



OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

# *In Touch*

August 2009



## *Olney bells ring out again*

The new ring of 10 were heard for the very first time this summer. See page 5 for a full report on the installation and more pictures.

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### *Autumn Meeting*

**Saturday 12th September  
at Padbury and Hillesden**

- 3.30 Ringing at Padbury
- 4.30 Service
- 5.00 Tea
- 5.45 Business Meeting
- 7.00 Ringing at Hillesden

Please phone names for tea to :  
Helen Stanworth (01280 814172)  
**by Monday 7th September**

Evening ringing at Hillesden approx. 7 – 8.30pm

# Who's Who 2009 – 2010

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Helen Stanworth  
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## *From the Editor . . .*

Welcome to this edition of In Touch.

The major news in the branch this summer is the installation of the new ring of 10 at Olney. For those who have not had a ring on these bells, I can say they are a real pleasure to ring. Having a ring of 10 within the branch will give us all opportunities to experience ringing on higher numbers.

There are a couple of new features in this edition which hopefully will continue into the future. Firstly there is a Notice Board page, to advertise future events and provide more information about how to get involved. If anyone would like to contribute to this (it does not have to be a branch event), then please send me the details and I will include it in the

next edition. The back page diary will continue in the current format.

Also in this edition I am pleased to announce our own bellringing agony aunt - Aunt Sallie. She has received a letter from a local ringing terrier who needs advice on ringing matters!

Please keep sending in any tower news that you have for 'Around the Belfries' - the more I receive, the more interesting the newsletter.

Just one more thing, the deadline for the next edition of In Touch is:

**Tuesday 3rd November 2009**

*Jonathan*

# Message from the Chairman

Dear All

Well, here we are past the half way of the year and what a busy period it was for activity in the branch.

With the three deanery officers settling in and changes in the way we operate, I believe we are starting to make a difference to the way we can help our fellow ringers.

And of course the installation and dedication of the 10 bells at Olney - there is still some work left to be completed but now comes the exciting task of putting a team together to ring them for regular Sunday services. I'm sure Charles and David will be looking for recruits and I know there has been some interest

from local people after the taster session held recently.

But let us not forget all our other towers who need support, if you know someone who may be interested in learning to ring or coming back to the exercise why not encourage them to come along to your practice. I'm sure you all know that feeling of being on the outside looking in when you first attended your first practice or your first day in a new venture, so please go and bring them along and make them welcome.

Brian

## Double Birthday Celebration

We have just returned from a holiday in Suffolk but the initial reason for our visit was to attend a lunch on the Saturday to celebrate the birthdays of two very dear friends, Lindy and Gordon Ellis, whose 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays fall in July and August respectively.

Many of the more long term branch members will remember Gordon and Lindy, formerly of Newport Pagnell and Lavendon, who were very active ringers in this area until 1994 when work commitments took them to Kings Langley in Hertfordshire. In 2005, following their retirement, they moved out to Norfolk where they now live in the village of Wortwell, near Harlestone which is situated just south of the Norfolk Broads. They are both very involved in the life of the village and the local church and are regular ringers at Redenhall and Rumburgh.

There were quite a number of ringers invited to attend the party and, as they had asked for donations to Redenhall Church Fund in lieu of presents, it seemed fitting that Gordon had arranged for us all to ring at Redenhall [8 - 22 ½ cwt] prior to the party. One of the locals made a recording of the ringing and all the ringers then signed the CD card insert and it was presented to Gordon and Lindy later on at the party. It made a really good start to an excellent day.

When on holiday we don't very often go ringing but during the week we attended two practice nights. At the party we were invited by the tower captain to go to the practice at Rumburgh [6 - 10 cwt] on Monday night. It was an unusual church set well back from the road with access past a pond and across the land of the adjacent property. The bells had been rehung for the millennium and the ringing circle was all at one end of the ringing room. It

turned out that they had to leave the old frame intact so it was still in one half of the belfry and the new frame had been installed along side it at the other end.

Later in the week we also went to ring at Badingham [5 - 9cwt] which was the village where our cottage was situated and it turned out to be quite an unusual practice. The tower captain, a Danish man, made us very welcome and we were pleased to be able to help out with their band of learners. After we had been ringing for about an hour, he said that he had a special thank you for us and he then produced some glasses and a couple of containers from a cupboard and proceeded to pour out drinks for everyone – Adnams beer, no less! It turned out that one of their ringers gave promotional talks about Adnams Brewery and took along some beer for people to try out. Any beer he had left over was then brought along to the practice for consumption by the bellringers. A bit different from the coffee that some towers offer!

Sheila Blenkhorn





# from the Ringing Development Leaders

## Newport Deanery

During the period since the last issue of In Touch you will hopefully understand that I have been slightly busy with issues connected to the major project being completed in Olney. As a result I have not been as visible to members within the branch and specifically within the Newport Deanery to the extent that I would have hoped for.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June Olney was host to one of the twice yearly meetings of the Newport Deanery Synod. As part of the agenda I gave a 45 minute illustrated talk on the development of English style full circle ringing and the Olney Bells project which was well received and prompted a number of questions both during and after the talk. As part of that meeting Rev. Beverley Hollins, the Denary Development Facilitator for the Newport Deanery, handed out copies of the deanery plan to synod members for distribution to each of the parishes in the deanery.

