

THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

(Affiliated to the Central  Council of Church Bell Ringers)

NEWSLETTER No 153 - JULY 2017



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STEF AND RICHARD'S FUNDRAISING EVENT AT SAINTBURY.



(Photo: Colin Allen)

Stef and Richard draw the raffle at the enormously successful fund-raising event at Saintbury on 8th April for the Family Bereavement Suite at Worcester Royal Hospital, and in memory of Jack Whittle. It was big! More details and photos on p.7

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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 (October 2017) is Sept 13th 2017

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. **NOTE: MY EMAIL IS NOW chrismpovey@gmail.com**

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.

DID SOMEONE SAY THEY DIDN'T GET A JULY NEWSLETTER?

IF SO, ASK WHETHER THEY PAID THEIR 2017 SUBS BY THE END OF JUNE. IF THEY DIDN'T, THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T GET ONE – NO SUB; NO NEWSLETTER. (AND IF THEY DID PAY, CONTACT THE EDITOR)

NOTICE OF 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND STRIKING COMPETITIONS

ON SATURDAY 21st OCTOBER 2017

**AT THE CHURCH OF ST MARY, TEMPLE GUITING, GLOS
BELLS: 11-3 17 in F#**



ORDER OF THE DAY

2.15pm	Brazier Cup Striking Competition
3.00pm	Newing Shield Striking Competition
4.30pm	Service in the Church
5.15pm	Annual General Meeting in the Church (Chairman: the Guild President)

!THERE WILL BE NO EVENING RINGING!

The **AGENDA** for the AGM is:-

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting (*in January Newsletter*)
- 3 Matters Arising.
- 4 Guild Master's Report (*to be included in the October Newsletter*)
- 5 Treasurer's Report (*included in the April Newsletter and on website**)
- 6 Election of Officers (Guild Master, Ringing Master, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer)
- 7 Election of Committee and Honorary Independent Examiners.
- 10 Ratification of new members during the year
- 11 The proposal to confer Honorary Life Membership on a member.
- 12 Any Other Business (at the Chairman's discretion)
- 13 Results of the Striking Competitions.

(* available from the website for printing out if reqd: www.fourshires.org.uk; then select 'Newsletters')

Chris Povey, Honorary Secretary

Light refreshments will be available in the Church from about 3.30pm.

As usual, donations of food will be gratefully received.
Stuart Cummings or Jackie Hands can advise on what to bring.

Teams intending to take part in the Striking Competitions should contact the Ringing Master (Richard Lewis-Skeath) about their entry.

EDITORIAL

My apologies for the lateness of this issue. The reason? Helen and I went on holiday at the end of June, a family emergency during that time (happily fully resolved), a weekend away in Yorkshire for other family reasons – plus the gorgeous weather made me very reluctant to sit inside banging away on the keyboard. And lastly, this Newsletter would not come together tidily at the end. It happens..... We went to the Bavarian part of Germany, where, it seems, church bells are swung at all times of the day. In France we've found a bell is swung after the 7am hour clock strikes, the 12 noon strikes and then the 7pm strikes. Imagine the uproar from any of this occurring here: shattering the peace, etc, etc! Nobody seems to turn a hair there. On the other hand, they don't have Sunday Service ringing, or practice night; or quarter peals; or even peals. Perhaps we should stick with the status quo.

This issue contains announcements of two more deaths of members: Michael Gray of Snitterfield and Viv Barnes of Hinton-on-the-Green, who was an Honorary Life Member of the Guild. Their obituaries and that of Chris Roberts are on pages 5 & 6

The April Fools in the April Newsletter were the augmentation to 12 at Chipping Campden and the Striking Comps at Brailes. Perhaps one day these will happen. Apologies to those who were either trying to arrange the first peal of Cinques at Campden, or toning up their muscles for Brailes. The

AGM and Striking Comps are at **Temple Guiting** (see page 3).

What amazing luck that Long Compton's PCC Treasurer raised the level of insurance cover 3 months before the lightning strike (p.9). One can only wonder how many churches are under-insured, such that when the disaster occurs, as eventually they do in some form, there is insufficient insurance money to undertake repairs.

Please note: there is to be a Guild Walking and Ringing Tour this year on 23rd September: see page 16. John Carroll became involved and managed to negotiate the details. It looks it will be a good event. John says the distances are quite achievable for the timetable.

Lastly: my email address is changing to chrismpovey@gmail.com. There is a note to this effect on page 2. The old one will be valid for a time, but I suggest you alter any email records for me now.

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

The sound of Church bells is able to touch the hearts and minds of those who hear in many ways. The music of the bells goes out from the tower or steeple. The sound is imbued with tradition and to some extent mystery, and reaches out the minds of all who hear. Listeners are perhaps reminded of things and events from the past and can be like sympathetic human actions from the past, the present and possibly the future.

Rev Dr Peter Newing

PHYLLIS BRAZIER AND DOUG BOTT'S RETIREMENT PARTY

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, Phyllis Brazier has decided to retire from ringing. Additionally, Badsey and Willersey ringer Doug Bott decided to do likewise.

The Willersey ringers, principally Bob Topp and Robert Chadburn, decided a party would be appropriate and booked a cream tea on Saturday for 29th April at the Wayside Tea Room at Wickhamford, near Evesham, to which local ringers and friends were invited. It was a lovely occasion. About 20 attended. We had an excellent tea with scones and lashings of cream and jam, plus tea in the traditional style, ie from tea pots. Robert gave a speech afterwards and gave appropriate presents to Phyllis and Doug, and wishing them on our behalf a happy 'retirement'. It was all quite delightful, and the Wayside Tea Room proved a very good choice of location. (See also the quarter rung in the evening at Hampton, p.15)



Robert (left) giving his speech, and (right) the assembled company



Chris Povey.

MEMBERS' OBITUARIES (of which, sadly, there are three)

CHRISTOPHER C ROBERTS (1945-2017)



Chris was born in Gresford, North Wales, in 1945 the son of Gladys and George Roberts and grew up in the Welsh village of Rossett. He was a victim of the widespread polio outbreak of the late 1940s which left him with a scoliosis and entailed him wearing a plaster jacket for 8 years. However, this did not prevent him from getting into many schoolboy scrapes with his friends, nor indeed learning to ring.

At school Chris, by his own admission, did not work particularly hard! Among the things he really enjoyed was the technical drawing class. He used to proudly tell the story of when he took his work up to the master to be marked and the master called back the class swot and downgraded his mark to 98% so that he could give Chris 99%, saying 'I never give 100%'.

Chris learnt to ring at Pulford in Cheshire at the age of 13, having been dragged along by a bunch of friends. This would be the start of a lifelong hobby. Chris subsequently moved to Chester and spent many years as the steeplekeeper (1977-2015) and later tower captain (1986-2015) at the Cathedral. He met Jackie there in 1976 and they married in 1982. Shortly afterwards Zoë was born, with Charlotte arriving two years later. Ringing was a big part of family life, including canal boat ringing holidays and weekends worked around Central Council meetings, at which Chris represented the Chester Diocesan Guild for many years. CDG meetings, outings and striking competitions provided more family days out and Chris also spent various periods serving as Guild secretary, and Chester branch ringing master and chairman. Chris and Jackie also trained a band of new ringers at Tarporley before their children arrived and, more than 30 years later, one at Farndon.

In 1962 Chris was apprenticed to the GPO (later BT). They taught him to drive on a week-

long 'crash' course based at an old airfield. Chris was ultimately a member of the team responsible for the installation of private wires (the circuits controlling things like computer systems and burglar alarms) for the whole of North Wales. He was so happy with his work, he stayed for 42 years, retiring in 2004.

Chris also put his practical talents to good use as an itinerant bell-hanger, often with his good friend David Andrews. The pinnacle of these exploits together was a total re-hang of Thames Ditton bells into a new wooden frame. There had been early indications of his talents as a builder when, aged ten, he pulled down an old outhouse behind the family home and rebuilt it and later in life he showed great aptitude for DIY and all things practical. At one point, the headmistress of his daughters' school asked Chris to look at the school piano, as the music teacher had complained it was too quiet. Chris proceeded to dismantle it and Jackie & the girls can still remember the look on her face as the innards of the instrument were spread out across the hall floor! He did fix it though, successfully adjusting the volume and putting it all back together again to the headmistress's relief and amazement.

