

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central  Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 150 - OCT 2016



Founded Oct 18th 1909

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GRAHAM PAYNE.

7/11/1942 - 14/7/2016.



(Photo from Ros Payne)

Graham was elected Ringing Master of the Guild in 1996 and continued in this role until 1999, when he took on the combined position of Guild and Ringing Master. He served in this capacity until 2001. Shortly after Pam Copson ceased to be the Newsletter Editor, Graham served as the Editor in conjunction with another member. There can be few who have served the Guild in each of these important capacities. Graham will be remembered for his exceptional diligence in undertaking these roles and for his ringing abilities. His obituary is on p.3.

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The FSG website is: <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>

Subscription rates: £5 adult; £2 Junior

It also has a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1548368912115550/>

The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (January 2017) is Dec 13th 2016

This Newsletter survives only because of the contributions you make to it. Without them it will fail. Articles can be submitted to the undersigned via email or to the postal address shown above, or to any committee member.

Please contribute something, however small (or large). You would be surprised the things people enjoy reading about. They will all be welcome... and don't worry if you think your handwriting is unintelligible. It can normally be translated. Just send the stuff in!

Newsletter Editor: Chris Povey Postal and email addresses above

It helps me hugely if you send articles to me by email, so I can cut-and-paste. If sending articles in this way, please use MS Word format for written articles, jpg format for photos, and scanned items in pdf or jpg formats. (I have the facility to scan photo prints if you haven't.) Please let me know ownership of photos for acknowledgement where relevant. If you have a long article, you might consider breaking it into parts.

**THERE WERE 19 DIFFERENT CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE. THIS MAY BE A RECORD.
IT SHOWS THE GUILD IS IN GOOD HEART. PLEASE LET THIS CONTINUE.**

REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE 15TH OF OCTOBER.....

WHY?

BECAUSE IT'S THE GUILD AGM & STRIKING COMPS!

WHERE?

LANGBOROUGH
(FULL DETAILS IN JULY NEWSLETTER)

EDITORIAL

As you will see from the front page, **Graham Payne** passed away recently. How sad to have another prominent member leave us so soon after Clint Evans (reported in the last Newsletter). Although Graham's illness prevented him from ringing in recent years, his abilities on the end of a rope, and in managing the Guild and its ringing practices, will be remembered for a long time. He (and Ros) put a lot of time and effort into the Guild, and much of his ethos remains with us today. He always wanted the best; he wasn't someone who was content with 'just enough', which isn't surprising for a Royal Engineer of 20 years; and a Warrant Officer to boot! Military precision seemed to be his byword. The most telling description of Graham I heard came during a conversation I had with Bill Sabin at the funeral. He said Graham came to ring with the Ilmington band and that 'he certainly pulled us up', meaning that he improved their standard of ringing and striking. To hear somebody such as Bill (particularly Bill, and particularly somebody from the great Mickleton-Ilmington band) say such a thing is a wonderful epitaph. His obituary, ably written by Bill Nash, is well-worth reading (following page). I enjoyed knowing you, Graham

The lightning strike at Long Compton is a reminder that the elements do not exempt Churches from their considerable forces. PCCs in the past (and some possibly the present) may have believed that the Great Almighty will protect, but our understanding of science allows us to know there is no exemption and to undertake works that eliminate or severely reduce the damage that lightning can produce. Lightning conductors are now commonplace, and it would seem sensible to protect tall buildings with these devices. Sadly, Long Compton didn't have one, so the PCC are now faced with rectifying the considerable damage. There will probably be an insurance pay-out, and hopefully this will cover the cost. But it won't cover the hassle factor. Rather amazingly, a lightning conductor is not a requirement of EIG's

insurance. However, if one is fitted, then all major metalwork in the church, particularly lead roof coverings and equally particularly metal bellframes, should be connected to the conductor, as metal of all types increases the building's attraction to lightning. Long Compton has a metal bellframe and lead roof coverings..... I strongly suspect there are other churches with similar features that don't have conductors fitted. Let us hope Long Compton's PCC can effect repairs soon and within any insurance pay-out they receive. But, one wonders, will the fitting of a conductor be a condition of the settlement? Perhaps, too, ringers at churches with metal bellframes might check whether a lightning conductor is fitted; and if not, cite Long Compton's experience for getting one fitted. Even our little Church at Wormington, with its wooden spirelet and wooden bellframe housing just one bell, has a fully up-to-date conductor. It must be sensible to provide such protection.

Sadly the Guild Walk didn't work well this year. There were insufficient to ring at the last two churches. Michael Haynes has decided not to organise next year's, so a new organiser is required if a Walk is to happen in 2017. If you enjoy walking and ringing, might you undertake this job? There is a bit of time in which to choose a route and make arrangements, but I need to advertise the details in the July Newsletter, for which such details are required by mid-June.

Chris Povey, Editor

(The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Four Shires Guild or its Committee. The Guild endorses no products or manufacturers advertised within the Newsletter – but would not allow such advertisements where the goods or services are knowingly questionable.)

THE CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS

Many of us visit neighbouring towers whilst still comparative learners and this helps us gain in experience. Attendance at ringing meetings also helps and we gain valuable friendships that help bond ringers together. Ringers are a friendly group, which means that when miles away from home when on holiday we have friends in the village or town tower, who welcome us.

Some of us have rung at many towers which have provided us with the opportunity to see villages and towns in other parts of the country that we would never have visited but for the fact we are ringers. Ringing has taken me to Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. Some get to North America and Australia!

Rev Dr Peter Newing

OBITUARY - GRAHAM DAVID PAYNE; 11th November 1942 – 14th July 2016

We were saddened to learn of the death of Graham, who had been a tower of strength in local ringing circles in the early 1980s through to the early 2000s.

Graham grew up at Eastleigh, Hants, where his brother was a bellringer and Graham pumped the organ at North Stoneham, a local church nearby. It was here that he met Ros. Graham had an early and enduring interest in music and military bands, and he played the guitar.

At the age of 15 he joined the army (initially through the Boys Service, the Day School, until 18) and continued in the army until 1978, leaving as a Warrant Officer 2. He trained as an engineer (he was in the Royal Engineers), and travelled widely in this role, principally in Germany, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and other places. He married Ros in 1965 and they moved to Stretton-on-Fosse in 1972, he being based at Long Marston. After leaving the army he worked in Saudi Arabia for a further four years for an oil company.

When he returned to South Warwickshire in 1982 he became Chief Engineer at the Moat House Hotel in Stratford. It was a chance meeting with George Rouse, tower captain at Ebrington, that got Graham interested in bellringing. He learnt at Ebrington and made rapid progress, moving his allegiance to Ilmington after a year or so to ring more advanced methods and quarter peals.

Soon quarter peals (many of which were multi-method) were being rung for every Sunday morning Service (and for other occasions) at Ilmington, and mostly conducted by Graham. These were invariably well struck and included a huge number of doubles methods, some seldom rung elsewhere. Graham also rung a number of peals on 6, 8 and 10 bells, including Spliced

Surprise Major and a multi-method Doubles peal at Ilmington by the Sunday Service band, which he conducted.

Graham taught Ros to ring, and others, and he supported a number of other towers, especially Mickleton. Ilmington and Mickleton ringers had gradually and increasingly co-operated, and rang for each other's Services and practices whenever possible.

Although Graham was never tower captain at Ilmington, he ran the practices and did so very well. Perhaps to the dismay of other towers, Ilmington won many striking competitions (especially those of the Four Shires and Coventry Diocesan Guild) while under Graham's leadership and since. Mickleton won some, too. Graham always expected the rest of the team to produce good striking, and have a thorough grasp of the methods being rung. Those of us who just look at blue-lines before trying to ring a new method were astonished and bewildered by the complexity and huge number of rules associated with any method he tried to explain. Concentration was required. Such was Graham's concentration when conducting that a sweet sucked at the start of a quarter peal would still be there at the end!

For a number of years Graham was Ringing Master of the FSG and ran the Saturday practices very well. He always gave special help to those who really wanted to improve. He also organised the Guild's Striking Competitions, the Inter-Shires Striking Competition and the Guild Dinners. He was also Editor of the Guild's Newsletter, which at the time was considered one of the best in the country.

The augmentation at Ilmington to 8 in 2000 saw more of Graham's organisational skills. He wrote to everybody in Ilmington, organised and took

part in fund raising activities, and was treasurer for the augmentation fund. He played a leading role in removing the old treble for retuning – a tricky engineering job. All-in-all, another success. He threw himself into 'ringing', perhaps treating it like a military campaign, with an intensity that some may have found formidable, but whatever he did was thorough and carried through to completion. As Ilmington's tower captain, Bill Sabin, was heard to say, "Graham certainly pulled us up" – perhaps a bit of an understatement!

Those of us who were fortunate to know Graham and Ros socially knew a less intense person, who rode a motorbike (with Ros on the back) and, at one time, had a sporty car (an MG). He also played golf. Graham was intelligent, knowledgeable, friendly and funny. He was also astute and a shrewd judge of character. He had an interesting life and would come out with many amusing anecdotes. He was great fun.

