

NEWS FROM THE GUILD

A visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury

People from all over the diocese welcomed the Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally when she visited to help celebrate the 1350th anniversary of the foundation of the Diocese of Hereford during the weekend of 10th and 11th October.

We hope many of our members will have taken the opportunity to hear or meet with Archbishop Sarah Mullally. We'd like to offer our warmest congratulations to Ludlow ringer Angie Jones (who appeared



On Sunday, 11 October 2026

Much Marcle, Herefordshire

St Bartholomew

Tenor: 12-1-14 in F

General Ringing

- 1 Madeleine Johnson
- 2 Anne Newman
- 3 Hannah West
- 4 Robert Hodges
- 5 Rachel Coates
- 6 Steve Maddox

In celebration of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, to the village's 'Big Apple' cider festival.

in our last newsletter) who was confirmed during the special service at Ludlow.

Bishop Richard said in his weekly video message that he felt a sense of legitimate pride and joy in the work of so many of Hereford diocese, and Archbishop Sarah Mullally gave thanks for all those who are supporting churches in our area.

We're very pleased that our members were able to welcome Archbishop Sarah Mullally in our own particular way, with ringing taking place at both Ludlow and Much Marcle. Thank you to all those who took part.



St Laurence Ludlow Guild

On Saturday, 10 October 2026 in 48m

Ludlow, Shropshire

St Laurence

Tenor: 16-2-16 in E

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Graham Fletcher
- 2 Jan Greatrex
- 3 Denise Fletcher
- 4 Tony Greatrex
- 5 Alex Sharpe
- 6 Rosie Marshall
- 7 Richard Bracher (C)
- 8 Tim Hughes

For the Archbishop of Canterbury confirmation service. Where 40 people were confirmed including Angie one of St Laurence's Bellringers.

Tower Open Day

The HDGB Tower Open Day took place on 3rd October. It was a glorious autumn day in the beautiful countryside, we welcomed visiting ringers from as far afield as Norfolk, East Sussex, Bristol, Leicestershire, North Yorkshire and Cheshire as well as from across our Diocese.

Everyone enjoyed the HDGB hospitality with a warm and friendly welcome throughout the day. A huge 'Thank You' to everyone who volunteered to help with stewarding, and to the towers who allowed us to ring. We're delighted that the day raised £1016.10, leaving us with a profit of £991.10 after expenses.



Look out for the new The Ringing World website

At the Central Council weekend in Rugby we attended the AGM of The Ringing World. This was an interesting and informative meeting which gave an insight into the huge amount of work and effort that many people (both employees and volunteers) put into keeping The Ringing World and Bellboard at the centre of our ringing life.

The Editor, Will Bosworth, gave us a sneak preview of the new look Ringing World website which they are to launch shortly, it really did look like a comprehensive and exciting redesign, they hope it will allow them to continue to add and develop new features for ringers well into the future.

If you don't regularly visit <https://ringingworld.co.uk/> we recommend you do – see if you can be the first to spot the new design!

How safe are your Tower Funds?

We've recently been approached by a tower captain where a new PCC Treasurer was trying to absorb Tower Funds in a restricted account into the general church funds. We were very lucky to be able to refer them to our Tower Stewardship Advisor, and to seek advice from Steve Coleman who is a leading authority on ringers' money matters. Steve was very generous with his time and knowledge and has kindly agreed that we can reproduce a series of articles that originally appeared in The Ringing World.

We will reproduce one per newsletter (see the last page), please do take the time to read them, and to consider the state of your own Tower Funds – this is something to discuss at your Tower AGMs.

Recruitment at Much Wenlock

At the recent Management Committee Meeting Richard Rogers told us how Much Wenlock ringers make use of open days and events such as the Christmas Fayre and Heritage Open Days to attract people to the tower to find out more about bells. People are often keen to visit the splendid tower and the more people who know and understand what bellringing is about, the more likely it is that we will find people to learn to ring.

One of the recent learners is Jacob who achieved his ART Learning the Ropes Level 1 on 30th August, followed by a host of personal 'firsts' on 1st September.

A great achievement in just 4 months, well done Jacob. Fantastic to see another young ringer in the tower!



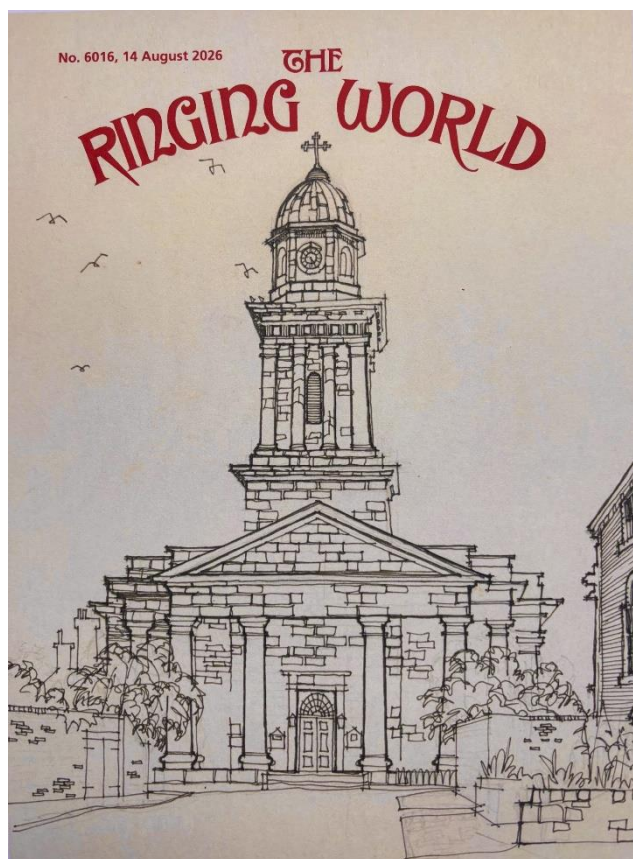
Please consider printing out a copy of this newsletter to put in your tower, or to share with ringers who don't receive emails

On the Ringing World Front Page

St Mary Magdelene, Bridgnorth featured on the front page of *The Ringing World* Issue 6016 on 14th August, together with an article about the history and recent refurbishment of the bells.

Well done to Alan Reade and Jon Hunt for sharing the information with the wider ringing community.

We feature a lot of outing reports in this edition of the Guild Newsletter, maybe next time you could consider arranging your day out (or ringing holiday) in the Bridgnorth area? With the railway and nearby Ironbridge/Coalbrookdale attractions there's every reason to visit!



