



In Touch

February 2011

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the North Bucks Branch will be held at Newport Pagnell on Saturday 5th March 2011. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend, as the branch recruitment project will be a big feature of the AGM.

- 3.30 Ringing
- 4.30 Service
- 5.00 Tea
- 5.45 Business Meeting &
Ringing until 8.30

Tea and meeting will be held in the church.

Numbers for tea to Carol Smith 01908 616666, by Tuesday 1st March, please.

*Newport Pagnell Church in the early 19th century
See page 8 for a history of the bells and ringing at Newport.*



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THE BIG RING-PULL The Branch Recruitment Project

Thanks to the positive response from branch members, the project is now steaming ahead.

Planning the event is now underway, with groups meeting regularly: read page 3 for an update on the project.

There will be an opportunity to discuss progress and plans at the AGM.

Who's Who 2010—2011

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Guild Website			www.odg.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

February

19th Branch Practice at Whaddon 4pm

March

5th AGM at Newport Pagnell 3.30pm

12th Guild Spring meeting at Great Brickhill

April

16th Branch Practice at MK Village 5pm

May

2nd Guild Open day and 8 bell Competition in Old North Berks Branch

3rd Deadline for contributions to In Touch

14th Branch Practice at Stony Stratford 5pm

21st Guild AGM in Bicester Branch

June

18th Branch Summer social and Striking competition at Clifton Reynes 5pm

July

2nd Interbranch Striking competition against Towcester Branch at Olney 6pm

From the Chairman . . .

Dear All

Welcome to this issue, the last before this year's AGM.

Since the previous issue the team led by your In Touch Editor have started the planning for the recruitment drive, more of which is reported later on. Do please read about all that is going on and offer your help wherever you can.

Do come to the meeting at Newport and have your say about the branch and of course vote on those you wish to see as branch officers.

Brian

From the Editor . . .

You may notice subtle changes to the style of this edition - I have been looking at other newsletters produced in the guild and, inspired by some of them, have modernised the look of In Touch. It's important to keep up with the times and not stand still!

Of secondary benefit, is that the content now fits into 15 pages rather than 18 (content has been steadily growing over the past year) thus reducing copying costs. The Diary has moved to page 2 and the officer contact details are also more succinct.

I hope you like the changes.

The deadline for contributions for the next edition of In Touch is **Tuesday 3rd May 2011.**

Jonathan

THE BIG RING-PULL

The Branch Recruitment Project

UPDATE

Firstly I would like to thank all those members who contacted me before Christmas and offered their help and support to this important project. This is most heartening and indicates how important people think recruitment is to our exercise, especially in this branch. To date, 30 people have put themselves forward and I am sure that more will join the project as it gains momentum. Whilst we have not yet identified any marketing expertise, we have established two external contacts who we hope can help us in this respect.

Those who have specifically offered to contribute to the upfront work, in deciding what it is we actually need to do, are now participating in the 'preparation phase'. There have been a number of meetings already, where ideas have been presented and avenues explored, and things are coming together nicely. The following sections detail our thoughts at this point in time in each of the four workstreams. Work will continue on this preparation phase until the end of March.

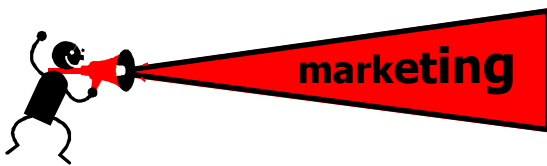
If you have offered your help for later in the project (maybe for teaching, talking to recruits at the event,

ringing, etc.) then as the plans get firmed up you will be contacted and invited to become more involved.

Interestingly (and I mention this elsewhere in this edition) I have recently spoken to a lady who organised a similar recruitment event in Newcastle. She put the Lichfield Mobile Belfry in the shopping centre and handed out leaflets. They attracted 10 new recruits who progressed to branch membership at local towers and that was without providing any training. With a possible greater footfall and an organised training course, it is not unreasonable to think that we could attract a significantly larger number.

This project will be the main topic of conversation at the AGM on the 5th March. Please come along and discuss it. If you have not already offered your help and would like to do so, then please contact me. There is plenty to do and all help is very welcome.

Jonathan Griggs
Project Manager



From the Marketing Workstream:

The purpose of the marketing workstream is to advertise and communicate our intent: to find people interested in ringing and to attract them to the event! How we shall do it?

In advance of the day

Communication with the local radio, TV and newspapers to encourage articles, explaining what we are doing and why we need to do it; encouraging anyone interested in learning more to make a point of attending; preparation of the necessary materials and designing the artwork, which will describe our brand and be visually captivating.

We also need to design data collection forms to collect details of the people who show interest on the day. As we cannot rule out anyone – that would not be in the interest of the exercise as a whole – we need to be ready to cope with people who don't fall into the North Bucks catchment area. So we will need contact details for surrounding Guilds and Associations.

On the day

The intention is to use large, professionally printed display material on the perimeter of the area where we shall be operating in Middleton Hall to attract the attention of people and inform them a little about what they can hear and see.

We shall have floor-walking ringers, wearing eye-catching branded tee-shirts, on the look out for people showing interest in what we are doing. Operating to a predetermined script, the floor walkers will encourage those interested to come on a journey past further material which explains what bellringers do and why we are ringing bells in CMK. Further display material will be posted closer to the mini-ring which will help to explain how the training program will be operated.

Then we get to the inner sanctum – the mini-ring and having a go. There will be regular demonstration ringing, "sight and sound in concert" which will give a clear visual understanding of how we ring and what happens when the rope is pulled. The exhibition ringers will also wear distinctive tee-shirt carrying through the Big Ring Pull brand. Following each demonstration, the interested public will be able to ring with one-to-one guidance.

Upon completion of this "journey", we need to capture the contact details of interested people: if they are from the MK we will follow up with invitation to our training programme; if they are from outside North Bucks, we will pass their details to the appropriate ringing association.

