

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central  Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 166 - October 1st 2020

CONTENTS

P2 Officers and committee members of the Guild

Mini bell, tower tour

P4 Committee meeting notes

P6 Facebook competition

P8 From the archives 40 yrs ago

Quiz questions

P3 Guild badged clothing

P5 Points from last committee meeting

P7 From the archives 100yrs ago

P9, 10, How well do you know your towers photograph quiz

P11 Quiz answers

P12 Top tips

P13 An interesting article

P14 Adverts



Founded Oct 18th 1909

IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE AGM AND STRIKING COMPETITIONS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Guild Committee have agreed that the 2020 AGM will be postponed to a suitable Saturday early in 2021. There will be no Striking Competitions until the normal 2021 events.

The Committee did consider a virtual AGM by Zoom or similar, but concluded some would not have a computer link, and some would be reluctant to use the technology involved. Postponement was judged the best option in the circumstances.

Editorial

I hope many of you have been able to at least ring for your local tower Sunday service, even if its only been for 15minutes, on a few bells and infrequently. I have been lucky enough to ring for one Sunday service and a wedding, it was really good

to feel that excitement again even though we only rang 3 or 4 bells, to comply with social distancing. I have also ventured into the virtual world of ringing, on ringing room, I wonder how many others have done this ? It still has some excitement value as you try to work your way through

methods, its not complicated and beginners can try to think about ringing methods without the worry of bell handling. It does have that all important social contact too, well worth a try. We also managed a mini bell, tower tour, see our story on page 2 and 3. Alison Lee.

From Offenham we travelled to Badsey, this happened to coincide with their Sunday service ringing and during a period of silence from the tower bells, our mini bells rang out, appreciated by local parishioners arriving for Sunday service.

From Badsey we travelled to Bretforton, followed by Pebworth, Cleeve prior, Middle and South Littleton, we all had a turn to run the ringing at each tower and our ability slowly improved, the highlight was a plain course of original on 7 with a cover and very few mistakes.



Even the shadows were socially distanced by the end.

Graham and Alison Lee

Martin and Claire Penny



Hi standards of ringing at Pebworth



Traditional pub refreshments to finish and a short burst on the bells to entertain the local.

Alison Lee

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

In the first instance please email your order to **Kathy McCarthy**: khmccarthy@fastmail.fm There are no extra carriage charges on the prices above. All profits from the sale of clothing go to the Guild Bell Restoration Fund.

Colours: The range of colours can be seen on the Guild's website, which is <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 shirts	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
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The Committee meeting of the Four Shires Guild for 11th August 2020 was once again held via email responses to questions outlined in the Agenda notice.

The Hon Sec considered all the answers to the questions posed in the Agenda notice and has formed a grid of those answers (copy enclosed).

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19th May 2020: are these correct? **Unanimously agreed.**

2. Treasurer's financial statement: submitted and noted.

3. Reduction of grant for repair of Ebrington's bellframe: this has arisen because the repair costs have reduced substantially due to a different repair method. The normal percentage method for calculating grant reduces this to £450 (from £600). Principal Officers dealt with this in the interim. Confirmation by remaining Committee members reqd: **unanimous agreement.**

4. Items for discussion:

(a) in the light of the ongoing Covid restrictions, should:-

the Striking Competitions on Sat 17th October be cancelled? **unanimous agreement to cancel.**

the AGM be cancelled that day? The voting went as follows: _

Run on that day as normal: 1 vote

Cancel: 2 votes

Attempt a virtual meeting (eg, via Zoom): 4 votes

Postpone to early 2021: 2 votes

Majority voting is agreement to provide a virtual Annual General Meeting on 17th October 2020. Hon Sec to investigate (Action CP)

(b) in the light of the Covid restrictions, should the Walk & Ring event be cancelled (19th Sept)? **majority agreement to cancel**

(c) ditto Minimus Competition on Sept 5th: **majority agreement to cancel**

(d) booking a venue for the 2021 Annual Dinner: in the current conditions should we book this now? The voting went as follows:-

Do not book (hotel unlikely to accept a refundable booking): 2 votes

Cancel the event as future situation uncertain: 4 votes

Book now; assess nearer the time: 1 vote

Leave for the moment: 1 vote

Leave for the moment, but don't book if refundable unavailable: 1 vote

There is a majority for not booking the venue, either at all (cancel) or leaving at the moment: agreed not to book at this moment. But a majority also suggest to assess the situation with Covid in (say) 3 months time. (Action PQ)