Thanks as always to Will Bosworth, editor of *The Ringing World* for allowing us to reproduce from the magazine.

On the cover



The pen-and-ink sketch of the church of St Mary Magdelene, Bridgnorth, in Shropshire gracing this week's cover was made by **Alan Reade** in 1970, the year he was taught to ring the bells at nearby Claverley, where he has been tower captain for 40 years. Thanks to Alan and to Jon Hunt, Tower Captain at Bridgnorth, for the following information.

Bridgnorth castle was founded as one of a string of forts to oversee and guard a section of the Border Country in 1101 by Robert de Belleme, the son of the French Earl, Roger de Montgomery, who succeeded his father as Earl of Shrewsbury.

A church was founded in the grounds of the castle as a royal free chapel in 1238, although the College of Canons was dissolved in 1548, by which time the church had become the parish church.

In 1642, King Charles I described Bridgnorth and its castle as "*the finest in my domain*" and during the Civil War, Bridgnorth was a Royalist stronghold. In 1646 Cromwell's Roundheads arrived with orders to take Bridgnorth for the Parliamentarians. Following a three-week siege Cromwell was successful and he ordered that the castle be demolished. Before this a team of men had dug a 69ft long tunnel into Castle Hill to try and blow up the gunpowder stored inside the church, by then dedicated to St Mary Magdelene, but the Royalists surrendered.

By 1647 little of the castle structure was left intact, but parts of the great tower remained, the Roundheads leaving it leaning at an angle of 15 degrees, four times the lean of the leaning tower of Pisa.

The church somehow survived this turmoil. Five Abraham Rudhall bells were brought up the River Severn from Gloucester and installed around 1713. They were augmented to six with a bell from Thomas Rudhall in 1764.



The famous Scottish civil engineer Thomas Telford, as County Surveyor of Shropshire, was appointed in 1790 to design a new church in Bridgnorth to replace the original, by then dilapidated. He had a reputation based on his prediction, following an inspection, that the chancel of St Chad's in Shrewsbury would collapse. Although ridiculed by the church leaders, his prediction was fulfilled a few months later.

Built over the period 1792–1796 it is aligned north-south rather than the usual east-west, with a copper covered tower containing the six Rudhall bells. The bells were taken down, tuned, rehung and augmented by two bells in 1939 by John Taylor & Co to make the modern 8cwt ring of eight in G.

The band of bellringers had tumbled from a strong 12 in 2017 to a muted three by 2023 making recruitment and training of new ringers a priority. Many volunteers came forward but training and retaining ringers proved difficult.

To improve things, Taylors were asked in 2025 to inspect the installation. The bells had been rehung on plain bearings in 1939, and the lack of maintenance of them was the main concern. Fortunately, a small bequest had been left to the church by a parishioner which went some way towards the cost of replacing the

plain bearings with sealed roller ball bearings, greatly helping the 'go' of the bells for learners and simplifying maintenance procedures.

The small but enthusiastic band of eight people included two novice learners. Under the captaincy of Jon Hunt, the bells of St Mary's continue to ring out over this twelfth-century split-level riverside town, famous for its cliff railway and for being the northern terminus of the heritage Severn Valley Railway.

Visiting ringers are always welcome to support and secure the future of the church and its bells, and indirectly to ensure the availability of the heavier ring of eight bells at the now redundant St Leonard's Church close-by in the town.



News from the Central Council – International Ringing Census 16th-22nd November 2026

Helping shape the future of ringing

How many active bellringers are there today? How often do we ring? Who is joining the exercise? Where are we succeeding, and where do we need to do more? Surprisingly, we do not know the answers with any confidence.

The Ringing Census 2026 will provide the most comprehensive picture of bell ringing for nearly forty years. It is a key initiative supporting the ambitions of Ringing2030, helping us to understand the current state of our community and providing the evidence needed to support recruitment, retention, training and long-term planning. Rather than relying on estimates or anecdote, the census will give us a robust evidence base to help shape the future of ringing.

Building on previous surveys

The census builds on the valuable work of previous ringing surveys, including the landmark 1988 Ringing Survey and more recent pilot studies. Over the past few months, a small project team has reviewed what has worked well in the past and designed a modern, fully digital census that can be repeated in future years. By repeating the census at regular intervals, we will be able to measure changes in participation over time and understand the impact of initiatives such as Ringing2030.

How the census works

The census will take place during a single week, **from 16–22 November 2026**. Participants will be asked to complete a short online questionnaire describing their ringing activity during that week. The survey should take no more than around ten minutes to complete. Participation is entirely voluntary, but every response counts. The more people who take part, the more accurate and representative the picture of ringing will be. Whether you ring every week, only occasionally, or are just beginning your ringing journey, we hope you will take part.

How you can help

Delivering a successful census will depend on volunteers across the ringing community.

Census Enumerators

Enumerators will play an important role in helping us build an accurate picture of ringing across the country.

Each Enumerator will be allocated a small group of towers from our target sample and, after Census Week has ended, will:

- contact the Tower Captain or nominated tower contact
- encourage completion of the Tower Headcount Survey
- answer straightforward questions and provide practical support
- follow up where a return has not been received
- establish and record the status of towers unable to provide a return.

Our aim is for every tower in the target sample to be accounted for – whether it is active and completes the survey, has no active band, is currently inactive, or is unable to take part.

This follow-up is particularly important because it will help us understand non-response and produce a more reliable estimate of the total number of ringers and active towers. Most Enumerator activity will take place in the second half of November 2026, after Census Week. Full guidance, templates and an online briefing will be provided.

Interested in getting involved?

If you would like to support the Ringing Census 2026—as an Enumerator, data analyst, data protection adviser or in another capacity—we would be delighted to hear from you.

To find out more please visit <https://cccbr.org.uk/census/>



Young Ringers – Burghill Bell Club 2026: Our Biggest and Best Year Yet

Bell Club 2026 was a tremendous success, with more young ringers, more activities, and even more enthusiasm than ever before. Over three lively days, nine children took part—four returning members and five new recruits. For the first time, we welcomed two younger participants aged 6 and 8, supported throughout by their grandparents, who are long-standing members of our band.

The week began with name games to help everyone settle in before heading up the tower for a hands-on introduction to the bells. A trip to the roof—always a favourite—gave the group a chance to burn off some energy and enjoy the view. Their confidence climbing the ladders set a brilliant tone for the rest of the week.



Between sessions on handbells and tower bells, the children enjoyed a variety of activities, including **colouring, word searches, bookmark making, origami bells, making sallies**, and a tower-building challenge. Working in teams, they designed and built towers strong enough to hold a bell—an activity enjoyed by children and helpers alike.



