

NEWS FROM THE GUILD

October 2024

An Audience with the Bishop of Hereford

On Monday the 21st October 2024 Fran Watkins, Val Roberts & Sue Robinson – in our roles as Guild Secretary, Guild Vice President and Guild Master were invited for a meeting with the Bishop of Hereford.

After topping up our energy levels with a sandwich, a bit of cake and the must have traditional cup of tea in the Cathedral refectory, we moved across the courtyard and were welcomed into the beautiful Bishops Palace. More tea was offered and accepted, and we settled in the bishops' study for an hour's conversation.

The discussion topics opened with the matter of potential church closures & the subsequent consequences for the bells and the bellringers. We took the opportunity to outline the project that the Guild is undertaking under the leadership of the Reverend Anthony Ellis and both parties were able to take away some salient points to consider. We then moved on to the gritty subject of recruitment and the opportunities for a degree of collaboration, given that traditional church routes to bellringing are much less prevalent than in times gone by. We spoke about the need for total inclusivity and how handbells could play a role here.

Slightly tongue in cheek we touched on the less than conventional relationship bellringers have with the church, but all agreed that both sides could do more to make sure things remain convivial. Inviting our Vicars, Curates & Church Wardens up into the tower would be a good way to reach out and start building a rapport where one doesn't already exist. Val made a point Vicars & Curates needed to be trained in how to chime a bell, another potential opportunity for our two communities to come together.

Finally, we all went outside in the beautiful palace gardens for a photo opportunity, thanked the bishop for his time and hospitality and wound our respective ways home through the Hereford traffic.

Sue Robinson, Guild Master 24.10.24



To all members

It will soon be time for our District AGMs and reminders to pay subscriptions for 2025.

At the Guild AGM meeting in May it was agreed that the cost of a Ringing Member subscription for 2025 would **increase to £10.00**, all other rates remain unchanged.

We will also **require all members to complete a membership renewal form** this year through the Guild website. Further details can be found at the end of this newsletter, and we will be visiting AGMs to help with any queries. Please do not worry if you do not use the internet, help will be on hand.

[visit the website at hdgb.org](http://hdgb.org)

St Laurence Ludlow Guild's Scottish Odyssey

As with most ideas in ringing – good and bad – it started with a conversation in the pub. Post one quarter peal, the conversation turned from ringing on 10 bells to ringing on 12. The Hereford Guild does not have a ring of 12 bells within its boundaries so if we want to ring on higher numbers, it means a trip to Kidderminster, Worcester, or Shrewsbury. A little voice inside my head said, 'why not go to Tulloch?' but that little voice didn't stay inside my head ... and the half-expected responses of 'it's a bit far' came back as 'now that's a great idea'!

The Highlands Ringing Centre is a forward-thinking, purpose-built ringing training facility. It is the inspiration of its owners, Peter Bevis and Helen McGregor. Based at Tulloch Farm in the Scottish Highlands and backing on to the Nevis Range (yes, that is Ben Nevis over there ...) it is in a very scenic location. There are two rings of bells – 12 (07-2-04) and 8 (03.0.21) alongside a simulator bell. All the bells are very easy and pleasant to ring. The ring of 8 was only installed in April of this year (replacing a lighter ring). There is plenty of self-catering accommodation on the farm as well as a kitchen and self-catering rooms in the ringing centre itself. It is ideal for groups to gather and ring whatever – the bells are practically inaudible outside (not that there are any neighbours to annoy).

Fast forward 12 months and a group of ringers who regularly ring at Ludlow headed north for our Scottish Odyssey.

The Ludlow band has changed somewhat in the last few years with several ringers moving into the area. So, in addition to ringing, this was an opportunity for the group to socialise and get to know each other better than we have been able to up to now.