In November 2008 Bishop John of Oxford published *Living Faith for the future: a strategy paper for the next five years*. The 2009/10 deanery plan sets out the deanery's purpose for achieving its vision in the light of the diocesan strategy. The specific steps we are or will be taking are set out using the headings in *Living Faith*. One of the headings is entitled 'Creating Vibrant Christian Communities' and within that there is a section on Bellringing including SMART objectives numbered 28 and 28a as follows:

Bellringing is a call to worship, and an expression of love for God in music. Ringers in the Newport Deanery are part of the North Bucks branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. The branch has appointed a Ringing Development Leader (RDL) for each deanery, who will encourage more people to take up ringing and more contact between ringers and clergy or church members. Newport Deanery is one of the few which has an increasing number of ringers, and it sets a good example for sharing in support for towers across a deanery. We can create opportunities for bells to be rung for special occasions and continue to encourage

more people to join in: for some people, ringing is their first point of entry to the Christian life.

There are a few young people learning to ring in the deanery and this is to be encouraged and built on. The RDL's will work together to offer events to bring together teenage ringers, and it is likely to be possible by 2010 to assemble a completely teenage band of ringers within the deanery for occasional ringing.

In Olney the church is using the arrival of new and recast bells as an opportunity to build relationships with local schools and businesses by taking the bells on tour through the town before they are hung, and by going into schools with history and music lessons, the latter being an ongoing project. This form of evangelism and community building is to be commended and encouraged throughout the deanery.

28	Grow a strong relationship with bellringers across the deanery, encouraging the ringers to regard their work as a contribution to the worship of the church.	RDL, Lay Chair and Chapter
28a	Use bellringing as a means of evangelism and community building e.g. though connecting with schools	RDL and other ringers



The Newport Deanery Synod meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> June also included the election of two members of clergy and two lay members to represent the deanery on the Oxford Diocesan Synod. I was elected as one of the lay members to represent the deanery for the next three years.

David Phillipson

## Buckingham Deanery

The get together at Thornborough was not that well attended but thanks to those who made the effort to come. I am still keen to find out your needs and aim to visit each practice in the deanery over the next few months. There is renewed interest at Thornborough and it is hoped that a practice may start up again soon. Whaddon held an open morning in conjunction with one of their usual coffee mornings and



I went along to help. There were a few interested people and hopefully two new recruits and one person returning to ringing. Thanks also to Helen and Catherine for helping at the morning as well. Perhaps you should try an open session in your tower. If you need help in any way, give me a call.

Richard Stanworth

## Milton Keynes Deanery

Alan Marchbank has supplied various reports which are spread throughout this edition of In Touch.

# News from Olney - the arrival of the new 10

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June, right on time at 1pm, the bells of Olney crossed the bridge over the Great Ouse and came home. Together with a police escort, the lorry carrying the bells, supplied by Projector Lifting, toured the town stopping outside all three schools. The return of the bells had been well publicised and a good number of people saw the bells for possibly the first and certainly the last time.

The lorry managed to negotiate through the church gate pillars and reverse right up to the North Door. The bells were safely off-loaded and arranged at the back of the church. Later that afternoon the church flower ladies decorated the tops of the bells with flowers that fitted well with the traditional blue of the headstocks from Whites.

The decorated bells sat at the back of the church for the whole weekend and a rota of ringers greeted a steady stream of visitors throughout that time. On the Sunday at the end of the Eucharist service the Rector, Claire Wood, blessed and anointed the two new trebles. A large number of family members were present from the Soul and Ward

families who donated the two bells in memory of Bob Soul and David Ward who both died in 2006.

On the following Monday morning Graham Clifton and James Haseldine arrived from Whites to supervise the volunteer workforce of Alan and John Marchbank, Jonathan Griggs, Richard Haseldine, Roy Keeves, Charles Knight, Brian Newman and myself. By the end of Monday, 7 of the 10 bells were in place and by the close of Tuesday all 10 were hung. On the Thursday afternoon all 10 were fully fitted and roped up and we rang the front 6 and the back 6 all be it with all of the trap doors open except the belfry floor.

By the end of the following week all of the trap doors had been replaced and the long serving safety barrier in the ringing chamber had been removed. We had also fitted the heavy steel brackets in the ringing chamber and reassembled and hung the old 6<sup>th</sup> frameside from the original 1626 frame. The brackets were constructed

by Charlie Head of Bletchley to a design from our resident structural engineers. On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June we were able to ring the original 8 bells for a wedding; the bride being a niece of a significant benefactor to the appeal.

On the following Monday evening a practice was held at which a number of people from Whites were present including Brian White and Graham Clifton. A range of touches were rung including Stedman Caters and Cambridge Royal and there was a general feeling of satisfaction and delight with the resulting sound and go of the bells. Outside there is an evenness of sound all round the tower. Inside, whilst there is currently slightly too much overall sound, the balance of sound is superb

and the retuning of the existing 8 and the two new trebles has produced an outstanding result.