With our youngest member absent on the final day, the group tackled more advanced tasks. They tried conducting the handbell team and rang rounds on tower bells. Four participants, not yet regular tower-bell ringers, managed both strokes with minimal support—an inspiring achievement.

After Bell Club each day, helpers took part in Plain Hunt/Bob Doubles practice. This gave Luke the chance to ring Plain Bob Doubles, and he quickly mastered a plain course.

Every child received a certificate and badge for both handbell and tower-bell ringing, thanks to HRGB's Crescendo Scheme, ART's Learning the Ropes, and

Sherbourne Teaching Aids. Goodie bags added a final celebratory touch.

Around 25 people contributed to making Bell Club 2026 such a success. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone involved. Plans are already underway to make next year even better.

What the children thought:

Evie: "I have had so much fun during Bell Club, I have done tower bells, Hand bells, crafts and making new friends. I was so nervous to come to Bell Club at first but after the first day I felt right at home. Before I came I had never used tower bells before or properly anyway. I enjoyed it so much, I learnt new things about the bell as well. I feel so much more confident now from the first time I pulled the rope. In



crafts, we made origami bells, bookmarks made out of wool and loads more. We also did handbells and I do have experience from them but I played different bells as well. It has been so much fun I really hope I can go again next year. It was an opportunity of a lifetime."

Matthew: "From church bells to hand bells to crafts I've done everything I was hoping for and more! I came to bell club without a clue on how to ring a church bell. I am confident and feel I know the basics on how to ring. In crafts we did so much! From bookmarks made out of wool to origami church bells and more. It was really fun. I have experience playing handbells but still learnt loads, I now know how to play on foam! I made loads of friends, everyone is friendly and makes you feel welcome. I think that Bell Club 2026 was amazing and definitely worth going to!"



Kris Perruzza

This is a brilliant scheme that I know ringers are drawing inspiration from all over the country – is it something your tower could consider? Fran

Help shape the future of the Guild

Following our member survey earlier this year, we are looking for volunteers to join a workgroup to help define the future direction of the Guild.

The survey highlighted that some of our current rules and structures can act as barriers to progress and may discourage members from getting involved. We want to fix this. The workgroup will develop concrete proposals and a timetable to bring these improvements to the next AGM.

Our goal is to move quickly and efficiently so that we can focus our energy on the Guild's core priorities.

If you would like to help, please email guild_secretary@hdgb.org by **November 1st, 2026**. Initial meetings will be held online for convenience.

RingFest 2026

What a brilliant day in Bishop's Castle for the Church Stretton District RingFest and Open Day!

Over 250 people came along to try out the church bells, hand bells and [Matthew Higby's](#) Peals on Wheels. The event made a big and positive impact on the town.

Congratulations to everyone whose hard work made this great day happen. Here's to next year!

Stoke St Milborough Ringers

RingFest 2026 Strikes the Right Note

St John the Baptist's Church, Bishop's Castle was the venue on 15th August for the newly introduced RingFest and Open Day.



Many ringers, from various towers were asked to display posters advertising the event, which gave attendees the opportunity to ring at a tower they may not already have rung at, or with people they have never rung with. It also offered the opportunity for non-ringers to have a go on both a portable mini ring and tower bells.

Over 250 people took the opportunity to come and look around the beautiful St John the Baptist's

Church, with many of them coming from the town itself to see 'what was happening'!

Local ringers came to ring with others from towers across Shropshire and Herefordshire, and those with less experience were encouraged to ring with more experienced ringers. This was itself a valuable opportunity. There were about 75 ringers in all. Those that were not ringers were encouraged to 'have a go' and as a result the tower (and some others around here) can expect to welcome new learners to the art of ringing.



There were other attractions for those that came – one being the opportunity to ring on the '*Peals on Wheels*' mini ring – a portable metal framed tower made by the acclaimed Matthew Higby. Although the bells in the mini ring are very light, they were a delight to ring and it was satisfying to see both adults and children ringing them. Within the church was a demonstration of handbell ringing, which again was open to everyone to try – and many did!

And then it was time for a cup of tea and piece of cake! The choices were wonderful - and slices large - and the team serving them very friendly and welcoming to the church.

I came with a friend from Meole Brace tower and we both want to extend our thanks for a wonderful day to Neil, Mark, Jenny and Ashley for the hard work, time and effort that they put into planning and executing the day. Special thanks to all the stewards whose collective enthusiasm and willingness to engage were key to the event's success. And also many thanks to Martin, Helen, the refreshments team, the church and PCC at Bishop's Castle for their support. I for one think it was a great success and I look forward to next year's event.

I would also like to mention - and thank - the team that took on the task of introducing newbies to the art of bellringing. Encouraging people to the ropes was (relatively) easy but at that point it was necessary to hand over these complete novices to the experts.



I hope these photos demonstrate the helpfulness, friendliness and enjoyment of the day.

Jackie Morris



Management Committee Meeting

The Management Committee Meeting took place on 10th October and the draft minutes can be found on the website at <https://hdgb.org/management-committee-meetings/>

From the meeting there are several initiatives

- Workgroup to review rules & roles (Blue advert page 6)
- Launch of a Pilot Tower Support Fund (Green advert page 9)

We hope you will support these projects &/or let us know what you think

Rise & Shine in Knighton

On 23rd July a quarter peal of **1260 Gunner Webber Bob Triples** was rung at Knighton with the following footnote:

Gunner Webber Bob Triples is rung for the first time on the day of the dedication of a memorial bench to Gunner Willie Webber and his wife Gladys; residents of Knighton at the time of their marriage at St Edward's in December 1917. Gunner Webber died in a tragic accident on 2 October 1918 while serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery in France. He is not named on the Knighton War Memorial so the bench is a fitting tribute in recognition of his service and Gladys's connection to Knighton.

Gunner Webber Bob Triples: 347.1.7.3.127.3.7.3.7.123.7.1.347 le127 (1362475)

The BBC produce a series called Rise and Shine on BBC Breakfast and they are creating a show for Remembrance Sunday, They got in touch with the ringers telling them that the story of Gnr Webber and how the Knighton community embraced his memory is something they would like to include in the show, so the ringers reassembled for a repeat performance for filming. We hope that many of you will watch the show and that the programme highlights the special place that ringing has in our communities.

"Get a Grant for Your Tower!"