Chris rang 85 peals in total, the majority of which were for the Chester DG, and was occasionally awarded the accolade of being asked into peals organised by Denis Mottershead. Chris was elected to the Cumberlands in 1976, having been proposed by Norah Randles of Frodsham. Jackie remembers a small gang going down to London for a gathering in early '77 and killing time by going to the cinema in Leicester Square to see a newly released film called 'Star Wars'.

One theme from the many cards Jackie has received in the last few weeks has been Chris's kindness and generosity with his time in helping people to learn to ring and further their expertise. Also, many have mentioned his good sense of humour.

It was with great pleasure he welcomed Colin and Gordon into the family when they married Zoë and Charlotte respectively, and he took delight in his four grandchildren Joseph, Simon, Adam and Amelia.

In May 2015, Chris and Jackie moved to Moreton-in-Marsh to be nearer their grandchildren and had settled very happily there, making many new friends in the area. He would have enjoyed his funeral at the end of March, could he have been there, which was attended by many ringers who partook of an excellent 'bun fight' as Chris would have called it. He will be sorely missed by all.

(This obituary also appeared in The Ringing World)

I didn't know Chris long, but it was long enough to know I had met a kindred spirit in the world of steeple-keeping maintenance work. Yes, as his obituary tells, he was the steeplekeeper for many years at Chester Cathedral, a large and high-profile ring like Evesham, but he oozed experience beyond that – and it showed in the way he spoke about all aspects of maintenance. He had very obviously seen it and had dealt with it. It was a joy to converse with him, particularly with his cheerful nature. I miss those chats; and shall do so for some time.

Chris Povey

MICHAEL GRAY (25 March 1933 – 26 April 2017)



Ringling in South Warwickshire became the poorer, when on 26 April, Michael Gray of Snitterfield, died following an illness in Didcot Community Hospital in Oxfordshire, aged 84yrs. He is survived by his only sister Janet, husband Joe and their family, to whom we express sincere condolences at this very sad time.

Michael James Orsman Gray was a Warwickshire man through and through, having been born in March 1933 at Kenilworth. His father James and mother Winifred, who were tenant farmers, later moved the family in 1937, to take up a larger tenancy of Tile Barn Farm and Old Farm at Hampton Lucy, which at the time were both part of the Charlecote estate.

Tragedy struck the Gray family, when in 1939 his mother died very suddenly of a cerebral haemorrhage, leaving husband James and his

two very young children to cope with a large farm and facing the impending start of a second world war. However, the village community in Hampton Lucy rallied around and gave wonderful support to the family when it was needed. Janet recalled in her tribute at the funeral, that notwithstanding all the difficulties, it had been for them both a very happy childhood, and friendships formed at that time, had proved to be lifelong.

Michael attended the Croft school, and then in 1941 aged 8, he went on to King Edward V1 School, Stratford-upon-Avon, where the inspirational teacher Dickie Dyson, engendered in him a lifelong interest and fascination with physics. Michael's great interest in the subject manifested itself in his later life, when after retirement, he finally got the opportunity to study for and attained a physics degree at Warwick University. When Michael left KES in 1951, it was during the Korean War. He joined up into the RAF where he became an aircrew signaller and later attained the rank of Flight Sergeant.

From the mid 1950's, Michael took over the tenancy of Holyoake Farm Little Alne, where he continued to farm until he retired in 1988, at which time he moved to Snitterfield. Well known bell ringer, Chris Pickford, who grew up in Sheffield near Little Alne, remembers Michael from the time he attended primary school at Aston Cantlow. Chris worked for Michael on the farm in the school holidays, and remembers that the farm included an area of woodland with a large pond around which he and his sister, and other Sheffield friends, loved to explore – and an old military observation bunker. Chris recalls, that to them as children, Michael always seemed so much friendlier – and younger – than the other local farmers on whose land they roamed. During one school holiday (he was at boarding school when he learnt to ring) Chris went along to ring at Aston Cantlow and found that Michael was amongst the ringers and thereafter began a long ringing friendship. I recall firstly meeting Michael at Alcester, St Nicholas, when I was learning to ring in 1970. We were later to ring together again when my family moved to Stratford in 1973 and I joined the ringers at Holy Trinity Church. Michael continued to be a very regular visitor to our practice night at Stratford from that time onwards. He attended the annual ringing holidays I organised between 1986 -2003, when we stayed for two or three days at a time in many different regions of the UK.

Michael rang his first peal, of Plain Bob Minor, at Wootton Wawen in May 1976. He would later go on to ring a further 34 peals, his last one at Wellesbourne in December 2011 of King James Alliance Major. He served as General Secretary of the Coventry Diocesan Guild for 11 years and later became President of the Association between 2009 - 2012.

Throughout his long life, Michael was a traditionalist, keen theatregoer, particularly Shakespeare, something he had enjoyed since school days. He loved visiting the Welsh Highland Railway, something he did on many occasions accompanied by a cousin. Sadly, during his life, he suffered from depression on many occasions, and he was always grateful for the loving support that he received not only from his family but also from close friends and neighbours.

Michael was fundamentally a 'gentle man' at heart, someone who couldn't bear any kind of fuss, Mr Reliability, who had a sincere commitment in all aspects of public service, his charity work, and to his church.

I am indebted to Peter Wyatt, a fellow old boy of KES, for his recollections, to Chris Pickford and Richard Pearson, the KES Archivist, for their valued assistance.

For me, the following verse from the hymn, Abide with Me, sung at Michael's funeral, seems to sum things up rather wonderfully:

*"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy
victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me".*

Michael Gray, a true gentleman, bell ringer
and friend

"May he rest in peace and rise in glory"

Charles Wilson

**VIVIEN (VIV) BARNES
(8 March 1923 – 5 May 2017)
A reflection on her ringing life.**



Viv will have been known to many ringers in and around South Worcestershire over her 94 years – she sadly passed away on May 5th after a short illness.

Born into a family that were at the heart of village life in **Hinton-on-the-Green** and residing all her life opposite St Peter's church she was from an early age brought up within

earshot of the eight bells there and also the then teenage handbell band of the Johnson family. Unsurprisingly she became a very useful and competent ringer with the hugely successful Hinton bands of the 50's, 60's and 70's. She ably demonstrated how to ring a treble bell accurately and faultlessly ringing all her 26 tower bell peals on the treble bell from Minor to Stedman Caters. Of her 28 handbell peals she rang the tenors to both Grandsire and Stedman Triples, Caters and Cinques as well as Kent Treble Bob Major before ringing the trebles to Plain Bob Major and Grandsire Triples and Caters. All but 5 of her 54 peals were rung at Hinton (I rang only one with her - Double Norwich Court Bob Major in 1975).

Although she never married she endeared herself to everyone who knew her and was a well-known friendly face in 'Boots the Chemist' in Evesham. I recall one day visiting the shop and noticed some useful-looking store fittings laid aside in the staff car park at the rear (no problem back then to park for a few minutes) and after enquiries to Viv they were ready for me to collect on my next visit – just some simple trays on a wire rack I still use in the garage today!

It was fitting that open ringing preceded her memorial service (smart and colourful dress at her request) with her longstanding companions in recent years, Phyllis Brazier and Doreen Mills, amongst those present – the three of them being regularly seen at branch-level meetings since husbands Tony and Len's passing (I was taught to ring by Len Mills back in 1967).

Viv was not quite the last of the Hinton ringers from years past still resident in the village, as ringing continues today under the direction of Clare Davies (the only active resident ringer) with a monthly first Tuesday joint practice between Bretforton, Childswickham and Hinton – Viv often stood at her garden gate and voiced her appreciation of hearing the bells. May she rest in peace.

