



In Touch

North Bucks Branch - www.northbucksbranch.org.uk

May 2018

Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch.

Hopefully now we can look forward to sunshine, putting into distant memory the seemingly endless rain.

In this edition, you will find the usual news from around the branch, the peals and quarter peals members of our branch have achieved, forthcoming events, and the start of a discussion into what the branch means to us.

The incoming Mayor of Milton Keynes is a ringer; see what challenges he has set himself!

Your news, views and events are the lifeblood of this publication, and it would not exist without them, so please continue to send me such correspondence; if it is interesting to you, then it will be interesting to others in the branch.

Phillip Starr
Editor - In Touch
newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk

Branch Summer Social and Striking Competition at Great Linford

Advance notice of this year's summer social and striking competition which will be held at Great Linford on Saturday 30th June.

It would be great to see as many towers as possible enter a band - you can ring whatever you are happy with - call changes or a method. There were only two bands competing last year so we are hoping to get a lot more this year - you've got a couple of months to select your band and practice your chosen test piece.

Practice Night—St. Mary's Whaddon

The regular practice at St. Mary's, Whaddon continues on the first Friday of every month. All abilities are welcome, and every effort will be made to accommodate you. Please join in this friendly practice on a fine set of six (Tenor 16 hundred weight).

Midweek Ringing Group

At the North Bucks Branch AGM held on 21st April it was suggested that a midweek, daytime ringing group be set-up for those members who were available to ring weekday daytimes. This group will meet on a monthly basis on the 2nd Thursday of every month. Ringing will be from 11.00am to 12.30pm and is open to all ringers from the branch (and any visitors). Where possible tea and coffee will be served. After ringing there will be an opportunity to go to a suitable local hostelry for lunch.

Arrangements are being made for the rest of 2018. The first date is the 2nd Thursday of June i.e. **14th June** at St Andrews, Great Linford (MK14 5AU) from 11.00am to 12.30pm, followed by lunch at The Nags Head, High Street, Great Linford MK14 5AX.

Do come along if you are able. If you need any more information please feel free to email me on read887@btinternet.com

Nick Read

Our Branch

The 21st of April saw the revised date for the branch AGM, delayed due to the snow we had in March.

To that meeting, **25** members had been impassioned, able or interested enough to attend, excluding branch officers.

In 2018, the branch membership is recorded as 219, - approximately 11% of the membership had attended.

From the records available, concerningly, this small proportion represents one of the better branch turnouts; previously in 2017 = **37** members; 2016 = **31** members. As you see, attendance is falling.

At the AGM, our Secretary, Gary Reading, made it clear that he wishes to stand down. Nobody offered to take-up this constitutionally vital role. Gary then agreed to continue in the role until at least the officers meeting in July, to allow for the word to spread about the vacancy.

Both the Chairman, Graham Bartholomew, and the Treasurer, Anne Nightingale, indicated that they would stand for office again, if no one else wished to take the roles.

No one stood for the RDL roles. At the subsequent officers meeting, on the 22nd of April, the branch officers decided to abandon the role, making Graham Bartholomew (in a second branch role) and Simon Head joint Ringing Masters. Also agreed at the officers meeting, was that Simon would take on the role of webmaster from the Secretary, given his professional qualification.

Oxford Diocesan Guild (ODG) rules make it clear that the branch officers must consist of a Chairperson, a Treasurer and a Secretary, although rules do allow for the Treasurer and Secretary roles to be combined.

The branch will be without a secretary later this year, and there are no clear guidelines from the ODG on what this would mean for the branch. The serving officers are largely in place on the basis that no one else is willing to take on the roles. It is therefore unclear what would happen if other officers, made despondent by the extra workload or indifference for the membership, resigned.

To impose this role on the treasurer, if they were able to take on the extra responsibilities, would mean fewer people taking greater work.

With such low turnouts to branch events, and so few willing to participate in running the branch, it is time to ask –

What is the point of the branch?

Only 7 of the 21 branch events since January 2016 have achieved more than 20 members attending, and none greater than 37.

These concerning statistics argue strongly that engagement with the branch is very low, and while content to pay membership fees annually, members seem to ring independently of the branch.

The officers are concerned at the low turnouts. While communication has been mooted as the reason for this, these pages are widely circulated, and emails regularly sent; it is unlikely that the membership is unaware of the events.

Could the officers go to each tower, and speak to each member? Yes, and lose time that could be spent ringing, part of the skill they enjoy. They could spend money on fuel, and work fruitlessly towards a membership that feels indifferent. There are now only 7 officers. Yet more work, for so few people.

