



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

In Touch

May 2007

Summer Ringing & Social

Saturday 2nd June 2007

4.30 to 6.00 pm Ringing at St Mary's Church, Clifton Reynes

6.30 pm Bar-B-Que at The Robin Hood at £5.50 per head

plus Social / Games - try your hand at Indoor Skittles and Darts!

Names for bar-b-que by Saturday 26th May to Alan Marchbank
Tel: 01908 611434 EMail: alan.marchbank@btinternet.com



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Secretarial Snippets

Grants

Applications for grants for assistance from individuals for training or from towers for work or for the provision of things that keep bells ringing shall be submitted to the Secretary. Details of applications received will be sent out to towers as soon as possible after receipt. All applications received and sent out at least one month before a meeting will be considered at the next general meeting of the Branch.

Grants will be given towards training courses as follows: 50% of the cost up to a maximum of £50. Applications for grants should be made in writing to the Secretary. It would help us if you apply before you attend the course.

Videos

Bellhandling—a tutor's companion (produced by the Central Council)

Look to and Learn (produced by the Kent County Association)

Teaching Demonstration (recording of Steve Coleman teaching)

These videos may be borrowed from the Secretary free of charge. However, a deposit of £5 will be required against safe return of the video.

Email Distribution of Notices etc

If there are any tower correspondents who haven't given their email address to the Secretary and would like to receive electronic notices, then please send an email to the Secretary (secretary@northbucks.org.uk). If you are not sure if she has your email address, then send details to her anyway.

Business Meetings & Election of New Members

Please note that any Branch practice may be convened as a business meeting if deemed necessary by the officers present, subject to there being sufficient members present. These will mainly be for the election of new members. The Secretary will have membership nomination forms at Branch practices as well as meetings. Under these arrangements, new members may be elected at any Branch practice or meeting.

Our Grateful Thanks...

....to all those who contributed towards this issue of *In Touch*.

The deadline for the next *In Touch* is:
Tuesday 7th August 2007

Sheila Watts & Sheila Ware, Editors

Chairman's Jottings

Last year when Alan indicated that he would be standing down as Chairman this year, he suggested that the Branch needed new blood in the Officers. Well it's not exactly new blood, but as I have never been Chairman before, I hope I can bring a new view to the post.

Communication with members is clearly an important issue, and is core to the Communications initiatives being put forward by the Guild. Last year we put in place the 'Connect' Initiative in an attempt to improve communication within the Branch. I would like to see this extended to include the Officers visiting towers and taking the Branch out to the towers rather than relying on members coming to the Branch. This is in no way trying to impose the Branch on you but an attempt to make you aware of where the Branch might be able to help you with the ringing in your towers. This could be as little as finding an extra ringer to ring for a wedding or special Service, or arranging some special training as part of your regular practice. An updated list of the towers for which each Officer is responsible is included in this issue.

If you feel there is any other way in which the Branch can help the ringing in your tower then please contact any Officer. If they are unable to help you themselves, I'm sure they 'know a man who can'.

Richard Stanworth
Branch Chairman

From the Ringing Master

Since taking office, we have only had one Branch practice which was at Stowe, and we rang copious quantities of the special method and everything else up to London. The Master of the Guild was present and was obviously pleased with the way things were done.

I am pleased to say that we have rang many quarters with numerous firsts in method. Congratulations to all those who have taken part and particular thanks to those from over the borders in South Northants, etc. who help us out regularly. It is a pleasure to see Dave Phillipson and Mike Lowndes back with us taking part in the quarters.

On 7 May we have got two very strong teams to take part in the 8 Bell Competition at Kidlington (a total of only 9 teams) - hopefully we will be able to get the results to *In Touch* just before it goes to press.

Looking ahead to the Branch 6 Bell Competition at Emberton on Friday 15 June. I invite all towers in the Branch who have got a band to do their best to provide a team. You will see the rules elsewhere in this issue. I am pleased to announce that our old friend Alan Shephard has agreed to act as Judge. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Barry Eglesfield, Ringing Master

**Denby Philip Murduck
1947—2007**



We regret to report the death of Denby Murduck of Emberton on Saturday 28 April after a short illness.

His funeral was held on Friday 4th May at All Saints. Ringing took a very positive part in the Service, and friends from the Emberton, Hanslope and Newport Pagnell bands took part.

Denby has been a member of Emberton Bellringers and a friend of us all for many years, and it was only after he died that we realised we knew little of his ringing history, as he was not one to talk about himself! But we do know he rang widely in the UK over many years, was a College Youth, Tower Captain at Deeping St James, a member of the Bristol Society, and the North Bucks Branch!

A Quarter has been rung at Buckingham in thanksgiving for his life, with another scheduled for Emberton on 13th May. He will be greatly missed by all.

Grandsire Doubles School - 17 February 2007

I started learning ringing at All Saints, Loughton a few years ago, and have steadily progressed to ringing touches of Bob Doubles and Bob Minor inside. I enrolled for the Grandsire Doubles School late last year, and it was with some trepidation that I turned up at Woughton-on-the-Green on 17 February for the training day.

The course ran all afternoon from 1:30 to 5:30, with a half-hour break in the middle. There were three students and at least eight experienced ringers.

After a short theory lesson it was straight into ringing, then after we had all had a go there was more theory, and more ringing ... and it wasn't too long before I felt comfortable ringing a plain course inside. Of course, this meant it was time to move on to something trickier - bobs and singles. This was harder, and although I made good progress it's something which I think I need more practice of on Monday nights.

For me the training day was just the right mix of theory and practice, and I came away from it knowing that I could ring a plain course, and have a good attempt at bobs and singles.

It was an excellent training session, and would like to thank all those involved in setting up and running the school, including Chrissy Cable, Richard Stanworth, and all the experienced ringers who gave up their time on Saturday afternoon to help a few learners.

