



In Touch

*The Newsletter of the North Bucks Branch of
The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.*



**St Andrews, Great Linford
(The New Editor's Home Tower)**

Sorry, I didn't have another picture to use

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Editorial

Hello and welcome to my first issue of *In Touch*, it's been a bit of a rush to get this one together, partially due to my computer not liking the files I was given (I blame Bill Gates), and partly due to the incorrect copy date set in last issue, so unfortunately I've been unable to sort out the changes and new features I'd hoped to. Hopefully I'll have better luck next issue.

As this is my first issue, I would be interested to know what you want out of it, and what you think of the newsletter. With your help I can make it better. (Any comments to the editorial address above.)

Now a little bit about me :-

I'm 17 and doing A-Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Ousedale School, Newport Pagnell. My tower base is Great Linford, where Alan Marchbank has been teaching me to ring since mid-January this year. You may ask why I go to Gt. Linford not Newport Pagnell as I live in N.P., well it's because there were fewer people I know who ring at Gt. Linford (only one in fact) so there's less embarrassment when I get it wrong (which is fairly often!).

I was introduced to ringing by Lindsay Atkinson who is in the year above me at school, and who I met due to a common future career goal - to be a doctor.

Well I hope my editorship is not too disastrous, until next issue,

Bye



Copy Date for the Next Issue is

Monday 20th July 1998

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

held at Newport Pagnell on 7th March 1998

In Memoriam

Before the meeting the Chairman asked all present to stand and remember Gordon Bignell from Bradwell, who was at some time back in the late seventies branch organist.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Doug Hird, welcomed all those present to the meeting, commenting that many previous AGMs had been held at Newport when the vicar of Newport was chairman of the branch. He also remarked that Newport are a very fine ring that more members should come here to ring them and give them some exercise.

Apologies for Absence

Received from, John Wells (Guild Master), Barry Cowper (General Secretary), Paul and Peggy Faithfull, Chas and Liz Knight, Michael Nimmo, Sheila Blenkhorn and Roy Keeves.

Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the Quarterly meeting held at Shenley last December were published in the February edition of 'In Touch' and had been displayed on the notice boards before the meeting. These were agreed as a true record. Doug Hird stated that these minutes, along with all the other minutes that the branch has, have been put into the Branch Archive, so definitive minutes are now available if anyone is interested in looking at them.

Matters Arising

Guild Proposal to purchase a Mini-Ring. Discussion of this was deferred until later in the meeting.

Old Wolverton. Some further information was available. Several quotes had been made by Hayward Mills for different frame arrangements. All come to the same sort of cost for augmenting the bells, £25 - 26,000. English Heritage still have to state their preferred solution. They are still aiming at the timescale quoted at the previous meeting - take the bells out around Easter. It was pointed out that the existing bells will not be removed from the tower. They are to be re-hung but will not be available to ring once work has started.

The ODG Bell Fund has provisionally offered a grant in the order of £800, but this is a very loose offering as no formal grant will be made until a firm application has been made. This cannot be done until a Faculty has been granted. It is understood that a faculty is being applied for. This was as of a couple of weeks ago, so it is hoped that things will start to become clearer.

Brian Newman proposed that we follow the Guild's example and wait until the faculty has been granted before we make an offer. David Joyce asked if Old Wolverton had taken up our offer of help with labouring which could reduce the cost by a few thousand pounds. Doug Hird said that this was not mentioned at all when Mick Nimmo had talked to him.

Alan Marchbank said that the Towers and Belfries Committee had passed advice to Old Wolverton not to accept Hayward Mills' offer to start any of the work until a faculty had been granted and a formal order could be placed, as any work started before then could leave the Church in an awkward legal position.

It would appear that there are large sums which could be deleted from the cost by providing able bodied semi-skilled labour. The provision of such labour could potentially reduce the cost by as much as £7 - 8,000. It also appeared that the ringers were not heavily involved in the project and would simply stop ringing when told to, accept whatever was done in the tower, and return to ringing once the work was completed.

It appeared that the meeting could not take any decision at this time, and next business was proposed by David Joyce, seconded by Alan Marchbank. This was agreed.

Election of New Members

Nominations had been received proposing ten new members -

Tower	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Hanslope	Mrs Jane Canvin Ms Karen Purnell Mrs Kay Crane	Roy Keeves	Sheila Blenkhorn
Great Linford	Andrew Jeffries	Alan Marchbank	Brian Newman
Stowe	Mrs Susan Russell	William Yates	Richard Stanworth
Newport Pagnell	Jonathan Stacy Zak Woodward	Godfrey Foat	Gareth Grayson
Bradwell	Miss Christine Cable	David Joyce	Jill Joyce
Maids Moreton	Peter Tampsett	David Goodger	Helen Stanworth
Old Wolverton	Miss Jennifer Starkie	Mike Nimmo	Malcolm Hooton

All were elected without dissent. The Chairman welcomed them all to the Guild and asked those present to stand and make themselves known to the meeting.