(e) a question of whether to return to the previous level of printing hardcopies of the Newsletter when normality returns, or go entirely via email. It should be noted that roughly 75% of members receive a hardcopy Newsletter. The voting went as follows:

No hardcopies: entirely email: 0 votes

Email generally, except where no email access: 5 votes

Ask members to choose: 2 votes

These two categories receiving votes are similar, **hardcopies are still to be printed when normality returns.** The voting above suggests asking the members (but this does already occur on the subscription slips that are attached to the January Newsletters very year. Perhaps a more obvious insertion in the Newsletter is required, ie that those receiving hardcopies should register to continue with hardcopies). **Hon Sec to write an article to this effect for a future Newsletter (Action CP).** A recent poll at a local tower revealed that the majority receiving hardcopies would be happy to have an emailed copy - a reduction from 8 to 3. Something similar may be the case elsewhere, such that a worthwhile reduction in hardcopy printing will occur.

5. Date of next meeting: two dates were offered, 10th or 17th November. If face-to-face allowed, and the majority of members are happy to do this, then at Church House, Evesham. Otherwise, meeting to be by emailed responses again. Everybody is currently free for both dates, so **Tuesday 10th November is suggested.**

Chris Povey

Hon Sec

Signed as a true record (when able to do so):

.....

Points from the last Committee meeting (held 11th August)

Despite the difficulties caused by the present Covid-19 restrictions, the Committee did meet, but via email contributions to proposals on the agenda. August's meeting was the second held in this way. It's not as good as meeting together, but it is keeping the Guild functioning. The Minutes of the meeting are shown in this Newsletter. I was asked to expand on one issue in the meeting – whether we have computerised versions of the Newsletter as the norm or not – so I thought I may as well expand on other points agreed at that meeting.

2020 AGM and Striking Competitions:

The Notice on the front of this Newsletter shows the 2020 AGM is postponed until early in 2021. As the Notice says, we did consider the possibility of holding a 'virtual' AGM, but none of the Committee had experience of hosting such a meeting, none had the software to do it, and crucially we did not think many would choose to use this facility. The 2020 Striking Comps will not happen at all. The next Comps will be at the normal time of the year in 2021. (Would those who are holding in particular the Newing Shield and the Spencer Jones Cup ensure these two items are stored very securely in the interim, as they are valuable – not in the Ringing Room or similar, please. If there are concerns about storage, the items can be returned to me.)

Annual Dinner:

You will see we are undecided about booking a venue for the Annual Dinner. In view off the news today (22/09/2020) that extra restrictions are to apply, and that there is a possibility some restrictions may continue for 6 months, the Committee's decision to delay a decision about this until late November or early December is a sensible one.

Email versions of the Newsletter or continue printing:

The covid restrictions are hampering our normal methods of distributing hardcopy newsletters. This is based on seeing people to pass copies on to them in the normal course of ringing events. We are not, of course, in the normal course of events at the moment, and emailing copies to people in pdf format has been the only satisfactory method of circulation. Yes, it's possible some haven't received their copies, but most have. Apologies to those that haven't.

The question asked at the Committee meeting was whether the Newsletter should continue in 'softcopy' format, or whether we should return to what we had before covid changed things. There are many advantages of softcopies: cost is one; time to print is another; and lastly distributing them. All stages are by volunteers (and those currently doing those jobs would be happy to hand them over to others to have a go...). Prior to covid, about 75% of members received hardcopies, ie 25% had it by email. While the subscription renewal form has the ability to change your Newsletter preference, it is quite possible that this is overlooked and people just continue as before. This note is therefore to bring to your attention the advantages to the Guild of having emailed newsletters; and if so, let the Editor or me know. I suspect there are a number of members who, if reminded about this, would change to an emailed copy.

The Committee agreed to ask members about this, so here it is: **WOULD YOU CONSIDER CHANGING FROM HARDCOPY TO EMAILED COPY WHEN NORMALITY RETURNS?** Let us know for when that happens. Emailed copies are of course in line with current recycling or environmental objectives. In the meantime, we shall continue as now, ie emailed copies (except for posted copies).

Chris Povey

Hon Sec

Chaplain's thoughts

I expect that, like me, you have been missing ringing for service and for practice nights, and also the company of other ringers you meet every week. Congregations tell us that they miss the bells too, which is a good sign. I was thinking that perhaps those who live near the tower feel glad that things were quieter.