Need help with tower maintenance? 🔔

Following agreement at the Management Committee Meeting, we are excited to launch the **Tower Support Fund as a pilot scheme**. This is a new initiative designed to help towers with essential repairs to keep bells ringing safely and reliably.

The Essentials:

- **Grant Amount:** Up to 50% of project costs (maximum £250).
- **What's covered:** Ringing fittings (stays, sliders, pulleys), safety-critical maintenance, and work that restores "ringability."
- **What's not covered:** Major structural building work (masonry, roofs, spires).

How it works: Applications are scored by a panel based on urgency, impact on ringing, and the tower's activity level. Because this is a pilot, we have designed the process to be quick and efficient.

Ready to apply?

1. Complete the application form (email contact@hdgb.org to request the form).
2. Attach your quotes or receipts.
3. Send it off!

Not sure if your project qualifies? Contact the Guild Belfries Officer or Guild Secretary for a quick chat before you apply.

Safeguarding

We have printed Safeguarding Contact Information sheets, and a copy of the Code of Ringing available for display in towers, please email contact@hdgb.org or ask your District Secretary if you would like copies. We should aim to have up-to-date local safeguarding contacts displayed in every tower.

Remember - if you have immediate safeguarding concerns in your parish environment you should contact your Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@hereford.anglican.org , or contact safeguarding@hdgb.org for advice in non-urgent circumstances.

Church Stretton District Outing

The Church Stretton District Outing 2026 was held on 12th September. Fourteen of us met at **St Mary's church, Ellesmere** for the start of a day in which we aimed to visit five churches around North Shropshire and North Wales, with a well anticipated lunch thrown in.

St Mary's, a beautiful Grade 1 listed building has a ring of 8 bells which were accessed by a set of very steep stairs, but the climb was worth it. All of the bells date from the 18th century, with the oldest three bells cast by Abraham Rudhall II in 1727. Although relatively heavy to ring, they had a very melodious 'warm' sound to them. A spacious ringing room meant that we could easily sit and observe those who were ringing. Interestingly in the middle of the circle was a large, cream-coloured animal hide – cow we think – which you might notice in the group photo below.



A short drive took us next to **St Martin of Tours church, St Martin's**. This delightful little church with a ring of 6 bells had a smaller ringing room which comfortably accommodated the now 18-strong band. The bells there were lighter than St Mary's but with a sound that was just as pleasing, and ringing was easier as a result. The ringing room had a window 'wall' with a view through to the nave and the altar. A small Juliet-style window ledge also gave a beautiful view out over the surrounding graveyard and beyond. What I did find very interesting was a working Ellacombe chiming apparatus, complete with mini-sallies. Richard explained how the apparatus was connected to chiming hammers so that a single person could chime rounds, changes or even tunes on the bells when they were down. By this time everyone was ready for lunch and some very welcome refreshment at The Keys pub at St Martin's. The food was delicious and very filling.



Ellacombe chiming apparatus with mini sallies at St Martin's

Then on to **St Mary's church, Chirk** where last year the bells had been rehung and augmented to a ring of 8. This was the lightest of our 5 towers at just over 7cwt and a good opportunity around the front to practice on very light bells. The more experienced rang very well struck Grandsire Triples and also Plain Bob Triples, whilst I practiced Plain Hunt on 5. The bells of Chirk proved to be a delight to ring.

The penultimate tower was **St John the Baptist church, Whittington** just a short distance from Whittington Castle. Access to the ringing room was by an easy to ascend metal spiral staircase. The 6 bells were easy

to control and the resulting ringing had a beautiful soft tone. Taking a moment away from ringing, it was nice to get the opportunity to look around the church itself. Obviously a well-loved and equally well-used church, its charm was underscored by beautiful, and colourful, leaded windows and the extremely pretty organ with intricate wood-carvings and decorated organ pipes.

And so we reached our final tower at **St Oswald King and Martyr church, Oswestry**. I have been into the body of the church a number of times but never up the bell tower. What a lovely tower it is too! The tenor was outstanding as there was a large box for the tenor ringer to ring from. Watching the band and practicing my rope sight soon gave way to the other items of interest around the tower. There was clear evidence from the peal boards that many peals had been rung here. The earliest I found was from 1731 of a '*Whole Peale of Tripples*' and the latest from 2017.

Those in need of refreshment retired to The Oak Inn across the road to recall the events of the day and compare notes on the towers and bells.

A massive thank you to Jenny Ferguson for organising this outing to some excellent rings of bells. Not only did I enjoy the day immensely but I learnt a lot too.

Jackie Morris



Notices

REVISED DATE OF BRF AGM

Apologies, but we need to postpone the HDGB Bell Restoration Fund AGM.

The BRF AGM will now be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 25th November 2026 in The Art Room, Leominster Community Centre, School Road, Leominster, HR6 8NJ.

As a reminder, the membership of the BRF comprises all current Ringing Members, Honorary Ringing Members and Freeman of the Guild, together with one representative from each affiliated church's Parochial Church Council. Members are entitled to attend, speak and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

More about the Bell Restoration Fund and its work can be found here: https://hdgb.org/?page_id=710

Kind regards,

Ginette Pardoe, Hon. Secretary, BRF

gstapp@gmail.com 07872 95691

Stedman Practice

On 10 October, we held a well-attended Stedman Triples practice at Kingsland, with more than 20 ringers taking part. The experienced band allowed us to get straight into ringing touches, and we hope everyone found the practice enjoyable and useful.

We've heard from members who couldn't attend or weren't yet at the required level but would welcome similar targeted practices. There's a clear appetite for more opportunities like this—and a need for volunteers to help organise them at Guild and District level. You don't need to know everything yourself; a willingness to organise and bring people together is what matters. Could you help?

BRF Sponsored Walk - A Sponsored Walk took place on 24 September 2026 supporting the Hereford Diocesan Guild of Bellringers Bell Restoration Fund

Some walked 13 miles, some rang in the four towers of Bodenham, Marden, Burghill and Wellington, some supported from the side lines, some organised, some gave sponsorship and most importantly some baked flapjacks.

So, what made this day so very special?

Was it the stunning Herefordshire countryside?

Certainly, it was both beautiful and varied, including lakes full of wildlife, fields full of lively cows, hills with views to die for and shady woodland.

Was it the weather?

We were blessed with the warmest and brightest day in late September. A perfect day for a walk.

Was it the challenge?