It is clear that there are towers who only interact with the branch when Guild subs are due, and when the tower is approached to host an event that will attract a small proportion of the members. Speaking to the individuals at such towers, it is clear they do not feel the branch means much to them.

Ringing continues regardless of the branch. The first Friday of every month sees a general practice at Whaddon, originally aimed at developing newer ringers, which has now moved on to more advanced ringing. This event was not embraced by the then branch, who wanted branch practices to be the centre for branch ringing learning. This practice attracts members from both Central and North Bucks branches, and is one example of the membership filling a void the branch has not been able or willing to fill.

Why are branch practices so poorly attended? Anecdotal discussion seems to find that newer or less skilled ringers are put off by a perception of ringing snobbery, and they feel less welcome.

P.T.O..

One sad tale tells that a new ringer, attending their first branch practice, and asking for Bob Doubles, which they were learning, was asked if “that is all you can ring?” The branch should be shocked by such an occurrence, but it is just as likely that similar or worse tales of unwelcoming atmospheres could be recounted.

There are those who are willing to help organise branch events, and those people are so valuable. There are those who have served the branch as an officer, and they should be thanked for their contribution.

Could some of these fine folk be persuaded to return to the fold?

There are many in the branch who have not served, and they should ask what they could do, if they want the branch to have a future.

The point of this article is to inspire a debate about the future.

If it does not fire your opinion, then the future is clear; the branch has ceased to be relevant and no longer serves a purpose.

If this does impassion you, then turn up at a branch event. Offer to serve the branch, all roles can be shared, and your input and energy valued.

Write to the editor and tell the branch what you think. This debate affects all the membership.

Phillip Starr

The End of an Era

Silently, without ceremony or acknowledgement, and by a simple conversation, a centuries old village tradition came to an end.

St. Mary’s, Whaddon has abandoned tower practices.

After decades of tireless work by Derek White, the Tower Captain at St. Marys, the band now consists of only four members; insufficient to carry out practice or to train new recruits.



In many articles in the Whaddon Quarterly, the local parish newspaper, both Derek and the Churchwardens of St. Marys have made it plain that the bells will largely fall silent without new members. The village has voted with its feet, and the democracy that we cherish as a nation has sealed the fate of ringing – the village no longer wants ringing.

For years Whaddon has increasingly relied upon ringers from outside of the village to make up the numbers, but with the skill in rapid decline nationwide, that source of support is all but exhausted.

While the four remaining ringers will endeavour to rally support for the second Sunday service, Christmas, weddings and other special events, this will be come increasingly challenging over the next few years, without the regular connection to ringing.

The regular first Friday of each month practice continues at Whaddon.

Phillip Starr

The Mayor of Milton Keynes' Challenge

From the middle of May I will have the honour of being Mayor of Milton Keynes. One thing mayors are expected to do is raise money for their charity.

I have decided to combine this duty with my activities as a bell-ringer, and have challenged myself (for my charity) to ring a quarter-peal at every tower in Milton Keynes Council's area during my year of office – there are 26 towers by my reckoning. If you're not sure of the boundaries of Milton Keynes, this means every tower in the branch from Calverton eastwards, and Fenny Stratford/Bletchley northwards.

To make the challenge both more difficult for me, and more challenging for other ringers, I intend that every quarter should include as many local ringers as possible, and at least one first of some sort.

Obviously I can't do this on my own – I need your help. Please contact me (on martinpetchey49@gmail.com or 07712 485255) if you want to be involved, or if as a tower you can organise a quarter for me at your tower.

Use this as an opportunity to challenge yourself, too – to ring a new method, or on higher numbers than usual; I look forward to hearing from you

Martin Petchey

Equal Rights for Women - Anniversaries

There are some key anniversaries coming up which may be of interest and worth special ringing - maybe a ladies band touch/quarter/peal?:

- * Monday 2nd July is the 90th anniversary of women winning equal voting rights to men in the UK (Equal Franchise Act);
- * Sunday 21st October is the 60th anniversary of the first lady peer entering the House of Lords;
- * Wednesday 21st November is the centenary of the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act allowing women to stand for Parliament;
- * Friday 14th December is the centenary of the first general election in which women in the UK were eligible to vote

*Elva Ainsworth
Guild PR Officer*

Next edition...

Please ensure that you send all submissions to newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk no later than **Friday 24th August 2018** to be included in the next edition of In Touch.