The next day I rang Grandsire Doubles inside for the Church Service at All Saints with no mistakes (although I wasn't affected by any bobs or singles), so something must have stuck.

All in all a very enjoyable day, and one that has really helped me to take my next step forward in bell ringing.

Gary Reading

Golden Wedding

On Friday 16 March some of the Hanslope bellringers rang a very special quarter peal to celebrate the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Shirley and Alan Cozens. They were married at Hanslope Church on that date in 1957. Shirley [nee Simons] grew up in Hanslope and Alan came from Roade, Northamptonshire, where they now live. Alan is still a member of Hanslope tower and rings with us here every week. After the quarter peal the ringers all adjourned to The Globe in Long Street, Hanslope for a celebratory drink [or two] and where they were joined by Shirley and some of the other Hanslope ringers and friends.

Friends from the South Northamptonshire Society also rang two peals for Shirley and Alan's Golden Anniversary, one at Cosgrove on Friday 16 March and another at Wicken on Saturday 17 March.

St James the Great, Hanslope, Bucks
Friday 16 March 2007

1250 Superlative Surprise Major

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

St Peter & St Paul, Cosgrove, Northants

Friday 16 March 2007 2hr 49min [10]

5040 Surprise Minor

7M [London, Primrose, Bourne, York, Ipswich,
Norwich, Cambridge]

- 1 Stanley M Ruddlesden
- 2 Julie A Haseldine
- 3 Kay Bartholomew
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Christopher C Stokes
- 6 Andrew Haseldine (C)

Rung to celebrate the Golden Wedding
Anniversary of Shirley and Alan Cozens

St John Evangelist, Wicken, Northants

Saturday 17 March 2007 3hr 7min [15]

5120 Glasgow Surprise Major

- 1 Raymond A Vickers
- 2 Julie A Haseldine
- 3 Marika Pascovitch
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Richard Haseldine
- 6 Christopher C Stokes
- 7 Andrew Haseldine (C)
- 8 James Haseldine

With the best wishes of all of the band to
Shirley and Alan Cozens on the occasion of
their Golden Wedding Anniversary



Branch Business Meeting

A short meeting will be held during the Branch Practice at North Crawley on Friday 18th May 2007 to transact the following business. All members are invited to attend.

Grant Application

Election of New Members as previously given to Chairman on nomination forms

Dean Meakins from Bradwell Tower has a place on the Radley One-Day Course, and has applied for a grant from the Branch. The normal grant towards a training course is 50% of the cost up to a maximum of £50. A 50% grant would be £10. This short meeting will discuss the application and, if agreed, approve the grant.

DOVE'S GUIDE FOR CHURCH BELL RINGERS

By Peter G Davies—ODG Public Relations Officer



Most ringers, especially those who venture out to ring at towers other than their own, will be familiar with Dove's Guide for Church Bell Ringers. It's the definitive source of information about rings of bells not only in Britain (which is where it started) but also around the world. Now in its ninth printed edition, it was first published in 1950.

But ringers may be less familiar with the Internet version which can be found on the Central Council web site at www.cccbr.org.uk/dove/home.php. The site provides full-featured searching, links to mapping facilities to show the exact location of towers, satellite navigation data and details of changes to entries as they occur. Its scope has recently been extended by the addition of data for individual bells as a step towards a prototype National Bell Register (the 'proto-NBR').

At present, Dove lists 7,087 towers and the proto-NBR has details on 34,047 bells in 5,167 towers. The site relies on contributors to provide the information which the site contains and you can log on to it and upload your tower details if they aren't already there - but beware, there are strict rules on the derivation and authenticity of data supplied to maintain a high level of accuracy.

Until very recently, the Oxford Diocesan Guild had not been playing its full part in providing the NBR with data and in November 2006 only about 20% of towers had bell data beyond the basic tenor weight which appeared in Dove. That situation has now changed dramatically and over the Christmas period the percentage was raised to 100%. The ODG can now hold its head up high as one of the major

contributors to the NBR - and so it should as the largest Association in the Exercise!

However, the task is far from complete and although the 100% has been achieved it only means that 100% of the towers have had some additional details uploaded; there are still lots of gaps. The NBR records weight, diameter, note, casting date, founder and status of canons - six parameters - for each bell.

To learn more about this, why not visit the On-line Dove site and see for yourself what data are on it for your tower and, more importantly, see whether you can fill in any of the gaps. The URL of the site is given above, or you can just Google for Doves Guide. The home page has a search window into which you can enter your tower name. When the tower name appears (beware there may be more than one with the name you enter, e.g. Abingdon will have two entries, click on the number in the column underneath the # sign and the details of the bells in the selected tower will appear.

If you are bold enough to provide details on line you can click on "Edit Details" and the editing page will appear. However, before you do this make sure you read the explanatory text which will guide you through the process and which will warn you of the pitfalls of providing insufficiently verified data. If you don't want to risk the wrath of the Dovemaster for messing up the editing, send your gap-filling data or errors to the Newsletter editors and they will do it for you.

The Olney Eight Ring Out

by Dave Phillipson

Towards the end of the practice night on Monday 30th April 2007 we rang rounds on the eight at Olney. I can hear some of you saying so what! Well for those of you that have rung the eight at Olney you will not be saying 'so what' and secondly there is the significant fact that seven of the eight ringers had learnt to ring within the last six months.

On the previous Sunday morning we rang before and after the service as it was a special service for the John Newton Bicentenary. We managed to ring the eight in rounds after the service with the very welcome assistance of a brace of 'Marchbanks'. This gave a couple of our learners their first chance to ring on the eight. Most of this ringing was witnessed, in the ringing chamber, by a number of the visiting choir from Little Rock in Arkansas who sang at the morning service as well as giving a recital in the Church the night before. Needless to say that after the ringing had finished, and the eight bells were down, we spent the next hour shepherding batches of American visitors up to see the clock and the bells.

