



# *In Touch*

May 2010

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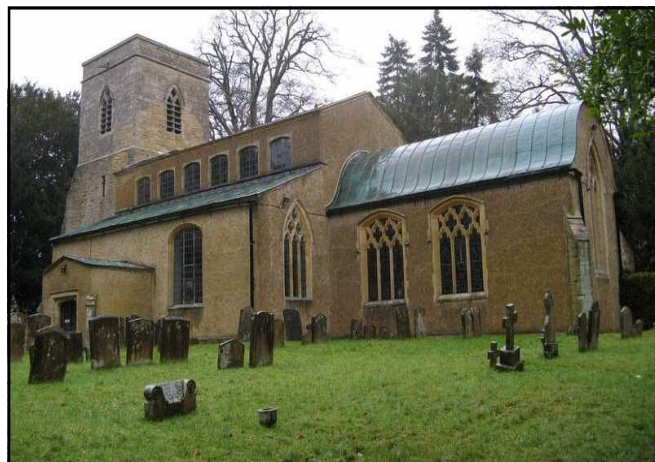
## *Branch Summer Social & Striking Competition*

*Saturday 19th June at Stowe*

Everyone is invited to the Branch Summer Social - an afternoon of ringing, light refreshments and good company. The second part of the afternoon will include the Six Bell Striking Competition.

5.00pm General Ringing  
6.00pm Striking Competition

The striking competition is an opportunity for everyone to join in and try to ring to the best of their ability. It doesn't matter what is rung - call changes or a method, so long as there are 120 changes. The draw for the event will take place at 6pm. Teams do not need to be submitted beforehand - just be there on the day for the draw.



*Taken from <http://images.google.com/images>*

## *Great Brickhill bells return*

Last year In Touch reported on the work to Great Brickhill bells. Now they are back in the church and will be ringing soon.

See page 3 for more details



# Who's Who 2010–2011

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## *From the Editor . . .*

Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch.

The main ringing news in the branch this month is the completion of the rehang and augmentation at Great Brickhill. After the excellent work undertaken by Whites at Olney last year, I am sure that everyone is keenly anticipating ringing again at Great Brickhill. David has the latest news about this project on page 3.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in contributions for this edition. It is not only appreciated by myself but also everyone who reads the newsletter. There are still some towers however that have not made any contributions since I started doing this 2 years ago. All news would be very welcome.

As the weather warms up a bit I see the outing season has started, and there are already reports from a couple of towers in this edition.

Last month I laid down a challenge to come up with a limerick starting with a line that ends in 'campanology'. The results are on page 12.

Please note, the deadline for the next edition of In Touch is **Tuesday 3rd August 2010**.

*Jonathan*

# Great Brickhill bells are back

Great Brickhill bells, together with the two new trebles cast by the Whitechapel Foundry on 30<sup>th</sup> October and the 1681 Sanctus bell, have now been rehung by Whites of Appleton. Earlier, on 13 March, ringers and villagers made the pilgrimage to Appleton to see the refurbished and retuned bells assembled in the new bell frame, and our thanks go to Brian White and his wife, Diana, for hosting the event. After the morning visit, an excellent lunch was had at the Bear and Ragged Staff at Cumnor and I still had time to get back to watch the French beat the England rugby team.

On 8 April, the new steel support grillage, which will brace and strengthen the tower, along with the bell frame was installed by Graham Clifton and his team. The bells were returned to Great Brickhill on 16 April, together with the two new bells augmenting the ring to eight. The Rector, Revd. John Waller, blessed the new bells at the service on Sunday, 18 April. During the following week, the bells were hoisted into the frame. Wheels, clappers and fittings were installed and the bells first rung individually on 4 May and I was privileged to be the first to ring the new cast treble. However, it is unlikely that the bells will be ready to ring together until early June in order to allow the concrete for the tower repairs and in the grillage foundations to fully cure. We have been required by English Heritage to rehang three massive ancient support timbers in the tower and those are now in place with the new grillage assembled above. The timbers will support new ceiling boards in the ringing room and new hardwood benches and panelling are to be fitted. The total project cost, including tower repairs, are expected to reach £150,000.

The Brickhill ringers have been practising both at Newton Longville, for which we would like to thank Nigel Tittley, and latterly at Bletchley with Hugh Butler, Derek Stainsby, Brian Baldwin, Terry Page and Simon Head, as well as Lynne Pughe, Nick and Lyndsey Brett from Linslade. They have all assisted the band in preparation for ringing the eight bells. However, we are all appalled at the state of the Bletchley ringing room, which is being used for storage and as a camera and sound gallery. Old Harry Sear must be turning in his grave. However, if In Touch readers would like to join in practising with Brickhill ringers, we ring at St. Mary's, Bletchley at 7.45pm on Wednesdays until the Great Brickhill tower is ready for ringing in June.

David Middleton



*The returned Great Brickhill bells awaiting rehangng*

## Message from the Chairman

Welcome to this edition of 'In Touch'.

Looking at the turnout at the last branch practice at Newport it looks as though the move from Fridays to Saturdays has been a success. Thank you to those of you who made it so worthwhile. Doug has written a piece in this edition about the approach to running a branch practice and what he is trying to achieve.

Congratulations are in order to the band that represented the branch in the Guild 8 bell competition. A very respectable course of Yorkshire was rung which was one of the best from a branch band within the guild.

At the AGM there was a discussion about recruitment ideas within the branch. The officers have continued to research these exciting ideas and there is an update on where we are in this edition.

In June we are holding the summer social event at Stowe. So if you fancy a cup of tea and a slice of cake interspersed with some Grandsire then come along. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Brian Newman



# from the Ringing Development Leaders

## Buckingham Deanery

This year the Summer Social and striking competition will be held at Stowe. The church nestles on the edge of the Landscape Gardens close to the south front of Stowe House.

There will be general ringing from 5pm with the striking competition starting at about 6pm. This will give everyone a chance to have a ring and get used to the bells before the competition.

