris Povey. In Memory of Barbara Lee, Godmother to the conductor.

Welford on Avon, Warks, 28 Mar, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: 1 Freda Cleaver, 2 Rosemary Cole, 3 Tracey Newbold, 4 Edward Timmins, 5 John Newbold (C), 6 James Trewin. For the 90th birthday of Ewart Harper, who has been ringing at Welford up to the present for over 40 years. Many happy returns Ewart. Also 3rd's birthday on Friday 31st!!

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

Many will know that Richard and Stef lost baby Jack in January. We all feel for them. There is to be a fund-raising ringing event at Saintbury of Saturday 8th April: details below. The money raised will go to the Family Bereavement Suite at Worcester Royal Hospital.

‘JOIN IN FOR JACK’

🕒 8 April at 10:00–2.00pm

📍 Saintbury Church

Open ringing for all - Tea, coffee & cakes - Raffle To raise funds for the Family Bereavement Suite at Worcester Royal Hospital and in memory of Jack Whittle.

Please come!
Richard & Stef

My editorial mentioned the death of Chris Roberts. His funeral was on Friday 31st March at Moreton. There were many there. In the short time he and Jackie have resided in Moreton, many in this area came to know him. Because it wasn't possible to cover this properly due to the issue date of this Newsletter, I intend to do this in the July Newsletter, where an obituary, associated ringing and other coverage can be given the space they deserve.

As I write this, John Taylor & Co are gearing up to start work at Blockley. It cannot have escaped the notice of all members that this work is a full rehang of the existing 8 bells, plus an augmentation to 10. The chance to ‘buy’ a bell and have an inscription applied to it has been taken up with enthusiasm, to the point that to cope with the demand the existing tenor is to be recast, too, as it's the poorest sounding bell in the existing ring. (*I'm sure the new bells at Campden will be purchased just as enthusiastically, John: see Editorial. All power to your elbow! Ed*). The other seven existing bells will be tuned where possible. I understand the work programme demands some slick working, as the Bishop of Gloucester has been booked for a date in September. Many have asked: why have a ring of 10? Rings of 10 are extremely useful, particularly if the tenor is moderately heavy or more, because the front 6 of a 10 are a genuine 6 on their own, but are, of course, significantly lighter than the back 6. This is an enormous help to ringers who are ‘finding the years creeping up on them’. Ringing the ‘light 6’ (as they are normally referred to) is a vastly better option than ringing the front 6 of an 8 for

two reasons: the tenor of the ‘light 6’ is even lighter than the 6th of the 8 (it is the 4th of the 8) and a ‘proper’ 6 sounds so much better musically than the front 6 of the 8. A 10 does, of course, retain the 8 just as before – and gives the chance to ring 10 if lots of ringers turn up (which is something we all wish for). And another thing: 10 bells sound truly wonderful. Luckily, Blockley tower is big and there's plenty of room to put 10 bells in there; and all on one level, too!

It's interesting to see how bell restoration projects get underway. It can be the sometimes-sudden appearance of a large lump of money that tips the balance between a red light and a green light (the work at Adlestrop was a prime example of this, and Blockley, too, although the wait in the former case was excruciatingly long), or it can be a long and hard campaign of scraping bits of money together by a dedicated band of believers, whose trust in the worth of the finished result never wavers. Occasionally it is a necessity arising from the need to undertake the proposed work because things are falling apart. The latter case in particular can lead to a shortfall of cash, which can then sharpen the minds of the PCC to raise the shortfall. I know not whether Pillerton Hersey's situation falls into this category, but I understand their rehang scheme (see front page article) includes a shortfall at the moment. Although an augmentation is included in this work, the bell for this was a gift to the project. The new Hersey treble rang at Adlestrop for over 300 years. Its redundancy there after the recent work released it for use elsewhere and Hersey was the ideal location. At one time a redundant bell would normally go into the pot as scrap metal, but old bells, retuned as required, are now ‘recycleable’; and very many redundant bells are included regularly in augmentations or to assist in forming new rings. Sometimes discordant bells are replaced with redundant bells that are better toned. (If you have any interest in investigating what is available in this line, take a look at The Keltek Trust website:) Good luck to Pillerton Hersey's PCC with their endeavours; and let's hope a sudden injection of cash comes their way soon to balance the books.

Long Compton: I understand work has started on repairing the lightning damage. I do not know how long it will be before these bells are back in action.

Evesham Bell Tower bells will be out of action from the beginning of May until almost the end of July. Nothing exciting: no rehang and no augmentation. It's just a repainting of the bellframe – and there's a lot of it to be done. It is recommended metal bellframes are repainted every 30 years or so. The Bell Tower frame was last painted 35 years ago. It's not bad, but it should be done, so that it gets no worse and

therefore even more expensive. A Guild practice is to be held there on Saturday, April 29th.

Phyllis Brazier has decided to give up ringing. She suffered recently from a back problem, which prevented her from ringing for five weeks, so she thinks it is better to be sensible and not to tempt providence, especially as she is a goodly amount past four-score years. A happy ringing retirement, Phyllis. You have done your bit for ringing in this area in outstanding fashion. Put your feet up!