Roger Hunt

For the last few years Viv's Newsletter was usually the first I delivered after printing my batch. It would normally be on my way to Sunday Morning ringing at Evesham. A quick left at Hinton Cross and down into Hinton. Turn the car round and park outside her house. Get out, post the Newsletter through the letter box and then away to Evesham. On a recent occasion it was on a Saturday morning. I could hear some movement at the back of the house, so wandered down. Viv was filling her washing machine. We had a quick chat, particularly about the stonework repairs on the Church tower. It was nice to talk – but it was the last time I did that with her. Lovely lady and, as her peal records tell, a very competent ringer – but one who never boasted about her achievements. **Chris Povey**

THE STUPENDOUS SAINTBURY EVENT ON 8TH APRIL

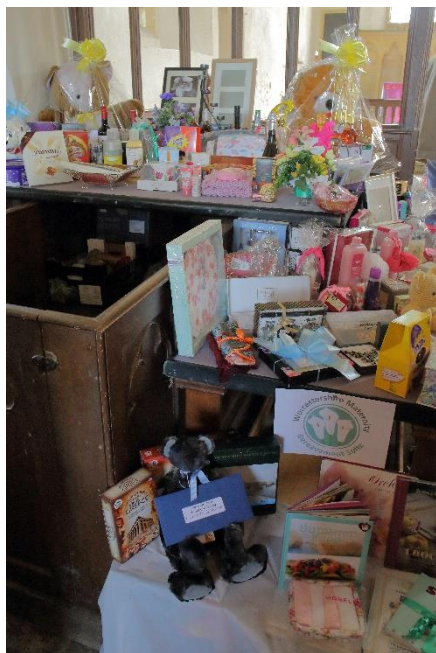
As advertised in April's Newsletter, Stef and Richard organised a fund-raising event for the Family Bereavement Suite at Worcester Royal Hospital, and in memory of their son Jack Whittle. Although it was a ringing-based gathering, both ringers and non-ringers were invited. Many attended. Some of the people with whom Stef shared her experiences in the hospitals in which she found herself during her and Richard's sad experience were there, too.

Although there was ringing for the ringers, there was some basic tuition in ringing for non-ringers, tea/coffee/cakes for the hungry and thirsty, and masses of prizes for the raffle. It was an incredible event, superbly

organized; and it was clearly supported from the Almighty, too, because it was a beautiful day. The views from Saintbury Church were glorious.

I believe the amount raised was over £1200, which, as Richard says was 'truly amazing and far exceeded our initial expectations'. It will be long remembered as an event that really hit the mark. I cannot think anybody went home saying they didn't enjoy it. Hearty congratulations therefore to Stef and Richard for the inspiration; and huge thanks to them and their helpers for all the work they put into it before, during and no doubt afterwards.

Chris Povey



The amazing array of raffle prizes



Ringing for the ringers

(Photos by Colin Allen)

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS.

It is now quite possible the name above will soon disappear. Although neither Matthew nor myself could attend the Central Council Meeting in Edinburgh (as mentioned in the last Newsletter), news from the meeting was sufficiently 'hot' to be seen on the Bellboard website very soon after.

If the name could disappear, will the organisation bearing the name disappear, too? In its present form yes, but in a different form, no. The Central Council has carried its name since it was founded in 1891. It is the organisation that allows representatives from affiliated bodies to come together once a year to discuss common items of interest. It is fair to say it has done a good job in this respect, as the guidelines and framework within which we all work have been at some time formulated by the Central Council. So why the big change? Many people associated with the Council recognise it has become too big, too lumbering, and has far too many 'passengers' for it to be effective in undertaking the work it is meant to do. The world has changed, but the CC hasn't. (I gave my views on the current situation in my report of the CC meeting last year in the July Newsletter. Ed)

Luckily, the group elected to come up with some proposals to modernise the CC did just that. There was a long and detailed report from the group about what was wrong with the current regime and what should be done to ensure it stays in being, together with proposals to implement the far-ranging proposals. These had been included on the CC Meeting's agenda. Yes, all this hit the streets just over a month before the meeting, so there were howls of protest from various quarters about there being insufficient time to digest everything properly and to deal with it all in a fully democratic way. It appears all the howls were overcome by those who wanted the changes implemented quickly, as reports of the meeting show the proposals were agreed almost unanimously (with one or two minor amendments in some cases).

So, what is to happen now? Not sure, but developments will be reported as they occur. The Letters column in The Ringing World will provide interesting reading for some time to come, which will delight the Editor!

Chris Povey and Matthew Kemble

FROM THE ARCHIVES:-

100 YEARS AGO

There was no meeting between 27th April 1917 (reproduced in From the Archives in the last Newsletter) and the very brief entry of 31st October 1917.

40 YEARS AGO

There was no Committee meeting between 1st March 1977 (reproduced in From the Archives in the last Newsletter) and the Committee Meeting held on 24th August 1977 (to be reproduced in the next Newsletter).

FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 16th MAY.

The Committee met on Tuesday 16th May at Church House, Evesham.

1) Apologies for absence: Michael Dane (on hol), Jackie, Matthew.

2) **Minutes of the last meeting:** The Minutes of the February meeting were agreed and signed.

3) **Matters Arising:-**

AGM location: arranged for Temple Guiting

Xmas party: Stuart said might need to be 9th

Dec. He will continue liaising with Badsey

Conversion to charity: Chris this might hamper our operation, but Michael D did not think so. More investigation to be done.

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

Guild Master: thought it worthwhile to decide on a location for the Dinner now. All agreed

Hon Secretary: Chris had received a proposal and seconding for ten new members:-

Andrew Cummings (Falmouth)

Elizabeth Kyberd (Gt Hampton)

John Smith (Gt Hampton)

Frances Smith (Gt Hampton)

Alyson Jackson (Sherbourne)

Tony Reece (Sherbourne)

Edward Alexander (Sherborne)

Ken Spensley (Willersey)

Robert Moon (Childswickham)

All were proposed and seconded. Membership was agreed in all cases by the Committee.

Chris reported the deaths of Chris Roberts, Michael Gray and Viv Barnes (HLM).

Obituaries to appear in the July Newsletter

Treasurer: Michael D distributed his report re finances prior to the meeting. So far 178 members have renewed; remainder trickling in. The Bell Fund now has £1540 of unallocated money due to the new donation scheme.

Ringling Master: Saturday practices still well-attended.

Safeguarding Officer: Peter had received a report from Chris Mew. Chris P will put this in the July Newsletter.

Fixture Sec: Stuart said he hope to include Oddington and Chipping Norton again soon

Newsletter Editor: reported that the July issue will be late, due to a late June holiday and weekend away. Hopefully out by 8th July.

CCBR: Chris said there are proposals for the CC meeting that will alter the CC substantially. These arise from the Working Group tasked with investigating this. As neither he nor Matthew can attend this meeting the CC Hon Sec invited comments from the Guild. Chris said it was widely believed the CC in its present form was severely outdated and that if no change occurred it would die. It was agreed to support the proposals for change. Peter also disagreed with the increase in the subs to the CC, as the CC reserve seem large, which found agreement.: Chris to write to the CC Hon Sec relaying that the Guild supporting the proposals for change, but not the proposal to raise subs.

6) **Bell Restoration Fund:** no new applications

Updates:

Pillerton Hersey: new metal 5-bell frame to be supplied.

Blockley: bells out and at Taylors, Loughborough.

Moreton-in-Marsh: clappers due to be removed soon for rebushing.

Donation Scheme for BRF: about £642 had been received in donations

6) **Items for discussion:-**

2017 programme:

Guild Ringing Tour, 1st July: Richard reported one change to the event: cannot ring at Ledbury. He is trying to find a substitute

Guild Walk, date not fixed; thought September. It's thought Michael H is considering Oddington/Adlestrop/Broadwell but unsure. Was it worth contacting Allen Turner for a route? If no details forthcoming for the July Newsletter, then there will be no Walk.

AGM and Striking Competitions, October 21st: all arranged for Temple Guiting.

Inter-Shire Competition, 18th Nov: Chris agreed to contact Todenham Church and Village Hall for this.

Xmas Party, 16th Dec, Badsey: Stuart reported it may have to be Dec 9th. No disagreements with this date if it is necessary.

7) **AOB:**

None.

8) **Next Meeting: Tues 15th Aug** at Church House, Evesham, 7.00pm start.

Future Committee meeting dates: 21st Nov.

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

DOES YOUR TOWER NEED A GOOD CLEAN-UP?