Do come along as a band from your tower and have a go in the competition. You can ring call changes or plain hunt if you are not comfortable ringing a method. Plain courses of a method can be rung instead of a touch. All that is needed is a minimum of 120 rows, so that each band is judged over the same extent. If you can't get a band from your tower, join forces with a neighbouring tower to make up a band, or come along and we will try to make up a band for you on the day. We would like to get as many bands as possible and make it fun evening.

If you haven't been to Stowe church before, follow the National Trust signs for the gardens and then, once you have turned off the public road and crossed the bridge over the lake, look out for a turn to the right, signed to the church just after the cricket pitch. Follow the signs through the arch to the left of the house and then follow the road round past the end of the buildings. The church car park is on the left before coming to the south front of Stowe House. This route is part of a one way system. Please ask one of the local ringers about the way out as it is not immediately obvious.



Richard Stanworth

## Newport Deanery

My aims for the Newport Deanery are pretty much what our aims were last year. What I want to do though is to take a fairly long term view. We have to accept that we won't have time to do everything in one year. So we should start at the beginning. There are three areas where we can make a difference now:



### Teaching new ringers

I will be developing opportunities for our existing ringers to learn how to teach new ringers and build on this with sessions on how to be a tower captain.

### Being part of the Church

David has already made a good start on this so I will be speaking to clergy individually and as a group during the year as well as developing an opportunity for non-ringers to get something out of ringing.

### Improving the state of our bells

Alan can't do all the Towers and Bells inspections in the branch so I propose to do some myself. First with Alan's assistance so we can calibrate our findings and then I would like to involve other branch members. Some of our bells and bell frames are really fascinating.

Meanwhile we get on with the business of ringing together.

Doug Hird

## Milton Keynes Deanery

We are approaching the busy time of year with weddings and visitors filling Saturday afternoons.

Looking at Linford, Bletchley and Olney diaries it seems we have close to 40 weddings between April and November – more than enough for anyone. Clearly we shall be busy and need some help.

The Saturday practices certainly appear to be hitting the mark with good attendance and a wide variety of things being rung to meet all needs. I am looking forward to the practice on 22 May at St Lawrence Bradwell Village. These are delightful bells which go well and are easy to hear. Please note that this is 1 week later than normal to avoid the clash of dates with the ODG AGM.



The ODG AGM gets a mention elsewhere – be good to see you there supporting Sheila Watts.

Work at Great Brickhill continues at quite a pace and we shall soon be able to appreciate the new 8. Well done David and your team for making this happen and helping to continue and develop the exercise in North Bucks. David's band is currently practicing on Wednesdays at Bletchley, and I know he will appreciate any support you can give him.

Having put my mini-ring together during the damp winter season I thought I might just put a spanner back on the nuts and bolts and give them a tighten as the weather gets warmer and the timber dries out. Good job I did as there were a number of important bits that were quite loose. Maybe as the weather improves we should all be planning a little maintenance to check wheels and pulleys and frame fixings are as they should be?

Alan

## *Branch Recruitment Project - update*

Following the proposal at the branch AGM to investigate holding a public relations and recruiting event in Middleton Hall, further enquiries have been made and the information obtained discussed at the last officers meeting.

Feedback from The CentreMK who manage Middleton Hall suggest there may be environmental issues relating to noise levels which might prevent us from using a mini ring in the hall. We have been asked to measure how loud the bells would be and feed this back to them. The officers are also concerned that the potential number of

recruits from such an event may be too many to cope with. In light of these concerns the officers are looking at alternative venues for a recruiting event.

Suggestions which are being followed up are: the Stoke Goldington Steam Rally or combining with a suitable event at the Milton Keynes Bowl or Campbell Park. All of these alternatives are outdoors so noise levels should not be such an issue. We are continuing to follow up the Middleton Hall option as well and will report on progress via these pages and the Autumn meeting.

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## *Olney venture forth around the branch*

Spring is in the air and we at Olney decided that it was high time that we had a spring outing around the local area. Sheila Ware and Sheila Watts volunteered to arrange this on our behalf.

With sat navs at the ready (well for me that is) and a beautiful May day we set off to our first venue at Cosgrove in Northants. My sat nav decided to take the scenic route and I arrived with Matthew, Ella and Sophie, ten minutes late. I really will have to take a map with me next time.

St Peter and St Paul at Cosgrove is a lovely church with a six-bell tower and a tenor of 11cwt, so much lighter than ours. We went up a short spiral staircase to a small room with a spy hole over looking the congregation. The sound of the bells was quite quiet. We were all quite nervous as we are a relatively new band of ringers with not much experience of other towers. After a quick ring at rounds we all settled down to plain hunt and call changes.

Next in line was a real treat. Named 'The Broadway Campanile' - a delightful set of ten mini bells that had recently been installed in Alan Marchbank's garage. We were all desperate to have a go. We all watched Alan as he gave us a brief presentation of how to ring them and then we had a go.

Oh what a din! It was a good job that there were no passers-by. Poor Alan, to hear his beautiful bells making such a racket! We did get the hang of them though and within a relatively short period we were ringing Plain hunt and Grandsire. I was amazed and felt a certain sense of achievement.

Time for a relaxing lunch; picnic for the younger members and pie-and-a-pint for others. St Lawrence Church, Bradwell was the first tower after lunch. Another beautiful church, with a small spiral staircase to a first floor balcony overlooking the congregation. Traditionally known as the 'graveyard shift' we were soon ringing out to call changes and Grandsire.

Our last ring was at Woughton on the Green. Again a lovely church (we are so lucky in the North-Bucks branch!) – with double doors leading to a six bell, ground floor ring with a tenor of 7 cwt. We were all getting a bit tired by now. I was sporting a blister and Ella and Sophie, our youngest members of the group had seen the hand-made jewellery on offer in one corner of the church and were sidetracked.



*Olney ringers at Woughton*

Everyone had a super time and all agreed that we had progressed well today.