To come back to the Monday practice. We rang all eight up at the start (for 'we' read 'they'!) and rang both the front and the back six in rounds at various points during the evening. This was also the first time that this local band had rung the back six in rounds. During the course of the last two practice nights all seven of the learners had also had chance to ring the tenor on its own, and some the seventh. At about 8.40 I thought we should go for it. We had three sessions in rounds on eight with the first two spent ensuring that we could pull off in reasonable proximity to each other. The third session was anything but perfect but there again perfectly acceptable. What an achievement for seven ringers who had been ringing for less than six months!! I congratulate you all on both what you have achieved in ringing terms in a very short space of time and for the only slightly less significant achievement of putting up with my nagging.

For the sake of posterity and in order to extract maximum embarrassment the ringers stood as follows:

Treble	Mat Sheaf
2 nd	Liz Sheaf
3 rd	Coral Bex
4 th	Ruth Plackett
5 th	Helen Dilley
6 th	Graham Dilley
7 th	Philip Davies (Rev.)
Tenor	Dave Phillipson



In reaching this milestone we were all hoping that Charles Knight was listening so that he could share in the success of what he had started back in October of last year. Charles is recovering from a hip replacement operation at present and we all wish him well; come back soon please. We should also acknowledge the contribution and enthusiasm of the local 'clerical' learner, Philip Davies, Vicar of Olney (7th to the rounds and also rang the tenor up!).

I am sure that everyone reading this will appreciate the difficulties of continuing this rate of progress to the next stages, i.e. even two experienced ringers to seven learners is not an ideal ratio. We would welcome any assistance on Monday nights between 7.30 and 9.00 pm and also between 9.20 and 10.00 am on Sundays.

If you are able to support this keen and enthusiastic band or you would just like to experience ringing on our unique ring of eight and you wish to confirm that we are indeed ringing before your arrival, then please give me a call on 01234 711291 or alternatively you can e-mail me on fabianstedman@btinternet.com

Six-Bell Striking Competition

ODG North Bucks Branch

This will be held on Friday 15th June at Emberton. Please come along and take part, it is as much a social ringing event as a serious competition. Although the winners have traditionally gone on to represent the Branch in the Guild competition, there is no compulsion to do so. Just let us know and we will find another band to represent the Branch.

Please make your entries to the Ringing Master by **Thursday 14th June**, either by telephone or email. If you leave it until the day of the competition your entry may not be accepted.

RULES

1. Entries must be made to the Ringing Master by the closing date notified in *In Touch*. Entries on the day may be accepted if time allows.
2. Ringers should ring regularly at the tower, within the Branch, that they represent, but may borrow up to two ringers from another tower to make up a team.
3. A tower may enter more than one team but each team may not have more than two ringers from any other team.
4. Each team will be allowed a period of practice before the test piece. However they must have started the test piece within ten minutes of the start of their practice.
5. The start of the test piece will be notified to the judges by ringing two whole pulls on the treble.
6. The test piece will consist of 120 changes in one or more methods, or 120 rows of call changes. If method is rung then plain courses are acceptable. If call changes are rung, then only 120 rows, beginning with the first called change will be marked. Opening and closing rounds will not be marked.
7. Where possible, a judge from outside the Branch will be appointed for the competition. He or she will be asked to offer constructive comment and advice on the ringing by each band, as well as presenting their markings. The judge's decision is final.
8. A Branch Officer or other suitable person will act as tower steward and timekeeper. The steward may be asked to indicate when the test piece has been completed if call changes are rung.

Over the Border! Towcester Branch Calendar 2007

Date	Event
19 May	Practice, Cosgrove, 19:30 - 21:00
9 June	<i>Guild AGM, Guilsborough Branch</i>
7 July	Striking Contest with N. Bucks, Wicken, 18:00 - 20:00
4 August	Practice, Gayton, 19:30 - 21:00
25 August	1/4 peal week - start
1 September	1/4 peal week - end
15 September	<i>Guild Summer Festival & 8-bell Contest, Peterborough Branch</i>
29 September	Autumn Mtg & 6-bell Contest, TBA
20 October	Quiz & Fish 'n' Chip Supper, Stoke Bruerne CC, 19:00 - 22:00
3 November	Joint Practice with North Bucks, Towcester, 19:30 - 21:00
1 December	Annual Dinner, The Walnut Tree, Blisworth, 7:00 for 7:30
26 January	AGM, Blakesley, 15:00 - 20:00
23 February	Practice, Blisworth, 19:30 - 21:00

Quarters in hand

Buckingham, 6 Mallard Drive
Thursday 8 February 2007
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1-2 Ann Fletcher
3-4 Andrew Spencer (C)
5-6 Jonathan Spencer
First quarter in hand 5-6

Buckingham, 6 Mallard Drive
Thursday 15 February 2007
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1-2 Ann Fletcher
3-4 Andrew Spencer (C)
5-6 Jonathan Spencer

Buckingham, 6 Mallard Drive
Thursday 22 February 2007
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1-2 Ann Fletcher
3-4 Andrew Spencer (C)
5-6 Jonathan Spencer
Birthday compliment to 3-4

Quarters

Whaddon, St Mary
Sunday 18 February 2007
1260 Stedman Doubles
1 Alex Marchbank
2 Terry Page
3 James Maltby
4 Alan J Marchbank
5 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
6 Hugh Butler
First on the bells since re-hanging by Whites of Appleton
Get well compliment to Fred Greene
Belated birthday compliment to Edie Robinson

Olney, Ss Peter & Paul
Sunday 25 February 2007
1280 Spliced Surprise Major
(8 methods: London, Bristol, Rutland, Superlative, Cambridge, Yorkshire, Pudsey, Lincolnshire)
1 Alex Marchbank
2 David Phillipson
3 Richard W Yates
4 Jonathan Pawley
5 B Douglas Hird

