

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central



Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 164 - April 1st 2020

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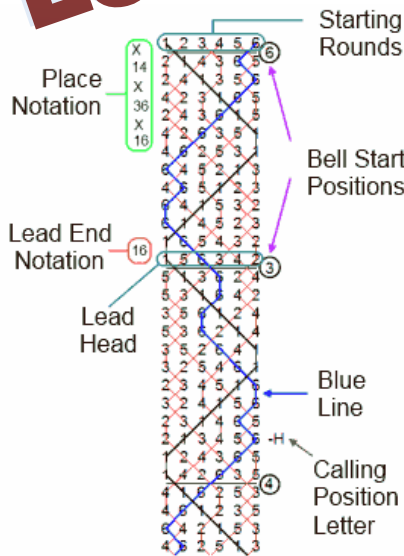
P11 Security of the Bells

Programme of events



Founded Oct 18th 1909

Look on the bright side



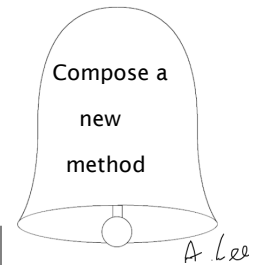
Compose an e-mail to invite a local guide or scout group, school club or U3A group to a practice

Write an Article for your local village magazine
Why I started bell ringing



Make that mini ring, model bell or teaching aid

Make up a quiz



Internet and Youtube links for your 50 Ringing things

Download Mobel or Abel for practice on a home computer

Learn a new method to conduct



Recruitment Poster

Editorial

Whilst editing this issue I was wondering what would make the front page, that became apparent in mid March when it was announced all ringing should cease even teaching individual people and simulator use.

How devastating, its hard to compre-

hend that the all church bells would be silent. People cannot remember anything happening like this before so what can be done to help look on the bright side.

Bell ringing social media has been commenting on making use of this time i.e. thinking about ways of recruitment and

retention, improving ones own blue line library of memorized methods, thinking about that next tour once we are allowed out again, the use of electronic ringing gadgets to substitute our loss. Do send in your photos of ideas, inventions or creations so I can print them in the next edition as there wont be any other 'newsy' items.

Alison Lee

Chaplains Thoughts,

Did your tower ring the church bells on the 31st January for Brexit ?

The original purpose of having a church bell was to call the people of the parish for worship in an age when the parishioners did not have clocks or watches also the Rector, Vicar or Curate of a parish was ordered to cause a bell to be rung when they went daily to the parish church to read matins early morning and evensong late in the day. The clergy prayed for the people of the parish and so when they heard the bell they knew that their priest was about to say the daily office and pray for their various needs.

At Brimpsfield where I was Rector for 26 years; I walked over the 200yrd foot path to the church, which crossed a field, and used my main church daily. However I did not go on Tuesday or Thursday mornings during term time as I was for 18 years the Bishop of Gloucester's inspector and visitor to church schools in the widespread area covered from Shurdington, south of Cheltenham and northwards as far as the Warwickshire border south of Stratford-on-Avon. A large number of schools were in the greater Cheltenham area and others in the rural area to the north and so I became familiar with the schools in the Four Shires guild area as well as the churches and their towers and ringers.

In recent years the numbers of bells in many of our churches has increased especially during the 19th and 20th centuries and I have personally located and supplied second hand bells to make the many rings of 5 into rings of 6. All this has helped in the development of change ringing. It does not seem long ago that we rang for the millennium in 2000. Bells are rung for Sunday services and for weddings and national and local special events. Whether or not you rang for Brexit will have been a local decision.

Rev. Dr Peter Newing.

2020 FSG Annual Dinner

The Guild's Annual Dinner was held once again at The Northwick Hotel in Evesham on Saturday 1st February. This venue greatly pleased those attending last year, but a price rise was necessary this year. The Committee had considerable discussion about whether the slight increase in price would deter some; and whether the excellent all-round service we received last year would be repeated. From the comments I heard it was, and I don't believe there were any adverse ones. It was all very good indeed. Not only was the service slick, the quantity of food brought to the tables was enough to quell the hunger of anyone – if anybody left hungry it was their fault! All well-cooked, too.



The event followed the normal pattern. Thanks for the food was led by one of our Vice-Presidents, Rev Dr Peter Newing (who was there with his wife Angela). Then three courses plus coffee (nobody could complain that the soup was cold – it was piping hot). During the latter part of the meal those stalwarts Stuart and Michael sold tickets for the raffle. Coffee was the Speaker's time to entertain us, who this year was Professor Alison Hodge.