We know that people are 'the Church' but buildings are important as well, they are public statements of our belief in God. Cathedrals and parish churches have been witnesses to God and of our spiritual needs for centuries. All religious buildings and the dioceses are now short of money because they have been closed to visitors and worshippers for so long. Small village churches which are valued by those who live there may have done rather better, but it will, in future, be much harder to raise money for bell restorations and augmentations than in the past. Grant making bodies will not have so much available either over the next five years.

Let us hope that things will soon return to normal in our towers.

Rev'd Dr Peter Newing,

Well done Evesham !

Over the past few weeks there has been some voting going on.

A competition was created by Jack Pease on facebook bellringers, entitled 'Finest rings between 30 and 40cwt' out of a possible 64 towers, 40 made it through to these categories then the voting began, plenty of lovely comments posted including 'wonderful bells' 'love Evesham bells'

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Mears/Whitechapel Rings (1954-1971)	Old Style Rings	Gillett & Johnston Rings	Whitechapel Rings (1971-1994)
London, Cripplegate (1954) (12), 34-0-6 in C#	Imperial College, Queens Tower (10), 38-1-15 in Db	Croydon Minster (12), 36-3-18 in C#	Sheffield Cathedral (Anglican) (1971) (12), 34-0-7 in C#
Great Yarmouth (1958) (12), 30-2-4 in D	Norwich, St Peter Mancroft (12), 37-3-15 in B	Coventry Cathedral (12), 33-3-6 in Db	Canterbury Cathedral (1981) (12), 34-3-4 in C#
Washington National Cathedral (1962) (10), 32-0-6 in D	Newcastle Cathedral (12), 37-2-17 in Db	Londonderry Cathedral (10), 32-0-6 in D	Sydney RC Cathedral (1985) (12), 34-1-3 in C#
Guildford Cathedral (1965) (12), 30-1-10 in D	Cambridge, OLEM (8), 31-2-5 in D	Wexford (10), 31-1-0 in D	Birmingham, St Martin (1990/91) (16), 39-1-19 in C
Westminster Abbey (1971) (10), 30-1-15 in D)	Derby, St Luke (8), 30-3-2 in D	Birmingham, St Philip's Cathedral (12), 31-0-23 in D	St Buryan (1992/94/2001) (6), 37-2-9 in C#
Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8
Taylor Rings (1898-1903)	Taylor Rings (1908-1921)	Taylor Rings (1924-1947)	Taylor Rings (1947-2011)
Loughborough, All Saints (1898) (10), 30-2-0 in Db	Queen Camel (1908) (6), 36-3-7 in C	Rotherham Minster (1924) (12), 34-3-0 in Db	Evesham (1951) (12), 35-3-20 in C#
Beverley, St Mary (1900) (12), 34-3-12 in Db	Shrewsbury, St Chad (1914) (12), 39-2-7 in C	Winchester Cathedral (1937) (14), 35-2-6 in C	Maidstone, All Saints (1957) (10), 32-0-20 in C#
Glasgow Cathedral (1901) (10), 32-1-6 in C#	Waltham Abbey (1914) (12), 37-1-7 in C	Grantham (1946) (12), 32-1-11 in Db	Ipswich, St Mary-le-Tower (1976) (12), 34-3-6 in Db
Ambleside (1901) (8), 32-2-2 in Db	Westbury (1921) (8), 35-0-14 in C#	Wakefield Cathedral (1947) (12), 35-1-0 in C	Leighton Buzzard (1987) (12), 35-1-14 in C#
Long Ashton (1903) (8), 30-3-23 in Db	Leicester, St Margaret (1921) (12), 32-3-14 in C#	Lichfield Cathedral (1947) (10), 31-2-9 in D	London, Cornhill (2011) (12), 32-1-6 in Db

Finest Rings between 30 and 40cwt

Group Stage 8 - Taylor Rings (1951-2011)

Recordings of these rings can be found in the comments below, feel free to share your own. Vote for as many towers as you like, and the top two will go through to the knockout stage. Results to be given at 10pm.

This is likely to be another closely run group, all very fine Taylor peals in their own right. This is the last group stage match.