Whilst endeavours will be made to send out reminders, your support in keeping to this deadline is appreciated.

GUILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

The Diocese of Oxford is working towards creating a church which is safer for everyone. Active engagement with safeguarding training supports all those who have a role within the Church to effectively recognise and respond to possible abuse and implement best safeguarding practice.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

The C2 module is essential for all tower captains and trainers who have completed the C1 online training.

Saturday 15 September 2018 1000-1200

Registration and refreshments 0930 St Mary's Parish Rooms, St Mary's, Church Street, Kidlington OX5 2AZ

Maximum 30 places

Applications to: Catherine Lane Catchmole Cottage, 12 High Street, Wheatley OX33 1XX 01865 874026 / safeguarding@odg.org.uk

Safeguarding E-Learning – Online Training Two safeguarding training modules are now available through the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal, to complete online (<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>). The C0 Basic Awareness e-learning module is recommended for anyone who needs a basic level of safeguarding awareness. Participants completing other core modules will be asked to complete the C0 e-learning in preparation. The C1 Foundation e-learning module can be completed by those who are unable to attend the C1 face-to-face sessions being held across parishes. The C1 Foundation e-learning module will need to be completed by those attending C2

*Ken Darvill
Acting General Secretary*

Guild Website

The last 6 months has seen a lot of work go into the development of a new Guild Website. The aim is to create more dynamic, up-to-date and user-friendly website to serve the needs of the Guild's members.

The "development" version of the site can be viewed at <http://www.odg-dev.timsawers.com/> Please be mindful that this is a development site, and there are still tweaks and changes before it goes live; the intention is to go live with the new site as soon as possible, however any feedback would be gladly received.

There are also some new social media profiles.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Oxford-Diocesan-Guild-of-Church-Bell-Ringers-2062157157396367/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ODGCBR>

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoL-6oUPIfXYJzKTEI8_LUw

Please do like, follow, favourite etc if you use any of these platforms. Naturally, these are a little sparse at the moment, however should you have some content (such as video), I would be more than happy to post these on your behalf. The hope is that some of these channels can help improve (NOT replace) communication between the guild and it's members.

I'd like to thank in particular Elva Ainsworth for driving the development of the new site, and Doug Beaumont for his wisdom and advice. Also to Tim Sawers, who has put many long hours into development.

If you would like to pass on any comments, please do get in touch at webmaster@odg.org.uk

*Tim Hayward
Guild Webmaster*

Central Council Annual Meeting Weekend Saturday 26 to Monday 28 May, 2018—Lancaster

BOOKINGS NOW OPEN FOR ALL RINGERS

This year, the Central Council meeting weekend is following a NEW format, themed on inclusion and outreach. As well as the annual meeting itself, there is a wide variety of seminars, sessions, stalls and activities on offer for ALL ringers. Here's a flavour:

Available all weekend:

Lichfield Mobile Belfry running demonstrations
Carter Ringing Machine and Woodhouse Ringing Machine running demonstrations
First World War Rolls of Honour on display
CCCBR publications stall
Association of Ringing Teachers stall

Saturday afternoon activities:

Hands-on tower maintenance seminar (courtesy of the current Towers & Belfries Committee)
Stewardship & Management Guidance seminar (courtesy of the current Tower Stewardship Committee)
Biographies seminar (courtesy of the current Biographies Committee)
Bell Restoration Projects seminar (courtesy of the current Bell Restoration Committee)
Public Relations seminar (courtesy of the current PR Committee)
Youth Leadership Forum

Sunday afternoon activities:

An open meeting by the Guild of Clerical Ringers on the theme of mature clergy / ringer relations, challenges and opportunities
An open meeting on the proposed new central ringing organisation rulebook

Day tickets are available for £12 per person – with free entry for under 18s!

Follow this link to find out more and secure your booking!

<https://ccabr.org.uk/about/meetings/2018-meeting/>

Who's who of Branch Officers

Chairman: Graham Bartholomew
chairman@northbucksbranch.org.uk
07724 889120

Secretary: Gary Reading (Outgoing)
secretary@northbucksbranch.org.uk
01908 662483

Treasurer: Anne Nightingale
treasurer@northbucksbranch.org.uk

Minutes Secretary: *Unfilled vacancy*

Ringling Master: Graham Bartholomew
ringingmaster2@northbucksbranch.org.uk
07724 889120

