

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central



Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 167 - January 1st 2021

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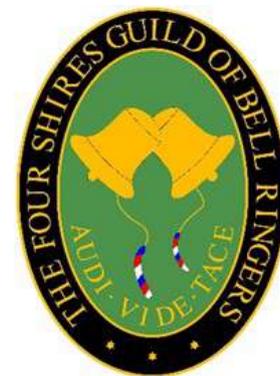
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Founded Oct 18th 1909

NEW HONORARY SECRETARY REQUIRED FROM 2021 AGM

I intend resigning as the Guild's Honorary Secretary at the 2021 AGM in October. I shall have done the job for seven years, with some secretarial input prior to that. I have a few things going on in my life that I didn't have a few years back and I feel the need to off-load some things. This post is one of them. I believe I've 'done my bit for the Guild'. It's for somebody else to give it a go now.

The job is typically secretarial, and anyone who has done this sort of work previously will recognise it as such:-

arrange meeting venues, formulate the agendas, attend the meetings (4 per year) and take the Minutes, distribute the Minutes and act on any actions that arise from the Minutes that are the Hon Sec's to do;

arrange the venue of the AGM and the Striking Comps. Arrange the organist and preacher. Compile the agenda for that, take Minutes and distribute, undertake actions;

work in conjunction with the Master of the Guild to arrange the Annual Dinner;

receive grant applications to the Guild's BRF, distribute the details to the members, write letters to the applicants when their application has been considered;

receive incoming mail (email and by post), and reply on behalf of the Guild when answers are known;

liaise with the other Principal Officers of the Guild (Master, Hon Treasurer and Ringing Master) and the Newsletter Editor among others; and be a signatory to the Guild's two bank accounts;

anything else? Probably, but can't bring it to mind at the moment...

For further information contact me (01386-584388; chrismpovey@gmail.com).

Chris Povey

FREE GUILD MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021 FOR PAID-UP MEMBERS

The Committee held an Extraordinary Meeting by email to discuss the following proposal:

Proposed by Michael Dane (Hon Treasurer); seconded by Peter Quinn (Guild Master) that:-

in the light of the severe disruption to Guild activities in 2020, it is proposed that Guild subscriptions for 2021 be free for those who paid 2020 subscriptions by 31st December 2020. (Invitations to donate to the Guild's Bell Restoration Fund are unchanged.)

the proposal was agreed by a majority, with none voting against.

This means: if your 2020 subscription was paid by 31st December 2020, your membership will therefore be valid until 31 December 2021. However, invitations to make donations to the BRF (£5 min) are unchanged.

Chris Povey, Hon Sec

Editorial

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting back into ringing, the virtual way, over the past 3 months. A practice night runs in the same way as it would in a real tower, the experience of the band will dictate what is achieved, only hampered by occasional, small technical issues. I would even go as far as saying there may be a place for virtual ringing after normality returns as learning methods seems easier. See below for an in-depth account on virtual ringing.

During November I found myself invited to one of a series of zoom consultations with a few other ringers. Hosted by Simon Linford president of the CCCBR, quite daunting for a quiet person like me.

The consultations were set up to include ringers young and old, experienced and inexperienced in order to gain a "good representation of opinion", CCCBR(18 Nov 2020). The majority of the discussions were on the "merits or otherwise of a direct membership organisation", (CCCBR). Not necessarily "a direct member of the CCBR but more of a direct member of bell ringing", (CCCBR). This does not mean "doing away with territorial associations as the value of local organisations is universally acknowledged", (CCCBR). No need to change the way local guilds provide regular ringing, their services will be unchanged. It seems that joining one direct

organization with one payment that has an easy to navigate website with information on all your ringing needs, including quick links and an app to the part of ringing that interests you, could be a win win situation. An interesting progression of ringing organizations, watch this space.

Reference: CCCBR, (18 Nov 2020), *CCCBR reforms progress report*, <https://cccb.org.uk/about/reforms/>,

Hope you have all noticed two rather important announcements on the front page and the fact that subscriptions are only due for some members.

Alison Lee

Virtual ringing

I am very pleased with how virtual ringing has turned out at Childswickham. I tried to resist getting involved with more technology and lived in hope that ringing would return very soon after the initial lockdown. Obviously, things did not return to normal and I felt I needed to start recapping on my methods somehow as they were slipping from my memory.

I decided I would have to learn the technology for ringing room and zoom and give this virtual thing a go, I was able to join a local practice with people I knew and a branch practice with some familiar faces. I soon realised that it wasn't scary at all and the technology was not daunting, downloading a little software in a few moments on one device only and I was able to join into practices.