The Olney band which consist of Graham Dilley, Helen Dilley, Ruth Plackett, Charles Knight, David Phillipson, Sophie Wood, Matt Sheaf, Ella Sheaf and myself would like to personally thank: Alan Marchbank, for being ringing master and for allowing us to ring on his bells, Jonathan Griggs, for his time, patience and experience and both Sheila Ware and Sheila Watts for arranging the whole day. We all agreed that we would like to do this again, maybe in the Autumn.

Liz Sheaf

# News from the Oxford Diocesan Guild

## From the Deputy Master . . .

I would just like to say “thanks” to our band who gave up their bank holiday afternoon to take part in the 8 bell striking competition. It was a good performance – well done.

I would like to remind you all about the Guild AGM later this month. It would be good to see a few North Bucks faces there – especially as we can expect to see Sheila Watts presented with Distinguished Membership – one of the first in the Guild to be so recognised. It is also a good chance to meet up with other Guild members and an opportunity to network with those who are just over our boundaries. Agenda and papers for the meeting are available on the ODG website.

Whilst looking at the website you might want to look up the recently revised guidance on dealing with inappropriate behaviour towards children and vulnerable people. The Law is changing in this respect and the ODG policy has been updated.

There was a good response to the call for ringing to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our first Master Rev FE Robinson. All ringing dedicated to him has been collated by the Master and a fitting article appeared in the Ringing World a few weeks ago. Details of the branch ringing to mark this anniversary are here on this page.

Alan Marchbank

### St Andrew, Great Linford

Tuesday, 16th February 2010

#### 120 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Helen Stanworth
- 2 Tine Marchbank
- 3 Alex Marchbank
- 4 Richard Stanworth
- 5 Alan Marchbank
- 6 John Stanworth (C)

### The Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Saturday, 20th February 2010

#### 5026 Peterstone Wentloog Surprise Major

- 1 Trevor W Marchbank
- 2 Benjamin Hockenhill
- 3 Carol A Marchbank
- 4 Robert J Marchbank
- 5 Alexandra J Marchbank
- 6 Alan J Marchbank
- 7 Benjamin Carey (C)
- 8 Kames C Marchbank

First in method by all

### SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

Sunday, 14th February 2010

#### 1264 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Elly Cooper
- 2 Loretta Ramsey
- 3 Simon Read
- 4 Mike Lowndes
- 5 Charles Knight
- 6 Nick Read
- 7 Alan Marchbank
- 8 B Douglas Hird (C)

1st quarter on 8: 1

1st blows in method: 3

### All Saints, Emberton

Tuesday, 16th February 2010

#### 60 Stedman Doubles

- 1 Phil Haslam
- 2 Sheila Blenkhorn
- 3 Sheila Ware
- 4 Alison Fowler
- 5 Roy Keeves
- 6 Roger Everson

### SS Peter & Paul, Olney

Monday, 15th February 2010

#### 120 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Liz Sheaf
- 2 Sheila Ware
- 3 Simon Read
- 4 B Douglas Hird
- 5 Charles Knight
- 6 David Phillipson (C)

### St James the Great, Hanslope

Thursday, 18th February 2010

#### 168 Stedman Triples

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

Rung without a cover bell

### SS Peter & Paul, Olney

Monday, 15th February 2010

#### 120 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Helen Dillely
- 2 Sheila Ware
- 3 Simon Read
- 4 David Phillipson
- 5 Charles Knight
- 6 B Douglas Hird (C)

### All Saints, Emberton

Wednesday, 17th February 2010

#### 120 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Tony Gray
- 2 Colin Payne
- 3 Ivor Dickin
- 4 Roy Keeves
- 5 Harry Curtis
- 6 Ian Thompson

Rung by the North Bucks Midweek Group



# General Quarters and Peals



## SS Peter & Paul, Buckingham

Monday, 29th March 2010

### 1344 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Shirley Webb
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Jeremy Gilliland
- 4 Laurence Gibson
- 5 Ray Vickers
- 6 Jonathan Spencer
- 7 Andrew Spencer (C)
- 8 Christopher Stokes

Rung to welcome Revd Will Pearson-Gee as Rector of Buckingham

## SS Peter & Paul, Olney

Saturday, 20th March 2010

### 5055 Stedman Caters

in 3 hours 14 mins

Composed by Robert E J Dennis

- 1 Martin J Whiteley (C)
- 2 David Phillipson
- 3 D Kay Chamberlain
- 4 B Douglas Hird
- 5 Jonathan D Chamberlain
- 6 Jonathan Griggs
- 7 Alan J Marchbank
- 8 Richard Horne
- 9 Jonathan R Pawley
- 10 Charles J Knight

With best wishes to David Phillipson who will leave for Australia shortly

## SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

Sunday, 4 April 2010

### 1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Elly Cooper
- 2 Rachel Stacy
- 3 Mike Lowndes
- 4 Simon Read
- 5 Nick Read
- 6 B Douglas Hird (C)

Rung for Evensong on Easter Day

## Holy Trinity, Old Wolverton

Tuesday, 20th April 2010

### 1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Alice Mansfield
- 2 Michael Woodcock
- 3 James Woodcock
- 4 Malcolm Hooton
- 5 Michael Nimmo (C)
- 6 Wendy Price

First quarter: 1

Rung (early) for St George's Day

## SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

Sunday, 11 April 2010

### 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Nick Ashton
- 2 Loretta Ramsay
- 3 Mike Lowndes
- 4 Scott Ayers
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 6 Charles J Knight

1st on a working bell: 1

Rung before Evensong to commemorate the baptism of Kelsey Ellingham earlier today at this church

## Grants

### Did you know that financial assistance is available from the branch for training and bell maintenance ?

If you would like a grant from the branch for assistance with bell maintenance in your tower then please notify the secretary. Applications are discussed and agreed at the next branch meeting.

Assistance for individuals wishing to attend training courses is also available. Up to 50% of the cost of the course can be claimed with a maximum of £50.