- Evesham, Bell Tower - (12), 35-2-20 in C# ...
168 votes
- Maidstone, All Saints - (10), 32-0-20 in C# ...
96 votes
- Ipswich, St Mary-le-Tower - (12), 34-3-6 in Db ...
58 votes
- City of London, St Michael Cornhill - (12), 32-1-6 in Db ...
40 votes
- Leighton Buzzard, All Saints - (12), 35-1-14 in C# ...
40 votes

Finest Rings between 30 and 40cwt Grand Final

After starting my with 40 towers, we're down to just two - Lichfield Cathedral and Evesham Bell Tower. Winner to be announced at 10pm.

- Evesham, Bell Tower - (12), 35-2-20 in C# ...
109 votes
- Lichfield, Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Chad - (10), 31-2-9 in D ...
84 votes

Finest Rings between 30 and 40cwt


Knockout Stage - Match 5


You may only vote for one tower, and the tower with the highest number of votes will go through to the Quarter Final. Recordings are provided in the comments as usual. Feel free to share your own.


- Evesham, Bell Tower - (12), 35-2-20 in C# ...
178 votes
- Westminster, Imperial College - (10), 38-1-15 in Db ...
18 votes

Like Comment

1

 **Jack Pease** Author
Evesham - https://youtu.be/Oy2dT_BBDGU?t=88

 YOUTUBE.COM
bellringing from evesham belltower

 **Jack Pease**
1 d · 🗨️

RESULTS - Finest Rings between 30 and 40cwt

Thank you to everyone who has supported this competition, means a great deal to me. After some 4500 votes, and some very close matches, the winner of the final and thus the whole competition, is Evesham, who narrowly beat Lichfield Cathedral to win the title.

I will be organising another contest, details of this to be announced very shortly. Thanks!

56

5 comments

Quarter Final 3

You may only vote for one tower, and the tower with the highest number of votes will go through to the Semi Final. Recordings are provided in the comments as usual. Feel free to share your own.

- Evesham, Bell Tower - (12), 35-2-20 in C# ...
132 votes
- Maidstone, All Saints - (10), 32-0-20 in C# ...
52 votes

Semi Final 2

You may only vote for one tower, and the tower with the highest number of votes will go through to the Final. Recordings are provided in the comments as usual. Feel free to share your own. The winner of this match will face Lichfield Cathedral in the final, tomorrow.

- Evesham, Bell Tower - (12), 35-2-20 in C# ...
132 votes
- Beverley, St Mary - (12), 34-3-12 in Db ...
60 votes

Thank you Jack! I'm pleased Evesham have been voted the most popular ring of bells in the weight range!. For me the Tenor is the finest bell I've heard under 40 cwt. It just has the very slightest edge on sound to Lichfield Tenor & Worcester 11th.

14 h Like Reply

Kind permission given by Jack Pease to publish his competition in the FSG

magazine

From the archives 100 years ago

A committee meeting was held at the rectory Moreton, on the 24th September 1920, at 7pm for the purpose of making arrangements for the autumn meeting of the guild at Campden on the 27th October. There were present the Rev's Spencer Jones and G.E. Hitchcock, and also representatives from Blockley, Shipston, Ilmington and Moreton. Mr Harris of Willersey wrote regretting his inability to be present owing to pressure of business. It was proposed by Mr Pardon, seconded by Mr Evans that the programme be similar to the one carried out at the previous meeting but that the competitions must commence punctually at 2pm. This was carried unanimously.

Proposed by Mr Evans, seconded by the secretary, that the Rev A.D.Agar, vicar of Blockley be invited to preach to us at the special service. The Rev S.Jones kindly undertook to interview the Rev A.D.Agar on the matter.

It was decided on the proposition of Mr C.Bird, seconded by Mr Arthers, that rule 10 be suspended for the time being, and that members be asked to pay the sum of 1/- per head towards the cost of the tea.

Proposed by Mr Evans, seconded by Mr C.Bird, that the last six bells be used for the competitions with a tagman for the tenor. Also that 10 minutes be allowed for rising and the same for sinking. This was carried. It was unanimously resolved to ask Mr Pardon to again act as judge in the competitions, to which he gave his assent.

Proposed by Mr Arthurs, seconded by Mr Pardon, that the awarding of the small certificates be suspended for the present. Carried. The question of holding one of the half yearly meetings on a Saturday was raised by Mr Pardon, and after considerable discussion it was resolved to refer the matter to the half yearly meeting for their consideration. On the matter of a trophy, the feeling of the meeting seemed to favour a shield, and the vicar of Campden kindly undertook to make enquiries as to the cost from the Guild of art at Campden. He also agreed to make the necessary arrangements for the tea. This concluded the business and the meeting closed with the usual votes of thanks.