But before doing so it was noted that the gathering included two professors, at least three more members holding doctorates, an OBE and an MBE. The remainder of the gathering held degrees from either some academic institution or the University of Life (and some say the latter is vastly superior...!). What a wonderful cross-section!

Although Alison is a prominent member of the Central Council's hierarchy, she chose to speak about the sustainability of ringing, 'sustainability for the future' being a subject that is receiving a lot of press these days (but not at the time of writing this report, coronavirus, self-isolation, lock down, most people not working being the main topic world-wide at present... Do you remember those halcyon days when we could ring bells without a ban? How the world has changed in just two months.) Alison demonstrated how sustainable ringing is. She started with bell ropes. They are made from flax or hemp, natural plants, and the sallies are all wool (yes, ropes some now have polyester top ropes, but flax or hemp is still widely used). Then there's the bells themselves, which are an amalgam of copper and tin (bronze) and are fully recyclable – but most likely into new bells. Bell frames are constructed from either wood or metal. If the former then the wood can be re-used if deemed unfit for continued bell frame use; and if metal, then the steel or cast-iron can be melted down for re-use. The hardware is very sustainable and very long-lasting. This led her on to the other aspect of ringing: the human input, which might be termed 'the soft-



Brazier Trophy to Willersey

ware'. From her viewpoint looking down on the audience it was obvious that most of those were in the OAP bracket. And it was also clear to her (and to many there, of course) that to sustain the sound of church bells in this country some big changes to the software would be needed to achieve that aim. She said the youngsters were the prize in this respect, but recruiting them is easy compared to keeping them. Dusty and dirty ringing rooms are very uninviting and will not encourage youngsters to stay. Yes, many of us will have experienced such things in our early days, but this will no longer be tolerated now. There are many activities out there to attract teenagers and ringing is now required to compete with these. Also, the standard of teaching must be high for a myriad of reasons. It was a timely warning about how the human element

(the software) is the key to keeping bells ringing. Change is vital.

After this Stuart Cummings announced that the raffle had made an amazing £146, which would all go into the Guild's Bells Restoration Fund and allow the Guild to continue giving grants to bell projects

The prizes were then awarded. Those teams receiving such were:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| The Newing Shield (winners of the striking competition) | Ilmington |
| The Spencer Jones Cup (the runners-up) | Pebworth |
| The Brazier Trophy (winners of the Brazier striking comp) | Willersey (B) |
| The Merit Award (to the band that, in the Ringing Master's opinion, has made most progress in the year. | Childswickham |



Newing Shield to Ilmington



..... and the Hon Sec with a pretty lady!

Merit Award to Childswickham



Spencer Jones Cup to Pebworth

The Shield was presented by Rev Peter Newing (Vice-President), the Spencer Jones Cup by President John Nicholls, the Brazier Trophy by Vice-President Freda Cleaver (although Richard L-S accepted it on Willersey's behalf as no-one from that tower was there), and the Merit Award by Richard Lewis-Skeath (Ringing Master). Signed certificates were awarded to those teams that took part in the competitions, but who did not receive awards.

And so closed another chapter in the Guild's history (Thanks to Roger Hunt for the photos). Chris Povey

Four Shires Guild of Bellringers – Financial Report 2019

The guild operates 2 bank accounts with HSBC; a Community Account which is our day to day account for General Funds and a Business Money Manager Account (which generates a small amount of interest) which holds the Bell Fund.

The General Fund started the year with £572.93 and finished with £982.04 which shows an increase of £409.11. However, we paid an decreased dinner deposit last year for the 2020 dinner (£265) and we had some subs paid in advance, for 2018 we actually made a profit of £120.

The principal income was subscriptions of £989 and expenditure of £302 on printing and postage, £432 for the guild and handbell insurance and £80 for CCCBR. The total membership for 2019 was 207 including 8 Life members (slightly down on 2018)

The Bell Fund started the year with £3,688.92 and ended with £5,073.83. The income was £1,389.91; up slightly from the 2018 income. We paid no grants in 2018; there are outstanding grants of £1,200 agreed at the end of the year. At the end of 2018 we had £3,878 of unallocated funds which can be used for grants.