**Look at page 9 for Guild training events.**

*The Branch takes another step forward into digital age ...*



Taking advantage of the technology of the Internet, Newport's ringers have posted a video of themselves ringing on Good Friday on Youtube. Go and have a look at it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPhiLCCN5rY>

## David Phillipson leaves Olney

David Phillipson, the Ringing Master at the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul in Olney, announced suddenly early in March that he had accepted a post in Australia and would shortly be leaving for a period of at least 2 years. He commented that few things were more important than bellringing but work was one of them.

David recently masterminded the major project to re-hang the ring of eight bells in the church tower on a new frame while enhancing the ring to ten bells. At the same time all the wheels, headstocks, pulleys, stays and sliders were renewed and the bells retuned. He gave freely of his own time and skills to assist and oversee the works as they progressed and the results speak of his great achievement.

The band are very grateful for all he has done on the augmentation project and to teach us, mostly a completely novice set of ringers, how to ring church bells in the English tradition. Therefore we are particularly saddened that he is now leaving us and the lovely bells behind, at least for the time being.

To acknowledge our thanks to David we threw a mini party in the tower after a shortened practice session on the evening of 22 March. All the Olney band attended, including four young ringers who David has worked very hard to encourage. We also invited a number of ringers from other towers who know David well to attend this practice and join with us to send him on his way with our good wishes. Some 25 people in all attended, including the Rector of SS Peter and Paul, Olney. Having partaken of refreshments, David was presented with a card signed by all the ringers and a framed photograph of himself with Charles Knight (Tower Captain) standing

next to the refitted tenor bell before it was taken back up the tower to its rightful place in the new frame. We also wished him well in his new job, hoping that he would return to us after his project in Australia had concluded and thanking him for everything he had done to promote ringing in Olney.

Sunday May 9th was the last Sunday that David could ring at Olney before leaving for Australia. It was therefore particularly pleasing to be able to ring all 10 bells by a local band: Graham & Helen Dilley, Phil Haslam, Charles Knight, David Phillipson, Ruth Plackett, Matt, Ella & Liz Sheaf, Sheila Ware.

Helen Dilley



Olney ringers at David's farewell party

I would like to record the thanks of the Branch and Olney Church and ringers for the massive difference David has made to ringing through the creation and delivery of the Olney Bells Project. Before his involvement at Olney, Charles had done a great job starting a new band but with bells that were so hard to ring, progress was going to be slow and a limiting factor in building a band with young blood.

The re-hanging and augmentation has changed all that and has provided a new opportunity for the Branch to develop its 10 bell ringing. It has also provided a spring-board from which a new relationship with the Church and deanery has been born and now more than ever before, ringing is seen as an important part of the sacrament.

It seems unlikely that any part of the project would have been accomplished without David's drive. From the first proposal to the PCC, through planning, financing and actually doing the work he was there making it happen, (and making others make it happen!)

Best wishes for Australia David and we look forward to seeing you back.

Alan and Charles

## David in his earlier days

David was taught to ring by Jack Millhouse who was a prolific ringer and teacher of ringing in the Lincolnshire Guild and particularly at Lincoln Cathedral.

Here he is with Jack in his early ringing career. The ringers from left to right are Jack Millhouse, Margaret Parker, David Phillipson, Vivienne West, Chris Sharp and Susan Faulk.





## *A practice viewed from the other side*

*- thoughts on the branch practice at Newport on April 17th*

It is always good to welcome the branch to Newport. For some it was a grab, if only of the balcony, but most ringers come to Newport to enjoy one of the best rings in the area.

Branch and Guild events often get a bit of coverage in In Touch from one of the participants but what about the organisers? I thought it might be worthwhile describing how a branch practice is actually run.

How do you run a branch practice? Is there any kind of plan? Well, the aim is for everyone to get something from the opportunity and to enjoy the bells. With a ring like Newport, the second of these comes for free so you are half way there.

To keep the ringers happy you have to create a balance between the varying abilities and keep in mind some overall aims. Also at Newport, we wanted to ring a course of Yorkshire S Major as this was the method for the 8-bell striking competition. So we did that first. My next target was to give some 8-bell opportunities to ringers normally confined to 6-bell towers and finally, to give the more experienced 8-bell ringers some pleasant method ringing. So I concentrated on standard methods that the assembled band was capable of ringing well. We could quite possibly have finished in "traditional" style with a touch of 8-spliced or 3 leads of Bristol but more good was being done with the standard methods.

As to structure, I try to alternate between the more and less advanced. So between the Stedman Triples and Yorkshire S Major would be call changes or plain hunt on 8. Not quite as one of our learners once described "a good bit of ringing then a bad bit." Before each piece of ringing I announce what the next piece of ringing will be. That gives everyone a chance to look it up and decide if they want to ring now or to wait. This keeps the practice moving which is also useful for the ringers to have a bit of confidence that we will have time for another go at something later.

For a branch practice, band placing works well to position ringers on the bells they will get the most out of. So you can position a conductor, a tenor and treble ringer to give the band strength if someone is ringing inside for the first time. Also, shy learners need to be encouraged onto the most appropriate bell. Most people will then fill in the gaps adequately.

So what did we ring? Yorkshire S Major, Plain Hunt on 8, Rounds, Stedman Triples, Grandsire Triples and Bob Major. It doesn't sound like much but we got several goes at each and everything came round.

So how about this for an idea? Why don't other ringers have a go at running branch practices? Actually, anyone can do it - it just takes a little forward thinking and some knowledge of what everyone wants to achieve. Just talk to me if you want the experience.

Doug Hird

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## *Guild Training Events 2010*

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 25th

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 Shiplake Ringing Centre. Groups will cover Surprise Minor, Stedman Triples, basic Surprise Major, and advanced Surprise Major. Further details can be found on the poster which was sent out recently, or on the Guild web site.