6 Alan J Marchbank
7 Alan Shephard
8 Barry R Eglesfield (C)

Maids Moreton, St Edmund
Sunday 4 March 2007
1260 Stedman, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles
1 Ray Vickers
2 Shirley Webb
3 Margaret Vince
4 Laurence Gibson
5 Andrew Spencer (C)
6 Robert George
A Golden Wedding compliment to Margaret and Reg Doble

Linslade, St Barnabus
Thursday 8 March 2007
1280 Pudsey Surprise Major
1 Simon Head
2 Alex Marchbank
3 Anne Pawley
4 Ruth Stokes
5 Alan J Marchbank
6 Christopher Stokes
7 Alan Shephard
8 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
First blows in the method—2
First quarter in the method—3

Milton Keynes Village, All Saints
Sunday 18 March 2007
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1 John Marchbank
2 Barry R Eglesfield
3 James Maltby
4 B Douglas Hird
5 Simon Head
6 Alan J Marchbank (C)
On Mothering Sunday, for all Mothers
First of Minor—1

Husborne Crawley, St James
Friday 23 March 2007
1260 Stedman Triples
1 Alan Shephard
2 Peter Tribble
3 Alan J Marchbank
4 Christine Cable
5 David Joyce
6 Richard Horne
7 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
8 Charles J Knight

Padbury, St Mary the Virgin
Sunday 25 March 2007
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1 Victoria Stanworth
2 Helen Stanworth
3 Catherine Stanworth
4 Michael Tinsley
5 John Stanworth
6 Richard Stanworth (C)
Rung as a Farewell to Rev Tom Gibbons

More Quarters

Stony Stratford, St Giles

Saturday 31 March 2007

1280 Spliced Surprise Major

(8 methods: Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Pudsey, Superlative, London, Bristol)

- 1 Alan J Marchbank
 - 2 James Maltby
 - 3 Peter Tribble
 - 4 Ruth Stokes
 - 5 B Douglas Hird
 - 6 Alan Shephard
 - 7 Christopher Stokes
 - 8 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
- First 8-Spliced—2 and 3

Leighton Buzzard, All Saints

Sunday 1 April 2007

1440 London (No 3) Surprise Royal

- 1 Alex Marchbank
- 2 Richard W Yates
- 3 Chris Bulleid
- 4 Jonathan Pawley
- 5 Ed Houghton
- 6 Alan J Marchbank
- 7 David Phillipson
- 8 Richard Horne
- 9 Alan Shephard
- 10 Barry R Eglesfield (C)

Leighton Buzzard, All Saints

Sunday 8 April 2007

1280 Bristol Surprise Major

- 1 Alan J Marchbank
- 2 Catherine Stanworth
- 3 Robert Tregellus
- 4 Alex Marchbank
- 5 James Maltby
- 6 Peter Tribble
- 7 Michael Tinsley
- 8 Barry R Eglesfield (C)

For the great and glorious festival of Easter

Regina coeli laetare. Alleluia!

First of Bristol—2, 4 & 7

Rung on the front 8 having run out of time to ring the big ones!

Stowe, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Saturday 14 April 2007

1260 St Clements & Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Ann Fletcher
- 2 Margaret Vince
- 3 Shirley Webb
- 4 John Collett
- 5 Jonathan Spencer
- 6 Andrew Spencer (C)

To celebrate the wedding of Robin Eldon Manisty and Amanda Croft

Stony Stratford, St Giles

Monday 16 April 2007

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Michael Woodcock
- 2 Terry Page
- 3 Malcolm Hooton
- 4 Mike Nimmo
- 5 David Moore
- 6 Bob Winstanley
- 7 G John Collett (C)
- 8 John Mercer

Rung to celebrate the 100 years of Scouting

First triples—1

First triples inside—5

Wicken, St John

Sunday 22 April 2007

1260 Stedman Triples

- 1 Alan Shephard
- 2 Alex Marchbank
- 3 B Douglas Hird
- 4 Michael Lowndes
- 5 James Maltby
- 6 Simon Head
- 7 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
- 8 Alan J Marchbank

In celebration of the life of Margaret Ann Bethel

Leighton Buzzard, All Saints

Sunday 29 April 2007

1440 London No 3 Surprise Royal

- 1 Marika Pascovitch
 - 2 Catherine Stanworth
 - 3 Susan Marshall
 - 4 Jonathan Pawley
 - 5 James Haseldine
 - 6 Phil Dunn
 - 7 Michael Tinsley
 - 8 Graham Nabb
 - 9 Graham Clifton
 - 10 Barry Eglesfield (C)
- First of London Royal—2 & 7

Buckingham, Ss Peter & Paul

Friday 4 May 2007

1260 Stedman Triples (47m)

- 1 Ann Fletcher
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Jonathan Spencer
- 4 Simon Head
- 5 Chris Stokes
- 6 Andrew Spencer
- 7 Barry R Eglesfield (C)
- 8 B Douglas Hird

In celebration of the life of Denby Murduck

First Stedman Triples—3

CONNECT Briefing Initiative

Aims

Increase the level of contact with Branch members.

Develop a feeling of involvement with the Branch.

Improve the feeling of belonging to the Branch.

Encourage attendance at meetings and the promotion of membership of the Branch.

Methodology

Each tower with paid up members has been included in the table, which shows each tower's and details of the Tower Contact.

The table allocates Branch Officers to be a point of contact with towers for regular communications.

At least twice per year each Branch Officer should visit the practice nights of their allocated towers, or some other occasion when the ringers at that tower meet and/or ring together.