Marketing Workstream
Alan Marchbank

Teaching

From the Teaching Workstream:

The original training plan was to teach the new recruits over 10 weekly training sessions. However, the group now considers that this is too long, leading to a loss of focus by the recruit and likely fallout from the program. It is therefore proposed to compress the training into 5 modules, each module will be run a number of times over a two week period, allowing recruits to attend each module at a time to suit them. The aim of the course is to make bellringing exciting, varied and interesting. Dates permitting, the course will start one week after the event in Middleton Hall. An example of how the course might look is below:

	AM	PM	Eve
Sat	Mod 1	Mod 1	
Sun			
Mon			Mod 2
Tues			Mod 2
Wed		Mod 2	
Thu			Mod 3
Fri			Mod 3
Sat			
Sun			
Mon		Mod 3	
Tue			Mod 4
Wed			Mod 4
Thu		Mod 4	
Fri			
Sat	Mod 5	Mod 5	

The course will take new recruits through the practical learning stages to a level of ringing rounds. Module 1 will include demonstration ringing, a talk about the program, the provision of a 'Welcome Pack' including information on bellringing in the branch, a training plan and a One per Learner book. We will also have CCTV looking at the bells ringing and a model bell.

The course will have a capacity for 36 recruits. As they progress, there will be opportunities for non practical sessions, including watching DVDs on ringing history and bell handling, rope tying practice, listening skills, an explanation of change ringing and bellringing terminology and handbell ringing etc. These sessions will only be short, but will provide a broader picture of ringing beyond just bell-handling. There will be a short training plan for each session, which will be added to the learners' Welcome Pack as they progress.

Module 5 will complete the training through to rounds, with a more social aspect, including presentation of the New Ringer's Book and also hopefully Guild membership.

During their training, recruits will be introduced to the members of the tower where they will eventually continue their ringing. However, there will also be a continuing program, that will allow the recruits to continue to meet as a group.

It is planned, with the permission of Downs Barn to host all the training there, as it has ideal facilities for teaching and for people to meet. We are investigating installing the ABEL simulator onto the 8 bells so that recruits can learn to handle whilst hearing their bell (and also to minimise disruption to neighbours).

We have always recognised that in order to teach recruits we need skilled teachers. We had a strong response from people offering their services, both from people wishing to learn to be teachers and from those who have taught before. We are proposing to run a 1-day course for ringers to learn or refresh their skills on how to teach rope handling. The Guild has offered to run this course based upon part of their Integrated Teacher Training Scheme (ITTS). It is proposed that all potential teachers should attend this course, whether they have taught before or not, as this ensures good practice, and a professional and consistent approach.

Teaching Workstream

Jonathan Griggs, Nick Read, Sheila Ware, Mick Nimmo
Doug Hird

Display !

From the Display Workstream:

Plans are to hire either the Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry or the Charmborough Ring for the recruitment event in Middleton Hall. The LDMB is our preferred option, but the final decision may depend on which bells are available to be booked for the day. The date of the event will depend on when the Centre MK management are able to make Middleton Hall available to us at no cost, as the hire fee for exclusive use is prohibitive.

As well as a mobile belfry, there will be various displays about bellringing, using sets of display boards which the branch and Guild own.



THE BIG RING-PULL - more

Outline Plan for Recruiting Event Day

0700 - 0900 Erection of Mobile Belfry
 0900 5 mins of Demonstration Ringing, followed by 25 mins of "Have a Go" sessions
 0930 5 mins of Demonstration Ringing, followed by 25 mins of "Have a Go" sessions
 and so on throughout the day until:
 1800 - 1900 Dismantling of Mobile Belfry

Suggested Teams:

Team No.	No of volunteers	Time slots	Tasks
1	6	0700 to 0930	Erect mobile belfry, give first demonstration ring and supervise first have-a-go session
2 to 9	6 in each team	0930 to 1730 in one hour slots	Give demonstration ringing and supervise have-a-go sessions
10	6	1730 to 1900	Give demonstration ringing, supervise have-a-go sessions and dismantle mobile belfry

Therefore the maximum number of ringing volunteers needed is 60, however I am hopeful that people will volunteer for more than one of the teams during the day, for instance if everyone volunteered for 2 teams, then 30 people would be required.

The "Have a Go" sessions are, of course, aimed at any member of the public. Because of the 'cosiness' of the mobile belfry, a maximum of three bells can be used simultaneously for these sessions, therefore each team will need a minimum of three ringers who can supervise. Alan Marchbank has kindly offered the use of the Broadway Campanile for ringers to get used to ringing very light bells as it does require an adjustment to normal ringing styles in order to handle them. Practice sessions will be arranged for team members before the day of the recruiting event.

Display Workstream

Richard Stanworth

£ Finance

From the Finance Workstream:

YOUR HELP NEEDED!

In this issue Jonathan has updated us on the excellent progress being made planning the Big Ring Pull, and it's good to see so many Branch members involved.

We now need to fund the project. It was agreed at the Branch meeting at Downs Barn in September that normal Branch funds would not be used; the membership would raise the money separately. The Finance Workstream has met and we have been considering ways in which we can all help.

The overall budget for the project is approximately £3000, including contingency. This may sound a lot, but the various project groups have analysed their costs, and this figure is based on gaining 36 recruits which would be an excellent result and a good investment. We must also not discount the enormous benefits of raising awareness of ringing. To break down the costs a little:

Display - hire of mini-ring, transport, etc - £300

Teaching - welcome pack, teaching material, books, catering, donations to host towers, etc - £800

Marketing - posters, fliers, display aids, data sheets, postage and stationery, tee shirts - £1500

How do we raise this money? We will, of course, be applying for grants from the Guild, The Ringing

Foundation, etc, but there are many ways in which we can help raise these funds ourselves. Here are some ideas:

- 🔔 Each tower to donate their wedding fees for one wedding
- 🔔 Sponsored quarter peals
- 🔔 Sponsored walks
- 🔔 Quizzes
- 🔔 Coffee mornings
- 🔔 Other local events organised by towers

We particularly like the idea of donating wedding fees - a relatively painless way of raising a substantial sum of money. Just 15 towers participating could raise approximately £1500!