Michael Dane, Hon Treasurer – Four Shires Guild of Bellringers

Four Shires Guild of Bellringers - Accounts 2019

2018	Income	2019	2018	Expenditure	2019
	General Fund				
£856.21	Opening Balance	£572.93	1		
£1,047.00	Subscriptions	£989.00	2	£335.77	Printing & Postage
	G&B Donation			£363.51	Insurance
£34.80	Garments	£101.20		£34.80	Garments
£1,633.00	Annual Dinner	£1,300.00	3	£2,056.00	Annual Dinner
	Donations towards Tea			£80.00	CCCBR
				£0.00	Room Hire
				£0.00	Website Domain
£0.00	Badges	£5.00		£0.00	Engraving Shields
£1,190.15	Bell Fund Donations	£1,427.80		£1,318.15	Transferred to Bell Fund
£1,295.00	Trans from Bell Fund (grants)	£0.00		£1,295.00	Grants Paid
£5,199.95	Total receipts	£3,823.00		£5,483.23	Total expenditure
				£572.93	Closing Bank balance
				£0.00	Cash in hand
				£572.93	Closing Balance
	Restricted Funds - Bell Fund		5		
£3,662.24	Opening balance	£3,688.92	1		
£325.00	Mid Week Tours	£400.00		£500.00	Pillerton Hersey
£581.00	Donations	£635.20		£500.00	Blockley
£3.53	Interest	£8.81		£175.00	Moreton in Marsh
£120.00	Newsletter Advertising	£120.00		£120.00	Bidford
£286.95	Raffles, outing, teas etc	£221.50			
£5.20	Clothing Profit	£4.40			
£0.00	From General Fund	0			
£1,321.68	Total receipts	£1,389.91		£1,295.00	Total expenditure
				£3,688.92	Closing balance
					£5,078.83
	Creditors at year end			Debtors at year end	
£45.00	Subs paid in advance	£18.00		£ 600.00	Dinner deposit
£531.00	Badges & Shields	£526.00			£265.00
	Other assets of the Guild include: Newing Shield, President's Chain, Brazier Trophy, Spencer Jones				
Notes					
1	Opening balances		4	Printing	
	The Guild operates 2 bank accounts, one for the General Fund and the other (which incurs interest) for the Bell Fund.			This covers the cost of all the Guild printing & posting, including the Newsletters.	
2	Subscriptions		5	Bell Fund	
	The total membership for 2019 was 207. This includes 8 Life members & 6 who paid in 2018.			The Committee decided that all the nett profit from Teas, Raffles, Clothing sales etc would go into the Bell Fund. The outstanding grants are £600 to E brington, £300 to Childswickham, £200 to Hampton and £100 to Temple Guiting.	
3	Dinner figure; This includes a deposit of £265 for the 2020 dinner.				

Open Tower Event

On Saturday 27th July Moreton-in-Marsh is having an Open Tower Event. This is to allow people to come and visit the ringing room to see results of the clock move/auto-winding project and have a go on the newly installed training bell. In the evening the Four Shire Guild are having their weekly practice to show people what bell ringing is all about.

16:00 - 18:30 Open Tower

18:30 - 20:00 Four Shire Practice, bell ringing demonstration.

Please put this date in your diaries and come along and support the event. I'm advertising this locally as well as a recruitment drive. Nick.

Top Tips

Grandsire Doubles

1. Grandsire is easy

Many people find Grandsire more difficult to learn than Plain Bob, but once you are reasonably confident about the work it is actually easier to see and stay right in. Why? Because you only need worry about 2 bells!

- In Grandsire doubles you have six ringing bells
- Ignore the tenor except to lead off – that leaves 5 bells
- The treble is just plain hunting, ignore it except as a signpost – that leaves 4 bells
- The hunt bell ALWAYS follows the treble, you can treat the two bells as one – down to 3 bells.
- Of the three remaining bells one of them is you! Therefore in terms of dodging you only need worry about 2 bells. AND you dodge with both bells so if you did your up dodge with bell A then you will do your down dodge with bell B

2. Knowing which is the hunt bell

- The hunt bell is always the bell you follow after you have followed the treble.

If you haven't spotted it while you are plain hunting then

- a) If you make thirds you do so over the treble and the hunt bell
- b) It is the bell you follow whilst doing your first blow in 5ths before dodging 4/5 down and your last blow in 5ths after dodging 4/5 up.

Spotting it at a call

If you can work out which bell is going into the hunt whilst ringing a bob or single then you will be ahead of the game!

At a single

- If you are making long thirds it is the bell making seconds under your thirds (ie the bell below you that is not the treble).
- If you are dodging 4/5 it is not the bell you are dodging with, nor the bell you are over in 4ths place whilst you are dodging (that one is doing long thirds) so it must be the other one.

