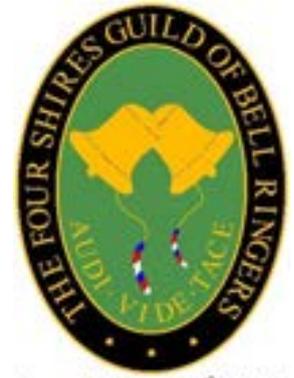


THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central



Council of Church Bell Ringers)



Founded Oct 18th 1909

NEWSLETTER No 165 - July 1st 2020

CONTENTS

P2 Officers and committee members

FSG clothing

P4 minutes of committee meeting

P6 , 7 Lockdown antics

P9 Top tips Stedman doubles

P11 Adverts

P3 Chaplain's thoughts

FSG peals and quarters, Ringing room experience

P5 From the Archives, Quiz

P8 YouTube links, Quiz answers

P10 David's story, Subscriptions, Striking competition information.

Exclusive offer to Bell Ringers!

Champing™ is the simple and unique concept of camping overnight in beautiful historic churches.

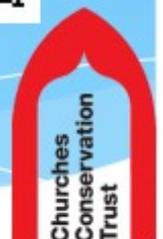
From Orkney to Dartmoor there are 20 locations across the UK run by the Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust is offering the Bell Ringers community an exclusive of **20% off** Champing™ booked from now until 31st July for stays up to the end of season 2021 using code **BELLS20**.

Great for holidays and ringing outings further afield.



Bookings can be made online for this season at <https://champing.co.uk/> or if wanting to book for next year call 0207 841 0436 or email the team at champing@theccct.org.uk

With all the uncertainties this year, all bookings are fully flexible, with free amendments and cancellations.



<https://cccbr.org.uk/2020/06/26/champing-holidays-at-cct-churches/>

Editorial.

Since the last issue of the newsletter we have been locked away from ringing so what have people been doing to keep their hand in? I've had quite a few interesting responses regarding this question, to keep themselves busy or just to remind them of ringing that once filled our time.

There is still no hope of normality at present but The CCB R has published guidance on a phased return to ringing for services only, they cannot as yet give us a date but suggest for some churches services may start early in July. Restrictions of 1m distancing, only ringing 3 or 4 bells, wearing a mask, staying on the same bell and only ringing for 15 minutes just for

service ringing have been speculated. See link for details <https://cccbr.org.uk/2020/06/25/returning-to-service-ringing/>

Front cover advert could be a cheerful thought for some, if things should get back to normal.

Alison Lee

Chaplain's thoughts

The Clergy are used to dealing with the joys and distresses of their parishioners such as long awaited births or the suddenness of the unexpected death of a young person.

During this coronavirus pandemic we are told that these times are unprecedented. To live in isolation is to find that each day is just like the one before and the one before that. I believe that people who have a religious faith can cope better than those of no faith. Some years ago I conducted the funeral of the late Colonel James Carne, V.C, D.S.O, of the Glorious Glosters who had spent 18 months in complete isolation as a prisoner in 1952-53. He found a piece of rough hewn stone and a rusty nail and, over many months, he carved a cross. This now has a home in a niche in a pillar towards the east end of Gloucester Cathedral.

Christians can pray and meditate to concentrate the mind to their advantage. The Kingdom of God to which we belong is here, now, in our midst. This has led to the strengthening of community spirit of us all. There have been many examples of exceptional love and devotion to others. Even small things which may seem dull and unremarkable, kind words and gestures, have shown valuable concern for others.

As HM the Queen said, we must persevere and live through this. There will be better times, even though the world will never be exactly the same again.

Rev'd Dr Peter Newing,

FSG Peals and Qtrs

Unsurprisingly there are no entries for this issue except those that braved technology and used the ringing room platform, one member scored a quarter

[Ringing Room, UK](#), Monday, 25 May 2020 in 44m1260 **Plain Bob Doubles** 1 Joseph A Sharp 2 Joanne L White 3 Richard Lewis-Skeath 4 Chris de Cordova 5 William J Lander (C)6 Monica Hollows 1st for all on Ringing Room. 1st as cover for 6

[Ringing Room, Long Compton, Warks](#) Saturday, 16 May 2020 in 5m60 **Plain Bob Minor** 1-2 Trevor Hobday (Long Compton) 3-4-5-6 Trevor Hobday Rung on a PC keyboard like playing a piano

Ringing Room : A Different Way of Ringing



After working for the first month or so of lockdown & then being furloughed, I was looking for a way to try & somehow do a bit of ringing. I had seen that some people had rung handbells over the internet and I then became aware of Ringing Room.