Why Graham suddenly stopped ringing while Ringing Master of the Guild was a mystery at the time. However, it became apparent that he was in increasingly poor health. He returned to Ilmington tower after some years, but by then his co-ordination was poor and his memory was failing him. Soon he was unable to drive or ride a bicycle safely, but he was able to continue playing golf, which he enjoyed greatly. His last two years were in Quinton House Nursing home, where he was looked after very well.

Graham's funeral, a humanist service, was at Oakley Wood Crematorium on 29th July, where his family members, Ros, Juliet, Louise and Joss, and his brother, were joined by a number of bellringing friends from both the FSG and the CovDA. A collection for Quinton House Nursing Home after the Service raised a generous sum.

Bill Nash

Salford Priors, Warks

Monday, 25 July 2016

1260 Grandsire Triples

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1 John Kinchin | 5 James Ingham |
| 2 Chris Mew (C) | 6 John Nicholls |
| 3 Peter Quinn | 7 Richard Lewis-Skeath |
| 4. Karen French | 8. Jackie Hands |

Ilmington, Warks

Tuesday, 2 August 2016

1260 Plain Bob Triples

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 David Clark | 5 John Kinchin |
| 2 Fran Chapman | 6 Jackie hands |
| 3 Bill Sabin | 7 Michael Dane (C) |
| 4 Bill Nash | 8 Mike Fairfax. |

Both rung in memory of Graham Payne, ringer at Ilmington, and past Master and past Ringing Master of the Four Shires Guild.



Photograph of the ringers with Graham's wife Ros, daughter Louise and grandson Joss at Ilmington after the quarter peal.

Ros wrote to the Guild:-

Dear Chris and the Four Shires Guild,

I want to thank you so much for attending Graham's funeral. I know he would have been very humbled and pleased so many of you came. I certainly was and it was lovely to see you all. Also, the beautiful flowers that Peter and John brought over on behalf of the Guild were so appreciated. Many thanks for your support.

Warmest regards,
Ros.

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 18th FEBRUARY.

The Committee met on Tuesday 16th August at Wellesbourne's Church Centre. There were no apologies.

1) The Minutes of the May meeting were agreed.

2) **Matters arising** were:-

Striking Comp certificates: amendments done and agreed. To be used at the 2016 comps;

Guild badged clothing: colours to be made available on the web-site. There was agreement to the suggestion that some clothing samples be purchased and made available at Saturday practices for members to inspect. Matthew to obtain 3no sweatshirts and 3no polo shirts for this purpose;

Follow-up with the White Hart Royal Hotel: Peter Q has had no joy with them, so other places to be investigated;

Update on Ted Copson: now out of hospital and in Park View Residential Home in Warwick;

Proposed BRF donation scheme: all happy with the scheme and the Notice of Proposal given in the July Newsletter.

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

Hon Secretary: reported two deaths since the last meeting, Clint Evans (HLF) and Graham Payne (past Master). The Guild had been represented at both funerals. Graham's obituary will appear in the October Newsletter, in which the letter of thanks from Ros will be given. A suggestion had been made that a note inviting bequests from wills for the BRF be included in the Newsletter: agreed.

Treasurer: Michael D presented his report: nothing contentious. BRF has about £1100 of uncommitted funds. Michael is predicting a surplus of £100 in the General Account at year end. Report accepted by all;

Ringling Master: reported that Saturday practices

are still well attended generally. There were slightly fewer people on the Ringing Tour this time, but still ample.

Child Protection (now to be known as the Safeguarding Officer): there was a written report from Chris Mew regarding DBS checks and their portability between towers. The report to be given in full in the October Newsletter (see below).

Membership Sec: Peter K said he had received notification of a new member and four who wished to become members:-

Tom Tibbets, Childswickham

Prop: Michael D; sec: Peter K

Steve Roderick, Bishops Itchington

Sue Roderick, ditto

Timothy Hughes, Bosley (Cheshire)

Denise Hughes, ditto

All prop: Richard; sec: Matthew

Peter K said he will not be seeking election to the Committee at the forthcoming AGM, but would continue to hold the archive collection of Newsletters if wished: agreed. He was thanked for his time and his work for the Guild.

Fixture Sec: concentrating on obtaining the next batch of towers.

Newsletter Editor: the October issue is underway. It was suggested that a bolder notice be given inviting members to have their Newsletter via email, as this reduces costs.

CCCB: Chris went to the CC meeting at Portsmouth: his report appeared in the July Newsletter. Andrew Gunn gave his apologies for absence.

Peal Secretary: Chris has spoken to Sandra, who will update the peal book when Chris and she arrange to meet to hand over the book.

5) **Bell Restoration Fund**: the application from Moreton-in-Marsh was considered and £175 (prop: Michael D; sec: Peter Q) was offered.

Adlestrop update: grant paid and letter of thanks received;

Pillerton Hersey update: it is possible an order may be placed soon with Taylors;

Blockley: faculty application made. Work is scheduled to start April 2017. A letter of thanks for the grant offer had been received.

New applications had been received from Great Hampton and Bourton-on-the-Water. Both to be considered at the November meeting.

6) **Items for discussion**:-

A proposal from a member concerning the Saturday practices was considered, but the Committee did not feel able to support it; however, its sentiments will be borne in mind.

2016 Events Programme:-

Minimus Striking Comp: to be at Ettington. Peter Q to manage the day as Chris unavailable. Mark Sayers to judge;

Guild Walk, 24th Sept: all arranged by Michael H;

AGM/Striking Comps: to be at Longborough, as already advertised;

Xmas Party, Badsey, 10th Dec: to be as last year, which went well.

Annual Dinner, 4th Feb 2017: new location being sought and agreed.

7) **AOB**:

None put forward

8) **Next Meeting: Tues 15th Nov**: at Wellesbourne, 6.30pm start.

Future Committee meeting dates: 21st Feb; 16th May, 15th Aug, 21st Nov.

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

REPORT BY THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

A new version of the Church of England Safer Recruitment Guidelines was issued at the end of July 2016 and replaces the previous version issued in June 2015.

I have not been through every letter of it as yet, but the principal change affecting ringers is in regard to portability of DBS checks. The new version clearly acknowledges movement of persons undertaking similar roles in more than one parish. Where a person undertakes the same role (eg, teaching minors ringing) in another parish, then a further DBS check is not required. However, the reference is **within the Diocese** so does not cover cross-Diocesan boundary work. I have queried this with Westminster HQ (plus other questions) and am awaiting a reply, after which I will be writing an update for the Ringing World.

In the meantime it does not make things easier for regular helping at other towers.

I have had enquiries from other quarters regarding Guild/Society training days. My response was that, since most such training events are one-offs and do not fall within the '4 times a month' criteria, there is **no legal reason** to have a DBS-checked person in charge. However, I would still advocate that having a DBS-checked person present is good practice and shows reasonable steps have been taken to look after young people and is a fall-

back in the event that an incident should take place.

Chris Mew.

(The Guild is exceedingly fortunate to have Chris as its Safeguarding Officer. He is the acknowledged expert on these matters as it affects ringing, having for many years followed the various stages of development of the legislation governing activities with minors and vulnerable adults. He has written articles on the subject for The Ringing World. You will also note that the title of this post has now changed to 'Safeguarding Officer', to fit in more correctly with the legislation and the Diocesan personnel now dealing with this subject: see Committee Meeting notes above)

There have been a few cases nationally where ringers have been involved with, and found guilty of, the provisions of the Safeguarding legislation and the law has dealt with them accordingly. What may be considered worse is to be wrongly accused of such offences. Such things do happen and the fall-out from this can be distressing for the accused and may affect his/her reputation for a long time. The legislation recommends various actions to prevent anything occurring, either actual, claimed or wrongly-claimed. Dioceses are now demanding PCCs put in place these actions. Even if you do not teach at all, or only teach those who are not minors and/or vulnerable adults, it is nonetheless very sensible to be aware of the requirements of this subject. Ed)

FROM THE ARCHIVES:-

100 YEARS AGO

There was just one short entry for this period in 1916. The Battle of the Somme had started on the 1st July and many thousands of men had already been killed or injured by this time. The horror of that period was being reported, and no doubt its impact was beginning to sink in. They did not know the War would continue for over two more years, with the Battle of the Somme lasting until November 1916 and then more horrors at Passendale in 1917 (in which campaign a Great-Uncle of mine died).

25th Oct 1916.

The Great War being still waging, there was no half-yearly meeting held on this date.

40 YEARS AGO

Committee Meeting held on 12th October 1976 at The Barley Mow, Chipping Campden.

Members attending: H O Hart (Chairman), A J Brazier, P S Carter, C Evans, M F Fairfax, G F Osborn and R H Payne.

Apologies: Rev J D E Smith.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Minutes of the previous Committee Meetings held on 24th August 1976 and 19th March 1976 were read and agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: Ringing World correspondence – it was agreed that correspondence concerning the Guild should be monitored and action taken if considered necessary after consultation between Committee members. Members' loans – it was reported by the Secretary that four members had agreed to requests for interest-free loans and subscribed five pounds each to the loan fund. It was stated that the amount, twenty-five pounds, should prove adequate to cover the short term cash flow problem caused following the additional number of badges supplied by the Birmingham Medal and Badge Company.