At a bob

- If you are making thirds and you do not become the hunt bell then it is the bell you made thirds over (other than the treble).
- If you are dodging 4/5 then it is the bell you follow in 4ths place in the first of your double dodges.

Am I the hunt bell?

If you can't spot the hunt bell it may well be because you are it!

You are the hunt bell if

- You take the treble from lead
- You are over the treble whilst doing your first blow in 5ths place
- You pass all the other bells before you meet the treble
- You make seconds at a single
- You make thirds at a bob and you were not expecting to make thirds in the circle of work
- You make thirds at a bob and you take the treble from lead
- The conductor tells you so

3. The dodging

In a plain course of Grandsire if you are dodging 4/5 down the blow in 4ths place after you have done the dodge is over the treble. It's the same at a bob or single, the blow as you come off the back is over the treble. Now you have realised this you can use it. If you don't know how many dodges you have done keep going until you are in 4ths place over the treble at which point hunt in.

Claire Penny.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

100 years ago

A committee meeting to make arrangements for the spring meeting was at the Rectory on Friday 9th April at 7:30 pm, the Reverend Spencer Jones presided after the minutes were read and duly passed. Letter of apology for non attendance were read from the Reverend G E Hitchcock and Messers W Harris (Campden) and J Williams (Longborough). It was decided to arrange the programme on similar lines to the one carried out at the previous meeting at Saintbury, with exception of round ringing which it was decide to eliminate on this occasion, for the purpose of economising time. The committee further decide that the Reverend A D Agar (vicar of Blockley be asked to kindly preach to us at the special service, at the parish church and that Mr E Pardon be requested to act as judge. This with the customary vote of thanks to the chairman closed the meeting. Owing to the severe floods there was a small attendance. G E Hitchcock.

The Spring meeting of the Guild was held at Shipston on Thursday the 29th April 1920, and as everything passed off well, it proved to be a very successful and enjoyable event. The competition began about 2:30pm, consisting of rising and falling, call changes and method. The following being the results awarded by the judge Mr E Pardon

Rising and falling	Call changes	Method	Willersey thus secured two honours and
Campden 57%	Willersey 95%	Willersey 78%	Campden one
Willersey 40%	Campden 93%	Moreton 40%	
Moreton 30%	Blockley 78%		
Blockley 20%	Moreton 68%		

At the conclusion of the competitions, a short service was held in the parish church, conducted by the Rev. D Lloyd, assisted by the Rev. Dr Holbrooke and a very interesting and forceful address was given by the Rev, Spencer Jones. After the service, members and friends to the number of about 50, sat down to an excellent meat tea in the Hostel, kindly given by local Ladies and Gentlemen. Following the tea, the usual Business meeting was held, the Rev. G E Hitchcock being voted to the chair. The secretary read the minutes which were duly passed, after which a letter of apology through inability to be present was read from the President Sir Gilbert Wills, Bart, m.p. The secretary then presented the Balance sheet, which showed a balance in hand of £3-10-9. Also in giving his report on the present state of the Guild, he instanced the encouraging manner in which they were pulling themselves together after the great havoc caused by the war. The report and Balance sheet were then duly adopted. It was unanimously decided to hold the next meeting at Campden on Wednesday Oct 27th. The Secretary raised the question of a new kind of trophy to be competed for, and the meeting resolved to refer the matter to the committee for their consideration. It was proposed by Mr C. Bird, seconded by Mr Pardon that all the officers be re-elected, carried. Mr Pardon was unanimously elected paid instructor to the Guild in place of Mr Frank Bird, who has left the district. The winners of the competition at Saintbury were then presented with certificates by the chairman. After hearty votes of thanks were passed to the Ladies and Gentlemen for providing such an excellent tea, and to the Rev. G E Hitchcock for his services in the chair, the meeting terminated. Touches were rung on the Bells during the evening. G E Hitchcock.

40 Years ago

Committee meeting held at 2 Colebrook Courtyard, Blockley on the 11th March 1980.

Apologies: P Harmer

Matters arising from the Minutes:-

Bell Restoration Fund:

A J Brazier asked the Committee to read the 'Bell Restoration Fund' leaflet obtained from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to consider the feasibility and implications of beginning such a Fund.

Open Afternoon:

The Open Afternoon organisation is as follows: S Carter to be in charge of ringing; MF Fairfax and AJ Brazier will explain ringing; Mrs P Linsdell in charge of tea and coffee. A small display of articles connected with bellringing will be on show.

