

CHAPTER 1: BEFORE THE GUILD

1. Early days - 1880 to 1914.

The first all-clerical peal, Stedman Triples conducted by the Rev. F.E. Robinson, the most prominent clerical ringer of his generation, was rung on October 2nd, 1884 on the bells of his church of St Peter's Drayton, Oxfordshire. It was a remarkable fact that so many able clerical ringers could be assembled at this time, because, although some outstanding ringers over the years had been clergymen, such as the Reverend Professor Dr Samuel Lee in the early nineteenth century, the majority of clergy seem to have had little involvement with ringing. Clearly as the century progressed more clergy took up the art. After the Oxford University Society was founded in 1872 several clergymen who had been at Oxford joined the Society, and several of the earliest undergraduate members were ordinands. In 1882, on the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the OUS, its first peal was rung at Drayton. The Rev F E Robinson conducted Stedman and the Rev A du B Hill was in it. Other ringers were F A H du Boulay, G F Coleridge, and J F Hastings, all of whom were subsequently ordained.



FRANCIS EDWARD ROBINSON - born 1833, ordained 1868, died 1910

Vicar of Drayton, Berks, 1878 - 1908, Diocesan Inspector of Schools, 1872 -1902, JP Berkshire 1864 - 1892.

He learned to ring at Finedon, Northants, and when an undergraduate at Oxford rang for chapel services at Magdalen and New College. He learned change ringing at Appleton. He rang his first peal there on Oct. 13th 1859 - Grandsire Triples. In all he rang about 1,250 peals of which he conducted over half. He was the first person to ring 1,000 peals, and the first clergyman to conduct a peal on his own bells. His notable achievements included 10,080 Double Norwich, 12,041 Stedman Caters, 13,265 Stedman Caters, and 15,041 Stedman Caters in 9 hours 16 minutes (G F Coleridge was also in this).

He used to chew raisins during peals and expertly separated out the pips and spat them out against the opposite wall! It might be thought that spending so much time travelling about and ringing he neglected his parish, but the Church Times said that few parishes were more thoroughly worked than his. He was an expert carver of wood, taught his sons Latin and Greek, and at the age of 60 learned Hebrew and read the OT through several times in the original.

Two and a half years after this first OUS peal eight clergy members of the Society assembled at Drayton, and this was the occasion of the first clerical peal, rung jointly for the OUS and the Oxford Diocesan Guild. Indeed later that day they went for a second peal.

Holt's Original was attempted, conducted by the Rev C D P Davies, but a rope broke after half an hour, and the peal was lost.

Although the records of F E Robinson show that he rang with many other clergy, it was to be twenty-four years before another all-clerical peal was scored. The only attempt we know involving F E R of was when the Central Council meeting was held in Exeter in 1907. Robinson and nine other clergymen went for a peal on the 10 at St Sidwell's on May 22nd. Stedman Caters was attempted, but it was lost after 22 courses.

When two clerical peals were rung the following year on September 8th 1908 F E Robinson was unable to be in them for two reasons. The first was because that summer he had suffered a heart attack, and he had to resign his living. He accepted the verdict that he could attempt no more peals (he died in 1910). The second reason was that the peal when it was rung was for the *Cambridge University Guild*, which by this time was providing the exercise with a new generation of outstanding clerical ringers.

There was one other Oxford man who rose to great prominence during this period, the Rev C D P Davies, who was in the first clerical peal, and also figured in the spate of peals which ended following the outbreak of World War 1.



The Rev Charles Douglas Percy Davies, 1855 - 1931

C D P Davies rang a total of 84 peals, mostly before World War 1. Apart from being in the first clerical peal he conducted the Stedman Caters at Warwick and rang two more in 1910 and 1914, and also stood in the attempt made in 1911 at High Wycombe for a clerical peal of Stedman Cinques. His outstanding achievement in practical ringing was a 13,054 of Stedman Caters at Cheltenham.

He was Master of the Gloucester & Bristol Association in both its 25th and Jubilee years, and was Secretary of the Central Council for twenty years from 1901.

He did much work on composition in odd-bell methods and contributed a lengthy appendix on composition and allied matters to the book on Grandsire in the Snowden series. He opposed strongly the categorisation as irregular of methods with other than Plain Bob lead-heads. At the 1916 Central Council meeting he spoke for 1 hour 13 minutes on the subject, and subsequently published at his own expense a 24-page pamphlet on this matter.

Like so many clergy of his generation he had wide interests. He became a fellow of the British Astronomical Society at the age of 33, and served later as its President. J S Pritchett described him as "one of the most unselfish and benevolent men I have ever known".

Other notable Oxford ringing clerics were The Revs H A Cockey, Master of the Gloucester & Bristol Association, and F J O Helmore, Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral from 1883 until

his death in 1938. J F Hastings succeeded his father as Rector of Martley in 1907, and retired in 1944. He was the only one who might have joined the Clerical Guild, but did not in fact do so.

The Ringing World for September 3rd 1999 carried an item from the Archives - the Bell News of September 2nd 1899 - describing the formation of a "New Clerical Guild" of change ringers, in Leicester on August 21st. Nine clergy were at the inaugural meeting; the Master was the Rev H Drake of St Mark's, and the Rev A J Meakin was the Secretary. The Bell News editorial greeted this item with rather faint praise, and nothing is known about this Guild. It and its members do not seem to have been within the mainstream of those who were most active in ringing at this period.

Therefore our attention switches now to Cambridge. The University Guild there was formed later than the Society at Oxford. It was founded in February 1879, and in May the Rev AHF Boughey, a Fellow of Trinity and Vicar of Great St Mary's Church, consented to become its President. He was still President when he died in 1936 at the age of 86. He personally taught generations of young men to ring, and many of these were ordained and retained their active association with the CUG.

A CUG peal of Stedman Triples in 1906 would have been the second clerical peal but for the fact that HST Richardson, who conducted it, was not yet ordained! He was a deacon by 1908 and duly conducted the second and third clerical peals, which were rung on September 8th 1908. This was in the course of a ringing tour of the Cambridge University Guild. Two days later nine clergy with one layman rang a peal on 10 - Bob Royal. Another clerical peal was rung for the CUG the following year at Drayton. H Law James conducted Double Norwich, and this was the only clerical tower bell peal in which AHF Boughey took part.

But the next year, 1910, is the first one in which CC Cox describes a *Clerical* Ringing Tour as having taken place. Prior to that the clergy had been present - possibly even forming a majority - at a ringing tour including laymen. Two peals were rung, both of Stedman, and the great achievement was the first of the two - Stedman Caters rung at St Mary's Warwick, the first clerical peal on ten bells. This was the first time that clerical ringers were drawn from the two ancient universities and also from Durham. The two peals rung were for the College Youths and the Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association. It is not clear at this distance how long the clergy were together, whether there were other peal attempts, or whether other ringing was included in the programme.


ISAUS DEO!
 ANGLICAN SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS
 OF LONDON.

On Tuesday, Oct. 11th, 1910.
 Was rung in this Tower, in 5 hours, 32 Min.
A PEAL OF
Stedman Caters
 3067 CHANGES.
 Being the First Peal on Ten Bells, by
TEN PRIESTS OF THE CHURCH.

Rev. G. F. COLERIDGE, M.A. OXON. <i>Vicar of Craythorne, Berks.</i>	TREBLE
Rev. J. F. HASTINGS, M.A. OXON. <i>Rectory, Marley, Wore.</i>	2
Rev. H. S. RICHARDSON, M.A. Cantab. <i>Principal of Bishop's Hostel, Bishop Auckland.</i>	3
Rev. C. CAREW COX, B.A. Dulelm. <i>Assistant Priest of Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon.</i>	4
Rev. E. V. COX, B.A. OXON. <i>Assistant Priest of St. Etheldra, Tamworth.</i>	5
Rev. F. J. O. HELMORE, M.A. OXON. <i>Provost of Canterbury Cathedral.</i>	6
Rev. C. D. P. DAVIES, M.A. OXON. <i>Rectory of Frotherne, Glos.</i>	7
Rev. H. LAW JAMES, M.A. Cantab. <i>Vicar of Sarrilod, Lines.</i>	8
Rev. C. W. O. JENKYN, M.A. Cantab. <i>Chaplain of Queen Anne's School, Caversham.</i>	9
Rev. H. A. COCKEY, M.A. OXON. <i>Vicar of Oldland, Glos.</i>	TENOR

Alan Williams, W.A. John Gibbitts, *Boothswoles*
Ticor. John G. Mellor,



FIG. 83.—CLERICAL PEAL, WARWICK, OCTOBER 11, 1910.
 H. S. T. Richardson, E. V. Cox, J. F. Hastings, C. W. O. Jenkyn, C. C. Cox, H. A. Cockley,
 H. L. James, G. F. Coleridge, C. D. P. Davies, F. J. O. Helmore.

This peal was rung at St Mary's Warwick. It, and the Stedman Triples rung the following day at Mickleton, mark the beginning of the coalescence of the different strains of clerical ringing which would lead to the formation of the Clerical Guild 27 years later. The Ringers were from: Oxford University: 1,2,5,6,7,10; Cambridge University: 3,7,8; and Durham University: 4. Even so, some of the most prominent Cambridge ringing clergy were not in this peal at all.

Although they did not form a majority in the 10-bell peal, nor even in the abortive 12-bell attempt at High Wycombe the following year, there is no disputing that the Cambridge clergy were the outstanding group in these years before 1914. The CUG had rung its first peal on handbells in 1890, and handbell ringing always loomed large in its subsequent ringing. The Revs AHF Boughey, E Bankes James, HST Richardson, H Law James and BH Tyrwhitt-Drake rang a peal of Grandsire Caters in hand on August 7th 1912, and the following day the first four rang a peal of Double Norwich. Of the James brothers, H Law was probably the better ringer, and E Bankes the more important composer and theoretician, but they both made an outstanding contribution to the exercise over a period of over 30 years. They were notable for the acerbity of their exchanges in and out of the belfry, but were vehement defenders of one another if other people criticised one to the other! HST Richardson was also a very able conductor, and he greatly developed the technique of continually transposing coursing orders as a means of keeping peals right. It was no coincidence that after his ordination the second clerical peal was rung where he was curate, at Darlington! Other notable ringers from the CUG at this time were HJ Elsee, CA Clements, and CWO Jenkyn. The latter conducted the final pre-war clerical peal, of Stedman Triples, at Lydney in 1914, and was in five of the other successful peals. He died in 1933. He had been Librarian to the Central Council since the inception of the position, and was succeeded in the post by BH Tyrwhitt-Drake, another one of the notable early clerical

CUG ringers, who was tragically killed in an accident in his rectory garden at Walsoken, Norfolk, in 1936.

There is little doubt that if anyone had taken steps towards actually forming a Guild of Clerical ringers in these years preceding the First World War, the resulting Guild, if all the available clergy had joined it, would have included a substantial proportion of the most able ringers in the country, and would have comprised a formidable group indeed. However the war years intervened, and there is no evidence that this outstanding group of clergy had the energy or the inclination in the immediate post-war years to take up where they had left off in 1914.

2. The Nineteen thirties.



Towards the end of what proved to be the inter-war years informal gatherings of clergy for ringing tours began again, and *The Ringing World* carried accounts of these events from 1935 onwards. On May 31st 1935 it refers to a Clerical Ringing Tour as having taken place. An account from a local paper claims that this was the first such tour for 24 years, but the list of Clerical Tours in Canon Cox's writing records the Wantage tour of 1935 immediately after that at Frampton-on-Severn in 1914. Since he was involved in both, we may assume that this is a definitive list, and so the paper should have said 21 years. In the course of this week yet another clerical peal was rung, Grandsire Triples at East Hagbourne, conducted by the (then) Rev C Carew Cox (calling Holt's Original). This is the only clerical peal known between the Stedman Triples at Lydney in 1914 and the formation of the Guild of Clerical Ringers. There was a gathering in Herefordshire the following year, 1936. The *Ringing World* report starts: "This year's clerical ringing week was held with headquarters at Hereford....." In 1937

The Ringing World gives a report of the CLERICAL RINGING WEEK centred on Evesham, and this is described as "what has become an annual 'institution'" - meeting in Low Week. Are three years running long enough to constitute an 'institution' for Anglicans? They must, because we have no record of any other such gatherings and tours!

EV Cox appended a note to the arrangements for 1937: "It is considered essential for the good name of our 'Weeks' that only good striking should be allowed, and that it should be realised by us all that we are not on tour for the purpose of just holding united practices". It has to be assumed that the standard of clerical ringing did not approach that of the golden years before the outbreak of the Great War, but the clergy were ready by 1937 to move on from an informal arrangement to something more permanent. On the Thursday evening that year, April 8th, the clergy, under the chairmanship of the Rev EV Cox, decided to form a Guild of clergy who are change ringers. Canon GF Coleridge was invited to become the first President, and other officers were elected. All those present at the meeting joined the newly-formed Guild to be known as "The Guild of Clerical Ringers". Accordingly, when they next met in Low Week 1938, the Guild was in being. A set of rules and constitution was drawn up, and the first Annual Meeting of the Guild was held.

Although there is no formal continuity between the earlier clerical ringing activities and the movement that led to the formation of the Guild, certain individuals link the two. Canon GF Coleridge, a recent President of the Central Council, and one of the best known and most distinguished ringing clerics then alive, was invited to become the President of the new Guild, although he had not been present at the recent ringing weeks. He had however been a member of the band which rang the very first clerical peal in 1884, 53 years before, and furthermore he had rung in the Rev FE Robinson's 1000th peal. He also rang in three of the clerical peals before the war, including the first clerical peal on 10 at St Mary's Warwick on October 11th, 1910. CC Cox, EV Cox and HST Richardson were also in that, and they were part of the group that started meeting again in the 1930s. H Law James, who had been among the earlier clergy ringers, had died in 1932. His brother E Bankes James, who rang in the first clerical peal of Superlative Surprise, and the two handbell peals in 1912, took part in the pre-Guild tours, and was elected Vice-President when the Guild was formed. HST Richardson rang in seven of the earlier peals, and took part in the tours of 1935 and 1936, but sadly he died in January 1938, between the decision to form the Guild in 1937 and its implementation in April 1938. So when the Guild came into being there were among the first members those whose memories encompassed both the active years of 1908 to 1914, and even the very first clerical peal in 1884.

CHAPTER 2. THE GUILD IS FORMED

The third Clerical Ringing tour organised by EV Cox was held at Evesham in 1937. Those who remembered those early days always spoke of the efficiency of his organising, the precision of his arrangements, and of his determination to see his timetable adhered to. This lies behind a passage in one of the delightful and witty accounts of these tours written by Gilbert Thurlow. He describes the arrival at Croome D'Abitot. "The key, which ought to have been in the font, or under the harmonium, or somewhere, had to be fetched some distance. After a long delay, which EV stood with amazing patience, we eventually got up to the bells, which hadn't been rung for two years. However EV's castor oil worked wonders, and the bells were soon going." The party in 1937 consisted of the Revs EG Benson, C Carew Cox, EV Cox, F LI Edwards, E Bankes James, FHS Marle, BF Sheppard, AGG Thurlow, WMK Warren, C Elliot Wigg, and RF Wilkinson. Only one peal attempt was included, at Hinton-in-the-Green, but this was unsuccessful. The cost at the Hampton House Hotel, Evesham, was 10/6 per day for dinner, bed and breakfast (younger readers might wish to render this as 52½p per night, or £2.10p for the 4 nights!). Prices of lunches, teas, and tips were extra.

On the Thursday evening of Low Week, after ringing at Evesham Bell Tower, EV Cox presided at a meeting of the company, joined now by HG Benson, to decide on the venue for the following year. They agreed upon Hertfordshire, and that a peal should be attempted **each** morning; this reverted to the practice followed in 1935 and 1936, even though only one of the several attempts had been successful. Then on the proposition of the Rev E Bankes James it was unanimously decided to form a Guild for clergy who are change ringers. It was to be known as "The Guild of Clerical Ringers", and Canon GF Coleridge was to become its first president. The Rev EV Cox was appointed Hon Secretary & Treasurer, and he, together with the Revs E Bankes James and C Carew Cox were asked to draw up rules of constitution. The life membership fee was fixed at 5/- (25p - but in those days post cards cost only 1d to send, and letters 1½d, [1p=2.4d] so the Secretary could send members 40 letters before their subscription was used up!). All those present joined the newly formed Guild.