13 miles and 4 towers certainly were a challenge. Few of us regularly walked this distance or rang in 4 different and new towers in a day, let alone both. But somehow the combination worked really well. After a relatively short walk of 3 or 4 miles, we started to hear the distant sound of Marden bells being rung up and then the glimpse of the steeple grew larger, drawing us in with every step. Before we knew it, we were crawling through a hobbit-like entrance, up a spiral staircase and crying the familiar "Look to, treble's going she's gone". Any anxiety changing to confidence and then eagerness to get to the next tower, and next experience. All thanks to the welcome, excellent organisation and support ringers and helpers at each tower. Oh and how could I not mention the incredible chocolate flapjacks? We could overcome any challenge after one bite.

Was it the ringing?

There was ringing for all levels from rounds and calls, to Grandsire Doubles to a Quarter of Cambridge Surprise Minor and on a variety of bells, including on the heaviest ring of 6 bells in Herefordshire at Wellington. For many it was hearing the bells, calling to us as we approached towers and saying "goodbye, please come again" as we left. Is there any sound better than well struck Grandsire Triples fading away as you walk towards the end of such a delightful journey?

Was it the sponsorship?

We were overwhelmed by the amount of sponsorship from both ringers and those who have not yet rung. (never say non-ringer) All sharing a love of the sound of bells and desire to keep them ringing across Herefordshire.

But what made it so special was the combination of all these things cemented by a camaraderie, a sense of mutual support, new friendships, and a common goal to (as one T shirt put it) "Keep Calm and Carry on Bell Ringing".

Cathy Fuller

And a final word from Sue Hack....

My personal thanks to Cathy for summing up a wonderful and inspiring day. My thanks too. on behalf of the Trustees of to the BRF. to all who contributed and to all the sponsors, so many YOU the Members of the Guild. Your generosity shows how much we all care about our bells. We are still receiving donations but the total raised, including the eligible gift aid, is expected to exceed £3,000. A final figure will be announced when all donations have been received.

This is a fantastic achievement – THANK YOU.



Fownhope Bellringers' Tower Outing

It was felt that the student ringers at Fownhope needed to stretch their wings and find out just how different and challenging bells can be in other towers. So their Tower Captain, Caroline Priestley, organised a day's outing for them together with some seasoned ringers to support. On the morning of Saturday 10th October we set out to 5 local churches starting at St. George's, Woolhope. The challenge here was an anti-clockwise ring or ringing backwards as some would say! The four students had no problem with this – and promised they'd be back to help with Sunday service ringing when required! The second tower was at Tarrington, also a ground floor ring but clockwise as most towers are but heavier than the bells at Fownhope. Again, no problems encountered by our learners here - rounds and call changes were well struck and a pleasure to listen to!



Then on to Mordiford - only 5 bells here, ground floor and clockwise again but quite loud. The students all circled the tower, ringing a different bell each time they rang to feel the change in weight. All good experience!

Lunch at the Moon after this was a most welcome break before we ventured on to the fourth tower at Weston Beggard. Once again only 5 bells here but on plain bearings which meant they didn't turn as easily and proved quite a challenge – for the experienced ringers as well as the less experienced! They were also very loud and no one was able to shout above the sound to call some changes. We rang a few rounds, agreed that they were not very nice to ring and moved swiftly on to the last tower of the day at Yarkhill. St John the Baptist Church at Yarkhill has a very light ring of 8 bells but we chose to ring on the (slightly heavier) back 6 bells only. The students had all been warned not to pull too hard and heeding the advice, managed the challenge of these very light bells very well indeed.

A great day out for everyone and an excellent experience for the students to ring such a variety of bells. Well done students! Thank you to those who supported during the day and to Caroline for organising it all. We look forward to the next outing and more challenges!

Nominations invited for Most Improved Ringing Room

The Bell Restoration Fund are currently looking for nominations for the George Cousins Cup.

George Thomas Cousins was a valued member of HDGB who died in 1987. He was instrumental in the formation of the Hereford Ringing Course in 1963 with Wilfrid Moreton and Austin Wingate, and the BRF in 1976.

George donated a cup so that it can be awarded by the BRF each year for the most improved ringing room in the Hereford Diocese.

Improvements could include any measures that have made ringing rooms more comfortable and inviting, such as redecoration, better lighting, heating or seating, or better organisation of the space.

Previous winners have included Broseley and Ledbury.

If you know of a tower that deserves recognition, please contact Ginette via gstapp@gmail.com.

Tower Talk – Burghill Hub

We hope you all get the opportunity to read **Tower Talk**, the newsletter published by Association of Ringing Teachers. In their Issue Number 36 – August 2026 Edition they published an article celebrating the formation of the new ART Teaching Hub/

How did that Happen? We're a Teaching Hub!

Kris Perruzza, Burghill Teaching Hub Lead

Step 1

Organising a day course

When I decided to organise an ART M1 course, I never imagined it would lead to the formation of the Burghill Teaching Hub. We'd already had some success in recruiting and retaining a new cohort of ringers at Burghill quite organically, some of whom stood out as future ringing teachers.



We had five willing participants; so, to reach the numbers required to run the course, we invited local towers to put ringers forward to attend the course. In speaking with these towers, we discovered that they, too, were having success in recruiting but needed additional support in teaching.

We quickly filled the course with local ringers, many of whom were acting Tower Captains of the towers that now form the Burghill Teaching Hub: Burghill, Bodenham, Fownhope, Marden and Wellington. The course took place on Saturday 31 August 2024. Our tutors were Frank Seabright and Paul Lewis. Everyone got on really well, was engaged, and the day was a great success.

There were nine teachers in total, and experience levels were almost split evenly. Three of the teachers had been actively teaching bell ringing and were confident; two had been teaching reluctantly and lacked confidence, and the final four had never taught before.

I asked quite a few questions for Frank and Paul about how the after-course processes, when we get accredited and what to expect. It was obvious to me that the success of the course depends on fostering good relationships and creating a supportive environment to ensure we complete the process.

Step 2

Starting to teach

We created a WhatsApp group, and after the day course, arranged a session for the teachers to practise the techniques they were taught on each other. This proved to be a really good idea as it meant the teachers could ask questions, have a go, make mistakes and work through them in a safe and supportive environment. It also allowed the mentors to get to know their mentees.



This was the start of what turned into monthly practices. These sessions included new ringers and supported both them and their teachers. The teachers found it helpful to be supported through the stages of teaching they needed help with, and to ask for advice and guidance. The new ringers enjoyed sharing the experience with each other, building friendships and having sessions tailored to their needs.

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Step 3

Stand-alone foundation skills practices

As the new ringers started to achieve their LTR Level 1, it soon became clear that trying to fit the LTR Level 2 curriculum into a busy regular practice night with established ringers wouldn't work. I arranged a Level 2 practice, focusing on the LTR Level 2 curriculum, working on kaleidoscope ringing, bell handling techniques with those learners and the teachers.