If honest, only a few would answer 'no'. The flip-side to the question is, of course, is your tower as clean as it might be...? I had to get Evesham Bell Tower's belfry cleaned before the bellframe painters started. The painting contractors, John Taylor & Co, wanted it cleaned before they started, because there was a fine layer of stone dust over everything despite the bells being covered during the recent stone refurbishment work; and of course a few decades of dust and grime on the floor. Luckily, very luckily, some 2 years ago John Smith at Hampton thought that his belfry could do with a clean up, so he looked through the industrial cleaners section of the phone directory and landed on Redditch-based Fusion Cleaning Services. No, they hadn't cleaned out a belfry before, but they would come and have a look and, if viable, give a price. They inspected, it was viable and they gave a price that suited John. Work started. They took a day to clean in out, and removed all the rubbish afterwards. Yes, it was a bit grubby - but nothing like some I've seen. John showed me afterwards. Yes, it was very good - quite a contrast from before, even though it wasn't dreadful to start with.

Hinton-on-the-Green tower has had tower stonework renovation work recently, too. Like Evesham, their work contract didn't include for a good clean down of stone dust internally on completion either. Unfortunately, their bells didn't get covered up with ropes removed and pulleys encased

in poly bags (as we did at Evesham), so a really thorough clean-up was necessary; not for repainting the frame (it's wood), but to ensure the dust didn't act as an efficient grinding paste with the ropes and the pulleys. Clare Davies asked about a cleaning company and I mentioned Fusion had been at Hampton and had done well. Clare made contact, one of the directors inspected and they were given the order to get on with it.

With my cleaning requirement in mind, I dropped in at Hinton when Fusion were there and spoke to Craig Ellis, the Managing Director. Yes, they could do it, but would like to inspect beforehand to check the scope and therefore the time and cost involved. I met Glen's co-director, Glen Mallinson, who gave me a price for cleaning the belfry, clock room, upper and lower ringing rooms, and the stairs. The PCC was content with this, so Fusion got a green light to begin.

The cleaning team duly arrived. They consisted of Rob and Becky in a large van that contained all the specialist (and non-specialist) cleaning equipment. To cut a long story short, Rob and Becky were excellent - nothing was too much trouble. They worked well - even down on their hands and knees under the bells and bellframe vacuuming the belfry floor. And Becky even washed the bells! All the rubbish was removed, leaving the Tower cleaner than I've ever known it. We've had a few impressive

(Continued on p.9)

spider's webs around at high level (which I used to say were listed Grade 1, because they were attached to the structure), but they've now gone. A big transformation. Not only that, Rob and Becky were careful with everything in the Tower – really nice people to have in the place. How long did they take? A touch under 3 days. Would I recommend them? Yes, very much – and try to get Rob and Becky! Should you or your PCC be interested in having a tower clean-up, Fusion's advert (for which they paid) appears on p.17.

From the towers I get to see I guess the answer to the question in the heading is: yes, very, very likely. The trouble is we don't notice how grubby and grotty they get, because it happens slowly – or quickly sometimes, when somebody dumps a load of junk in what becomes 'the glory hole'. Tower rooms gather dust and gunge quickly, too. It's amazing how many old – and quite useless – ropes hang up on pegs; awaiting what? The day

when they might be needed? My experience of old ropes in belfries is that 95% of them are rubbish and will never, ever be any good. Chuck them away. One or two towers in the area – oh, perhaps 3 or 4 then – are in a truly shocking state and the PCC should be signing up the likes of Fusion Cleaning Services as a matter of urgency. I will not say what daily rate we were charged, but for the manpower involved and the amount of work that was done in a day, I considered it good value.

As members of PCCs tend not to venture into the ringers' domain, it is for ringers to bring the state of the tower to their notice and to suggest a clean-up is a good idea - and could this happen, please? Yes, of course ringers could do a fair amount towards this – a domestic vacuum cleaner also works up a tower - but the gunge and rubbish built up over many decades may be beyond their reasonable resources.

Chris Povey

UPDATE ON LONG COMPTON'S LIGHTNING DAMAGE.

Readers may remember the article in last October's Newsletter about the lightning that struck Long Compton's Church tower on September 4th. Trevor Hobday's photos at that time showed the dreadful damage that had occurred. The repairs have been undertaken and by the time the bells are ringing again it will one year from the strike. I was asked by Trevor and one of the Churchwardens to take a look at the bells, to check everything was OK for when ringing can resume.

Why can't they ring immediately? Lime mortar has been used for the stone repair. Although it has much more flexibility than cement mortar and is kinder to stone, it takes much longer to cure. Any movement during this stage can lead to problems of adhesion, so bells aren't rung. The architect and building contractor check the curing at regular intervals and, when happy curing is sufficient, give permission for ringing to occur. Ringing is expected to resume in about September.

Unfortunately, it wasn't just the stonework that suffered. All the electrics and electronic equipment in the church was blown apart, too. Lightning has to find its way to earth and wires of all sorts can assist in this way – but domestic wiring cannot carry such huge voltages, so destruction occurs.

The repair is excellent, as the before and after photos below show.



Readers may remember that the tower did not have a lightning conductor in spite of it containing an all-metal bellframe and a sheet lead roof (all metals attracts lightning; and the more there is, the greater the attraction). The repairs have included a lightning conductor that should send further strikes quickly and safely to earth. Although Church insurers EIG do not demand that churches have lightning conductors (which I find strange), I guess the EIG payout for the damage included a heavy recommendation that a conductor was fitted.

While Long Compton's PCC will have learnt a few things about lightning and the damage it can do, they can pat themselves on the back or lift their heads upwards and murmur some thanks. The total repair bill to put everything right is well above £100,000. The payout from EIG covered it, with no reductions for being under insured. How fortunate. Yes, fortunate indeed that the PCC Treasurer reviewed the renewal bill from EIG some three months before the strike and thought the sum insured looked low, so he raised it to a more sensible amount. Perhaps many PCCs should be reviewing their sums insured in the light of this event.

Chris Povey



RECENT MID-WEEK MONTHLY OUTINGS REPORT

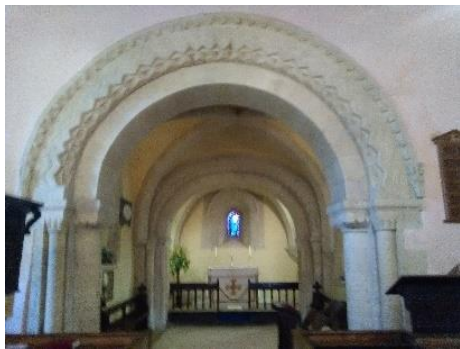
THE APRIL TOUR (the 330th): THURSDAY 20th: FROM HIGHEST CHURCH TO REMOTEST VILLAGE: MID GLOS
Telepathic links between Colin, our April organiser, and the delights of Gloucestershire

Highways manifested themselves in one arranging a ringing outing in a remote corner of the county and the other deciding it would be a good time to resurface and close several lanes in the same area. This led to an interesting

experience for the ringers, most of whom were unfamiliar with the locality. Despite Highways best efforts a total of 23 tourists and some non-ringing friends arrived at Elkstone, a six-bell tower in the highest church in Gloucestershire.

(Continued on p.10)

Both the local ringers and the church reflected a very welcoming community. Of interest is an integral dovecote, the result of 13thC rebuilding and an impressive double Norman chancel arch.



After further diversions we reached another six at the church which is part of Rendcomb College, a visit deemed possible due to the tour being outside school term time. These bells are seldom rung and again tourists are warmly welcomed. We had the opportunity to ring three medieval bells together which is a rarity.



Leaving Rendcomb meant we were finally free of road closures and diversions. Our lunch was at Siddington on the outskirts of Cirencester.

Our first tower of the afternoon was Kemble from where we moved to Edgeworth, said to be the most remote village in Gloucestershire.

Whilst not ringing there was much of interest in the church: named boxed pews (sadly not contemporary) and a fine tapestry carpet.



The most notable feature is a medieval stained glass window with a rare image of Thomas à Becket. This commemorates the Edgeworth

Miracle, when a local herdsman was purportedly cured of leprosy by visiting Becket's grave in Canterbury.