27th October 1920

G.E.Hitchcock

The Autumn meeting of the Guild was held at Campden on Wednesday the 27th October, 1920.

The results of the competitions which were timed to commence at 2pm was as follows

Rising and Falling	Call Changes	Method
Moreton 81 Points	Shipston 90 Points	Shipston 84 Points
Shipston 79 Points	Moreton 75 Points	Moreton 68 Points
Ilmington 54 Points	Ilmington 74 Points	
Blockley 42 Points	Blockley 73 Points	
Willersey 39 Points	Willersey 70 Points	

Mr E.Pardon officiated as judge, assisted in the latter part by Mr W.Harris (Campden) owing to Mr Pardon having to leave to catch his train. At 16:15 a special service was held in the Parish Church, when a very earnest and impressive address was delivered by the Rev A. D. Agar, vicar of Blockley.

Tea was provided by the ladies and friends in the Blue School room at 5 O'clock. There were about 50 present, including the Rev's G. E. Hitchcock, Spencer Jones, and A. D. Agar, also Mr J. Parsons, (Churchwarden). After tea a short business meeting was held, the vicar of Campden being called to the chair. A letter of apology for inability to be present was read from the President. The minutes were duly read and passed. On the proposition of Mr H. Pitcher, seconded by Mr W. Harris it was decided by a large majority to hold the spring meeting at Blockley on the last Saturday in April.

The Rev G. E. Hitchcock produced the design of a shield which a previous committee meeting had requested him to obtain, with a view to adopting a trophy of this pattern to be duly competed for at future meetings. It was on the proposition of Mr H. Pitcher, seconded by the secretary resolved that the design be adopted, it being left in the hands of the chairman to arrange for the purchase thereof. It was decided to include the names of the fallen ringers belonging to the Ilmington Belfry on the trophy. The certificates won by the Campden and Willersey towers were duly presented by the chairman. Votes of thanks to the Lady helpers and others for providing the members with such an excellent tea, and to the Rev G.E.Hitchcock for his services in the chair closed a happy and successful gathering.

Spencer Jones, Chairman.

From the Archives 40 years ago.

Minutes of a Committee Meeting held at Kineton on 29th December 1980.

Present: M F Fairfax, L Bedford, P Linsdell, J Nicholls, A Turner, A J Brazier, P Harmer.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting were read, accepted and signed.

2. Matters Arising:-

a) Outing:

A successful day was had by those attending, but several people thought it was too far away; the next outing should be to local towers. Mrs Linsdell has two itineraries.

b) Restoration Fund:

This was raised at the AGM, but there was little comment. A J Brazier suggested special efforts for individual towers would be better than a general fund. The following was suggested: Guiting Power, Todenham, Saintbury, Upper and Lower Slaughter, Stanton, Pebworth. Mr Brazier proposed Todenham the tower of 1981; M F Fairfax seconded. It was suggested that J White should write an article describing the needs and a quarterly progress report for the Newsletter. A leaflet should be prepared for distribution at the annual dinner.

c) Towers:

P Linsdell reported difficulty in obtaining permission to ring at: Stow, Honington, Quinton, Broadway and Ilmington. Discussion ensued; several members suggested the wrong person was being approached. A J Brazier agreed to update the list.

d) Membership:

There were 62 paid-up members at the AGM, plus 8 since. This is less than 1979, particularly as many were new members. A J Brazier suggested a reminder of subs due should go in the newsletter.

e) Newsletter:

A Turner reported he could buy copy paper at £1.90 per quire. Requirements are approx.:

125 copies of each newsletter, 6 sheets each: £12.00 pa

10 stencils: £1.20 pa

Postage: £16.00 pa

Mrs Linsdell said she could still get printing done but we must supply the paper and a donation to the ink might be needed. Mrs Linsdell pointed out minutes of the 1980 AGM, Guild Master's and Secretary's reports were required for the April Newsletter.

3. Annual Dinner

Cost is £4.50 + 0.50 to cover cost of guests. Names are required by Wednesday 4th February. J Nicholls agreed to enquire about suitable background music to be played before the meal. Guests to be Mr G Clifton and wife, and Mr T Evans. Letters of invitation to be sent. M F Fairfax agreed to remind Mr & Mrs Newing of the date.