So in 1938 the clergy gathered at St Albans, staying in the White Hart Hotel, Holywell Hill (at the same rates as the previous year). There was a bit of coming and going; two of those who originally accepted, The Revs R Copeman and E Bankes James (who was ill), did not come, and BF Sheppard was unable to stay until the Thursday evening, April 28th when the AGM was held. However 15 were present at the meeting, Canon Coleridge, now aged 80, took the chair. The other members present were JHB Andrews, EG Benson, HG Benson, C Carew Cox, EV Cox (Secretary), F LI Edwards, RD StG Edwards, FSH Marle, ES Powell, AGG Thurlow, WHR Trehwella, MWK Warren, C Elliott Wigg, and RF Wilkinson.

The Rules of Constitution were duly presented, discussed, and adopted, and the most significant fact to emerge was that 34 life subscriptions had been received, and these five shillingses formed the great bulk of the receipts which had totalled £8.11s.2d. The next year's tour was fixed for Devonshire.

As to the ringing tour itself, we do not have an account from the Ringing World. By the time of the AGM no peals had been scored, but the following day the first for the Guild was achieved, Bob Major at St Mary's Knebworth, conducted by CC Cox; he and his cousin EV were survivors of the glory days from 1910 to 1914, and E S Powell, though not in that group of

ringers, was another senior figure in the exercise. The remainder had all been ordained after the Great War. The following year in Devon another peal of Bob Major was rung at Wolborough, conducted by the Rev ES Powell. This time there was another veteran, WP Wright, though he was never a member of the distinguished group that included the Coxes.

MEMBERS OF THE GUILD OF CLERICAL RINGERS.	
Rev. J. F. Amies.	Ravenstone Vicarage, Olney, Bucks.
Rev. J. H. B. Andrews.	16. Clarendon Place, Leeds. 2.
Rev. E. G. Benson.	Burghill Vicarage, Hereford.
Rev. H. Benson.	Quinton Vicarage, Stratford-on-Avon.
Rev. Frank Bonner.	Thorpe House, Woodbourne Rd, New Mills, Stockport.
Rev. Canon G. F. Coleridge.	The Vicarage, Crowthorne, Berks.
Rev. W. J. Conybeare.	The Residence, Southwell, Notts. <i>Provost.</i>
Rev. R. Copeman.	The End House, Owlstone Rd. Cambridge.
Rev. C. Carew Cox.	The Vicarage, Lyme Regis, Dorset.
Rev. E. V. Cox.	The Rectory, Tedburn St Mary, Exeter.
Rev. F. L. Edwards.	Kington Magna Rectory, Gillingham, Dorset.
Rev. R. D. St G. Edwards.	Checkendon Rectory, Reading.
Rev. R. P. Farrow.	East Lulworth Vicarage, Wareham, Dorset.
Rev. Noel E. Hope.	Chedworth Vicarage, Cheltenham.
Rev. A. Rhys-James.	The Rectory, Bow, North Devon.
Rev. E. Bankes James.	Seafield Park, Fareham, Hants.
Rev. Canon B. Long.	Whitchurch Rectory, Reading.
Rev. F. H. S. Marle.	Deane Rectory, Basingstoke.
Rev. Canon C. C. Marshall.	St Chad's Vicarage, Leeds. 6.
Rev. R. H. Palmer.	The Rectory, Preston Capes, Rugby.
Rev. C. A. Phillips.	35. Dean Park Road, Bournemouth.
Rev. J. P. Polloe.	St Cuthbert's Clergy House, Philbeach Gardens, London. S. W. 5.
Rev. E. S. Powell.	Staverton Vicarage, Daventry.
Rev. I. J. Richards.	16. Broad Walk, Caerleon, Mon.
Rev. A. S. Roberts.	38. Walmer Terrace, Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London. N. 13.
Rev. R. F. R. Routh.	The Rectory, Beaconsfield, Bucks.
Rev. A. Scott.	92. Bradford Street, Bolton, Lancs.
Rev. B. F. Sheppard.	The Rectory, Somersham, Hunts.
Rev. W. H. Smale.	Petrockstowe Rectory, Okehampton, Devon.
Rev. A. G. G. Thurlow.	The Hermitage, Bishopgate, Norwich.
Rev. John E. F. Tredennick.	56. Havering Road, Romford, Essex.
Rev. John M. Tredennick.	18. Fernside Road, Winton, Bournemouth.
Rev. W. H. R. Trehwella.	St Paul's Vicarage, Truro.
Rev. W. M. K. Warren.	Binegar Rectory, Gurney Slade, Bath.
Rev. C. Elliot Wigg.	Chearsley Vicarage, Aylesbury, Bucks.
Rev. R. P. Wilkinson.	Ordsall Rectory, Retford, Notts.
Rev. W. P. Wright.	The Hall, Eyam, via Sheffield.

At the 1939 meeting a request was made for a Register of the Members to be drawn up, and each member provided with a copy. E Bankes James offered to print such copies, and presumably the above list in the Guild Archives, containing 37 names, is the result of the decision. This list is taken as the definitive list of those we may call "Founder Members" of the Guild, comprising the original group at Evesham in 1937, those who had sent in life subscriptions up to the first AGM in 1938, and the other three who had paid by 1939

In 1939 EV Cox circulated with the notice of the Week a severe warning about striking, since all the ringing was to take place in an area where there was virtually no change-ringing, and impeccable striking was expected. The account of this Devon tour maintained that the striking standard, while not perfect, was not too bad. EV himself was unable to influence the standard, because he was ill and prevented from taking part. Gilbert Thurlow was another who was missing, and so the report was written by John Andrews, who lamented that the above mentioned were greatly missed, "and not only in the belfry". When the AGM was held at the Edgehill Hotel, Bovey Tracey - same rates for accommodation applied - arrangements were made for a tour the following year in Suffolk. But this was 1939! In the event, with the Second World War breaking out, and before long the ban being imposed on tower bell ringing, the Guild's activities were suspended, and it did not meet again until 1946.

Notes on some of the founder members.

James Frazer AMIES. He was ordained in 1913, and was still on the membership lists until the mid 60s. He attended two ringing weeks.

John Hugh Barker ANDREWS. He was working in Leeds at the time of his first attendance at a Clerical Week. After service as a chaplain in the RNVR during the war he was appointed Vicar of Chittlehampton in North Devon in 1946, and remained there until his death in 1984 at the age of 79. Prebendary of Exeter in 1961, MBE in 1964, Proctor in Convocation from 1959, Sub-Dean of Exeter Cathedral from 1971 - all this speaks of his distinction in the Church. In the Guild he rang in 4 peals, and was a reliable ringer in the standard methods on 5 to 8 bells, but he always found surprise to be a challenge. Indeed his annual course of Cambridge Minor was usually a fraught occasion! He succeeded Preb EV Cox as Secretary in 1953, and continued in that office for 15 years. He was appointed a Vice-President in 1969, and took the chair at the AGMs in 1974/5 on the indisposition of the Rev RD StJ Smith. He was elected President in 1975, and continued in office until his death in 1984. As Secretary he carried out his duties with quiet efficiency, but he could reduce an AGM to helpless laughter by his solemn reading of some of the letters of apology as his eyebrows flickered above his poker face and black-rimmed glasses. As President he invested the proceedings of the Guild with dignity, and in his urbane manner he kept a firm grip upon the business. As the garb and demeanour of members became more informal - some would say scruffier - 'the Preb' always gave tone to the gathering with his clerical suit and collar. But he had a wonderful sense of humour, and could make a balanced and positive contribution to discussions on any manner of subjects. In his later years he seemed not to age at all, and his sudden death came as a great shock to all.



Edward Geoffrey BENSON. He was Master of the CUG in 1922, and after his ordination and service in one or two parishes in the Gloucester Diocese, he spent the rest of his life in the Hereford Diocese. His main ministry was at Burghill (1936) and Presteigne (1950), and he was appointed a Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral a few months before his sudden death

in office in 1961. In the Hereford Guild he served as Vice-President, and also was on the Central Council at the time of his death. In the Clerical Guild he was active from the time the first clerical tour took place in 1935. He faded out of Guild affairs after 1948 until attending the last three Weeks before his rather early death in 1961. He rang in three peals for the Guild.

Hugh Gilpin BENSON. Geoffrey's elder brother was CUG Secretary in 1921. After ordination and a period of service in Africa he returned to this country. He too rang three peals for the Guild, but stopped attending the Weeks after 1947. He remained a member until his death in his eighties.

George Frederick COLERIDGE. By 1937 Canon Coleridge was seen by many as one of the Grand Old Men of ringing. He was Vicar of the parish of Crowthorne, Berks, to which he had been appointed in 1894; less active than formerly, he was still renowned for his prowess as a ringer. He was a founder member and former President of the Central Council, and Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild from 1933 to 1946, His last peal was London Surprise Major in 1932 after which a knee injury prevented further attempts, but his total of 273 included the 1st clerical peal, FE Robinson's 1000th, the 1st clerical peal on 10, a 15,041 Stedman Caters at Appleton, and the celebrated "giants' peal" of 1925 at St Giles-in-the-Fields in which all the ringers were over 6 ft high - Canon Coleridge being the tallest at 6 ft 4½in! He accepted the Presidency of the Clerical Guild, and duly presided at the two first AGMs, but with the war intervening he was too aged to continue afterwards, and resigned in 1946. He died in 1949 at the age of 92.



William James CONYBEARE rang a peal for the CUG when an undergraduate, but after ordination in 1898 was not one of the group of clergy who progressed so far. He later became Provost of Southwell Cathedral. He died in the 50s.

Ralph COPEMAN was another early CUG member. Ordained in 1882, he died before the Guild met again after World War 2.

Charles Carew COX. Ordained in 1909 following studies at KCL and Durham, Carew Cox rapidly secured his position in clerical ringing circles dominated by Oxford and Cambridge men. He was in the first clerical peal on 10, the first surprise peal, and in the 1930s revival he conducted the final pre-guild clerical peal in 1935. He succeeded Canon Coleridge as President of the Guild in 1946, and remained President until his death not long before the Ringing Week in 1965. His major preferment was as Vicar of Lyme Regis, where he was a devoted and effective parish priest as well as being a leading ringer in the region for 26 years, becoming a Canon of Salisbury in 1951. He was also Master of the



Salisbury Guild for 21 years. For most of his time as President he was a centre of stability and authority, and the unquestioned ringing master and chief conductor. He must have endured much frustration when year after year the peal attempts failed and the standard of ringing produced by the Guild fell far short of his ideal. Great was his delight when the peal attempt at St Thomas, Exeter conducted by Malcolm Melville succeeded in 1964 - the first success during the Guild Week since 1950. Carew Cox had considerable accomplishments with the pen. He contributed many articles on the Christian seasons for the Ringing World, worked on liturgies, and composed hymns. One of his hymns "Lord God, all Glorious" written in 1961 and dedicated to the Guild of Clerical Ringers used to be sung annually at the Guild Evensong on ringing weeks. Set to the tune Coelites Plaudant (EH 242) it includes the verse:

Grace, Lord, our belfries with the sense of brotherhood;
Lose all our weaknesses in Thy strong perfection;
Unseen Conductor! Guide through all the changes,
Blessing our harmony.

Perhaps this does not deserve the oblivion to which a younger generation has consigned it! It has to be said however that the phrase "unseen conductor" is still to be heard from time to time.



Ernest Vyvyan COX. Unlike his younger cousin, EV went to Oxford. He was then only a call-change ringer, but with a friend he set about reviving the fortunes of the OUS - very successfully in the event. He stood in a peal of Stedman Triples at Drayton in 1903 with the Rev GF Coleridge, and the Rev FE Robinson conducting, rung "to celebrate the revival of the OUS". He was secretary of the OUS in 1902-3. He was ordained in 1904, and by the time he left the Midlands in 1916 where had served several curacies he had already rung 129 peals in 100 towers. In the Society for the Archdeaconry of Stafford he was clerical secretary and treasurer. He rang 144 peals in all, and these included those notable early clerical peals before WW1, and the first for the new Guild in 1938. His remaining ministry was in the Exeter Diocese, where he became a Prebendary in 1940. It would be fair to say that EV was the motive force in getting ringing clergy together again in the 30s, and he made all the arrangements for the tours of 1935-7. Therefore he was the automatic choice for Secretary and Treasurer of the newly formed Guild, and held the post until 1953. Despite his

relentless insistence on punctuality, and his readiness to fight his corner in differences of opinion with his cousin, his was a benign and genial presence, and when children of members began to appear in the party he relished a role as a surrogate grandpa or elderly uncle. He died on May 30th 1961 at the age of 79.

Frank Llewellyn EDWARDS was a greater ringing character than a ringer. An Oxford man he went to Ridley Hall Theological College at Cambridge. He fell in with CUG men there and rang three handbell peals attributed to the CUG but later disclaimed by them! Ordained in 1902, he soon succeeded to the family living at Kington Magna in Dorset and remained Rector until shortly before his death in 1956. He was a proverbial 'squarson' and farmed his own glebe. Although Grandsire Doubles or Triples was more his mark as a ringer, his interest in

ringing was wide and profound, and he was Secretary/Treasurer of the Salisbury Guild from 1913 to 1950, and Central Council Representative from 1911 until his death.

Reginald Dawson St George EDWARDS. Ordained in 1899, he was not a very advanced ringer, but participated in several of the early Guild weeks. He died about 1957.

Reginald Percy FARROW. Here was another Oxford man. He was ordained in 1902, and so presumably just missed the revival of the OUS by EV Cox. He served in the Midlands for many years until he became Vicar of East Lulworth in 1935, where he remained for 25 years until shortly before his death in 1961 at the age of 88. He rang the first of his 75 peals in 1892, and the last in 1935 - and these included one long length of Minor in a variety of methods. When at East Lulworth, which had no ring of bells, he used to attend the practices at Wareham, and rang the third to a farewell quarter (for him) at the age of 87, complaining that they had not gone for a full peal! One reminiscence of him in the fifties is of an elderly cleric holding forth at branch meetings in deepest Dorset to an audience of bemused rustic call-change ringers on the subject of his peal of Superlative. He attended several clerical Weeks after WW2 in his latter years.

Noel HOPE was ordained somewhat later in life than was normal at this period. He became interested in Ringing at East Grinstead, and helped to found the East Grinstead and District Guild. Later he became Master of the Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association. He participated in several of the earlier tours before his death in 1957.

Arthur Rhys JAMES was not related to the other celebrated James brothers. He was a clerical and ringing colleague of EV Cox in the Exeter Diocese. He rang the treble in the second Guild peal on the Devon tour. He died in about 1952.

Edward Bankes JAMES. Most of his ministry was as an ordained schoolmaster. In his latter years he affected a dodderly manner, but was in fact hard as nails, and when near the coast would always swim in the sea before breakfast. St John Smith recalls an incident on a CUG tour (in the thirties) when some of the younger men slipped away to a West Country pub noted for its rough cider. Bankes James suddenly turned up (in his clerical collar, of course) and announced loudly "I thought I should find you young fellows here!" He proceeded to demand from a reluctant publican a pint of the cider, which he downed swiftly without ill effects. His ringing prowess was considerable, although not quite up to that of his brother, Law James. His most notable contribution was as a deviser of new methods which included Bristol Surprise and Little Bob, and also of compositions, many of which are regularly rung today. Having been in the group of clergy who rang together before World War 1, he enthusiastically joined in the revival of clerical ringing in the 1930s, and was elected as Vice-President when the Guild was formed. After the break for World War 2 he resigned his position in 1946, being then too infirm to attend, and died the following February.

Bertram LONG. Canon of Oxford. Died soon after World War 2.

Frederick Spencer Howard MARLE. For a long time Rector of Deane near Basingstoke, he was not an advanced ringer, but attended most of the tours before and immediately after the war.

Charles Cecil MARSHALL. Canon Marshall was ordained in 1898, and was Vicar of St Chad's Far Headingley in Leeds from 1907. He never attended any of the Guild activities and died in 1949. In the course of his life he rang 13 peals. Christopher Marshall, who later joined the Guild and became President in 1999, was not related to him.

Roy Hatchard PALMER was ordained in 1898. He had been at Cambridge, but his name does not figure in the records of the CUG. He attended many of the Guild Weeks.

John Parker PELLOE was an active member of the OUS. He was ordained in 1936, and although he always had an interest in the Guild he scarcely ever attended its activities. He did come to the AGM after his retirement when the Guild stayed in Ely. He became Archdeacon of Wisbech. He died in 1982.

Charles Augustine PHILLIPS. Died 1949/50.