It is anticipated that the Big Ring Pull will take place in the autumn. We need to start raising funds now, so, it's over to you! Please let us know what your plans are - that way we can track how the money is going to come in. We hope to make a real difference to the recruitment of new ringers in the area.

Thank you for your help.

Finance Workstream

Sheila Watts
Trudy Hutchings
Brian Newman

us and them - ringers and the public

The following article is written by John Harrison, the ODG Education Sub Committee Chairman and was printed in the Sonning Deanery Branch newsletter, Spring 2010. It talks about the relationship between ringers and the public and is apt at this time when we are thinking about the Big Ring Pull. Coincidentally, I was recently talking to a lady from Morpeth who put the Lichfield Mobile Belfry in the Newcastle shopping centre for a day, talked to local passers by and recruited 10 new ringers who then went on to learn at local towers and become branch members. Our project should be able to improve on this number as we are offering the follow up training. Thanks to John for allowing us to reprint the article.

Jonathan Griggs

1 – A lot of what we think and talk about as ringers revolves around the ringing itself: what we do, how we do it, when we are going to do it, with whom we are going to do it, and so on. As individual ringers, we might be more preoccupied with learning methods, with the difficulties of handling, or with organising the ringing. A few of us also spend time trying to help non-ringers to understand the fascinating world of ringing – the nature of the skills themselves, the richness of the heritage tradition, the unique nature of the music, the evolution of the technology, the social history, and so on.

2 – Many bands today find things difficult – they never seem to have enough ringers, and the ringers that they have, find it a hard to reach a good standard of performance, and even harder to extend their repertoire beyond the most basic methods. Many influences can lead in this direction, and once established, a state of continued 'struggling' can seem inevitable.

You might wonder what connection there is between the two previous paragraphs. If you recognise the state of affairs in (2) you might have dismissed the final part of (1) as of no relevance to you. 'We haven't got time to do things like that – we have our hands full trying to keep the bells ringing'. 'All we need from non-ringers is for them to come forward as new recruits, but we can't seem to get any'. 'No one wants to give up the time for ringing these days, there are too many competing attractions'. 'Anyway, ringing isn't very exciting in a struggling tower'. I have often heard those sentiments, if not those actual words.

At the AGM, there was a discussion on the state of ringing, and it was clear that some of us see things as 'the glass being half full', while others of us saw it as 'the glass being half empty'. As a result (I'm not quite sure how) I was asked to write some thoughts in the Newsletter about the relationship between ringers and non-ringers. Obviously that includes recruitment, but a relationship that starts and ends with recruitment isn't much of a relationship. I believe it is important to cultivate better awareness of, and a respect for, ringing among non-ringers in the communities within which we live and ring.

I would like to start with a story.

Begging bowl or welcome sign?

Imagine that you are walking down the street of life, and you see a beggar sitting on the pavement. Next to him is a sign, not saying 'wife and kids to support' but 'Ancient art and historic bells to support'. And he is not asking you to drop money into a hat, he wants you to give up an evening a week to learn to ring bells with

him. You've seen pictures of people swinging on bell ropes, and you wouldn't want your friends to know you did something odd (even if you had the time, which you don't) so you make your excuses and pass by. Of course if you met someone asking for money to restore the ancient church bells, which were becoming unringable, you probably would make a donation, because you quite like the sound of church bells, and you can afford it. You might even tell your friends about it, because heritage projects are the sort of good cause that you and your friends like to support.

Now imagine that you are walking down the same street of life, and you see a poster saying 'Welcome to the fascinating world of ringing'. Next to it is someone smiling at you, who asks if you know what ringing is about. You say not really, but you like the sound it makes, and he invites you to step into a small exhibition about ringing. You aren't in a hurry, so you go inside. There are pictures and models that show how ringing evolved, how bells are made and how they work. There is even an explanation of how bell 'methods' work, which you don't understand, but it looks fascinating. There are pictures of ringers old and young, big and small (you didn't realise bellringers were so diverse) and they all seem such nice, 'normal' people. You see a video of bells being rung, and you notice that one of them is being rung by a young girl standing on top of a large wooden box so she can reach the rope. Then you realise the same girl is standing next to you. She is 17 now, but was 14 when the video was made. She tells you that the bell she was ringing weighed $\frac{3}{4}$ ton, and she explains the technique of ringing a heavy bell. You are amazed. You look around the room and you can instantly see who the other ringers are, because they are all wearing tee-shirts with a big bell saying 'I'd rather be bellringing'. You begin to understand how people get hooked on ringing, and you leave the exhibition glad that you took the time to look round, and feeling very positive about ringing and admiring the obvious skill and enthusiasm of the ringers.

These two stories paint deliberately extreme pictures, and there are many possibilities in between, but I hope they will help you to put yourself in the position of 'them' rather than 'us'. 'They' are the non-ringing public, who typically know hardly anything about ringing (and what little they do know may well be untrue) but most of them like to hear ringing. So let's think about the outcomes of these two stories.

The beggar didn't get any recruits, and went home feeling as miserable as ever. Maybe he didn't expect much success, based on previous experience. The

us and them - continued

people who walked past him remained just as ignorant about ringing as they were before, and they may even have got the impression that ringing must be dying out.

The mini exhibition succeeded on several fronts. A lot of people saw it and found it very interesting. They enjoyed themselves, and they went away much more knowledgeable about ringing. They were impressed with the enthusiasm and friendliness of the ringers, as well as with their obvious skill and dedication. Some of them intended to take up the offer to go and see the bells and ringers in action one day. The ringers went away feeling positive, because they could sense the interest in what they were doing, and the people they spoke to were very appreciative.