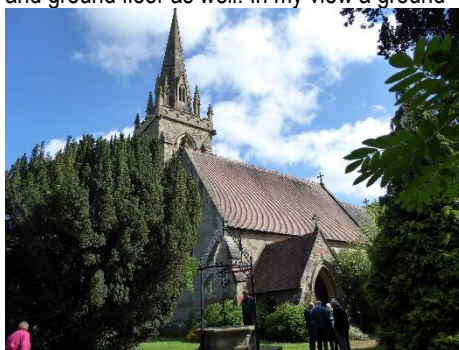
Four Shires Monthly Tours take place on the third Thursday of each month. Ringing at four towers is arranged to suit all standards and newcomers will be made very welcome. A pub lunch is arranged but is not compulsory.

Isobel Murphy

THE MAY TOUR (the 331st): THURSDAY 18TH. SOUTH OF WORCESTER

Woke up to a brighter looking day, let's hope that it continues like this not like the day before when it rained all day.

First tower of the morning, Madresfield a 9cwt 6 and ground floor as well. In my view a ground-



floor ring makes it easier for the organiser to obtain lunch requests. George and Ruth Morris paid us a visit and met up with old friends. George and Ruth regularly came out with the group in our early days. The Church along with a peal of 6 bells were consecrated in 1867. However in 2005, two of the bells were scrapped and two lighter bells added. The decorated chancel arch was a delight to see.



Next tower was Hanley Swan approached by

driving past the delightful village pond. A short climb up to the ringing room, from the outside giving us a ring of 6, this time a lighter tenor, 6cwt. These bells were restored in 2009. These bells were all cast in 1872 by Warners.

Lunch came next with a stop at The Rose and Crown, Severn Stoke. This 500 year old black and white pub, which was flooded in Christmas 2012 forcing it to close, was a lot more spacious than it appeared from the front. Well worth another visit.

Having been fed and watered it was on to Kempsey, an anticlockwise ring of 8, tenor being 15 cwt. This was the heaviest ring of the day. Up



until 2012 these were a 6. The 2 trebles were added then. Here we were watched over by Brother Roger standing in a window. I must admit he was very quiet making no movement or even any comments on our ringing.

Our final tower of the day was Croome D'Abitot situated on the Croome Park Estate. We were following on from a quarter peal and were met by Paul Smith who was responsible for the work undertaken in 2011 to restore this ring. It has been suggested that the Church exterior was designed by Capability Brown in 1763. He was responsible for the layout of the parkland. Standing at the entrance to the Church, looking to the west there is a grand view over to the Malverns. You just have to shut out the drone of the M5. This was another ring of 6 with a tenor of 10 cwt. The current building replaces an earlier Church but the bells from the old Church were saved and moved into the new one.

Our thanks go to Joy for organising this day out and to those who guided us through our ringing. Various methods were rung besides the standard methods we tend to ring the ones that spring to mind were 4 spliced at Kempsey and Carlisle at Hanley Swan. What about the weather? It was lovely with just a few spots while we were at Croome Park.

Sandra Parker

THE JUNE TOUR: THURSDAY 15TH (the 332nd). WEST OXON

June 15th started sunny and warm for most as we made our way to South Leigh our only eight of the day. The bells go well but are very loud. We rang Rutland, Cambridge, Superlative, Plain, Grandsire and Stedman.

(Continued on p.11)

(Mid-week tours cont.)

After the important business of choosing lunch was dealt with there was much of interest in the church, the 14th and 15th century wall paintings being the most important. The major one of these shows a depiction of Judgement Day with people being dragged from their graves and thrown into Hell on the right side or lifted to heaven on the left. The comment in the church information said this was to show the villagers right from wrong. I also enjoyed looking at the beautiful hassocks



There was a shock for us all as we left the church as it had become cloudy and cool. We made our way to Church Hanborough, a 13cwt.

six, and a very nice upstairs ring. On the way upstairs there were some lovely views of the beautiful garden next door. We rang the usual minor and doubles methods plus Carlisle. The Church is light, bright and quite plain but I found a lovely cross stitch wall hanging done in wool, which showed the village including Church, tithe barn and pub.

Lunch next at the Oxfordshire Yeoman in Freeland, which was excellent. Even better, it had my favourite cider!

The light six at Freeland followed lunch. The upstairs ringing room is small, so a rotation system was the order of the day. The normal methods were rung plus Norwich and Westminster. A visit inside the

Church showed it to be very ornate and quite dark. My favourite part was the vaulted roof of the chancel.

The last tower of the day was at Bladon, where there were some problems parking as it was school leaving time. So much to see here, the most interesting being for me the beautiful window by Emma Blount for the 50th anniversary of Sir Winston Churchill's death. This showed many things that were part of his life. Ringing went on the 6 bells with London added to the usual ones.

John thanked Michael Probert for organising an excellent outing and lunch. The just over 20 of us then made our way home.

Brenda Dixon

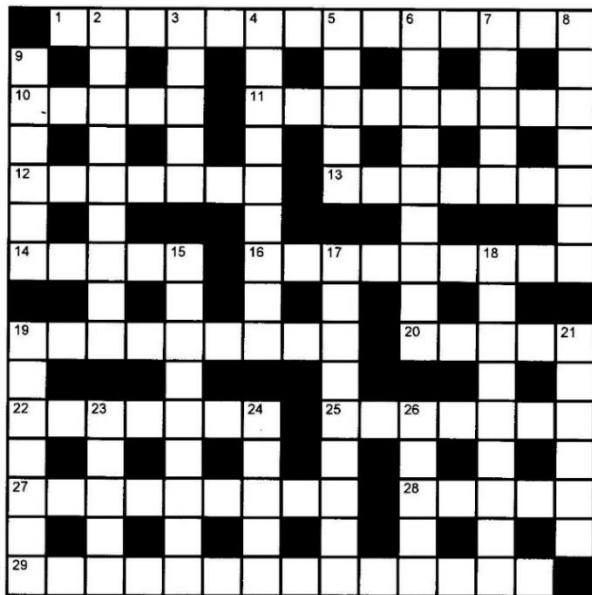
THE MID-WEEK RINGERS WOULD BE DELIGHTED IF YOU JOINED THEM

Ringers, particularly FSG members (it is a Guild event), are very welcome to join us – it isn't a select group. We enjoy ringing in towers in both local and a-little-less-local parts – and we have a pleasurable time. Tours aren't arranged well in advance, but details of future tours can be found by looking on the web-site that is specific to these tours: see <http://homepages.which.net/~paul.evans12/4shires/html/bracket.htm> or contact me (details on page 2).

Isobel Murphy

EL PRESIDENTE'S CROSSWORD

Oh! there are some little gems in this one, 1A and 22&25A in particular.



S A S R O C E
 C H I C T W E L F T H M A N
 I C O P F I R
 O P T I O N S M A L L E S T
 S D E L
 S T Y E M I S G I V I N G S
 O N A T M L
 K N O T S T O R M S L O W
 O U O E U
 O N E H U N D R E D A R C H
 I E S E
 M I S S P E L T S C H I S M
 O M R A T E T
 A N D B R I S T O L L I E U
 A E N E Y L R

Answers to April 2017 X-word

Across

- 1 The last magazine showed the editor cannot resist it. (5,5,4)
- 10 Gesticulation. (5)
- 11 A tribute. Old or New. (9)
- 12 A social climber. (7)
- 13 Country on the Eastern Mediterranean, half Christian and half Muslim (
- 14 Chuck it in the dyke. (5)
- 16 I don't understand it. (2,5,2)
- 19 Said to be the sincerest form of flattery. (9)
- 20 A stunted person. (5)
- 22 & 25 The Ringing Master's Posse! (7)
- 25 See 22. (7)
- 27 Allocating according to rules. (9)
- 28 The last Greek letter. (5)
- 29 The Romans passed through here! (7,-2,-9)
- 29 In place of. (4)

Down

- ..1 Luciano the famous Italian tenor. (9)
- 3 Release. An argument? (5)
- 4 Pasta. (9)
- 5 Bird of the thrush family. (5)
- 6 On the right side. (9)
- 7 The Deep. (5)
- 8 An understanding between nations. (7)
- 9 Purloined. (6)
- 15 Formed by freezing of the dew. (4,5)
- 17 A fashionable movement to join. (9)
- 18 Brazen. (9)
- 19 The time between certain occasions. (7)
- 21 A Public Prosecutor particularly in Scotland. (6)
- 23 One could change this later. (5)
- 24 A heap of stones with significance. (5)
- 26 A popular Spanish wine. (5)

THE SECOND 'GREAT INTERNATIONAL' STRIKING COMPETITION

Readers may remember the first time this Striking Competition was held. It was two years ago at Longborough. Denzil Spear had the brainwave of holding a competition between Devon call-change bands and 'Scientific' (ie change ringing) ringers to show who was best at striking bells. It was a brave thing to do, particularly in trying to bring ringers all the way from Devon to Longborough. But Denzil speaks Devonshire language, having originated and learnt to ring in Barnstaple, and clearly his communication skills got the whole thing underway – and very successful it was, too. The FSG band was the highest placed scientific band then, coming third behind some very impressive striking of 'down yonder' bands. There was much jubilation in the FSG camp, as the scientific bands thought they would be last. I well remember Denzil saying at his closing speech two years ago that he hoped another of these competitions would occur – but it wouldn't be organised by him, as he'd had enough with that one.