The Guild Boundary:

After a lengthy discussion as to where our boundary is, the extra-territorial boundary and the possibility of including new towers in 'our area' the Committee decided to keep the area defined on the map published in the Newsletter from time to time. As to the question of towers participating in the Striking Competition from outside 'the Area' the Committee decided that: towers from outside the Area may enter the Competitions subject to the Approval of the Committee on a formal application and also subject to the Competition rules.

Signed'

MF Fairfax 5/8/80

FSG Quarters and Peals

[Little Comberton, Worcestershire](#), St Peter, Friday, 3 January 2020 in 48m (13-1-18 in G), **1308 Grandsire Minor** 1 x 720, 1 x 588

1 Nick Allsopp , 2 Roger Hunt , 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath ©, 4 Harry Stephenson, 5 Neil Garner, 6 Steve Bowley

[Bredon, Worcestershire](#), St Giles, Friday, 3 January 2020 in 52m (18-2-2 in D), **1260 Doubles** (5m) 2/3 - 240 each of Reverse Canterbury, Plain Bob, St Simons and St Martins and 300 of Grandsire, 1 Neil Garner, 2 Roger Hunt, 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 4 Nick Allsopp

5 Steve Bowley ©, 6 Harry Stephenson

[Beckford, Worcestershire](#), St John the Baptist, Friday, 3 January 2020 in 46m (13-3-0 in F), **1272 Surprise Minor** (2m) 3/3 - 636 each of Beverley and Surfleet, with 11 changes of method, 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Roger Hunt, 3 Harry Stephenson, 4 Steve Bowley

5 Nick Allsopp , 6 Neil Garner (C)

The tower that got away-Kemerton
3rd January 2020



[Willesley, Gloucestershire](#), St Peter, Saturday, 4 January 2020 in 43m (12 in G), **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**, 1 Sarah Fletcher, 2 Beccie Williams, 3 Jenny Chadburn, 4 Sarah Chadburn, 5 Robert Chadburn ©, 6 Pete Kavanagh, First Quarter 1

[Pebworth, Worcestershire](#) St Peter Saturday, 18 January 2020 in 44m (11-3-9 in F#) **1260 Mixed Doubles** (2m) 660 Plain Bob; 600 Grandsire 1 Pat Bell 2 Graham Lee 3 Tom Sandham 4 Alison Lee 5 Martin Penny (C) 6 Beccie Williams To celebrate the wedding of Caroline Underhill (daughter of the treble) and Sanjay Yadave on 30th October 2019

[Long Compton, Warwickshire](#) St Peter and St Paul Saturday, 25 January 2020 (12-0-22) **1260 Plain Bob Doubles** 1 Caroline Makepeace 2 Sarah Elliott 3 Michael Cummings 4 Len Morley 5 Trevor Hobday (C) 6 Martyn Young First quarter 1 & 6.

[Childswickham, Worcestershire](#) St Mary the Virgin, Saturday, 1 February 2020 in 46m (11-3-26 in F#) **1300 Plain Bob Doubles** 1 Roger Hunt , 2 Claire Penny, 3 Alison Lee ©, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Martin Penny, 6 Graham Lee 1st quarter on the refurbished bells. 1st quarter as conductor 3. rung in her home tower on Four Shires Guild Dinner Day.

[Great Hampton, Worcestershire](#) St Andrew, Saturday, 1 February 2020 (12-2-4 in F#) **1260 Grandsire Doubles** 1 Francis Smith,, 2 Steve Bowley 3 Tom Sandham, 4 Rob Newman, 5 Patrick Wooster ©, 6 John Smith, Rung to mark the beginning of a new chapter in our nation's history.

[Pebworth, Worcestershire](#) St Peter, Sunday, 2 February 2020 in 72m (11-3-9 in F#) **2020 Doubles** (2m) 960 Plain Bob, 1060 Grandsire 1 Beccie Williams, 2 Alison Lee, 3 Jackie Roberts, 4 Neil Garner, 5 Claire Penny ©, 6 Graham Lee, Rung to mark the palindromic date 02/02/2020. Belated Happy Birthday to Jackie from the rest of the band. Longest length rung - 1, 2, 6 and as conductor

[Childswickham, Worcestershire](#) St Mary the Virgin, Saturday, 7 March 2020 in 46m (11-3-26 in F#) **1260 Plain Bob Doubles** 1 Clare Davies, 2 Graham Lee, 3 Alison Lee ©, 4 Claire Penny, 5 Martin Penny, 6 Rob Moon