4. Accounts:

A discussion took place regarding guild badges, handbooks and balance at the Ruining World. A balance sheet is to be drawn up for the newsletter.

5. Any Other Business:

A J Brazier asked about separating the AGM and competition so that members are not kept so late on competition day. P Linsdell considered even less people would then attend the AGM. Instead more effort should be made to make people comfortable.

6. Next Meeting:

1930, 17th February 1981 at 3 Queens Close, Shipston on Stour.

Signed: M F Fairfax, 24/2/81.

More Quiz questions from our Offenham tower captain

1. What are the calls for 'sixty on Thirds'?
2. You are ringing down six bells, the treble says 'downwards', what happens next?
3. If you are ringing a standard 5ths observation 120 of plain bob doubles. You made the first bob,
A) which bell are you ringing and
B) what do you do at the last bob?

Claire Penny

'How Well Do You Know The FSG Churches, Part 2 Quiz'.





Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 12

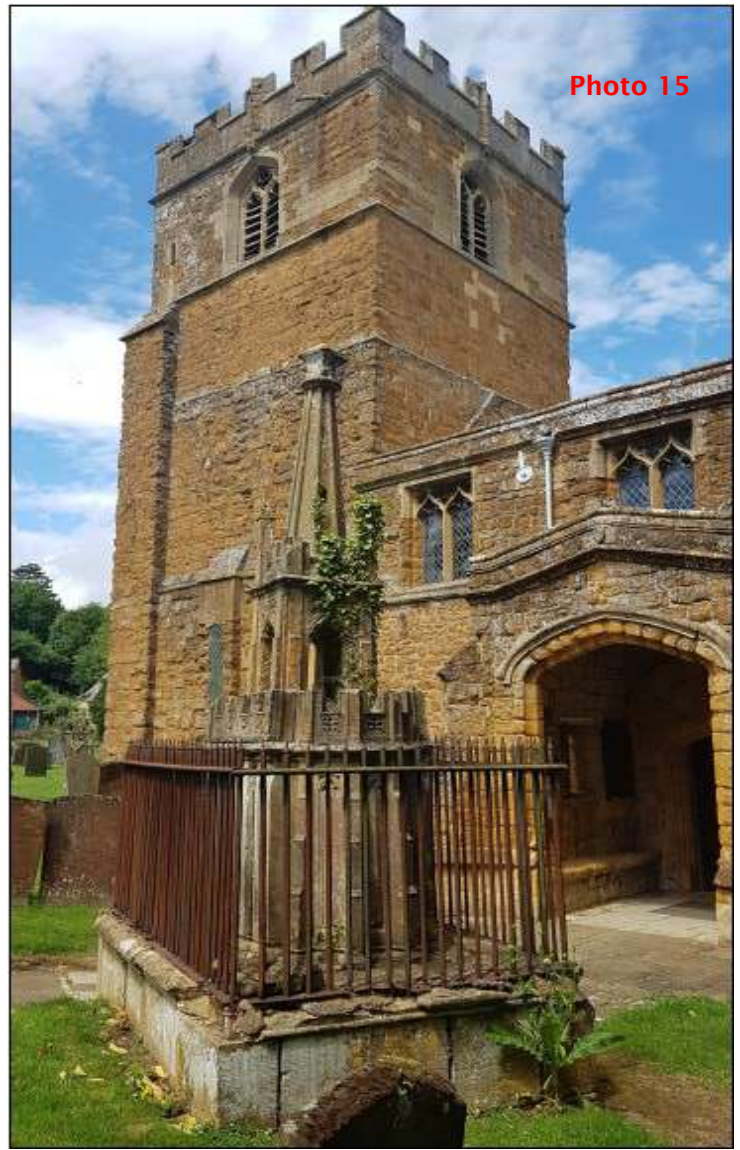


Photo 15

Thankyou for these Fantastic photos and quiz by Kathryn McCarthy

Answers to Offenham quiz pg.....

1. Salford Priors, 2. Chipping Norton, 3. Saintbury, 4. Lower Quinton, 5. Sutton-under-Brailes, 6. Moreton-in-Marsh, 7. Great Rollright, 8. Stratford-upon-Avon, 9. Newbold Pacey, 10. Evesham, 11. Clifford Chambers, 12. Childswickham, 13. Guiting Power, 14. Bledington, 15. Ilmington

Answers:- To photo quiz

1. Sixty on thirds is a Devon call change peal, the whole thing is 66 changes long and it is 60 changes from queens to queens the basic principle is that you hunt the treble in and out and each time it is at the front or the back, you move another bell one place in a specific pattern. This pattern is to move each bell in turn, starting with the third out to the back.