Closing date for applications is 19th July

### **Teacher Training Day** – Saturday 16th October

This is an introductory day to a new scheme for training you to teach bell ringing. The scheme is called the Integrated Teacher Training Scheme - ITTS (be careful how you abbreviate it!) The scheme will run over several months and is backed up by a Moodle site, which is a form of VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). This is a pilot for a new scheme being developed by the

Central Council Education Committee. If we are to succeed with the major recruiting event put forward at the branch AGM then we will need lots more teachers. Further details are not yet available but if you are interested in this then please contact Richard Stanworth. He will then be able to send you more details when they are available.

### **Steeple Aston Training Day** - Saturday 30th October

This course provides tuition & practice on basic methods from Plain Hunting 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 (address on page 2) or email [steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk](mailto:steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk)

Closing date for applications is 14th September

### **Ten Bell Training Day** – Saturday 4th December

This course provides tuition and practice for those wishing to progress with ringing on ten bells. It will be held at the Aston Clinton Ringing Centre. Further details will be published later in the year.



# All around the Belfries

## Bradwell

Bradwell ringers held their annual dinner at the Black Horse, Great Linford this year. We were joined by Andy Jowitt our Minister and though it was a tight squeeze in the restaurant with all ringers, spouses and guests everyone was able to attend and we had a good evening.

We have appealed through our Church AGM for more ringers and one gentleman has come forward and had his first lesson. Hopefully he will continue to attend and will be the first of our new recruits.

Jenny Brookman

## Padbury and Hillesden

Padbury and Hillesden are now part of the North Bucks Branch following ratification of the transfer at the Guild Spring Committee Meeting. Due to failing health, the ringers at Hillesden are struggling to ring for services. Padbury ringers are therefore helping out whenever possible. This is currently the 6.00 pm service on the fourth Sunday in the month (ringing from 5.20 pm) and the 11.00 am service on the first Sunday of the month (ringing from 10.20 am). We have received favourable comments from the congregation at Hillesden about how nice it is to hear the bells rung. We hope that regular ringing will lead to interest in joining the band.

We are also planning some spring cleaning of the belfry at Hillesden and trying to increase the sound level of the bells at ringing platform level. Padbury practice on a Friday evening and we are grateful for the support of ringers from other towers within the branch and this is helping both visitors and our own band to make useful progress. More visitors are always welcome. Ringing is from 7.00 pm.

Richard Stanworth



## Great Linford

The above photo came to light recently. It was taken in July 1970 and shows an early ladies band at Great Linford. The original is stamped Beds County Press, I wonder if it was taken for publication in a local paper?

The band was taught by Clarry Sapwell who was ringing master for many years and handed over in the early 1980s to Ron Snack. The ringer of the 5th in the picture is still in the congregation.

Going clockwise from bottom left

- Mary Leaver (4)
- Joyce Browning (5)
- Barbara Blow (6)
- Jill Leaver (1)
- Liz Leaver (2)
- Ann Willason (3)

Alan Marchbank

## Patience - a poem found by David Jones in Market Overton tower

It'll come they said, it'll come  
We started with clappers tied,  
Heaving away at the end of a rope,  
With the Sally of course, we couldn't cope,  
The bell would drop and we'd give up hope,  
It'll come they said, it'll come.

It'll come they said, it'll come,  
We tried rounds on open bells,  
But was never in time with the rest of the band,  
The ringing, in fact, got quite out of hand,  
Was upside down when ordered to stand,  
It'll come they said, it'll come.

It'll come they said, it'll come,  
Plain hunt was next on the list,  
We hunted up and we hunted down,  
Got shouted at and called a clown,  
Woke all the babies in the town,  
It'll come they said, it'll come.

I suppose in a way that's just life,  
Always striving for something new.  
Leading and dodging, and trying to cope  
With everyday problems, never giving up hope.  
To complete life's method, one must pull on life's rope,  
And it will come, no doubt, it will come!



## *Hanslope head north to Yorkshire*

Just back from a fabulous ringing weekend based in Skipton, Yorkshire. It was organised for us by one of our ringers, Kevin Haseldine, who now lives and works in the area. I thought I would like to give you a flavour of the places that we visited.

Our rendezvous tower was late on Friday afternoon at Saltaire [6 - 4 cwt]. The village of Saltaire was originally built by Henry Salt in the 1850s to accommodate all the workers at his woollen mill. It is a most interesting place with rows of what has now become very desirable housing and the whole village has now been preserved as a World Heritage Site. The church at Saltaire has an unusual round tower supported on columns. This was a very light peal but, unlike many light bells, they handled well and were surprisingly easy to ring.

We then went on to ring at Bingley [8 – 14¾ cwt] which was memorable mainly because they have Yorkshire tail ends, ie a miniature sally on the end of the rope. Some of us had never seen, let alone rung on, bells with this type of tail ends but although they caused one or two awkward moments we soon got the hang of them.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny as we all met up again at Thornton-le Dale [6 – 9¾ cwt] for the first tower of the day. The church was in a beautiful position on the side of a hill and the churchyard adjoined a field full of very dark brown sheep and lambs which, we were told, would soon be let loose to graze in the churchyard. Meanwhile inside the church there had been a 'bit of an incident' when someone hadn't realised that the bells were up and pulled on a rope which then looped itself over the guide frame and necessitated a ladder to disentangle it all.

The second tower of the day, Barnoldswick [6 – 12½ cwt], was once again in an idyllic situation on a hill just outside the town with beautiful views. The church was most interesting with very imposing dark Jacobean box pews and a three decker pulpit which were originally destined for Kirkstall Priory but were left in the parish church when the monks later decided to situate the priory nearer to Leeds. The bells have recently been augmented from 3 to 6 and were only rededicated in January this year. We were told that they have installed the headstocks and wheels for a ring of 8 and a frame for 10 bells so it would seem that they have hopes for further augmentation. As we were leaving the church we passed a barn on the edge of the churchyard where, two local ringers casually informed us, they had a mini ring of six bells and they opened the barn for us to see

them. They were quite basic and they apparently use them mainly as a PR exercise for local schools to show them how bells work and let them have a go at ringing and hopefully interest them in ringing at the church. The last tower of the morning was Gisburn [6 – 9 cwt]. Here we achieved our ringing objectives of the weekend: to ring some York and Carlisle Surprise Minor. The church does have a minor claim to fame in that Francis Duckworth, who wrote the hymn 'Jesus Shall Reign Where ere the Sun', lived in the village and is now buried in the churchyard.