[Offenhams, Worcestershire](#) St Mary and St Milburgh Monday, 16 March 2020 in 43m (10-3-2 in F#) **1260 Plain Bob Doubles and Minor** 3 x 180 Plain Bob Minor; 4 x 180 Plain Bob Doubles 1 Beccie Williams 2 Graham Lee 3 Tom Sandham 4 Alison Lee 5 Martin Penny (C) 6 Claire Penny Rung to celebrate the 50th Birthday of Claire (6) and 9th Birthday of Georgie Whitby (Granddaughter to 3)

Large proportion of FSG members

[Evesham, Worcestershire](#) The Bell Tower, Saturday, 25 January 2020 in 3h 51 (35-2-20 in C#) **5040 Plain Bob Triples** Composed by C Ravenscroft 1 D Rose W Horton 2 Nicholas K Allsopp 3 Stephen W Horton 4 Neil J Garner 5 Steve Bowley 6 Roger H Hunt 7 Michael Chester © 8 Rachel D Page Rung, on the pentatonic 8, to mark the Chinese New Year. First peal on this 8

[Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire](#) St David Saturday, 29 February 2020 in 2h 44 (10-0-14 in G) **5088 Leap Day Delight Major Composed by R D S Brown** 1 Nicholas K Allsopp 2 Steve Bowley 3 Roger H Hunt 4 Raymon A Sheasby 5 Robert Tregillus 6 Mark W Sayers 7 Ian N Robinson 8 Michael Chester (C) Rung to mark the 24th anniversary today of the installation of Rev. Steve Wookey as Vicar of this church.

Vale of Evesham society

[Badsey, Worcestershire](#) St James Saturday, 8 February 2020 in 3h (15-0-4 in F) **5056 Cambridge Surprise Major** Composed by T B Worsley 1 Heather A Kippin 2 Roger H Hunt 3 Anthea S Edwards 4 Christopher M Povey 5 James Clatworthy 6 Craig P Homewood 7 Stuart D Piper 8 Robert C Kippin (C) Specially arranged and rung as a 90th birthday compliment today to Roger Savory of New Jersey, USA, who learnt to ring on these bells in the late 1940s.

Other notable ringing

Missed items from end of last publication [Willesley, Gloucestershire](#), St Peter's, Sunday, 29 December 2019 in 42m (11)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles, 1 Chris Wainwright, 2 Beccie Williams, 3 Claire Penny, 4 Martin Penny, 5 Robert Chadburn ©, 6 Pete Kavanagh, First Quarter 1, 6

Badsey 31st December first ring on new years eve and firing of bells, Chloe Honeywell

[Evesham, Worcestershire](#) The Bell Tower Sunday, 8 March 2020 in 55m **1259 Grandsire Caters** 1 Rachel Page 2 Jeanette Davey 3 Helen K Normington 4 Stella C Smith 5 Nicola Piper 6 Jane Gilbert 7 Kath Cocks (C) 8 Claire Penny 9 Margaret Pang 10 Di Sheppard Rung for International Women's Day 1st Grandsire Caters as conductor

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES, 18th FEBRUARY.

The Committee met on Tuesday 18th Feb at the Parish Centre, Wellesbourne.

1) Apologies for absence: John Wheeler.

2) Minutes of the last meeting: agreed as correct and signed as such.

3) Matters Arising:-

Kathy McCarthy can offer Guild clothing in all available colours.

4) Reports: the following are highlights:-

Guild Master: The Guild Dinner was adjudged to be successful. The venue was excellent.

Hon Secretary: Chris had received proposals and secondings for the following:-

Sarah Elliott (Long Compton), prop Trevor Hobday; sec Len Morley

Eddie Sandford (Tredington), prop Kathy McCarthy; sec Stuart Cummings

Richard Budd (Tredington), ditto above

Maureen Baker (Sherbourne), prop John Wheeler; sec Michael Dane

Jane Hopkins Sherbourne), ditto above

Lisa Hillyard (Willersey), prop Bob Topp; sec Robert Chadburn

Lena Stranks (Willersey), ditto above

David Bezzant (Bricklehampton), prop Richard L-S; sec Claire Penny

Membership was agreed, nem con.

Treasurer/Membership: Michael distributed his financial report prior to the meeting. Everything is financially stable.

Ringling Master: Richard said there was little to report other than the practices had been going well.

Newsletter Editor: The Committee recorded their delight at Alison Lee's offer to continue as Newsletter Editor.