Now for those that haven't heard of it, Ringing Room is a new online platform that was devised specifically to enable ringers to come together whilst unable to ring "properly" in their own towers and "ring" call changes and methods by basically pressing a key on their computer.

Let me explain a little further..... you first have to be registered on Ringing Room (a simple process of entering your email address & choosing a user name. You then need to be invited to join a practice (or set one up yourself). You also need to join a "meeting" via one of several platforms (Zoom seems to be the most popular & reliable that I've come across although there are others being used). The host will provide tower log in details for Ringing Room & the meeting session. Once you have logged into Ringing Room, you will see a circle of ropes (any number of bells can be selected by the host). You are then able to select a bell yourself or one can be allocated to you. To make your bell sound, you press the space bar - once for hand

stroke and once for backstroke. You will see your sally go up & down accordingly. Once you have checked your rope for length (I'm joking!) you are ready to have a go at some Rounds. You need to press the space bar just after the bell that you are following has sounded but it is quite tricky as your bell will sound almost immediately and it will take a few goes to get it to strike in the right place. There is no two second delay as there is on tower bells! Everything seems to happen very quickly and it does take a bit of getting used to!

Once you have mastered Rounds, you might want to have a go at some Plain Hunting. You will probably find that it will take several attempts (especially if there are other Ringing Room novices in the band) to get it round successfully. Eventually you'll be able to tackle some simple Doubles.

Most people that I've spoken to agree that once you get used to Ringing Room then it becomes easier to progress to slightly more challenging methods. I found the first few times took some getting used to as you don't really have any rope sight to help you. I would definitely advise trying to ring by places.

I was pleased to be able to join several practices over the weeks, including some surprise major ones & I was included in several quarter peal attempts although for various reasons only one of these was successful! At one of the practices I joined we managed a touch of Stedman Triples & even some Grandsire Caters!! At another event advertised from 7.30pm - 9pm there were still a few of us there gone midnight!! The ringing had fizzled out by then but the post-practice banter and beer were both in full flow!! Just like any good practice really!!

There is a Ringing Room Facebook group which co-ordinates all upcoming practices and events and allows members to discuss ideas & tips on how to get the most out of sessions.

So I would urge everyone to give it a go - there have been several practices catering for "newbies" taking their first steps in virtual ringing and all the ringers that I've encountered on Ringing Room have been really welcoming. If you would like to have a try then I'd be happy to set up a "Four Shires" practice - just send me a message & I'll arrange it!! Who knows, if enough people are interested we might even manage a Four Shires quarter peal!! <https://cccbr.org.uk/2020/06/07/ringing-room-a-users-guide/>

Richard Lewis-Skeath.

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIA EMAIL ON TUESDAY 19 MAY.

Following on from the questions I asked concerning the essential business pertaining to the meeting on Tuesday 19th May, I have the results of the responses. These are:-

1 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 18th Feb at Wellesbourne (distributed to all on March 27th by email)

Are the Minutes correct?

Majority agreement that they are; and nem con. I shall have them signed as such at our first 'attended' meeting

2 Financial Statement

Michael's note attracted no adverse comments or questions. Therefore it was supported and accepted.

3 Consideration of grant applications.

There are two: Moreton-in-Marsh (to relocate the clock); Aston Cantlow (clapper work). Info distributed to all by email Monday 3rd Feb and by post to Jackie.

Moreton: cost £3675.

Majority agreement that this project be awarded a grant. There were no objections. (For the record, Nick confirmed a vested interest in the project and therefore abstained from voting.)

There were no objections or amendments to the suggested sum of £234 assessed by Michael on the normal level of grant. A number of members agreed to propose or second, so for the record Peter proposed and Michael seconded.

Aston Cantlow: cost £814

Majority agreement that this project be awarded a grant. There were no objections.

There were no objections or amendments to the suggested sum of £90 assessed by Michael on the normal level of grant. A number of members agreed to propose or second, so for the record Stuart proposed and I seconded.

In both cases I will write to the applicants offering the grants on the normal terms.