The following Saturday was the Olney Cherry Fair and the weekend was the patronal festival. The 10 bells were rung for the start of the fair and there was open ringing following the fair at which a number of you were able to ring on them for the first time.



On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July Alan Wilson, the Bishop of Buckingham officiated at a service of rededication of the bells followed by an excellent reception in the church hall. Bishop Alan delivered a very humorous yet considered sermon in which he included a number of jokes about how many of varying types of people it takes to change a light bulb. He did not include how many bell ringers does it take but it would be nice to go back to him with a number of options so if anyone out there has any humorous bellringer related responses I would be pleased to hear them. On a more serious note our cameraman was not able to make the service to record the events on camcorder and the ringers were so involved with the service that we currently have no photographs of the event at all. If anyone has photographs please contact me; I am so desperate at the moment it might even come to the exchange of money!

## News from Olney contd.

What stage are we at now? The new ropes have been delivered and will be fitted once decorating has been finished. I am awaiting delivery of the new electromagnetic hammers so at present the clock is running but not striking the quarters or hours. A new lockable and solid belfry door and frame is being built at present, previously we had a gate and a rotten frame. The decorating of the ringing chamber should be finished in the next ten days and then we can have the felt underlay and natural fibre based carpet laid. Once the carpet is down we will then form a judgement as to what further works will be required to improve the quality and level of sound being delivered to the ringers. Please remember that absolutely no internal sound control measures have been undertaken at all at present, what you hear at present is as they were installed plus the replacement of trap doors; we have not even replaced the 30 bags of screed, papers, etc., that were removed from the void between the ringing chamber ceiling and the clock room floor.

We are in the process of installing CCTV with cameras covering the belfry, the ringing chamber and the central aisle with monitors in the ringing chamber and the rear of the church. The system is for training and education purposes.

Ringng-wise, the first quarter peal and peal are due to be rung inside the next month. Monday night practices



have resumed with handling tuition from 7.00 to 7.30 and then ringing continuing until 9.00 pm. Please note that access is now through the West Door at the base of the tower and not through the North door and church as previously. We ring every Sunday morning between 9.20 and 10.00 at present and we will be introducing ringing for the 6.00pm Evensong in due course. It is the intention to introduce monthly ten bell practices and to invite bands to ring quarter peals on Sunday evenings. The recruitment and training of new ringers will start in earnest after the summer holidays.

The hard work starts now and I look forward to welcoming you all to ring on our fine ring of ten.

David Phillipson

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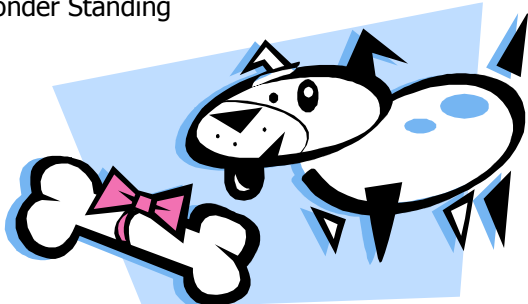
## Dear Aunt Sallie . . .

It was not my fault (honest!) that when he said: "*it's as dry as a **bone***" naturally I went to investigate, as I do like to get my nose into things and know what's going on.

I was **disgusted** to find out that instead of the *tasty bone* that I was expecting, he was splicing a BELL ROPE and thinking about applying a dose of ROPE LUBE.

What I want to know is; will this stuff make the bell rope taste more bone-like or perhaps it's an aid to digestion?

Yours doggedly,  
Miss Oonder Standing



Dear Oonder,

That must have been a huge gastronomical disappointment. Rope Lube will most certainly **not** turn a dry bell rope into a bone-flavoured treat. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO EAT IT. Rope Lube is designed to help moisturise hemp ropes and allow them to 'breathe' while preventing microbial attack. Very useful for ringers but not so good for dogs!

Try to get your owners to go to your local pet-store, that is if you can get them away from the bells and ringing activities, and find you more suitable doggy treats. Running off into the garden occasionally with items of clothing, socks, underpants etc. may encourage them to do this, but you have probably discovered this for yourself.

Good luck and do not hesitate to get 'In Touch' (no apologies for the pun) with me again if you have any more questions.

Your problem adviser,

Aunt Sallie



# Padbury Bells

## *a brief History*

St Mary's Padbury is celebrating its 800th anniversary this year. There has been a building on the site since at least 1209. As part of the celebration, the local band, with a little help from outside, will be attempting a celebratory peal on Saturday 5th September. The main celebrations will be taking place on the following day, Sunday 6th, ending with an Anniversary service attended by the Bishop of Oxford, and an 'Anniversary Tea'.