Open Ringing Day: it was agreed that the day was a success, and that similar arrangements should be put in hand for September 1977. Points for consideration were to include published ringing times strictly adhered to, arrangements for lunch at Mickleton and evening at The Lygon Arms, Chipping Campden, and a charge to be made for ringing at each tower.

Ringling Competition: Arrangements were detailed by M F Fairfax and agreed.

Annual General Meeting: Subscriptions, it was agreed that these remain at the current rates. President: it was agreed the The Lord Dulverton be approached to request his acceptance of the office. Vice-President: it was agreed to recommend the election of Revd J D E Smith.

Any Other Business: Guild Activities Record; it was agreed that special events in the post 1974 activities of the Guild be recorded in a separate reference book. Ringing Competition Membership; The Secretary was asked to check membership of all ringers taking part in Ringing Competitions and ensure Certificates are issued only to teams complying with current rules. Amendment to Ringing Competition Rules; Suggestions were made concerning proposed alterations and M F Fairfax agreed to present various ideas to a Committee meeting.

(Signed) Henry O Hart.

Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 30th October 1976, at the Village Hall, Childswickham, the Guild Master in the Chair.

Apologies: Apologies were received from Messrs R.H.Diston, F.J.Powell, Revd R.F.Rothery, Mr F.G.Rouse, Revd J.D.E.Smith and Mr R.H.Wright.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 25th October 1975 were read and confirmed, and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from the Minutes: Badges – the Secretary reported that the Committee had agreed a suitable design and badges were now available at one pound each.

Membership: The Secretary reported current membership as sixty-three residential members, sixteen extra-terrestrial members and fourteen honorary members.

Secretary's Report for 1975: Saturday ringing practices continued throughout the year, with only one failing to provide a quorum. Circulation of the Quarterly Diary of Events continued to all members, tower correspondents, and local Association Branch officials. The venue for the second Annual Dinner was changed, to be held at the Lygon Arms Hotel, Chipping Campden, on 15th February, with the Guild Master presiding. In addition to forty-eight members and guests, Mr & Mrs Arthur Jopp and Mr Andrew Jopp, judges in the 1974 Ringing Competition, were official guests of the Guild and joined the company. Following Dinner, Revd W.G.Bates, Vicar of Offenham, presented the Spencer Jones Cup to Mr H.O.Hart, representing the winning team, Chipping Campden, and certificates to all teams taking part in the two half-yearly Ringing Competitions. Ringing Competitions were held at Ebrington on 26th April (gap) teams taking part. Teams representing Mickleton were winners on both occasions. Judges were Messrs F.C.Lynes and C.R.Steed (Stratford-on-Avon). Membership at 21st December consisted of (gap) members, (gap) extra terrestrial members, and (gap) honorary members. Assistance provided by Mr M.F.Fairfax with competition arrangements, and Mr G.Osborn with preparation of the Quarterly Diary has been appreciated.

Treasurer's Report for 1975: Audited accounts were presented to members prior to the meeting, and showed a balance in hand of £16-80. The report was approved on the proposition of Mr S.Franklin, seconded by Mr G.Osborn.

Elections: President – It was reported that an invitation had been extended to The Lord Dulverton to accept nomination for this office. A reply had not as yet been received by the Secretary. The meeting approved the nomination subject to Lord Dulverton's agreement.

Vice Presidents – Subject to approval by the nominees, Mr J.D.Johnson, proposed by Mr M.Stewart and seconded by Mr P.S.Carter, and Revd J.D.Smith, proposed by Mr M.F.Fairfax and seconded by Mr R.J.Radley, were elected.

Guild Master – Mr H.O.Hart on the proposition of Mr C.E.Evans, seconded by Mr P.S.Carter, was elected.

Secretary & Treasurer – Mr A.J.Brazier on the proposition of Mr M.F.Fairfax, seconded by Mr R.Payne, was elected.

Auditors – Election of auditors was delegated to the Committee.

Committee - On the proposition of Mr S.Franklin, the Committee (Messrs P.S.Carter, C.E.Evans, M.F.Fairfax, G.Osborn and R.Payne) was re-elected.

Subscriptions for 1977: On the recommendation of the Committee, Mr S.Franklin proposed, and Mr A.P.Carter seconded, the current subscription rates (50p and 20p). Approved.

Amendments to the Rules for Ringing Competitions: An outline of suggested revisions to the existing rules was given by Mr M.F.Fairfax. It was agreed to leave the matter for finalisation by the Committee.

With the second half of the Ringing Competition taking place during the afternoon, a report was given prior to the meeting by the two judges, Messrs J.D.Johnson and T.E.Newbury. On behalf of the Guild, the Master thanked the Judges and expressed appreciation for their assistance at both 1976 Competitions.

(Signed) Henry O.Hart

THE GUILD RINGING TOUR, 2ND JULY; NORTH WARKS.

Brilliant weather arrived with the dawn to set the scene for our annual tour – again efficiently organised well in advance by our Ringing Master Richard.

Polesworth, a pleasant ring of 8 (tenor 11 ½ cwt in F), had a prominent ringers' ancestry of the Alsopp/Allsopp surname brought to life by Nick's presence with us. Here the first Double Norwich Court Bob Major of the day was executed.



St Editha, Polesworth

A short journey away found us at **Grendon** on a 6 with a tenor weight just 3lb heavier and a semitone sharper than Polesworth – St Clements Bob Minor following the usual Doubles fare.



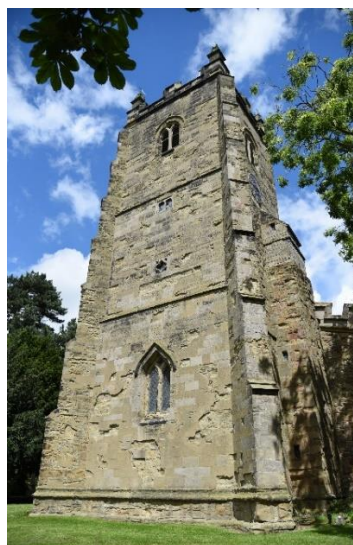
All Saints, Grendon

Arrival at **Atherstone** (a light 8 cwt eight) signalled the onset of drizzle but Grandsire and Stedman Triples, along with more DNCB Major, helped dispel the gloomier weather. A brief

downpour encouraged a quicker dispersal to various hostelrys for lunch!



St Mary's, Atherstone



SS Peter & Paul, Kingsbury

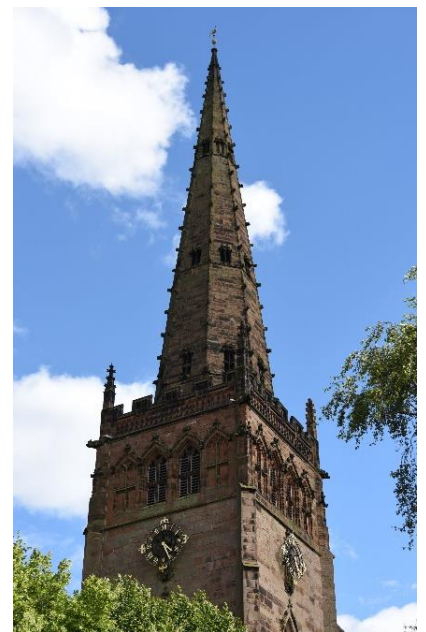
The 17 cwt eight at **Kingsbury** were put to good use with Cambridge Surprise Major supplementing Plain Bob, Grandsire and Stedman Triples.



St Giles, Nether Whitacre

Nether Whitacre at 10 cwt were a useful 6, where Norwich Surprise Minor was achieved. The war memorial at the churchyard entrance recorded amongst others a Pte Walter Stevenson, 2nd Lincs Reg't, who was killed 100 years ago on July 1st.

Finally we rang at **Coleshill** with its glorious crotched spire (visible for miles from many directions). The well-kept ringing chamber and 10 bells served our party of some 20 in number comfortably as we managed Caters et al. A call for Cambridge S Royal was summarily dismissed by Richard given the lack of practice time and a draught from a questionably positioned wall-mounted fan!



SS Peter & Paul, Coleshill



Michael Cummings, Michael Probert, Stuart Cummings and another enjoying the ring at Coleshill.

So thank you Richard once again and also to the intrepid participants on the day.

Roger Hunt (and to whom all photo credits)

Seen on a tee-shirt: **If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.**

EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT LITTLE LUMP OF WOOD UPSTAIRS...?

I had to make a new stay for Evesham's tenor recently. I'd suspected for some time that the old stay had a crack in it, because it felt a bit spongy when setting the bell. I couldn't see anything obvious in the belfry, so the year-long lay-off the bells have just had gave me the opportunity to take the stay out and have a closer look. Yes, there was a small crack. Somebody in the past had given it a whack; and regardless of the size of the stay (it's a big 'un), nearly two tons of bell represents a lot of force.



The new and the old tenor stays

I've made a lot of stays over the years (many not even for my own tower...). I say the hardest part of making a stay is not the actual making, but having the right piece of wood available to do the making. The right wood is ash (don't bother using anything else: waste of time) and the right piece of ash means the grain must be straight and free of knots or other irregularities throughout if possible, but certainly well above and below where the stay will protrude from the headstock. That's where the greatest stresses will occur and therefore it's the most vulnerable area. If there's a knot and it will end up near the top of the stay, that's unlikely to be a problem. Stays never break at the top; always just above the headstock.