Hold discussions with the ringers covering (but not limited to) the following topics -

- Confirm the receipt and display of *In Touch* in the tower
- Explain how additional copies of *In Touch* can be downloaded
- Feedback from the content of *In Touch* - what did they like / not like. Have they got something to contribute to the next one?
- Are there matters arising from the minutes of the meeting published in *In Touch* that they would like brought to the next meeting?
- Will they be attending the next meeting - if not do they want apologies sent?
- Do they have new members for election? Do they need help or advice from the Branch, e.g. Tower and bells related advice, education / training or grants for work or training courses, assistance with ringing for forthcoming special services etc.

Any major issues should be circulated to all Branch Officers as soon as possible so that we are all aware of them. Minor issues can wait until the next meeting. If any Branch Officer is unable to attend a meeting then any issues from their towers should be forwarded to the Secretary.

In the time between the distribution of *In Touch* and the AGM or Half-yearly meeting,

each Branch Officer will make contact with their allocated towers, either in person or by telephone (but not by e-mail) for a brief conversation covering (but not limited to) the topics above.

Expected Benefits

As the briefings increase the relationship between the towers and the Branch Officers, we should expect to understand what the membership wants from the Branch and how we can adapt our management of it to be more relevant to a greater proportion of the membership.

Measures of Success

- Increased attendance at meetings
- Increased demand for help and advice into the towers
- Changes to the structure of meetings and practices
- Greater interest in the role of Branch Officers and an increased willingness to stand for election.

Tower	Branch Officer Contact
Bradwell	Chrissie Cable
Buckingham	Barry Eglesfield
Clifton Reynes	Sheila Watts
Emberton	Sheila Watts
Fenny Stratford	Helen Stanworth
Great Brickhill	Alan Marchbank
Great Linford	Alan Marchbank
Hanslope	Chrissie Cable
Lavendon	Doug Hird
Leckhampstead	Helen Stanworth
Lillingstone Lovell	Richard Stanworth
Loughton	Brian Newman
Maids Moreton	Barry Eglesfield
Milton Keynes Village	Chrissie Cable
Newport Pagnell	Doug Hird
Old Wolverton	Alan Marchbank
Olney	Doug Hird
Shalstone	Richard Stanworth
Shenley	Brian Newman
Simpson	Brian Newman
Stoke Goldington	Sheila Watts
Stony Stratford	Barry Eglesfield
Stowe	Richard Stanworth
Tingewick	Richard Stanworth
Tyringham	Doug Hird
Whaddon	Chrissie Cable
Woughton on the Green	Brian Newman

Catherine Stacy from Newport Pagnell found this story in a 1949 issue of *Country Life* from her late Grandad, and thought we might like to share it in *In Touch*

A RABBIT IN THE BELFRY

By GEOFFREY HOLLAND

STRICTLY speaking, I should say under, not in, the belfry, for I have only once ventured into the belfry itself, the ascent to which is by a ladder borrowed from a neighbouring garden and set steeply up from the gallery at the west end of our little church. Through a trap-door one emerges into a world of beams, a dim light filtering through the louvres, and overhead the steeple. The six bells, each with its wooden spoked wheel with rope attached, are hung so close that if a pull were to be given below you could hardly stand clear of the swinging bell. That the beams up here are stout is not surprising if you consider the force behind half a ton of metal swinging almost a complete circle, and this six-fold. Our heaviest bell, the tenor, is light compared with the giants in great churches, but is imposing enough in the confined space of the belfry.

In this church the ringers stand in two rows of three just inside the west door, an unusual and inconvenient arrangement, both for the important business of watching the ropes of one's fellow ringers and because the congregation must walk in between the ringers. Nothing will induce them to use the south door. Bells are more commonly hung so that the ringers stand in a circle. Moreover our ropes pass up through the gallery; beginners have been carried up and struck hard against the ceiling. You soon learn when to let go of your rope.

A church bell may be either chimed or rung. In chiming, the rope is simply pulled and the bell swings to and fro so that the clapper strikes its side. A little practice enables you to make the bell "speak" with only a few inches movement of the rope. Percy, our Captain of Bells, will sometimes become a one-man band, chiming treble with his right hand, No. 2 with one foot and No. 3 with his left hand. Although it sounds pleasant enough if absolutely regularly timed, chiming is a monotonous occupation, for no changes can be rung.

When you are to ring, however, the bell must first be "pulled up," that is to say it must be swung further and further until the mouth is nearly vertical. To prevent its swinging right over it is fitted with a wooden stay, which stands upright when the bell is in the down position and rests against a slide under the upturned bell, which is then "set." The slide is a piece of wood fixed on a pivot at one end, with a travel of about 18 inches at the other. This device is necessary because the bell may be set in one of two positions. In the first, known as sally, the

red, white and blue hand-grip which bears this name is at about the height of your head, while at the second, "rope's end," the rope has been carried round the wheel and its end is just comfortably at arm's length above the ringer. The beginner who pulls too hard or allows the stay of his bell to bump heavily against the slide may break the stay, in which case he will have the humiliation of seeing his rope vanish from his grip as the bell turns completely over. If he is not quick to leave go he may be carried aloft himself. His bell rings itself to a standstill.

Gradually you get the feel of the bell and can judge when to check the rope, just before the stay touches the slide. There is something very satisfying in the feel of a bell as it rises to rope's end. You learn, too, to stand close to your rope, to bring your hands down as if throwing it to your feet, and not to look up. Soon you are putting less effort into pulling, for comparatively little strength is needed. Pulling the bell up is more arduous, for it entails pulling the sally almost down to the ground until the bell is swinging high enough for you to take up the motion of ringing. Bells have an obstinate way of not coming up for the beginner, and of coming down again after a few strokes.