After lunch we moved on to Settle [8 – 14¼ cwt], where the church is situated beneath a huge viaduct. This church is unusual in that it is aligned north to south as apparently the church owned the land but after the railway was built that was the only way they could fit the church onto the land that remained. The bells here were really noisy which made it difficult to concentrate on the ringing.



*Last of the summer wine !*

The next tower was Giggleswick [8 – 10½ cwt] where we rang from a balcony which looked out across the church. There was some wonderful needlework in this church especially in the nave and choir stalls where there were sets of seat cushions featuring not only birds and flowers, but also tractors and farm buildings.

After Giggleswick extra time had been allowed for us to take a very spectacular route up across the Dales past Malham Tarn and along a rather dramatic hilly road

to take us to our final tower at Kirkby Malham [8 – 17½ cwt]. There was a sign in the churchyard which said 'To the Watery Grave' and this turned out to be a grave where the headstone had an arch cut into its lower edge to allow a stream to run through it. We all agreed that we had rung on some superb bells but Kevin was insistent that the best was yet to come!

Our final ringing of the weekend was on Sunday for morning service at Skipton [8 - 22 cwt] where the church is situated at the top of the main street just below the castle. Here we rang a very creditable course of Lincolnshire and finished with 3 leads of Bristol as a service touch. All in all it was a superb weekend and yes we did have to agree with Kevin that Skipton were the best bells of the weekend. Thanks for all your organisation Kev and here's to the next trip.

Sheila Blenkhorn

# The tuning of bells in North Bucks

This is the first in a series of articles about how our bells are tuned. I will go over some of the theory, some of the practice and some observations that we can all make while ringing or sitting out. First let's just start thinking about what a bell sounds like. The next time you are ringing, focus on one particular bell (the one you are ringing would be good!) and see how many distinct notes you can hear. Perhaps it might be easier if you just ring the one bell. It can be hard to tell with some bells and, when a ring is the product of several founders, it is really hard.

A modern bell will have five harmonics that are deliberately tuned. The Hum, The Prime (an octave above the hum), The Tierce (a minor third above the Prime), the Quint (5 semitones below the Nominal) and the Nominal (an octave above the Prime). Then there will be higher harmonics of all these which, if the 5 main harmonics are in tune, will also be in tune. If all the bells in a ring are tuned like this, their various harmonics will combine constructively. If not, there will be discord.

The quality of the sound of a bell, like any musical instrument, will depend on its shape. The founder first casts the bell to a pre-determined profile. The shape of this profile is quite an individual feature of a particular founder's bells. We will look at this in the next article. Then, the bell is fine tuned by removing metal from the inside surface. The art and science of bell tuning has

left some good examples in North Bucks through the centuries and we will look at a few of these in subsequent articles. Finally, I will look at recent analysis that makes use of recording and computer technology to record the fine detail of the bell tuner's work and also shows some quite unexpected things about bells and bell ringers. Then we will understand how good some of our bells really are, and how good they could be.

Doug Hird



*Tuning a bell at Taylors' foundry*

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## Limerick competition results

Last month the editor laid down a challenge to branch members to come up with a ringing related limerick. The only rule to budding Edward Lear was that the first line must end with the word **campanology**.

In the following weeks the editor was literally underwhelmed with responses! It appeared that the challenge was quite difficult as the word campanology takes up most of the syllables of the first line.



However some ringers (mainly called Sheila) persevered and two excellent entries were received. Having scrutinised the entries closely I have decided that they are both worthy of a first prize. The prize is to have their work published in that most prestigious tome - In Touch. So thank you ladies.

***Our hobby must be campanology  
For this we make no apology.  
Such an interesting task –  
What more could we ask?  
But first place is now genealogy.***

*Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware*

***It's officially called campanology  
And that's the correct terminology  
But to us, from the beginning  
It's known as bell ringing  
And for that we shall make no apology***

*Sheila Blenkhorn*

## *Guild Eight Bell Striking Competition*

This year we travelled to Wendover, well known to our Chairman, for this competition, held as usual on the May Day bank holiday. There were only seven teams taking part this year so no heats were required. The test piece was a plain course of Yorkshire Surprise Major. We were drawn to ring sixth, which avoided ringing too early in the competition.

Chief Judge was Robin Leale from Kingston on Thames. Here are the results and some of the comments.

The judge commented that the bells had been rung quite slowly with most bands ringing around the 3h 12m peal speed; except for North Bucks who rang at 3h 4m peal speed. These speeds seemed very slow because we thought that we rang quite quickly. It is possible that

the total time, including the one minute of rounds at the beginning was used as the time to ring the 224 changes of the course. If one minute is deducted from each time you arrive at times of 2h 41m for our band and 2h 49m for the others. These seem much more realistic peal speeds considering that the tenor is only 13 ½ cwt and the bells were re-hung only two or three years ago.

The usual teams finished first and second. These are tower teams who ring together regularly so we came second out of the branch bands. We were one of only three bands to ring without any method mistakes (even the winners had a minor trip) and put in one of our best efforts for a long while. We seem to be on a roll after getting in to the final last year, so let's see what we can

do next year! Congratulations to the band and thanks for taking part. The ringers were:

Alex Marchbank  
Simon Head  
Nick Gray  
Tony Gray  
Doug Hird  
Richard Stanworth (C)  
Jonathan Griggs  
Alan Marchbank

Place	Band	Rang	Comments
1st	High Wycombe	4th	Good beat from opening rounds. One unexpected trip near the end
2nd	Reading, S Mary with St Laurence	5th	Very good piece. No method mistakes
3rd	EBSB Branch	7th	Found it difficult to get good rhythm, no method mistakes
4th	North Bucks Branch	6th	Took a while for all to ring at the same speed. Good consistency and commendably free of trips
5th	Reading Branch	1st	Steady pace, inconsistent rhythm. Problem with leading
6th	Banbury Branch	2nd	Striking improved as it went along. ¾ of faults came from method mistakes
7th	South Oxon Branch	3rd	Took some time to hit consistent rhythm

