



GUILD REVIEW WHITE PAPER
1303
RINGING STANDARDS / STRIKING COMPETITIONS / CLUSTER GROUPS

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This paper is being delivered to all members of the Guild and is for discussion and feedback. All members are invited to send in comments including amendments to the proposals. Your comments may be sent to your Branch Secretary, Guild Secretary or direct to the Guild Master. Please return by 5 February 2014.

1. BACKGROUND

The recent Review of the Guild Objectives and Operations was carried out by five nominated working groups each with a specific areas of reference. Reports submitted by these Groups together with the results of a Guild wide survey have led to the development of some specific proposals for change. These proposals are being set out in series of White Papers that will enable all members to be informed and comment prior to any amendment and submission to a Guild AGM for approval or ratification. Some items may need a Rule Change or Addition.

2. Ringing Standards / Striking Competitions

2.1 Problem

2.1.1 The standard of ringing and the "noise" we make from the tower is important to the quality of service we give to the church and community. The general public listening outside are appreciative of good ringing and conversly critical of bad ringing. The Guild needs to be continually promoting good ringing for the benefit of the community and to help promote the public image and acceptance of bells being rung. Good ringing standards are a key part of attracting, motivating and retaining new ringers.

2.1.2 The ongoing development and improvement in striking is a key part of good ringing standards but requires good training and opportunity to experience and practice.

2.1.3 Striking Competitions were set up to motivate an interest in improving striking along with the fellowship of ringing. The existing arrangement for Guild and Branch striking competitions is not attracting a reasonable level of interest to help meet the objectives. Some Branches do not participate in Guild or have Branch competitions. The format of the competitions is seen as being the main inhibitor to participation. Rules on qualifying as a band member are restrictive and many ringers are effectively barred from participating.

2.1.4 Teachers / Tower Captains are not always able to offer constructive help in striking and may encounter resistance to any help offered.

2.2 Existing Arrangement / Structure

2.2.1 Ringers in many towers are not being offered help with improving striking.

2.2.2 The Guild 6 bell competition is in two parts, The Plate and The Cup with each part having the same rules and conditions. Branch competition(s) have one part only with the top two placed teams going forward into the Guild Cup competition and the third and fourth placed teams being entered into The Plate. Branch competitions operate to the same rules as the Guild competition. Choice of call changes and method is open.

2.2.3 The Guild 8 bell competition is open to one team from each Branch to ring a set method. There are no 8 bell competitions held in the Branches.

2.2.4 Some Branches hold an informal 6 bell Rabbits Competition where experienced ringers act as team leaders and members names are drawn to form bands under the leaders ringing whatever each team think is appropriate to the skills of the band. This is not linked to the formal competitions.

2.3 Solutions

2.3.1 Offer training courses to Trainers and Tower Captains on how to judge and develop good striking and motivate ringers to improve.

2.3.2 Offer training courses to all members on listening and how to develop striking skills.

2.3.3 Change the format for the Guild 6 bell striking competitions:

Allow members to form a band from any individual tower, group or cluster of towers. A cluster is a group of towers from a natural or convenient local geographical area and whose members regularly join together to ring for practices and services. This would allow many ringers who are at towers with very small numbers to join in a team and not be restricted by specific tower membership. Individual towers may still enter a team but there would be no minimum number qualification but only members from within the cluster may be recruited. A tower, group or cluster may enter two teams with only one in each Cup or Plate competition.

Have two 6 bell competitions The Cup and The Plate each having its own rules.

The Cup

Two teams from each Branch may enter. The method of selecting the teams to be decided by the respective Branch with team membership as above. (see Branch format).

Test piece to be a specified method of 240 changes to be rung by all teams.

All other rules as per existing format.

The Plate

Two teams from each Branch may enter. The method of selecting the teams to be decided by the respective Branch with team membership as above. (see Branch format).

Test piece to be 240 call changes.

All other rules as per existing format.

2.3.4 Change the format for the Branch 6 bell striking competitions:

To be determined by the respective Branch who are encouraged to 'think laterally'. Examples: Copy the Guild Competition, Rabbits Competition, Tower Leagues (pairs of towers / tower groups holding informal competitions on joint practice nights through the year). A system that will encourage maximum participation and allow 'winners' to proceed to the Guild Competitions.

2.3.5 Change the format of the Guild 8 bell striking competition:

Allow members to form a band from any individual tower, group or cluster of towers. A cluster is a group of towers from a natural or convenient local geographical area and whose members regularly join together to ring for practices and services. This would allow many ringers who are at towers with very small numbers to join in a team and not be restricted by specific tower membership. Individual towers may still enter a team but there would be no minimum number qualification but only members from within the cluster may be recruited. A Branch may enter two different tower, group or cluster teams into the competition.

Test piece to be a specified method and length.

2.3.6 Encourage 8 bell striking competitions to be held in the Branches. Open to all members with flexibility of format as in 2.3.4 to encourage participation.

3. CLUSTERS

3.1 Problem

3.1.1 For many members, their day to day ringing activities are centred round small groups or clusters of towers in which they join together for practices and service ringing. Many rural parishes are joined in a formal cluster and a rotation of services around the group lends itself to a mobile band of ringers. Many churches now have their bells rung through such mobility and joint help. The Guild and Branch organisation / rules are sometimes restrictive to this natural way of operating.

3.2 Solutions

3.2.1 Recognise tower groups and clusters as a formal grouping within the Branch organisation giving them representation rights (a member on the Branch Committee), allow participation as a group in Guild Striking Competitions.

3.2.2 Encourage tower groups and clusters to form and include ringers and towers where activity may not otherwise exist.

3.2.3 Branches to help form clusters with all towers and ringers included. All ringers including non Guild Members.

4. DISCUSSION / FEEDBACK

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