Happy 90th birthday congratulations to Ewart Harper of Welford-on-Avon (see Q dated 28th March on p.15)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

In response to your question **re Hastings gear transferred to Evesham** (Newsletter 151) I can confirm that the redundant apparatus did come from Studley although from which bell is unrecorded – it may be that the integral slider rail bracket is ‘centre-popped’ with the number of the Studley bell as this was a customary (and general) engineering practice if assemblies had been trialled in the workshop prior to despatch for assembly on site.

Roger de Flaedenburg



A typical Hastings stay gear re-installed and awaiting final painting during the Bretforton bells rehang on ball bearings in 2014. (photo: RdeF)

(*My thanks for this response and for the info it contains. I suspect some readers will wonder why Hastings stays are apparently so complicated. They are more difficult to set up correctly than the normal stay and slider arrangement. But they can be; and when they are, they are effectively frictionless. Ed*)

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)

BEQUESTS TO THE GUILD'S BELL RESTORATION FUND

Have you made, or you about to make, your will? The Guild would be grateful if you would consider making a bequest from your estate to its Bell Restoration Fund. The Fund is now a significant part of the bell restoration scene, and we need money into it so that it can be distributed to the good causes that have arisen and will continue to arise. Speak to the undersigned if you need advice.

Chris Povey, Hon Sec

EDGEHILL TEACHING CENTRE, KINETON

SATURDAY 20th MAY.

Module 1 Teaching Bell Handling

Provides you with the skills and techniques necessary to take a ringer from their first lesson to having competent bell control. You will learn through a mixture of practical and classroom sessions:

- the theory of teaching a skill,
- how to break down bell handling into easy stages that the learner can master,
- how to adapt to different learning types,
- the different levels of instruction, and
- the benefits of intensive teaching.

If you'd like to attend this course, please email Graham Nabb on gnabb50@gmail.com, or 07974 743766

NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

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

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

APR 1 st	DUMBLETON, Glos,	6, 11 cwt in G
APR 8 th	HINTON-ON-THE-GREEN, Worcs,	8, 10-1-8 in G
APR 15 th	* NOTE * NO SATURDAY PRACTICE THIS WEEK * EASTER SATURDAY *	
APR 22 nd	MICKLETON, Glos	8, 15-3-16 in E (GF) (*NOTE 7-30PM. TILL 8-45PM.*)
APR 29 th	EVESHAM, Worcs	12, 35-2-2-20 in C# (& 10, 14-2-26 in F#)
MAY 6 th	ALDERMINSTER, Warks	6, 12-0-26 in F
MAY 13 th	HARVINGTON, Worcs	6, 8-1-14 in A
MAY 20 th	NORTON, Worcs	8, 12-3-26 in F# (GF)
MAY 27 th	QUITTING POWER, Glos	6, 6-2-25 in Bb (GF)
JUN 3 rd	BROADWAY, Worcs	6, 18-1-16 in E (GF)
JUN 10 th	BIDFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 14-0-24 in F (GF)
JUN 17 th	BLADINGTON, Glos	6, 8-0-13 in G (*NOTE 7-30PM. TILL 8-45PM.*)
JUN 24 th	ASTON CANTLOW, Warks	6, 14-0-14 in F
JULY 1 st	* NO PRACTICE * ANNUAL RINGING TOUR (SEE NEWSLETTER FOR DETAILS: p.14)	
JULY 8 th	CHURCHILL, Oxon	8, 10-3-9 in G (*NOTE 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM.*)
JULY 15 th	LOWER QUINTON, Warks	6, 13-0-7 in F# (GF) (*NOTE 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM.*)
JULY 22 nd	ALVESTON, Warks	6, 7 ½ cwt in A
JULY 29 th	WHICHFORD, Warks	8, 12-3-23 in G (GF)

For any alterations to this programme, check the FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>). & 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:

!! SUBSCRIPTIONS (& DONATIONS) !!

Yes, folks, reminder time again: FSG subs were due on 1st January 2017. The rates are £5 for members and £2 for Juniors (under 18). If you haven't paid yet, please do so soon – it benefits the Guild. (Please note: there is no Non-Resident Life Membership category. An annual subscription is required to retain membership.) Also, please give a donation to the Guild's Bell Restoration at the same time - £5 minimum. It's a very good cause!!

Payment in cash can be made to Michael Dane, Hon Treasurer or any Committee member. If paying cash it will assist the person to whom you are giving the money if you use the payment slip attached to the January Newsletter. With the best will in the world it is sometimes difficult to remember who gave you money.....!!

YOU CAN PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BY INTERNET BANK TRANSFER, which is a very convenient service if you are internet-connected and have internet banking. THE GUILD'S BANKING DETAILS ARE: Bank, HSBC; Acct No, 71118668; Account name, FOUR SHIRES GUILD; Sort Code, 40-41-26. For 'Reference', please insert your name and tower (or unattached), otherwise you and your payment will be untraceable!! You will not need a receipt, as the bank transfer process allows a copy of the transfer document to be printed off. (I have used this system and it works well. I suggest those who pay subs and donations for a group of ringers follow it up with an email to the Treasurer listing those names. Ed)

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

Events for 2017 – book the dates now:-

Annual Ringing Tour	Sat 1 st July: Herefords/Glos/Worcs border – see Notice on page 14
Walking & Ringing tour	Possibly: Saturday in late Sept (organiser may be required)
AGM & Striking Comps	Sat 21 st October: Stuart and Michael Cummings will be welcoming us.
Inter-Shire Comp	Sat 18 th November (alternates with the Minimus Comp).