Everard Slade POWELL. Remembered in the exercise for his "Ringer's Handbook", for many years a *sine qua non* for all beginners, he was ordained in 1899. When the Guild was formed he was active from the start, normally accompanied on the tours by his wife who was also an accomplished ringer who had a considerable hand in his publications. He was elected a member of the Committee of the Guild and conducted the peal of Bob Major rung in Devon in 1939. He was a very able ringer, although by reputation not always a great striker! He composed and conducted a number of peals, and the peal of Bob Major rung by the Guild in his memory at Gilmorton, Leics, on April 8th 1948 was to one of the last compositions he published. Geoffrey Benson told of having occupied a room adjoining that of the Powells on one of the tours, and of having been kept awake half the night as the couple discoursed at length on methods and compositions!

Ivor John RICHARDS. A Welshman, ordained in 1929, he soon became established in a predominantly English company as one of the most regular and popular attenders at the ringing weeks, in later years usually accompanied by his wife who did not ring. He rang four peals for the Guild, and was most at home in the standard methods. He restored to ringability and augmented to 8 his bells at Llanarth, Gwent. He died in 1979/80.

Harold Samuel Temple RICHARDSON. We do not know whether he had paid his sub to join the new Guild, but his death between the decision to form the Guild and the first AGM undoubtedly deprived the Guild of one of the most distinguished ringing clergy of the period. Over the years he had been a prolific peal ringer and conductor, especially in his earlier days. He attended the ringing week in 1936. A master of the CUG in 1903-5, he conducted all but three of the 23 peals rung for the CUG between 1903 and 1908, as well as three of the early series of clerical peals.

Arthur Stansfield ROBERTS, a Cornishman, was ordained in 1938, so presumably he joined the Guild in the course of its first full year. After a curacy in London the Bishop of Truro invited him in 1940 to become curate-in-charge of Carbis Bay near St Ives, a conventional district where a church had been partially built in 1929. He remained there even after retirement, and never left until 1987, when widowhood and advancing years compelled his removal to a "grandpa" flat at the home of one of his children. In 1946 a peal of 8 bells was installed in the two-thirds completed tower, and in 1948 Carbis Bay was constituted a parish. In 1959 the tower was finished, and two trebles added, and later still the whole church building was

completed. From then until 1979 Arthur continued as Vicar, only retiring to a bungalow in the parish when his wife became incapacitated, and he had to care for her. In 1968 he became a Canon of Truro. He was a leading exponent of change ringing in the far west, and is reputed to have rung between 400 and 500 peals. In our Guild he was a frequent attender after World War 2, and organised the tour centred at Carbis Bay in 1953, after which he did not participate in any further tours. He rang in four peals for the Guild; he died in 1997 aged 90, the last of the founder-members to do so.

Robert Francis Reginald ROUTH. Ordained in 1913, and Rector of Beaconsfield from 1937. He attended the Guild Ringing Week in 1946.

Arthur SCOTT. Ordained 1930; many years of his ministry were spent abroad, and we have no record of participation in Guild activities.

Bertram Freer SHEPPARD. A former Master of the CUG Canon Sheppard was ordained in 1921. He rang a number of peals in hand and in the tower including five for the Guild. His unassuming manner concealed a considerable ability in method ringing. He served for a time as a Vice-President, and died in 1973/4

William Henry SMALE. Ordained in 1921, he does not seem to have attended any Guild activities. He died in the early sixties.



Alfred Gilbert Goddard THURLOW. "Gilbert" was one of the great characters of ringing in the past sixty years. A CUG man he was involved with the OUS whilst a Curate at Wokingham. Later Precentor of Norwich Cathedral and Priest in charge of several city churches, he then became Vicar of Great Yarmouth, and finally Dean of Gloucester, he made his mark in different places. He undertook the restoration of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth after its destruction during the war, and installed the new ring of 13 bells. A Central Council member for many years, he also served a term as President. He was always a centre of liveliness and animated conversation and was deeply knowledgeable about bells, ancient buildings and most things antiquarian. He was in his way quite a polymath. Ordained in 1934, he was involved with clerical ringing from the start, and was an integral part of the group, although some years after WW2 his attendances began to fall away, and sometimes he would only put in short appearances - but they were always enjoyed. As a ringer he had considerable ability and rang over 100 peals, although his attention sometimes used wander, often with disastrous results. In fact there have been many ringers who have looked back ruefully at the number of peals they *lost* partly of a consequence of Gilbert's being in the band! He rang in five peals for the Guild and died in 1991.

John Edwin Foster TREDENNICK. Ordained in 1936, after 20 years in Essex and Norfolk he became an incumbent in London until retirement in 1976, when, as befitted his name, he went to live in Cornwall in Truro. He was much loved there, and stories abounded about his gentle and lovable nature. One relates that one day he was walking in High Cross when a youth (yobbo, to some people!) called out, "Morning Vicar! How's God?" With a smile he replied, "He's fine. I was talking to him only this morning!" He was not active in Guild life for many years, but then started coming to the Ringing Weeks for a few years. He was a quiet

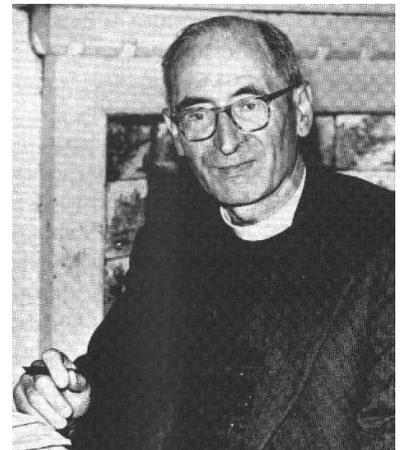
and unassuming man, and a moderate ringer, but even in his latter years he was still anxious to try to make progress with surprise, not always with success! He died in 1995, aged 89.

J M TREDENNICK. Ordained in 1894; died 1952/3. He was the father of the above John Tredennick, and was latterly Vicar of Langdale in the Lake District. He had no recorded active involvement in the Guild.

William Harold Rosewall TREWHELLA. A Cornishman with a wry sense of humour, he was a simple ringer, but always an agreeable person to have around. He attended the Weeks regularly, and died in 1977.

William Meade-King WARREN. Ordained in 1897, he died in 1964/5. He was a very regular attender from the start until 1949, and soon after he stopped coming his place was taken by his son, Henry. He died 1964/5.

Charles Elliott WIGG. Ordained in 1932 after Oxford, he was not a very big man, and was further hampered by a limp left by an attack of polio when he was young. He compensated for this by developing a very powerful pair of shoulders which enabled him to be an excellent heavy bell ringer. For example he turned in the tenor of St Peter Mancroft (37cwt) to a peal of Double Norwich. He was President of the OUS for forty years, and succeeded Canon Coleridge as Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. He rang over 300 peals, of which 13 were for the Clerical Guild (these included the first clerical peal of Royal at Magdalen in 1969, and the first clerical peal of London Major the following year). He regularly attended the Ringing Weeks from 1935 until not long before his death in 1977.



Reginald Felix WILKINSON. He was ordained in 1914, and served his ministry in the Diocese of Southwell, becoming a Canon in 1941. He was Vicar successively of Ordsall and of West Bridgford near Nottingham, and was also Chairman of the Diocesan Advisory Committee. As a ringer he was quiet and unassuming, but a competent performer on most numbers of bells. He was Chairman of the Southwell Diocesan Guild from 1946 until his death in 1963 at the age of 73. He began participating in clerical ringing in 1937, joined the Guild, and became Vice-President after the resignation of Bankes James and regularly attended the Ringing Weeks until 1958. He rang in five peals for the Guild.

William Peter WRIGHT. Ordained in 1889, and lived for many years at Eyam Hall - presumably not in a ministerial post. He attended two or three tours before the war, and rang in the 1939 peal at Wolborough. He died during WW2.

CHAPTER 3 - THE CAREW COX YEARS

Five years; five peals; some promising new members - the Guild seemed to get off to a good start as soon as the Second World War was over. Nineteen members, together with two wives, formed the party which converged on Barton Seagrave Hall Hotel just outside Kettering, Northants, on April 29th 1946. Unfortunately the Hall Hotel couldn't accommodate everybody, so some had to have lodgings elsewhere. We do not know what tariffs applied, but ominously members were told to bring their own soap (& towel if at the George Hotel), "also your thermos, if you have one". *Charabanc* fares would be 4/- per day. EV Cox advised members that Canon Coleridge was not seeking re-election as President, and said that careful consideration must be given "of how best to set & maintain a high standard of ringing".

The Rev C Carew Cox was elected as the new President, and Canon R F Wilkinson as Vice-President to replace the Rev E. Bankes James who also sent a letter of resignation. The week's ringing produced a failed attempt for a peal of Bob Major at Burton Latimer, but on the Wednesday evening a handbell peal of Bob Major was rung - to date the only handbell peal rung by the Guild (there had been, of course, the two CUG clerical peals of Grandsire Caters and Double Norwich in 1912). The only new member to grace this first post-war tour conducted this peal, the **Rev M C C Melville**. He was to figure prominently in the affairs of the Guild, and attended his last tour in 1998. He was also the conductor of the peal at Exeter in 1964 which broke the long peal drought at the Low Week tours. It is probably fair to say that his main [non-territorial] ringing interest has lain with the Universities' Association, whose tours he continued to attend into advanced old age (even in 1999), but for many years he was closely involved with our Guild. From time to time he enjoyed introducing various unsettling topics at the AGMs, such as communications from the "Rabbits' Guild". His peal total for the Guild was 8. He died on December 30th 1999 at the age of 86.

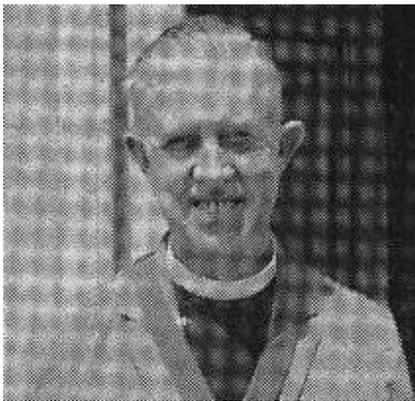


A revolutionary year - 1947.

Because Gilbert Thurlow had to be in London throughout Low Week, the tour was fixed for the week after! That gives a measure of his importance to the Guild in those days. Nineteen members and two wives assembled at Burford on April 21st 1947. Malcolm Melville was missing, and was to be missing for a few more years while he taught in a school in Brazil, but another significant new name appeared, RD StJ Smith. The Secretary reported at the AGM that 12 new members had joined in the last year. There was a motion in the name of RD StG Edwards proposing a constitutional change - an additional officer, a Master, and some other small committees. After much discussion Gilbert Thurlow eventually proposed that "we continue as we are" - and that put a stop to that! In view of the importance of the creation of the post of Ringing Master nearly 40 years later, one has to question whether some of the lack of achievement in the intervening years may not have been due to the failure of members to grasp this opportunity. This year 8 or 9 members came by car, and this provided the transport for the group - with some amusing moments of confusion duly recorded by Gilbert in his report. He tells of the peal attempt: "On Wednesday we tempted providence by visiting Clanfield, where two clerical peal attempts came to grief some years

ago owing to broken ropes. Bob Major came to grief this time owing to a broken train of thought in the conductor's mind". [the conductor's name is not given!]

The following year Leicester was the venue, in Low Week once again. It was not necessary to bring soap or towels, but "each one must bring 3 points and 3 Bread Units: these may be cut out" The party was saddened by the death since the previous year of the Rev E S Powell. Several who had hoped to come were prevented, but there were nevertheless 17 present, including several new ones, most notably KWH Felstead and D P Roberts. **KWH Felstead** was in the successful peal attempt - Bob Major at Gilmorton, rung in



memory of E S Powell. Ken Felstead was Vicar of St Michael's Southampton, and later Master of St Cross, Winchester. At St Michael's he was a member of a band that rang many advanced methods, and he became Master of the Southampton University Society, and also of the Winchester & Portsmouth Guild. He was always a lively member of any party he was in - and over the coming years he became the life and soul of many an evening on Guild tours, performing some of his 'turns', especially "Jimmy Law". Eventually he rang nine peals for the Guild. He is best remembered in the exercise for his work in assembling records of all the peals rung in all the towers in the country,

and in later years he would always leave behind in each tower visited a card (or larger piece of paper) with a note of the dates and methods of all the peals that had been rung in that tower. His work, put together before the age of computers, was handed over to the Central Council, and has been a major resource for the use of the exercise. Another new attender was ADH Allan, already rather elderly, and not a very good ringer, but a very delightful and amiable person. It is recalled that the members were provided with directions for reaching the evening towers in Leicester, which included the tram route numbers.

Another Revolutionary Year - 1949.



A five night Ringing Week - that was what faced the members when they went to Taunton in 1949. It brought complications in those days of post-war austerity: "Do not forget to bring your RATION BOOKS, if staying for more than 4 nights". A record 22 members attended + 2 wives, and the widow of E S Powell. It was perhaps a sign of the times that there was a request for more time and help to be allocated to learners during the week. This was a far cry from EV Cox's pre-war castigation of those who came on the clerical weeks for an extended time of ringing practice! Nevertheless there were plenty of those present capable of ringing more advanced methods, and in the course of this tour two peals were rung: Cambridge Surprise Major at Milverton, conducted by Roger St J Smith, which was his first in the method as conductor, and Kent Treble Bob Major, Conducted by Carew Cox. The Cambridge was not in fact the first ever clerical peal of surprise - that had been the peal of Superlative at Prestbury in 1912.

FIRST CLERICAL GUILD PEAL
OF CAMBRIDGE SURPRISE
MAJOR

MILVERTON, Devon

The Peal Band (l to r):

C E Wigg
B F Sheppard
A S Roberts
A G G Thurlow
R D StJ Smith (C)
K W H Felstead
C C Cox
R F Wilkinson



This was probably the high spot in the immediate post-war achievements of the Guild. This Week brought several new members to take part, including K C Davis, who for the next 15 years until his early death was a lively participant in Guild affairs, and J Kingdon, who attended two Ringing Weeks; he was Secretary of the Chester Guild.

The next year, 1950, saw the Guild going to Chester. Ration Books were still required, for this was yet another 5-night tour. EV Cox, who made all the arrangements, was ill and unable to attend. There were 19 members involved, including one non-resident. The notice warned that only 11 would be present for the whole time. 15 managed to be there for the AGM. John Andrews stood in as deputy Hon Sec. Seven new members were elected. They remembered Canon Coleridge who had died during the year. Only the previous year he had written with apologies, and passing on some reminiscences of former times. The ringing seems to have been enjoyed. Ken Felstead was the scribe this time, and he relished his opportunity:-

"The week was most successful from the very beginning, and a happy omen

of this came the very first night, when we learned....that Mr Thurlow had *purchased* a book on ringing from another member! How are the mighty fallen! So much so that investigation revealed that after that he never attempted to sell one of his own."

The President conducted a successful peal of Bob Major at Northrop on the Thursday in which one of the new members present rang - T P Hearn. Little did the members realise that not until 1964 - in the final year of Carew Cox's life as it turned out - would members on a Guild Ringing Week celebrate the achievement of another peal.

1951 onwards - some undistinguished years.

The next year seemed to set the tone for more modest ambitions. Headquarters were in Wells, at the Swan Hotel (24/- per day, and 3/- for sandwiches); there were only 13 resident members, together with three wives, but no peal attempt was scheduled. One of the gloomy moments on the tour came when members listened to the budget on a car radio, and found that petrol was going to go up to 3/6 a gallon!



THE GUILD AT MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK, APRIL 24TH 1952
Mrs Andrews, JHB Andrews, WHR Trehella, BF Sheppard, DP Roberts, RD StJ Smith, CC Cox,
AS Roberts, MCC Melville, EV Cox, RH Palmer, IJ Richards, KC Davis, JGM Scott, AGG
Thurlow, HF Warren, F LI Edwards.

In 1952 the party was a bit bigger for the tour centred upon Bury St Edmunds, where the Angel Hotel charged 25/6 per day! Sadly the abilities of those coming did not encourage the arrangement of a peal attempt once again. There were some new faces, however. John G M Scott, a future President of the Central Council, was there, although he did not for long figure among the gatherings of the Guild. Henry F Warren (son of WMK) and Eric B Wood - Christian names, rather than initials or just surnames, were beginning to come into use! - made the first of many appearances. Later on Eric was to become Vicar of that

celebrated parish of St Peter Drayton, the church of F E Robinson, and both hosted peal attempts there, and participated in eight peals for the Guild.