Ringling Master: Simon Head
ringingmaster1@northbucksbranch.org.uk
07825 730456

Guild Rep: Patricia Rosewell
guildrep2@northbucksbranch.org.uk

Guild Rep: *Unfilled vacancy*

Branch Archivist: Doug Hird
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In Touch (Branch Newsletter) Editor: Phillip Starr
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Quarter Peals

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Loughton, Buckinghamshire

All Saints'

Monday, 1 January 2018 in 44m (11-0-8 in G)

1260 All Saints Place Doubles

- 1 Becky Fawcett
- 2 Anne McIntyre
- 3 Ann Birch
- 4 Gary W Reading
- 5 Edward Fawcett (C)
- 6 Graham Bartholomew



To mark the start of the celebrations for the 800th year since the first vicar was appointed at All Saints' Loughton.

The final ring on the old bells before they are taken away for restoration.

First in method as conductor: 5

The band would like to associate this quarter with Derek Stainsby, a ringer at this tower for over forty years.

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

SS Peter and Paul

Sunday, 21 January 2018 in 46 mins (21-2-16 in E)

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Ann Birch
- 2 Anne McIntyre
- 3 Liz Wagstaff
- 4 Martin Petchey
- 5 Graham Bartholomew
- 6 Gary Reading
- 7 Simon J O Head (C)
- 8 Keith Wagstaff

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

SS Peter and Paul

Sunday, 28 January 2018 in 46m (21-2-16 in E)

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Douglas S Vale
 - 2 Alan J Marchbank
 - 3 Liz Wagstaff
 - 4 Anne McIntyre
 - 5 Graham Bartholomew
 - 6 Gary Reading
 - 7 Simon J O Head (C)
 - 8 Keith Wagstaff
- First quarter peal on 8 – 1

Holy Trinity Old Wolverton—26th January 2018

1260 2m Doubles 480 plain bob and 780 Grandsire Doubles

- 1) John Mercer
- 2) Wendy Price
- 3) Malcom Hooton
- 4) James Woodcock
- 5) Michael Nimmo (C)
- 6) Phillip Starr

70th birthday compliments to Michael Nimmo.

St Andrew Great Linford - Wednesday 27th December 2017

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1) Steve Thomason
- 2) John Marchbank
- 3) Gary Reading
- 4) Charles Knight
- 5) Alan Marchbank (c)
- 6) Graham Bartholomew

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Elizabeth Knight

Rung to mark 50 years of Milton Keynes



As the photo shows Great Linford ringers rang for and celebrated the arrival of 2018 in some style with seasonal nosh and bubbles! Happy New Year to North Bucks Ringers and thanks to all those who have visited practices at Linford and Downs Barn in 2017, hope to see you in 2018!

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

SS Peter and Paul

Sunday, 4 February 2018 in 50 mins (21–2–16 in E)

1344 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Adam Hird
 - 2 Anne McIntyre
 - 3 Liz Wagstaff
 - 4 Ann Birch
 - 5 Martin Petchey
 - 6 Graham Bartholomew
 - 7 B Douglas Hird
 - 8 Alan J Marchbank (C)
- first in method - 3 and 4

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Hanwell, Oxfordshire

St Peter

Saturday, 12 May 2018 in 35 (7–0–8 in A)

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Graham Bartholomew
 - 2 Barry R Eglesfield
 - 3 Mary Friskney
 - 4 Alan J Marchbank
 - 5 John B Marchbank
 - 6 B Douglas Hird (C)
- For ODG AGM Day.

First Cambridge Minor inside - 5

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

All Saints, Milton Keynes Village

Sunday, 25 February 2018 in 44 mins (9–0–0 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Anne McIntyre
- 2 Becky Fawcett (C)
- 3 Ann Birch
- 4 Liz Wagstaff
- 5 Simon J O Head
- 6 Edward Fawcett

Rung to commemorate the 150th anniversary of a peal of Grandsire Doubles on 25 February 1868 by The Society of Ringers, Charlton Kings conducted by James Midwinter, relative of 2. First as conductor 2.

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Calverton, Buckinghamshire

All Saints

Tuesday, 24 April 2018 in 43 mins (10–1–24 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Simon J O Head
- 2 Anne McIntyre
- 3 John Brookman
- 4 Douglas S Vale
- 5 Gary Reading (C)
- 6 Mark Vale

Rung to commemorate the centenary of the death on this day of Lance Corporal Wilbert Devine of the East Lancs Regiment, great-uncle of 2, who was killed in action at Villers-Bretonneux aged 22.

And also to celebrate the birth of a son (yesterday) to Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

First Q in method and first Q inside – 4