Peal Secretary: two peals had been rung for the Guild, at Imber (28th Dec) and Great Rissington (29th Dec).

5) Bell Restoration Fund:

Michael confirmed there was £4429 of unallocated money available for grants

Grant applications for consideration:

The application from Hinton-on-the-Green for major maintenance work considered. It was proposed by Peter, sec by Nick, that £440 be offered: agreed. Applications from Aston Cantlow and Moreton-in-Marsh had been received and would be considered at the May meeting.

6) Items for discussion:-

Recent events:

Guild Xmas Party at Badsey: all went well: very enjoyable.

Annual Dinner: this was excellent, with The Northwick Hotel providing a very good service again. The raffle made an amazing £145 for the Bell Restoration Fund.

Future programme:

Annual Ringing Tour, Sat 4th July: Richard L-S to arrange. Details to follow.

Minimus striking-comp, Sat 5th Sept. Nick to arrange. Likely to be at Wyck Rissington

Walk & Ring, Sat 19th or Sat 26th Sept. John C to arrange. Locations to be announced.

AGM & Striking Comps: Saturday 17th Oct: location to be announced.

Guild Xmas Party, Dec: whether to have one this year, and if so where, to be discussed.

Guild Annual Dinner 2021: it was decided to book The Northwick Hotel at Evesham for the 2021 Dinner.

7) The new Guild membership certificate.

This was displayed at the Guild Dinner. It was agreed to give new members from 1st Jan 2020 a copy of this.

8) AOB:

Charity status: Michael reported that converting to a charity could not be done via the Charity Commission, but could via HMRC. To be discussed further at the May meeting.

Security of Guild valuables; the Guild silverware items are of high value, and their insurance is consequently high. The Committee is to agree ways in which this cost can be reduced. Holders are to be extra-vigilant about them and to ensure they are not displayed in public or semi-public places.

10) Next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 19th May at Church House, Evesham..

Future Committee meeting dates: Aug & Nov in 2020

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

Name	Tower
_____	_____
President	Guild Master
_____	_____
Hon. Secretary	Date
_____	_____

The Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers

AROUND THE TOWERS



THE MIDNIGHT RINGERS

For the first time in living memory the bells of St. James Badsey rang in the New Year in the traditional manner with firing at the allotted hour. The band consisted of; Stef Whittle, Christina Ireland, Chloe Honeywell, Robert Hall, Gordon Hill, Tony Hartwell, Steve Bowley and Richard Lewis-Skeath. Rob Newman and myself Tom Sandham

Long Compton Works St. Peter & St Paul, Saturday January 25th 2020 **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**

1 Caroline Makepeace, 2 Sarah Elliott, 3 Michael Cummings, 4 Len Morley, % Trevor Hobday©, Martyn Young.
First Quarter 1 & 6, This is the first quarter peal rung by a local band for many years

Childswickham, Worcestershire St Mary the Virgin, Saturday, 1 February 2020 in 46m (11-3-26 in F#) **1300 Plain Bob Doubles** 1 Roger Hunt, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Alison Lee ©, 4 Chris Povey, 5 Martin Penny, 6 Graham Lee 1st quarter on the refurbished bells. 1st quarter as conductor 3- rung in her home tower on Four Shires Guild Dinner Day.



My Bell ringing journey

I started ringing at the ripe young age of 69 at Pebworth when Martin Penny started up a new ringing group for beginners. I progressed slowly and completed my first quarter peal in December 2018. I organised a tour maybe a small one but still a tour, last year. It was suggested to me by a ringer from Pebworth that maybe I should consider doing "50 Ringing Things" A 100 weeks challenge. For those of you that don't know about this challenge, It consists of a booklet with challenges split into Three areas -In my Tower, Out and about, My Ringing. You can achieve Bronze, Silver & Gold awards Typical of me I went full steam ahead bought the book started to tick off things I had already done, I then found out that you can only count items that you complete after you have enrolled for the challenge, whoops that's me told. After messing up my book and starting again, I have to now try and sort it out, my challenge to myself is try and complete my silver award within 6 months (end of June) achievable with everyone's help! These challenges have taken me way out of my comfort zone Ringing a bell heavier than 16Cwt - Blockley, Changing a stay - Cherington - Ringing a bell less than 3 Cwt - Lighthorne - I have enjoyed doing and completing these tasks but, it would not have been possible without the help of other ringers. I have a few difficult tasks ahead next one is to ring at a tower while on holiday. I am hoping to do this during the springtime. I also wanted to ring on a mini ring (less than 1 CWT) if anyone can direct me in this area I would be grateful. I am making a special effort to visit 50 different towers I think/hope my bell handling is improving. I must record my thanks to the support I have received from members of the Four Shires, G&B & Coventry branches and of course my tower captains. All this is very time consuming so thank you to my husband (non ringer) for his help and support sometimes keeping me company on my treks around the countryside. Finally today I have completed my Bronze Certificate so well on my way to my silver award.