A. call the bells to queens, B. call the treble up to 5ths place, C. call the third into 2nds place, D. call the treble down to lead, E. call the third into 4ths place, F. continue this process until the third is in 5ths place, G. call the fifth, then the second, then the fourth, out to 5ths place in the same way, moving them one place when the treble is either leading or in 5ths place, H. Queens is regained after 60 calls.

2. The bells get closer together. If you are ringing higher numbers of bells you must close in from the back, so if you are near the front it may be several minutes before you actually move.

3. You are ringing the third and at the last bob you run out. In PB the work you do at a bob in a standard touch always comes in the order 'in, out and make it. Therefore if you run in at the first bob, you run out at the second and make the final one.

TOP TIPS

Learning Methods

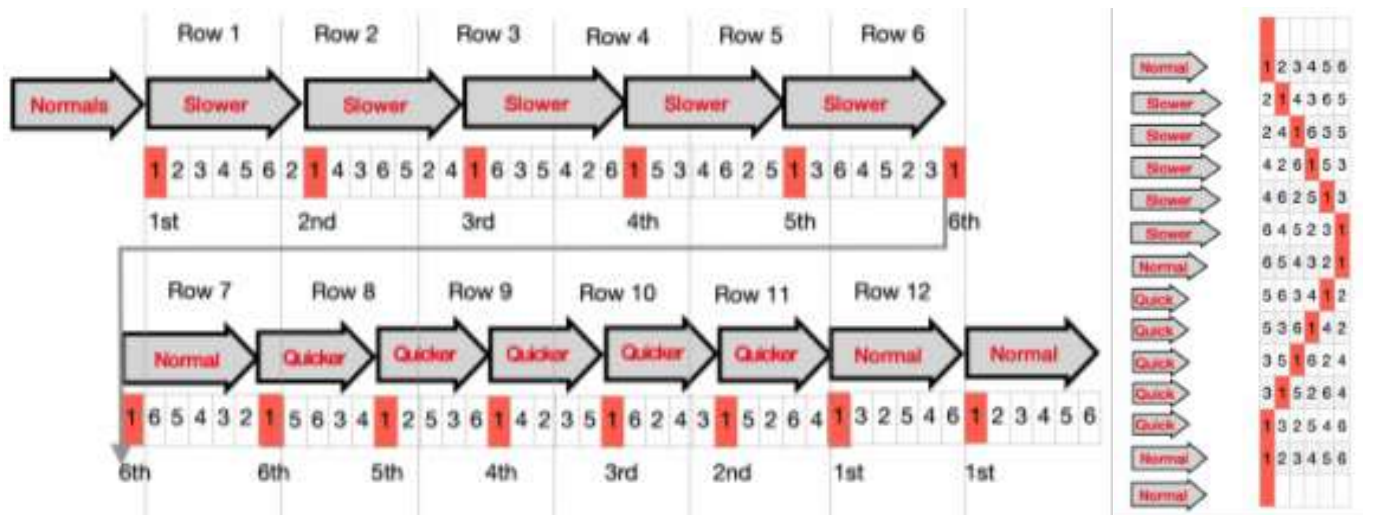
Introduction When progressing up the learning ladder with method ringing, a lot of people hit a bit of a brick wall and discover that progress onwards is not easy when they move from the simplest methods to more 'advanced' ones. However, in most cases I believe the issue is more about how you approach the problem or we would all struggle in the same way. In this series of articles I will try and provide some pointers to help with more complex lines and look at how you can turn the basics to your advantage in what will become a very different world and outlook! When we start to ring methods, we all start with the basics; this normally starts with the ability to plain hunt from first to last in the order and the ability to cover.... to ring last every time. What you are actually learning is how to move up and down the order, and how to stay in the same place while others are moving around in front of you. If you can move in both directions and stay put... you have the basis of everything you might need to do... These three simple tasks are the fundamentals of all method ringing no matter how complex the method might be... So fundamentally, the only difference between plain hunt and methods, particularly the more complex ones, is that instead of going in a straight line from first to last, we take a more meandering path. In this first article we will start from the beginning and look at two of the most important skills related to change ringing.... Ropesight and Rhythm.

