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Dear Guild Member,

Now that 2018 has begun, it is time to recount the year the guild has experienced, and let the wider guild know what we of the resident population have been getting up to.

2017 had a promising start, ringing in the New Year in Northamptonshire, courtesy of James Ellison and family. Despite again firing out our date touch, a great time was had by all, replete with paintballing, tower grabs, and the company of James' very high-quality dog, Bliss.

As the Guild rolled into Lent Term, Oli continued his incredible feat of not only running the Guild, but also swelling its ranks, with a 'boot camp' running for three days at the start of term to refresh the minds of our new learners. Teaching continued each week this term in the hour before evensong ringing, which along with the revival of the Bene't's Sunday afternoon quarter slot, led to a term of very busy Sundays.

That is not, of course, to say that the other days of the week were quiet for us. Alongside out of town practices, we continued last year's peculiar trend of ever closer bonds with the OUS, meeting up for their Dinner early in February, and attending a Joint Outing in London a few weeks later, capably arranged by David Phillips of the OUS. Another highlight of the term was Guild Pancake Night, at which Oli and Megan displayed their generosity by inviting us once again round to their flat, and everyone else displayed their ingenuity by bringing a range of toppings to complement our pancake attempts, many of which were sufficiently broken to be not, topologically, pancakes.

The 2017 Dinner was a fantastic opportunity to show off the triumphs of our teaching scheme, with James Hodgson, Martha Radbourne, Alistair Benford and Jon Wright all tenoring to a quarter peal, having only started to ring in Michaelmas. The Past Master's speech was given by Jenny Earis, and the Guest Speaker was Roger Booth, whose speech was focused on opening up the ringing commu-

nity to new members, and I hope that the Guild's association with him and the Charmborough Trust to this end will continue for many years to come.

It seems that we hadn't had enough of the OUS during Lent Term, because we met up with them over the Easter break for a repeat of last year's boat race ringing. After meeting up for lunch, we paid a short visit to the Science Museum before ringing for the start of the women's race. Although we had 10 ringers, we took the unusual decision to go for something a little easier than Royal, and rang Cambridge Major. Our caution paid off, however, when our quarter came round, whilst the more ambitious attempt by our rivals fired out.

At the beginning of Easter Term, having spent two terms training a handful of learners, we decided it was time we learned how to teach people to ring. So Oli Bardsley, Megan Corless, Sam and Barry Johnson, Rachel Anderson and I all spent a day at a learning to teach day run by Graham Nabb of the Association of Ringing Teachers. The next big event in Easter was our AGM, at which a wholly undergraduate committee was elected: myself as Master, Imogen Smith as Secretary, Benedict M'Caw as Assistant master, and Martha Radbourne and Alistair Benford, both having started to ring less than a year previously, as Steeplekeeper and Librarian. Although quiet period suppressed some of our activities, there were still plenty of formals, curries and handbell practices to keep the social life of the guild strong in Exam Term.

With the end of exams and the beginning of Summer, there was a bout of striking competition excitement as we entered both the Cambridge District Competition (Coming a respectable 6th out of 11 teams) and the Ridgman Competition (sadly not doing so well and coming last of 7). GSM seems to be something of a hotspot for striking competitions at the moment, since as well as last year's Ridgman Contest, it will this year be hosting the National 12-Bell Competition (organised by the Cambridge Youths, but since it's a rare treat to have such an event in our home city, please do sign up to help if you can by following this link.) Our thirst for competition did not abate, and we challenged the Youths to our annual rounders match on Jesus Green on a fantastically hot day, culminating in a trip to Oli and Megan's flat for a barbecue.

Guild activities did not slow down over Summer, with an excellent Guild Week to London and St Alban's, jointly organised by Dickon Love and Brian Meads, featuring some challenging rings on the notorious new Southwark bells, and a lesson in the merits of very straight backstrokes from the long draft at Weathampstead. Although not an official Guild event, surely some mention must be made of Oli and Megan's wedding on the 12th of August. Once again I congratulate the happy couple, and especially Megan, who managed to ascend the belltower and ring

after the service still in her wedding dress. Not an easy feat I imagine!

Summer continued with more events for the guild, including the inaugural 'Guild Holiday', in which 16 students decamped to the Isle of Wight for a week of beaches, beautiful countryside and bells. A great time was had by all, and preparation is already being made for a repeat event this summer in County Durham. With only a few weeks left until the start of term, one more event remained, with a handful of us attending the Society of Cambridge Youths' annual dinner, containing not one but three handbell touches in the course of the evening. Handbell-phobic students may take heart in the knowledge that this is not a feat I intend to emulate.

Michaelmas 2017 started strongly, with the Charmborough ring making a triumphant return to our freshers' fair stall, and bringing in more learners to start the teaching schedule off all over again. Alongside semi-regular events such as formals and curry nights, we also had more ringing-centric events, such as the Southern Universities Association weekend, this year in Bristol, producing a curious sense of *deja vu* in those who had attended Guild Week 2016, since we slept on the same church hall floor as we did then. Putting in a respectable offering to both the 6- and 8-bell competitions, and contributing great energy to the traditional SUA Ceilidh, we set off back again, greatly impressed with the hosting of the Bristol Society. Another highlight of the term was the London Outing, masterfully organised by James Ellison.

As 2017 drew to a close, Rachel volunteered to host our New Year get-together once again, although not quite anticipating the record-breaking 13 attendees that descended on Swansea when the time arrived. Woodland walks, candlelit dinners(not to everyone's approval), and some exceptionally pleasant rings of bells made the holiday most worthy of its exceptional turnout, and Rachel and family must be congratulated for their fantastic hosting abilities.

That brings us right up to the present. I hope that those of you who haven't had a chance to be involved in all the guild events of the past 12 months have had as exciting and enjoyable year as we have, and I hope to see many of you at various Guild events throughout 2018.

I hope you all have a great 2018.

Joseph J Wakeling –  
*Master, Cambridge University Guild of Change Ringers*