## *Inter Branch Competition Saturday July 3rd*

This is an informal get together with the Towcester branch of the Peterborough Guild which takes the form of a three-part striking competition. The three parts are:

Plain Bob Minor  
Call changes on eight bells  
Stedman Triples

There is something for just about everybody, so if you would like to take part, please let your Deanery RDL know. Ideally we need a separate band for each part of the competition, so that's a total of 22 ringers. If we don't get enough volunteers then the RDLs will be getting in touch to ask you to take part. Last year light refreshments were served, so there is a chance to socialise whilst listening to the other bands. There is often an adjournment to a local hostelry after the competition where socialising continues.

## *Paws for thought*

We were watching the telly the other night. There was a good programme on about a competition where some collies run about a lot to round up sheep and drive them into shedding ring and then into a pen, whilst the farmer type stands at the other end of the field shouting and whistling to make out he is in charge.

But I've got a much better game . . .

I've got a ringing shed. People volunteer to get inside and shout at each other to ring rounds and don't want to come out!

Me, I sit guarding the door in the sunshine.

And they say collies are clever?





# OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

## NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

### *Meeting minutes of Annual General Meeting on 6th March 2010*

#### **Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman, Brian Newman, welcomed everyone to Woughton on the Green for the Annual Meeting and thanked them for coming.

#### **In Memoriam**

The chairman asked the meeting to stand and remember Bill Thatcher who had died since the Autumn Meeting in September. Bill Thatcher was tower captain at Padbury, which is, to all intents and purposes, now part of our Branch.

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Received from Robert Newton (Guild Master), Hilarie Rogers (Guild Secretary), Brian Gatward (Guild Treasurer), Ed Houghton (Guild Steward), Scott Ayers, Chrissie Cable, Barry Eglesfield, David Jones, David Joyce, David Lapham, Ruth Plackett, John Stanworth, Vicky Stanworth, Nathan Tinsley, Carrie Walker,

#### **Minutes of previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Autumn Meeting held at Padbury in September had been published in the November edition of In Touch. No comments were made regarding the minutes so the Chairman deemed this as acceptance of the minutes as a true record.

#### **Election of New Members**

Nominations had been received proposing 13 new members

Emberton: Maureen White proposed by Sheila Watts, seconded by Phil Haslam.

Hanslope: Carol Owen, Helen Dear, Terry Fayers, Tim Waumsley, Clare Lamonby proposed by Roy Keeves, seconded by Jonathan Griggs.

Newport Pagnell: Peter Jarvis, Kate Hollins (Junior), Rev Beverley Hollins proposed by Doug Hird, seconded by Nicki King.

Sherington: Mark Vale, Nat Masters, Robert Brewis proposed by Doug Hird, seconded by Charles Knight.

Whaddon: Margaret Barrie proposed by Derek White, seconded by Phillip Starr.

All were elected without dissent.

#### **Officers Reports**

Officers Reports, where received, were published in the February edition of In Touch (and included in the Appendices to the minutes)

Chairman – No Report

Secretary – (Appendix A) – No Questions

Treasurer – (Appendix B) – Sheila Watts highlighted the main points to note: Funds have increased by £41 over the year; 183 subscriptions were collected; over £100 has been collected for the Guild Bell Fund, £52 more than last year; In Touch costs were £232 for four issues but with donations of £172 from towers towards the cost of In Touch, the net cost to the Branch was £52, about the cost of one issue. The accounts have been audited by Alison Fowler, an

accountant from Olney. This was because our previous auditor, David Phillipson, is now a Branch Officer and not exactly impartial. David had been Branch Auditor for a very long time (the records do not indicate when he started doing this job) and the Branch owes him a huge debt for this. Sheila wished to convey her personal thanks but asked that the Chairman propose a vote of thanks. On behalf of the Branch the Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to David for all the work he has put in over the years as Branch Auditor. This was carried unanimously and appreciation was also shown with a round of applause.

Moving on to 2010, Sheila thanked towers who had paid their subscriptions, and reminded everyone that, following a Guild rule change, subscriptions have to be paid by the end of March. She will write to outstanding towers tomorrow who may not realise the change. She asked anyone in the area to remind the towers who have not paid yet. These are Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Lovell, Loughton, Maids Moreton, and Thornborough. Donations to the Guild Bell Fund at the meeting was £24.

David Phillipson pointed out that the accounts published in In Touch were unaudited. The Treasurer reported that they had now been audited and she had with her a copy of the audited accounts. The audited accounts are the same as the accounts published in In Touch. Queries were raised over whether there were ringers at Loughton and Thornborough. There are definitely members at these towers; Loughton bells are not being rung at present as work to the church floor has effectively closed the church for three months. It was then formally proposed by Richard Stanworth and seconded by Philip Starr that the accounts be adopted. This was agreed on a show of hands.

Ringling Development Leader(Buckingham) – (Appendix C) – Richard provided an update on the transfer of Padbury and Hillesden. The Central Bucks Branch has voted to accept the transfer for these towers to North Bucks. Subject to formal approval by the Guild Committee next Saturday, which is a rubber stamp exercise, these towers have now moved to the North Bucks Branch.

Ringling Development Leader(Milton Keynes) – (Appendix D) – No Questions

Ringling Development Leader(Newport) – No Report

Guild Representatives – No Report

Branch Archivist – Doug reported that this year had been much the same as previous years collecting information together and tidying things up. A couple of suggestions which are being worked on are details of the peals rung at Olney, and a Roll of Honour. This has involved collecting detail from papers during the First World War. The Chairman suggested that some of this information could be obtained from the Central Council web site. Doug pointed out that this did not include details of all local ringers, as they were not all Guild members.

