



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

In Touch

August 2010

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Autumn Meeting at Downs Barn

Saturday 11th September

3.30 Ringing

4.30 Service

5.00 Tea

5.45 Meeting



This is the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry. It is proposed to ring these bells in Middleton Hall in the shopping centre in order to publicise our branch recruitment campaign.

This will be the main topic for discussion at the meeting. Please come along and share your views.

See page 4 for more details of the proposed project.

**Names for tea to Alan Marchbank 01908 611434
by Tuesday 7th September.**

Evening ringing until 8.30

Who's Who 2010–2011

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From the Editor . . .

Welcome to the Autumn edition of In Touch.

This edition contains details of the branch's proposed recruitment project. Please read it and bring your thoughts along to the Autumn meeting.

In the last edition we had some articles about David Phillipson leaving the area and moving to Australia. This month, thanks to modern technology, we have news from him from down under.

Also in this edition are reports from recent striking competitions, news from towers around the branch and a new competition. Enjoy !

The deadline for contributions for the next edition of In Touch is **Tuesday 2nd November 2010.**

Jonathan

From the Chairman . . .

Dear All

It was pleasing to see many of you at the Summer Social at Stowe.

The officers have been preparing for the 'big event' for next year with the possibility of a handbell performance at the Christmas show in Middleton Hall. We will be asking for your help in all this.

Both Whaddon and Great Brickhill are now both ringing again, with Great Brickhill soon to hold its dedication service.

Please read all the news in this copy of In Touch about our push to increase our membership and finally I hope to see you at the Autumn meeting.

Brian

Sheila Watts - our Distinguished Member

I had been looking forward to being eligible for Honorary Membership of the Guild, and time was creeping on to when this would be possible. (I well remember being elected a Guild member at Stony Stratford in 1975 - my first experience of a ringers' tea and I recall thinking there was more to this ringing lark than bells.)

Imagine my dismay when the Guild started talking about abolishing the category of Honorary Membership! But all was not lost - a new category of Distinguished Membership had been formed, albeit with very different criteria - but I did not expect to be in this group. I was very surprised and pleased when I became aware the Branch was going to propose me for membership. An invitation arrived from the Guild Secretary to attend the AGM at Speen in Berkshire, when I, and others from the Guild, would receive this honour.

It was a long drive to Speen, but we were rewarded with an inspiring service (I'd forgotten how massed ringers can sing), a super tea, and a very well run AGM. It was also great to catch up with old friends. Ringers from the Branch had also travelled to Speen for the occasion, which was much appreciated. Certificates for Distinguished Members were presented by Robert Newton, the Guild Master, and I felt truly honoured to be in such august company.



Sheila Watts receiving her distinguished member certificate from Robert Newton - Guild Master

Caption Competition

Alan Marchbank was captured recently at the branch practice at New Bradwell.

Any ideas on a relevant caption ?

You can send your ideas to the editor and they will be published in the next edition.

No prize - just lots of kudos.

Good luck.

My contribution is :



. . . and our Leader looked down on His people and He was pleased with what He saw.

Jonathan

Paws for thought

Ah the summer is upon us once more and so it's time for lots of wedding ringing which means I get to sit around outside towers in the sunshine whilst they ring or drink tea! There is sometimes something to bark at and that gets them going - especially if it's a wedding guest who's strayed round to the tower door. I tell em!



Its not a bad life though really.

The majority of the household plus a couple of them from Newport Pagnell have gone off to Hull on a weeks cycling and ringing - The Young Peoples Cycle Tour they call it. Don't make me laugh! The organiser has to be 70 if he's a day! Means I'm stuck at home with him.

He's too keen. 7am up and out of bed and off for a walk. We go by the Nags - but it's closed! Then he's "doing jobs" till after Archers time when it's another walk - but this time he's "earned a pint" so we stop at the Nags.

It's not a bad life really!

Polly

Branch Recruitment Project - update

The Objective

At the AGM, the branch agreed that it wanted to progress the idea of having a single large branch level recruitment event, with the aim of getting our message about ringing to the largest number of people possible. The officers have subsequently been reviewing options and implications and now have a proposal to discuss at the Autumn meeting on September 11th. In preparation for this discussion, this article provides some background information on the options, the likely costs, the input required from towers and how the project could be taken forward to make it a success. At the meeting we need to decide whether as a branch we wish to progress and commit to this project.

