

Dear Guild Members

This is Guild Bulletin No. 21 dated 5 November 2020.

Latest Central Council Advice (4 November update):

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/>

This update is specifically for England, and is responding to the lockdown that starts on Thursday 5th November for four weeks.

*The government in England is asking people to stay at home if at all possible. **Stopping ringing during this time is consistent with that request.** Churches are closed except for private prayer and broadcast worship. We realise England's senior faith leaders, including the Bishop of London who heads the C of E Recovery Group, are challenging the government's decision to ban communal worship during this further lockdown period, but at the moment no exception has been made, and even if it was, our guidance wouldn't change. This is a much stricter lockdown than Tier 3.*

However, we support the tolling of a single bell on Remembrance Sunday, if it is with the permission of the incumbent and churchwardens. The tolling of a single bell is a powerful symbol of remembrance understood by communities and will mean a great deal to many. Please be particularly aware of the risks associated with entering a tower and ringing on your own – make sure someone knows you are doing it and can watch for you. A muffle is not needed when tolling a single bell.

Government: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#weddings-civil-partnerships-religious-services-and-funerals>

Obviously there is nothing I can say that you will not know already from the media! From today to at least 2 December, all of England will be in a national lockdown. For us bellringers that means the same as the Spring. Places of public worship will be shut, except for private prayer, so there will be no Sunday services to ring for. **So, like in the Spring, no ringing during this latest lockdown.** Unfortunately this will include any planned ringing for Remembrance Sunday, except as you see above, with local agreement, the tolling of a single bell for Remembrance this Sunday. We know that this lockdown may be extended after 2 December and the 'talk' from the 'experts' is that at the end of it we may all end up in what has been Tier 3 (up to now our area has been in Tier 1), which would probably mean no ringing, but we don't know that yet.

The hope was that we could at least stay at the current restrictions so that we could ring a few of our bells for Christmas, and that still might be possible, as 'special' regulations might be introduced over the festive season, so let's not give up hope of that just yet. I know optimistic messages at times like these can become a little hollow; but I will sincerely say 'KEEP GOING' and please try not to be too

despondent. I know it is more difficult the longer this goes on and now that the autumn and winter are upon us. But as before, in the general scheme of things, not being able to ring church bells is not the greatest sacrifice that anyone has to make. At some point we will get back to our familiar pattern of activities and in the meantime please, please do all you can over zoom, on the phone or by old fashioned letter and Christmas card, to keep in touch – you don't even have to mention bellringing!

In that spirit I would draw your attention to:

1. Virtual Ringing Courses: <https://sdgr.org.uk/ringing-in-lockdown/>
2. Eric Hitchin's wonderful fundraising: <https://sdgr.org.uk/eric-hitchins-90th-birthday-challenge/>
3. The new autumn Face to Face – this will be on the Guild website (<https://sdgr.org.uk/face-to-face/>) SOON (by mid November) with a limited print run – please again help people not on the net to get access.

Finally, unrelated to all this, for those of you who were not able to join in the Zoom EGM on the Channel Islands, to let you know: The Guild held an EGM on 31 October 2020, via Zoom, with approximately forty-five members attending representing all of the current eight branches of the Guild. The Master of the Winchester and Portsmouth Guild and the Chair of the Channel Islands District attended for the start of the meeting and answered questions. The meeting agreed unanimously to the Channel Island ringers fully joining the Salisbury Guild when the Islands move dioceses. A group has now been established to work on the details of the move. It was most encouraging to see the welcome displayed at the meeting towards our potential new members and friends.

So keep cheerful and stay safe!

Robert Wellen

Guild Master, Salisbury DG