4 Annual Ringing Tour: Saturday 4th July

The current ringing restrictions may or may not be in force by then. If in force, then clearly it cannot run. If relaxed, would there be sufficient time to arrange a tour; and would sufficient ringers come to it, as some may not wish to mix in close proximity with others (ie, continue social distancing)?

Should the event be cancelled for this year? Agree/disagree

There was universal acceptance that the event is unlikely to run, even if 'acceptable' normality occurs. The general view was that it should at least be postponed,

and some thought cancelled for this year. Richard (the organiser) had what is probably the best solution. He said, 'I think it should be cancelled. It wouldn't be too difficult to re-arrange for later in the year if decided, based on the initial itinerary, when things get back to normal. Alternatively, we could perhaps arrange a Guild social event instead later on?' I suspect all would happily agree with this view.

While many members will guess the event will not run on 4th July, Committee members should spread the above message around, as the July Newsletter will circulate too late.

5 Location of the 2020 Guild AGM and Striking Competitions, Saturday 17th October

So far I have had one suggestion: Alveston

Any others?

There were no other suggestions. Alveston (suggested by Christina) was supported. John W in particular thought Alveston an excellent venue, as did John C.

I will initiate discussions with the ringers and clergy at Alveston for Saturday 17th October.

6 Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 11th or 18th August (Church House, Evesham?) Please indicate which is best for you.

Both dates are free for most. Go for 11th August at Church House, Evesham, if restrictions are lifted and everybody is happy to meet in person. If not, then it will be another 'essential business' meeting by email.

I will put a copy of the above on file, plus copies of the responses from those that did.

Please let me know if you disagree with anything above.

Chris Povey

Hon Sec

From the archives 100 years ago– There was no entry for the period July– September.

From the Archives 40 years ago

committee Meeting held at Badsey Fields Lane, Badsey, on 5th August 1980

Apologies: Miss L Bedford, A Turner, J Nicholls, J White.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Bell Restoration Fund: it was decided to hold a Special Committee Meeting to discuss this when all members would be present.

Ringling Master:

The Secretary reported the resignation of P S Carter as Ringling Master as from 31st August. A J Brazier proposed that Committee members be responsible for the Saturday practices in their area until a new Ringling Master was elected at the AGM. The Secretary was asked to write to P S Carter accepting his resignation and thanking him for his work.

Outing:

A J Brazier agreed to contact P Thomas and finalise arrangements for an outing in the Eccleshall area, which was arranged by the Ringling Master.

Competition and AGM:

These will take place at Great Wolford on 25th October.

(Signed)

M Fairfax 22/9/80

Committee Meeting held at Badsey Fields Lane on 22nd September at 7.30pm

Apologies: J White

Outing:

The support for the Outing to Staffordshire has not received much support, but it was decided not to cancel.

Bell Restoration Fund:

After a general discussion about the pros and cons of setting up a fund it was decided to give the members at the AGM a brief account as to what was involved and the implications of a registered charity which such a fund would be; also to suggest an alternative method of help – local aid efforts for specific churches.

Towers:

It is now fairly difficult to get tower captains or vicars at certain churches to agree to a Guild Practice even just occasionally. It was suggested that the committee representative be approached for help in establishing a better relationship than exists at the moment.

Membership:

Membership has fallen over the last year to eighteen months. This was felt to be partially due to some committee members being less active of late at Saturday practices; also a failure to get subscriptions in promptly. The Secretary is to let Committee members know what outstanding subscriptions are due in their area.

Miss L Bedford agreed to try and arrange a skittles/darts evening.

Newsletter:

As the present arrangements for printing the Newsletter will incur greater expenditure in future A Turner and M Fairfax are to find out if duplicating paper can be acquired more cheaply

Subscription:

No increase is recommended for the next financial year.

(Signed)

M Fairfax 29/12/80

Keeping us all together:- Offenham Practice night Quiz

Every single week since lock down Claire Penny has sent us all 3 quiz questions. Here are a few as an example, answers on page 8

1. At a bob in grandsire doubles you dodge down with 3 and your first blow in 4ths place is over 5. Who is going into the hunt and who is coming out ?
2. a) Of the Standard Eight Surprise Major Methods (1992 listing), which one is not an English place name?

b) If you started in Offenham and travelled by road to the remaining method names in alphabetical order and returned to Offenham, roughly how far will you have travelled?
3. What are Yorkshire tail ends ?