The Options

The main concept for the event is to set up a mobile ring in a public space which would attract passing potential recruits. Options for hosting this have been considered including Stoke Goldington Steam Rally, The Bowl and Middleton Hall. Following some research it was felt that the best response is most likely to come from using Middleton Hall. The costs of hiring the whole hall are prohibitive; however we can share the hall with another event, or have it to ourselves on a day when no one else has booked it. Both of these options are free. The preferred timescales are to host the event in the first half of next year, either on a Saturday or a weekday during a school holiday. We can have 3-4 months notice of an acceptable date for the use of the hall.

Having reviewed the suitability of available mobile rings, it is considered that the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry best fits our needs. There has been some concern expressed by the operators of Middleton Hall that the sound will be too loud from the bells, however, having undertaken an assessment we believe the Lichfield ring will be within tolerances. We have been invited to ring handbells in the hall at Christmas time in order to test the acoustics of the space.

The Proposal

It is proposed to have the mobile ring ringing all day. Around the ring will be a large number of display boards with information about ringing – the history, the art, what it involves, where to do it, contacts, our training program etc etc. There will be people with flyers talking to passers by, explaining what is going on, explaining what ringing is all about and acquiring contact details. There will also be opportunities for people to have a go at bell handling on the mobile ring. The training program will also be explained.

In preparation for the day, there will be some significant advertising and marketing, including local TV, radio, press, notices and posters, so that the widest

possible audience can be made aware of what we are doing. Of course, the bells ringing in Middleton Hall should themselves draw the crowds in.

It is expected that some visitors to the hall will be from outside the branch and possibly outside the ODG. We therefore need to co-ordinate with neighbouring associations in terms of contacts for recruits. For everyone that expresses an interest on the day we need to either try and get them on the local training scheme, or if they are not from this area, get their local ringing contact to make contact with them to encourage them to their local tower.

The publicity day is just the start of it. Key to making the project a success will be the number of people who complete the training and become active ringers within (or outside) the branch. Therefore it is important to follow up people's initial interest with the start of the 'The Ringing Experience' training scheme.

The key aspects of this 'The Ringing Experience' training scheme are as follows

A ten week course of 10 scheduled sessions either on a weekday evening, or a Sunday afternoon.

The course will include the following :

- Introduction – demonstrations and seeing a bell ring.
- Basic Bell handling, ringing up and down, ringing rounds and call changes.
- Talks about aspects of bellringing: ringing and the church, ringing history, change ringing, Guild structures, training materials and resources – internet and RW etc.
- Coffee and biscuits – an essential element to make this a socialable exercise.

All the recruits will be trained together at various local towers. This helps to create a group bond and is more likely to ensure retention. During the later stages of the course, local tower captains will be invited to introduce themselves to the recruits living in their locality, so that there is a smooth transition from the centralised training to the ringing in the local church. The aim of the training is to produce a ringer who is competent at handling a bell and can ring rounds. On completion of the course, the recruits will receive a certificate to show accomplishment and join the branch as a member.

The group will be encouraged to continue to communicate and train together, therefore follow up monthly sessions will be arranged so that the overall momentum is not lost.

Branch Recruitment Project - continued

The Cost

If the project is going to be undertaken seriously, then these are the likely levels of expenditure required:

Hire of mobile ring	£300
Hire of Hall	Free
Handout materials	£300
Display materials	£300
Insurance	£200
Data Capture	£200
Follow up training Costs	£500
Admin (post / phone etc)	£200
Contingency	£250
Total Cost	<u>£2250</u>

This amount of money exceeds the current funds of the branch and therefore alternative sources will need to be found.

The Ringing Foundation (www.turningcourse.com) has been approached to establish what support it can give. They are discussing our proposal at the end of August, so we should have some feedback by the time of the September meeting.

What needs to be done

This is a big project. If it is undertaken properly, it could make a step change to the number of ringers within the branch. However it will only be a success if there is support from across the branch on not only a verbal basis, but more importantly, on an active and practical basis.