The following year, 1953, Gilbert Thurlow headed his Ringing World report, "The Ministry goes West". The peal attempt certainly did, but the tour based at Hendra's Hotel, Carbis Bay, Cornwall, was in the parish of A S Roberts and was attended by 20 members. Perhaps they were encouraged by the bargain rates at the hotel, 18/- per day, but an extra 1/6 for the garage. At the AGM Preb E V Cox announced that through pressure of diocesan business he had to resign as Secretary, and he was succeeded by John H B Andrews - who had already deputised one year when E V was ill, and had done a lot of the organisational work for the previous year's tour.

The Guild went West again the year after, but North of the Bristol Channel this time. Newport was unequivocally in "Monmouthshire" in 1954, and the King's Head Hotel charged 18/6 - but this was for B & B only, and dinner cost 7/3 extra! Only 13 members were resident, but two locals joined in each day, Ivor Richards and FA Oswell, and one or two others did at times. St Woolos Cathedral in Newport, and the recently restored bells of Llandaff Cathedral were both visited. A tower was arranged for a peal attempt on the final morning, but on the day the band felt there was not enough time available, so no attempt was made. At the AGM the rules were duly bent so that Preb EV Cox could be appointed an additional Vice-President without displacing the sitting incumbent of the position, Canon RF Wilkinson. For the first time the members looked forward beyond next year and suggested a venue for the next Week but one.

The strong West-Country bias of the Guild was in evidence in 1955, when North Devon was chosen, and the members stayed at the North Cliff Private Hotel, where the all-inclusive charges were 18/6 per day. 15 were resident, but among those who joined in the odd occasion was **Nicholas FD Coleridge**, a relative of the great man whom he would call "Cousin Fred". He was destined to become one of the best loved characters in the Guild (if not one of the greatest ringers) over the twenty years before his premature death. The amiable butt of jokes and the occasion of much hilarity, he earned himself the nickname "The Archdeacon", and was always at the heart of the extra-belfry activity. The peal attempt this year produced some good ringing of Stedman Triples - but 1½ hours was all that could be managed.



And now for an eye-witness account!

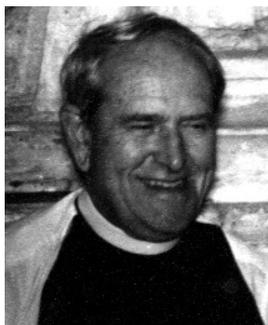
The author was four months into his first incumbency, and could now do what he wanted in Low Week, and so he turned up on the second day of the Matlock tour in 1956. (He never again allowed an APCM to be held on Low Monday!) He was not the most distinguished newcomer, since **Canon A C Blyth** of Selwyn College made his first appearance also. He had succeeded Canon Boughey as President of the CUG, and for over 20 years had had a very strong and formative influence on that Guild. One of his ambitions was to ring an all-Selwyn peal, and he achieved this first in 1952 with a handbell peal of Bob Major; this was followed in 1954 by tower bell peals of Double Norwich and Cambridge Major. He only became a Clerical Guild member in 1956, and came to two tours before his death in 1961.

The very night before he died he attended the CUG practice at St Andrew's, and rang his favourite method - Stedman Triples.

In 1956 18 members together with two wives took part - mostly in appalling weather! High Tor Guest House (Tel: Matlock 31) was the headquarters, charging 21/6 per diem (or £4.30 for 4 days!). The peal attempt, Oxford TB, was at Darley Dale, but "came early to grief", as DP Roberts reported. Before long StJ Smith was to be Vicar there, and the bells played their part in one of the Guild's later triumphs. His father had been Vicar of Heanor, and St John entertained the Guild to luncheon there on the Wednesday before ringing on the bells. One stalwart made his last appearance at Matlock - F Llewellyn Edwards, one of the great eccentrics of the early days of the Guild. Despite his age he entered into the social life of the Guild, and one evening when there was no ringing he showed remarkable quickness in grasping the essentials of party games that were played. He died before the next year's tour.

So what was it like 44 years ago? Apart from the weather my chief impression is of elderly, black-clad, sober-faced clerics, mostly wearing their dog-collars all the time, but always courteous and friendly to a new boy. I recall ringing that was always a struggle once anything more ambitious than Grandsire or Plain Bob on six bells was attempted. One reason for this was that many of the party either had towers where the ringing was very elementary, or else they did not have bells at all. As a consequence the first four days were spent in trying to get back to whatever standards had been enjoyed in the members' salad days. A few favoured individuals might achieve a few leads of surprise major, but the predominant calls, whatever was being rung, were "Go rounds!" & "Go again!" By the time progress had been made, the last evening was spent conducting business, and on the final morning everyone's sights were set on the journey home (by steam train, or else in ancient cars that would have found motorways a challenge had there been any!). To those who had been accustomed to the sterner schedules and standards of University tours it all seemed very gentlemanly, and somewhat low-key. But it was a great way of unwinding after Easter, provided that one had survived Easter Week itself.

It had been intended to visit Bridport in 1957, but the Suez crisis occurred in 1956, and the clerics, using the same logic that says you can only hold chapter meetings in towns from October to April, because all the country lanes are blocked by snowdrifts, decided that because of problems about petrol supplies Bristol was a safer place to have as the centre. Two small hotels in Clifton, which were not greatly appreciated (indeed one member recalls discovering fleas in his bed!), provided the accommodation needed and a party of 19 duly assembled and enjoyed some slightly better ringing. Cambridge, Superlative, and of course Bristol Major were rung. A peal attempt was duly lost at Bitton. A new member was elected, **Royston Bryant**, who was Curate at Emmanuel Clifton, and who took a pair in a course of Grandsire Caters on handbells rung to thank the hosts there who had entertained the Guild to a sumptuous tea. He was one of the outstanding ringers in the Bristol area before his ordination at the age of 47. He had studied for the ministry with David Sansum, and perhaps it was contact with him that led the latter to his interest in ringing. Royston rang in the peal of Yorkshire in 1965, but did not attend any of the Ringing Weeks. He died in 1998.



Another making his first appearance was **Canon F A (Eric) Sanders**, who regularly attended for several years. He was one of those who are solid ringers in basic methods, but who make no claims to be 'advanced'. He rang in the Exeter peal of Plain Bob Major in 1964, which was his only one for the Guild. He was always a pleasant and friendly member of the party, took a full part in everything that was going on, and often wrote the report for the *Ringling World*. His wife frequently came with him, and she was a ringer too. He was Rector of Overton in Hampshire.



THE GUILD AT TORTWORTH RECTORY, April 30th, 1957
 (Standing, l to r) EV Cox, Mrs Peel, WA Peel (Rector & Member), CC Cox, PT Robbins, EB Wood, KWH Felstead, GE Ruming, JHB & Mrs Andrews, AGG Thurlow.
 (Sitting, front) WHR Trewhella, FA Sanders, HF Warren, D Ballard, BF Sheppard, FHS Marle, Mrs P Wood, RD StJ Smith, MCC Melville. (Sitting, behind) DP Roberts, IJ Richards.

Bridport was at last reached in 1958. The party stayed at Knight's Bull Hotel at a charge of 33/- each, prompting some of the more impecunious younger clergy to form a breakaway group, and slum it in a more modest B & B. Among them were John Homfray, Christopher Marshall, and Gordon Ruming. The first two will figure prominently as the story of the Guild unfolds. This year the Guild was entertained to tea by both the Coxes severally at their retirement homes, CC at Morcombelake overlooking the Dorset coast, and EV at Kilmington near Axminster. The annual peal failure took place at Litton Cheney, but Canon Cox had unexpectedly to put his pen to the peal book later that year, when six members, most of whom had recently joined, came together at Cleeve Prior in Worcestershire and rang a peal of Doubles, conducted by Ivor Richards. This purported to celebrate the Lambeth Conference that had recently taken place. It was the Guild's eighth peal, but it had taken 20 years to get this far.

The following year another Bull was scored: the Olde Bull Hotel, Sittingbourne in Kent, was the base for the 1959 tour of East Kent, and offered the more reasonable terms of 26/6 a

day. This year two cathedrals again were visited, Canterbury and Rochester. Peter Robbins' wife, formerly Betty Spice, came from Sittingbourne, and her father, George Spice, was Secretary of the Kent County Association, so there was local knowledge and help in fixing up the programme. Only 14 members made it (too far east?) but there were two ringers among the ladies who accompanied the party. Stanley Evans, a local, joined, and he has been an integral part of the Guild ever since and has rung in 17 peals. Eric Sanders wrote the report and is worth quoting:- "Our members fall into three classes: (1) experts who are in practice, (2) experts who are out of practice, and (3) the others. Some of our class (1) members were unavoidably absent this year, but despite this there was some good ringing." A fourth class might have been mentioned, that scarcely exists today - pipe smokers - who feature in this picture taken at Milton-next-Gravesend:-



The next picture, however, shows the Guild *in a church*, and all the pipes have been put away. (They were produced, and hats, years later when Kent was again visited, and the secular tower of Quex Park allowed indulgence in such secular behaviour.)



THE GUILD IN KENT, 1959. (l to r): EV Cox, CMJ Marshall, CC Cox, EB Wood, JHB Andrews, JBT Homfray, FA Sanders, EG Benson, WHR Trehella, PT Robbins.

The peal attempt this year was in fact for Cambridge Major, but went the way of all other recent attempts. However, following the innovation of the previous year, eight members gathered at John Andrews' church at Chittlehampton. The Secretary hoped to provide an exhibition of "scientific" change ringing to impress and challenge his local ringers. Ivor Richards conducted the 9th peal for the Guild - Grandsire Triples, on September 7th. But it was still to be another five years before double figures were reached.

North, South, East, and West

In 1960 the Guild really branched out into new pastures - Lytham St Annes. 17 members made the long journey north, with five ladies to keep their menfolk in order. The ringing does not seem to have been as good as sometimes, and the peal attempt failed. At the AGM economic problems began to surface. Postal rates had risen, and the Guild finances were under strain. It was the practice to circularise with the programme for the tour the whole membership, which was now standing at about 80, many of whom had never taken part in the annual tour, and in all probability never would. The meeting was reluctant to take any action that seemed a breach of faith with those who had paid their life membership fee - even though it had stayed unchanged for new members at 5/-. Nothing was done for now, but this was a problem which would not go away. Postage rates had already reached 3d for letters; in 1967 when 1st & 2nd class postage rates were introduced they were respectively 5d and 4d, and that was only a shadow of what was to come.

South in 1961 - Southampton, in fact. The County Hotel only charged 30/- a day, 3/6 less than Lytham! (Eric Sanders observed in his report that accommodation was becoming an increasing problem. It was fortunate that an hotel was found "big enough to take the party and modest enough to suit clerical means"). 20 members, with accompanying ladies and also children (4 Robbins and 1 Wood) formed the party. This was the first year that the Guild took to the sea, and sailed to the Isle of Wight to ring at the pick of the towers there on the Wednesday. One recently elected member made the first of many appearances - R N Longridge. There were enough better ringers for Cambridge Royal to be rung, together with the five standard surprise methods on major. The peal attempt was the usual failure.

Dick Longridge was a very regular attender for many years. In the sixties he often brought one or both of his boys, John and Christopher, who were progressing in the art (rather beyond the standard, it has to be admitted, achieved by their father!) and were always very well behaved. Dick had a very dry sense of humour, and one of his legendary sayings came about on one occasion several years later when some of the smaller children who were accompanying their parents - or rather one in particular - had been very noisy on the coach. He had been persistently impersonating a Dalek, and had attempted to exterminate the entire Guild. As we walked back to the Conference house, he was heard to mutter, "I'm all for Herod!". Although his ringing achievements were modest, he did ring in the Guild's only peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor.

East Anglia was the venue in 1962, with headquarters in Gilbert Thurlow's parish of Great Yarmouth. The peal attempt was made on the middle eight of the 12 at that church, and was conducted by the curate, Giles Galley. Unfortunately it failed after 2½ hours. 16 members came, but two major absences were Prebs EV Cox and EG Benson who had both died since the previous year. The Secretary, JHB Andrews had in fact succeeded to the

Prebendal stall at Exeter made vacant by EV's death. Canon BF Sheppard was elected as the second Vice-President in place of EV.



THE GUILD AT BRIDGNORTH, April 23, 1963
(l to r) Betty Robbins, Barbara Homfray, Mrs Richards, Nicholas Coleridge, Mrs Sanders, John Andrews, Ken Felstead, CC Cox, Chris Marshall, Dick Longridge, Peter Bond, Eric Wood, Peter Robbins, Eric Sanders, Pat Wood (with Alban), WHR Trehella, Ivor Richards, John Homfray.

The Guild went West the following year, 1963, by holding a week in the "Marches" with an hotel, the Denehurst, in Church Stretton, as the centre. Peter and Betty Robbins had the amazing coincidence of being allocated the very bedroom in which they had spent their honeymoon twelve years previously. In 1951 it cost them £1.0.0 each a day full board; it cost Guild members 32/6 for D B & B in 1963. It was recorded that John Andrews' annual course of Cambridge Minor was achieved at the third tower on Day 1 in the absence of many of the first team! St J Smith's ringing was curtailed by physical problems, and so, lacking a conductor, no attempt was made for a peal, and even the scheduled quarter of Yorkshire failed. 15 members attended; Peter Bond was there for the first time, but Canon RF Wilkinson had died, and so RD StJ Smith was elected in his place as Vice-President.

Peter Bond had a comparatively short time as a Guild Member. Ordination (in 1962) was his second career, and he was always a striking figure with his great height and burly figure. His practice of carrying a portable tape recorder around, and always demanding a special piece of ringing to be recorded was an innovation for the Clerical Guild! He was instituted to a living in Norfolk in 1970, but all too soon was struck by ill health. When the Guild visited Beetley in 1976 the bells, which he had installed, numbered 6. They were soon to be 8. However he had to retire completely in 1978, and died in 1981, aged 58. He and David Cawley worked together on many matters in connection with the restoration of bells, and in Norfolk he followed on the work of Gilbert Thurlow who had moved away to become Dean of Gloucester. He rang 22 peals for the Norwich Association, but did not participate in any for the Guild.

The final Ringing Week of the Carew Cox Presidency in 1964 was held once again in Devon, with 16 members staying at the Trood House Hotel just outside Exeter. It looks as if the ringing during the week varied considerably, despite the need to maintain standards in the home of clockwork call-change ringing. However Malcolm Melville was entrusted with the responsibility of piloting the peal attempt safe into harbour at St Thomas's, Exeter, and he and the band rose to the occasion and Plain Bob was achieved. Carew Cox was absolutely delighted. Five of the band had been ordained since 1950 so there was a hint that peal ringing ought to figure more prominently in the Guild's activities. And so, although the members did not realise it at the time, the second era in the Guild's history was coming to an end, and a new chapter was about to unfold.



THE PEAL BAND AT ST THOMAS', EXETER CELEBRATE WITH THE PRESIDENT
(l to r) Chris Marshall, Malcolm Melville (C), John Homfray, Stanley Evans, Eric Wood, Roger StJ Smith, Peter Robbins,
Canon FA (Eric) Sanders

CHAPTER 4 - UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

The last time the Guild met with Canon C Carew Cox, who had rung in the fifth clerical peal at Warwick in 1910, and had been President of the Guild since 1946, was at Exeter in 1964. We have a picture of the party taken that year:-



THE GUILD AT EXETER, 1964

(l to r) Nicholas Coleridge, Mrs Sanders, Dick Longridge, John Andrews, Barbara Homfray, John Shepheard-Walwyn, John Homfray, Canon BF Sheppard, Canon FA Sanders, Ivor Richards, Canon CC Cox, WHR Trehwella, Henry Warren, Roger StJ Smith, Mrs Richards, Alban & Pat Wood, Christopher Longridge, Chris Marshall, Stanley Evans, Peter Robbins, Malcolm Melville, Eric Wood

So when the Guild met at Nottingham in Low Week 1965 it was under a shadow. The President had died in March, and there was the additional sadness that the headquarters for 1965 were at the Fourways Private Hotel, West Bridgford, in the very parish where Canon RF Wilkinson, Vice-President from 1946 had been Vicar until shortly before his death two years before. 19 members came, but what was significant was that some new ones of considerable ability joined in for the first time. Roger Fry and Roger Keeley had recently been ordained and immediately joined the Guild. Roger Fry was an established figure in the Bath & Wells Association, and brought considerable maturity to the Clerical Guild's standard of ringing for a few years. Roger Keeley had grown up in Canon Cox's parish of Lyme Regis, and was already an accomplished ringer. Both of these were conducting peals regularly, and they brought their expertise to the Guild. Also David Sansum came for a day. He had been ordained a little earlier than the other two, but he had only started to learn to ring when he was a curate in Bristol, and, while not too far along the path yet, was progressing fast. He was destined 30 years later to become the second clerical ringer to achieve 1,000 peals.

