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## Newsletter - October 2024

The GCR Committee wish all our members a restful, yet productive, autumn season. This newsletter covers the Guild's recent ringing excursion to Birmingham; a foretaste of the Low Week Tour 2025 and an early numbers request; some reporting on the Central Council of Church Bellringers Annual Meeting in September at Exeter (attended by your President as the Guild's Council representative); and a few other things in passing!

## Brum Brum – The Clerical Guild and Friends let loose in Birmingham – October 2024



Around the beginning of October some fourteen of us met for three days to ring at towers in and around Birmingham – parts of the West Midlands that some of us had only ever before viewed on maps: Wood Green, Darlaston, Willenhall, Rowley Regis, Edgbaston, Moseley, Harborne, Smethwick, Netherton-Dudley, Halesowen and Brierley Hill.... Mostly, the rings were 8s with a couple of 10s with one 6. Altogether, we did fairly well with some reasonable surprise major, a lot of Stedman and Grandsire Triples, and on the 10s Grandsire, Stedman Caters and Little Bob – with one plain course of Bob Royal. That is a very speedy summary of our ringing! Once again we enjoyed, as we do, looking around some most interesting urban churches, quite a few of Victorian origins with sprawling graveyards. It was a happy social outing with pleasant lunches and two Indian Restaurant visits during our two evenings together. A highlight for the more courageous among us was joining the practice night at St Martin's in the Bullring (below) where ringing on the 16 was an upbeat experience – along with Stedman Cinqes and for at least one of our number, Bristol Max..

The photo above shows lunch at the 'Village Moseley' after having eaten and drunk. For our one full day of ringing we had the services of a large minibus. Most helpful. On the other hand when reliant on our 'own' transport and with some of us

coming from more rural places, journeying between towers was a bit of nightmare when finding them and parking in the midst of traffic congestion. What did we do before Sat Nav and Dove Bells church postcodes....?

Grateful thanks to Tony Ellis, the Guild's immediate Past President, for sorting out and obtaining the towers for us and making all the arrangements regarding travel and accommodation. It was very good to see for a part of the time Fr John Greatbatch joining us (member since 1990) and also Clive Thrower from Bakewell (member since 2003).



# The Low Week Tour 2025 – Monday 28th April to Friday 2nd May

Please get the dates of the LWT 2025 into your diaries now: to repeat **Monday 28th April to Friday 2nd May.**

The plan is to visit the area around Lichfield, Burton on Trent and Ashby de la Zouch over the week. Some rural and urban places to visit and several very good rings. We do hope that by arranging a week's ringing in the Midlands (so to speak) it will prove attractive to a wider audience from all parts of the country. As usual we will endeavour to find suitable accommodation so that we are all near each other... enjoying the social as well as the ringing and worship aspects of the week. And for a high proportion of our number, good beer as well. Again, as usual, ringing will cater for all levels of experience and ability. The key aspect of this week is that we share fellowship and laughter and wherever possible non-ringing families and partners, etc will be most welcome.

We are very grateful to Tony Ellis and David Everett for undertaking the arrangements for the week and further details will be published early in the New Year. However, it would be most helpful now if you could give an indication of strong interest and even commitment to attending for a part or the whole week. This will help Tony especially in arranging accommodation – and whether you are looking for a double, single or shared rooms. **Can you let Tony know please as soon as possible please and by the beginning of November, if possible?**

**Email: [a.ellis7@btinternet.com](mailto:a.ellis7@btinternet.com)**



The Church in the photo is St James, Barton Under Needwood a village your President knows well. The peal of 8 there is presently being recast, refurbished and augmented to a ten by Taylors. All will be in place when we visit there on the tour.

## **Prayers at the commencement of the 127 Annual Council Meeting of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR): Exeter, 7th August 2024**



**The prayers beneath were given by your Guild President at the commencement of the CCCBR Annual Council Meeting in Exeter on 7th September 2024:**

The prayers which I offer on behalf of us all fall into three short petitions:

*Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we ask your blessing upon this 127th Annual meeting of the Council, its stewards, trustees and executive, and all representative members of the Council's affiliated societies serving in both territorial and non-territorial guilds and associations. Help us all to work together for the furtherance and advancement of our art, and in the service of your church. We give thanks for all those who have been willing and able to prosper the tasks befalling the Council's Workgroups directed towards a sustainable future for the ringing exercise. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.*

*O God our Father, we give you thanks for our fellowship within the ringing exercise and for the rich inheritance in which we are privileged to share. We pray for ringers everywhere. We ask your blessing upon all who hold positions of leadership and responsibility for ringing worldwide. Amen.*

*And finally, we ask that your peace and approval be with us this day; give us your light to guide us and your love to unite us in true fellowship; provide us with a determination which is steadfast in decision; and enable us together to preserve and progress in our art using to the full the gifts you have given each of us. May we ring*