There have been bells in the church for at least 450 years. In 1553 it was recorded that there were four great bells and one saunce (sanctus?) bell. In 1680 the four bells were re-cast into five bells and in 1716 they were re-cast

again, this time into six bells. The present bells were cast in 1806 by John Briant of Hertford. They were required to be the same weight as the bells being replaced. The bill with the churchwardens' accounts show that they are actually 1cwt 1 qtr less than the 1716 bells, for which an allowance was made of 15 pence per pound. The original quotation for the job was £120 but the final bill came to £124 4s 2d as this included the costs of taking the old bells by canal from Buckingham to Box Moor near Hertford and returning the new bells to Padbury. Prices have risen since 1806 and similar work today would be likely to cost about 500 times as much – around £60,000! The total weight of all the bells, according to the account submitted by John Briant, is 38 cwt 3qtr 13lb. Since the bells were installed in 1806 they have been re-hung twice – in 1882 and in 1962, each time by the bellhanging firm Whites of Appleton. When the bells were re-hung in 1962 they were put into a new metal frame which was placed slightly lower in the tower than the wooden frame which it replaced. The two main beams of the wooden frame are still fixed across the tower above the present frame.

It is now over 40 years since the last re-hang and very little work has been carried out on the installation during this time apart from routine maintenance such as replacing worn out ropes. Some of the moving parts have become worn and it is time for some professional maintenance to ensure that the bells continue to sound out as a call to worship and to celebrate Church and national events, as the bells of St Mary's have done for the last 450 years. The work will involve replacing the crown staples (that part on which the clapper swings) and the rope pulleys, and re-greasing the main bearings on which the bells swing. The total cost will be £3287, which is about 5% of the cost of replacing the bells and frame. Considering that this is the first work on the bells for 47 years, the wear and tear on the installation works

### **Agreement with John Briant, Bellfounder**

*Memorandum of Agreement made this 28th October 1805, between Thomas Flowers and W<sup>m</sup> Horwood Church Wardens of the Parish of Padbury, Buckinghamshire and John Briant Bellfounder of the Borough of Hertford, the said John Briant to agree to cast the Weight of Metal that's in the old Peal which is about 39 Cwt 1 Qtr 23lb into a new Peal of Six Bells in the Key of A. The said John Briant to further agree to make a new Frame of Oak Timber and a new sett of hangings, and fix the whole in the Tower fit for use in a sound strong and Workmanlike manner by Easter next for the sum of £120 -- As it's impossible to cast a large Quantity of Metal to a few pounds, it is provided that if the old bells should weigh more than the new Bells the said John Briant to allow the Parish 15 Pence per lb for every lb deficient. Or if the new Bells should weigh more than the old Bells, the Parish to allow the said John Briant 19 Pence per lb for every lb added.*

*The Carriage to and from Hertford and the Floors of the Tower to be completed at the Expence of the Parish.*

*Signed* *John Briant*

*Churchwardens* *William Horwood*  
*Thomas Flowers*

# Padbury Bells contd.

out at about £70 per year. Once this work is complete, the bells should not need any other such work for another 50 years or so. There is some other maintenance work which will need doing in order to keep the bells in good working order. This consists of making the bell chamber waterproof to prevent rain getting onto the bell frame, and painting of the frame to prevent rusting. These are tasks which the bell ringers intend to carry out themselves over the next few months.

In the early days, Padbury was mainly a call change tower and in 1908 ten ringers from Padbury joined the recently formed North Bucks Branch as Probationers. They were not admitted as full members as they did not ring methods. They were a good call change band and rang together for the next 20 years. The Probationers certificate of our most celebrated member, Charles Gough (Junior) still hangs in the tower. The rule

defining probationary membership existed until 1922, although none seem to have been elected after 1914. Charles went on to become a full member and frequently rang with the Buckingham ringers after the Second World War. Indeed he was a good advertisement for the benefits of ringing as he was still ringing at the age of 98 and died in 1996 at the age of 103!

(Some of this information taken from the article by Bill Butler in Odd Bob, May 2007)

The first peal on the bells was not until 1911, more than 100 years after they were installed. A total of 14 peals have been rung up to August 2009, approx six before the bells were re-hung in 1962, and eight since. We can look forward to celebrating the centenary of the first peal in two year's time!

Richard Stanworth

## John Briant's bill for the casting of the bells in 1806

1806 July 16

Messrs Horwood and Flowers  
Church Wardens of Padbury

D<sup>r</sup> to John Briant

To a new Peal of 6 Bells, Frames and Hangings per Contract	£	s	d
	120	0	0
To Carriage from Buckingham to Box More	2	5	6
Wharfage at Buckingham	0	4	6
Wharfage at Box More	0	7	4
Land Carriage 35 <sup>Ct</sup> at 1 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup> p Ct	2	12	6
Carriage of 1 <sup>st</sup> Bell and Clapper sct 6 at 2 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup>	0	15	0
Carriage of new Bells &c from Hertford to Box More 45 ct at 1 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup>	3	7	6
Carriage of new Bells from Box More to Buckingham in same proportion as above	2	16	10
Wharfage at Box More	0	10	0
	<u>£132</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>

	C	Q	lb	
Weight of old Bells	40	1	5	gross
Deduct 5 Crown Staples of Iron			<u>20</u>	
	40	0	13	neat Wt
Weight of new Bells	<u>38</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>	
Cr	1	1	0	at 15d
			<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>
			£124	4 2

**Pinned in with the bill, on a piece of paper with embossed receipt stamp:**

Receiv'd 24th July 1806 of  
Messrs Horwood & Flowers,  
One hundred and twenty four  
Pounds, four Shillings and two  
Pence for Casting a new Peal of  
6 Bells &c as p bill annexed.