Thank you for reading, this now completes another challenge. Pat Bell.



SECURITY OF BELLS AND FITTINGS DURING THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS

The Church Buildings Council and Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England has recently produced the first version of a guidance note aimed at helping incumbents, churchwardens and PCC members to understand the practical steps involved in closing church buildings. This deals with the general aspects of leaving the buildings unvisited for what could be a long period. It recommends actions with water supply, electricity, heating, storing valuables securely, alarms and the like, and making visits to the buildings when it is possible to do this in-line with the present Government restrictions on people's movements. The guidance note is iterative, and more versions will be produced as time goes on. At present no mention is made about bells.

Although the security of bells is perhaps better than many items at ground level, their installations face different issues and checks are advisable when it is possible to do this within the current movement restrictions. It is hoped that all bells that are normally left up will have been brought down by now and left in a safe state. If not, it is recommended that this occurs very soon, but this may now require permission from the police to allow a journey to the tower without being apprehended. Bell installations can suffer from intruders at any time, and these can include birds, squirrels and rainwater. Bird mesh can easily be broken if it isn't secure or weakened by corrosion: large birds can push very effectively. Squirrels are much worse, as they can wriggle in all directions and can get where birds can't. The only surfaces they can't get a 'key' to climb on is glass and ceramics. The damage they can do in a short time is substantial, eg to ropes. If squirrels have entered, please obtain professional services to catch them. They might look pretty little creatures, but they are very nasty to deal with and can inflict serious injuries through biting and scratching. Grey squirrels are classed as vermin and the law requires them to be killed if caught (could you do that?). Water ingress other than wind-blown rain through louvres can occur from blockages in the rainwater shedding system, eg blocked drains and gutters, or holes in roof coverings.

There is of course another intruder who may take the opportunity to visit in the lock-down, and that is the metal thief looking for bells that are easily taken. While most bells in towers might be considered reasonably secure due their general inaccessibility (but not necessarily so), bells in external bellcotes and the like become much easier pickings. Also, redundant bells on display in churches are prime targets. While it might be thought a bell is generally too heavy to be carried out, thieves will be unconcerned about breaking them up in-situ if the church is sufficiently isolated for the noise not to be heard; and they will be unconcerned about collateral damage, too. The recent theft of the bell from 'the UK's smallest church' in Wiltshire occurred before the lockdown arrived, but its position at ground level in the never-locked church could be seen as an invitation for the theft to occur. There is a need for some PCCs in particular to be much shrewder about the possibilities of bell thefts. The fact that bells are generally out-of-sight or out-of-reach can be attractive to some individuals. The loss of a bell can be financially and historically damaging.

As mentioned above, the ability to visit to make checks may be difficult in the current climate. An exercise run or cycle ride past the church concerned may be an acceptable way around the restrictions, but a visit by car may not be and specific permission might be needed. Hopefully a request from the incumbent or the churchwardens (ie the legal guardians) to the police for a visit by the Ringing Master or steeple keeper might be considered reasonable.

Chris Povey

Member, CCCBR Stewardship & Management Workgroup

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS APRIL- JUNE 2020

Every one is now aware of The Coronavirus and its effects, it's the same virus family that causes the common cold thus spreads rapidly, likely by droplets from coughing and sneezing. Sadly in vulnerable people, those over 70yrs of age are in this category, it can cause more serious complications. In light of advice from the central council of church bell ringers and indirectly from the C of E concerning church services, the FSG Committee has decided to suspend the Saturday practices until further notice. The FSG website and face book page and bell board will carry details of this.

I have been told that this country has lived through some tough times the obvious world wars with food rationing and silent church bells, a 3 day working week in 1974 and winter of discontent 1978/9, 6 economic recessions in living memory but we have always come out the other side. As you may be aware this is likely to continue for a minimum of 12 weeks, this magazine cannot be printed and distributed in the usual manor, it has to be email only.

Just in case we can ring again by July, I have 2 dates for the diaries.

4th July FSG annual tour

27th July Moreton in marsh tower open day

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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 email-able.)
Chris Povey, Hon Sec

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