These are the activities that will be need to be undertaken :

- Organising the logistics of the mobile ring
- Help with setting up the mobile ring
- Ringers to man the mobile ring during the day
- People to talk to interested potential recruits
- Preparation of the display material
- Preparation of the marketing material
- Communication to TV, radio, press
- Planning the training sessions
- Hands on bell handing training
- Talking to recruits about related ringing subjects
- Ringers for the training scheme.
- Coordinating and liaison with the recruits
- Liaison with other branches and guilds
- Financial control

Bringing all this together requires a separate set of skills – someone to manage a project and co-ordinate all the component parts. Additionally, it would be useful to have some professional marketing experience to draw on. Do these skills exist within the membership of the branch?

What next

This proposal is to be discussed at the Autumn branch meeting on September 11th at Downs Barn. As a branch we need to decide how to take it forward.

Please come along to the meeting and bring your thoughts and ideas with you.

Branch Practice at Bradwell - May 2010

The attendance was less than had been previously experienced, but that was not a disappointment and we were able to concentrate our efforts with a few who needed something a little different. Norwich and Cambridge were both rung, as well as plain doubles and minor, Grandsire and even some Kent Treble Bob.

Charles Knight made the journey from Olney on one of his nicely restored Velocette motorcycles and there was a good deal of interest in the old 4th bell which is cracked and was replaced in the early 1980's. It hangs in the North aisle a little out of sight to my mind, but then again what do you do with an instrument that is historically important but practically useless?



Alan

WANTED

I am collecting Ringing Association and Guild badges. If anyone has any badges they would like to dispose of please get in touch and we can discuss values etc. My details are on page 2.

Alan Marchbank

Branch Six Bell Striking Competition

The branch six bell striking competition was held at Stowe in conjunction with the Summer Social on Saturday 20th June. It seemed that all the people I knew who might judge the competition were busy, so I was left with no alternative but to judge it myself. This left the Padbury band one short so I must thank Gillian Macdonald for standing in for me at the last moment.

After the general ringing the draw for the competition took place. As the judge I left the church so that I would not know the order in which the teams were to ring.

I found a spot in the car park away from the other cars where I would not be disturbed and from where I could hear the bells clearly; a little too clearly as it turned out. At Stowe the second is hung above the other bells and from where I was sitting it 'shouted' out more than the rest. This meant that I tended to hear any errors that the ringer of the second made more clearly than the rest.

These are my comments about each team, in the order that they rang.

Team 1 (Olney) - Rang Call Changes. They rang at a steady pace, which was good for the bells. Most faults occurred when each change was called, although this improved in the second half of the test piece. Faults occurred because hand strokes were not open and backstrokes were, i.e. the wrong way round.

Team 2 (Great Linford) – Rang plain courses of Grandsire Doubles. This piece was hesitant but there were no real clashes. It was rather uneven.

Team 3 (Woughton on the Green) - Rang Grandsire Doubles. Unfortunately this band broke down in the fourth lead and failed to finish.

Team 4 (Shenley & Loughton) – Rang Plain Bob Doubles. The speed varied. The striking improved when they slowed down slightly, although a number of faults were picked up by the tenor being late.



Most of the winning team from Shenley and Loughton

Team 5 (Padbury) – Rang Grandsire Doubles. Many faults were picked up due to clashes. There were periods where it improved but it was marred by inconsistent leading.

Based on the faults awarded to each team, they were placed as follows:

1st	Shenley & Loughton	46 Faults
2nd	Great Linford	49 Faults
3rd	Olney	81 Faults
4th	Padbury	95 Faults
5th	Woughton	DNF

Congratulations to the Shenley & Loughton team who are eligible to go forward to represent the Branch at the Guild Six Bell striking competition at the beginning of October.

Listening to the ringing I thought it was a successful day and thanks to all who entered. It is some time since I can recall a team entering who rang call changes and the results show that what you ring is not important. After all, this is a good striking competition, not a method ringing competition. Even in the Guild competition the winners ring something that they can do well so that they can concentrate on good striking.

Richard Stanworth



Peals, Quarters and other ringing



SS Peter & Paul, Olney

Saturday, 15th May 2010

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Matthew J Sheaf
- 2 B Douglas Hird
- 3 Simon O Head
- 4 Charles J Knight
- 5 Alan J Marchbank (C)
- 6 Elizabeth Sheaf

First quarter on the new front 6

First quarter: 1 & 6

Rung with best wishes to David Phillipson who has just moved to Australia to work.

The quarter was arranged in a Saturday morning slot which is reserved for locally organised peal attempts but as there wasn't one in May it was thought opportune to have a go at a quarter instead.