Dear All, Cat up a tree episode 1

You might have noticed watching news updates with all the doom and gloom the last story of each update is a “cat up a tree”, or “feel good item”. This has got me thinking that with all the social isolation that is happening now you might be thinking nothing is happening in the world of bell ringing.

It is possible with the social isolation and lack of travelling to get up the tower and do some maintenance, or even do some of those jobs which have been waiting to happen. I’m lucky here as the walk to the tower is within my local confines and makes for a good daily exercise. I’m assuming here there are two of you who are socially isolating together. I strongly urge nobody should be up a tower or a belfry on their own. Luckily, I have Jane who is more than willing to put on her “grunge” and ascend ladders.



Here are Moreton-in-Marsh we have been planning on moving the clock and installing a training bell for some time. With the allocation of a faculty at the beginning of the year we were hoping to do it this coming spring. But due to current circumstances, the clock move is on hold as this requires a group of people and in the confines of the ringing room it is impossible to be more than 2m apart from one another. The installation of the training bell is another matter. Below is the story so far of what we have been doing over the Easter Weekend.

The training bell has been on order for some time. It had to be modified so that it could be dismantled to a point to allow the individual components to be passed through a small trap door from the ringing room into the belfry. The original plan was for Jane and I to go and collect it from the manufacturer, Matthew Higby, but just the it was ready for collection the virus shut down happened. It was possible however to get it sent to our home address by courier. The following picture shows it arrived on our drive as a flat pack. In the next picture you can see Jane disinfecting the metal to ensure no spread of the virus happened.



As can be seen the metal work has come galvanized, the silver colour. This will ensure it does not suffer from corrosion in the belfry. To make it look more in keeping with frame up the tower we have painted the metal work with the same coloured paint that was used by the team when the frame was painted a couple of years ago. Basically, you can have any coloured taining bell you like if its “International Tractor Red”. In this next picture you can see we have installed the frame of the training bell above and between the tenor and second frames and beside the 3rd bell on the upper level. This means the rope will appear in the ringing room between the tenor and the treble but behind the treble in-line with the second rope. In the background you can see the sound proofing that was installed last year to quiet the bells nearest our neighbours. As it turns out it’s a good job this was done as there are holes in the mesh which is on the outside of the louvers. The birds are nesting in the louvers but luckily, they cannot get inside of the belfry.



All merit to Jane here. Some of these metal sections were very close to her body weight. When people ask how the Egyptians built the pyramids without hydraulic lifts all you must do is think of your GCSE physics and Archimedes with “give me a lever and a fulcrum”. When social isolation is lifted, and we can bell ring again you should ask Jane how her muscles felt. The last thing we have done this weekend is fit the wheel which is shown here (please ignore the “Covid-hair style”):



So, what is next I hear you ask?

Well, you can see from a previous picture training bell is temporarily fixed to the existing frame using G clamps. The bell needs permanently fixing. This will happen when I can source some 5mm thick angle iron and 12mm high tensile bolts.

Also, the eagle eyed will have noticed there is no “bell” in the wheel. The lump of steel which forms

the “bell” is so heavy this will have to wait to be installed once we can get three people in the belfry at the same time. It will take 2, very muscular, to hold and 1 to installed the bolts.

The one thing we shall be doing next weekend, fingers crossed, is putting the holes in the ceiling. This is to allow the rope to fall from the belfry into the ringing chamber.

Episode 2

In the last update from the “cat up the tree” story we had temporarily installed the training bell frame and wheel. I had been hoping to then cut the whole in the belfry floor ready for the rope as I was not expecting to be able to source any steel or fixings. Having spoken to a friend by telephone it was mentioned that hardware merchants, along with off-licenses, were on the essential supplier list and were therefore open for business, albeit by post only. It is quite amazing what you can buy over the internet these days. A quick “google search” and I was able to source both the bolts and steel required to create fixings to ensure the training be could be securely attached to the existing bell frame. Consequently, a week ago both Jane and I sent a happy few hours drilling and bolting the training bell into position. Unfortunately, we didn’t take a photograph of this process. Drilling a dozen holes upwards at almost full stretch is more tiring that you might expect. One thing we can show is that whilst we were not up the tower Rob has been busy and marked out the holes in the ringing chamber walls where the clock shelf supports will be placed.

If you look carefully above and to the right of the clock mechanism just below where the wall corbels out, you can see the marked rectangle. This will be where one of the RSJ’s, of “I” beams, that support the clock shelf will be socketed into the wall.



