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## PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD

OPERATING through 11 branches, with a total membership approaching 1,000 ringing members, the Peterborough Diocesan Guild, whose summer festival is to be held at Welford on September 3rd, occupies an important place among the Guilds affiliated to the Central Council. Many regard the Midlands as being in the forefront of ringing, with such centres as Birmingham and Leicester, but the Peterborough Guild has a worthy record of the main purport of ringing, i.e., for Sunday service, although there are towers, like in all Associations, where conditions need improving. Commenting on this in his last annual report, the general secretary said just over 100 forms were returned as the result of the Sunday Service Survey, and these revealed situations ranging from very good to poor, some of the latter being due to the bad state of the bells and fabric.

Under its present title, the Guild is in its 26th year, but organised ringing goes back very much farther. Its forbears were the Raunds, Wellingborough and District Society, formed in July, 1883, which by the end of that year had 63 members. The name was changed to the Central Northamptonshire Association in 1895, and by the end of the century it was affiliated to the Central Council. A conspicuous member of the Council was the late Mr. Fred Wilford, who served for 32 years. He was also general secretary of the Guild for 14 years. The decision to form a diocesan guild followed a meeting at Wellingborough in 1923, addressed by the Bishop of Peterborough. When the Diocesan Guild was formed the following January two other ringing societies were absorbed—the Oundle and District and the Peterborough and District, which was then a member of the Central Council. The county of Rutland is in this diocese, but it was not until 1933 that a Rutland Branch was formed, which has at present 11 towers possessing Guild members. Another was created in 1930, when the Towcester and District Society sank its individuality to become a branch of the Guild.

The present Master, Mr. Patrick I. Chapman, in his report for 1959 writes encouragingly, and regards the year as one of consolidation and progress. He had visited nine of the 11 branches and was impressed by the increased attendances and the enthusiasm displayed by the large number of teenage members present. This, he states, is

clearly the result of a lot of hard work by a considerable number of people. He makes one good point, which we trust will be considered by other Guilds. Many parishes are actively concerned with the Diocesan Stewardship Campaign, and he urges these parishes not to miss the opportunities thus afforded of recruiting beginners from people who want to offer their talents in the service of the Church.

With a total of only 67 peals, the year under review was not prolific, but there were three first peals in the method for the Guild. These were Spliced Surprise in six methods, rung at Daventry, Double Bob Major at Wicken and Grandsire Minor at Cogenhoe. The Master, in congratulating some 20 members who rang their first peal, expresses the hope that they will go on to ring many more. He adds: 'Our chief purpose is to ring bells for service, but it should also be borne in mind that only the best we are capable of giving is good enough. The only way to attain our highest capabilities is by continued and prolonged practice, and the regular ringing of peals is the best way of doing it.'

It is interesting to recall that in the early days of the Guild a gold medal was presented to the member who had rung 100 peals. This was discontinued in 1914 and a new rule passed that a certificate which bore a photograph of Peterborough Cathedral be awarded to all members ringing their first peal. The rule still operates. The year, however, saw one 'gold medallist in spirit,' Mr. Ernest G. Orland, president of the Guilsborough Branch; but two other members passed ringing milestones—Mr. Percy D. Baldock his 150th and the Master his 250th peal.

The general secretary, Mr. G. W. Jeffs, in his report mentions the continued good work of the Bell Restoration Fund, with grants of £30 each to Desborough, Marston Trussell, Woodford and Collingtree, and £20 to Creton. The fund is healthy, with £615 13s. 10d. to its credit at the end of the year. Marston Trussell bells have been restored after a long period of silence. In the Northampton Branch report mention is made of the excellent work of Mr. George F. Roome and his helpers in overhauling and restoring to ringing order the fine ring of eight bells at St. Mary's, Easton Neston, in the Towcester Branch. This tower had been unavailable for many years owing to the ill health of the late Dowager Lady Hesketh, and to ring here is a great asset to the Branch.

Good luck, Peterborough Diocesan Guild, during 1960-61; may lapsed members be few and the steady work of recruiting new members continue.





