There were a few nerves to begin with but once the ringing settled down and confidence grew this was a nice piece of ringing and as can be seen from the footnotes, a good many "firsts" were scored. Well done to you all!

Alan

SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

Saturday, 17 July 2010

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 John Marchbank
- 2 Elly Cooper
- 3 Nick Read
- 4 John Stanworth
- 5 B. Douglas Hird
- 6 Simon Read (C)

Rung for the 1st wedding anniversary of Matt & Elly Cooper on the 10th July.

First as conductor

First quarter inside: 2

Rung on the front 6

St Laud, Sherington

Sunday, 4th July 2010

660 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 John Marchbank
- 2 Elly Cooper
- 3 Nick Read
- 4 Simon Read
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)

Rung before Deanery Evensong

All Saints, Hillesden

Tuesday 6th April 2010

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Andrew Marshall
- 2 Marion Robinson
- 3 John Causer
- 4 Janet Garnett
- 5 Edith Robinson
- 6 John Stanworth (C)

St Mary, East Claydon

Tuesday April 6th 2010

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Edith Robinson
- 2 John Causer
- 3 Marion Robinson
- 4 Janet Garnett
- 5 John Stanworth (C)
- 6 Andrew Marshall

S Mary the Virgin, Padbury

Tuesday 6th April 2010

1320 Surprise Minor

(720 Norwich, 600 Cambridge)

- 1 Helen Barker
- 2 John Causer
- 3 Janet Garnett
- 4 Marion Robinson
- 5 John Stanworth
- 6 Edith Robinson (C)

St James the Great, Hanslope

Sunday 20th June 2010

1250 Spliced Surprise Major

(Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire)

- 1 Brian Berry
- 2 Roy Keeves
- 3 Stuart Grout
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Ian Thompson
- 6 Richard Haseldine
- 7 Tony Gray
- 8 Jonathan Griggs (C)

Rung to celebrate the ruby wedding anniversary of Fr. Robert and Mary Nokes.

1st quarter of 3 spliced: 2 3 5 7

1st quarter on 8 for 25 years: 1



Peals, Quarters and other ringing



SS Peter and Paul, Olney

Saturday, 17 July 2010

5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal

in 3 hours 15 minutes

Composed: David G Hull

- 1 Ruth Stokes
- 2 Pauline Campling
- 3 Carol A Marchbank
- 4 John Stanworth
- 5 Phil M Haslam
- 6 Alan J Marchbank
- 7 Christopher C Stokes
- 8 Edward O Marchbank
- 9 George H Campling (C)
- 10 Trevor W Marchbank

Rung as a 50th birthday compliment to Phil Haslam and to wish Bon Voyage to Trish and Holly Phillipson, joining David in Australia.

S Mary the Virgin, Padbury

Friday 14th May 2010

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Helen Stanworth
- 2 Richard Stanworth
- 3 Brain Plummer
- 4 Michael Tinsley
- 5 Catherine Stanworth
- 6 John Stanworth (C)

First Quarter: 3

For the 90th Birthday of Beth Stanworth, Mother of Richard and Grandmother of Catherine and John.

SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

Saturday 26th June 2010

5024 Bristol Surprise Major

In 3 hours and 9 minutes

- 1 Raymond A Vickers
- 2 Murray A Coleman (C)
- 3 Ruth Stokes
- 4 B Douglas Hird
- 5 Richard Haseldine
- 6 Christopher L Stokes
- 7 Allan L Marks
- 8 James Haseldine

Rung to commemorate the ordination today at this church of Revd Karen Browne.

Special touches rung in memory of Rev F E Robinson

At the North Bucks Branch Practice held at Buckingham on Saturday 20th February 2010

177 Stedman Triples

- 1 Michael Tinsley
- 2 Catherine Stanworth
- 3 Terry Page
- 4 Tony Gray
- 5 Jonathan Griggs
- 6 David Phillipson
- 7 Richard Haseldine (C)
- 8 Richard Stanworth

During Service Ringing for the Deanery Evensong at St Mary, Padbury on Sunday 21st February 2010

A course of Stedman Doubles

- 1 Michael Tinsley
- 2 Helen Stanworth
- 3 Gillian Macdonald
- 4 John Stanworth
- 5 Richard Stanworth
- 6 Catherine Stanworth

Apologies - these should have been published in the last edition of In Touch



Steeple Aston Training Day

Saturday 30th October

In last February's edition of In Touch Ruth Plackett described the help and encouragement she experienced at last year's Steeple Aston Training course. She recommended people to 'Have a go'.