But the exhibition didn't get any recruits! It might have done, but for the sake of argument, let's assume that no one volunteered on the spot. Even in recruiting terms, the exhibition sowed seeds. Many people went away feeling positive about ringing, and some of them in the

future might decide they would like to try it. But even if they don't, they will provide a more fertile environment for others to do so. They might encourage their children to take up ringing. They might show admiration rather than scorn when a friend thinks about doing so, and thus tip the balance in favour.

But regardless of hard nosed recruitment, we should care about the people in the communities that we live in. We impose our performances and our practices on them, we live among them. If we are proud to be ringers, we should want other people to understand why. Ringing has a fascinating story to tell. We should not try to keep it to ourselves.

I hope I have explained why it is important for us to develop positive relationships with non-ringers. This article has been about motivation.

John Harrison

Christmas Bells in Middleton Hall

Many thanks to those of you who came out on the two Sundays before Christmas to ring handbells in Middleton Hall. Our aim was to entertain the passing shoppers and to promote bellringing to a wider audience and in this we succeeded.

Unfortunately we were competing with all the other sounds from the Christmas displays in the hall and so although we rang, we were not heard by as many people as we might have been. We will use this as a learning experience for the Big Ring Pull - on that occasion we will be more central, louder, and people will not be in such a rush to do their Christmas shopping.

Having said that, we engaged with about 100 people and passed on some general literature about ringing and some contact details. As we were only ringing for a couple of hours, this is a positive result. No direct recruits have come forward so far, but it is all about presence.

Thank you to those who gave up their time. It was a very worthwhile exercise and will help us in planning our approach to having a ring of bells in the hall as part of the recruitment project.

Alan Marchbank

Young Ringers' Striking Competition

Late last year John Marchbank, Alex Marchbank and I were sent a letter from the Guild Master Robert Newton asking us to represent the Oxford Diocesan Guild in a Young Ringers' Striking Competition. It is to take place on the 26th of March as part of the celebrations for the Ringing World's 100th Anniversary. The competition will be held in Pimlico, London at the 7cwt eight of St Saviour Church.

Overall a dozen or so young ringers aged between 13 and 18 were asked to come to practices from all over the Oxford Diocesan Guild including Milton Keynes and Reading. The first practice was held at Downs Barn and another one in Cuddington near Aylesbury. We have practised a range of methods including Grandsire, Stedman and Bob Triples, and Plain Bob, Cambridge and Yorkshire Surprise Major.

The touch set by the judges is 168 Triples, 180 Major or Call Changes. We have not decided on what we will ring, as the band is still being selected by Robert Newton. Our ambition is to perform the best striking possible when we ring against the other 14 teams that are in the competition.

Simon Read

Branch Practice at Olney, 15th January 2011

The Branch Practice held on the ten bells at Olney was well attended by about 25 ringers.

The bells were kept moving by a variety of methods - there was no time to sit and chat. All levels were catered for and there was ample opportunity to enhance our ten bell ringing skills.

Touches of Stedman and Grandsire caters along with courses of Plain Bob and Little Bob Royal were scored. Each piece of method ringing was interspersed with some rounds and call changes so everyone was kept active for the evening. Everything came round and the quality of the striking was high. It was a very successful evening.

Newport bells and ringing, from the archive

Newport Pagnell has had eight bells since 1748 when Thomas Lester cast a ring at Whitechapel with a tenor of around 22cwt. This replaced a set of five bells. The only survivor of these old bells is the sanctus, cast in 1670 by Anthony Chandler.

We don't have to wait long for the first account of ringing on the bells. In 1761, the Northampton Mercury reported:

We are informed also, that the same day his Majesty's Nuptials and Coronation were celebrated at Newport Pagnell by a considerable Number of Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood, when the Healths of his Majesty, the Queen-Consort, and all the Royal Family, were drank, with the warmest wishes for the Continuance of our Happiness in his Majesty's most illustrious House. The healths of the Earl Temple, and Mr. Pitt, the noble Assertor of our valuable Liberties and Constitution, and of all true Patriots, were commemorated, with Success to his Majesty's Arms by Sea and Land, as the true Means of an honourable and lasting Peace. The Evening concluded with Illuminations, Ringing of Bells, and every other Demonstration of Joy suitable to so happy an Event.

In the following year, a tune machine was installed by Joseph Eayre of St Neots. Nothing but a plaque with a list of tunes survives of this but a clock of the same period remains unused in the clock room, probably because it is too large to remove easily.

At the end of 1789, the same paper reported the first peal on the bells and, so far, the earliest known peal in the branch. Unfortunately, there is no detail in this account but a few years later the ringers signed their names to a letter to the paper. They had been accused of taking money to ring for the surrender of Valenciennes and their protest tells us that they were: Edward Simcox, Wm. Pearce, Charles Brandon, Thomas Harvey, Samuel Smith, George Nickolton, Joseph Joyce, William Joyce, B. Trulove.

The two back bells were recast in 1816 and 1819, a few years after the construction of the town's Iron Bridge, which would have made delivery of the bells easier. The familiar pinnacles and battlements were constructed in 1827 so it would seem that this was a time of prosperity for the town.

The introduction of a local paper in the town greatly increases our knowledge of ringing from 1859. Croydon's Weekly Standard, becoming the Bucks Standard in 1888, reported ringing from small snippets, as on Whit Monday 1863

This day was ushered in by a merry peal on the church bells

to full details of dedication services, Watch Night services and Branch meetings. It is this paper that gives us the full story of how Gillett & Johnston replaced the Eayre tune machine and added a bell in 1887, fitted an Ellacombe chiming apparatus in 1898, fitted Westminster chimes to the old clock and re-hung the bells in 1903, and completely replaced the bells and bell frame in 1911.