Whenever possible, replicate the dimensions of the original stay; but consider the possibility, or even probability, that the broken stay you've just removed may be the umpteenth since the original. Try to obtain the original dimensions from somewhere reputable, or if unavailable, get help from someone who knows about stays and/or what the original dimensions are likely to be.

Do not make them too large in the hope that a large stay won't break as easily. A stay is the safety valve and it's designed to break if there's too much force put upon it. (It is NOT to stop the bell going over the balance as some people seem to think – the ringer is supposed to do that!) It's to park the bell when upside down. A stay that's too large may cause something vastly more expensive to break, for example a headstock or the gudgeons. The Taylor-type ones that fit inside a square socket can't be made too large, but there's another danger with those – making them fractionally too large and then hammering them down into the socket. This is bad, bad news for two reasons: firstly, it can pre-load the cast-iron headstock, which may break if the stay is hit hard against the slider (and you won't want to pay for a new headstock.....); and secondly, when you want to remove the bit that's inside the socket after the local stay-thumper breaks it again, you will be there for a very long time trying to get

it out; and it will be accompanied by much swearing, cursing and threats to the person who fitted it in this way! Lastly, stays should be tapered towards the top, to make them more resilient to the thumps they will receive if you're teaching learners, but tapering also has a direct bearing on how the bells sets. If you have habitual stay thumpers in your band, ask them to stop. If they question why stay thumping is wrong, ask them whether they park the car against the kerb with a big thump or whether they gently place the wheels against it. They are likely to say 'gently, otherwise it damages the wheels'. Tell them it's the same with a stay – and if they break, or crack, a stay by continued thumping, you will give them the bill for a new one purchased from a bellhanger!

Then there are Hastings stays, which are normally found on Taylor rings of a certain age. You will notice the stay in my photo is a Hastings stay; there's a funny metal thing on the top (it's called a dinger). Some people love these stays and some people think they are instruments of the Devil. (John Scott, who was a noted ringer and bell historian from Devon, told me on one occasion that a Mears & Stainbank bellhanger once said to him, 'Mr Scott, the man who invented these stays, his parents couldn't have been married!' It so happens the inventor was an engineer-turned cleric, the Rev Edward Hastings Horne.) Personally I love them. They are the 'Rolls-Royce' of stay systems, because they are virtually frictionless when properly set up. I've been looking after 14 Hastings stays for the last 30-odd years and know all their little foibles and tricks – and they have many. 'Properly set up' is the operative phrase, because once tamed they are a treat; and I don't have to adjust them continually as some people say they need to. Neither is there a slider underneath the bell to get in the way when fitting muffles or other clapper work. However, if you are to make one of these stays, beware, because the tolerances on their dimensions are very small indeed. Too long and they will foul the slide bar; too short and they won't hit the stops. It can take a long time to make and fit one of these, so get it right first time and you won't have to remake it. A few years ago I was arguing the merits of Hastings stays with Alan Hughes of Whitechapel Bell Foundry, until he gave me the knockout question: 'So you think I should supply Hastings stays on all our rings?' 'Er no', I replied, having seen how badly ordinary stays can be fitted by steeplekeepers!

If you are unhappy about making stays (do you know what the non-tapered or parallel face is, and where it is to be placed?), or you think the carpenter whom you've asked to make it doesn't really understand what's wanted, or in case a rubbish job will result regardless, do consider buying a new stay blank from the bellhanging company that provided the installation originally. This might be more to do with the Taylor-type stay that fits in the socket – and especially the Hastings stays – because the type that fits on the side of the headstock is mostly simple to make. Yes, stays from the bellhangers are relatively expensive (remember, they are a business, so it costs to make the stay; and then they have to courier it to you), but there are two very good reasons for going down this route: they use high quality ash; and secondly, the stays fit beautifully. I'm not trying to boost bellhangers' profits. I'm merely trying to get properly fitting stays on bells. And if you want to reduce the cost of stays, encourage people not to break them – or worse, crack them such that a breakage occurs unexpectedly on somebody else!

To stay thumpers: if you are doing this because you are learning, then there is some reason. At some time, preferably soon, please learn to take the bell up to the balance at both strokes without touching the stay against the stops unless you are setting the bell – and then learn to place the bell on the stay by not banging or bouncing it. To habitual stay thumpers, please exhibit consistency; either park your car against a tall hard kerb by banging the wheels against it, or adjust your ringing style to learn not to bump stays. Remember: the person who makes the stays might be watching you – and wincing at every knock you give it.

Chris Povey

RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

THE JULY TOUR: THURSDAY 21ST (the 321st) SUNNY NORTHANTS!

After the heat wave of the past couple of days it was a pleasure to participate in the 321st Four Shires Guild's Mid-week Outing to sunny Northamptonshire, where the temperature was in the low 20s and far more suitable for ringing. Often a county driven through but not explored the beauty of north-west Northamptonshire and its history delighted everyone.

Our first stop was the village of Yelvertoft and the Parish Church of All Saints situated at the eastern end of the village. All Saints has 6 bells, the tenor weighing 12cwt. Here we rang London, Cambridge, Bob Minor, Stedman and Double Oxford. Like many churches, weddings and funerals are a big part of church life and so it was at All Saints. Beautiful garden flowers adorned the church when we arrived, due to a funeral the day before, but as we were ringing new flower arrangements were being assembled for a wedding on Saturday. All Saints is a busy church with plenty of activities for the 700+ inhabitants of Yelvertoft.

Our next stop took us to Welford, a slightly larger village with just over a thousand inhabitants. It boasts two marinas, being on a short arm of The Grand Union Canal, and is on the Jurassic Way long distance footpath. The Parish Church of St. Mary's is a Grade II listed building and has 8 bells, the tenor weighing 12cwt. The ringing room is tucked behind the splendid organ. Again wedding flowers were in existence and added to the church's splendour. Obviously Welford ringers have a sense of humour – the line for 'Brexit' Doubles was drawn out on the board, a straight line featuring a downturn and then chaos! We rang Double Norwich, Grandsire Triples and Stedman.

Our excellent lunch was at The Wharf Inn in Welford overlooking the marina.

After lunch we visited East Farndon, a small village of 300 residents and St John the Baptist church with a tenor weighing 7 cwt. The church stands at the top of a hill and has a fine tower which can be seen from miles around. The ringing room is entered through two wooden doors with bells carved into them. We rang St. Clements, Chester, Norwich, Cambridge and Stedman. Two modern stained glass window panels depict the four seasons in the four parishes of the benefice.

Northamptonshire is known for its spires and squires and our final stop of the tour took us to St Denys' Church, just across the road from Kelmarsh Hall, an elegant 18th century country house. In the Churchyard of St Denys, again a grade II listed building is a very large granite vault. Inside the church the wooden pews have been magnificently carved with flowers and



leaves, and are a sight to behold. There are large angels looking down from the rafters and the marble altar and surroundings covered in mosaic patterns are well worth a visit. We rang the 6 bells, the tenor weighing 9cwt, to Annabel's London, Cambridge, London, Stedman and Plain Bob.

Our thanks to Brenda Dixon and Alan Marks for organising the tour to a corner of Northamptonshire, very close to the Leicestershire border and the M1 and A14 but you'd never know it!!!

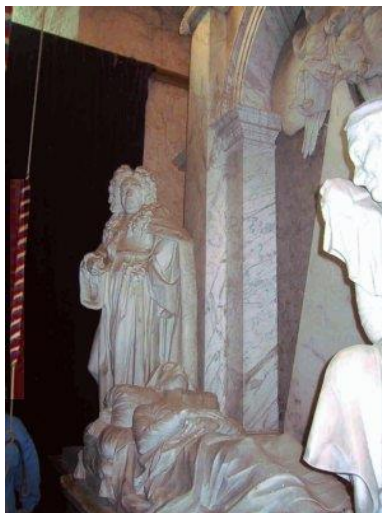
Jenny Ball

THE AUGUST TOUR: THURSDAY 18TH (the 322nd). WEST BUCKS

Attendance at events during traditional holiday periods can sometimes be unpredictable, however the Four Shires Monthly tour in August proved to be better than some months earlier in the year.

Organised by Colin Lord, we ventured to the western boundary of Buckinghamshire and were treated to some interesting bells and churches.

At the first tower, Holy Cross and St Mary, Quainton, the ringers compete for space with



some spectacular marble monuments to the Dormer family who had been prominent in national politics in the 17th Century. The eight bells are squeezed into a relatively small space and the longer than usual draught means that the over life size protruding limbs of some of the figures provide additional hazards for the ringers. Broken hands and feet suggest that, in the past, the ringers may have had the better of this contest. Despite these difficulties, Grandsire and Stedman Triples and Plain Bob and Yorkshire Major were successfully brought round.

We were warned that at the next tower, All Saints, Wotton Underwood, we may encounter



armed police, as it is in close proximity to the home of former Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Fortunately he must have been elsewhere. This church was memorable for the prolific Grenville Family tombs that filled a side aisle in an unusual double row and also along the floor. Here some favourites, Cambridge, Grandsire and London were given an airing, but we also ventured into less familiar territory of Single Oxford Minor.