JOHN BRIANT

£ s d  
124 4 2





# *All around the Belfries*

## **Downs Barn**

The only recent ringing here has been by the Cumberlands as part of their Pitman day. Simultaneously with the attempt at Bletchley a peal of Pitman's 8 Spliced Surprise Major was scored in fine style.

We have been in discussion with Bradwell about trying to get Downs Barn rung for service on some regular if not frequent basis. Due to the timing of services this seems unlikely to be possible. I am always keen to get the bells rung for service on a Sunday. Anyone willing and able to ring for an 11am service however infrequently, please contact me and I will make the necessary arrangements.

Alan Marchbank



## **Great Linford**

On the grounds that the Met Office was promising a barbeque summer we thought we should enter into the spirit of things with a ringers summer barbeque. After a bit of planning we deciding a Tuesday was a good night (well we only go ringing don't we?). We should have expected it really but the day dawned with rain. It picked up a bit and we all arrived bearing the various ingredients. Thankfully the weather remained fine throughout the cooking and eating phases; puddings and coffee were enjoyed in the church as it was by then raining.

Summer is here and with it a significant number of weddings to ring for. We are grateful to all those that help us manage the burden – is it because we are a picturesque church or just because we are part of a big parish? There is also an increase in Friday weddings – great when the kids are about, but otherwise they can be a struggle.

Practices continue to be well supported and we are generally able to get all six going most Sundays for service. Like many other towers we need some new recruits in anticipation of the teenagers departure for university . . .

As you will read elsewhere there has been a chance for reflection recently, with the Church Warden updating the Terrier and asking for details of the bells etc. This made me realise that it is 17 years since the bells were re-hung and quarter turned. Goodness doesn't time fly!!

Alan Marchbank

## **Woughton (and elsewhere)**

Friday Weddings - four in a row.

Good contacts between towers has produced some useful support and good fun recently for me. It started with my appeal for ringers, using the branch email link, at St Mary's Woughton on the Green on Friday 17th July. Many thanks to Wendy and Phil Haslam from Emberton who helped out on this occasion and I treated them to a wet afternoon and a bride who was 30 minutes late - she only lived 400 metres away on the Green. One of my own ringers failed to turn up and we were able to complete the six from two ringers who were guests at the wedding. The rain kept the wedding party in the church taking photographs for what seemed like an hour and we finally rang her across the wet grass to the hotel next door at about 5.30pm - wedding at 4.00pm. A small bonus was added to ringers pay packets for the day.

Trish from Milton Keynes Village appealed for help with the following Friday's wedding at Wavendon. I was able to help by providing three ringers to make up the six. The only notable event on this occasion was a polite telling off from the Vicar for ringers chatting during the service - apologies given.

Sheila Watts must be held responsible for the events at North Crawley a week later. She put out the nbb.odg email appeal for support on behalf of Malcolm Rose. Again I was able to provide three ringers for another bride who was 30 minutes late. We were able to ring her in as well as the planned out. What we did not expect was a service of more than one hour so the bells were finally rung down at about 2.45pm for a 1.00pm wedding. Ringers from Woughton, Bradwell, Newport, Loughton and Olney supported this one. I spent my £10 in the Cock Inn, but I must recommend the Youngers Special and the warm beef sandwich.

Oh yes there was another Friday wedding at my own tower on Friday 7th Aug and this time my thanks go to the Marchbanks for providing two ringers to help out.



Brian Baldwin

## **Newport Pagnell**

Nicki King reports smashing her target of £750 and raising a fantastic total of £920 for the Stroke Association through making cakes and sponsorship for running the London Marathon this year. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to her efforts.

## Bletchley

The church audio visual team have made improvements to their kit in the tower and it is now possible to ring the treble without first moving the camera mixer.

We have already rung for half a dozen weddings so far and there are more later in the year. Thanks to all of you who assist us in this commitment. I know the church is very pleased to have the bells rung and to be able to offer this to couples as part of the wedding service.

The Cumberlands came and attempted a peal recently as part of their Pitman day. Pitman's 9 Spliced Surprise Major was attempted and lost twice – the second time after a couple of hours of very nice ringing. Both attempts failed due to conductor error.

Alan Marchbank

## Willen

### *Willen Bells - almost as they were?*

I was asked to find information to update the Gt Linford Terrier the other day and in the process re-discovered these pictures of Willen's bells.

They were taken in 1991 just after a local (and a local ringer who should have known better) had re-hung the treble for chiming only. I got to see and take photos of the second and third with their original fittings intact.