It was clearly a case of 'never say never again', as another competition was run again on May 20th at Longborough. Denzil must have been in the thick of it. Some of the Devon bands reappeared, clearly expecting to trounce the 'scientifics' – and why not? However, this time some wild card change ringers appeared in the form of a band from (I believe) the Bristol area, who were competing under the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths banner.

For those readers not conversant with the Cumberlands, they are a long-standing national society (founded in the 18th century) and have responsibility for ringing bells in various central London Churches. They are considered historically in the same category as the Ancient Society of College Youths, which was founded in 1637. The College Youths are responsible for ringing bells in the City of London. There is much rivalry between these two great societies, with no-one being able to be a member of both at the same time. I cannot dilate on the supremacy of one society over the other, as I would be accused (probably correctly) of considerable bias, so will leave that question to be answered by others!

This year's competition took on much the same format as last time, with the FSG team probably apprehensive about matching their previous placing. However, there was a major upset – the Cumberlands band took first place. This was followed by a similar format to last year, with call-change bands following in the next two places, and the FSG band behind them. I cannot think the top Devon bands had an 'off' day, so the Cumberlands band must have performed absolutely superbly - as their almost total lack of faults confirms – and all credit to them. The results are as follows:-

1 st	Cumberlands	17.5 faults
2 nd	Albanas (Devon band)	34.5
3 rd	Burrington, Devon	45
4 th	Four Shires Guild	53
5 th	Exeter St David's A	92.5
6 th	Longborough A	116.5
7 th	Exeter St David's B	169

Not only did the Cumberland team win overall and took the Ruth How Plate, it also took the award for the best rise and fall of the day. Having heard Devon bands perform with rising and falling, the Cumberlands rise and fall must have been spectacular!

Longborough's own band took part, too, and how proud they must have been not to be last – indeed they were only a few points behind the team in 5th's place. Denzil must have been proud, too.

The FSG team, although 4th, no doubt felt that honour had been satisfied in being placed similarly among the call-change bands to last time. The team consisted of: Richard Lewis-Skeath, Nick Allsopp, Roger Hunt, John Gwynne, Lucy Gwynne and Michael Haynes

Another one in 2019 Denzil?
Chris Povey

FROM THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Notes of the last Committee Meeting (see page 8) record that Chris Mew, the Guild's Safeguarding Officer, gave a short update on what is happening. Here is Chris's report:-

I don't think there are any new developments which overtake what I last sent, the most important being:

Teaching young people ringing can use a DBS certificate for different churches provide in the SAME DIOCESE.

However, if an individual is signed-up to the on-line update service then certificates can be used across Diocesan boundaries since a host parish can just check on line if necessary.

There was a full-page update on Safeguarding in the March 17th issue of RW.

I hope this is useful. If any tower or individuals have problems then any FSG member is welcome to contact me direct.

Chris Mew

BLOCKLEY'S STRANGE BELLFRAME (SOON TO DISAPPEAR.....)

Blockley's bellframe is, or fast becoming 'was', an extreme oddity, being composed of two entirely separate frames, one of wood (the lower part) and the other of metal (the upper part). As tends to be the case with such odd arrangements, it was a bodge to save money. The wooden part was installed in 1729, as part of the building of the new tower. It was a diagonal frame to take the 6 bells of the time. This arrangement lasted until 1892, when either the wooden bellframe was showing signs of age, or the parish wanted to augment to 8 bells; or perhaps it was a bit of both. Money must have been a big issue, because the finished product was not a good arrangement. The contractor was Bond of Burford, who had rehung lighter rings of bells on girder frames for cheapness. A girder frame is a single layer of 'I' beams, to which the bells are attached directly. There are no

sideframes to lift the bells above the steel girders. These frames are acceptable for light rings, but Blockley bells were heavier than is acceptable. To reduce the cost further, Bond removed everything of the old wooden frame above the bottom beams and then attached the sliders and frame pulleys to them. Unfortunately the girders were built in to the thinner part of the tower, because the old frame was built-in to the thicker part. Not only that, some of the beams ends were attached next to the louvre openings. This arrangement had all the ingredients for inducing cracks in the stonework – but, against all the odds, no obvious cracking occurred.

The time came when a rehang was a genuine necessity, and the question

of where to attach the new bellframe to the tower became important. The new bellframe needed to be attached to the thickest part of the tower, where the old wooden frame was attached. But this frame, being old and being built with the tower, caused worries about Historic England's feelings about its removal. Retention would mean difficulties in siting the new frame, as the appointed bellhangers would not attach the new frame to the thinner part above the off-set. To cut a long story short, Historic England did agree to the old timbers being removed, as bellframe expert Christopher Pickford suggested in his excellent report to the PCC on this frame that the remains were so little, and although a diagonal frame it incorporated no special features, it wasn't worth keeping.

Taylor's removed the bells and the girder frame in early May. The girder frame took a great deal of time and effort to release it from the walls. The second photo shows the remains of the wooden frame as it appears now (it awaits removal). The big clear-up will happen when Taylor's return to remove this frame. Having to undertake steeplekeeping work over the wooden frame was clearly uncomfortable! David Brown said it was literally a pain to do such work sometimes, as it meant lying on one's back over a beam. A big, traditional steel and cast-iron frame will be provided, which will last for a very long time. The first of this type of Taylor bellframe (which is at Dumbleton) was installed in (coincidentally) 1892 and happily looks as though it will last for another 125 years! Buy cheap, buy twice...

Chris Povey



RETRO RINGING RALLY, SATURDAY 13 MAY 2107

The second Retro Ringing Rally (RRR2) took place on Saturday 13 May. We were expecting an increase in numbers for this second event and we weren't disappointed. Twenty ringers and 11 classics were with us for most or part of the day. Triumph, Austin, MG, Morris, Mercedes and BMW were all represented as well as ringers from as far afield as Derbyshire, Kent and London.

comprised Kemerton, Bredon St. Giles, Bredon's Norton, Eckington, Great Comberton and Crophorne.

A great day out, with lunch and tea both taken at 'The Bell', lunch in Eckington, tea in Crophorne. One day, one tour, one pub name, many cars! Our thanks go to Chris Seers for her great organisation behind the day. We hope to repeat the event again next year.

Our towers were again around the Bredon Hill area of Worcestershire and

Keith & Isobel Murphy



TALES FROM A TOWER NEAR YOU (11)ALL AT SEA!

Back in June 2011 the Southern Branch of the W&DCRA experimented with holding a branch meeting whilst afloat on a boat. Following a rushed 'must get parked on a summer Saturday afternoon' dash into Evesham from the ringing session at Great Hampton we took our seats onboard the vessel 'Handsam Too' in the capable hands of Tom Sandham. Although a fairly speedy business meeting ensued the cool breeze and dull weather that day sought to chill the bones and so everyone was glad to chat to each other once again when we continued with a trip down the River Avon (note the winter coats in my photograph below – the smiling faces were optional!).

We skirted the lockhouse first but the familiar & lingering smell of the sausage products once churned out in their grease-proof (later see-through plastic) wrappings from the old Collins/Richmond factory behind the Methodist church had long since gone. Next the then iconic landmark of the New Bridge (now replaced by an unloved structure resembling an inverted traction cage for concrete stitched together with shopping trolleys) towered above us before we passed the rope operated ferry at Hampton and turned around at the former GWR railway bridge over the river. I recall the floods of July 1968 when the only way to walk home to Hampton from Evesham railway station was through the goods yard and over the former (demolished in the '70's) LMS railway bridge which stood adjacent to its GWR cousin – at 11pm the only lighting along the former trackbed skirting Clarke's Hill was from glow-worms along the overgrown

trackside! (It's now a private road leading to the local sewage works.)