The course provides tuition and practice on basic methods from Plain Hunt to Plain Bob Major. Priority will be given to members who have not attended before.

This year's course is just a couple of months away so if you felt inspired and want a whole day's ringing practice then contact Richard Stanworth (address on page 2) for more details or an application form or email steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk

See page 12 for details of training grants available. Closing date for applications is 21st September.

David Phillipson: News from Down Under

Down under in this context refers to Australia and not being 6 feet under which was one of my reactions to the full page about me in the May edition; I had to pinch myself a few times just to make sure I was still alive and that it was not my obituary. In all seriousness, I would like to thank everyone for their kind wishes either expressed in that page or since.

Ringling is a little different down here, as you would imagine, you have to work harder to ring at other towers because of the distances involved and the climate is a little warmer even though this is still mid-winter. It can get as low as 15c outside during the day! which gives the Sydneysiders an opportunity to wear their scarves, gloves, woolly hats and heavy coats. I am looking forwards to the weather getting a little warmer, having now gone through two winters back to back.

Some things do not change however, there is still ringling politics, inter-tower rivalries and apathy towards branch activities, remind you of anywhere? In the city of Sydney itself there are two twelves, a ten, two eights and a six but on a Sunday morning it is impossible to ring at more than two towers and difficult to ring at two, so the easy way out is to ring at one; that is where the difficulties start as the two twelves ring at identical times, so you can imagine little mixing takes place between those two bands even though they have different practice nights. You may have noticed from the quarter peal columns that I ring at St Andrews cathedral which has a 29cwt twelve and a flat 6th. We probably have the strongest band anywhere in Australia and certainly in Sydney, with the abilities to ring surprise maximus and multiple spliced on 10 and 8 with the Sunday service band, so very challenging and satisfying.

I rang in my first peal outside of the UK on 17th July with a peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major at Burwood, which is an 11cwt eight about an hour outside of

Sydney. It was probably a little more 'touch and go' (no pun intended) than I am used to, given the relative inexperience of the band; the ringer of 3 had not rung a peal for over three years and the ringers of 4 and 5, with an average age of about 55, ring no more than one each per year, in fact my peal total of 256 was probably more than the rest of the band put together. The ringer of the 7th flew down from Brisbane that morning just for the attempt and was flying back that day. The one thing that I will probably never get used

to as long as I am here, is the fact that straight after the peal we went for a cup of coffee !!! – yes you are reading this correctly; Phillipson drinking coffee after a peal – there were no cameras present fortunately.

A month ago I flew down to Melbourne for the ANZAB AGM weekend, which was a good social occasion with a formal dinner on the Saturday evening and a celebratory Evensong the next day at St Paul's Cathedral. There are some good and not so good bells in the Melbourne area, with a below par number of local ringers. There is an unusual ring of 8 at St Patricks Catholic Cathedral: they are an 11cwt ring hung anticlockwise by Murphys of Dublin. They are worth ringling once and I am glad that the Irish reverted to brewing rather than bell founding.

I have been invited into the first peal on the new twelve at Brisbane Cathedral at the end of September. I am greatly looking forward to that, as I am meeting Ian Harris again who is also in the band and who I have not met since he left Bedford for Perth some decades ago. It will be a resident ANZAB band (yes I do qualify) and they have reserved the whole weekend for the peal, so I hope it is successful at the first attempt and that I do not have to ring too many changes over 5000. That is all from me this time and best wishes to all my ringling friends in and around North Bucks.

David



*St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne
8 bells 12-1-10 by Murphy of Dublin
hung anticlockwise*



All around the Belfries

Great Brickhill

We are ringing, but only temporarily, while the benches and panelling are constructed off site. Ringing will cease shortly when the joiners arrive and the ringing room is furnished. At the same time the walls have to be painted and the sound insulation has to be adjusted as the bells are currently too loud.