The photos on the right show the remains of the treble's headstock. The bell had sunk through its wooden headstock and wrecked the wheel. Thankfully the original fittings were preserved. I had never seen hooped gudgeons before: these had been fitted to the treble and were still on the second bell.

The picture below right is the treble after the rehang. The second (below left) and third were still hung for full circle ringing. Indeed we tied the clapper of the third and rang it! Again I had never seen a bell with an iron stay and a metal latch slider on the frame side.

I think these bells have now had the same treatment as the treble. Shame this work was done and the original Chandler fittings were destroyed. The bells could not have been made to ring full circle without massive expense, but with sympathetic attention it would have been possible to make them fit for chiming with the original fittings preserved in use.

Alan Marchbank



## Hanslope

Each year in July, Hanslope church has an open weekend. One of the attractions to entice people is that the tower is open and people can climb the tower to the base of the spire to admire the view. About 300 people climbed the steps over the two days this year.

By coincidence we had recently been thinking about recruitment at Hanslope, and the open weekend provided an ideal opportunity to promote ringing. We produced some publicity leaflets to hand out to everyone and also rang a single bell during the afternoon as a demonstration. The marketing exercise has produced results - we signed up 5 interested people and bell handling lessons have already started.

Jonathan Griggs





## St James, New Bradwell

Well this has to be one of the more unusual "grabs"!

Tine was contacted by the churchwarden recently as the rope of their single bell had broken, and they were looking for help to fix it. She duly trundled off and met the lady and (in hindsight) bravely took the remains of the rope from (the remains of) the wheel.

The rope had failed at the garter hole and there was plenty of spare rope wrapped around the wheel so John put in a long-ish splice and the job was done.

I went with John to put the rope back on and was prepared for some bolt tightening action as Tine had said she thought a few bits were loose. Liberal use of WD40 and a 15" adjustable had all the important bits tightened up and with the rope back on we were able to chime the bell again. I did not think it was safe to ring the bell up as the wheel is in poor condition – the rim is detaching from the sole due to nail fatigue (in other words they are rusting away).

The history of this tower is quite interesting. The church was built through public fund-raising. With the tower at about ringing room level, they ran out of money. The rest of the church was completed and the tower was



finished off with a wooden roof and a bell-cote. The bell is about 4 or 5 cwt cast in 1886 by John Warner of London. It is hung for full circle ringing although the bearings and pulley are most rudimentary and not the lowest friction devices I have seen!

Shame they ran out of money, just imagine what might have been installed? Could have been quite good – as long as it was not a complete Warner ring!

Alan Marchbank



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## *Branch summer meeting at Clifton Reynes*

An encouraging number of about forty people turned out for the summer meeting at Clifton Reynes in June. Along with some very pleasant ringing there was excellent tea and cake served in the church.

This year the meeting was combined with the Annual 6 bell Striking Competition. This was judged by Ben Carey from Portsmouth and Guildford Cathedrals. It was a pity that many left before the striking competition, as in the end only 3 bands competed for the trophy.

The results were as follows.

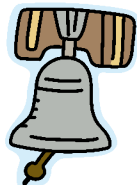
1 Hanslope	82%
2 Shenley and Loughton	59%
3 Great Linford	58%

For those who were still hungry after the cake there was a barbecue laid on at the Robin Hood !

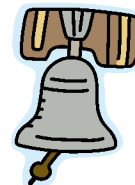


The Hanslope band (left to right) Roy Keeves, Nick Gray, Ian Thompson, Stuart Grout, Tony Gray, Jonathan Griggs, with judge Ben Carey





## Quarters and Peals



### St James the Great, Hanslope

Sunday 21st June 2009

#### 1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

1. Roy Keeves
2. Jonathan Griggs
3. Stuart Grout
4. Nick Gray
5. Ian Thompson
6. Kevin Haseldine
7. Tony Gray (c)
8. Richard Haseldine

To celebrate the 21st birthday of Sian Haseldine. 1st quarter of major as conductor.

### St Edmund, Maids Moreton

Saturday 25th July 2009

#### 1260 St Clements and Plain Bob Minor

1. Bob Christopher
2. Shirley Web
3. Ann Fletcher
4. Jonathan Spencer
5. Laurence Gibson
6. Andrew Spencer (c)

First quarter peal rung on the new ropes, with special thanks to the anonymous donor(s) for their generous contribution.

### St Mary, Easton Neston

Saturday 27th June 2009

#### 5184 Spliced Surprise Major (8 methods)

768 each Rutland, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Pudsey, 576 each Bristol, Cambridge, Superlative 384 London; 143 com

Comp Marcus C W Sherwood

1. Raymond A Vickers
  2. Julie A Haseldine
  3. Jonathan A Spencer
  4. Michael R Spencer
  5. Ruth Stokes
  6. Andrew J Spencer
  7. Andrew Haseldine (c)
  8. Christopher C Stokes
- 1st peal for Jonathan Spencer

Jonathan had not been keen to ring his first peal feeling that 3 hours of ringing would be rather boring. So to keep him awake and avoid too much boredom a peal of 8-spliced was arranged for last summer, unfortunately having his leg fixed took priority and it was cancelled. The peal was rearranged for spring 2009, but disaster struck again when the peal was miss-called after a couple of hours ringing. Finally in June this year a successful peal was achieved. The conductor was not troubled with any need to advise Jonathan during the peal and an accurate and well struck peal was rung.