*out the false and ring in the true, such that the gospel of Christ may be faithfully proclaimed, and the art of ringing remain a fitting instrument for your service. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Outcomes of the CCCBR Meeting

Should Guild members be interested, the following web links provide between them full reports and outcomes of the CCCBR Annual Council Meeting 2024:

[Annual Meeting 2024](#)

[Central Council AGM in URLs](#)

Beneath further down is a small piece (in italics) from the draft Council minutes in which the CCCBR President set out the 'three pillars' forward plans for the Central Council 2025. Also included is the Central Council's Motion B to increase affiliation fees: viz. the Central Council's proposal to increase the affiliation fee for territorial and non-territorial societies/guilds/associations, to £1 per member by 2026, in order to secure successful outcomes for the 'pillars' outlined beneath.

The pillars constitute a component of Ringing 2030: a CCCBR major project to create a sustainable future for change ringing, reversing negative trends and building on many positive initiatives.

Your Guild of Clerical Ringers President did not oppose Motion B but indicated that as a non-territorial guild we do not request or raise annually a membership subscription (or on joining) and neither do we have presently the infrastructure for doing so. Further, with an aging membership on the whole and limited funds, the eventual increase to £1 per member (approximately 100 members currently) could in the final event add significantly to our financial pressures in subsequent years. My comments are recorded briefly in the [draft minutes](#).

The Central Council appeared to recognise that our plight is not dissimilar to the University Societies who also do not raise a subscription, and that further consideration would be given by the Council to this matter. We watch keenly this space....

## **Central Council of Church Bell Ringers: Forward Plan for 2025 and Motion B**

*Tina Stoecklin, CCCBR President, introduced the forward plans for 2025, based on the published information regarding the 3 Pillars.*

*For 2025, the plans included:*

*Pillar 1: Bring bell ringing to more events, a targeted marketing campaign and to rollout school lesson plans.*

*Pillar 2: Targeted recruitment campaigns, launch the marketing and recruitment portal, grow the young ringers' hub, plan one more regional course and bite-size leadership and diversity training.*

*Pillar 3: Bite sized technical knowledge, changing churches, central overhead provision, financial conference and professional engagement.*

*Note: Alison Hodge (Worcester and District) felt that the plans presented needed much more detail. She felt that the Workgroups lacked resources and volunteers.*

*Financial update for 2024 and outline General Fund budget for 2025*

*There were several questions:*

*a. Nick Elks (Peterborough DG) Will there be any further spending on YellowYoYo: see <https://yellowyoyo.co.uk/projects/bellringing/>, and have we had value for money? The President confirmed that there is no further spending. The spending was in three phases, on research, developing branding and collateral, and the deliverables (including logos, banners, etc) and the website design for the recruitment portal. The President considered the spending excellent value for money.*

*Motions – the most significant being:*

### **Motion (B)**

*Paul Wootton (Bath & Wells Association) proposed, and Ian Roulstone (Society of Royal*

*Cumberland Youths) seconded:*

*1. Change Standing Order F1.1 to: The Annual Subscription for each Affiliated*



*Society shall be £0.40 per member of that Society based on its Society Membership.*

*This change to come into force on 1st January 2025.*

*2. Change Standing Order F1.1 to: The Annual Subscription for each Affiliated Society shall be £1.00 per member of that Society based on its Society Membership.*

*This change to come into force on 1st January 2026.*

*3. The Executive are requested to create a new Standing Order aimed at ensuring visibility in the statement of accounts of the Council for the year ended 31st December previous, required at the ACM by Rule 6.1 b) (2), of how the Council has performed as a charity.*

*4. The Executive are requested to create a new Standing Order aimed at ensuring visibility in the Executive's forward plan and budget for the next year, required at the ACM by Rule 6.1 b) (3), of how sustainable the finances of Council are, and how it plans to use funds to further its objects.*

*After considerable floor discussion, the President put Motion (B) to the vote:*

*For the motion: 87 Against: 26 Abstentions: 5 The motion was carried.*

*Mary Bone (Essex Association) urged the Executive to supply more information, especially when it came to changes to Standing Orders, and would like to see affiliated societies treated equally.*

*The President added it would be beneficial to have help with financial planning and asked for experienced and informed volunteers to contact her.*

*Paul Wootton (Bath and Wells) added that assistance with project planning should be considered.*

## **Changes in Churches**

On the final day for the Exeter Central Council gathering Simon Linford (former CCCBR President) gave an informed researched presentation on church closures over the longer period – which could see 12/13% of churches with full circle ringing closing, being sold off, given over the trusts, etc. with the potential loss of access for ringing. The consequence is that some significant and valuable peals could be lost to the nation. I attach his presentation with a link which you may find of interest - click the button below.