Then the great day comes when you ring round with the team: bell-ringing gains much from being essentially a team affair, and ringers are patient and tolerant folk, remembering perhaps their first nervous efforts. "Look to," says treble. "No. 1 going, No. 1 gone." You pull off just after the man before you (or it may be a girl, for they can make good ringers) and keep his movements in your eye. As you get used to your bell you develop a delicate control, enabling you to make slight adjustments of time. In ringing round, treble will be at the opposite end to tenor, pulling off at sally when the latter is at rope's end, so maintaining the even round of strokes. When you are promoted to change-ringing, the captain will call the changes, and you may come into the lead or drop back behind one of the other bells, to do which complete control of the bell is necessary. Later still comes "method," when no calling is done, but the order changes at each stroke in a definite cycle, such as grandsires and bobs, which may last for an hour or more. By now, though, you will hardly be a rabbit, and this one would be getting lost amid "hunting up" and "dodging in" and many other quaint phrases handed down through all the years that this old skill has rung out the bells over English fields.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting Downs Barn - 3rd March 2007

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Alan Marchbank, welcomed everyone to Downs Barn for the Annual Meeting. He reminded members that we had to be out by a quarter to seven, and this was why reports and accounts had been distributed at tea for members to read in advance to help speed up the meeting.

In Memoriam – The Chairman asked the meeting to stand and remember Jo Neville who had been a member in and around the Branch for some years.

Apologies for Absence

Received from Jon Chamberlain (Guild Master), Gillian & Charlie Macdonald, Anne Mercer, John Stanworth, John Collett, Ros Tyrell and James Maltby.

Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the Autumn Meeting held at Weston Underwood in September had been published in the November edition of *In Touch*. Brian Newman proposed and Hugh Butler seconded that they be signed as a true record.

Election of New Members

Nominations had been received proposing nine new members:

Tower	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Stowe	Philip Pitcher (Junior)	Laurence Gibson	Anne Mercer
Whaddon	Mrs Anne Margaret Stokes	Derek White	Philip Starr
Newport Pagnell	Mrs Loretta Ramsay	Doug Hird	Nicki King
	Mrs Carol Smith		
	Nick Ashton		
	Robin Hickmott		
	Scott Ayers (re-election)		
	Catherine Stacy (re-election)		
	Rachel Stacy (re-election)		

All were elected without dissent. The Chairman asked those present to stand and they were welcomed to the Guild and Branch.

Officers Reports

The Chairman proposed to consider each report as printed in the information pack (and included in the Appendices to the minutes) and ask each Officer to respond to any questions about their report.

Chairman – (Appendix A) - No Questions

Secretary – (Appendix B) – No Questions

Treasurer – (Appendix C) – *In Touch* is a separate agenda item – No other Questions

Ringing Master – (Appendix D) – No Questions

Training Officer – (Appendix E) - Chrissie had not yet arrived and the Chairman asked that any questions be held over until AOB when she hoped to be present.

Guild Representatives – (Appendix F) – No Questions. Guild CD to be discussed in Any Other Business.

Branch Archivist – (Appendix G) - No Questions

Sheila Watts proposed and Sheila Blenkhorn seconded that the accounts be adopted. This was approved by a show of hands. The Chairman thanked Sheila Watts for her work in preparing the accounts and getting them audited before the AGM

Financing of *In Touch*

Alan introduced this topic by noting that when the Officers were looking at money at their meeting it became apparent that if we continue to produce *In Touch* as now, then in 14 or 15 months time we will have a problem as the money will run out. Sheila Watts had highlighted this and the production costs in the latest *In Touch* with a view to considering the way forward at this meeting. Sheila gave a little of the background: Towers have given donations towards *In Touch* for a number of years, but these have fallen off recently. Production costs have continued to rise and this year there was a shortfall of £250. The production of *In Touch* clearly needs to be re-thought. Sheila had researched various options and obtained opinions from a large number of the members and, based on this, made the following proposal:

One hard-copy should be sent to every tower with members four times a year, to be paid for, along with the subscriptions, at £5 per tower

Towers without members will still receive a hard-copy. This will be a cost to the Branch but it is important to keep the line of communication open

Individual and unattached members may pay £5 per year for a hard-copy, or they can receive *In Touch* via email or downloaded from the website without cost

Anybody who wants an individual copy may download it from the website. A message will be sent out on the e-group announcing that it is available and giving the web address. There are some privacy issues with this but Doug Hird has this in hand

This proposal was seconded by Richard Stanworth.

David Joyce raised concerns that the basis of the proposal was to make *In Touch* a cost to the tower rather than looking at ways of reducing the cost of production. Sheila Ware suggested that the £5 was a donation rather than a charge. This however raised the concern about what happened if the tower decided not to pay £5. The Branch would then have no means of communication with that tower, and the Secretary would have to make other arrangements for sending out notices etc. *In Touch* was seen as one of the main benefits of membership and there was concern that this was to be charged for. The cost of producing and distributing one copy per tower was estimated at about £200 per year. The difference between this and the cost of *In Touch* in 2006 was comparable to the loss made in 2006.

David Joyce proposed an amendment that 'the Branch deliver one hard-copy free of charge, four times per year to each tower in the Branch'. This was seconded by Doug Hird.

Andrew Spencer questioned the value of delivering a copy to towers without members or without ringers. The feeling was that this was important for communicating the function of the Branch to these towers where there may be non-member ringers. It was also important to make other Church Officers aware of the Branch and know where to call on ringers when needed. Margaret Vince asked if ways of reducing printing costs had been investigated. Sheila Watts assured her that alternative printers/copiers had been looked at and that it was unlikely that there was anywhere cheaper than Staples.

The Chairman then put the amendment to the meeting and it was carried by a large majority. The amended proposal, in which only the first section had been amended was then voted on and carried by a large majority. The Chairman thanked all for their contributions to the discussion. David Joyce then proposed a thanks to Sheila Watts for her hard work on the production of *In Touch*. This was met with general approval.