To start with ringing rounds was quite a challenge, even recognising which was hand stroke and back was hard but getting the hang of rope sighting and counting places in a different way, soon improved the rounds and I progressed to methods, the level of experience of the people at the practice made a difference as it would in a tower. I was then given the opportunity to revisit calling a simple touch which was also challenging as I had to make my fingers multitask and use keys on the key board for commands, instead of voice, the whole virtual thing was becoming a pleasure just like the real thing.

Within a couple of weeks, I felt confident enough to see who was interested to join a Childswickham practice, to my delight almost the whole team expressed an interest even though they each had some reservations. We set a date and started! Internet connection difficulty, technology issues, sticky tape over the camera, sound but no sight, included some of the problems on our first night but not unlike the other first practices I've heard about. With these issues resolved and even another beginner asking to join, we continued regular practice once a week.

I feel **really proud** of what we have achieved as a novice team of ringers. Each one of the team needs a mention. The beginners have learnt to count places and have become invaluable members for method ringing which has led us into attempting plain courses for different methods that some members never new existed. The beginners have also been getting to grips with plain Bob doubles. We have each learnt to call something simple and one member has got through touches of Bob doubles and to overcome technology when age is not on his side, (over 80yrs) for this member is fantastic. This may sound simple achievements to some experienced ringers but as a novice band in the tower, over the past few years, we have barely progressed to plain courses of bob doubles and only on certain nights when experienced ringers turn up.

So, if you fancy practicing your methods again, joining the chat or just having a go, ringing room and zoom/messenger may be the way forward. See below.

Need a virtual tower to join? here are a few regular practice nights currently happening within the FSG. Please contact the tower captains to join

Offenham Tuesday 7:30-9:00. contact Claire Penny

Childswickham Wednesday 7:30- 9:00. Contact Graham Lee

Pebworth Friday 7:30-9:00. Contact Martin Penny

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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CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS

As I write, ringing in churches is just starting again after the lockdown although in a very limited way. Let us hope that it won't be too long before we can return to our normal patterns. Many people have told us that they love to hear the bells, but we need to be cautious in case new people have moved into properties next to the church during the silent period, and may not appreciate loud noise from nearby.

We are going to have to recruit many new ringers to replace any who have dropped out, and to run refresher courses for any who had made a start last year. We must look everywhere to find people to teach and encourage them to persevere.

I can remember the last time that ringing was prohibited, during the war. Bells were only to be rung in the event of an invasion by the enemy. I was brought up in a small village near Canterbury where the tower houses 6 bells. One day, the bells were heard, because a man with mental health issues had decided to go into the tower where he pulled the sally of each bell leaving the rope swinging. The police went to find what had happened, and the would-be ringer was sent off to the local mental hospital for a week or two before being allowed home to continue his work as a gardener. I learned to ring, encouraged by my grandfather, in the first group to be taught after the war and made good progress by attending more than one local practice night locally. Within quite a short time I was helping the Canterbury Cathedral band whose numbers had sadly been depleted by the war.

Ringing recovered fairly quickly after the restart then. Let us hope that things may be similar after the present hiatus. Good luck with your own recruiting endeavours.

Peter Newing

Quiz questions from our Offenham tower captain, Claire Penny.

- Some ringing related anagrams for you to solve:
 - WROTE
 - LANDTIE
 - IDLERS
 - TANDEMS
 - LEAP
 - PORE
- What happens if you ring in spurs or hat
- If you are ringing a touch of Plain Bob how many bells are affected by the bob if you are ringing on
 - 6 bells
 - 9 bells
 - 12 bells

FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER BY EMAIL SUBMISSION

1 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 11th Aug by email submission

The Minutes were agreed

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

1. AGM: subsequent to our last meeting and the agreements made then, it was agreed that running an AGM by 'Zoom' was unlikely to be successful and the October Newsletter carried a notice to this effect. It was agreed that the 2020 AGM would be run in early 2021.
2. Booking a venue for the 2021 Annual Dinner: Peter said he had not booked an annual dinner as it is very unlikely that we would be able to in the present climate. He recommended that the next dinner would be in 2022. Majority agreement to this (one suggestion was to book for April 2021 and see what happens).
3. Printing v. emailing Newsletters: Chris reported that he wrote a piece for the Newsletter re this as agreed. Majority agreement to email copies at present, but to revert to printed copies when this becomes possible again, although there may be instances where the previous distribution system is possible and printed copies may be produced. (Printers to decide such action in each case.)

3 Financial Statement

Michael circulated a financial report prior to the meeting re the General Account and the BRF account. He also explained that the Guild had been offered a donation of £2000 towards the BRF, but this was from a charity account and needed to be referred to various authorities about whether the Guild can accept it (the Guild isn't registered as a charity), and if so, whether the grant aid (£500) as a charitable addition could be paid, too. Michael is liaising with these bodies.