Since then the bells needed little attention, apart from occasional work on clappers and bearings, until 2002 when the wheels and pulleys were re-built, bearings replaced and the clappers re-bushed. The most recent improvement has been the construction of a ringing gallery in 2008 which has greatly improved the environment for ringers.

Newport has a large and enthusiastic band with ringers of all ages and abilities. As a result, Wednesday evening practices can include anything from bell handling to Stedman Triples. Having a significant proportion of the band as regular Sunday morning attenders helps the ringing for this service while occasional quarter peals guarantee ringing for Evensong. In recent years we have worked to build on this by ringing for more events and festivals.

Doug Hird

ODG 10 Bell Striking Competition

Seven branches entered the ODG 10 bell competition held on the back 10 at Amersham last November. The test piece was a tricky split tenor touch of 288 Little Bob Royal.

The North Bucks band rang 4th and started well, however the ringing came to grief between the second and third single and we failed to finish.

The East Berks and South Bucks Branch won the competition with a 'strong start, long patches of good ringing an few faults' as the judge Ian Willgress described it.

Ah well, something to aim again for next year !



Quarters and Peals

St James the Great, Hanslope

Sunday, 14th November 2010

1260 Stedman Triples

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

Rung half muffled for Remembrance Sunday

1st of Stedman : 1

Holy Trinity, Old Wolverton

Tuesday, 16th November 2010

1260 Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles

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

Rung for the engagement of Prince William and Kate Middleton

St James the Great, Hanslope

Tuesday, 28th December 2010

1250 Rutland Surprise Major

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

1st Rutland : 3

Cross and Stable, Downs Barn

Wednesday 29th December 2010

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Nick Read
- 2 Alex Marchbank
- 3 John Marchbank
- 4 Rachel Stacey
- 5 Simon Read
- 6 Terry Page
- 7 Alan Marchbank (C)
- 8 Tine Marchbank

1st of Grandsire : 3

In celebration of the life of Jessie Sapwell, life-long supporter of ringing in Great Linford who died 22nd December 2010.

The Priory Church of St Peter, Dunstable

Friday, 31st December 2010 in 2 hours 58mins

5040 Grandsire Triples

- 1 B Douglas Hird
- 2 Nick Read
- 3 John B Marchbank
- 4 Simon Read
- 5 Alexandra J Marchbank
- 6 Graham J Clifton (C)
- 7 Robert Marchbank
- 8 Alan J Marchbank

First Peal : 3

First of Grandsire Triples : 2 and 4

St James the Great, Hanslope

Sunday, 6th February 2011

1250 Cambridge Surprise Major

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

1st Quarter as conductor : 6

For Sunday Service

SS Peter and Paul, Newport Pagnell

Sunday, 13th February 2011

1296 Bob Major

- 1 John B Marchbank
- 2 Nick Read
- 3 Alan J Marchbank
- 4 Jonathan Griggs
- 5 B Douglas Hird
- 6 Brian Baldwin
- 7 John Stanworth
- 8 Simon Read (C)

First as conductor on 8

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.



Tower news

Woughton

The small band at St Mary's Woughton on the Green (Brian, Jean, Simon, Peter & Christina, Adam and Anna), who have been together for many years, had a difficult month in December with a combination of weather, illness and holidays. The net result was that we were not able to practice after the first week and we did not ring for any of the Christmas or New Year Services which was unprecedented. I just had that feeling that, after 35 years with an almost 100% commitment to Thursday night practice, Sunday service ringing and hundreds of weddings, ringing at Woughton was about to come to an end. There have been other factors present including a nil response to appeals for learners (no teenagers in the congregation) and little interest, if any, in this aspect of the church from the Minister. Ecumenism and Fresh Expression are having an impact on traditional Anglican church life.

The ringers themselves have become a little bored with only four turning up for practice and service ringing on occasions due to a variety of perfectly valid alternative commitments. When the right six are there Surprise Minor is achieved.

It was important therefore to sit down and discuss how we intend to go forward in 2011, so we have done just that. We also discussed the proposed Branch Recruitment Project. I am pleased to say that the outcomes are reasonably positive and the key aspects of this are: we will only ring by arrangement when enough ringers (minimum 5) are available. This requires forward commitment by individual members, good planning and communication. Yes that is down to me.

Service ringing in January was achieved on 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays, but the first in February has been cancelled. Practice nights were held on 2nd and 4th Thursdays in January and we have changed the time back to 7.30pm. We have also agreed to set definite objectives and our London is improving and Beverley is added to the programme for February plus conducting Grandsire to relieve Peter's efforts. Also we have a Simpson lady learner who, when available, is making good progress with basic handling.

Representations have been made to the Ministry Team in the parish to review the wedding booking arrangements and to ensure that booking the ringers (about 20 ringing bookings in 2011) is a definite commitment. Several occasions have occurred in 2010 with last minute cancellations of the ringing requirement or indeed the whole wedding, largely for cost cutting reasons.

All the Woughton members support the Branch initiative to have a recruitment project. Whilst nobody has stepped forward to be the marketer or fundraiser, there is skill and experience within the band to assist in the training and development of new ringers should they come forward.

We are going forward into February with fresh hope that we can hold the commitment of the existing group and find ways to make our ringing more interesting and

useful to the church. A few new ringers with some commitment to the local church would be a real bonus. The gaps in our home ringing are being filled by one or two of the band getting out to develop their ringing at other towers and also to provide support, in particular to the emerging band at Great Brickhill.

There is no band, practice or service ringing at St Thomas, Simpson at the moment. Weddings are covered by Woughton. I continue to maintain both rings.

If any local ringers would care to join us for practice please let me know and if you have some pearls of wisdom to offer the Woughton ringers they would be welcomed.