I have been asked how common it is to ring 8-spliced as a first peal; checking with a computer record keeper on such matters I am advised that 16 ringers have rung their first peal to an inside bell for 8 spliced surprise major since 1965.

Andrew Spencer

## Guild 10 Bell Striking Competition 2009

This year the competition will be held at Long Crendon on Saturday 28th November.

David Phillipson is going to be organising a band to represent the branch. As we now have a 10 bell tower within the branch there will be ample opportunity for some practices beforehand. The method is to be announced shortly by the Guild Deputy Ringing Master!

Of course, having a 10-bell tower means that we can no longer hide behind the excuse of being unable to practice. But after the excellent ringing achieved in the recent 8 bell competition and with the opportunity to practise at Olney, we should now be confident of making a serious challenge. Watch out Reading here we come !

## from the Secretary



### Grants

Applications for grants (for training assistance, work in towers, ropes, pulleys etc.) may be submitted to the Secretary. Details of applications received will be distributed to towers as soon as possible and will then be considered at the next branch meeting. A meeting for this may be convened at any branch practice or event.

### Training Grants

Grants are available to assist with the cost of training courses as follows: 50% of the cost of the course up to a maximum of £50. Applications for grants should be made in writing to the Secretary. Please apply before you attend the course.



## OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

### News from the Guild and the Central Council

#### *News from the Guild:*

At the AGM on 16th May, Ed Houghton and Lorna Smale were elected Stewards to replace Martin Crick and Shirley Haines. Their contact details, with their respective branches, are on the ODG website. In addition, Mike Till stood down as a Central Council Rep, and was replaced by Graham Clifton.

There were two changes to the rules about Membership. Subscriptions are now due by April not December to align their receipt with the payment of the insurance premium. If you have not paid your subs by April you are not a member and won't be insured!

Also no more Honourary Members will be elected. Instead a new category of Distinguished Member has been introduced. This is open for nominations for those who have over 30 years membership and have made a significant contribution to Branch or Guild operations. The award of the class of membership will be by Guild Officers at the AGM.

Full details and nomination forms can be found on the Guild web site.

The Guild personal accident insurance scheme has also changed. Cover has been extended to include all members regardless of age and also those being instructed by a Guild member. The level of compensation paid in the event of a successful claim has also been increased. Again, see the ODG website for full details.

#### *and the Central Council:*

At the Central Council Meeting in May there was an appeal from Alan Regin - the steward of the Rolls of Honour (ringers who died during the Great War and WWII), for ALL ringers to be vigilant if they are reading peal boards in towers they are visiting or anywhere else where mention might be made of ringers who died in action. The records are incomplete and he is calling for anyone who has observed a memorial like this to ringers to get in touch with him with names, and if the locals are knowledgeable, photos.

The steward of the Rolls of Honour can be contacted on [aregin@spitalfieldse1.freemove.co.uk](mailto:aregin@spitalfieldse1.freemove.co.uk) or via the Central Council website.

#### *Training Courses*

There are a number of Guild training events coming up, details of which should be available on your tower notice board or have been circulated via the branch egroup.

##### **Michaelmas Training Day**

Saturday, September 26th 2009

The aim of this day is to provide the opportunity for students to learn more advanced methods than those offered on the Radley and Steeple Aston one-day courses. It is based at the Shinfield Ringing Centre. It is now too late to apply for this year but look out for next year if you are interested in learning methods such as Kent and Oxford Treble Bob, Grandsire and Stedman Triples, Surprise Minor or Major. However if you are a competent ringer of any of these, helpers are still needed. Please contact one of the Ringing Development Leaders for more details.

##### **Steeple Aston Training Day**

Saturday 31st October 2009

This course provides tuition & practice on basic methods from plain hunt to Plain Bob Major. Priority will be given to members who have not attended before.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from Richard Stanworth or email [steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk](mailto:steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk)  
Closing date for applications is 15th September 2009.

##### **Laying The Right Foundations**

Saturday 10th October 2009

A one day seminar for those who teach new ringers and those who wish to learn more about how to teach. This will be held at the Aston Clinton Ringing Centre.

This course is intended to provide a basic framework for teaching bell ringing upon which individuals can build as their circumstances permit. The different aspects of the topic will be approached in a variety of ways: presentation of ideas, discussions and practical sessions.

# Interbranch Striking Competition

After a break last year due to lack of ringers and not being able to find a suitable date, the inter branch competition against the Towcester branch was held this year on Saturday 4th July. The weather held for us so we were able to congregate outside and listen to the ringing whilst enjoying tea and cakes.

After several years of judging the competition ourselves, this year we had invited Graham Clifton from the Banbury Branch to judge the event. He had brought Alan Griffin to assist with the judging. They had heard of the event from others who had judged it in the past and had expressed an interest in judging the competition because the format differed from most other striking competitions.