4 Consideration of grant applications.

Update on grants:

1. **Ebrington** grant (£600): this has been reduced to £450 as agreed by the last meeting. Peter Banton understands and accepts the reason. *(Subsequent to this meeting Peter Banton informed the Hon Sec that the work to the bellframe is now complete and that an inspection is required to allow the grant to be paid. Chris to organise a visit.)*
2. **Temple Guiting** clapper rebushing work has now been completed satisfactorily and their grant has been paid;
3. **Moreton-in-Marsh** clock move. Nick provided an update: originally the clock move was organised for May 2020, but due to the pandemic lock down this was postponed. The four sockets in the wall which will hold the metal frame of the shelf have been created by Rob and myself. Luckily we managed to do this last weekend, Saturday 1st Nov, just before this next lock down. The next process to be done is the installation of the metal frame but I don't yet have a date for this to happen.

Applications for consideration:

St Mary's, **Halford**: rebushing the clappers and a new set of ropes. Information and application form were distributed to all on 3rd August (with the agenda for the Aug meeting). The application has 'lain on the table' as required and was considered.

Michael proposed £215 (based on our normal percentage arrangements; Chris seconded this. Majority agreement (no disagreements). Chris to send a letter to the applicant informing him of the decision. **Action: CMP (Done)**

New application: received from **Honington**.

The application form and the quotation for work were distributed prior to this meeting, so it can be considered at the Committee meeting in February. *(The Hon Sec pointed out that there was only one quotation for this, and that we would normally wish to see a competing one. However, the percentage we apply to calculate grant would make the amount well in excess of our maximum sum - currently £600 - so a second quotation would be meaningless and a waste of time. It is recommended that the single quotation is accepted in this case.)*

5 Items for discussion

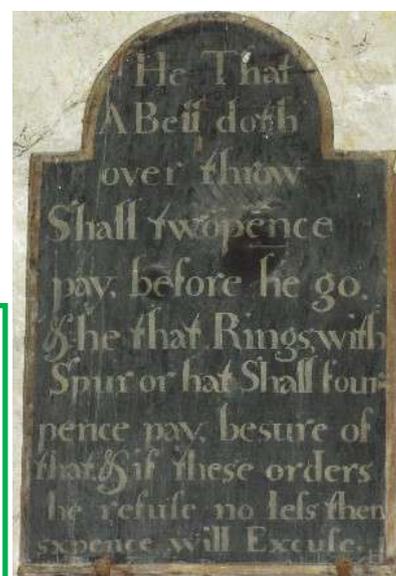
Peter asked a question about printing of the membership certificates and the picture of the four churches for framing. He said the latter can be printed to order they are on a much heavier paper than the certificates. He recommends having the certificates printed only at this stage. *(A reminder of the quotation: a single print of the four churches with an extra 5cm around on 280 gsm Fine Art paper is £4.91 +VAT each; the Certificates (A4 on 180gsm paper) are £1.75 + VAT each (20% discount for 100).*

There was agreement from the respondents to this question that Peter's suggestion be accepted: that 100 certificates be printed, but no churches prints at this stage

6 Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 9th February 2021 (Church House, Evesham, if we can meet in person; otherwise email submission again).
Chris Povey Hon Sec; 17th Nov 2020

(Note:: These Minutes are not the formal account of the meeting until they are agreed by the Committee at its next Meeting)



Quiz Answers from Claire Penny

1. A. Tower B. Tail End C. Slider D. Stedman E. Peal F. Rope
2. You get fined! There are several variations on a rhyme which lists the penalties for various transgressions in the tower. An example of one is "If you ring in spur or hat then sixpence will you pay for that." The rhymes vary from tuppence to half a crown.
3. By definition a bob swaps three bells, so the answer to all parts of the question is three.

FROM THE ARCHIVES – 40 YEARS AGO

Minutes of a Committee Meeting held at Shipston-on-Stour on 24th February 1981

Present: M F Fairfax, J White, D Hammond, J Nicholls, A Turner, A J Brazier, Jackie Taylor, P Harmer.

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

2 Matters arising:

- a) Newsletter. The balance sheet and officer reports will be made available shortly;
- b) Dinner. Music was not available as requested, but was not missed;
- c) Bank Mandate. This still needs amending (NB: the necessary signatures were obtained after the meeting);
- d) MFF reported the death of his father F Fairfax, an honorary member, who died on the 18th February. He reported a muffled quarter peal was rung in his honour on 20th February on Mickleton bells;
- e) Restoration Fund, Todenham tower. A meeting was held at Bourton-on-the Hill between PH, AT, MFF, JW and Rev Lambert and C Gilson. From Todenham heard that sufficient funds were already available to pay for tower repairs. Quotes were being sought for bell restoration. MFF agreed to produce an article for the Newsletter. Fund raising ideas were suggested:-

MFF: ¼ peal ringing for Service with a levy on each rope;

JW: sponsored ringing. AJB suggested amounts raised should be reported in the Newsletter. MFF agreed to produce an official sponsor form;

MFF: a coffee morning in selected areas. A small 4shires exhibition might also be mounted;

MFF: a car 'treasure hunt' in place of a Saturday practice.