The Bell Dedication Service has now been booked for Sunday 17th October at 3.00pm. There will be ringing from 2.15pm before the service and again afterwards. After the service, there will be a Harvest Festival tea party. If you would like to attend the party and take tea then please notify me by phone 01525 261024 or e-mail dmiddleton@themail.co.uk

David Middleton



Whaddon

For many years, members of the congregation at St Mary's have been complaining about the cold drafts which come down through the tower at the back of the church, so about a year ago the P.C.C. decided to install a glass screen at the front of the ringing platform to try to eliminate these cold winds as much as possible. So over the last six weeks the ringing platform has been filled with scaffolding while the outer frame was made up and then fitted into the recesses of the back arch, and then last week the laminated glass sheets were fitted into the frame. Although it fits very nicely into the ringing platform area, the noise from the bells has increased considerably when they are being rung for any function, so some sound insulation will have to be put on the floor of the clock chamber just under the bells.

As we were unable to do any ringing during the period which the screen was being installed, most of the Whaddon ringers were able to join either the Great Linford or Old Wolverton towers for their practice nights, and I should like to thank the Tower Captains and members of each tower for their welcome to the Whaddon ringers during this time.

Hugh Butler

Great Linford

Whilst work is progressing at Whaddon to install a glass screen between the nave and the tower ringing has been suspended there and the Whaddon ringers have joined our practice. This is really good as it enables some mutual support and benefit to both towers. The practice has therefore got somewhat busier. We are ringing rounds and call changes through the foundation methods of Plain Bob and Grandsire to the slightly more intricate Kent Oxford and Double Court and then onto Surprise. A lot to fit into a 90 minute session!

However, we are doing it and progress is being made on all fronts. In the peal reports you will see that Simon Read has rung his first peal (Yorkshire Major on the treble) and called his first quarter (Bob Minor at Newport). Well done Simon! Not bad considering he first handled a bell in May last year!

We have had the usual demand for wedding bells as Gt Linford is one of the most photogenic churches in the Stantonbury Parish, and with this the usual issues of lateness of brides etc. However a couple of weeks ago we had a first. An early bride! Half an hour early! Somewhere there was a change in time and as Brian arrived 10 minutes early for the ringing before the service, he found a church full of people expecting the service to start in 10 minutes. Funnier still, the vicar taking the service arrived after Brian!

Alan Marchbank



New screen at St Mary's Whaddon

Emberton

David Jones has been a staunch supporter at Emberton for well over twenty years, so it was with heavy heart that we said farewell to him in June.

Although he and his wife Rachel farmed in Hardmead, and worshipped at St Andrews Bedford, David has supported Emberton since the band re-formed back in 1985. He was always with us on practice nights, and happy to help out for weddings and Sunday services when he was not required at St Andrews.

David and Rachel are now starting a new life in Cumbria. We only had a few days warning of his actual departure date (a well kept secret - no fuss required!), but we felt the occasion must be marked. Bucks Fizz and cake seemed to fit the bill at the end of practice night on 29 June, and we had special methods "for one night only" – Double Cumbria Place Minor & Penrith Delight Minor.

We look forward to seeing you in Cumbria, David, and hope you'll find your way back here on the occasional Tuesday when visiting Tina and Peter.

Sheila Watts



Hanslope

At the beginning of May we had a tower outing to Worcestershire. The weather was not very good but we visited some pretty villages and most of the bells were generally enjoyable to ring. However, we were warned by the locals that the bells at Crowle, which was our first tower after lunch, were pretty awful and difficult to ring. Crowle are known locally as the worst bells in Worcestershire. When we arrived there we were very surprised and grateful to be met by one of the ringers from our first tower of the day who had decided to go up there and replace a couple of the bell ropes and do some general maintenance on the bells so that they would be better for us to ring. The bells were still very out of tune and noisy but at least thanks to our unknown helper the 'going' was better than we had been expecting.

On the last weekend of July, Hanslope church held its annual fund raising event and as usual the tower was open for both days for visitors to go up and see the view, which was good as it was fine and clear all weekend. This is always a popular event and our ringers were on duty both to steward the tower and to answer questions from some of the 250 + people who went up the tower during the course of the two afternoons.

Sheila Blenkhorn



David and friends at Emberton

Olney

Practices continue to be a very busy affair with the band needing increasing amount of "rope time" as they develop their change ringing skills. We have a band able to ring plain hunt on up to 10 bells, and Sunday service ringing regularly sees plain hunt on 6 and 8 as well as rounds and call changes.