Another first-time resident was **John Sheppard-Walwyn**, a very steady ringer despite the fact that he had been blind for many years. He has frequently caused astonishment when locals realised that the man who was confidently ringing standard and surprise methods, often better than those around him, was in fact without sight. He has equally caused amazement within the Guild at his uncanny sense of the lay-out when he arrives in a totally strange church, and in no time seems to be able to find his way about unaided. He has rung two peals for the Guild, and was honoured on the 50th anniversary of his priesthood by the Guild with a peal of Minor rung at Frenchay, where he often assists with the ringing, in 1993. It is to go rather ahead into the story which has yet to be unfolded, but we do have the picture of the band which rang that peal:-



(l to r: Tony Ellis, Bob Southwood (C), Peter Robbins, Chris Marshall, Patrick Wooster, & Jennifer Mole.)

The ringing in 1965 was, as always, somewhat mixed, but one of the most delightful incidents occurred at Sutton-on-Trent. Two dear little old ladies welcomed the Guild, and Ken Felstead duly presented them with his list of the 50-odd peals (many of them Surprise Major) rung at the tower. They scrutinised it carefully. "Oh yes. We have rung in all but one on your list!" said one of them. They were in fact the celebrated twins, the Misses Burchnell. When it came to the AGM the Guild of course needed a new President, and Roger St J Smith was the unanimous choice of the members. Canon KWH Felstead was elected to the Vice-Presidency along with Canon Sheppard. The peal attempt succeeded - Bob Major at Greasley, conducted by the new President in memory of his predecessor.



Roger Douglas St John Smith was an active member of the CUG before WW2, and when he transferred to Oxford for further studies, he became a member of the OUS as well; the CUG however was always his principal affiliation. Joining the Clerical Guild at the end of the war he soon made his mark by conducting the peal of Cambridge Surprise Major in 1949, and was

always one of the stronger members of any band. As a conductor he would not have claimed to be in the class of HST Richardson, and he was glad to let Roger Keeley do the bulk of the conducting once he was established, but many notable achievements were made with him in the band or as conductor. He rang 15 peals for the Guild, of which he conducted 5, most notably the Plain Bob Royal rung at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1969. His presidency of the Guild only lasted ten years before health problems stemming from a war wound seriously curtailed his ringing career. He has been unable latterly to take part in Guild meetings, but retains a lively interest in its affairs, and in all ringing matters.

In the ensuing summer several members got together in Kent, and attempted two peals. One succeeded, Cambridge Minor at Little Chart (Roger Keeley's first for the Guild as conductor), but the other failed, and a quarter only of Stedman was rung at Harrietsham. Another group met in November and Roger Fry conducted a peal of Yorkshire Major at Prestbury, Glos.

Anyone would think that a ringing tour taking place in Sussex from April 18 - 22 would be fairly idyllic - but the Brighton tour of 1966 was the wettest and most miserable - weather-wise - ever! There was some good ringing, even a touch of 4-spliced surprise major, but two peal attempts were lost, Bob Royal and Bob Major. The Bob Royal at St Peter's Brighton was a particular cause for regret, because all seemed to be going swimmingly until the conductor (whose identity had better not be revealed) called four successive homes. There were 22 members resident and six ladies, and two other members came part-time. Jim Tomsett was present and duly elected. He was ordained somewhat late in life, but would be a regular attender until his death in the 80s. The knotty problem of finance was skirted round again, and a proposal to raise the life subscription to 10/- was rejected.

The 1967 tour was unique in being a two-centre Week. The Diocesan House in the Old Palace, Lincoln, was not available for the fourth night, and so the party transferred to the Spa Hotel, Woodhall Spa for Thursday night - a place which was a source of amazement to those whose ideas of spas were drawn from Bath, Cheltenham, Matlock, Buxton and Harrogate. Where were the hills? It was a large party with more wives and children than ever before, and in typically ecclesiastical fashion the responsibility for arranging and packing up the lunches fell upon the various Vicars' wives or sisters! Some of the ringing was really good, including Cinques and Kent Maximus at Lincoln Cathedral. There were two peal attempts: Plain Bob Major at Gainsborough succeeded, but the elusive peal of Royal was lost at Ewerby (that particular ghost was laid in 1999 when a peal of Kent Royal was scored there). Michael Hart and Ron Lucas made their first appearances. Of the two Ron played a bigger part in the life of the Guild, and the Lucas family - Ron & Christine, together with Jonathan and Ruth - were regular attenders until Ron's untimely death occurred in 1982. He rang 6 peals for the Guild, and so far Michael has rung 7. This was the first time that the Guild stayed in other than a normal commercially run hotel, and it was significant that the charges varied greatly - 24/- at the Diocesan House, and 34/6 at Woodhall Spa. Only twice more would the Guild stay in an hotel. Following this tour, once again some members went to Kent in the summer, and Roger Keeley conducted a peal of Cambridge Major at Wye.



In 1968 the base was at a conference centre - The Old House, Cropthorne near Pershore. The charge was £5.15s.0d for the week, or just a little less than 29/- per day. Once again the ladies were enrolled to cater for the packed lunches. It was stated that ITV was interested, and members should come "capable of looking clerical". Presumably the accompanying picture was taken when the TV cameras were not around. After some of the recent tours, this one was blessed with lovely spring weather, and the Vale of Evesham was one of the best places to

be. The ringing was the usual mixed bag. One peal was duly rung, Grandsire Triples at Hinton-on-the-Green, but Bob Royal was lost again, at Claines after 2½ hours. At the AGM John Andrews asked to be relieved of the burdens of duty as Hon Secretary and Treasurer, and Peter Robbins was elected in his place.

Once again after the official Ringing Week some members gathered for peal attempts in the summer. In 1968 there was a flash-back to 1908, because two peals were rung in a day, and as in 1908 seven ringers were in both peals, with two others making up the two bands. First Roger Fry conducted Double Norwich at Drayton, Somerset, and then Roger Keeley conducted Stedman Triples at Curry Rivel. There was another attempt the next morning at Lyme Regis, but it did not succeed.

Another lovely rural conference house, Charney Manor, Oxon, provided the venue for the 1969 tour of Oxfordshire and Berkshire. It wasn't cheap at 37/6 + 5% service charge. There was some good ringing, but the first Guild attempt at Drayton, Berks, to which Eric Wood had recently moved as Vicar, was unsuccessful. The tour duly came to an end for the full party at Friday lunchtime, but Peter Robbins, a Magdalen man, had managed to secure the bells of his old college for an afternoon peal attempt, and at last, ably steered by the President, the first clerical peal of Royal - Plain Bob - came round in 3 hours 11 minutes. New members elected this year included Fred Ross, Nicholas Webb, Lawrence Pizzey, and Geoff Stickland, all of whom would make contributions to the Guild. Canon Sheppard reappeared after an absence of several years. At last something was done to prevent the Guild's funds from sinking into the red. Members were to be asked for 2/- to cover postages for the ensuing three years. Only those paying would receive the annual circular.

A rather different style of tour was held in 1970. Two neighbouring hotels in Swansea housed the party at quite a modest charge. and the first full day involved long journeys, taking in St David's Cathedral. Dinner was eaten in Tenby before ringing there, and the day ended with the long trail back to Swansea. The party was a bit thinner than usual, there being only 14 at the AGM, and the verdict after the failed peal attempt at Newton Nottage was that "we were not really up to it". New members elected at the AGM included Michael Stephens and Peter Newing. John Andrews was absent following an eye operation.

No peal was achieved in South Wales, but a glorious triumph lay ahead before the year was out. Some members met in October at Darley Dale, where the President had been Rector since 1963, prepared to sweat blood to try and ring a peal of London. After an inauspicious practice, the first attempt was embarked upon with Roger Keeley conducting, and it came sweetly into rounds in three hours! There was a sense of anti-climax. What was to be done with the rest of the time that had been set aside? In the event a peal of Superlative was rung at Fairfield, Buxton, the following day. It wasn't that the band was incompetent. It was simply that the clergy were inured to failure, and not used when they were together to ringing up to their capabilities and hopes. So clerical London was in the bag. There was a sense that we lesser mortals had done something that the giants of the past would have saluted. Also this showed that there was a new momentum in clerical ringing. The first ten peals had taken the Guild 26 years. The next ten had taken a mere 6.

1971 saw the Guild go north again, to the Manchester Diocesan Conference House at Crawshawbooth in Rossendale. Decimalization of the currency had arrived, but not yet the rampant inflation that was just round the corner. The cost was £1.62½ per day, with children at half price. Blackburn and Manchester Cathedrals were visited. An attempt for a peal of Stedman Caters at Worsley was quickly abandoned, but Cambridge Major was scored at Newchurch-in-Rossendale. At the AGM Canon Felstead stood down as Vice-President, and Preb JHB Andrews was elected in his place. The 15 members present included Canons A A Muxlow and A Hodgson, and the Rev L R Pizzey for the first time. The recent financial reforms had allowed a good working balance of £13.92½ to be built up.

Only 15 members were resident when the Guild visited the "Gin & Jaguar" belt of Surrey in 1972. The Southwark Diocesan House at Wychcroft, near Bletchingley housed the party at a cost of £2.00 per day. Some others joined in during the days. Michael Stephens (President 1994-9) came for the first time. Many notable members, including John Andrews, were absent, but not so many of the peal ringers were among them, and so, in spite of the smallness of the party, peals on 10 and 8 were attempted, and for the first time since 1949 two peals were achieved during the Ringing Week. Roger Keeley conducted them both, Stedman Caters at Leatherhead and Yorkshire Major at Coleman's Hatch. Eleven members of the party took part in the peals. It was interesting to note that at the AGM the onset of inflation did not affect the annual donation to the Ringing World. It had formerly been half a guinea (10/6); this year it was 50p! A token of appreciation to the Surrey Association was expressed by a donation of 25p.

The following year, 1973, the Guild went north again, and stayed in the Ripon Diocesan House at Barrowby, near Harrogate. This tour had the unique distinction of ringing at FOUR cathedrals, viz. Wakefield, Bradford, York Minster and Ripon. No peal was even attempted because at Tadcaster we found that a funeral was due to take place shortly. The Verger kindly assured us that we could start, stop for a 20-minute break, and then go on again, but the rules did not seem to allow for that kind of peal, nor did the timetable permit a more orthodox approach! There were 16 residents, and three members living locally who joined in.



The Guild at Barwick-in-Elmet, 1973

In 1974 the Guild went to an exceedingly refined place, and for the last time stayed at a Christian hotel - the Cedars on the Esplanade in Frinton-upon-Sea, facing the Green Sward, where, according to the many notices, it was easier to know what could **not** be done on it than what could! The £13 charge for the four days included packed lunches; coach travel and other costs brought the total up to £16 per member. Essex and parts of Suffolk were covered in the ringing programme. One peal was attempted and scored, Lincolnshire Surprise Major at Henley, Suffolk. Sadly the President was unable to take part in the tour owing to spinal trouble, and so the Vice-President Preb JHB Andrews was the leader of the party and presided at the AGM. He was the only surviving Vice-President, because Canon Sheppard had died during the year. Peter Robbins, having taken on a much larger parish, stepped down as Secretary, and John Homfray was elected in his place. With his unique methods, and a variety of amazing duplicators, he was to fill this office with idiosyncratic distinction for twelve years. In contrast with previous years it was decided to make donations of £5 to both the Essex and Suffolk Guilds. Furthermore it was agreed to bring a proposal to next year's AGM to increase the subscription for life membership to 50p.

There now ensued a mini-drought in peals scored at the annual ringing week. 1978 was to be the next time such a peal was successful. In this period however peals were rung at other times. In July 1973, 1974 and 1976, at Drayton, Berks, peals of Cambridge, Rutland and Yorkshire were rung, all conducted by Roger Keeley. Roger wrote a little piece in the Ringing World telling the story of the 1973 peal. He recalled that in FE Robinson's time the rule was "No peal, no meal!" (and that sometimes hungry parishioners would bang on the doors during a peal attempt, hoping to put the ringers off and then eat the food that the visitors would not

be allowed to have). On this occasion the band muffed two or three attempts, and then adjourned to the Vicarage garden, where Pat Wood had prepared a magnificent meal, including strawberries and cream, and were duly fortified! They then returned to the tower, and scored the peal. Maybe if this practice had applied in the early days, FE Robinson might have rung 2000 peals! The 1976 peal was rung in memoriam Nicholas Coleridge whose untimely death was felt very keenly by the Guild. These peals brought the Guild's total to 30.

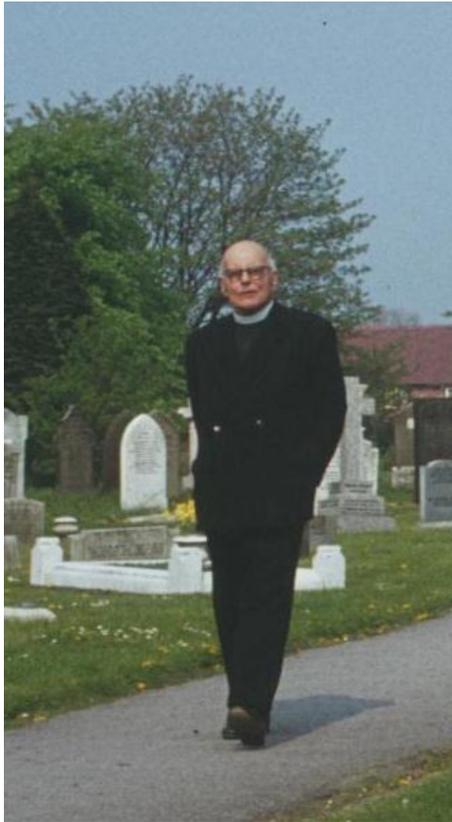


Raising the bells at Drayton before the peal of Cambridge Surprise Major, July 9th, 1973
(l to r) Peter Robbins (in his bearded period!), David Sansum, Arthur Muxlow, Michael Stephens.
(See next page)

Then in 1977 David Sansum hosted a gathering in the Midlands. Peals of Stedman Triples at Abbots Bromley, and Superlative Surprise Major at Lockington, Leics, on following days were conducted by Dale Barton.

CHAPTER 5 - THE ANDREWS PRESIDENCY

When the Guild met at Wadderton, near Bromsgrove in 1975, 17 members met without the President for the second year running. Vice-President Preb JHB Andrews was in the chair at the AGM, and it was revealed that the Rev RD StJ Smith wished to resign from the Presidency owing to his state of health and inability to attend the ringing weeks. Preb Andrews was elected President, and Roger StJ Smith and Peter Robbins Vice-Presidents. The



meeting duly agreed to the new subscription rate, and the Ringing World donation was raised to £1.00. Ernest Orland, who would be President from 1989-94, came for the first time. The ringing tour took place in and around Birmingham, and was the coldest one most members remembered, with snow falling on several days. It was hoped to try for a peal of Bristol (the Guild is still hoping!), but on arrival at Shirley, as at Tadcaster, preparations for a funeral were in evidence, so once more there was disappointment.

The next year, 1976, with a centre at Bishop Woodforde House, Ely, the Bristol was attempted again, at Trumpington. The participants believed that it would have been achieved had not the tenor rope broken. Interesting ringing took place in and around Cambridge, in the fen country, and into Norfolk, where a memorable Guild Evensong, with full Catholic ceremonial, was held in Peter Bond's church at Beetley, at which David Cawley assisted the Rector. 22 members took part in the tour, but the recent death of Canon C Elliott Wigg had deprived the Guild of another of the founder members. Another of them, Canon John Pelloe, formerly Archdeacon of Wisbech, who had not participated for many years, attended the AGM. First timer Patrick Wooster was present.

David Grimwood, a future Secretary and prolific conductor, and Bob Southwood, were elected to membership, and would soon play a prominent part in the life of the Guild.