Brian Baldwin

Olney

Way back in September we thought an autumn outing would be a good idea to follow on from the success of our May venture. It eventually became a winter outing as it was very difficult to find a suitable date for all of us, and a local Bedfordshire route on 4th December was planned. We are very lucky to have nice rural Bedfordshire towers on our doorstep!

But we bargained without the early December weather! We drove round the route on the Friday and after discussion with Alan it was decided to cancel our day out. But all was not lost. Alan arranged for Downs Barn and Great Linford towers to be available, and we had a very enjoyable morning. The money collected at the towers has been donated towards the Branch Recruitment Project.

We had decided to end the day with a Christmas meal, hosted by Graham and Helen Dilley, and an Indian menu was agreed. Great fun was had plain hunting with people and handbells; a new and interesting experience for all – thanks Alan!

Sheila Ware & Sheila Watts

Shenley - New Year's Eve Ringing

Ann Birch and her husband Paul very kindly put on the pre-ringing supper at their house and as it always seems to be the case when there is good food and conversation the evening slipped by so quickly, before we knew it was time to ring the old year out. The half muffled ringing was so exquisite we were left mesmerised and almost did not leave enough time to get the muffles off to strike midnight!

As is the tradition at Shenley there was a brief burst of open ringing before dashing up onto the roof to drink champagne and watch the fireworks. We were amazed at the number of Chinese lanterns drifting across the sky on the stiff breeze.

After another piece of ringing it was time for home and cherish the joy of keeping this long held tradition.

Ted Fawcett

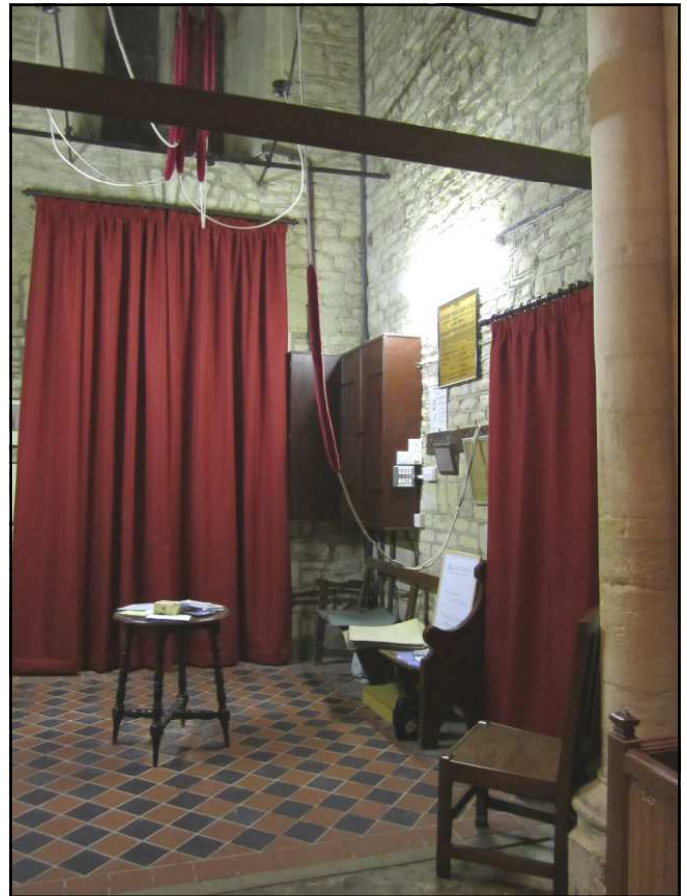
The heat is on at Emberton (or at least, being kept in)

If you're visiting Emberton belfry you'll see some changes. Fed up with freezing conditions and arctic draughts we decided that curtains were needed over the west door and the door up to the bells. The size of the task was somewhat daunting, but armed with the support of the Church we found some suitable fabric (and thermal lining) at *Dunelm*. We were fortunate that a parishioner was happy to erect the curtain poles - one at a high level. The end result is quite stunning and has made the Church (and us) very much warmer.

Around this time the rope attached to the spider broke, leaving us with a problem as the pulleys are a long way up. But Roy Keeves and Phil Haslam were happy to shin up a ladder with a new rope so that task is also done.

But more is to come. There is a plan to make the Church more user-friendly to the community, and *The Friends of All Saints* has been set up to raise funds to make this possible. The first tasks are to install a new outer porch door and toilet facilities. After that, when funds are available, the long term plan is to raise the ringing chamber, putting in a kitchen beneath. A glass/wood screen will be erected in the large west archway, so the ringers will be behind glass at the higher level, with wood at the base. Access to the ringing chamber will probably be by wooden stairs and trap door. The ringers are very much involved in the planning process, but it will undoubtedly be a very long time before all this comes to pass!

Sheila Watts



Emberton's new curtains keeping the heat in

Name that Tower Quiz

- the Answers

Here are the towers again, as printed in the last edition, this time with the answers.

I bet Old St Mary's in Stony Stratford caught a few people out !



Old St Mary's, Stony Stratford



Castlethorpe

Haversham



Gayhurst



Lathbury



Ravenstone



*Minutes of Autumn Meeting
held at Downs Barn on 11th September 2010*



Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Brian Newman, welcomed everyone to Downs Barn for the Autumn Meeting and thanked them for coming.

Apologies for Absence

Received from Chas Knight, Ruth Plackett, Helen Dilley, Graham Dilley, Matt Sheaf, Kate Hollins, David Joyce, Chrissie Cable, Alex Marchbank, David Lapham, Ros Tyrrell, Trudy Hutchings, Stuart Gibson (Guild Asst. Treasurer), Hilarie Rogers (Guild Secretary)

Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Woughton on the Green in March had been published in 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

One nomination had been received: Alex Moodie from Whaddon proposed by Hugh Butler and seconded by Derek White. She was elected without dissent.