With some support (and we are very grateful to all our supporters) we have 4 ringers at varying stages of ringing Plain Bob Minor inside, Matt being the most advanced and having tried simple touches from the 2nd and the others working hard at mastering the plain course. Weddings are a firm part of the ringing calendar and with help from Emberton and Hanslope we are managing to ring 10 bells after the service.

We offered our services to ring for the opening of the Cherry Fair again this year and were pleased to get 2 slots. It was at last year's event that the new 10 were opened and it seemed right to make this part of the ringers contribution to this significant "town" event. We also opened the tower to the public and had somewhere in the region of 70 people visit the ringing room and bells. Out of this came 3 new recruits – a family of mother, son and daughter, all who are now making good progress with learning to handle a bell. Our web-site is now under control, thanks to Helen, and you will see reports of progress and (maybe) plans so it's worth a visit – www.olneybells.com.

From the various reports you will see that David Phillipson is settled into his new life in Australia. However, through the technologies of Campanophile and e-mail the world of ringing has been shrunk and whilst 12,000 miles away, he could be just around the corner! I regularly get mail from him commenting on the peal and quarter peal achievements of the branch and people known to him, and the state of ringing in North Bucks which is very close to his heart.

Alan Marchbank

Interbranch Striking Competiton at Wicken

The Interbranch Striking Competition against Towcester branch was held on Saturday 3rd July at its usual venue of Wicken. The judges this year were Ian Willgress, recently elected as Master of the Peterborough Guild, and his wife Alison.

The three sections of the competition were held in the order: Plain Bob Minor, Call Changes on eight, Stedman Triples. Due to a mix up over dates, two of our team for the Stedman didn't show. We managed to persuade one of our less experienced Stedman ringers to ring and 'borrowed' Andrew Spencer but unfortunately we did not complete the test piece as too many of the band went wrong who should have known better. Our less experienced substitution rang very well (it was not his fault that we came to grief).

The results and the judge's comments:

Plain Bob Minor

Band A (Towcester). Practice was confident. Good leading due to open handstrokes and closed backstrokes. Minor clipping, errors throughout but in small groups of 6. Good rhythm.

Band B (North Bucks). Practice used to good effect. Front bells faster than the back bells. Test piece started at a steady pace. Where leading was good the changes were good. Improved over time and by the end of the touch was very good with very few errors.

Result: Towcester 26 faults; North Bucks 54 faults

Call Changes on 8

Band A (North Bucks). Practice - 6,7,8 very steady. In the test piece steady consistent treble leading. Rounds had few errors. First change errors quickly disappeared. Errors at backstroke rather than at handstroke. Good rhythm. Queens had stability. Very few errors toward the end.

Band B (Towcester). Practice took time to settle. Rounds strong. Ringing ebbed and flowed and often had 2 errors per row, possibly bells dropping. Strong leading.

Result North Bucks 32 faults; Towcester 63 faults

Stedman Triples

Band A (Towcester). Practice piece was more than 1 minute. Really only slight imperfections. Bells dodging in 6-7 very strong.

Band B (North Bucks). In practice used rounds to try and settle. In test piece again used rounds to settle. Method mistake early on from which they appeared to recover but broke down in second part of the test.

Result: Towcester 15 faults; North Bucks DNF

The Towcester Branch again won the competition by 2 sections to 1, 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.

A number of the ringers, along with our judges, then adjourned to the White Lion for further socialising.

Those taking part were:

Margaret Barrie,
Hugh Butler
Doug Hird
Mike Lowndes
Alan Marchbank
Alex Marchbank
John Marchbank
Tine Marchbank,
Simon Read
Nick Read
Andrew Spencer
Helen Stanworth
Richard Stanworth



Ian Willgress presenting trophies to John Purdoe Chairman of Towcester Branch

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.