We all enjoyed them, and that group has now been meeting twice a month for almost a year. Several of our ringers have achieved their LTR Level 2 as a result of these sessions, and we always focus on bell handling, striking and foundation skills.

We have just introduced a monthly LTR Level 1 session for our next cohort of ringers, and they are enjoying it.



Step 4

Formation of the Burghill Teaching Hub

Before we started this journey, each tower struggled to get a band for Sunday service ringing. Now, we ring all the bells for most services. It is a testament to the hard work of every teacher and their commitment to promoting excellence in teaching bellringing.



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Outing to Avon Ropes

A Tale of Old Ropes

When two bell ropes at Woolhope broke in quick succession during practices earlier this year and the remaining four ropes were found to be suspect, it was time for urgent action! On good advice, we decided to invest in new Polyester tops (each about 60 ft long) to be spliced onto the existing tail ends. The ropes were taken off the wheels, measured, quotes obtained and dates agreed with Avon Ropes near Bristol for the work to be carried out.



After Evensong service at the end of June the bells at Woolhope became silent so that all 6 ropes could be taken to Avon Ropes for repair. Then a mere two weeks later we were advised the work had been done

and they were ready for collection! What better excuse could there be for the bellringers to make this into a day's outing – ringing at two towers on the way down to Avon Ropes, firstly at Upper Cam and then at Wotton under Edge followed by lunch at Chipping Sodbury.



When we arrived at Avon Ropes, we were invited to have a look at the rope making process – what a treat! The expected 15 minute guided talk extended to 2 hours with lots of questions and explanations while the staff demonstrated the different stages of making bell ropes. A very enjoyable and enlightening day for all of us!

Thanks to Phil and Steph for their help in taking down the ropes, delivering them to Avon Ropes and subsequently putting the ropes back on the wheels. Also to Nick for driving the mini bus. To Phil at Avon Ropes for giving us the opportunity to see how ropes are made and finally to Sylvia for her generous donation which made it all possible!

Barbara Fox

LEDBURY DISTRICT BELLRINGERS DAY OUT – AUGUST 2026

On a warm and sunny Saturday morning in August, a group of 15 enthusiastic bellringers from Ledbury District set out (with sat navs !!) to drive around the countryside west of Hereford and sample the delights of ringing bells at 5 different churches. The weather was perfect as the recent high temperatures had dropped to a more manageable level. The country roads were clear (apart from the potholes) and the views spectacular.

The first stop was Madley, followed by Dorstone and then Clifford. At lunchtime we stopped at a pub by the river Wye for much needed refreshments and food and some discussion about the 3 places we had rung at. After lunch we moved on to Bredwardine and the final stop was at Burghill.

The bellringing at each tower catered for everybody in the group, from those learning call changes to the very experienced ringers with many years (and methods) under their belts. Ringing bells you are unfamiliar with can be daunting so having an opportunity to try different bells with a group of people you know is a worthwhile experience.

Thanks to the meticulous planning and organisation beforehand, the day ran smoothly, nobody was lost along the way and everybody was served with the correct meal at lunchtime – always a winner !!

We are very grateful to the people who were on hand at each location to give us access to the bell towers, answer any questions and offer us refreshments.

In the words of Lou Reed - (with a bit of artistic licence)

Oh it's such a perfect day
I'm glad I spent it with you (& you, & you)
Oh such a perfect day
You just keep me hanging on (to that bell rope)
You just keep me hanging on.....



Hilary Friso

RECRUITMENT & TEACHING

ART Training Sessions

Earlier in the year we part-sponsored some of our members to attend an Association of Ringing Teachers Training Module 1 event, with the offer of all the fees being refunded to the individual if they succeed in becoming ART registered teachers.

We need to continue to invest our time, money and enthusiasm in encouraging as many people as possible to feel competent and comfortable in training the next cohort of ringers, and we're pleased that some members have approached us to ask if we are able to help arrange another course.

The Association of Ringing Teachers offers courses for teaching of Bell handling, Foundation Skills and Early method ringing, you can find more details at

<https://bellringing.org/about-teaching/teaching-modules/>

If you are interested and would like to take part in a course, or if you think your tower could host a course, please email contact@hdgb.org so that we can gauge interest.

**UNLOCK NEW SKILLS
with ART COURSES**



Developing Ringer Expertise at All Levels: Training Opportunities at St Milburga's, Stoke St Milborough

The Church of St Milburga in Stoke St Milborough has established itself as a vibrant teaching centre within the Church Stretton District. Housing a fine ring of eight bells cast by Matthew Higby and Emanuele Allanconi, the tower offers an inclusive, highly supportive environment where bell ringers of every ability—from total novices taking their first steps to seasoned method ringers with decades of experience—can develop and refine their craft. We are not affiliated to any particular body in regard to our teaching approach, so we are able to maintain a flexibility of approach which meets the needs and desires of each particular ringer. We believe that everyone has their own individual learning style and that, therefore, the learner should be free to tell us what does or does not work for them. We will then adapt our teaching approach and focus on helping the learner to achieve their goals. In essence, our philosophy is that everyone has their own personal target with their ringing and it does not matter which route they take in order to get there.



We have an open door policy at Stoke St Milborough in regard to who can come to ring with us, i.e. anyone and everyone! We place no expectations upon ringers in regard to attendance or availability for service ringing, as we believe that everyone should be free to ring when they wish to without ever feeling they are under any kind of obligation. Some of our ringers come every week, whilst others just drop in on occasion. Either way, we will always welcome anyone who comes along and we encourage you as an individual to get involved in the ways and at the times that work for you.

A Pathway for Every Level of Ringer

At Stoke St Milborough, training is structured to ensure that ringers receive focused instruction tailored to their individual goals. The weekly schedule offers distinct sessions aimed at specific skill levels.

We hope that some of you will be able to take advantage of the training on offer at Stoke St Milborough, and we are very thankful for the ringers who are working hard to provide training and ringing opportunities, as well as supporting the Guild at events whenever possible. Please do find out more by visiting the website at <https://www.stmilburga.co.uk/practices--training.html>

CCCBR Teaching & Recruitment Resources –

Did you miss the Sound Start talk? Want to know what was covered? Find the briefing recording, slides and summary on the Recruitment Network tab (blue right hand 'button' on the website) here:

[Ringing 2030 Recruitment and Development – CCCBR](#)

Dates for your Diary

- 25th November – **BRF AGM**
- 5th December – Clifford & Kington AGM at Presteigne
- 16th January – Church Stretton AGM at Leintwardine
- 30th January – Hereford AGM Ewyas Harold
- 6th February – Bridgnorth AGM
- 6th February – Ledbury AGM
- To be confirmed – Leominster District AGM
- To be confirmed – Ross District AGM
- To be confirmed – Bromyard AGM



Energy & Enthusiasm at Kington

We're delighted to see the continued development of the band at Kington who are growing from strength to strength.