Officers Reports

Treasurer - The Branch Account balance at the Building Society stands at approximately £970, which is quite healthy. Thank you to those towers who have paid their Subscriptions. Only two towers have not paid, those being Leckhampstead and Tingewick. Sheila asked: if anyone has contact with either tower, then please encourage them to pay. Thank you for contributing to the Bell Fund, we have raised £23.60 today.

Forthcoming Events

An up to date Calendar of events had been distributed before the meeting.

Alan Marchbank announced two events for which ringing had been requested: The Church of England is encouraging ringing at midday on Wednesday 22nd September to mark the United Nations Bio Diversity day. The Girl Guides Association celebrates its centenary on 20th October and has requested ringing at 20:10 on 20/10/2010. Members were asked to let Jonathan know about any ringing for these events so that he it can be reported in In Touch, with photos if possible.

Alan also advised that it was likely that the venue for the Christmas celebration would be changed from Shenley to Loughton but this had still to be confirmed. Richard Stanworth announced that there were still places available on the Steeple Aston Course on 30th October and that he had application forms available. The closing date was 21st September.

Branch Striking Competition

Certificates for the competition held at Stowe in June were presented to the first three teams:

- 1st Shenley and Loughton
- 2nd Great Linford
- 3rd Olney

Branch Recruitment Project

Alan Marchbank spoke about the analysis of the distribution and age profile of ringers which David Phillipson had carried out over a year ago which suggested that unless we do something about recruiting more ringers and younger ringers, ringing in the Branch will die out in the next 10 years. This was the background to the project and the plan which had been detailed in the latest In Touch. We can work locally and get a few ringers in individual towers, or we can go for a 'Big Bang' approach. This proposal is for a 'Big Bang'. The outline budget shows us spending three times what we currently have in Branch funds. We haven't got this so we will need help with raising this, attracting some of the 100,000 or so people who pass by to talk to us and get them interested. We will then need to have an organisation that can attach people from other areas to their local Diocesan associations, and to deal with the people that we attract from the Milton Keynes area who want to learn to ring. We need support. The Officers can't do this alone. We have approached the Ringing Foundation, a charity associated with the Central Council who can provide support, and also the Milton Keynes Volunteer Association who have people with specific skills, such as marketing, fund raising who can help.

Alan summarised what the Officers wished to get out of this meeting: a discussion about whether this project, as proposed in In Touch, is something that the branch wants to happen, or doesn't want to happen, and if it is, is the branch membership going to support it by giving time and effort to its planning, creation, execution, and teaching of people from the event in order to sustain the ringing in North Bucks.

Nick Read spoke in support of this, taking heed of the comment that if we do nothing, ringing will die in North Bucks. He was willing to 'do his bit' to support this and encouraged everyone else to help with the project.

Jill Joyce expressed concerns raised by the Bradwell band. The budget appeared to be a ridiculous amount of money, being something like 10 years worth of subscriptions or many times our current annual surplus. Individual costs seemed excessive: there are handout materials available for free, data capture could be done by someone for nothing, and Insurance is already covered by the Guild insurance. They were also concerned that people who joined the training scheme would be accustomed to ringing at the training location on a particular night and would want to stay with the group and not move to their local tower which might

Autumn Meeting 2010 - continued

practise on another night when they were not available. They had lost potential recruits at Bradwell because they were already busy on a Wednesday night.

Alan commented on the project budget. In view of the potential numbers of handouts that may be needed we were concerned that an allowance should be included for producing them. In terms of insurance, we're not sure what will be required so we made an allowance in the budget. Equally, if we were to proceed with this proposal and then came back and said we had overspent on paper for handouts, or insurance, then the branch wouldn't be very happy. If we can save on costs, then all the better.

A more general discussion on the proposal followed. It was emphasised that there was no guarantee that the project would generate new ringers. A report of a similar project in the Ringing World was referred to where there had been some issue over placement of ringers after the initial training scheme but these had been successfully resolved. Support will be needed for towers where ringers disperse to otherwise they could be lost. There was a big push for ringers for the millennium and many of those were lost because of lack of encouragement. We need more people in the branch who are able to teach and we need teachers to be available immediately

after the recruiting event. There are also members who may not wish to teach bell handling but can help with training in other ways.

Sheila Ware felt that there was general support for the project and so formally proposed that 'The Branch adopt the outline plan as presented in In Touch'. This was seconded by Elly Cooper. Jill Joyce proposed an amendment that the words "subject to having the funds in place" be added. This amendment was seconded by Doug Hird. On a show of hands this amendment was lost by 19 votes to 8. The original proposal was then put to the meeting and was carried by 28 votes to one against.

Any Other Business

Jill Joyce asked for assistance with weddings at Bradwell on 1st and 2nd October. Ringing is normally ¼ hr before and then after the wedding but ringers cannot leave during the service.

Vote of Thanks

On behalf of everyone present the Chairman thanked Rev Beverley Hollins for taking the service, Jean Mattinsley for playing the organ, and mainly the Great Linford ringers for preparing the tea. Members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

Minutes of Business Meeting held at Olney on 15th January 2011

A short business meeting was held for the election of one new member and an auditor.

Election of New Members

Sophie Wood (Junior) from Olney, proposed by Charles Knight, seconded by Sheila Ware, elected without dissent.

Election of Auditor

Alison Fowler from Emberton was proposed by Sheila Watts, seconded by Jonathan Griggs, elected without dissent.

Kaleidoscope Ringing - the new alternative to Call Changes

At the beginning of February Alan, Doug and I represented the branch at an ODG training meeting at Thame. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and share training experiences and have the opportunity to try out some new practice methods.

Kaleidoscope is one of these methods. It teaches people who can ring rounds to practice dodging and make places without making that big leap into hunting and method ringing. We were inspired from having a go and I know that it has been rung in at least 4 towers in the branch since we attended the course. Here are the essentials.