From the ringing perspective our aim was to practice ringing, striking and rhythm on higher numbers. The week was divided into practice sessions (for all abilities) alongside quarter peal attempts and focus practices. Some made use of the simulator to practice methods and striking and, of course, there were handbells. Trips to ring at Inverness Cathedral and the majestic 10 bells at Inveraray were also arranged, enabling us to ring on different bells and experience the stunning Highlands scenery. Some of the more intrepid ventured further east of Inverness to ring on the Forres mini ringing. We scored 12 quarter peals in the week – and lost a few more (which will give us food for thought as to how to improve) with several 'firsts' being recorded. The highlight was undoubtedly the quarter peal of Little Bob Maximus, which for a band that does not ring on 12 bells, was an excellent piece of ringing – a performance to be very proud of. Details of all the performances can be seen on [Bellboard](#).

The week was a resounding success, with many wanting to know when we plan to return. It was particularly pleasing to see people develop their skills as well as seeing the group gel – with banter aplenty and the occasional dram of the amber nectar – as the week progressed. We now need to think about how we take our ringing forward – but a trip back to the Highlands is very much on the cards!

The Ringing Centre is available to anyone, however experienced you or your band may be. It's well worth the visit

Paul Wells



Second Guild/District Officers meet-up at Kingsland

We were pleased to hold another informal guild and district officers meet up at Kingsland on August 10th. These have been a really useful opportunity for us to get to know one another and we hope that building good relationships will help us work together for the benefit of all our members.

As the Kingsland meet-up coincided with the beginning of the Quarter Peal Festival, 8 officers took the opportunity to ring a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples at Eardisland beforehand.



Guild Triples and Major practice at Kingsland

As a direct result of comments that were made at the above officer's meeting, we will be holding a **Triples and Major practice** for those who would like an opportunity to advice their ringing but may not be able to regularly practice on 8 bells. The practice will be a relaxed session run on a similar basis to the Beginners Sessions that have been so popular. There will be an experienced band of helpers available to offer support and advice, and the best possible chance to practice with a steady band.

The practice will be held at **Kingsland on 30th November**, and we hope to see as many of you as possible there. Ask your district secretary for details and look out for the poster.

If you have any thoughts or ideas that you think your District officials could bring to future meetings please do let them know.

Beginners sessions continue to be popular

Recent beginner's sessions have been held at Burghill, Coalbrookdale and Presteigne.

Isabel D'Avanzo from Hereford wrote about the Coalbrookdale practice –

On 28th September members of the Guild took a trip to Coalbrookdale to ring at Holy Trinity church Ironbridge (10 bell tower). It was a lovely opportunity to meet new ringers as well as more experienced ringers from across the Guild.

With almost 30 people showing up, the practice was split into two groups with one group ringing up in the tower and another group having a go at the handbells downstairs in the church. The practice was primarily focused on rounds and plain hunting; bob doubles and rounds and call changes were also rung. We also had the opportunity to ring rounds on 10 which was a great experience for those who had not rung in a 10 bell tower before.

These practices are proving to be extremely popular, places are limited to ensure that everyone gets the best possible chance, so we hope that each district will host sessions in the coming months.

Grandsire training day in Leominster District

We were pleased to read on Facebook of the successful Grandsire training day that took place in the Leominster District on 28th September. The following day a quarter was rung at Stoke Prior with a first quarter peal of Grandsire inside for Jo Harris – well done to everyone involved!

Good Practice

Our discussions at the Kingsland officer's meet-up also led to us finding out about a very successful monthly practice being held in the south of the Guild. Vicky, who runs the practice told us some more...

Here are a few ideas behind it.