Many of you may have seen the band appear in your local newspaper (Shropshire Star/Mid Wales Journal & others) with a report of their successful funding application for tower improvements from Kington Town Council.

The band are innovative and fearless it seems – they are taking the opportunities available to them, attending events, learning by visiting other towers and making friends wherever they go.

If more of us did the same we could make a real difference...

NOTICES

👶 We are delighted to announce the birth of a son to Abi Pugh of Leominster and her partner, a first grandchild for Mark & Rhiannon, welcome to the world Rowan.

🥂 And, in more good news – Jessica Pugh married Craig Homewood on 15th August – many congratulations and our best wishes for your life together.

Getting to know.... Mark Aston

Mark is the Guild Treasurer, and kindly agreed to answer 10 questions to tell us more about himself and his ringing...

1. How long have you been a bellringer?

I started learning to ring when I moved to Leominster in 1997, aged 28, so I've been ringing for nearly 30 years.

2. Where did you learn to ring?

My first lesson was at Leominster Priory, which became my home tower. I was fortunate that there were plenty of opportunities to ring around the district at the time, so I also regularly visited Dilwyn, Staunton-on-Arrow and Eye.

3. Who taught you to ring?

I was very lucky to live just across the road from Mark Pugh, who first took me along to Leominster and gave me the first of many, many lessons. However, Tony Fuller and John Charles also deserve considerable credit for putting up with me during those early days!

4. What made you decide to learn to ring?

I'd always wanted to learn. My parents and grandparents were all bellringers at St Gluvias in Cornwall, and whenever we visited, I would occasionally be allowed to "have a go". When I moved to Leominster in 1996, Mark Pugh happened to live across the road and invited me along. With my family background, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to do. I've been ringing ever since, apart from a few years away when work, family and life generally got in the way.

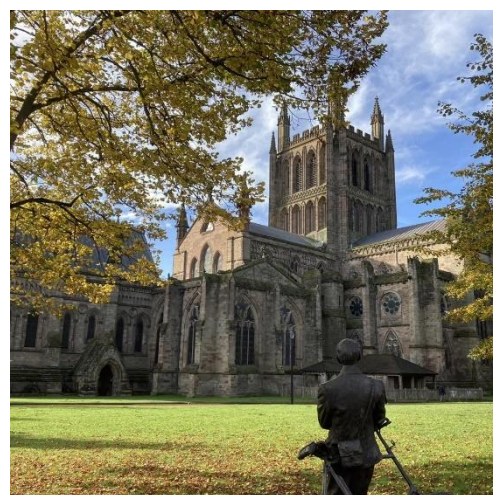
5. What are your favourite bells?

That's a very difficult question! I've been incredibly fortunate to ring at so many wonderful towers over the years, including some memorable opportunities during my travels around the world. Highlights include St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, the Old Post Office in Washington DC and, closer to home, ringing on 16 at St Martin's in Birmingham. I'll always have a soft spot for Leominster, being my first tower, but if I had to choose just one, it would have to be Hereford Cathedral.

For me, it's the combination of the sound of the bells and the extraordinary sense of history that comes with ringing such a historic set. There's something very special about being part of that continuing tradition.

6. Do you enjoy ringing quarter peals?

I really enjoy a quarter peal, although I haven't rung as many as I'd have liked recently. For me, they're just about the perfect length: long enough to provide a proper challenge, but not so long that they become a chore! I'll never forget ringing a quarter peal of Bob Doubles when something finally clicked. I suddenly understood, or perhaps could actually visualise, how the position in which I passed the treble told me what work I needed to do next. It was one of those wonderful moments when method ringing suddenly started to make sense!



7. Do you enjoy ringing peals?

No, I hate them... until they're over!

To me, ringing a peal is rather like running a marathon. Somewhere along the way, you start questioning your life choices, wondering why on earth you agreed to do it and swearing you'll never put yourself through it again. Then it's over, you've had a well-earned pint, seen the performance appear on BellBoard and, before you know it, you're planning the next one!

8. Have you undertaken any tower maintenance?

Over the years, I've helped with maintenance at quite a few towers, and I'm certainly not afraid of getting my hands dirty. However, my fear of heights, and ladders in particular, has occasionally limited just how close I've been prepared to get to the bells! I attended an excellent bell maintenance course with Ashley Fortey at Wellington and subsequently helped him replace a Hastings stay at Stoke Prior. It was a valuable experience, although I discovered that even something apparently straightforward can become surprisingly complicated!

9. Do you enjoy a ringing day out?

Absolutely! Ringing outings are one of my favourite things. Exploring somewhere new, visiting different churches, ringing unfamiliar bells and discovering a few new pubs along the way. What's not to like?

I also think ringing at different towers, on bells of different weights and characteristics, is one of the best ways to improve your bell handling. I'd encourage any learner who can confidently ring rounds to get out and visit other towers whenever they have the opportunity. It's a great way to build confidence, develop your skills and meet other ringers.

10. Why do you think bellringing is important?

I don't think the importance of bellringing can be underestimated. The sound of church bells on a Sunday morning, ringing out for national celebrations, or even the familiar sound of a weekly practice night has been part of British life for hundreds of years.

As ringers, we're the custodians of that sound and tradition, and I think we have a responsibility to keep it alive for future generations.

Even after nearly 30 years of ringing, I'm still surprised by the reactions I get when people discover I'm a bellringer. So many have stories to tell about the bells they remember hearing, what those sounds mean to them and how much they enjoy hearing them. There are, of course, always a few exceptions!

It reminds me that what we do reaches far beyond the ringing chamber.

That's why I think it's so important that we welcome learners and visitors, encourage people to have a go and spread the word about ringing. We also need to dispel some of the myths surrounding it. You don't need to be particularly strong, and no, you won't be pulled up through the roof if you forget to let go of the rope!

Bellringing is a remarkable tradition, and it's up to us to make sure it continues to thrive.



Please consider printing out a copy of this newsletter to put in your tower, or to share with ringers who don't receive emails.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue, the next newsletter will be out in January 2027, so please send any news or articles to contact@hdgb.org before the New Year.