Arrival back on terra firma allowed us to shake off the onset of seeming 'rigor mortis' and the success of the experiment? It was worth trying ... once.



'Roger de Flaedenburg'

AROUND THE TOWERS

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Barrie Wheeler of Evesham tells me he celebrates 70 years as a ringer this year. He started ringing – at Middle Littleton – at the age of 11. That's a very long time. Barrie is also the contact for Middle Littleton bells. Congratulations for putting this amount of time into ringing, Barrie.

Barrie also tells me that **Middle Littleton bells are currently not being rung**, as one of the pinnacles on the tower has been found to be loose. The timetable for undertaking the stabilising work is unknown, so it may be some time before these bells are rung again.

I see from **Roger Hunt's reflection** of Viv Barnes' ringing that he has notched up 50 years as a ringer this year. We are all getting older.....

I'm told **Pillerton Hersey** is to have a new steel bellframe as part of the rehang. The original plan was to repair the old frame and, if possible, add another pit above. Plans may have changed due to (I believe) a fractured cast-iron sideframe in the old frame. While an additional faculty will be required to change to a new frame, there are two distinct advantages: the new frame will be designed to have 5 bell pits on the same level; and there is only a small extra cost over repairing the old frame. Another bell to make 5 is, I understand, very unlikely at this stage, as funds are well-stretched with hanging four bells.

Blockley bells are now out and are at John Taylor's foundry at Loughborough. The new

trebles and the recasting of the tenor will occur in September, with a coachload of parishioners going to see the casting work. (Bells did ring out from Blockley for a wedding while the bells were out, but as might be guessed there is a story behind this, which I will relate in the next Newsletter).

Moreton-in-Marsh's clappers were sent off to John Taylor & Co for rebushing and were returned a week later, which was a very quick turnaround. The other part of the proposed bell work is to transfer the clock hammer from the tenor to the 'dead' (ie, hung stationary) bell that hangs up there (it's the old 4th from the pre-1958 ring), which gets no use. There are two plusses in doing this: the bell will now get some use; and it removes a clock hammer from a swinging bell (which is a huge plus).

Evesham Bell Tower bells are back in action after the repainting of the bellframe. John Taylor & Co did the work, and very nice it is, too. All the metalwork gleams in gloss red. Why did it take so long? Firstly, it's a big frame, with lots of surface area. Secondly, they removed the stays, ropes, wheels, pulleys and Hastings stay slides. The bells were all masked off, so no paint dropped on them, after which a lot of time was spent in cleaning down and neutralising any corrosion (there was only a little). The final top coats then were applied (and there's a lot surface area....). Once dry, the bell fittings were re-assembled and each bell was tried out in turn

and the stays adjusted. It was all left clean, tidy and fully operational. Full marks to JT's painting team. I have no doubt it will last for another 35 years at least, by which time I shall be pushing up daisies! In my various trips around local belfries I see metal bellframes that are in dire need of corrosion treatment and paintwork. One or two of them have had nothing done to them for a very long time, such that the work required to bring them back to decent order is great and consequently more and more expensive. One of the worst I've seen was Bourton-on-the-Water, where parts of the steelwork had corroded away due to part of being next to an opening through which rain blew. I suspect the paintwork at that time dated back to the date of its installation: 1957. All credit to the PCC though, who bit the bullet and raised a significant amount to have the bellframe painted and the clappers and pulleys overhauled. More PCCs should to be made aware if the need for repainting is evident and be encouraged to undertake the work. It's very likely many jobbing painters could do a cheaper job than a bellhanging concern, but I doubt few, if any, would be as thorough, careful and competent with the installation. My PCC had a solid-gold guarantee with JT&Co if something went wrong, as indeed they would have had with any of the other bellhanging concerns. A jobbing painter may give nothing in this respect, plus no idea of bells and bellframes. That should be considered too much of a worrying combination to be entertained with any sanity unless special or unusual circumstances pertain.

PEALS IN THE LOCALITY THAT INVOLVED A LARGE PROPORTION OF FSG MEMBERS AND/OR LOCAL REASONS FOR RINGING THEM.

Coventry Diocesan Guild

Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, Holy Trinity
Monday, 1 May 2017 in 3h 8m (19–0–2 in E)

5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal

Composed by C K Lewis

1 Richard Lewis-Skeath	6 Julie A Tarling
2 Rachel D Page	7 Raymon A Sheasby
3 Nicholas K Allsopp	8 Simon E Adams
4 Roger H Hunt	9 Andrew F Alldrick
5 Steve Bowley	10 Michael Chester (C)

Rung in memory of Michael Gray, past President and General Secretary of this Guild. He was a supporter of the ringing in this tower and one of life's true gentlemen. First on 10: 6.

St Brandon's Society

Willersey, Gloucestershire; Church of St Peter.
Saturday, 20 May 2017 in 3 hrs 0 min (12 in G)

5040 Cambridge Surprise Minor

1 Jennifer H Chadburn	4 Sarah E Chadburn
2 Joanna C Franklin	5 Robert G Chadburn (C)
3 Frances E Haynes	6 Roy A Meads

First peal: 1

A wedding compliment to Sarah Chadburn and James Allen, married 22nd April 2017. First peal of minor on the bells for 58 years

Worcestershire & Districts Association

Great Hampton, Worcestershire, St Andrew
Saturday, 17 June 2017 in 3h 5 (12–2–4 in F#)

5184 Quornden Surprise Major

Composed by D F Morrison (no. 2013b)

1 Rachel D Page	5 Roger H Hunt
2 Michael Chester (C)	6 Steve Bowley
3 Richard Lewis-Skeath	7 Nicholas K Allsopp
4 Christopher J Stuart	8 Christopher J Pickford

Rung to mark the 50th anniversary of the election of Roger Hunt to "The Wusters".

MILITARY IN MEMORIA

Bishampton, Worcs, 17 April, 1260 Doubles (Grandsire & PB): 1 Rachel D Page, 2 Christina Ireland, 3 Andy Harris, 4 Steve Bowley, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath. Rung to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of local soldier Private William George Perks, 10th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, killed during a skirmish in Belgium on Friday 17th April 1917. The band wish to include Martyn Palmer, a local ringer, who rang with us before and after the quarter

Crothorne, Worcs, 19 April, 1260 Doubles (Stedman, Plain Bob & Grandsire): 1 Kate Collingwood, 2 Caroline Evans, 3 Steve Bowley, 4 Neil Garner, 5 Roger Hunt (C), 6 Anthony Wheeler. Rung on the day of the 100th anniversary of the death, aged 23, of Private Wilfred Akers, 1st Field Service Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry, from the neighbouring village of Charlton. He was evacuated from the North-West Frontier garrison in India through illness to Durban, South Africa, where he later died from pneumonia and is buried in the Durban Road Military Cemetery. Also best wishes to Steve on his birthday.

Great Rissington, Glos, 16 May, 1260 Doubles (St Giles, St Miles, Lapley, St John, Winchendon Place, St Nicholas): 1 Rob Kilbey, 2 Steve Coleman (C), 3 Sue Coleman, 4 Jeremy Meyrick, 5 John Nicholls, 6 Tim Woodgate. In memoriam Frederick J Vallender, a former Great Rissington ringer who was lost in action near Salonica 100 years ago.

Evesham (Bell Tower), Worcs, 1 April, 1282 Cambridge Surprise Royal: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Steve Bowley, 3 Roger Hunt, 4 Lucy Gwynne, 5 Nick Allsopp, 6 Robert Tregillus, 7 Rachel Coates, 8 John Gwynne, 9 Roderic Bickerton, 10 Michael Chester (C)

Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks, 23 April, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Charles Wilson, 3 Simon Oram, 4 Rachel D Page, 5 Peter Quinn, 6 Simon Adams, 7 Roger Hunt (C), 8 John Perry. Rung for St George's Day and the anniversary of William Shakespeare's birthday. Also a belated 60th birthday compliment to local ringer Charles Wilson.