Hampshire (mainly) provided the setting for the 1977 tour, which filled the Winchester Conference House at Old Alresford Place to capacity. 23 members were involved, together with family members. There were so many present that there was no problem about holding two simultaneous peal attempts on the Wednesday morning. The problem was in bringing them round, and although Plain Bob Major at Overton lasted much longer than Superlative at Whitchurch, neither stayed the course. Some of the other ringing was better, including a half course of Yorkshire Royal and Ashtead Surprise Major. David Smith, who was very active until his ringing career was curtailed by a stroke 20 years later, was elected to membership and joined in this year. At the AGM Canon KWH Felstead was elected as an additional Vice-President.

The Guild went back to its roots as it were by holding the 1978 tour in Devon, with the headquarters at the College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth. The college was a somewhat

intimidating place in which the Guild members seemed rather lost. It was at about this time that some departures from traditional practice began to be established. Worship during the Week had normally consisted of Holy Communion on the first morning, with the addition of Guild Evensong, often on the Wednesday. Pressures from new liturgical patterns were making themselves felt, and celebrations of Holy Communion on other mornings, and even the use of "Series 3", began to occur. On the Tuesday there was a short raid into Cornwall, but the prize objective of Liskeard was a 'lock-out'. All the rest of the ringing was in Devon. Yorkshire Royal, Bristol, Pudsey and London Major were all rung, and 4-spliced nearly! Two peals were rung, both conducted by Roger Keeley, Plain Bob Major at Plympton St Maurice, and Yorkshire at Buckland-in-the-Moor. John EF Tredennick, a founder member, rang in the first one. He had not been seen for many years, but was now to join in the ringing weeks in his latter years.



PEAL OF YORKSHIRE

at Buckland in the Moor, April 7th, 1978

Peter Robbins photographed the rest of the band:

Roger Keeley (C)
 Chris Marshall
 David Smith
 Bob Southwood
 David Sansum
 Michael Stephens
 John Homfray

At the AGM **Canon AA Muxlow** was remembered. He had died in August 1977 after a short illness, aged 61. He and his wife, who was also an accomplished ringer, had not been joining in the Guild's activities for long, although he had been a member since about 1950. He first rang the tenor to a peal of Stedman Caters, and then was in two surprise major peals, between 1972 and 1974, and his death deprived the Guild of one who had started making a significant contribution.

The Revs JA Ellis and N De Keyser (later to be Secretary) were both elected to membership in 1978. This year there was "no time" to discuss a contentious issue which a member raised about the possible future ordination of women, and the next year the matter was again shied away from. It would become a more serious source of dissension in the next decade.

In 1979 the Week was held mainly in West and North Staffordshire, and the Potteries. The Lichfield Retreat House at Shallowford, near Stone, was the centre. John Nixon (later to be

the Guild's third Ringing Master) took part and was duly elected at the AGM. Two peal attempts failed this year, but the Peal Book does contain a peal in 1979. Members gathered at Lydney in Gloucestershire in October, and scored the Guild's (and clergy's) first peal of Surprise Royal - Cambridge. Roger Keeley called a composition by one of the first generation 'greats', the Rev H Law James.

1980 produced another first for the Guild. The Ringing Week was held in Northamptonshire, centred on Knuston Hall. 23 members came, and this suggested the arranging of a second tower on the Wednesday morning so that two simultaneous peals could be attempted once again. This time both succeeded. Lawrence Pizey conducted Grandsire Triples at Weldon, and Roger Keeley Plain Bob Major at Burton Latimer. The Rev Ivor Richards had died during the previous year. He had not joined in the Guild's ringing since 1970 in Swansea, but had been one of the mainstays from pre-war times. Later this same year another peal was rung in Northants, of Minor in 7 methods, conducted by John Nixon.

The next year, 1981, the Guild travelled as far north as it is possible to go in England. There had been heavy snow on Low Sunday, even though this occurred as late as April 26th! Members duly made it successfully - 26 of them, including a welcome reappearance of Roger StJ Smith. Members stayed at the Newcastle Diocesan House, Shepherd's Dene, Riding Mill. At the AGM it was decided to have only one Vice-President, and Peter Robbins was elected to that position. The scenery, churches and ringing were all enjoyed. It was recorded that at St John's Newcastle a band rang 4-spliced, then a completely different band rang Yorkshire, and there were still surprise ringers sitting out! The peal attempt for Cambridge Major at Brancepeth (recently most sadly destroyed by fire) was however unsuccessful.

In 1982 mid-south-Wales was visited. After staying at several Anglican and one Quaker house the headquarters were in a Methodist establishment, Coleg Trefecca near Talgarth, once the home of Howell Harris, an 18th century Methodist Reformer. The charge was £27.00, including packed lunches, apart from coach and other extras. This was a pleasant tour attended by 21 members, with spring-like weather, in lovely surroundings, and some good ringing was managed. Two straightforward peals were achieved, giving two fresh clerical conductors an opportunity. Michael Stephens conducted Bob Major at Clifford, and David Sansum Bob Triples at Llantilio Crosseny. After the peal at the latter the Vicar, the Rev JR Selby, who had been learning with the local band, was elected to membership, but he died before the next AGM. Ron Lucas was not in either peal, although he took part in the tour. Sadly he too died shortly after, on July 3rd, and in July a band with David Sansum as conductor rang a peal in his memory - Grandsire Triples at Ashby Folville, Leics. At the AGM in 1982 it was decided for the first time to make individual donations of £2 to the towers rung in.

The West Country called again the following year, 1983, and the 24 members attending enjoyed Halsway Manor at Crowcombe at the foot of the Quantocks. The charge was higher - £40.00, but members seemed well satisfied with the magnificent house and its surroundings. The bells of Somerset were enjoyed as usual, and one of two peal attempts was successful - Yorkshire Major at St George's Wilton in Taunton. The Rev Brooke Kingsmill Lunn took part for the first time.

Frodsham in Cheshire was the venue in 1984 at Foxhill, the Chester Diocesan House. 23 members attended, and ex-President, Roger StJ Smith met the Guild at Chester Cathedral. The assembling of Guild history was dealt with at the AGM [this work depends heavily on

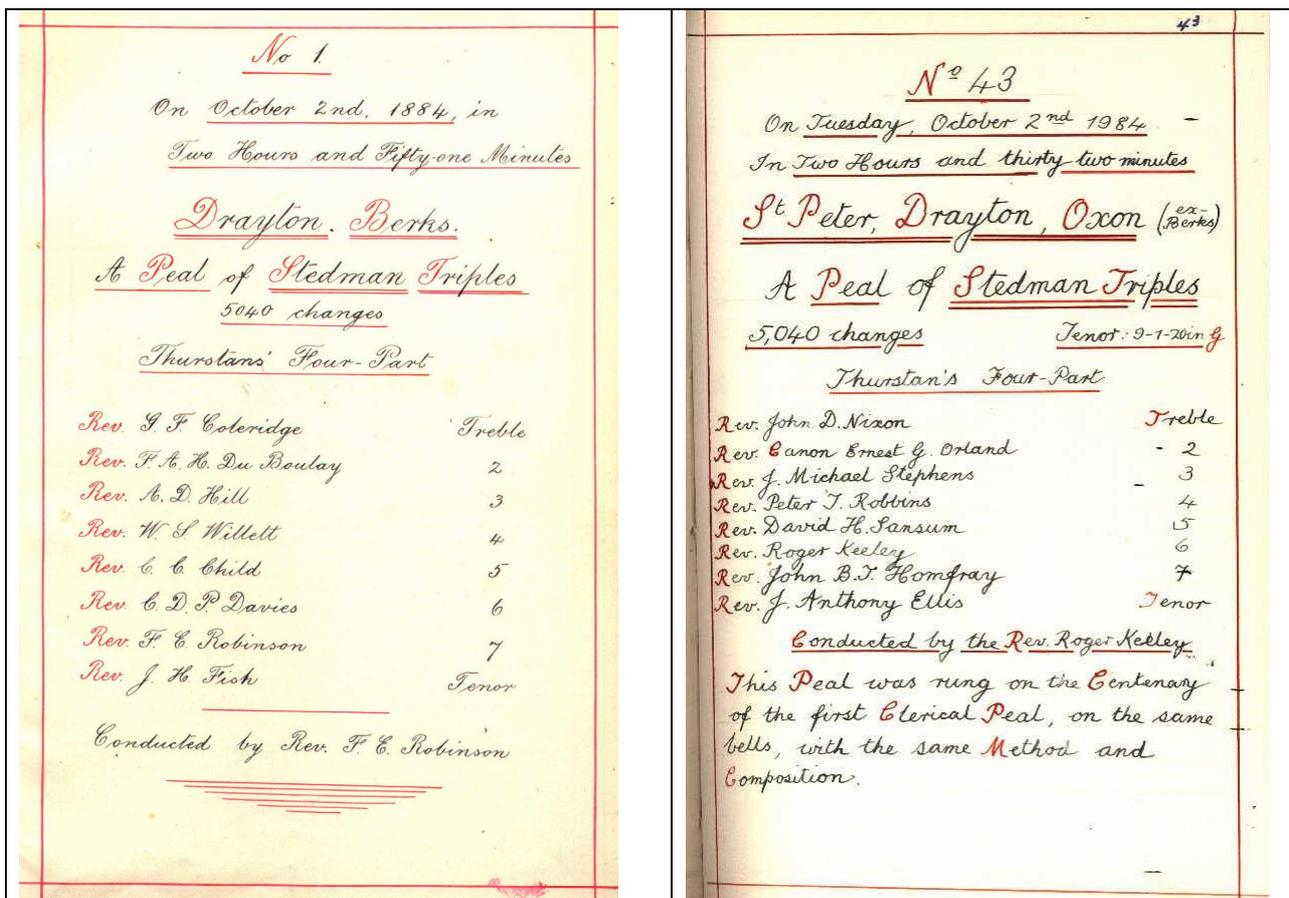
what was done at this time], and copies of the existing Guild Constitution were circulated so that there might be discussion on the subject next year. Oddly enough the report by John Nixon in the Ringing World was headed "Thirty five years before we return" - alluding to the vetoes frequently pronounced by older members on suggestions of future venues, on the grounds that the Guild has already been there - and it transpires that about 35 years ago is seen by those venerable gentlemen as virtually yesterday! The irony is that the Guild returned to the very same establishment for a tour covering different towers precisely 15 years later! One peal attempt failed this year, but another succeeded, at Over, where Roger Keeley conducted Superlative.



THE PEAL BAND (Superlative, at Over, Ches, May 4th, 1984): Michael Stephens, Peter Robbins, John Homfray, David Sansum, John Nixon, Tony Ellis, Roger Keeley (C), Ernest Orland

The rest of the ringing seems to have been rather undistinguished, and the tour was complicated by people getting lost, and by ropes breaking and giving all sorts of trouble. At the re-election of the existing officers at the AGM there was a warm tribute to the President, Preb John Andrews, but he warned the meeting that he felt he should retire next year. Perhaps he had intimations of mortality which were not perceived by the members. It is a fact, however, that after a very short illness John Andrews died on Michaelmas Day, this same year, 1984 - still President of the Guild, and still Vicar of Chittlehampton, at the age of 79.

By coincidence a peal ringing gathering had been arranged shortly afterwards, and on October 1st a peal was rung at Highclere in Hampshire in thanksgiving for the life of one of the last of the founder members, and one who had served the Guild so constantly and with such distinction. The peal was Yorkshire Surprise Major, and Roger Keeley was the conductor.



The following day another landmark peal was rung, also conducted by Roger Keeley, celebrating the centenary of the first clerical peal. It was Stedman Triples, rung on FE Robinson's old bells at St Peter's Drayton, which was now deemed to be in Oxfordshire. The date was the same; the method was the same; the composition was the same; the only differences were that one hundred years separated the two clerical peals, and the modern one took less time to ring. In the reproductions from the Guild Peal Book printed above, the "No 1" of the left hand entry tells that it is the first of the series of 11 peals rung by clergy before the formation of the Guild. This entry is in the lovely copperplate writing that Canon C Carew Cox employed to record the pre-Guild peals (and also the first 10 of the peals scored by the Guild between 1938 and 1964). The "No 43" on the right hand side is of course in the series of peals actually rung by the Guild of Clerical Ringers. Regrettably no one has been able to emulate the seemingly effortless facility of Canon Cox in the recording of peals in the Guild's Peal Book so beautifully.

CHAPTER 6 - THE PRESENT ERA

We have traced the story of the Guild from its origins to the death of the last founder-member President. It was perhaps a neat coincidence that the memorial peal for John Andrews and the centenary peal at Drayton came together, because the autumn of 1984 marked a watershed in the whole history and character of the Guild. In many ways it has been a different Guild from then on, and at the beginning of the year 2000 we are still seeing the process of evolution. Our final chapter will not be built up round the orderly progression of the annual Ringing Weeks. Instead we will look at different aspects of the life of the Guild of Clerical Ringers as it has moved into the second century of organised clerical ringing, and as it stands on the threshold of a fresh century and millennium.

The Annual Ringing Weeks.

Some things don't change, and the one thing that has continued without basic alteration is the Low Week tour, beginning after lunch on the Monday, followed by three full days, and normally ending after lunch on the Friday. The first tour after John Andrews' death was held at London Colney, a former Anglican convent now a Roman Catholic Conference centre, and this involved ringing at St Paul's Cathedral and other notable London churches. Once again the directive went out that dog-collars had to be worn if the Guild was to be acceptable in the belfry of St Paul's, and the company managed to comply with this requirement! Two years later Launde Abbey in Leicestershire provided the centre. Launde Abbey was revisited in 1998, and London Colney is scheduled again for 2000. All this, with the return visit to Frodsham in 1999, shows that the clergy are either (i) not bound by ancient tradition any longer, or (ii) so hidebound that they frequently revisit sites of former tours! However, in the favoured parts of England there are so many good rings of bells these days that it has proved possible to work out completely different programmes based on the same centre.

Without going into wearisome detail it can be said that over the past 15 years the attendances have fluctuated much as in former times, that the ringing has varied from Grandsire Doubles for the less skilled to 8-Spliced for the self-styled experts, that 12 bells still often pose a challenge not wholly overcome, that striking is not always impeccable, and that "Go rounds" is still heard too often. The peal attempts over these years have had varied success, but in 1992, when the centre was at the Coventry Diocesan House at Offchurch, the Monday morning started with two 6-bell bands scoring peals 70 miles apart, and then joining forces at the first official tower of the afternoon. In the other years one of the most notable features has been that five of the peals rung during the Ringing Weeks have been on ten bells. The 1994 tour, based on the former Salisbury/Wells Theological College in the Close at Salisbury, was memorable for two reasons. It involved taking to the water again when members crossed to Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour to ring at the eight there. And it was at about this moment that members started being struck down by a 'bug', and the remainder of the time together was punctuated by members falling by the wayside! One thing has remained constant over recent years - the steady increase in the cost of the weeks! In the 1930s the charge was 10/6 per night. When the Guild revisited Launde Abbey in 1998 the cost (including coach travel on two days) was £132, or £33 per day. Has there been a sixty-fold increase in prices in sixty years? But the Ringing Weeks have continued to be the

central focus of the Guild's life and activity and doubtless will be so for as long as the Guild continues.



THE GUILD AT SALISBURY, APRIL 1994 (before the bug struck!)

(l to r) Ivan Howitt, Chris Marshall, Selagh Melville, Tony Ellis, John Greene, Reg Stretton, Neil Sheard, Ernest Orland (Retiring President), John Nixon, Gary Mann, Michael Stephens (President Elect), Hugh Lawrance (kneeling), Nick De Keyser, Molly Stephens, David Smith, Gordon Benfield, Patrick Wooster, Peter Robbins, David Sansum, John Shephard-Walwyn, Malcolm Melville, Sarah Howitt, Dorothy Stretton Simeon Howitt, Jennifer Mole, Anne Shephard-Walwyn

Regular turnover of Officers.

When the Guild first met in 1985 following the death of Preb John Andrews the Vice-President, Peter Robbins, took the chair at the AGM, and was duly elected as the new President. Roger Keeley became Vice-President. This was the start of a period of constitutional change, during which a decision was made that offices should be held for a maximum of five years. Consequently in 1989 Peter Robbins, having had a part year as acting President and four as President stood down, and was succeeded by Ernest Orland. When his five years had elapsed Michael Stephens took over, and in 1999 Christopher Marshall, now a Prebendary, Master of the Bath and Wells Association, and recently retired from his parish at Wiveliscombe, became the Guild's eighth President. Similarly with the post of Hon Secretary and Treasurer, in 1986 John Homfray stood down and Nick De Keyser took over. In 1990 he resigned and David Sansum took his place. In 1995 David Grimwood succeeded and in 2000 a new Secretary will be required. It has been good that the top offices, whether considered as honorific or as entailing responsibility, have been shared around in a Guild, in which there is a wealth of talent and ability. The practice now followed is more in keeping with the spirit of the age than the former procedure whereby only death or serious incapacity brought about change at the top.