Lunch was at The Bull and Butcher in Ludgershall, which provided unusual tasty fare and friendly service.

At All Saints, Brill, Stedman Doubles and Double Oxford Minor, Norwich, Plain Bob and Primrose Minor were added to the repertoire.

Our final tower, St Nicholas, Chearsley, provided the newest ring and also welcome tea and cakes kindly supplied by the local ringers. Unsurprisingly these delightful bells responded well to our efforts, where we reprised our Single Oxford Minor, Grandsire, Stedman and Cambridge as well as adding some Bourne. Another good day of friendship and ringing. Thank you Colin and everyone.

Isobel Murphy

THE SEPTEMBER TOUR: THURSDAY 15TH (the 323rd). LEICESTERSHIRE

A rather misty, slightly autumnal morning as I drove up the Fosse Way to Leicestershire, however by late morning it was sunny and very warm

The first tower was **Peckleton**, 6 bells, tenor 9cwt, which were rehung in 1993 According to the list of vicars the full place name is Peckleton

cum Tooley. The church was rather isolated from the village. There was a plaque on the wall indicating that a certain Stanley Matthews made a significant financial contribution to the rehanging of the bells, and there was speculation among the ringers wondering if this was the well-known footballer. On the wall in the ringing chamber there were two wooden boards listing the benefactors in the parish. One listed a Mr William Wightman who gave £10, the interest thereof to be laid out yearly in bread or books to be distributed on Trinity Sunday. The board was undated so one can only speculate how much bread or how many books were distributed each year. We rang Bob Minor, Kent TB, Stedman, London and Cambridge Minor

The second tower was **Earl Shilton**, 8 bells, tenor 11 cwt, the church had a very thin spire. Lots of the tomb stones in the churchyard were made of thin slate. The peal boards in the ringing chamber were also made of slate. The church was rather gloomy inside. There was a large, very old wooden chest inside the door which was now being used as a donation point for a food bank. We rang, Grandsire, Rutland, Stedman, Double Norwich CBM and spliced Grandsire & Stedman.

Lunch was taken at The Wentworth Arms in Elmsthorpe, most opting for the 2 meals for £10 offer. Slightly inconvenient when you came to pay, as two of you had to go to the till together to pay your £5 each, the automated till not allowing us to pay one at a time.

The first tower of the afternoon was **Barwell**, 8 bells, tenor 11 cwt, a church in the middle of a housing estate. Access to the ringing chamber was by an open wrought-iron spiral staircase, which one of our party could not handle. In the church there was a small bell with a wooden handle with a note that said it was the Bousits

Factory hand bell used to call the workers to the barracks. In the ringing chamber there was a glass goblet in a wooden case, but no mention of its significance. There was also an undated photo (below) of the bells outside with the vicar and others, presumably taken when the bells were rehung. The vicar looked rather portly. His wife appears to be well dressed in a fur coat, as it is clearly winter time.



We rang Grandsire, Stedman, Rutland, Single Oxford Bob Triples and 3 leads of Bristol.

Our last tower of the day was **Sutton Cheney**: 6 bells, tenor 6 cwt. Only two of the bells (4 & 6) are from the same foundry, William Noone of Nottingham, but cast 46 years apart. The church was described as the battle field church, as it is close to the battle of Bosworth visitors centre. It is said King Richard III prayed in the church before the battle in which he was to lose his life in 1485. A pretty, light and airy church with a very small organ with no pedals. There was a nice blue carpet in the ringing chamber. On the wall of the ringing chamber was a list of call changes with names for the changes, some of which I had not heard of, ie Exploding tittums, Hagdyke, Burdette and See-saw. We rang Bourne, Beverley, Single Oxford and PB Minor. In the ringing chamber contained a print of the 10 commandments for the bell ringer:-

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE BELLRINGER

REMEMBER Wednesday evenings to keep them wholly for the practice;

THOU SHALT NOT follow one rope for too long, for the eyes are the window of the mind and if they be glued to one rope how shall the mind be lighted;

THOU SHALT NOT tarry without the gates;
THOU SHALT harken to the sound of thy striking and keep thy bell within her place;
THOUGH SHALT NOT bump the stay of thy bell lest it breaks and thou be carried up to the heavens;

THOUGH SHALT NOT rely completely upon thy helper, but cultivate thine own understanding for he that listeneth for his helper from place to place shall stumble and perish, but he that counteth his own places can in no way strike in the wrong place;

THOU SHALT learn thy methods well;
THOU SHALT NOT contemplate homework nor thy housework nor thy boyfriend nor any characteristic of thy fellow ringers, lest when the bob is called thou be taken unawares and be utterly confounded;

THOU SHALT NOT break any covenant with the band to follow after thy wife nor thy best girl nor thy second best girl nor thy friends nor thy enemy, for the band will not hold him worthy that turneth his 'yea' into 'nay';

HONOUR thy band and thy ringing master and forget not that regular attendance is also expected of thee on Sundays.

Clive Sparling

MEET THE (MID-WEEK TOURS) RINGER

I thought it would be interesting to do an occasional article to introduce some of the ringers who regularly attend the Guild's Mid-Week Tours. Well, I thought we might start with our longest serving member Richard Turner, who started coming to the group more than 25 years ago.

Richard, probably the quiet man of the group, (maybe because he doesn't get a word in edgeways!), is from Honiley, Warwickshire a light 6cwt six. Richard learnt to ring here in his youth, and is a lifelong ringer. He started ringing following a request from the vicar, and has been there ever since. The bells were augmented in 1978 and Richard helped to put the new treble in. Describing himself as most comfortable on 6 bells, when pressed indicating that his favourite method is probably Cambridge. He enjoys the

opportunity to ring things outside the local environment, especially on 8 bells.

A member of Coventry and Four Shires Guilds, and soon to be the Open University Guild too, if Isobel has her way, now that she has discovered that Richard has studied with them gaining a degree in engineering. Richard also worked as an engineer for Lucas Aerospace testing fuel units before retiring. What is it about engineers and bellringing, there seems to be a significant number in our ranks?

One of Richard's other passions is local history, and has traced his family tree back to 1700, the Turners originally carpenters & builders from Birmingham.

Very much "old school", Richard uses maps not

the satnav to navigate around the Four Shires, and likes the fact that the tours take you to many different places that you might not otherwise have gone to.

When asked about any words of wisdom that he would like to pass on he commented that "other ringers who can shout and be somewhat overbearing can put people off ringing" Wise words indeed to all of us in these days of a shortage of willing learners, and to the more experienced alike.

We look forward to many more years of Richard's company on the tours.

Chris Seers

(Thank you, Chris. I hope you will continue introducing more of the group. Ed)

LONG COMPTON TOWER STRUCK BY LIGHTNING!

At four o'clock on Saturday September 3rd I was driving home through a horrendous rainstorm, and as I was pulling into my drive opposite Long Compton church there was the most tremendous crack and flash. I didn't realise it immediately, but the tower had been struck.

A short time later the clock winder came round and asked if I had seen what had happened. The lightning had blown apart one of the four pinnacles on the tower, gone down through the tower wiring and melted the main church fuse-board. Those of us with houses round the church had also been affected: I and my neighbours lost our routers and PCs; and the cottage opposite us had a power socket blown out of the wall.



I went up to look at the bells and didn't see anything amiss with them. There is however what looks like a new crack in the stonework over one of the louvre arches.

The upshot is that the church is now closed until the structural



engineers determine that the tower is safe. Their concern is with the stability of the other three pinnacles, as well as with the rebuilding of the damaged corner of the tower. There will therefore be no more ringing at Long Compton for the foreseeable future, so we are lucky that we share our practices with Whichford.

Trevor Hobday

(What massive damage! But there was no lightning conductor.... See comments re lightning conductors in Editorial, p3. Ed)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

Just another hole in the wall?

Chris Seers questioned (last Newsletter / Mid-Week Outings) the purpose of the slits in the stone churchyard wall at Bretforton. It is purported they are the remnants of the site of the village jail and this can be lightly supported by the fact that the village stocks are still present in the Manor gardens, some 25 yards away, out of sight just behind the west churchyard wall. These wooden stocks are housed in a timber posted open-sided slated stone roof structure on a stone floor surrounded by a circular stone wall some 3 yards in diameter and sunk about 2 feet below ground level as my photo shows.

The Squire of the Manor in his day would probably have had custodianship of such facilities. Nevertheless, given their location, a spell in either would have been more the worst to bear if the church bells were ringing for any period of time!

Roger Hunt



GUILD MINIMUS ('MINI-MOUSE') STRIKING COMPETITION



The manageable but nondescript four bells at **Ettington** are very loud in the spacious ringing chamber – the effort in ringing them only being surpassed by the energy required to shout out instructions to each other!

This year only 7 ringers turned out in inclement weather but applying the rules 3 teams were able to battle it out - all chose to ring Plain Bob (4 plain courses) after a 'familiarisation' practice.