We have a very successful weekly evening ringing practice with a wide range of abilities, where I have been ringing for many years. When I retired from work I felt I had more time on my hands and wanted a bit more challenge. I joined the Wrinklies monthly ringing group and begin to enjoy ringing more. Several of us felt that as the Wrinklies covers a very wide area, we could start a new group as well as attending this practice, meeting once a month during the day in the same local church, where we could give ringers a chance to practise and consolidate their learning in a friendly and encouraging way. We started by inviting ringers who were ready to learn a simple method and others who wanted a bit more challenge. By giving ringers a chance to practise the same method as many times as they need until they are confident, and ensuring that there a plenty of more experienced ringers who can guide them, we have found that progress has been quite marked. There is no pressure to progress any faster than they want to. We always ask ringers for their feedback on the session and ask them what they would like to learn next. We work out a list of methods to concentrate on and everyone is given a reminder of these a few days beforehand to give them time to do a bit of homework first. After the ringing session all are invited to the local pub for coffee and a chat where they can give their feedback. We have a 'kitty' so that no one is put on the spot for paying for all the drinks which seems to work very well.

Maybe we can take inspiration and try a different approach to our practices and how we learn?



Recruitment & Retention - Teaching Materials

What tools do you use to inspire and plan your teaching?

Many of you will be familiar with **ART**, or maybe you prefer the **Sherbourne Teaching Aids**? Younger ringers in the scouts or guides might be keen to take **Bluebells Challenge**

<https://cccbr.org.uk/bluebells-challenge/>

Whether it is teaching new recruits how to handle a bell, or helping them to take the first steps in change ringing there are a lot of resources available to help. Visit the Central Council website for a whole host of ideas, advice and useful information .

Share what works for you, we all have something to learn.

Guild Quarter Peal Festival, 10th-25th August

This year the Events Team launched a Quarter Peal Festival, encouraging participating ringers to push themselves out of their comfort zones, as well as enabling learners and less-seasoned ringers to ring their first quarter peals, or try their hand at new skills.

We're pleased to report that some **46 quarter peals were scored**, and a few more we'll put down as a good practice.

We had **117 ringers** taking part, with 24 different conductors. There were many firsts, from first quarter peal to first surprise as conductor, with many others in between. Certificates were presented to those who achieved a significant first during the festival. These included a first quarter for **Elly Ingram, Paul Godber** and **Vicky Hurlow**. We had three new conductors: **Anne Newman, Len Hand** and **Susannah Peppiatt**, who called their first quarter peals. Six ringers rang their first quarter on an inside bell: **Gina Quan, Eddie Smith, Isabel D'Avanzo, Paul Ebery, Alan Simpson** and **Hannah West**. At the other end of the scale, **Lynn Scales** of Presteigne rang her thousandth tower bell quarter. Special congratulations to everyone who achieved a significant milestone in their ringing journey.

Thanks are due to everyone who took part in the event, especially those who organised quarter peals – whether successful or not, we hope the experience was positive!

Tower Open Day - 19th October 2024

There was a huge amount of rain in the week preceding our Tower Open Day, and sadly the weather took a toll on some of the villages and churches we were due to visit. However we were undaunted and are pleased to report that the day was a resounding success.

Nicky efficiently found us alternative towers at short notice after Yarkhill, Marden and Bodenham were all badly affected by the rain, with Marden and Bodenham suffering huge flooding within the churches once again. Our thanks go to Robert Hodges and Anne Newman who so kindly accommodated our last minute requests for the use of Tarrington and Hereford All Saints.

Thanks are also due to the volunteer stewards and tower captains who generously gave up their time to support the event. There were over 50 volunteers, not including those who provided very welcome refreshments throughout the day, we could not have done it without you! Special mention is due to Sue Newbould of Bodenham, and Ian Thornewell of Marden who both continued to volunteer on the day despite the problems back at their home towers, and Jenny Lawrence who acted as an additional 'Events Team' member for the day making sure the event ran without a hitch.

Visitors came from all over the country and they all seemed to enjoy the warm and friendly (if somewhat soggy) welcome they found in Herefordshire. It was also very rewarding to see that Ledbury District used the opportunity to take some of their learners on a 'mini-trip' to enjoy ringing and meeting with ringers from all over the Guild.

We are very pleased to announce that **we raised over £1100.00 for the Bell Restoration Fund** so a good day became a great day!