Visual Teaching Aids available to borrow:

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

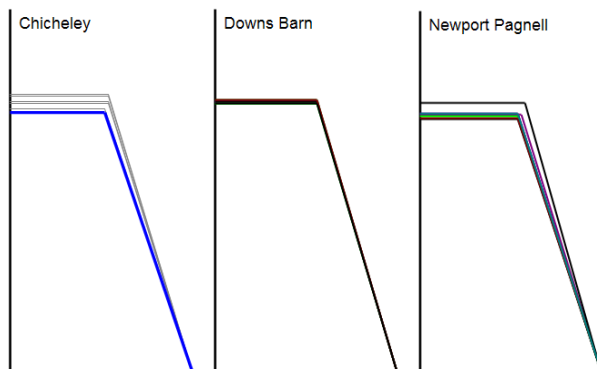
Look to and Learn by the Kent County Assoc. (video)

Teaching Demonstration recording of Steve Coleman

The Tuning of Bells in North Bucks Branch

We now consider a good bell to have 5 distinct harmonics in tune with each other. Founders before about 1890 did well to manage 3. They did, generally, cast consistent bells and, when they got the chance to cast a whole ring, the progression of the shapes of each bell was devised according to a plan.

To see what that plan was we can measure the bells, and adjust each measurement so that a picture of all the bells can be superimposed with, what looks like, the same diameter. For half a bell this gives a set of trapezoid shapes:



In 1718, The Rudhall foundry cast Chicheley's bells so that the smaller bells were relatively taller than the larger bells but all had similarly scaled upper diameters. This is the same approach used by Joseph Eayre for Great Linford in 1756. All the Taylor bells at Downs Barn (1992) are the same shape as each other, as are the front 7 and semitone bell at Newport (Gillett & Johnston, 1911). The tenor, however, is a completely different shape with the intention of bringing out the major 3rd harmonic. We can see here that these modern Taylor bells are slightly long, compared to the early Croydon "Simpson Tuned" profile although this could be because Downs Barn's bells are pretty small and a better comparison would be provided by a larger ring.

There isn't room here to show a full analysis of all the bells in the branch. However, most of them are on the branch web site arranged by tower or by founder. What we hear when we ring is that the bells of a particular founder, even after several centuries, are quite distinctive and recognisable. This is because they used the same moulding equipment for all of their bells and because the progression of bell shapes followed pre-determined rules.

Doug Hird

Minutes of Business Meetings

Held at Calverton on 22nd August 2009

A Nomination had been received proposing the following new member:

Simon Read (Junior) of Great Linford
Proposed by John Marchbank
Seconded by Alan Marchbank

He was elected without dissent.

And at Newport Pagnell on 17th April 2010

Two nominations had been received proposing the following new members:

Alice Mansfield of Old Wolverton
Proposed by Michael Nimmo, seconded by John Mercer

Brian Plummer of Padbury (Re-Election)
Proposed by Helen Stanworth
Seconded by Catherine Stanworth

All were elected without dissent.

There were also two transfers ratified: Michael Tinsley and Catherine Stanworth from Banbury Branch to North Bucks Branch.

Apologies for the lateness of these minutes.



Child Protection in the ODG

To All Tower Captains

You may have seen in the press that the new coalition government has made some preliminary changes to arrangements for checking the suitability of those who work or volunteer to work with children.

ISA registration has now been **halted** and the whole system is to be remodelled.

However, CRB checks **are still required** (as before) for tower captains and all those who teach or train children. Please note that 'standing behind' or giving advice does **not** count as teaching or training. It is face to face instruction that counts.

New CRB application forms will be in use from 28th June. 'Old' style forms can only be used if they were received by Diocesan Church House by 12 July. Ruth Reavley, the Diocesan CRB administrator has stocks of the new forms and can supply them.
ruth.reavley@oxford.anglican.org

As soon as there is any further information about the remodelled system I will up-date you.

Ann Mayou. Childrens Officer of the ODG

Branch Notice Board

Branch Practices :

Saturday 21st August	5pm	Lavendon
Saturday 16th October	5pm	Maids Moreton
Saturday 20th November	7.30pm	Great Brickhill

**Great Brickhill
Bell Dedication
Service**

**Sunday 17th
October
3pm**

**Branch Autumn
Meeting at
Downs Barn**

**Saturday 11th
September
at 3.30pm**

Christmas Celebration

**Saturday 11th December
at Shenley 5pm**

Put it in your diary

Guild and other stuff :

Saturday 25th September	Michaelmas Training Course at Shiplake
Saturday 2nd October	Guild 6 bell striking competition in the Oxford City Branch
Saturday 16th October	Teachers Training Day at Steeple Aston
Saturday 30th October	Steeple Aston Training Course
Tuesday 2nd November	Deadline for contributions to next edition of In Touch
Saturday 27th November	Guild 10 bell striking competition