## **Election of Officers**

**Chairman** Brian Newman proposed by Hugh Butler, seconded by Philip Starr

**Secretary** Helen Stanworth proposed by Brian Newman seconded by Philip Starr

**Treasurer** Sheila Watts proposed by Alan Marchbank, seconded by Sheila Blenkhorn

## **Deanery Ringing Development Leaders**

As David Phillipson was unable to stand for re-election due to work commitments abroad, the Chairman thanked him for the work he had done for the Branch.

Initially there was a lack of nominees for the Newport post. Alan Marchbank said that if we couldn't find anybody then we were not just failing the Newport Deanery but the whole branch if we were to proceed along the lines outlined at last year's AGM as regards being more closely aligned to the church organisation. For information, Richard Stanworth outlined the role of DRDL, as a liaison between branch and towers to ensure that help was given where needed, and as a contact point for any church in the deanery relating to anything to do with bells and ringers. David Phillipson added further clarification. The DRDL replaces the ringing master as that role was deemed not to be working due to the size of the branch, as well as providing a closer relationship with the church authorities.

**RDL Newport:** Doug Hird, proposed by David Middleton, seconded by Charles Knight.

**RDL Milton Keynes:** Alan Marchbank, proposed by Brian Newman, seconded by David Phillipson.

**RDL Buckingham:** Richard Stanworth, proposed by Brian Newman, seconded by David Phillipson.

**Guild Representatives:** Richard Stanworth proposed by Sheila Blenkhorn, seconded by David Phillipson and Hugh Butler proposed by Richard Stanworth, seconded by Philip Starr.

**Newsletter Editor:** Jonathan Griggs proposed by David Phillipson, seconded by Doug Hird.

**Branch Archivist:** Doug Hird, proposed by Ellie Cooper, seconded by Sheila Ware.

It was generally agreed that we ought to appoint an Independent Examiner, not connected with the Treasurer. No nominations were received. The Chairman suggested that this be dealt with at a meeting later in the year. This met with general approval.

## **Distinguished Membership**

The Chairman drew attention to this new class of membership, details of which were published in In Touch. Nominations for Distinguished Membership can be made by any member. Richard Stanworth stated that the officers had considered this matter and they were moved to nominate Sheila Watts for Distinguished Membership. Richard then read out the citation which had been prepared in support of Sheila's nomination and invited members present to sign the form as additional supporters of the nomination.

## **Recruitment and Training**

Richard Stanworth addressed the meeting. The officers have been looking at how the branch can help with recruitment. One idea is to hold an event with a mini ring in the Middleton Hall in The Centre MK. This has great potential both in raising awareness of bell ringing and for recruiting new ringers. The

catchment area is much larger than the North Bucks branch area, with up to 100,000 people passing through in a day. There is a smaller area in the Centre for use by charities or voluntary organisations but it would not accommodate a portable ring. There are potential costs of several hundred pounds in organising an event like this. It will need commitment and help from the members of the branch. It is also important to have the follow up training planned and ready so that the potential recruits are not lost. The planning and preparation could take some time so it is envisaged that the main event is unlikely to take place until some time in 2011.

At present this is very much a concept which is being put to the meeting to consider if this is what the branch should be doing. The costs are potentially quite high but the long term benefit could be worth much more. Sponsorship or donations from towers to offset costs are areas that could be considered. Hal Drysdale commented that the Charmborough ring had been at two events in the Central Bucks area and had generated a lot of interest in ringing as well as raising awareness. CBB had not had any follow up plan in place to benefit from the event and he commended the branch for planning to do this.

David Phillipson emphasised that recruitment and development of ringing are key areas of the objectives set out last year. The follow up is important as without that the whole exercise will have been wasted.

Elly Cooper said that we should also work on the smaller scale events such as local fetes and fairs. This would need to be part of the follow up and could be used to develop this part of the plan.

Richard Stanworth had proposed that the possibility of holding a recruiting event be investigated further. Doug Hird seconded the proposal and this proposal was carried on a show of hands.

Alan Marchbank then outlined plans to create a CD or DVD of resources, documents, posters etc which had been used to assist with recruiting and training locally, or from other branches or Guilds which we can make use of within the branch. This will make them easily available when needed.

## **Forthcoming Events**

An up to date Calendar of events had been distributed before the meeting. Richard Stanworth pointed out that entries had now closed for the Radley course but that the equivalent course will be held at Steeple Aston in October. The Chairman reminded members that grants are available from the branch towards the cost of courses. Once a place has been confirmed applications for grants should be made to the Secretary. David Middleton announced that a visit is being made by Great Brickhill villagers to Whites at Appleton next Saturday 12th March to view the bells and frame, and members are welcome to join them. Alan Marchbank asked about a date for the rededication of Great Brickhill bells. David said that the bells and frame will be installed during April but a date has not yet been set as there will still be quite a lot of work to do after that.

Richard Stanworth pointed out that the Branch Practice in May will be on the fourth Saturday as the third Saturday is the Guild AGM.

## **Vote of Thanks**

On behalf of everyone present The Chairman thanked Brian Baldwin and the Woughton ringers for hosting the meeting, and the Rev Tim Norwood for taking the service.

# Branch Notice Board

## Branch Practices :

<b>Saturday 22nd May</b>	<b>5pm</b>	Bradwell
<b>Saturday 21st August</b>	<b>5pm</b>	Lavendon
<b>Saturday 16th October</b>	<b>5pm</b>	Maids Moreton

## Branch Autumn Meeting

Sat 11th September

3.30pm

Downs Barn

**Interbranch Striking Competition against Towcester**  
Saturday  
10th July 6pm

## Summer Social and Striking Competition

Saturday 19th June  
at Stowe

4.30 start

## Guild and other stuff :

Saturday 15th May	Guild AGM at Speen in the Newbury branch
Tuesday 4th August	Deadline for contributions to next edition of In Touch
Saturday 25th September	Michaelmas Training Course at Shiplake
Saturday 2nd October	Guild 6 bell striking competition in the Oxford City Branch