In 1986 the new office of Ringing Master was created, and Roger Keeley, already Vice-President, was the automatic choice. In 1987 both positions became vacant because of

Roger's sudden death in January, and Canon Ernest Orland was elected to both offices. When Ernest became President in 1989 Michael Stephens became Vice-President, but John Nixon was appointed Ringing Master. Reg Stretton succeeded him in 1994, and David Sansum in turn took over in 1999. The creation of the office of Ringing Master has been particularly influential in the development of the Guild's life, because the holders of this office have not confined themselves to overseeing the ringing at the annual ringing week, but have increasingly taken on the responsibility of arranging peals and other ringing activities throughout the year, and the effects of this can be seen in the next section.

Additional Ringing Occasions.

The most remarkable change in the Guild over the past 15 years has been the amount of other ringing that has taken place besides the Low Week regular tour. Of course this sort of thing can be traced back as far as 1959, and there were some important mini-tour gatherings in the 1960s and 1970s. Peals are by no means the only form of activity for ringers, but for members of a non-territorial guild they can be a significant focus of guild life. It is a significant fact that the two special peals in 1984 were numbers 42 and 43 of the Guild's total, compiled over a period of 46 years. In the 15 years since then the number has risen to 90 - nearly 50 more! The only month of the year in which a peal does not seem to have been scored is January. This development has naturally been assisted by the fact that the clergy of today, even the retired ones, are generally in comfortable financial circumstances, possess motor cars, and can make use of the motorway network, all of which enables bands to assemble almost anywhere even for a ten o'clock start; those still in full time work can get home, perhaps pay a hospital visit, and chair a PCC meeting before the day is over! This has enabled a number of excellent performances to be notched up during this period. There was the first clerical peal on 12 bells, Stedman Cinques, conducted by Dale Barton, at St Paul's Bedford on October 10th, 1987. Yorkshire Surprise Royal was rung at Saltby and Kent Royal in the Granta variation at Ewerby. Surprise Major peals have included Newbold-on-Avon (at Newbold-on-Avon), Quedgeley, Biddenden, Pudsey, Rutland, Uxbridge, and 4-spliced, even though Bristol is still elusive. On six bells several peals in seven methods have been rung, but not yet one of Seven Surprise. There has been one year, 1996, in which seven peals were rung.

Extra ringing has not only consisted of peal attempts. In 1997 a number of members with some friends visited the Irish Republic, and rang at all the available bells there. In 1999 a slightly larger number completed the conquest of Ireland by touring the North. It remains to be seen whether the lure of Scotland, North America, Southern Africa, the Antipodes, or even the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man (nearly as expensive to reach!) will provoke the next foreign expedition. After all we already have flying bishops. We ought to have flying clerical ringers.

The Guild reconstituted.

The eighties were a period in which change was forced upon the Guild both from internal and financial forces, and from external events in the Church. The first pressure came from inflation causing money to lose its value. From the seventies distinctions had had to be made between the full body of members, most of whom had paid 5/- to be a member for life, and those who were active, and who wanted to be kept in touch with the plans and programmes of the Guild. A dual list of members emerged, some of whom paid additional

money so as to be kept in touch with the Guild's plans, and the remainder who were only circularised at longer intervals. Eventually the drastic decision was made to abolish life membership as the basis of the Guild. Life membership was reserved as an accolade to be conferred upon chosen individuals who had given distinguished service to the Guild. Ordinary membership was to be for five years at a time, and to be at rates which could be revised by the Guild every now and again. The result of this was to produce a reduced membership (it had risen to well over 100) but one that was far more realistic, even though it is still a fact that only a minority of the members could genuinely be described as active Guild participants. The number of members has crept up again to over 80, and a new sort of member can be discerned - one who does not attend the annual ringing weeks, but who is available for peal attempts in their area of the country.

The second pressure came from the opening of the ordained ministry to women. The first rumblings in the Guild came when ECUSA was responding to urgings to open the way to the ordination of women, and the issue was raised at the AGMs in 1978, and the years following. There are of course two interrelated issues here: first the theological understandings of members in relation to the desirability, or even the possibility, of women becoming priests; and secondly an innate reluctance on the part of some male groupings to admit women to membership - the M.C.C. and the Ancient Society of College Youths are two examples of this - where obviously theological considerations do not apply. It is fair to say that both influences were present when the Guild came to contemplate the possibility of women actually being members, as opposed to accompanying the party as ringing or non-ringing associates (and being given the job of preparing packed lunches!). The matter came to a head in 1985. The Welsh Church had by this time opened the diaconate to women, and an application for membership was received from the Rev Jennifer Mole. In these years, when the Cold War still raged in the outer world and spy stories abounded, anyone named Mole was viewed with suspicion and there was genuine puzzlement among the members - was this a real person or was it a spoof! A close straw vote revealed that the members were almost evenly divided on the matter, and the issue was deferred to the following year. Then duly the applicant's authenticity was confirmed, and she was elected, but not without opposition, as the first female member of the Guild. The question of the admission of women priests did not arise at this stage because neither the Welsh Church, nor the Church of England when it followed suit and opened the diaconate to women, moved straight away to the priesting of women. As the years passed a few ladies became members of the Guild, and Jennifer Mole was in fact the first lady member to take part in a peal. When women were finally admitted to the priesthood this proved to have a divisive effect on the Guild, as in the Church at large. A few terminated their membership because women priests would now be members, and some others are unhappy to the extent of absenting themselves on occasions when women priests celebrate Holy Communion. On the whole it can be said that the Guild has adjusted itself to the change neither better nor worse than the English and Welsh Churches have. One Guild member was in fact elevated to become one of the "flying bishops". Michael Houghton was consecrated as second Bishop of Ebbsfleet, and was actively planning to become the first Bishop to ring a peal for the Clerical Guild, but his premature death after less than a year in office prevented the realisation of that ambition.

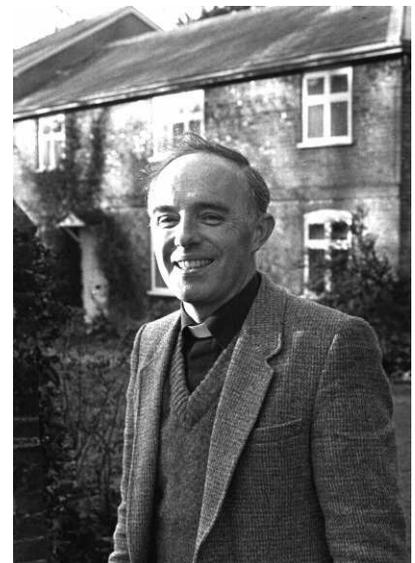
A related issue was whether or not members had to be in communion with the See of Canterbury. From time to time enquiries from Free Church ministers had been received, but the confining of membership to bishops, priests and deacons had always been maintained. With the possibility of episcopally-ordained ringing clergy moving into another communion

looming up, a change has now been made in the rules. Now any duly ordained clergy or ministers of a main-stream denomination, from Roman Catholic to Free Church, may belong to the Guild, whether or not they are members of the Anglican Communion.

Personalities.

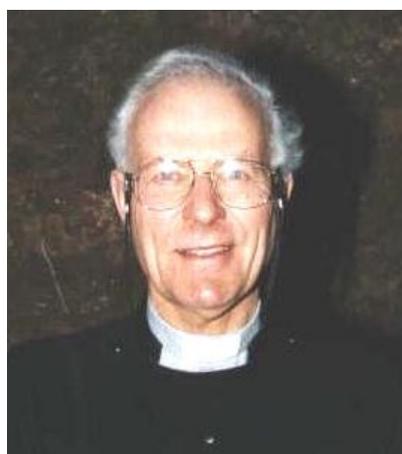
A feature of the present day Guild of Clerical Ringers is that there is a much greater amount of talent among the members. Seven members have shared the conducting since 1987. This period began with an unexpected loss at the beginning of 1987. No sooner was Roger Keeley appointed to the newly created position of Ringing Master than his sudden death occurred. Two bands rang peals in thanksgiving for his life. Michael Stephens conducted a peal of Minor at Padworth, one of the three rings of bells in the care of Tony Ellis at that time. David Sansum called a peal of Grandsire Triples on his own bells at Ashbourne.

Roger Keeley was a remarkable man. Slight in stature, and, surprisingly to those who rang with him, subject to epileptic fits, he was a good bell handler, and turned in many a tenor to a peal. He learned to ring as a boy at Lyme Regis where Canon Cox had set the highest standards, and rang his first peal at the age of 13½. He became Master of the London University Society when he was studying at King's, and was ordained in 1960. He had the good fortune to fall in with various outstanding ringers in different areas where he served, and with Tony Peake rang a peal in 165 surprise major methods in 1967. Later Brian Woodruffe moved into his parish of Whiteparish near Salisbury, and he then did a great amount of handbell ringing, including some long lengths. Roger was the Master of the Salisbury Guild for his last 17 years. When ringing a peal he seemed to be completely unflappable, scarcely even to be observing what was going on, but was very much in command. He rang 26 peals for the Guild between 1965 and 1986, and of these he conducted 19. Altogether he rang 509 peals. Others have rung more, and others have held higher office in the Guild. Other clergy have had a wider influence on the Exercise or been greater figures in the Church. But the achievements of the Guild in the years following his sudden death on January 30th 1987, aged 51, are built upon the foundations he was laying down in the 1970s and 1980s, and he was one of the most important clergy to have belonged to the Guild.



Nick De Keyser. In 1977 Nick started learning to ring when a curate at Yateley in Hampshire. Since those days he has served in Lincolnshire, Greater Manchester and Kent, and currently is an incumbent in Dover, and a member of the Canterbury Cathedral band. He has rung 62 peals, of which 23 have been for the Guild - including a peal of minor in 1994 by six clergy serving in the Diocese of Canterbury. He succeeded John Homfray as Guild Secretary in 1987 and served for four years, and in 1999 was elected Vice-President of the Guild.

John Homfray took up ringing at Oxford and rang not only with the OUS but also with the CUG when he went to Ridley Hall. His first tour with the Clerical Guild was at Bridport in 1958, and for a time in the seventies and eighties he was the member with the greatest number of peals for the Guild. His total at present is 33. In 1974 he became the Guild's Hon Secretary and Treasurer, and continued in this office for twelve years. For a few years he was unable to take a very active part in Guild affairs during the long illness of his sister with whom he shared his home. Retired now, he is able to ring with the Guild more often.



Christopher Marshall learned to ring on the bells of the Somerset parish where his father was rector, and following ordination in 1957, and a curacy at Leatherhead in Surrey, he has served all his time in the Bath and Wells Diocese, and lives in retirement not far from his last parish of Wiveliscombe. Since 1985 he has been Master of the Bath & Wells Diocesan Association, and to date has rung 252 peals. He joined the Clerical Guild immediately after ordination, attended his first Ringing Week in 1958, and has maintained his interest ever since - having rung 21 peals for the Guild by now. His ready wit, and earthy but always kindly sense of humour, coupled with considerable ringing ability, have guaranteed him a place in the affections of the Guild, and in 1999 he was elected as the new President to guide the Guild into the new Millennium.

Ernest Orland has had, like many clergy, an on/off ringing career! As a young layman he took up ringing at home in Northamptonshire, and was active in the Peterborough Guild for 13 years. Then training for ordination and learning to be a priest took up most of his energies for a time, until as an incumbent he was freer to organise his time. He served as President of the Peterborough Guild from 1967-81. His first peal was in 1947, and his present total is 281 - 22 of which have been for the Clerical Guild. He did not become a member until 1975, but since then he has achieved a meteoric rise, following Roger Keeley as both Vice-President and as Ringing Master in 1987, and then becoming President in 1989. After a set back caused by heart problems he is again ringing peals.



Peter Robbins has the second largest number of peals for the Guild, at present nearly 50, rung between 1964 and 1999. However this number forms just under a third of his personal tally (159 at the last count), and that has taken him more than 50 years, so he is not in the



same league as some of the other clerical ringers; nor is he a conductor - 2 peals of Doubles really hardly count! He began ringing at Oxford in 1946, and also rang with the CUG whilst he was at Westcott House. The largest number of his peals was rung for the Kent County Association, mostly when he was in the Canterbury diocese for 14 years. His principal achievement in ringing was to marry Betty Spice, who was one of the outstanding lady ringers of her generation. With 42 attendances at the Ringing Weeks he has outstripped everyone else in this respect. He was one of the pioneers of arranging peal gatherings outside the normal Ringing Week. A past Secretary, Vice-President, and President, he now enjoys life in the Guild from the back benches, and is still interested in ringing peals - hoping at least to achieve 50 for the Guild.

Canon David Sansum in 1996 became the first clergyman since the Rev F E Robinson to



The band who rang David Sansum's 1,000th peal at Ashbourne. L to R: Ian Brown, Jackie Burns, Andrew Burns, Kath Brown, Keith Woolley, David Sansum, Gordon Halls, Pat Halls.

have rung 1,000 peals as a priest of the Church, amassed over a period of 33 years. Three other Guild members have rung more than 1000 peals: Barry Fry, actually rang over 1,000 before he was ordained in 1983, Brian Harris, who was ordained in 1980, reached his 1000 in 1983, and Reg Stretton rang his 1000th in the year in which he was ordained; all have rung a good number since. But David Sansum didn't learn to ring until after he was ordained, and so every peal was rung as a clergyman [FE Robinson rang about 8 peals before he was ordained, but his final total was about 1250, so he rang well over 1000 as a clergyman]. David has rung more peals than anyone else for the Clerical Guild - at present over 50, and

has conducted several of them. He was in the Centenary clerical peal, in the peal of Cinques, in the first clerical peals of Cambridge and Yorkshire Royal, and the clerical London Major happened to be his own first in that method. He has also rung in a peal of Doubles by six Rural Deans, and one of Minor by six Prebendaries or Canons. In the Guild he has served as Secretary, and is currently Ringing Master.

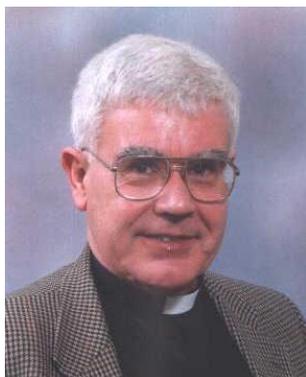


David Grimwood has been Secretary and Treasurer from 1995 to 2000. He learned to ring in Canterbury while at school. During training for the ministry he dropped out of ringing, but Dale Barton encouraged him to join the Guild while he was serving his Title in the Newcastle Diocese. Moves to Hampshire and Kent followed, and now he is ringing master at All Saints' Maidstone. Organisation has loomed large in his Guild activities, having arranged the N.E. tour in 1981, and the two trips to Ireland. Reg Stretton encouraged him to take up conducting, and he has now conducted 16 of the 21 peals he has rung for the Guild in recent years.

Michael Stephens has just completed a term as President of the Guild from 1994 to 1999. He spent his ministry in the Diocese of Canterbury, and conducted the peal of Minor rung by clergy of that diocese in 1994. Among his 35 peals for the Guild has been the first clerical peal on 12. Michael started ringing as long ago as 1945, and rang the first of his peals (his personal total is approximately 116) in 1946. His first 50 peals took only 10 years, but since then, as he has observed, marriage, children, and the cares of parish life, slowed down his ringing career, but since joining the Guild he has done a great deal more ringing than in some former years. His wife, Molly, in due course learned to ring, and normally accompanies him to the Ringing Weeks.



John Nixon became the third Ringing Master of the Guild in 1989. The process of organising more peal attempts in between Ringing weeks accelerated during his tenure of office, helped by the fact that he himself held a post in the Oxford Diocese, very centrally placed among the more active members of the Guild. His own personal tally of peals is 150 (conducted 17), and he has rung 29 for the Guild. In 1998 he moved to the USA, and therefore has been inactive in the Guild since then, but he has hopes of resuming his contact from time to time.



Dr Reginald Stretton was a well established ringer when he joined the Guild as a Deacon in 1992. He had started ringing almost 40 years previously in Derby, and in fact rang his 1000th peal in the same year in which he was ordained and rang his first for the Clerical Guild. In no time he was elevated to become the Guild's fourth Ringing Master, and during his tenure of the post there was a considerable increase in the number of peals attempted and scored in between Ringing Weeks. Among his personal achievements he has completed the "alphabet" of methods in Delight Major, and in Surprise Major and Royal, and he has also conducted many peals.