- a) Towers. AJB has almost completed updating the list;
- b) Membership. AJB pointed out continued effort was needed to attract new members.

3 Accounts: AJB proposed adoption of revision to the bank mandate; seconded by JN and carried unanimously.

4 Notepaper: AJB proposed headed should be produced without officers' names. This was agreed.

5 Competition: Arrangements are to be left to the Guild Master and published in the April Newsletter. MFF asked for competitors names 1 week in advance so as to help arranging the programme.

6 Amendments to the Rules: An amendment to and reprint of the rules was agreed.

7 Next meeting: Wednesday 8th April 1981 at Ebrington Arms, 7.30pm.

Signed

MFFairfax, 1/6/81

Archives from 100 years ago

A committee meeting to arrange the programme for the Blockley meeting was held at the Rectory, Moreton, on March 30th 1921.

At the meetings request the Rev G.E.Hitchcock took the chair and after the reading of the minutes, letters of apology for non attendance were read from the Rev's A.G.Agar and A.N.Warner and also from Mr E.Harris (Willersey).

It was proposed by Mr Faulkner, set by Mr W.Harris that the competitions be as usual but that they commence at 1:30 pm and hopes this was unanimously carried.

Proposed by Mr C.Bird, seconded by Mr Pardon that the service in the church commence at 4:30. Carried, Proposed by Mr K.Evans seconded by the Rev Spencer Jones that the vicar of Campden be asked to be the preacher, to which he kindly gave his consent. Tea was fixed for 5:15. Proposed by the secretary, seconded by Mr W.Harris that Mr E.Pardon be again appointed judge. Carried. Proposed by Mr Evans seconded by Mr Bird that 7 minutes be the time limit for rising and falling the bells. Carried unanimously.

Proposed by Mr Pardon, seconded by Mr Bird that the qualification for the method ringing be Grandsire Doubles or other 5 bell changes, carried. Proposed by Mr Pardon, seconded by the secretary that the trophy be held by the winning tower at Blockley for the first 6 months then the tower who won the highest number of points at the Spring and Autumn meetings combined, be allowed to hold the challenge shield for the next 12 months. This was also agreed to and the secretary was instructed to show the trophy to the president and afterwards to have the same on show. In some prominent shop window, in available parishes, prior to the Blockley meeting.

The usual votes of thanks to the Chairman and to the Rev S.Jones for the use of the room and refreshments closed the meeting.

Spencer Jones Chairman

Ringling stories from two young ringers and Robert:-

I first became interested in bell ringing at the Childswickham village fete on the 15th of June 2019, when I entered the church porch. I was hoping to get a snack, when I saw two bell ringers allowing people to go up into the tower. I asked whether I could go up the iron ladder into the bell tower and was fascinated by the tower and the six bells.

I wanted to start bell ringing because it was something different to try and I enjoyed going up into the tower and admiring the architecture. I started weekly lessons and began ringing on Sundays before Covid stopped the services and prevented me from going out onto the tower parapet! I study my log book and have to complete the grades. I was given a book on "Bells & Bell Founding" which I find fascinating.

I visited Worcester Cathedral with my friend and went up the tower with Alison, our teacher. We saw the large bells and rung the mock bells. We went to the top of the tower and saw the city below. I really would like to ring the bells in the cathedral one day.

I enjoy ringing in the band because I can learn from the other ringers that come, but we also get to have fun. I love the sound of the bells especially, bell number three, as well as being able to enjoy being surrounded by historic architecture. Freddie Barwise, aged 11yrs



Hi, I am Chloe Honeywell I'm eleven years old and enjoy ringing. I was eight years old when I started and learnt to ring at Offenham Church. I got into ringing because my Grandad was telling me all about it and I wanted to try it, I really enjoyed it and that's when my grandad got me lessons with Claire. From there I've been to so many different towers and done so many amazing things, my favorite has got to be watching my Grandad do a quarter peal with my Uncle and all his friends for his 80th birthday. I am so thankful and grateful for everything everyone has done for me and am so excited to get back to ringing soon.



Robert's story

My ringing career began in 1953 when I was taught how to handle a bell at St. James Church, Badsey. My teachers were Tony Brazier and Roger Savory, both excellent ringers. My first peal was rung in 1955. In 1956 I rang a peal of 6000 plain bob major at St. James church, Badsey, in 3 hours and 30 mins, the composition was arranged by Roger Savory. This was, and still is, the longest peal on those bells. I commissioned a brass plaque to commemorate the occasion together with a photo of the band. Sadly, I am the only member of the band left.