Mark Sayers judged and gave a short but direct adjudication mainly commenting on ringing speed and that most faults were recorded coming up to the halfway section of ringing. Then the moment we all waited for as the **Bretforton/Welford team** were announced winners of the 'Mini-Mouse Trophy' and yes ... the committee team had now, after some years, been relegated to a lower place.



The Presentation: Mark Sayers with Freda Cleaver, Michael Haynes, Richard Lewis-Skeath and Roger Hunt

Thanks to Peter Quinn, Michael Dane and Alan Turner for their efforts in completing the septet.

Roger Hunt (and photos by him)

Good to know the Committee team was downgraded this time – but it took a few years. Although I was unable to ring in the Mini-Mouse Striking Competition (it was my eldest son's wedding at the Gloucestershire Cherington), I did manage to attend a 'practice', as Roger Hunt relates below. Ed

MINIMUS AT EVESHAM. With the return to normality at Evesham one can look back at the enforced (and protracted) ban on ringing for the duration of the much-needed stonework



refurbishment – but bells did ring out from the tower on one occasion. The church kindly permitted me to ascend the tower one day towards the completion of work (after all I have been somewhat of a 'regular' ringer there since 1967 albeit some years not too often) and to my surprise Chris Povey was to accompany me as his son Ian, the project manager, was

detained elsewhere. Not to miss an opportunity to attain new heights in my ringing achievements I tucked 4 small handbells in my camera bag and duly ascended the scaffolding to gaze upon the wonderfully restored weather vanes and stonework and then at an appropriate time to suggest to Chris that we christen the occasion. Having just accompanied another visitor back to terra firma and rescaled the tower a somewhat out-of-breath Chris was in no fit state to refuse and we duly rang a rather hesitant* course of Bob Minimus (* sorry Chris – I think the occasion got the better of me!).

(photo: Kieran Hunt Photography)

Roger Hunt

THE GUILD WALKING AND RINGING TOUR

Sadly this event didn't attract many members and it very much curtailed the expectations of Michael Haynes, the organiser. He sent the following report:

There were only 6 ringers at Whichford tower today for the ringing & walking tour. They were Michael Haynes, Sue Bacon, John Carroll and Molly the dog, Stuart Cummings, Michael Cummings and Peter Kenealy, so we rang a touches of Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles and Plain

Bob Minor. As Stuart and Michael were booked to ring at a wedding at Guiting Power, just Michael, Sue, and John and Molly walked to Wiggington to the pub. The 3 of us could not ring at Wiggington Church, nor we did we ring at Swerford Church. We did not go on the tour to Hook Norton brewery either. I am very disappointed at the turnout, so have decided not to organise next year's event.

Michael Haynes.

CENTRAL COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

As hoped and promised a sub-committee has been hard at work discussing what changes should be made to re-organise the Central Council. This sub-committee is called CRAG (Central Council Review Action Group) and it is inviting submissions from interested parties on what changes should be made. 'Interested parties' is effectively anyone who has a desire to see the Central Council continue to be the body co-ordinating and managing English-style bell ringing. Phil Barnes is the

chairman of CRAG and submissions can be sent to him via submissions@crag.ccbr.org.uk. I shall be sending my views, as I believe that a central body should continue, but in a smaller, much more streamlined form. I accept the Central Council is a rather 'dry' subject to many, but, like politics (a rather 'dry' subject to many, too) it does impact on ringers to some extent.

Chris Povey

ADVANCE NOTICE - GUILD ANNUAL DINNER

SATURDAY, 4th FEBRUARY 2017

To be held at The Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, Charlecote, Warks: 7.00 for 7.30pm.

MENU

Starters

Cream of vegetable soup with fresh bread
Brussels pate with melba toast and red onion chutney

Main Courses

Chicken Breton in cream Mornay sauce with cheddar cheese, leeks, bacon & mustard, and seasonal vegetables and potatoes
Oven baked cod with a lemon and herb crust served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes
Mushroom, spinach and red onion tart (V), filled with a cheese sauce topped with crumble, and served with a mixed leaf salad

Desserts

Apple crumble and custard
Luxury white chocolate honeycomb cheesecake

Freshly-brewed Tetley tea, or Douwe Egberts coffee with mints

Cost per person £22.00

ORDERS TO THE FOLLOWING BY 14TH JAN 2017 AT THE LATEST.

Peter Quinn: 01789-840827; peterquinn22@gmail.com,
Michael Dane: 01789-470491; landm.dane@btinternet.com,
Stuart Cummings: 01608-685576; stuartcummings@madasafish.com
John Nicholls: 01386-841084; john.nicholls18b@btinternet.com

There will be a Speaker, and the Striking Competition trophies will be presented.

GUILD-BADGED CLOTHING

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE:-

Polo shirts:	£15.00	Full-zip ladies fleece	£25.00
Sweatshirts:	£17.50	Half-zip fleece:	£22.50
Full-zip fleece:	£25.00	Lambswool V-necked sweater:	£35.00

Orders to: Matthew Kemble, contact details on page 2. **Payment to:** Michael Dane, contact details on page 2 (cheques to be made payable to 'Four Shires Guild of Bellringers'. Payment via BACS may be possible: check with Michael first). There are no extra carriage charges on the prices above.

All profits from the sale of this clothing will go to the Guild's Belfry Restoration Fund

Colours: The range of colours can't be shown in this advert to any reasonable extent, but the range can be accessed via the Guild's website. Please see the advert on <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>.

WELFORD-ON-AVON RINGERS' OUTING, 2016: WORCS & WARKS

More than twenty ringers gathered at Alvechurch, Worcestershire, on Saturday 30 April for the start of the 2016 Welford tour, arranged once again by Freda Cleaver, Rosemary Cole and Ian Sturgess.

St Lawrence's Church, Alvechurch (8 bells 12-0-1) stands in an elevated position just outside the centre of the village. The church was rebuilt to a design by Victorian architect Butterfield, but the 15thC tower was retained, although the nave roof height was raised which has given the building an unbalanced look. The bells are a pleasing, easy going ring of eight. Although the first tower of the tour, altogether a very nice set of bells to start off the day. (*They were rehung in 2012, when the trebles and tenor were recast, because they were poor bells, Ed.*)

Beoley, St Leonard (8 bells 10-2-20). The church, which is very ancient, contains some most interesting features, the chief glory being surviving tombs of the Sheldon Family. William Sheldon was with the king at Bosworth Field, although he is best known for introducing tapestry-weaving to England. He set up the first loom at Barcheston near Shipston on Stour, after sending a Richard Hicks to Flanders to engage the most expert weavers he could find. William lies within the family chapel, built for his son, Ralph, alongside his wife. Access to the ringing

platform is via a stone staircase off the choir vestry. The ringing room is both light and airy, with a modern, curved glass screen overlooking the church. The bells are pleasant sounding, but need effort to make them strike well. Following the ringing, the opportunity was taken not only to enjoy the church building, but also the very welcome cup of coffee.

Lunch followed at The Hollybush Inn, only a few minutes' drive away near to Gorcott Hill on the outskirts of the new town of Redditch. The food and beer were excellent and a much welcomed opportunity to re-charge the battery amongst convivial company and surroundings.

The first tower after lunch was **Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley (8 bells 11-1-9)**, where the church is pleasantly situated away from the village in open countryside. The north doorway is as the Normans left it and there is also a set of rood loft stairs. Sadly the interior of the building is gloomy and not terribly inviting, made worse by the darkening clouds. The eight bells are challenging, and did not prove to be the most satisfying of the day. The ringing room has a low ceiling, mounted right beneath the frame, which does not make handling easy and the bells easy to strike, which is a great shame. (*The back 5 here were cast in Evesham in 1688 by Matthew Bagley, Ed*)

The penultimate tower of the tour was **St Nicholas, Alcester, (8 bells 12-2-13)**, a magnificent ring of eight cast in 1948 by John Taylor of Loughborough. The tower is ancient, with a curious clock face mounted on the south west corner overlooking the High Street. The remainder of the building was rebuilt in the 18thC, but it still retains some interesting early features, including an early clock, and a Tudor screen carved with roses and vines. The bells are magnificent and were far and away the best ring of the day.

Our final tower was **St Mathew's Church, Salford Priors, (8 bells 15-0-14)**, situated just a mile or so west of Bidford-on-Avon. The earliest surviving parts of the current church date back to Norman days and a doorway and window survive from this period. The bells, recast by Gillett & Johnson of Croydon in 1945, hang in a two tier cast iron frame, treble and fifth on top in a low side frame and the others below in an H-frame. A fine set of bells to end our day and **sincere** thanks go to Freda, Rosemary and Ian for all their practical arrangements.

Charles Wilson

(This article should have appeared in the July Newsletter, but I overlooked its inclusion. Sackcloth, ashes and apologies, Ed)

TALES FROM A TOWER NEAR YOU (8) HOME TOWER RECOLLECTIONS

Our planned practice night at **Fladbury** brought to mind many incidents of recent times associated with this once-unringable tower (some 60 years until 1991) It still possesses the only surviving complete ring of bells in Worcestershire cast by Mears of Whitechapel (being the back 6, cast in 1807, of the current 8). Taylors of Loughborough cast the additional trebles in 1992.