Having fixed the training ball frame, we decided to see if we could get the training bell weight up into the belfry. In the next picture you can see Jane using her favourite tool, a heavy-duty sack truck. I bought the sack track some years ago as a present to Jane. It allows her to move objects far in excess of her body weight. Don't anybody say I don't know how to show a girl appreciation by not showering her with gifts.

That black rectangular object is the weight which when attached to the wheel gives the feel of a bell. The shape of the weight turned out to be very useful. With the aid of a bell rope we managed to slide the weight across the bell frame into position. Having managed to secure the main weight we also attached two axillary weights either side of the main weight. We have added these to give the training bell the feel of ringing the 4th bell at Moreton.



We were so pleased to have managed to attach the weight we decided to take a selfie.

Please ignore my expression. I'm hanging onto the frame with one hand, standing on top of the tenor bell headstock and at the same time trying to take the picture. Health and Safety people please don't imagine that position.

I tried to try show the extra bell plates in the next picture you can see the black metal plates either side of the main black bell weight. You will notice this picture was taken whilst we were having 5 minutes and had not yet tightened up the 4 bolts which clamp these plates either side of the main bell weight. If, when we start using the training bell, it is decided its still a little light we can always add more plates.



So, what's next I hear you ask? We still need to put the holes in the floor to allow the rope to fall from the belfry into the ringing chamber. I have borrowed some tools from Rob and Jackie. Hopefully if the weather is dry next weekend, we might progress a little further. Just another "5-minute" job to complete the process.....

In this final picture you can see everything is tightened up and ready to use, though no bell rope yet. We have even attached the "stay", which is the loop of rope at the top of the wheel.

Episode 3.

It has been a couple of weeks since the last installment on the progress of the training bell installation. Jane and I had managed to install the bell and give it a first "ring" last weekend, but the final installation was more exacting than expected. We have, as of today, Saturday 9th May finished the mechanical installation of the training bell. Below outlines what we have been up to.

Having bolted the training bell to the frame, all that was left was cutting a hole in the belfry floor to allow the bell rope to fall into the ringing chamber. Cutting back the sound control turned out to be more of an effort than expected. We have managed to get through two carving knives and one Stanley knife cutting through the rubber and super quilt. Having finally reached the wooden floor we discovered the rope was falling halfway through a floor joist. This necessitated cutting a groove though the floor joist. The wood has been in the tower since the 1850's and was as hard as iron. This single piece of wood took 6 hours with Jane pressing down on a hand brace whilst I cranked it. If you want an upper body workout, I can recommend it. My torso only stopped aching about 2 days ago.

With the rope dropping from the upper frame level we decided to install a shoot to guide the



rope from the floor of the belfry to just below the training bell frame. Luckily Rob was able to supply some smoothly planed wood. This next picture shows Jane with the shoot at the base of the tower before installation. The shoot was about 2 m long. Having got this into the belfry we discovered it was too close to the wheel of the second bell. We therefore decided to shorten it as can be seen in the next picture. This shoot is now long enough so that it guides the rope through the belfry floor but is short enough not to interfere with the other bells. The next picture shows the shoot installed into the belfry with the training bell set at back stroke. As you can see the sally does not appear above the shoot. The eagle eyed will see I have "temporarily" fixed the shoot to the frame using cable ties. Someone please remind me in 20 years' time, to fix it properly. The next picture shows where the training bell rope falls in relation to the tenor, treble and second bell ropes. So, what is next?

The mechanical installation is now completed. It rings rather well though I find the tail end a little long. I'm going to leave the length as it is, hoping once the virus lock-down is lifted we can start the recruitment campaign. I'm now in the process of collecting the bits and pieces required to attach a simulator, so the training bell can make a noise within the tower.

Nick Allsopp.

Childswickham tower captain, Lockdown antics



Now lockdown's upon us what shall i do? I've plenty of wood and a pot of glue.

I purchased a bell on the internet, then off to the shed i quickly set.

This model bell I've been waiting to make, plans in my head taking shape.

The headstock, slider and the pulley wheel. Carved and shaped until they could peel.

So with sawing and banging and turning the air blue.

This was one of my fifty ringing things to do.

With a little help from my wife, Ali, Who sat down a sewed me this colourful sally.

A miniature bell now built to ring although not as good as the real thing.