I then moved to London for work and after a gap of 12 years commenced ringing again at St. Andrews, Hornchurch. The high point, for me, at Hornchurch, was a Father and son peal, which I rang with my son, Michael. I also took part in the 100th peal on St. Andrews bells, co-incidentally, it was also rang for the Queen Mothers 100th birthday. These bells were augmented from 8 to 10 and I was invited to take part on the first peal on 10. By this time I had left London and returned to the Vale of Evesham. I rejoined the Four Shires Guild in 1988 and rang at Offenham, where I taught some young ringers to ring including my youngest son, William. He rang his first quarter peal at the age of 8 years, followed by a full peal of Grandsire Doubles at Offenham, aged 9 years.

I rang a few more peals in various methods and was pleased to take part in the 1st peal on 10 at Pebworth, My grand daughter, Chloe Honeywell, is also learning to ring, being taught by the Captain of Offenham, Claire Penny, and what a terrific teacher she is, thank you Claire!

Chloe has written a short piece for the FSG newsletter, she has also told me how she enjoys her ringing and outings. I personally would like to thank all the people who have helped Chloe to progress with her ringing, particularly Claire. It is a tragedy that we have been unable to meet and ring for so long and I look forward to once again hearing those words 'Look 2 trebles going, she's gone'

Robert Hall

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BELLS OF ST NICHOLAS, SAINTBURY.

A couple of months ago Robert Chadburn asked me reply to someone about the history of Saintbury bells, and I thought it might be good to share this with Guild members via the Newsletter, as many members have rung there – and appreciated the view from its churchyard.

Prior to 1678 there were, it is believed, four bells in a wooden bellframe for four bells. In that year Henry Bagley cast five bells for the church at his foundry at Chacombe, Northants. (He is usually designated Henry I Bagley, as he was the first of the Bagley bellfounding dynasty that later included Henry II and Henry III.) To accommodate these bells the bellframe was extended to include the extra bell. (As an aside, Ebrington's 3rd, 4th & tenor were also cast by Henry Bagley in 1678, and probably the 5th, too, but that was recast in 1847 and again in 1955. Additionally, he cast the back three bells at Bourton-on-the-Hill in 1677, and probably the 3rd, too, but that was recast in 1873. Henry Bagley was quite busy in the North Cotswolds in those two years!)

Another bell (a treble) was provided in 1835 and was cast by John Rudhall, who was the last of the Rudhall bellfounding dynasty of Gloucester. The bellframe was again extended to accommodate this bell. Sometime prior to 1902 the 4th bell of this ring of 6 became cracked and was recast by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough. The work to hang this bell and to overhaul the other bells was undertaken by Fred White, bellhanger, of Appleton near Abingdon.



Things stayed in this form until the early 1980s, but the bells must have become hard to ring and eventually became unringable well before this date. I visited the tower and the bells in 1966 and the bell installation was quite derelict. The birds had been in for many years and most of the bells had twigs almost half-way up their waists. There was a Guild initiative, led by Tony Brazier, to clear the debris from the belfry to give the bells a try, but all came to nought, as the bellframe was well past its usable life. Here is a photo showing the extent of some of that debris.

The change in their fortunes came in what must have been 1980 or 1981, when a local resident's daughter wished to be married in the church. Ringing the bells was requested, but refused because the bells were unringable. Undaunted, the bride's father asked how much to make them ringable. Visits by bellhanging companies followed and a price to undertake the work was developed. The resident offered a loan to the church to have the work done, but he told the chosen bellhanger (the Whitechapel Bell Foundry) that if they didn't finish the work in time, he wouldn't pay them - and that was, quite genuinely, the commercial agreement that was struck. (I know this to be true, as Alan Hughes, the Managing Director of WBF, told me this himself.) The old wooden bellframe was removed and the 6 bells were hung in a new metal bellframe, which was laid out in such a way that pits for two smaller bells could be added if an opportunity arose. The work was completed on time – the wedding was in July 1983 - and WBF were paid.

The augmentation to 8 came in 1999, when the two Churchwardens decided to provide two trebles to celebrate the coming of the Millennium by completing the octave. These were cast by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry and were hung that year in the bellframe that was extended as envisaged to accommodate them. The new bells were dedicated on Sunday 31st October 1999.