Election of Officers

<u>Post</u>	<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Chairman	No Nominations		
Secretary	Helen Stanworth	Brian Newman	Roy Keeves
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Sheila Blenkhorn	Hugh Butler
Ringling Master	Barry Eglesfield	Doug Hird	Simon Head
	Richard Stanworth	Brian Newman	Roy Keeves
A secret ballot was held and Barry Eglesfield was elected by 12 votes to 10			
Asst Ringling Master	No Nominations		
Training Officer	Christine Cable	Hugh Butler	David Joyce
Guild Representatives	Alan Marchbank	David Joyce	Sheila Ware
	Brian Newman		
Branch Archivist	Doug Hird	Brian Newman	Barry Eglesfield
Newsletter Editors	Sheila Watts	Jill Joyce	Christine Cable
(Joint)	Sheila Ware		

All unopposed nominations were elected on a show of hands.

Sheila Watts asked if Richard Stanworth would be willing to stand as Chairman. Richard asked for time to consider this. The Chairman said that we could come back to this later.

Sheila Blenkhorn asked what happens at meetings if no Chairman is elected. Alan Marchbank replied that each meeting would need to elect a Chairman for that meeting, whether it be a Branch meeting or an Officers meeting. David Joyce asked that thanks to all the Officers for their work in the past year be recorded in the minutes.

Forthcoming Events

An up to date Calendar of events had been distributed as part of the information pack. Richard Stanworth added that a joint practice with the Towcester Branch is planned at Towcester but that the date is unconfirmed. They had suggested 3rd November but this clashes with the Steeple Aston Course. It is hoped to arrange it for 10th November but this is not yet confirmed.

Any Other Business

Richard Stanworth summarised his review of the changes in the Calendar agreed at the AGM in 2006, which had appeared in *In Touch*. Support for Branch events had improved. He asked if we should continue as we were or consider other changes. Brian Newman commented that the changes hadn't yet run a full year and he felt that we should stay as we were for another year and see how things go before we consider any further changes. This met with general agreement from the meeting.

Brian Newman gave a short history of the production of the Guild CD of tower information, how it started as a private enterprise by Kate Crennell and Bobbie May and was then adopted by the Guild. However the Guild did not take full control of the CD. There are some 380+ errors in the information, most of which could have been corrected by looking in 'Dove' as they are bell or tower related. There may also be other errors in the tourist type information on the CD. Also, the CD was supposed to raise money for the Bell Fund. It hasn't, and has cost the Guild a small amount of money.

Two options are to be put to the Spring General Committee meeting. These are:

The Guild takes full control of the CD, and appoint a person, or person to do this on behalf of the Guild, or

The Guild drops its association with the CD because there is too much work involved for the Guild to take it over and sort it out

Brian proposed that the Branch opinion is that the Guild drops its association with the CD and that the Guild web site is a more appropriate location for this information if it is to be maintained. This was seconded by Doug Hird. David Joyce supported the Guild dropping its association with the CD. He was concerned that it had ODG printed all over it but that the Guild had no control of the content. There was a general feeling that there are other routes to more up to date information and that a CD, like a printed report, becomes out of date very quickly. Chrissie Cable thanked everyone who had helped at the various ringing schools for their support which had helped to make them a success.

David Joyce announced that he had the bookstall in the corner for anyone interested.

Barry Eglesfield wished to congratulate members who had achieved firsts recently in various quarter peals.

The Chairman then proposed Richard Stanworth for the post of Chairman. This was seconded by Chrissie Cable. He was elected on a show of hands.

Vote of Thanks

Alan Marchbank then thanked those who had helped with the meeting – Barry Eglesfield, Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware, Helen and Richard Stanworth for bringing contributions to tea; Barry for playing the organ, Rev Paul Smith for leading the Service, and the Downs Barn Church authorities for making the Church available. He also thanked everyone for coming and for contributing to, and getting through the meeting in the limited time we had. He also announced that there was evening ringing at Great Linford for those that wished to, and wished everyone a safe journey home. The members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

Appendices

A Chairman's Report

As I reflect on 2006 I experience a range of feelings and emotions, from the highs of our achievements socially and within the towers, to the lows associated with the interpersonal difficulties that have arisen. It saddens me when I see us failing to work together to achieve the common purpose of our art – to ring bells well to call people to Church, and it hurts me when I see behaviour that is not aligned to the Christian values of the Church we are part. As I stand down, I encourage you all to take a moment to reflect on what we should be doing to make the Branch a more effective environment in which to achieve our objectives and more importantly how each of us need to behave towards one another. Each of the Officers has prepared reports that detail the performance and achievements of the Branch in 2006 and I do not intend to repeat all of that. However I would like to pick out a few high points for me.

The Christmas celebration at Bletchley. In every respect, a great success. We had a jolly good sing of favourite carols and enjoyed some humorous and thought provoking readings. It was excellent to see so many different faces at the event and enjoying the supper and social afterwards. Long may it continue.

The two training schools have been received with great thanks as they were well organised and well supported by good quality helpers. Thanks to everyone involved, I strongly believe that the Branch has a major part to play in training ringers.

The work that has been done in towers and the assistance given with work at Emberton, Maids Moreton, Whaddon and Stowe. This is important if easy going and safe installations are to be maintained. However in a world of declining interest in "getting one's hands dirty", we need to encourage more who are able to take an interest in "things upstairs", to learn what to do and when to do it.

D Ringing Master's Report

The Branch practices have again included a range of special methods, with varied success, although on several occasions the draw of the method has ensured a good turnout. Suggestions for special methods are always welcome. Please remember that we ring other things at the practices, besides the special method, so don't be put off if you don't ring it. The aim of these practices is to encourage all ringers in the Branch and give them a chance to progress with their ringing where they may not be the opportunity at their home towers. This may be the opportunity to ring a new method or just to ring with a more experienced band around them.