Some of my recollections begin with the return of the refurbished 6 bells from Taylor's foundry (to be hung in the new metal 8-bell frame) transported by a local haulier resident in the village – he was proud of his Scania flatbed rigid truck and was quoted in the Motor Transport Journal of the day as preferring to deal with 'foreign' truck dealers, as the British marque sales reps were incapable of differentiating between a shave, a shampoo and something sounding very similar! Surprisingly the bells were still on the truck on arrival, as he had driven from Loughborough down the M42 and the ensuing 'dodgem-style' roundabouts with the bells merely sheeted over with a tarpaulin and no restraining straps – the tenor and 2 other bells were overhanging the side of the metal-rimmed bedway by

about 6 inches whilst on the opposite side the bells were a couple of feet inside the rim.

Prior to the new trebles the PCC authorised re-instatement of the clock chimes. Thankfully the work was monitored by one of the churchwardens (and ringer) who prevented a pitfall of sorts by stopping Messrs Joyce of Whitchurch from installing, quite intentionally, all of the required lever bracketry in the vacant treble pit!

Investigating a 'clunk' on the frame one day exposed the fact that the clapper nut on the 6th had worked loose allowing the clapper to 'extend' and the flight to kiss the endgate bars – a check revealed 2 other bells also had not had split pins fitted to the nuts. A similar but louder sound was heard when the tenor clapper flew out some 10 years later, the clapper momentarily being wedged against the 2nd bell sideframe by the tenor bell before the tenor endgate frame deflected allowing the clapper free but at the same time shunting the 2nd bell's bearing housing out of alignment.

The tenor bell's soundbow lip lost a 3 inch long piece of metal as my photo shows, but was deemed sound after chemical crack



testing and the 2nd bell was rehung correctly. No missing split pin here as the clapper staple had snapped in two inside the headstock assumedly due to a rather sharp radius where the staple cross-section changes and the repeated clapper blows being transmitted up the staple from across the large hole in the crown of the bell resulting from removal of the earlier cast-in crown staple.

The bells ring well but I recall with combined annoyance and amusement the ringing in of the New Millennium. After a hasty removal of muffles I rang the 12 strokes for midnight on the tenor which was immediately followed by open rounds on 8 – at least at handstroke as the inept treble ringer rent asunder his stay* on the backstroke and so I was 'relegated' to treble ringing for the remainder of the session (* *most probably the first one of the New Millennium!*).

'Roger de Flaedenburg' (and photo credit with him)

AROUND THE TOWERS

PEALS, QUARTER PEALS AND OTHER RINGING

RINGING AT WELFORD-ON-AVON FOR HM THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Amongst my many bits of paper about ringing I have a copy of an item written by Pam Copson from Newsletter No.48 in July 1990. It was suggesting ringing Queen Elizabeth Doubles for the late Queen Mother's 90th birthday in 1990 so I got our band to learn the method and we practiced it on several practice nights and were able to ring for the present Queen's 90th birthday and including Milla and Mick our latest ringers who are members of the FSG. As there are two plain hunt bells we were able to include them in the celebratory ringing. We didn't manage the calls but I was proud we could ring for our Queen Elizabeth. The plain course was just 30 changes so we rang it through three times to make the 90 changes.

Freda Cleaver

(This report was also omitted from the July Newsletter – sackcloth and ashes again. Sorry Welford! Ed)

Great Wolford, Warwickshire

Friday, 19 August 2016

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Isobel Murphy | 4 Clive Sparling |
| 2 Richard Lewis-Skeath | 5 Keith Murphy |
| 3 Christine Seers | 6 Daniel Glyde (C) |

Rung in memory of local resident, Private Bob Hiatt, who was killed on Saturday 19 August 1916, by a shell, outside Contalmaison during the battle of the Somme. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. Private Hiatt was serving with the Gloucestershire Regiment (10th Battalion). His brother George was a bellringer who rang the tenor in the first peal for the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers on February 2nd, 1910, at Great Wolford.

Great Wolford War Memorial Bells to Remember Project 5/8

Hook Norton, Oxon

Tuesday, 20 September 2016

1260 Grandsire Triples

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Martin J Cross | 5 Keith Abbott |
| 2 Helen C Burchell | 6 Daniel J Austin |
| 3 John Collett | 7 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) |
| 4 Sally A Austin | 8 Mick J Austin |

Rung Half Muffled in memory of William Thomas Jacques on the 100th anniversary of his death, killed in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette on the Somme WW1 17/33

Ilmington, Warwickshire

Wednesday 7th September 2016

1260 Grandsire Triples

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 John Kinchin | 5 John Nicholls |
| 2 Bill Sabin | 6 Jaqueline Hands |
| 3 Fran Chapman | 7 Michael Dane (C) |
| 4 Bill Nash | 8 Michael Fairfax |

Rung to celebrate the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Chris and Ruth Righton

Bretforton, Worcs, 10 July, 168 Grandsire Triples: 1 Christina Ireland, 2 Rob Newman, 3 Chris Povey, 4 Janice Sheasby, 5 Ray Sheasby, 6 Steve Bowley, 7 Roger Hunt (C), 8 George Jelfs. Rung to welcome the Morris dancers gathering for their annual service. **Also,** 10 July,

120 Grandsire Doubles (7,6,8 covering): 1 Christina Ireland, 2 Janice Sheasby, 3 Chris Povey, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 Ray Sheasby (C), 6 Rob Davis, 7 Roger Hunt, 8 George Jelfs. Rung prior to the annual Morris Service.

Bengeworth, Worcs, 17 July, 120 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Gill Tomlinson, 2 Georgie Roberts, 3 Roger Hunt (C), 4 Martin Penny, 5 Tony Nunn, 6 Chris Povey. Rung as part of the welcome to local dignitaries and parishioners attending the Wychavon Civic Service by Chairman Councillor Mrs Frances Smith (a ringer at Hampton in this benefice) and the Chairman's Chaplain, The Reverend Mark Binney, Vicar of the United Benefice of Hampton with Bengeworth, Sedgeberrow and Hinton-on-the-Green.



L-R: Roger, Robert, Chris, Frances, Georgie, Gill, Tony, Martin

(Photo: Roger Hunt)

Bretforton, Worcs, Monday, 18 July, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Chris Povey, 2 Jane Gilbert, 3 Nick Allsopp, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 John Gwynne, 6 John Nicholls, 7 Roger Hunt (C), 8 Rob Newman. Rung as part of BretFest - the week-long village music festival.

Offenham, Worcs, 30 July, 1260 Doubles (300 Grandsire, 960 Plain Bob): 1 Stef Whittle, 2 John Nicholls, 3 Roger Hunt, 4 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C), 5 Steve Bowley, 6 Rob Newman. Rung to mark Richard & Stef's first year together!!

Bretforton, Worcs, 4 August, 5 mins of Rounds, Queens and Firing: 1 Roger Hunt (C), 2 Nana Hirayama, 3 Alan Curry, 4 Rob Davis, 5 John Cleveland, 6 George Jelfs. Rung at the end of practice night to mark the 751st Anniversary (today) of The Battle of Evesham.

Bretforton, Worcs, 30 Aug, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Christina Ireland, 2 Jane Gilbert, 3 Steve Bowley, 4 Nick Allsopp, 5 Chris Povey, 6 John Nicholls, 7 Roger Hunt (C), 8 Tom Sandham. Rung half-muffled to the memory of Marjorie 'Mari' Monica Autie of Bretforton whose funeral took place earlier today. (1st Q on 8 bells - treble).

Warwick (St Nicholas), Warks, 8 Sept, 1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Becki Johnson, 3 Lucy Gwynne, 4 Annie Hall, 5 Karen French, 6 Mark W Sayers, 7 Charles Hayward, 8 John Gwynne. For the launch of Heritage Open Days following ringing at Sherbourne, Hatton and St Mary's Warwick.

Great Hampton, Worcs, 25 Sept, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: 1 Christina Ireland, 2 Frances Smith, 3 John Smith, 4 Claire Penny, 5 Chris Povey (C), 6 Martin Penny. Rung prior to Morning Service to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Patrick Wooster's ordination as a Priest.

Mickleton, Glos, 26 Sept, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 John Kinchin, 2 Richard Lewis-Skeath (C), 3 Mark Sayers, 4 Robert Reeves, 5 Simon Oram, 6 John Nicholls, 7 Chris Mew, 8 Jackie Hands. Rung to mark the christening of Lily Ann Conroy at this church yesterday, granddaughter of John Kinchin.

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

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Ted Copson has now entered a Care Home in Warwick. His address is: Park View Residential Home, Priory Road, Warwick. CV34 4ND. He would probably like to have visits, or at the least some get-well cards. I have heard that he was taken to the recent Saturday practice at Sherbourne, where he was welcomed by those present.

do not stand still in Blockley....! Father Brown will be able to hear a different sound from 'his' church when the film-makers come again

Adlestrop received its first visiting band on August 27th and the second on the following day. The Guild is to have a practice here on October 29th.