Here are the details of the bells and bellframe as they appear on the Dove database website:-

Saintbury, Gloucestershire							
S Nicholas							
Bells							
Bell	Weight	Nominal Note	Diameter	Dated	Founder	Canons	Turning
1	3-2-5	F#	24.88"	1999	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd	F	
2	3-2-27	E#	26.25"	1999	"	F	
3	4-1-16	D#	27.50"	1835	John Rudhall	Y	
4	4-3-14	C#	29.25"	1678+	Henry I Bagley	Y	
5	5-2-4	B	31.50"	1678+	Henry I Bagley	Y	
6	7-1-6	A#	34.00"	1902	John Taylor & Co	F	
7	8-2-16	G#	37.13"	1678+	Henry I Bagley	Y	
8	11-0-24	F#	40.88"	1678+	Henry I Bagley	Y	

Saintbury, Gloucestershire

S Nicholas

Frames

Frame	Bells	Year	Material	Maker	Truss	Layout
1	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	1983		Whitechapel Bell Foundry		

The '1' addition to the 1678 bells show they have been listed by the Church Buildings Council to be worthy of extra care in their preservation. The notes of each bell are shown. Inscriptions of the six larger bells are recorded in 'Church Bells of Gloucestershire' by Mary Bliss and Fred Sharpe (1986 - which of course was prior to the augmentation in 1999).

The church is now with the Churches Conservation Trust, which allows ringing to continue. It would have been something of a tragedy if that hadn't happened, as they are a good 8; and being hung with modern fittings, go well too.

Chris Povey



St Edwards church Stow on the Wold, North entrance. Rumoured to be the inspiration for JRR Tolkiens "Doors of Durin" featured in a scene in the Lord of the rings; the fellowship of the ring. Although this has never been authenticated, JRR Tolkien lived and worked around Oxford and Birmingham and was a professor at Oxford during the time he wrote these books he was known to visit the Cotswolds often.

I never knew this hidden gem was within the FSG patch, having only visited for ringing in the dark. Worth a visit when we can get out and about again.

Photograph by Alison Lee

Surplus ringing books for disposal (donations to FSG funds invited)

I'm having a clear out of some surplus ringing books. They can be free-of-charge to a good home - the space is worth more to me than any proceeds from them - although I invite the recipients of the books to make a donation to the FSG's Bell Restoration Fund if they could manage that.

The following books are available:-

Church Bells of Gloucestershire (Fred Sharpe & Mary Bliss), 1986 (not strictly Gloucestershire, just those in Gloucester Diocese, so some towers outside Glos are included and some in it are not)

Church Bells of Herefordshire Vols 1-5 (Fred Sharpe) 1979

Church Bells of Worcestershire: (H B Walters) 1999 reprint of original book of c1920

Bellfounding: Shire Books. (Trevor Jennings) 1999

Curious Church Customs: (William Andrews) 1898

All are in good condition.

The information they contain is, of course, out of date regarding some towers, but it's the historical information that's still very interesting.

Anything that remains will probably go to the great library in the sky.

Chris Povey

chrismpovey@gmail.com

Learning Methods

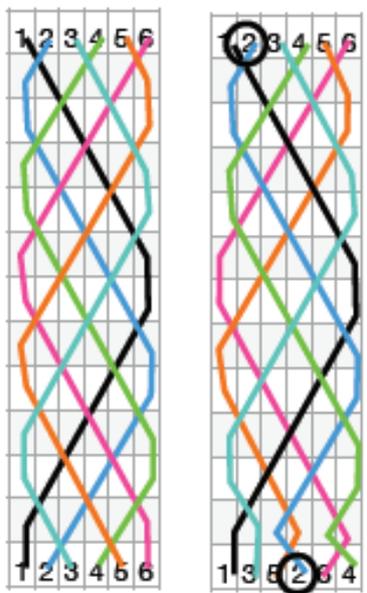
by Neil Garner

In part 1 of this series we looked at the ideas of rope sight and rhythm and their significance in finding your way around a method. In part 2 we take the ability to move up or down the order and by the addition of single adjustments, extend the idea.

Plain Hunt with Twiddly bits...!

This is probably a good way to describe Plain Bob and other simple methods. They are still fundamentally Plain Hunt but with just minor deviations from the norm. In Plain Bob, by making just a single change at the end of each lead, we swap bells around and by doing so, extend the length from 12 rows to 60. It allows the 5 working bells to ring a course of plain hunt in each place.... i.e. starting in 2nds place, 4ths, 6ths, etc.

By adding a different type of twist instead (a bob or single), we can then extend the 60 changes to a full 720... which is every possible permutation... or an 'Extent'!



This diagram shows a course of plain hunt and the first lead of plain bob. They are identical until the last change....

The bell which has just lead stays in seconds, causing the other working bells to reverse direction (a dodge) to avoid a clash, which also means that they do not come back to where they started, they all move to another starting position.

② → ④, ④ → ⑥, ⑥ → ⑤, ⑤ → ③, ③ → ②.

So it will take five leads before they returns to where they started.

People often talk about a 'circle of work' because actually, you ring plain hunt for 11 changes, then for the final blow, move to the next position and ring 11 more changes as if you were a different bell... and so on till you get back to where you started.

