

The Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

Members Update January 2020

Dear Member,

Happy New Year!

Firstly, I'm sorry to say that two current and two former members have recently passed away - Ann Desics from St Peter de Merton, Bedford and Ron Battams from St Botolph, Aspley Guise; and former members Jill Harris, nee Mayes, and Walter Jennings. Our sympathies go to their family and friends at this time.

Annual District Meetings (ADM)

Please support your local District Committee by attending the ADM, the arrangements are:

Biggleswade District - Saturday 11 January at All Saints Clifton: service 4.30pm, tea 5.25pm, meeting 6.00pm and evening ringing until 8.30pm. Names for tea by Thursday 9 Jan to Terry Brown 01462 631057 clifton@bacbr.org.uk

Bedford District - Saturday 18 January at St Peter, Sharnbrook: afternoon ringing 3.30pm, service 4.30pm, tea 5.00pm, meeting 6.00pm and evening ringing until 8.30pm.

Luton District - Saturday 25 January at St Barnabas, Linslade: afternoon ringing 3.30pm, service 4.30pm, tea 5.00pm, meeting 6.00pm followed by evening ringing until 8.30pm. Names for tea by Thursday 23 Jan to Angela Blackburn, 01582 663756 luton@bacbr.org.uk

November 2019 General Committee meeting

The General Committee met back in November 2019. Matters discussed included:

- Ringing World Notices - we spend about £200 every 18 months on advertising our Association and District meetings in the weekly Ringing World and we'd like to know if this expenditure is worthwhile. How do District Meeting visitors find out where and when meetings are held? Do they use the weekly Ringing World, Bell Board or the Association website and Facebook pages? Districts have been asked to find out from visitors so that we have some evidence to support this expenditure or otherwise. What do you think?
- Association peal rules and fees - at last years AGM Peal Secretary, Chris Williams, asked the General Committee to review Association peal rules and fees. Chris's concerns were that the current system is difficult to administer – dealing with relatively small amounts of money (a 50p peal fee, which has remained the same for 20 years!), not getting information in a timely manner and the belfry election of non-members and subsequent ratification procedure often wasn't followed correctly.

Apart from 2017 and 2016, there has been a downward trend in the number of Association peals. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the decline could be due to the fact that it is now more acceptable to ring non-association peals which avoids non-members having to pay the, one-off, £5 membership subscription and following the election process.

However, peal fees and non-resident membership subscription are a source of income to the Associations Bell Restoration Fund (BRF) and we agreed that its desirable to maximise income to be able to make meaningful grants to bell projects.

We sought and received views from members which helped us find a solution that would reduce administrative burden, increase income for the BRF and ensure that Association peals were still rung by members.

We agreed to:

- raise the peal fee from 50p to £1 - this is likely to be effective during January this year, we will advise;
- still require that all Association peals to be rung by elected members;
- effectively abolish the Non-resident Member's subscription fee by setting it to £0; this will require agreement at the AGM in May but not a permanent rule change. In the meantime, belfry elections of non-resident members prior to a peal according to rules 2, 7 and 8 will require a £5 subscription.

- **Finances** - we have just about broken even with our income and expenditure in the last two years. The General Committee discussed increasing subscription rates last year and at this meeting but decided not to as our reserves are relatively healthy. Putting this into context, our Resident Member (over 19) subscription has been at £10 (including the £5 contribution to the Association BRF) since 2014, meaning that the 'administrative element' has remained at £5 for at least 20 years! However, we can't be complacent, for example insurance and annual report printing costs rise each year and we will have to increase our subscription rates at some point soon unless we get more general income. The best way to achieve this is to have more members! I am aware that some towers have regular, keen ringers who aren't currently members but who are eligible for membership and I'd encourage current members to propose them. The forthcoming ADMs are an ideal opportunity to do this. In addition, this will also increase BRF income.
- **New membership form** - following the change to our membership categories as agreed at the May 2019 AGM there is a new membership form which can be found on our website at <https://www.bacbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2020-Membership-application-form-V2.pdf>
- **Association BRF update** - the Committee approved a BRF grant of £3000 to St Lawrence Steppingley for their augmentation and restoration project. Work here is expected to be completed in early 2020. However, the 'retrospective work' application from All Saints Campton for work identified and carried out during a routine maintenance visit wasn't granted. We do need your ideas for BRF fundraising. We talked about a possible open day to include Steppingley and Kempston; we've had some recent donations from towers where members had carried out some routine maintenance, the proceeds of a raffle from a Long-Distance Walkers Association event themed on the 'Oranges and Lemons' rhyme and the surplus made at Association events such as the striking competition and AGM. If you have any ideas or would like to make a donation please let me know.

Safeguarding update from the Central Council

The Central Council has produced a very good safeguarding summary for ringers which can be found here:

https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SM_Safeguarding_PlusAppendices_2019_Ver_2-Guide-plus-appendices-1.pdf

Bedfordshire Woman's Institute (WI) Centenary Ringing

Well done to everyone who took part in ringing to celebrate the Bedfordshire WI Centenary last September. There was an article about it in the WI's magazine and I know the following churches took part: Ampthill, Arlesey, Barton le Clay, Biggleswade, Bromham, Clifton, Cranfield, Goldington, Keysoe, Langford, Milton Ernest, Oakley, Odell, Renhold, Silsoe, Sutton and Westoning.

Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) Module 1 teaching bell handling, Saturday 1 February at RJ Sharp Ringing Centre, St Andrews Biggleswade

Registration is open for an ART Module 1 Teaching Bell Handling training course on Saturday 1 February, 9am to 5pm at Biggleswade and being run by Lesley Boyle. 10 places are available on a first come, first served basis at £20 for the day. For further details and **to book directly with ART** please visit the ART Website:

<https://events.bellringing.org/events/courses/teaching-course-module-1-st-andrews-biggleswade>

Anyone requiring further details can contact Christine Williams christine.williams.bells@gmail.com

Taylor's foundry appeal

Taylor's and the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust have been in touch about their Heritage Lottery Fund bid and the need to raise £1.1 million to repair and secure their historic foundry site. Find out more at <https://loughboroughbellfoundry.org/>. I have some posters which I'll bring to the ADMs.

That's all for now - please let me know if you change your email address or if you don't want to receive these updates.

Regards

Terry Brown

Honorary Secretary

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