Blockley as reported last time, the faculty application for the rehangng, augmenting and recasting work has been submitted, but no decision has been given yet. The PCC are soon expecting to have most, if not all, of the money required for the work, and Taylors are booked to start on-site on April 17th if all goes according to plan. The Bishop of Gloucester has been booked for a Dedication Service, which is ear-marked for 1st July. Things

Didbrook bells may soon be having a make-over. Simon Ridley tells me he has permission from the PCC to undertake an in-the-tower overhaul of the 5 bells and also to improve the rope circle. More details in the January Newsletter.

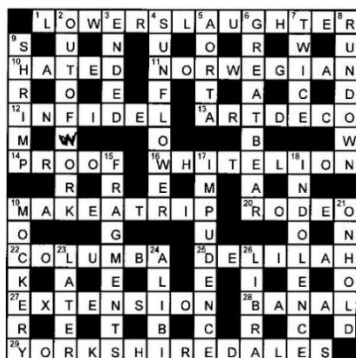
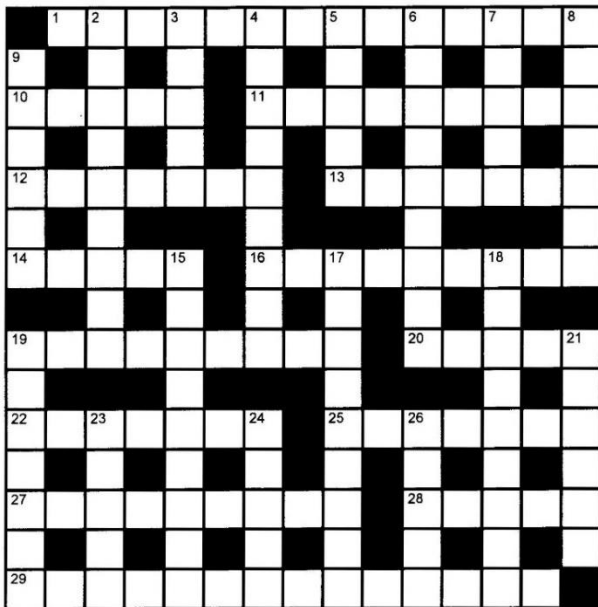
PLEASE REMEMBER, THIS PROPOSAL IS TO BE MADE AT THE AGM:-

PROPOSAL TO BE MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT LONGBOROUGH ON OCTOBER 15TH:

'The Guild Committee proposes the setting-up of a scheme that invites Guild members to donate £5 (or more if wished) annually towards the Bell Restoration Fund. This donation to be additional to membership subscription amounts. A list will be kept by the Guild Treasurer of the donors and amounts for accounting purposes and the list will be confidential to relevant Guild personnel. If agreed by the membership at the AGM at which the proposal is made, the scheme will come into operation on 1st January 2017.'

The reasons for this and its endorsement by the President, John Nicholls, appear in full in the July Newsletter.

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD



Answers to July X-word

Across

- 1 Cheltenham Festival? Remember the Marx Brothers. (1,3,2,3,5)
- 10 Augmented. (5)
- 11 Old fashioned name for an airport. (9)
- 12 Could be preserved, could be drunk. (7)
- 13 Outstanding nine met disguised. (7)
- 14 Music? Certainly seen in the bell-frame! (5)
- 16 Aggressive words or action. (9)
- 19 Nashville is here. (9)
- 20 Be stingy with this. (5)
- 22 Thrilled. (7)
- 25 The conductor's blunder. (7)
- 27 The mid-morning refreshment. (9)
- 28 Sing this hymn with me (5)
- 29 The high ground of North Africa. (5,9)

Down

- 2 You worked this out. (9)
- 3 Heard in the Alps. (5)
- 4 Disturbed predators could cause these on your cheeks. (4-5)
- 5 This multitude sounds as if it has stockpiled. (5)
- 6 Bizarrely, gradients could be seen looking up to the Heavens. (3,6)
- 7 Biologically copy. (5)
- 8 Baton showing Royal Authority. (7)
- 9 The grounds and buildings of a university. (6)
- 15 Would-be sergeants have this 'thrust upon them'. (9)
- 17 Use forenames to find a member of an international society. (9)
- 18 The sincerest form of flattery. (9)
- 19 Carmelite Saint of Avilla. (7)
- 21 It improves the direction of the bell-rope. (6)
- 23 Indian beginner carries the fish. (5)
- 24 Go to listen to recorded music. (5)
- 26 Flow along to the Northern anchorage (5)

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FOUR SHIRES GUILD BELL RESTORATION FUND

The Guild has a Bell Restoration Fund, from which the Committee is empowered to offer grants towards suitable aspects concerning rings of bells within the Guild's area of operation. Such aspects may include a range of needs, from maintenance to augmentations.

Rules and Constitution of the Fund are in the Guild Rule Book, and application forms are available from me. (These forms are emailable.)

Chris Povey (Hon Sec)

BEQUESTS TO THE GUILD'S BELL RESTORATION FUND

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

Chris Povey, Hon Sec

THE EDGEHILL RINGING CENTRE, KINETON

ASSOCIATION OF RINGING TEACHERS MODULE 2C TRAINING COURSE ON SATURDAY 2nd NOVEMBER

Module 2F Teaching from Rounds to Plain Hunt

Provides you with the skills and techniques necessary to build really good foundation ringing skills in your ringers. The course is designed for anyone involved in teaching a new band where the teacher can personally ring at least plain hunt. Theory sessions will cover:

- the importance of approaching teaching in easy, understandable stages,
- the critical importance of using effective feedback,
- the theory of coaching, and
- how to form a strong band.

This theory is supported by practical sessions that show how to develop these skills, including how to teach call changes, an exploration of kaleidoscope ringing, and different ways to introduce ringers to covering and plain hunt.

Module 2C Teaching Elementary Change Ringing

Provides you with the skills and techniques necessary to teach from rounds to basic change ringing. As in Module 2F you will learn the importance of approaching teaching in easy, understandable stages, the importance of using effective feedback, the theory of coaching and how to form a strong band.

The practical sessions will quickly cover some of the techniques taught in Module 2F (*details above*), but will concentrate on the development of change ringing skills using exercises and unusual methods to aid learning. The transition from plain hunt to Bob Doubles and/or Bob Minor will be broken down into a number of simpler, shorter steps, making the jump into change ringing both more gradual and understandable to the new ringer.

ANYBODY INTERESTED IN ATTENDING SHOULD CONTACT:-

GRAHAM NABB ON 07974-743766 or graham@nabb.orangehome.co.uk

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

OCT 1 ST	HOOK NORTON, Oxon	8, 20-2-13 in E	
OCT 8 TH	FLADBURY, Worcs	8, 12-3-03 in G#	
OCT 15 TH	Longborough, Glos	A.G.M. & STRIKING COMPETITIONS	(SEE NEWSLETTER)
OCT 22 ND	BUCKLAND, Glos	6, 14 cwt in F# (GF)	
OCT 29 TH	ADLESTROP, Glos	6, 4-2-21 in C	
NOV 5 TH	BLOCKLEY, Glos	8, 16-0-27 in F	
NOV 12 TH	CLEEVE PRIOR, Worcs	6, 8-3-26 in G	
NOV 19 TH	SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR, Warks	6, 9-2-1 in G	
NOV 26 TH	ILMINGTON, Warks	8, 12-3-26 in E (GF)	
DEC 3 RD	GREAT WOLFORD, Warks	6, 11-3-7 in F#	
DEC 10 TH	BADSEY, Worcs	8, 15-0-4 in F	*NOTE* 7-00PM. TILL 8-15PM. FOLLOWED BY XMAS PARTY
DEC 17 TH	WELLESBOURNE, Warks	8, 10-0-24 in G (GF)	
DEC 24 TH			* NOTE * NO SATURDAY EVENING PRACTICE THIS WEEK *
DEC 31 ST			* NOTE * NO SATURDAY EVENING PRACTICE THIS WEEK *

2017			
JAN 7 TH	SALFORD PRIORS, Warks,	8, 15-0-14 in F# (GF)	
JAN 14 TH	CHERINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE	6, 5-3-22 in B (GF)	(DON'T GO TO THE GLOS ONE!! *)

For any alterations to this programme, check the FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>), or Campanophile's diary). & also **BELLBOARD** website bb.ringingworld.co.uk (diary section)

Meetings are from 7.30pm until 9.00pm unless otherwise stated. All are welcome. You do not have to be a FSG member and we are especially pleased if members of the local band wish to come along and ring.

The Guild carries Public Liability insurance through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group for all its activities. Non-members attending these activities are also covered by this insurance, providing they abide fully by the Guild's Health & Safety and Child Protection policies. (Both policies now appear on the FSG web-site, so their contents are available to all, whether members or non-members.)

TAG-END:

NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

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

CHRIS POVEY, EDITOR

Events for 2016:-

Guild Xmas Party **Sat 10th Dec: Badsey Church after the practice there (all as last year)**

Events for 2017 – book the dates now:-

Guild Annual Dinner	Sat 4th Feb: The Charlecote Pheasant Hotel (at a cheaper rate than 2016!)
Annual Ringing Tour	Sat 1st July: where and which towers to be announced
Inter-Shire Comp	Saturday in mid-Sept (bi-annual with the Minimus Comp).
Walking & Ringing tour	Saturday in late Sept (organiser required)
AGM & Striking Comps	Sat 21st October: venue to be announced