The biggest danger when learning both Plain Hunt and Plain Bob is that it is quite possible to remember the numerical sequences and not use rope sight or rhythm at all. Although this might be a solution for 12 rows of plain hunt or maybe even for 60 rows in Plain Bob minor... it is not going to be sensible when you have to learn 720 rows... especially when you bare in mind there are many dozens of different ways to ring 720, as well as 5 different working bells to start from in each one! If you try this from memory... you will undoubtedly fail!

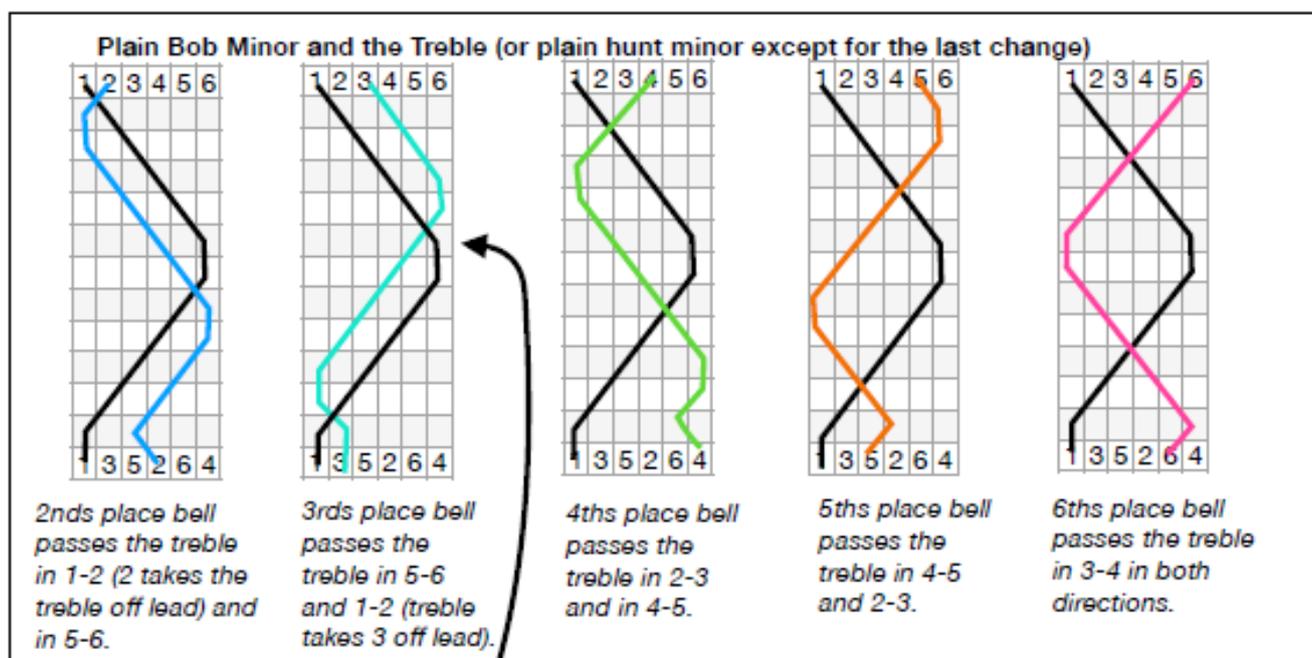
Once you have a solid grasp of rope sight and rhythm, you can start to concentrate on methods. With the simplest method where there is only one deviation from plain hunt per lead, one of the most basic issues is remembering where you have got to because in the 10 or 20 seconds when you are only plain hunting, there plenty of time to forget or become distracted.... What is the next twist and when is it due, is something which we all panic about from time to time!

The Treble is always our best friend...

One of the biggest helpers with our human fallibility is the treble. As we all know, the treble ploughs a constant furrow back and forth, plain hunting and seemingly unaffected by the working bells. Not only is it therefore a great place to hone your rope sight and rhythm skills from, it is also reminding everyone else what to do next.

We all know that in plain hunt we will pass the treble at a set point. 2nds place bells swaps with the treble at the first change, it is then followed by the 4th, 6th, 5th and finally the 3rd on subsequent changes. As we have already mentioned; in Plain Bob, we add a dodge on the last change of each course to cycle the working bells around the 5 possible starting positions, so although the 2nd passes the treble 1st in plain hunt, after the lead end, that changes to 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc. because the dodge delays everyone (except the treble) by one place.

This means that if you note where you pass the treble, you will know what to do at the lead end and when the lead end will be.... We all try to remember where we are and what we are doing, but the treble helps all of us more often than we might care to admit, by reminding us when we get distracted.



As an example, if you pass the treble in 5-6 on your way down, it is the first bell you pass on that journey. You instantly know that:

- you are still half a lead away from the next event, because the treble is as far away from leading as is possible.
- The Treble is following you and therefore will follow you lead.
- You will need to change course as you finish leading (because the treble will lead next)... so make 2nds and become 2nds place bell.