Cant wait to get back to our ringing skills and see all our friends from the Four Shires guild.

Graham Lee, Childswickham T.C.

Useful Index of webinars published by CCBR when using Abel simulator
<https://ccabr.org.uk/youtube-index/>

Chris Povey (Hon sec)

I have one item of interest, which was passed to me by an old (non ringing) school friend in London who happened to notice them. They are three recent Youtube recordings of local ringing at Chipping Campden. The internet references are:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVBOTB1WSSg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J15ZCeRhi9M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqNJOJ7ovpM>



Pat Bell achieving a bit of ringing at St Peters cathedral when on holiday in Adelaide Australia, Just before lockdown.

Answers to Quiz on page 5

1. 5 is going into the hunt, you are coming out
 2. a) The only one of the Standard Eight that is not named after a location is Superlative. The others are, in alphabetical order; Bris-
 tol, Cambridge Lincoln, London, Pudsey, Rutland and Yorkshire.
 b) As Rutland and Yorkshire are counties exactly how far you travel to visit them all (in order, starting and finishing in Offenhams)
 depends on which bit of the county you choose, but anywhere around 1,000 is about right.
 3. An extra sally at the bottom of the rope with a bulb shape to finish to prevent the hand slipping off, instead of rope just doubled
 back at the end

Stedman is different.

Top Tips

One of the main problems with ringing Stedman is that the rope sight is very different to Plain Bob and Grandsire, and it 'feels' odd when you ring it. Your subconscious is not expecting to keep meeting the same two bells on the front, and until you are used to it leading wrong is very weird. The best way to deal with this is to try and keep your mind ahead of your hands (ie think about your next blow(s), not the one you are doing), and definitely don't worry about what you just did. Things happen quickly in Stedman, you have to move with it or it gets away from you.

The line is easy.

Learning the line isn't difficult as it is beautifully symmetrical. Think of it in two parts, above 3rds place and 3rds place and below.

Above 3rds: you only do one thing; double dodge 4-5, lie, double dodge, 4-5, go in.

On the way in you have two choices:

Quick bell: once you leave the back hunt in through thirds place to lead, hunt out through thirds place.

Slow bell: Thirds on the way in; Whole Turn; Thirds; Half Turn; Thirds; Half Turn; Thirds; Whole Turn; Thirds on the way out.

Ringling it is more difficult.

If it is going well it's lovely to ring. The problem is that it can go from being beautiful to falling apart beyond redemption in three blows. If you are confident that you are right then be positive and keep going unless the conductor tells you something different.

Hints for the complicated bit.

How do you know if you are quick or slow? There are several ways of working it out by looking at which bells are underneath you, but I don't like signposts (in any method) that rely on another bell being right. I find that the best way is to remember that (if there is no

call) you alternate quick and slow, and you go in the opposite way to the way you came out.

If you really don't know my advice is to go in quick. If you are incorrect it's much easier to wait for a blow and then lead wrong than it is to catch up when you only have three blows to work with!

The slow work is new, and you need to learn it thoroughly because you go through it very quickly. If you have to think you've missed it.

Learn the terminology. People are going to shout 'first half turn', and you need to know what they are talking about.

Focus on the backstrokes. It should be natural to open the hand stroke lead, but in Stedman slow work half the time your first (or only) blow in the lead is a backstroke and you need to keep it closed or the rhythm falls apart. However, be careful not to go too far the other way and rush it!

Have some way of tracking where you are in the slow work. When you lead you can say to yourself 'first whole turn' or 'second half', whatever works for you. It's also useful to know some pointers. For example, if you are coming in from thirds place and get to the front 'wrong' you are either starting your first whole turn or doing the second half turn. Another one is if you are doing your thirds hand-back you are between the half turns (or on your way in your out). There are lots of these markers in the slow work, you won't remember all of them but have a good look and pick out one or two that will help you.

Singles

There are no bobs in Stedman doubles, just singles. Because Stedman is a principle the calls can come at any lead so they sometimes seem to be rather random. Just take each one as it comes and keep counting.

At a call:

- If you are in thirds place or below ignore it you are unaffected.
- If you are above thirds going out (ie you haven't done any dodges) then do the 'Cat's Ears' part of the single
- If you are above thirds and have already done some dodging then do the other half of the single (coat hangers or reverse cat's ears or whatever you like to call it).

And the important bit:

- If you are affected at the single you go in the same way that you came out.