Great Hampton, Worcs, Sat, 29 April, 1280 Lincolnshire Surprise Major: 1 Jane Gilbert, 2 Neil Garner, 3 Rachel D Page, 4 Margaret Smith, 5 Steve Bowley, 6 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 7 Nick Allsopp, 8 Roger Hunt (C). Rung with the band's best wishes to Phyllis Brazier, past Guild Vice-President, in her retirement from ringing. An FSG S@S quarter peal.

Mickleton, Glos, 8 May, 1260 Grandsire Triples: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Simon Oram, 3 John Nicholls, 4 Robert Reeves, 5 Mark Sayers, 6 Michael Dane, 7 Chris Mew (C), 8 Peter Quinn. Rung in fond memory of Michael Gray of Snitterfield, past President of Coventry Diocesan Guild

Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks, 28 May 2017, 1264 Plain Bob Major: 1 Peter Bridges, 2 Will Jones, 3 John Carroll, 4 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 5 Martin Penny, 6 Michael Haynes, 7 Charles Wilson, 8 Rod Bickerton (C).

Wellesbourne, Warks, 5 June, 1250 Cambridge Surprise Major: 1 Chris Mew (C), 2 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 3 James Ingham, 4 John Keddie, 5 Karen French, 6 Michael Dane, 7 John Nicholls, 8 Peter Quinn. Rung remembering the victims of Borough Market attacks.

Offenham, Worcs, 11 June, 1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor: 1 Richard Lewis-Skeath, 2 Georgie Roberts, 3 Nick Allsopp, 4 Jackie Roberts, 5 Jane Gilbert, 6 Martin Penny (C). First Surprise Minor – 2. Rung for the 2017 Offenham Wake.

Childswickham, Worcs. 11 June, 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: 1 Graham Lee, 2 Claire Penny, 3 Georgie Roberts, 4 Roger Hunt, 5 Martin Penny (C), 6 Bob Topp. First on Treble.

Whichford, Warks, 15 June, 1260 Plain Bob Triples: 1 Imogen Murphy, 2 Annie Hall, 3 Sue Marshall, 4 Lucy Gwynne, 5 Graham Nabb, 6 Becki Johnson, 7 John Gwynne (C), 8 Keith Murphy. First on eight and away from cover: 1 (**Congratulations Imogen!**). 1100th Q: 7. Rung on BBC Music Day

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

NOTICES AND ADVERTS

GUILD WALKING AND RINGING TOUR SATURDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER

A NEW ROUTE HAS BEEN DEvised WITH NEW TOWERS

Meet at ODDINGTON OLD CHURCH Ringing 10.00 - 10.45am (Parking restricted; please park tidily)
Walk to ADLESTROP Ringing 11.30 - 12.15pm
Walk to Broadwell for lunch (1.15 - 2.30pm)
Ringing at BROADWELL 2.45 - 3.30pm
Walk back to Oddington Old Church.

For further details contact the organisers:- John Carroll (j.carroll@homecall.co.uk)
Michael Haynes (hynmicha6@aol.com)

FRIENDS OF COLESHILL BELL RINGERS AND FOUR SHIRES GUILD MINI-OUTING. SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER.

Shipston-on-Stour (6, 9cwt)	10:00 - 11:00
Todenham (6, 13cwt)	11:15 - 12:00
Lunch in Moreton-in-Marsh (location tba)	
Bourton-on-the-Water (8, 12cwt)	14:30 - 15:00
Longborough (6, 11cwt)	15:15 - 16:00
Moreton-in-Marsh (8, 10cwt)	16:15 - 17:00

Please put this date into your diaries. The ringers at Coleshill are novice ringers and this will be the first outing for many of them. Your help in supporting this day's ringing will be appreciated. There will be the usual FSG evening practice that evening.

Nick Allsopp, Organiser (allsoppm@googlemail.com)

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>.

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 shirt	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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CARILLON BUILDERS

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The Bellfoundry, Freehold Street, Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE11 1AR, England
Tel: 01509 212241 Fax: 01509 263305
Email: office@taylorbells.co.uk

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

GUILD LAPEL BADGES



Guild lapel badge are available. They are slightly different to the previous version, as it is now the same as the clothing badges (the 'standard' Guild badge). It is slightly '3D' too, as some features are raised.

£4 each from the Hon Sec.

(The original badges cost £1 in 1976!)

NEED A CLEAN-OUT OF YOUR TOWER? THEN TRY FUSION CLEANING SERVICES.



Fusion has cleaned out Hampton, Hinton-on-the-Green and Evesham Bell Tower belfries. Recommended for such work!

DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

JULY 8 TH	CHURCHILL, Oxon	8, 10-3-9 in G (*NOTE 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM.*)
JULY 15 TH	LOWER QUINTON, Warks	6, 13-0-7 in F# (GF) (*NOTE 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM.*)
JULY 22 ND	ALVESTON, Warks	6, 7 ½ cwt in A
JULY 29 TH	WHICHFORD, Warks	8, 12-3-23 in G (GF)
AUG 5 TH	BRETFORTON, Worcs	8, 8-3-11 in F# (GF)
AUG 12 TH	TREDINGTON, Warks	6, 16-1-20 in E (GF)
AUG 19 TH	WELFORD-ON-AVON, Warks	8, 9-3-1 in G#
AUG 26 TH	HALFORD, Warks	6, 7-2-16 in A (GF)
SEPT 2 ND	SAINTBURY, Glos	8, 11-0-24 in F# (GF)
SEPT 9 TH	CHILDSWICKHAM, Worcs	6, 11-3-26 in F#
SEPT 16 TH	SHERBOURNE, Warks	6, 11-1-17 in F#
SEPT 23 RD	BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER, Glos	8, 12-1-22 in F# (AND GUILD WALK/RING: SEE p.16)
SEPT 30 TH	BOURTON-ON-THE-HILL, Glos	6, 11-1-27 in F (* NOTE 7-00PM. TILL 8-30PM. *)
OCT 7 TH	FLADBURY, Worcs	8, 12-3-03 in G#
OCT 14 TH	BUCKLAND, Glos	6, 14 cwt in F# (GF)
OCT 21 ST	TEMPLE GUITING, Glos	A.G.M. & STRIKING COMPETITIONS (<u>*SEE P.3 FOR DETAILS*</u>)
OCT 28 TH	HOOK NORTON, Oxon	8, 20-2-13 in E
NOV 4 TH	CHIPPING CAMPDEN, Glos	8, 22-1-18 in Eb

For any alterations to this programme, check the FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>). & 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:

ELECTIONS REQUIRED AT THE 2017 AGM AT TEMPLE GUITING

Every year the Guild Rules require that members are elected to the posts of Guild Master, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary and Ringing Master (the Guild Officer posts). In addition, six members are elected to serve on the Committee. There are no elections this year for President, Vice-Presidents and Central Council representatives

Firstly, please consider standing for these posts. Secondly, if not you, please propose candidates.

DID SOMEONE SAY THEY DIDN'T GET A JULY NEWSLETTER?

IF SO, ASK WHETHER THEY PAID THEIR 2017 SUBS BY THE END OF JUNE. IF THEY DIDN'T, THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T GET ONE – NO SUB; NO NEWSLETTER. (AND IF THEY DID PAY, CONTACT THE EDITOR)

YOU CAN PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BY INTERNET BANK TRANSFER, which is a very convenient service if you are internet-connected and have internet banking. THE GUILD'S BANKING DETAILS ARE: Bank, HSBC; Acct No, 71118668; Account name, FOUR SHIRES GUILD; Sort Code, 40-41-26. For 'Reference', please insert your name and tower (or unattached), otherwise you and your payment will be untraceable!! You will not need a receipt, as the bank transfer process allows a copy of the transfer document to be printed off. *(I have used this system and it works well. I suggest those who pay subs and donations for a group of ringers follow it up with an email to the Treasurer listing those names. Ed)*

Events for 2017 – book the dates now:-

Walking & Ringing tour	Sat 23 rd September – new route; looks a nice <u>SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 16</u>
AGM & Striking Comps	Sat 21 st October at St Mary's, Temple Guiting, Glos (see p.3 for details)
Inter-Shire Comp	Sat 18 th November (alternates with the Minimus Comp).
Christmas Party	Sat 9 th Dec at Badsey Church *NOTE* ringing starts at 7-00pm.