Many of our visitors eagerly asked when the next Tower Open Day would be, that is yet to be decided, but we hope to see more of you join in the fun on our next Grand Day Out.

The Events Team are Nicky Aubrey, Richard Bracher, Tim Hollinghurst and Fran Watkins

Forthcoming Events

We will soon be approaching our District AGMs and we hope that many of you will be able to attend not just your own, but neighbouring district's meetings as well to hear what is going on in the Guild and to share ideas and enthusiasm.

As well as the usual items on the agenda, the Guild officers hope to be able to attend as many meetings as possible to discuss the new membership renewal form with you, and to hear your thoughts and suggestions on what you think the Guild could do to encourage ringing in your area.

District	Date	Place
Leominster	02/11/2024	Tenbury Wells 3:30pm
Ross on Wye	23/11/2024	Llangarron 3:00pm
Clifford & Kington	07/12/2024	Almeley 2:30pm
Church Stretton	18/01/2025	Welshpool 2:30pm
Hereford	25/01/2025	Woolhope 3:00pm
Bridgnorth	01/02/2025	TBC
Ledbury	08/02/2025	TBC
Bromyard	TBC	TBC

Have you ever considered standing as a district or guild officer?

We'd love to welcome new faces and ideas, none of the roles are too onerous and almost all are for one year only.

If you would prefer to take just a small step, many districts would probably welcome volunteers in a posts such as 'assistant master' or 'district committee member' so that you can get a feel for what is involved before making a larger commitment.

Why not have a chat with your fellow ringers before your AGM and see if there is a role for you?

Central Council Representatives



We would like to send our full quota of four Central Council Representatives to future CCCBR meetings. We currently only have two Central Council Reps in post, and so **we need nominations for two more Central Council Representatives**, please send in nominations from your District AGMs for the next Guild AGM in 2025.

Membership Renewal Form 2025

All members renewing their membership for 2025 will be required to complete an online renewal for so that we will have one central, secure record of Guild membership, rather than a large number of officers



holding data in various forms throughout the Guild. The form is online so that the information can be stored on secure UK servers, but we understand that not all Guild members will have access to the internet and so help will be at hand to ensure that no-one is left struggling to provide their details. We aim to have the form on the Guild website as soon as possible ready for your renewals and we will have more information available at district AGMs.

A leaflet will shortly be available which we hope will answer many of the questions you have, but if you have any worries, or points of view that you would like to discuss with the Guild officers please do get in touch.

One of the aims of the renewal form will be to improve communication with **all guild members**, by having up to date information in one central place we will be able to ensure that we keep in touch with you as often as you like, how you like.

Please note subscriptions for 2025 should be paid to your District Treasurer in the usual manner.

Guild Insurance

At the Management Committee Meeting in October a review of the Guild insurance was held. Our existing policies for £2 million public liability and £10,000 personal accident cover had renewal premiums totalling **£1863.29**. An alternative quotation had been received from Ecclesiastical Insurance who offered £5 million public liability and £2,500 personal accident cover for a premium of **£229.62**. The Ecclesiastical quotation was accepted and the policy schedule will be published on the Guild website shortly. If you have any questions about the new insurance cover please contact the Guild Secretary guild_secretary@hdgb.org.

More News

We hope that most of you already know about the Guild website www.hdgb.org and follow us on social media such as Facebook, X and Instagram. Many districts and towers also regularly post on social media about what they are doing and the achievements they celebrate together.

Bellboard is another great website to visit, you can check out the calendar to see what events are happening all over the country.

If you have an event that you would like to publicise, then please tell peo@hdgb.org and webmaster@hdgb.org who will spread the word far and wide, there are ringers out there just waiting to hear from you!

We hope that you have found this Guild Newsletter useful and enjoyable, please let us know what you think, we'd really appreciate your feedback. You can tell your District Secretary, or email direct at news@hdgb.org

We've really appreciated receiving news stories from around the Guild, please send news for the next issue to news@hdgb.org