Some bits that might help the singles: If you are doing cat's ears then your blows in 5ths are over the same bell.

If you are doing the reverse cat's ears then you need to make sure you finish your double dodging up with bell A before you do your single work with bell B and then double dodge down with bell C.

If you lose where you are in the reverse cat's ears it might help if you know the first lot of 5ths are over bells A & B, the middle set both blows are over bell B and the finally it is over bells B & C.

And the most important thing to remember when ringing Stedman.....BREATHE!

WHEN

WHY

HOW

IN 1933 my Father was Canon of Liverpool Cathedral, and I was born in May. It is often said that while a mother to be is pregnant, the noise of music and bells have a lasting effect on the child. So it was that my love of bells was born. I was christened in the cathedral font, and after 18 months, moved to Endon, about 2 miles from Pershore, in Worcestershire. On Sundays, with the bathroom window open, I could hear the bells of Pershore Abbey. This went on for 7 years.

Jump many years until I left the army and was living in Naunton Beauchamp. I had already joined the choir, and wanted to take up bell ringing. I went to a local church one evening by arrangement, and just sat on a chair. I was not introduced, and no one spoke to me. They just got on with it! I went a second time, and the same thing happened again.

I got on with life without ringing.

Thus when I lost some balance and had to cease another sport at 85, I asked Graham Partridge, the Bell Captain at neighbouring Elmley Castle, if I could learn. He kindly arranged for me to go to Eckington one evening to meet Tony and Kath Cox. Tony agreed to teach me, I thoroughly enjoyed everything, and was very regular on Thursday evenings, until my present Choirmaster in Bricklehampton said "Choir or Bells". Tony had been a superb instructor, and the band good fun.



So a friend, Sarah Bent, who had also been learning at Eckington, took me to another local church, which lasted, with no formal instruction, until one evening when 2 visitors were ringing, and seemed to me to be so much better, in stance, method and natural ability than anybody else, that before I left, I found out their names.

Next day I phoned, spoke to Claire Penny, and discovered she was Tower Captain at Offenham. I asked her whether it was worth while me continuing at my age. She replied "yes", and offered to continue my teaching.

And so I had private lessons once a week, until I said that I would love to get more practice. Whereupon she agreed to 2 lessons a week, and after a while invited me to come along to Offenham and Peabworth practice nights. Claire's husband Martin is the Tower Captain there.

In Coleman's bedside companion he says it is not easy to go from 6 bells to 8. Offenham has 6. But Peabworth 10, where we ring 6, 8, or 10. That makes me very lucky.

I rang at my first official service in July 2019 at a wedding in my own village of Bricklehampton, which was also the first time within living memory of the 3 bells being rung, and this was a special occasion because of a request from an ex church warden, and a lot of work from Steve Bowers. I have since rung at our services, and Little Comberton.

With Claire teaching 10 year olds to ring, she must be breaking a record to have a now 87 old as well! The friendliness, help and understanding from all is a wonderful example of how to treat other people, and the welcome to fresh faces and help at all towers is extraordinary. I only wish I had started at 10, instead of 85

Now that the Virus has struck, with no practice allowed, Claire is keeping up her excellent work by organising a quiz every Tuesday, with answers the following Tuesday, together with the next questions. Luckily, she doesn't show us all our marks.
David Bezzant.

!! SUBSCRIPTIONS !!

FSG subs for this year were due on 1st January 2020. This notice is a reminder for those who haven't paid yet (and there are some new members elected at the February Committee meeting that need to pay, too). The rates are £5 for members and £2 for Juniors (under 18). Please pay as soon as possible, as those that haven't paid by the end of July face losing the Newsletter. Payment benefits the Guild. (Please note: there is no Non-Resident Life Membership category. An annual subscription is required to retain membership.)

Payment may be made to Michael Dane, Hon Treasurer. Paying cash might be difficult at the moment (and Michael might not wish it at present). Paying by BACS (see below) or by cheque are the other options. A cheque may be posted to Michael (his address is elsewhere within this Newsletter), but please say where/who it's from and/or who the payment covers. Cheques to be made payable to 'The Four Shires Guild'.

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 use this system for FSG payments and it works extremely well. CMP)*

Here's hoping we can ring again soon.

Saturday October 17th, proposed date of the AGM and Striking Comps and proposed location is St James Church, Alveston, Warks (6, 7.5cwt in A).

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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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