Ropesight

To the novice, ropesight is a magical thing which enables experienced ringers to see things that they cannot... it is totally baffling! For the experienced ringer, ropesight is not baffling at all... it is set of visual clues which help us to get our bearings and be in the right place at the right time. The way we do this will be different depending on the direction we are going... in the same way the technique for going up a ladder into an 'accessibly challenged' belfry is different to the one we use to come down again! Moving upwards to a later place in the order involves following a different rope... Logic says that if I am ringing one place later, someone else must be ringing one place earlier to fill the gap I have left.... This therefore involves my bell swapping places with the bell immediately above me. To summarise... 'follow the bell that is currently following you'. Once you make a decision to pull your rope and the bell is over the balance, you can forget about who you are currently following... gravity will have taken charge and you will not be able to influence things any further whether you want to or not...! So as soon as you start your pull, look around to see who is watching you.... That is your next bell.. the rope you will next follow! When you are learning, the experienced folk will often do their best to catch your eye and help with this.... they might even wave if you are looking the wrong way! The skill is to look around the whole group.... which might well involve a very wide field of view from left to right. As you get more practiced, the need for those bigger cues will gradually diminish... but even experienced ringers will miss cues and occasionally benefit from a nod or a gesture. Of course, once you have passed someone going the other way, you cannot pass them again until you have either stopped or changed direction, so for the next rope, cross them off your list and only look at the others. So a choice of 5, becomes 4, then 3, etc.. This rule will work for everything from Plain Hunt minimus all the way to the most complex maximus! Moving downwards in the order requires a slightly different approach. You start at the back by ringing after the last bell (just like covering)... to move downwards, you pass that bell (it will replace you at the back)... As before, once you have passed it, logic says you cannot pass it again without stopping or changing direction so you can disregard it until you do! So, it gets easier with each blow, because once again, every bell you pass reduces the choices left. Clearly, this is going to get much harder as you add more bells, with twelve bells there will be 11 others to look at.. and trying to remember who you have already passed will be more difficult! However, the big advantages of higher numbers are that it goes much slower, so there is more time to look, and in many methods, because the numbers of permutations are so enormous, we don't need to mix the patterns up very much... so it might only be 3 or 4 bells which get mixed up... the others stay in the same order all the way through... so the longer the touch, the easier it gets to remember the order because of repetition.

Rhythm.

When you hunt up, you will need to ring slower. When you hunt down you need to ring quicker. Staying in the same place will be somewhere in between i.e normal rounds speed! If you can judge this change of pace, it will help you to guesstimate your position when rope sight fails you. If you get very good at this, you can even ring without rope sight! This is how some ringers are able to stare at the floor, seemingly oblivious to everyone else. Of course they are not oblivious, they are listening intently and trying to ring accurately at the three speeds mentioned.



Top tips continued

In the diagram above we illustrate the rhythm in Plain Hunt Minor. By writing the rows in one continuous sequence we can see how the rhythm crosses the rows. On the way up there are 7 blows between each place and on the way down only 5. It is only in rounds or when the bells stay in the same place for 2 blows (i.e. in first and last place) that you ring at the normal speed for 6

On very low numbers of bells, the change of speed is most marked.... as you go to higher and higher numbers the increase or decrease become less significant... which is why you may see the tenor struggling to keep up when ringing minimus. Accelerating a large vehicle is much harder than a small one, especially when you need a lot of acceleration.... Articulated lorries are not Ferrari's! In the next article, we will look at how to approach basic methods like Plain Bob and plain courses of Grandsire....

By Neil Garner

Snippet of interesting information

Sent to me by Peter Richardson ,tower correspondent of Halford, Shipston.

An article from the Vintage Sports Car Club Bulletin, Autumn 2020, recording the diaries of Americans Stanley Page and Charles Belden who drove across Europe to Moscow in 1909, in a Packard Model 30.

On August 7th 1909 they reached the Kremlin in Moscow, they had to obtain special authority to use a camera within the Kremlin and a permit from the chief of police.

The photographs they took were of a monster bell, weighing 202 tons and standing 20.1 feet high on a stone foundation. The Tsar bell cast in bronze in 1735 and intended to be hung in the Ivan Tower with other notorious bells, one of which weighs 65 tons and several others made of solid silver. This bell never made it to the Ivan Tower as the building in which it was cast caught fire, the bell was so badly cracked it has never been sounded, a single piece cracked out weighs 9 tons.



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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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