

The Guildford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers was formed in 1927 when the new Diocese was created. Today the Guild has over 600 members. Its aims include the proper care and use of bells and belfries. To help this the Guild established a **BELL RESTORATION FUND** in 1979.

WHAT IS THE FUND FOR?

A ring of church bells is a complicated mechanical installation. Bells are heavy - some weigh over a ton - and periodically need new bearings, ropes, clappers and pulleys. A new bell installation ought to last 100 years, but interim maintenance is essential, and at some stage major work on every bell installation is likely to become necessary. In addition, the towers in which bells are hung and which are often much older than the bell installation may need repair to allow the bells to continue to be rung. The Bell Restoration Fund provides large and small grants and loans to contribute towards the costs of such work.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

About two thirds of the income to the fund comes from the ringers themselves: from their annual membership subscription, donations, collections and fundraising efforts. The other third comes from the generous support of Parochial Church Councils of the Diocese without which we would not be able to make

such significant contributions to projects as we have done in recent years, and from interest on deposits.

HOW IS THE MONEY SPENT?

The first major project, the rehang of the bells at *St Nicholas, Thames Ditton*, received a grant of £1,250. More recent projects have seen quite substantial sums being spent.

Some of the recent beneficiaries have been:

St Martin, Dorking (£10,000) where the bells were recast, augmented and rehung in a new frame.

St Andrew, Farnham (£5,000) where the bells were augmented from eight to ten and a new frame installed as part of a major project involving work on the whole church.

At St Nicolas, Cranleigh (£4,000) cracks in the tower were the stimulus to carry out some much needed work on the bells and fittings as well as stabilising the tower.

All Saints, Witley (£2,500) where the spire supports had collapsed; and (£10,000) to rehang the eight bells, recasting three which were of poor tone.

All Saints, Crondall (£11,000) where the heavy and difficult six bells were rehung lower in the tower and augmented to eight.

St Peter, Farnborough (£25,000) where the ancient wooden tower required major strengthening and stabilisation.

At St Nicholas, Alfold (£10,000) the three bells became unringable in 1913. They were augmented to six and hung in a new frame

lower in the tower.

The fund has given a range of smaller grants for repairs, e.g. fixing the bell frame firmly to the tower walls at *St Peter & St Paul, Godalming* (£2,800), replacing worn-out bearings, clappers and rope guides at *St Michael & All Angels, Pirbright* (£2,850), new headstocks and bearings at *St Mary the Virgin, Worplesdon* (£1,500), repair of clappers and other fittings at *St John the Baptist, Womersley* (£1,500), refurbishment of clappers and pulleys at *St Bartholomew, Haslemere* (£1300) and remodelling clappers and repairing gudgeons at *St Mary and All Saints, Dunsfold* (£900).

Over the years more than 30 churches have benefited from grants ranging from £25 to £25,000.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO WE NEED?

Over the last few years average income to the fund has been around £10,000 per year. Routine inspections and special projects lead us to believe we are going to need a similar sum over the next few years to meet anticipated demand. Ringers are already working on a whole range of fundraising projects to help to meet these targets.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE GUILD DO FOR BELL RESTORATION?

Knowledgeable ringers (some of whom are professionally qualified) will carry out inspections of bell installations, and, if required, draw up a full written report including recommendations on an appropriate course of action.

Many ringers assist on a voluntary basis in the practical aspects of maintenance and restoration work. This can save a parish thousands of pounds.

WHY NOT BECOME A RINGER?

Church bell ringing is best served by having enough ringers in all our towers to make sure that the bells are rung regularly and properly maintained. Bell ringing is a fascinating hobby and a very sociable activity. Why not see whether ringing is for you by contacting the Guild Master who will make arrangements for you to visit a ringers' practice to see for yourself what goes on?

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

Do you have a practical skill which could be utilised on a restoration project? Most of the work is done by ringers and other volunteers under the professional guidance of the bell founders and hangers.

Alternatively, you can support the Bell Restoration Fund. If you enjoy the sound of

bells, you can help us by making a donation or even remembering us in your will.

For further details, advice or information, please contact our Bell Restoration Fund Administrator:

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Please send any donations to our Treasurer:

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Cheques should be made payable to the Guildford Diocesan Guild Bell Restoration Fund. All donations will be acknowledged.



GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

BELL RESTORATION FUND
(Registered Charity No 278025)



St Bartholomew, Haslemere