Nicholas Webb. The Guild suffered a great loss when Nick Webb died in 1992 at the age of 53. He had learned to ring before ordination, and returned to his northern roots for most of his ministry. From 1970 he was Vicar of Thornhill, and he was able to install a ring of 8 bells (from Cross Stone, Todmorden) in the tower there. He suffered a stroke in 1987, but recovered to the extent of being able to ring one or two more peals including one three months before he died (his personal total was 84, including 8 for the Guild). His presence at the ringing weeks was always much appreciated and his absence has been keenly felt.



CHAPTER 7

FULL LIST OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE GUILD

GLOSSARY:

Ord. - Date of ordination as Deacon.

PG - Pre-Guild; i.e. attended clerical ringing tours pre-WW1 or 1930s

FM - Founder Member (1937-9). Name printed in *bold italics*.

M - Became member.

W - attended one or more Ringing Weeks.

P - rang one or more peals for the Guild.

⌘Membership lapsed with the new Constitution in 1987.

d - date of death when known.

Current Member, 2000

Allan, A D H	Ord. 1898. M by 1948. W. d 1960/61.
<i>Amies, J F</i>	Ord. 1913. FM. W. d c1973.
<i>Andrews, J H B</i>	Ord. 1929. PG. FM.W.P(4) Sec 1953-68, Pres 1975-84. d 1984.
Arthur, J S	Ord. 1924. M 1958. ⌘
Baker, T J W	Ord. 1961. M 1984.⌘
Baldwin, J C	Ord. 1983. M 1987.
Ballard, D	Ord. 1907 M 1953. W. d c1963
Barton, D	Ord. 1973. M 1974. W. P(11)
Baycock, P L	Ord. 1966. M 1970.
Benfield, G	Ord. 1980. M 1992. W. P(1)
Bennett, M E	Ord. 1961. M 1976.⌘
<i>Benson, E G</i>	Ord. 1928. PG. FM.W.P(3) d 1961.
<i>Benson, H G</i>	Ord. 1924. FM.W.P(3) d
Birch, L J	Ord. 1931. M 1951. d 19??
Blackman, P R	Ord. 1955. M 1958. W.
Blyth, A C	Ord. 1922. M 1956. W. d 1960/1
Blyth, E W	Ord. 1911. M by 1952. D
Board, D L	Ord. 1921. M 1950. W. d 1965/6
Bond, P N	Ord. 1962. M 1963. W. d 1981
<i>Bonner, F</i>	Ord. 1935. FM. d 1951/2 .
Boulsover, P J	Ord. 1940. M by 1948. W.⌘
Brett, D A A	Ord. 1955. M 1960.⌘
Brett, P G C	Ord. 1961. M 1984.
Brewster, D P	Ord. 1958. M 1961. W.⌘
Bridge, W G	Ord. 1933. M by 1949. W. d between 1986 and 1993.
Brinkworth, C E C	Ord.1936. M 1961. d 1979/80
Brookes, D C	Ord. 1986. M 1990. P(2-)
Bryan, P J M	Ord 1948. M 1956. Res. 1974
Bryant, R G	Ord. 1956. M 1957. P(1) d 1998
Bunce, R F	Ord. 1957. M 1961. Res. 1971
Burnett, D	Ord. 1969. M 1972.⌘
Burslem C D J G	Ord. 1959. M 1992. W.
Caw, H M	Ord. 1995. M 1996.
Cawley, D L	Ord. 1972. M 1974. W. P(4)
Chamberlain, R C	Ord. 1978. M 1987
Chilpin, C G	Ord. 1978. M 1997.
Clayton, A E H	Ord. 1963. M 1964. W. P(1)
Clements, E G	Ord. 1979. M 1990.
Cole, P G L	Ord. 1952. M 1973.
<i>Coleridge, G F</i>	Ord. 1884. PG. FM. First President, 1837 - 1946. d 1949.
Coleridge, N F D	Ord. 1950. M 1951. W. d 1977.

Collins, J Ord. M 1987. Not clearly identified.

Conybeare, W J Ord. 1898. FM. d by 1956/7.

Cooper, M Ord. ? M 1998. In Australia.

Copeman, R Ord. 1882. FM. d by 1946.

Coussmaker C R C Ord. 1960. M 1961.

Coutts, J Ord. 1940. M by 1952.⌘

Cox, C C Ord. 1909. PG. FM. W.P(6) President, 1946 - 1964. d 1964.

Cox, E V Ord. 1904. PG. FM. W.P(1) Secretary 1937 - 1953. d 1961.

Curtis, L R Ord. 1993. M 1994.

Dart, T H Ord. 1931. M 1963.⌘

Davies, A C F Ord. 1937. M by 1952. W.

Davis, K C Ord. 1939. M by 1949. W. d 1974/5

Davey, A Ord. 1977. M 1979 W.

De Keyser, N D L Ord. 1975. M 1978. W. P(23-)

Derham, H K Ord. 1991. M 2000

Dorrington, R B Ord. 1981. M 1982. P(3-)

Druce, B L Ord. 1960. M 1999.

Edwards, M W (USA) M 1975.⌘

Edwards, F Ll Ord. 1902. PG. FM. W. d 1956.

Edwards, R D St G Ord. 1899. FM. W. d 1957/8.

Ellis, J A Ord. 1972. M 1978. W. P(31-)

Ellison, G A Ord 1935 Bp of Chester/London, M 1955. d by 1993

Errington, S Ord. M 1999

Evans, S M Ord. 1954. M 1959. W. P(17)

Farrow, R P Ord. 1902. PG. FM. W.d 1961.

Felstead, K W H Ord. 1937. M by 1948. W.P(9) Res. 1988. d 1994

Fielding, J J Ord. 1954. M 1960.⌘

Fisher, D S Ord. M 1999

Foran, A J Ord. 1988. M 1990. W.

Ford, D E Ord. 1958. M 1965. W. (Brother John Derek, SSF from 1972)⌘

Fry, B J Ord. 1983. M 1984. W. P(2-)

Fry, R O Ord. 1960. M 1961. W. P(6)⌘

Galley, G C Ord. 1958. M 1962. W.P(3)

Gentry, M Ord. M 1999

Gibbons, D A Ord. 1984. M 1987. P(5-)

Glasspool, J M Ord. 1990. M 1996.

Godfrey, W T Ord. 1969. M 1972.

Goodman, D G Ord. 1961. M 1965.⌘

Graham, A S D Ord. 1960. M 1972.⌘

Graham, G G Ord. 1951. M 1954.⌘

Grainger, B Ord. 1964. M 1971. W. P(2)

Greatbatch, J C Ord. 1983. M 1990. P(1)

Green, S M Ord. 1995. M 1996.

Greene, J H Ord. 1949. M 1975. W.

Grimwood, D W Ord. 1974. M 1976. W. P(22) Secretary, 1995-2000

Hall, W N Ord. 1954. M 1978.

Hallett R Ord. 1949. M c1978.⌘

Harris, B Ord. 1980. M 1988. W. P(8)

Hart, M S Ord. 1963. M 1967. W. P(7)

Harvie, P J Ord. 1962. M 1992.

Hearn, T P Ord. 1942. M 1950. W.

Herbert, C J Ord. 1962. M 1974. ⌘

Hoare, K G Ord. 1927. M 1952.⌘

Hodgson, A Ord. 1934. M 1949. W. d 1986/93.

Homfray, J B T Ord. 1954. M 1958. W.P(34-) Secretary 1974 - 1986.

Hope, N E Ord. 1930. FM. W. d 1957.

Houghton, D J Ord. 1971. M 1973.

Houghton, MA	Ord. 1980. Bp of Ebbsfleet . M 1981. P(2) d 1999
Howitt, I R	Ord. 1985. M 1988. W. P(8-)
Howitt, J L	Ord. 1962. M 1973.☞
Hughes, J M	Ord. 1971. M 1987.
Hulton, C B	Ord. 1903. M after 1939. d 1946/7
Huntriss, J C	Ord. 1974. M 1975.☞
Hurst-Bannister M B StL	Ord.1944. M 1957.☞
Hutchings, L B	Ord. 1960. M 1968.☞
James, A Rhys	Ord. 1902. FM. W.P(1) d. 1952/3.
James,E Bankes	Ord. 1896. PG. FM. W. First Vice-President. d 1947.
Jones, R E L	Ord. 1940. M 1954. d by 1985
Keeley, R	Ord. 1960, M 1961. W. P(24). d 1987
Ketchley, L G	Ord. 1912. M 1950. d
Kingdon, J	Ord 1912. M 1949. W. d 1961.
Kirkman, T	Ord. 1994. M 1997. P(3)
Lawrance, H N	Ord. 1985. M 1991. W. P(2-)
Lempriere, N E	Ord. 1957. M 1963
Lees, J R	Ord. 1991. M 1992.
Lesiter, M L	Ord. 1963. M 1996.
Lethbridge,C D	Ord. 1993. M 1996.
Lewis, C G R	Ord. 1923. Archdn of Newport. M 1954. d 1964/5
Lindley, H T	Ord. 1953. M 1965.☞
Lloyd, H W J M	Ord. 1943. M 1978?☞
Long, B	Ord. 1894. FM. d c1948.
Longridge, R N	Ord. 1948. M 1960. W.☞
Love, R A	Ord. 1968. M 1999
Lowman E S C	Ord. 1938. M 1951. D
Lucas, R C	Ord. 1964. M 1966. W. P(6) d 1982.
Lunn, B K	Ord. 1964. M 1982. W.☞
McCready, M D J	Ord. 1988. M 1998
Mann, G	Ord. 1990. M 1991. W. P(2-)
Marle, F H S	Ord. 1910. PG. FM. W. d 1967/8.
Marshall, C C	Ord. 1898. FM. d 1949.
Marshall, C J B	Ord. 1957. M 1958. W.P(22-) President 1999.
Martin, C A	Ord. 1920. Bp of Liverpool. M by 1951 d 1974/85
Melville, M C C	Ord. 1939. M by 1946. W.P(8). d 1999.
Millar, C	(see Wheeler)
Miller, J A	Ord. 1991. M 1996.
Minns, A L	Ord. 1934. M 1952. d 1960/61
Mole, J V	Ord. 1984. M 1986. W. P(3-)
Morrison, Hon N R	Ord. 1956. M 1971.☞
Moule, G W H	Ord. 1936. M 1969.☞
Munt, C	Ord. 1953. M 1965.☞
Muxlow, A A	Ord. 1941. M by 1951. W. P(3). d 1977
Newing, P	Ord. 1965. M 1970. W. P(1)
Nixon, J D	Ord. 1978. M 1979. W. P(29-)
Odlum, M J	Ord. 1956. M 1971.☞
Orland, E G	Ord. 1962. M 1975. W. P(21-) President 1989 - 1994.
Oswell, F A	Ord. 1923. M 1950. W.☞
Palmer, R H	Ord. 1898. FM. W. d 1965/6.
Parker, A T	Ord. 1961. M 1985.
Peel, W A	Ord. 1922. M 1949. d 1970/1
Pelloe, J P	Ord. 1936. Archdn of Wisbech. FM. 1985. W.☞
Pennell, D B	Ord. 1967. M c1978.☞
Phillips, C A	Ord. 1897. FM. d 1949/50.
Pizzey, L R	Ord. 1967. M 1969. W. P(13-)
Poulton, C F	Ord. 1928. M 1955. Res. 1971

Powell, E S	Ord. 1899. PG. FM. W. d 1947/8.
Powell, R R ff	Ord. 1945. M 1959.⌘
Richards, I J	Ord. 1929. FM. W.P(4) d 1979/80.
Richardson, H S T	Ord. 1907. PG. FM? d Jan. 1938.
Ridley, D G	Ord. 1993. M 1994.
Rigby, F F	Ord. 1939. M by 1951. d 1979/80
Robbins, P T	Ord. 1950. M 1951. W.P(49) Sec 1968 - 1974. Pres. 1985 - 1989.
Roberts, A S	Ord. 1938. FM WP(4) d 1997.
Roberts, D P	Ord. 1933. M by 1946. W. d 1957/8
Ross, F	Ord. 1964. M 1969. W.P(10-)
Rothery, R F	Ord. 1969. M 1987. P(3)
Routh, R F R	Ord. 1913. FM. d 1950/1.
Ruming G E	Ord. 1952. M 1957. W.P(1)
Sanders, F A	Ord. 1934. M 1956. W. P(1) d 1985
Sansum, D H	Ord. 1956. M 1965. W. P(55-)
Scholfield, P	Ord. 1966. M 1971. W.
Scott, A	Ord. 1930. FM. d after 1975?
Scott, J G M	Ord. 1951. M 1952. W.P(2)⌘
Sheard, N J	Ord. 1984. M 1992. W.
Sheppard B F	Ord. 1921. PG. FM W. P(5) d. 1973/4
Shepherd-Walwyn., J	Ord. 1941. M 1964. W. P(2)
Short, J T	Ord. 1968. M 1984. W. (3-)
Simcock, M P	Ord. 1952. M 1953.⌘
Sluman, R A	Ord. 1925. M 1949. D
Smale, W H	Ord. 1921. FM. d by 1967/8.
Smith, A G C	Ord. 1981. M 1988.
Smith, G R H	Ord. 1952. M 1965.
Smith, J D E	Ord. 1964. M 1977. W. P(19)
Smith, P F	Ord. 1990. M 1991. W. P(5-)
Smith, R D St J	Ord. 1939. M by 1947. W.P(15) President 1965 - 1975.
Smith, T R	Ord. 1980. M 1988.
Snow, W H	Ord. 1936. M 1965. d 1986/93
Southwood, R A	Ord. 1974. M 1976. W. P(14-)
Spivey, P	Ord. 1948. M 1952.⌘
Stephens, J M	Ord. 1964. M 1970. W. P(35-) President 1994-1999.
Stickland, G J B	Ord. 1966. M 1969.⌘
Stoter, G J	Ord. 1967. M 1969.⌘
Stretton, R J	Ord. 1991. M 1992. W. P(19-)
Talbot-Ponsonby, A	Ord. 1968. M 1972.
Thomas, E M	Ord. 1938. M 1952.⌘
Thomas, R W	Ord. 1957. M 1966. W. P(1)
Thurlow, A G G	Ord. 1934. Dean of Gloucester. PG. FM. W. P(5) d 1991.
Tindall, D N	Ord. 1942. M 1970.⌘
Tomsett, J	Ord. 1964. M 1966. W.
Tranter, J	Ord. 1943. M 1965.⌘
Tredennick, J E F	Ord. 1936. FM. W. d 1986/7
Tredennick, J M	Ord. 1894. FM. d 1952/3
Trehella, W H R	Ord. 1915. FM. W. d Sept. 1977
Vayro, M S	Ord. 1993. M 1994.
Villiers, T	Ord. 1962. M 1980?.⌘
Vincent, A J	Ord. 1954. M 1960.
Vine, N P	Ord. 1981. M 1989.
Ward, K R	Ord. 1965. M 1981.
Warren, H F	Ord. 1948. M 1950. W.
Warren, W M K	Ord. 1897. PG. FM. W. d 1964/5.
Webb, A	Ord. 1950. M 1958. W.P(1)⌘
Webb, N D J	Ord. 1963. M 1969. W. P(8). d 1992

Wheeler, C	Ord. 1987. M 1991. (n ■ e Millar)
Wigg, C Elliot	Ord. 1932. PG. FM. W. P(13) d March 1977.
Wilkinson, R F	Ord. 1914. PG. FM. W. P(5) d 1963.
Wilmott, O L	Ord. 1938. M 1950. ☞
Wilson, W G	Ord. 1967. M 1986
Witton-Davies, C	Ord. 1937. Archdn of Oxford. M 1954. d 1993
Wood, E B	Ord. 1951. M 1952. W.P(8)
Woodhead, C G	Ord. 1952. M 1962. ☞
Wood, S	Ord. M. 1994.
Wooster, P C F	Ord. 1965. M 1974. W. P(30-)
Wrenbury J B B	Ord. 1990. M 1991. W. [the Rev and Rt Hon Lord Wrenbury]
Wright, W P	Ord. 1889. FM. W.P(1) d before 1946.
Yeo, L J	Ord. 1980. M 1982. ☞
Zass-Ogilvie, I D	Ord. 1966. M 1970. ☞