Ringling and Money
by
Steve Coleman

Tower Funds in 2023

Our tower fund is currently in an account with a particular high street bank, but they're now charging us to keep it there and opening another account isn't proving easy. Can you help, or should we just transfer it to the PCC and have done with it?

T.F.
Yorkshire

Three separate issues here.

1. Should you have a tower fund at all?
2. Where should you keep it if you've got one?
3. And what's the best way to transfer a tower fund to the PCC if you decide to?

This time we're looking at Issue 1.

The technicalities

And certainly, I recognise that the very suggestion of transferring a tower fund to the PCC gets some ringers very upset. "I'm not having the church getting its hands on our money," they say, and I understand where they're coming from. But let's at least look at the advantages and disadvantages.

So the legal position is that any group of people can get together and form an *unincorporated association*. They can do it with a mass of written rules or they can do it without any written rules at all. They can even do it in such a low key way that they don't realise they *have* formed an unincorporated association.

In times past the classic unincorporated association of this last sort was the workplace tea club. Someone collected a fixed sum from everyone each week and then bought supplies of tea, milk and sugar. Any money left over was kept in cash in a tin, and when it got too much, everyone had a free week or shared in a tray of cream cakes. A large teapot bought years before, was the tea club's only asset.

A tower fund is an unincorporated association in the same way, and the members of that association are the people who are, for the time being, the local ringers. Nowadays when so many ringers ring for services and practices in several towers, it's not always easy to say who the local ringers are, but that rarely causes a problem.

The need

And the reason why it rarely causes a problem is that most tower funds don't benefit the ringers at all. A few funds pay the Association subscriptions, and a few funds subsidise an annual meal or outing, but most just buy ropes and pay belfry maintenance expenses. Indeed, some tower funds don't spend any money at all but just grow gradually larger on the assumption that a full restoration will take place sometime.

So if you've got a tower fund yourself, ask yourself why. And if your reply is, "Because we've always had one; it's traditional," that might need more thought. Certainly, some tower funds are indeed so traditional that they date back to Victorian times when the ringers' twopenny and fourpenny fines went towards an annual dinner, rather like a Christmas savings club. Some even supported band members when ill.

That was great at the time and it's certainly a splendid tradition, but subsidising band members doesn't make a lot of sense now. Association

subscriptions are little enough, and most people can afford a meal out once a year. If the band know that one or more of their members are in financial difficulties, they can subsidise them there and then.

Besides, those tower funds that pay subsidies are often financed by a minority of the band putting most of the money in while everyone takes money out. And that's an arrangement that can lead to hurt feelings and even band break-ups.

Paying for maintenance

Of course, most tower funds don't go back very far at all. Sometimes, they were instigated by a former vicar or church treasurer who wanted ringers' donations kept out of the church accounts in order to reduce the *Quota* – the sum then paid to the Diocese and calculated on the basis of the church's income. It was improper then and it's irrelevant now but no one thinks to change it.

More likely, you have a tower fund because you feel it's the band's responsibility to pay for ropes and maintenance, and you probably do all the work too. That's great, and many PCCs are very happy with the arrangement, but as we'll see next time, it can be very poor value financially. And worse, as we'll see later too, the fund can easily disappear completely.

Then again, you may have a tower fund because you believe you couldn't trust the PCC to buy ropes and organise maintenance if you didn't do it yourselves. You may even worry that if you gave the PCC the money they'd spend it on something else entirely.

Restricted funds

The law, though, would not allow the PCC to do that. Any money given to a charity for a particular purpose can only be spent on that purpose, and spending it on any other purpose would be unlawful. So since PCCs are charities, donations for the upkeep of the bells – whether given by band members, visiting ringers or anyone else – can *only* be used on the bells.

That money must be itemised separately in the church's annual accounts too. It must appear as a *restricted fund* and any interest earned must be added to it, as must any related Gift Aid reclaim. So by keeping your own records of what you've given specifically for the upkeep of the bells – and then scrutinising the PCC accounts every year – you can ensure that the fund isn't being spent inappropriately.

Having your cake

What you can't do is have your cake and eat it. You can't have an account that's under the sole control of the ringers but is also a restricted fund in the PCC accounts. That's a legal nonsense. An account can only be part of the PCC accounts if the PCC has ultimate control over it.

Of course, the PCC can delegate limited and temporary authority over their restricted bell fund account to named ringers, but the PCC must be able to withdraw that authority at any time.

Trust

But notwithstanding the legal position, could the PCC try to spend a restricted fund inappropriately anyway?

Well, they could. Not normally, of course, and not often because most people are trustworthy and genuinely want to do the right thing. The great bulk of church treasurers and churchwardens – all volunteers and often *reluctant* volunteers too – do their very best to keep their church afloat in very

challenging circumstances. The last thing they want to do is act improperly, so friendly cooperation and a watchful eye for unintentional mistakes are normally all that's needed.

But sadly, a few people *aren't* trustworthy, and I've certainly helped bands where the PCC *hasn't* acted properly, normally when they've been led astray by one or two forceful and opinionated individuals. For that matter I've even helped PCCs when there's been outright embezzlement. But in the great majority of cases, PCCs only act incorrectly by mistake, so if the ringers and the PCC are on good terms, there isn't a problem.

When there's a problem

But supposing you find out that the PCC *has* used the restricted bell fund for other purposes or it intends to, what should you do?

First, *don't get angry*. Instead, talk quietly and calmly to the church treasurer, churchwardens and/or incumbent – and keep a detailed note of each conversation just in case it might be helpful later. Most likely they'll realise they've made a mistake and put things right.

If they refuse and insist they can do whatever they like, contact the Archdeacon. Write a clear, polite and calm letter setting out the position carefully. He/she will almost certainly instruct the PCC to act properly. In the extremely unlikely event that he/she doesn't, consult the Charity Commission.

Visiting band donations

And when you're thinking about all this, don't forget that a good bit of of your tower fund might not belong to the ringers anyway. Donations given by visiting bands most certainly belong to the church and not the ringers, and depending on the arrangements, some other contributions might belong to the PCC too. So if you put all those into your tower fund and then used them for the ringers' benefit, that wouldn't be lawful.

Wasting money

But more important than the legal niceties is that using your tower fund for bell maintenance wastes a great chunk of the money in it. And how it does that, we'll be looking at next time.

Steve is happy to answer all Ringing and Money questions individually and entirely confidentially. His email is steve@ringingbooks.co.uk

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