## Changes in Churches

It would be of interest to know your knowledge of churches relatively local to yourselves that could be under threat of closure or some other threat resulting in the loss of full circle ringing. Please do write and let me know. Tony Ellis is undertaking some work in this connection in his own Diocese. The criteria for churches under threat that Simon lists are sensible measures for consideration.

## And just a few other matters...

The Guild/Ringing World publication **The Voice of the Church** continues to sell well. The initial print run in 2023 was about 1000 copies of which considerably well over half have now been sold to assist RW funds. In fact, copies on sale at the Exeter CCCBR Council meeting ran out. Do get a copy if you still do not have one from RW publications: very helpful indeed to convince non-ringing church leaders of the importance of their bells and ringers, etc.

### Buy The Voice of the Church

The Central Council Library Collection was moved from Worthen to the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust (LBT) at the beginning of August 2024 and will be open to visitors from the beginning of October 2024. Details can be found online.

However, there is material from the collection available online and the following link is worth a look.

### About the CC Library Collection



## **Bell Sunday 2025**

And a reminder about the date set for Bell Sunday in 2025...a reminder to those Church leaders near you with bells and ringers that something might be organised well in advance to celebrate the contributions that your ringers make to the Voice of the Church....

The date is: **Easter 5, 18th May 2025.**

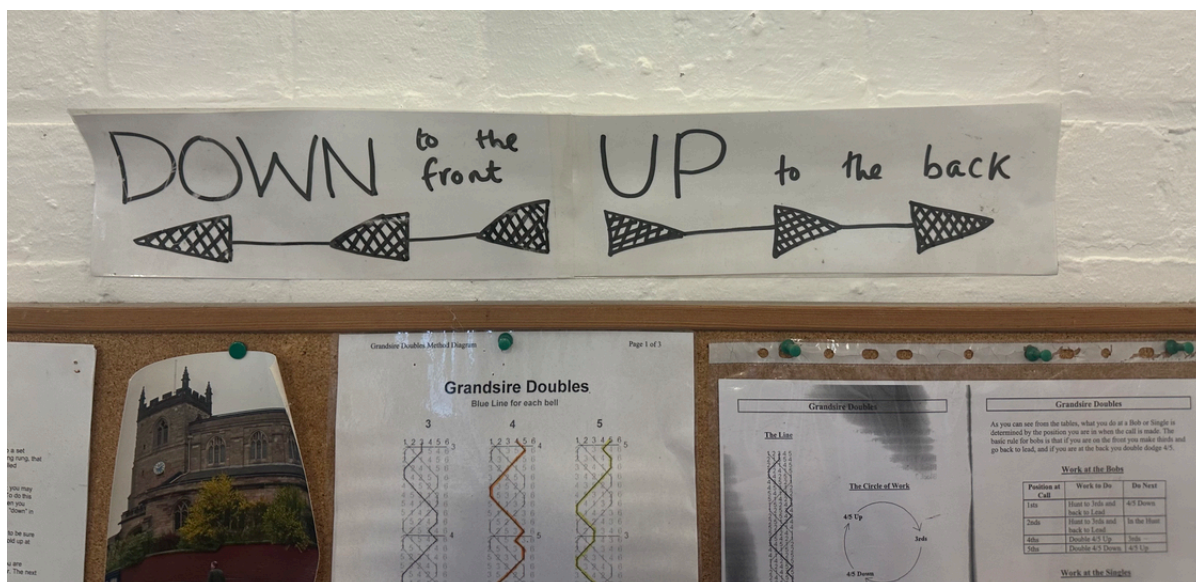
## **And Finally...**

And finally, again to remind that if you have ringing clergy near you who are not yet members of the Guild of Clerical Ringers, please capture, urge and cajole them into membership. The more the merrier....usual stuff. Tim Hawkings is the contact for

this – see beneath at end.

All best wishes and God bless in all,  
Jon

Jonathan Rose, President, The Guild of Clerical Ringers



## Guild of Clerical Ringers Committee

**President** The Revd Jonathan Rose  
01395 512094/07969 008091 [revjonrose@gmail.com](mailto:revjonrose@gmail.com)

**Vice-President** The Revd Max Drinkwater  
07989 779493 [mlddrinkwater@cantab.net](mailto:mlddrinkwater@cantab.net)

**Ringing Master** The Revd Dale Barton 01274 297419  
[dale.barton720@gmail.com](mailto:dale.barton720@gmail.com)

**Secretary** The Revd Timothy Hawkings  
01225 684908 [revhawkings@googlemail.com](mailto:revhawkings@googlemail.com)

**Other Committee Member**  
The Revd James Mercer 07713 236709 [jamesjmercer@mac.com](mailto:jamesjmercer@mac.com)



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