Kaleidoscope involves changing with another bell in a set pattern or sequence. The idea of the various patterns is to develop bell control. There are three basic works involved:

- Long places (4 blows)
- Short places (2 blows)
- Dodging (alternate blows in 2 places)

These works can be started at either handstroke or backstroke. The instruction is given during the ringing and then subsequently the order to start ie:

"3 and 4 dodge in 3 4 next handstroke"

This allows as much time as necessary to ensure everyone understands what they have to do before the instruction to start is given.

As learners progress, the sequences can be built up by joining the three basic works together and adding more works of your own. The sequences can be built up to the level of the learner being able to ring Cambridge front work before they have learnt to plain hunt.

Further information can be found in the book called Kaleidoscope Ringing available as a CCBR publication via Alan Marchbank's North Books Stall priced £2. We are planning to have a go at this at the next branch practice at Whaddon on the 19th February.

Jonathan Griggs

Annual General Meeting on 5th March 2011



Agenda

- 1 Chairman's welcome
- 2 In Memoriam
- 3 Apologies for Absence
- 4 Minutes of previous meeting – as published in this edition of In Touch
- 5 Matters arising from minutes
- 6 Election of New Members
- 7 Officers Reports – as published in this edition
- 8 Election of Officers
- 9 The Big Ring Pull:
 - Display
 - Training
 - Marketing
 - Finance
- 10 Forthcoming Events
- 11 Any Other Business
- 12 Vote of Thanks

Secretary's Report

Average attendance at Branch practices has increased from 15 to 19, although numbers at the AGM and Autumn Meetings were slightly down. It appears that our change to events being held on Saturdays is showing signs of being a success.

Membership of the branch decreased by six in 2010, despite 19 new members being elected, and three transfers from other branches. There are now 29 towers in the branch with members, two more towers than last year.

The Officers have met on nine occasions during the year to deal with the business of running the branch and planning the Big Ring Pull. Between meetings informal discussions have taken place by e-mail.

As part of the usual preparations for the Annual Report, tower information sheets were again sent out to all towers for which we have contact details, requesting that they check these details and correct any mistakes. The rate of return was much the same as in previous years. If your tower has not yet returned the sheet, please do so, even if the details are correct. That way I can ensure that the branch records are kept up to date.

The transfer of Padbury and Hillesden to the branch was ratified at the Guild Spring Committee Meeting in March, bringing all the towers in the Buckingham Deanery into the Branch.

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

The Autumn Meeting was held at Downs Barn, with the catering looked after by the Great Linford band. We went to Shenley for the Christmas Celebration with the Fish and Chip Supper being held in the Memorial Hall at Loughton. The supper was again followed by an informal quiz organised by Alan Marchbank. The numbers were down compared with last year but it was much enjoyed by all who came. Our thanks to the Shenley and Loughton ringers for the arrangements.

Helen Stanworth

RDL Buckingham Deanery

Early in the year I sent a letter to the Buckingham Deanery Chapter, the Churchwardens and representatives of the Buckingham Denary Synod. This was a general letter of introduction about the DRDL role and how I might support the various ringing and bell associated activities in the Deanery.

This resulted in two requests for assistance. I was asked to organise ringers for the three bells at Lillingstone Dayrell for a wedding in August. This also gave me a chance to take a look at the state of the installation there. They are in reasonable condition considering how infrequently they are rung. Radclive, another three, are interested in making their bells fit to be at least chimed. They have obtained quotes from some of the bell hangers and I put them in touch with the Guild Towers and Belfries Committee to see if they could offer advice.

Now that Padbury and Hillesden have moved in to the branch, we now have all the towers in the Deanery within the branch. As Hillesden is part of the same benefice as Padbury, the Padbury ringers have undertaken to ring at Hillesden for two services a month. Once a month in the latter part of the summer the Friday night practice was held at Hillesden instead of Padbury and it is hoped to continue with this arrangement during British Summer Time.

Progress in the Deanery has mainly been within my own benefice during the past year. However other towers in the Deanery have not re-joined the Guild and I need to encourage them back into the Guild if at all possible.

Richard Stanworth

RDL Milton Keynes Deanery

Here we are again with another 12 months past and an annual meeting just around the corner. It has been a very progressive year in the Deanery and it is worth reflecting for a moment on what has been achieved.

Great Brickhill bells have been re-hung and augmented to 8 and a very fine job has been turned out. Ringing by a local band is well and truly established and good progress is being made.

Downs Barn bells are being rung regularly for at least 2 Sundays each month and an 8 bell practice is run on the third Tuesday of the month.

Loughton bells are back in service after ringing was stopped whilst the church had a new floor. A new floor has been installed below the bells which makes working on them a safer proposition. The re-timed Saturday practices are well attended and it has been encouraging to see new faces.

But I guess the most significant aspect of progress is in the development of the Big Ring Pull event of which more detailed information is elsewhere. Our next 12 months may well contain the biggest opportunity North Bucks has ever had to put ringing on the map with the general public of Milton Keynes. If you aren't involved yet please get involved. Ideally we would have someone from each tower in the Deanery associated with one aspect or another of the development and delivery of the project.

Thanks for your support in the year and lets look forward to a really exciting next 12 month to build on our progress.

Alan Marchbank

RDL Newport Deanery

Progress in the Newport Deanery has, this year, been much as before while we get to grips with the branch Big Ring Pull activity. However, much good work has been done by individuals working between towers and people going out of their way to help and learn. I have visited most of the active towers in the deanery over the past few months either for practice or Sunday and am impressed with the general level of willingness to progress. The few quiet towers still get support from the stronger bands though and I would like to develop this more in the future. Although it is fairly easy to keep track of what our local church is doing, ringers in the Deanery continue to gain great support from the help of Rev. Beverley Hollins who keeps us in touch with wider issues both in the Deanery and beyond.

While the Big Ring Pull is a branch activity which will keep us all busy, I hope to be able to organise some quarter peals to help some with their progress and to keep interest levels up.

Doug Hird