There was a separate toss of a coin for each section in order to determine the order of ringing but it turned out that the Towcester branch rang first in all three sections.

The only hiccup in the proceedings was that we were one short for the Stedman Triples due to one of our ringers not being able to come at the last minute due to work commitments. However, the Towcester branch kindly lent Nigel Williams to us.

Graham and Allan had been furnished with a set of rules but in their remarks afterwards they commented on the fact that the bands did not appear to follow them too closely, in particular all bands exceed the one minute of practice allowed in the rules.

These are some of the judges' comments (as many as I managed to note down) and the results:

## Plain Bob Minor:

Band A (Towcester) Most problems due to poor leading.

Band B (North Bucks) A good speed, easier to hear, no major clashes.

Result: Towcester 34 ½ faults; North Bucks 24 faults

## Call Changes on 8:

Band A (Towcester) No signal before the start but didn't catch the judges out as they were ready. Most faults came when the calls were made. Took a long time to adjust, but eventually settled down.

Band B (North Bucks) Not enough changes rung!

Result: Towcester 45 ½ faults; North Bucks 61 faults (up to the point they stopped)

## Stedman Triples:

Band A (Towcester) Very easy to listen to, only minor leading errors. Method mistakes were quickly corrected.

Band B (North Bucks) Several method faults. Didn't settle at all.

Result: Towcester 15 faults; North Bucks 32 faults

The Towcester Branch won the competition by two sections to one, so they collected both the Jack Green Trophy for the overall competition and the George Holland Trophy for the Stedman Triples.

Thank you to all who took part in the competition, especially those who were representing the branch for the first time. I hope it wasn't too daunting for you.



Those taking part were:  
Roger Everson, Doug Hird, Alan Marchbank, Alex Marchbank, Tine Marchbank, Brian Newman, Simon Read, Nick Read, Derek Stainsby, Helen Stanworth, Richard Stanworth, Vicky Stanworth, Nathan Tinsley, Ros Tyrell.

*Chris Bullied of the Towcester branch receiving the George Holland Trophy for the Stedman Competition from Graham Clifton*



# Branch Notice Board

## Emberton Elementary Practice - a chance to have a go

**Saturday 17th October 10:30 - 13:00**

This will be a tied practice with the special emphasis on handling for people who have never rung before. It is an opportunity for non ringers to come and have a go - learn a little more about ringing with the help of some audio visuals and have a go on a light set of bells. If you know of anyone from your locality that would be interested in this then please mention it to them and contact your local ringing development leader.

## Joint Practice with Towcester Branch on Towcester's 12

**Saturday 21st November 7:30 pm**

Ever fancied having a go at ringing on 12 or grabbing Towcester ? Here is the opportunity. This is a joint branch practice to cater for all standards. Rounds and call changes upwards. Open to everyone in the branch. So just roll up and have a go.

## Model Church Bells

*I have been contacted By Nick Green who makes model church bells as a hobby:*

'I am writing to invite you to have a look at my new website dedicated to model church bells. I am passionate about church bells and have been making models for some years now and have recently created the website, which I am constantly trying to improve and update. The address is:

<http://modelchurchbells.co.uk>

I would be very grateful if you could find the time to have a look and if possible mention it in your newsletter.'

*Consider it done - Ed.*

## Christmas Celebration

**Saturday 12th December**

Building on the success of the Branch Christmas celebration last year we will be repeating it again this year. The venue will be different but the format will be similar - ringing - carol service - fish and chip supper followed by the Alan Marchbank annual quiz - with prizes !

So hold that date.

## Visual Teaching Aids

Do you need some DVDs or videos to help teach your members to ring? There are a number of titles held within the branch and these are available to borrow. Please contact the secretary if you want further information (details on page 2).

**Bellhandling - a tutor's companion**  
by the Central Council (video or DVD)

**Look to and Learn**  
by the Kent County Association (video)

**Teaching Demonstration**  
recording of Steve Coleman teaching (video)

# What's on and where



## AUGUST

Saturday 22nd      4.00      Branch Practice      Calverton

## SEPTEMBER

Saturday 12th      3.30      Autumn Meeting      Padbury

*Saturday 26th      10.00      Michaelmas Training Day      Shinfield Ringing Centre*

## OCTOBER

*Saturday 3rd      Guild Six Bell Striking Competition      Vale of the White Horse Branch*

*Saturday 10th      Laying the Right Foundations Course      Aston Clinton Ringing Centre*

Saturday 17th      10.30      Elementary Practice      Emberton

*Saturday 31st      Steeple Aston Course      Steeple Aston*

## NOVEMBER

Saturday 21st      \*7.30      Joint practice with Towcester Branch      Towcester

*Saturday 28th      Guild Ten Bell striking competition      Long Crendon*

*Saturday 28th      Guild Autumn General committee meeting      Great Milton*

## DECEMBER

Saturday 12th      \*4.30      Christmas Celebration      TBA

Items marked \* were unconfirmed as at 7th August 2009  
*Italicised events are Guild events*