Using the treble as a guide is therefore brilliantly simple... it is a staff to lean on. Actually, this works for all methods, including treble bob and surprise... although in those cases, the treble is not just hunting, it zigzags its way along like many a good ringer at the end of the obligatory post ringing pub visit! But it does still follow a repetitive pattern and therefore offers exactly the same support.

Know the starts....

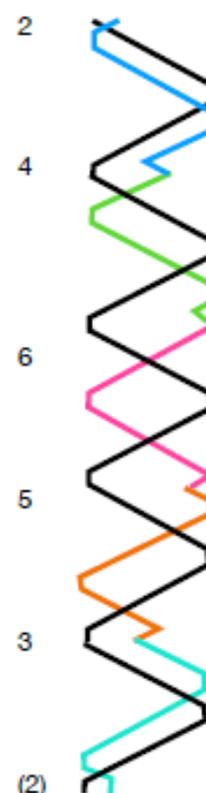
When you talk to expert ringers, they will often talk about 'place bells'. A place bell describes where you start in a method. We have already explained that in plain bob we add a twist into the pattern on the last change of each plain hunt course to cycle the bells around and try different starting positions. This is also true of every other method, so when you learn a line, it is important that you know how the line breaks up. Every minor method will be made up of 5 parts, one for each working bell, in doubles it will be 4 parts, and major 7 parts, etc.. So instead of learning a long continuous line, learn 5 smaller lines and the order in which to stitch them together...

This has 2 major benefits:

- by breaking the task down into smaller parts, it actually becomes much easier remember.
- it makes it easier to reference, because when you are lost, someone can say "4ths place bell", so you do what the 4th bell would do at the start.... You are back on track and you can once again visualise where you are and see the pathway through the other bells!

A clue to someone who has learned a method this way is that they will not be worried about which bell they ring. For them, it is just a matter of starting with a different section.

If we lookout the adjacent diagram, we can see that Plain Bob Minor is actually all five versions of plain hunt (except for the last change), done in the order 2, 4, 6, 5, 3... So if you ring the 5th bell, it just starts at a different point in that sequence... so 5, 3, 2, 4, 6...



Next time, we will look at how you can build on the basic methods and move into the world of the more complex lines, where you meander along a line which resembles a mountain path....

Round and about Happisburgh with (Norfolk George)

At the end of September, we went up to north Norfolk for a week staying at west Runton at a hotel by Cromer. West Runton is 12 miles from north Walsham the home of a long-time member of the four shires guild that being George Riseborough or as members will know him as (Norfolk George). We both thought that as George had not been able to come down to Dorn by Moreton-in-marsh with his caravan for the last 2 years, due to health problems, as he had done for years we should contact him, this we did. George said he had a fall 2 days before but was ok if he used a walking stick and said how he had missed coming down and meeting his ringing friends at their practice evenings and going for a pint after the practice. We arranged to get together with social distancing due to covid recommendations.

George said he would like to show us the church at Happisburgh pronounced, (haze-bruh) that he rings at and also sings in the choir. George came to our hotel on the Wednesday morning and we followed him in our car to haze-bruh via north Walsham a small market town where George lives. When we arrived at St. Mary's church haze-bruh. The church was locked up but would be open later in the day so we had a walk round the church and churchyard with George and agreed we would return later in the day when the church would be open and have a walk around the inside of St. Mary's with George.

We enjoyed our time with George, he sends his good wishes to all FSG. members he has come to know over the years and hopes to see you all again one day.

George in the churchyard at St. Mary's looking very well now in his 89th year



St. Mary's dates from 15th century. the Norman church was completely rebuilt in the 14th century and the 14th century church, was itself rebuilt in the 15th century only the chancel was spared and then it was extended and heightened. In the churchyard is a memorial to the crew of HMS Peggy that ran aground here on 19th December 1770 a total of 32 members of the crew are buried here. On the north side of the churchyard is a large mound marking a mass grave of 119 crew members of HMS invincible which came to grief on Haisbro sands in 1801.



St. Mary's tower dates from 15th century is 110 ft tall. has a ring of 8 bells with 10-0-22 cwt tenor, in George's words "don't she stand proud"?



Coastal erosion.

George said when he was a lad he rode his motorbike from haze-bruh to Eccles-on-sea the road is now 100 yards out in the North Sea, in the last 20 years 35 homes have been lost to the sea. The tower captain, Gilbert said if the erosion rate carries on as it is St. Mary's could be lost to the sea in 60 years or so



font dates from 15th century is carved with figures of lions with woodwoses wild men of the woods bearing clubs. a fine example of 15th century craftsmanship.

By Stuart Cummings

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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 emailable.)
Chris Povey, Hon Sec

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