Following on from the comments made about the compositions used in Guild competitions in 2005, the methods and compositions for 2006 were more straightforward. In May we ventured to Longcot in the Vale of White Horse where we rang a course of Yorkshire Surprise Major. After a long wait for the judges to decide the result, we were placed fifth, missing out on fourth place by just 0.2%. A shorter journey in November took us to Banbury to ring Grandsire Caters in the ten-bell competition, finishing sixth out of six. As the only Branch in the Guild without a ten-bell tower we still did better than the other nine Branches who didn't even enter.

In the Branch competitions, the six-bell event was held at Old Wolverton under a new set of rules. Great Linford were declared the winners by the judge, Jonathan Pawley from Leighton Buzzard. The Beginners Competition was given a rest this year following the lack of interest in 2005.

The Inter Branch competition was again held at Wicken at the beginning of July. Revenge was sweet against the new Ringing Master of the Towcester Branch, with North Bucks winning both the George Holland Stedman Trophy and the Jack Green Trophy for the overall competition. The evening concluded as usual with suitable refreshment at the White Lion. The Joint practice with the Towcester Branch at Hanslope in November was also well attended and enjoyed by all.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who supported the ringing at Branch practices and meetings, and to all who took part in the various competitions.

E Training Officer's Report

I took over as training officer in June. Despite having a job which gives me very few Friday evenings off and a lot of weekend working recently, I have tried to get along to a few practices and find out what sort of things people want training or ringing schools on.

The first bit of organising that I got involved in was the Christmas Celebration! It was good to see so many of you there, and the Fish and Chips seemed to go down very well.

There have been two ringing schools since Christmas, one was a learning Grandsire Doubles school, which had three students and they all made great progress. The other was a calling Stedman Triples school. There were three students for this school also, one of which was me. The most important thing for me after a ringing school is talking to the students and to the helpers to find out what improvements could be made.

Overall I am quite happy with the schools that I have organised, but perhaps a little disappointed with the lack of interest at times from potential students. I should like to take this opportunity to thank both Richard Stanworth and Martin Whiteley for tutoring at these schools. I have been really pleased at the willingness shown by so many of the helpers, without whom we could not have run the schools. The next event planned is the Stedman Doubles conducting workshop, but the date may have to be changed and there is still some more room for a couple of participants.

F Guild Representatives' Report

For the AGM I can only offer this note from the most recent F&GP meeting. As with all committee meetings it went on too long! But having said that the group decided to take to the Spring General Committee Meeting two major items:

- to ask approval to set up a small working group to progress the communications initiative.
- to ask the general committee to either drop the 'Guild CD' which we do not have the control over or to take full ownership possibly appointing a new editor.

On the latter matter, the feeling of the F&GP is to drop it as there are too many basic errors and for anyone wishing to organise an outing then Dove on line is a far better source of information. On this last point it would be useful to know the view of the Branch, so I may represent this at the next meeting.

G Archivist's Report

The Branch Archives - The slow trawl through local newspapers has now reached 1887, a Jubilee year. So we now know a lot more about why Newport has nine bells and a Gillett tune machine. Fenny Stratford got a complete ring of six and, at Olney, augmentation to eight was suggested although it would be another 16 years before that turned into reality.

More recent reports of Towers & Bells inspections and content from *Odd Bob* etc., along with quarters and peals, are adding to the picture. Some of the photos of the more "out of the way" places are being replaced and a number of photos of bells and frames are being scanned and included. I would like to re-copy some of the photos in ringing rooms now that technology has made this easier.

The Branch Web Site - Development continues on both content and functionality. The archive database continues to expand as does the list of events. The front page has been updated during the year to include more on recent and forthcoming events and now includes a map showing the location of the next event. It is planned to include parking information on this.

North Bucks Branch—Calendar 2007

MAY	18	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Norfolk Surprise Minor Business Meeting as notified to towers	North Crawley
	19		<i>Annual General Meeting</i>	<i>Beaconsfield</i>
JUNE	2	4.30	Summer Ringing and Social (Skittles/Darts)	Clifton Reynes
	15	7.30	Six Bell Striking Competition	Emberton
JULY	7	6.00	Inter-Branch Competition	Wicken
AUGUST	7		<i>In Touch Deadline</i>	
	17*	7.30	Branch Practice	Newton Longville
SEPTEMBER	8*	3.30	Autumn Meeting	Buckingham
OCTOBER	6		<i>Six Bell Striking Competition</i>	<i>Chipping Norton Branch</i>
	19*	7.30	Branch Practice	Wavendon
NOVEMBER	3		<i>Steeple Aston Course</i>	<i>Steeple Aston</i>
	10*	7.30	Joint Practice with Towcester Branch	Towcester
	24		<i>Ten Bell Striking Competition</i>	<i>Aston Clinton</i>
	24		<i>Autumn General Committee Meeting</i>	<i>Marsworth</i>
DECEMBER	15*	4.30	Christmas Celebration	TBA

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 30 April 2007
Events in *italics* are Guild events, etc.

Stop Press!

Here are the results of the **8-Bell Striking Competition**, held Monday 7th May, expressed in the order in which the teams rang. We all felt that the Branch bands had performed in exemplary style and achieved a good result. Oxford City winning certainly shakes up the usual top 3 and gives us hope for the future! Thanks to all who took part and lets get our heads around the 10-Bell and Stedman Caters!

Barry Eglesfield



Position	Score	Peal Speed	Team
4	92.0%	3:06	Reading Branch
1	96.0%	3:08	Oxford City Branch
7	89.0%	3:12	East Berks & South Bucks Branch
8	88.6%	3:08	Aston Clinton
9	82.0%	3:07	South Oxon Branch
2	95.6%	3:03	St Mary & St Laurence, Reading
5	91.7%	2:59	North Bucks Branch B
3	94.4%	3:01	High Wycombe
6	90.0%	2:59	North Bucks Branch A

Congratulations!