Officers Reports

Chairman. I woke up this morning and looked at this and thought, I've got to say something. So I looked back over what has happened in the last year or so. I think the branch has continued reasonably well considering that pretty much at the beginning of the year David and Rosa Bardwell left, and left us without a treasurer and newsletter editor. Our thanks to every body who picked up the pieces to fill the gaps there.

We lost a number of elderly and past members, as we mentioned earlier. We are recruiting madly and we are picking up new members all over which I think is really quite promising. Things are starting to pick up regarding recruiting for the millennium, certainly up this end of the branch. We've got a couple of our more unusual towers showing some interest, Lathbury and Tyringham. Something is already being done with one of these and we hope to get going with the other tower in the near future, so things are starting to move forward.

We've had our meetings and they've gone reasonable well - no-one's hit anyone.

Secretary The pattern of monthly branch practices and quarterly meetings continued as in previous years. My use of forms for tower correspondents to reply on has resulted in a much improved response and has made the task of organising visits easier. Thanks to all of you who replied promptly.

In mid year we said goodbye to David and Rosa Bardwell, as Doug has said. Our thanks to Sheila Ware and Nikki King for taking over Treasurer and Newsletter editor for the rest of the year.

Sadly, we have to report the deaths of Ed Lack of Newport Pagnell, John Wetherall and Tom Peach of Lavendon, and Gordon Bignell, formerly of Bradwell.

Membership has shown a slight increase during the year, the number of towers with members has remained static although there has been one new tower, Leckhampstead, and one tower, Stowe, no longer having any members at the end of the year. This has just changed with the election of new members at this meeting.

We now appear in the Buckinghamshire Community Link database along with the other branches covering the county. This is the Council OnLine Information Service which is available at various libraries throughout the county. We also have an entry in the Milton Keynes Community Information Network which can be accessed at the libraries in the Milton Keynes Council area.

We are due to host the Guild AGM in May 1999. The Branch Officers are planning that the service, tea and meeting should be held at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone in Central Milton Keynes and have approached them accordingly. This is still to be confirmed. Ringing will be arranged around the branch before and after the meeting.

Treasurer As you've already heard, David Bardwell has left us. His accounts are meticulously kept. Copies of the accounts have been circulated and are mostly self explanatory.

We started the year with £658.20 and we ended the year with £728.20.

We collected 204 subscriptions of which 168 were senior, 36 juniors. We sent £60 to the Guild Bell Fund which was the proceed from the raffles at two of the quarterlies and we've collected £26.50 from this raffle.

The Olney grant of £100 was for the new seating - Do come and sit on it.

The publication of In Touch, which is always very important as towers appreciate having it, is always an expense. It cost £145.43 of which £112.50 was covered by donations.

Jeanette Ross has moved out of the branch so we asked David Phillipson to audit the accounts for which we are very grateful.

Alan Marchbank asked about the grant to Leckhampstead for new ropes. This was not paid until this year. It came to £309.97

David Joyce asked about how donations to towers from branch practices only came to £30 when we normally leave £5 at each tower. This had come about because not all the tower donations had been included in the accounts. The donation is normally made directly from the collection and not all of these had been recorded in the accounts - only the balance of the collection had been included.

Sheila Ware then formally proposed the acceptance of the accounts and this was seconded by Brian Newman. This was agreed without dissent.

Ringing Master Practices have continued throughout the year, visiting towers all round the branch. Despite an increase in the number of members though, attendance at the practices was actually down by about 20% in 1997 compared with the previous year. That either was real or you didn't bother to sign the book as I counted the numbers in the book. Following a request at last year's AGM the practice in September had no special method with the intention of attracting more of our less experienced members to practice our normal repertoire of rounds, call changes, plain hunt etc. This was well attended, but mainly by the usual people and we only had one member who was at the rounds stage. The benefit was rather limited.

With more new members joining at every meeting I hope this year to run a practice once a quarter which focuses on rounds and call changes in order to try and encourage more of the newer ringers to come along.

We entered bands in both the Guild 8-bell and 10-bell competitions and came fourth in each. Our under 18 ringers could only muster four this year but went along anyway and were able to take part in a band made up with others.

We also retained the Inter Branch Striking Competition trophy in our annual match against the Towcester Branch and won the George Holland Stedman Trophy for the first time, of many I hope.

We have not managed any branch training sessions in the last year. An attempt to help individual towers to progress hasn't yet come to fruition. However this would seem to be the best way we can help as a branch. If you would like help at your tower over the next year then please let me know and I will see what can be done. Please remember however that we all have commitments to our own towers and can only help you out when we have the time available, so don't expect an instant response to your request for help.

David Joyce thought we ought to congratulate the Ringing Master on organising bands to win the competition against the Towcester Branch as he knew how difficult it can be to organise the bands.

He also suggested that any tower that invites the branch officers to help needs to understand that the officers will run the practice rather than just come along as helpers and let the tower captain carry on doing it his way.

Branch Archivist Much of what I have done in the last year has been completing our sets of minutes of branch meetings. This has been a matter of going through old minute books, old In Touches and bits of paper and scraps here and there and I've managed to get together everything except about 16 meetings. I think these 16 meetings we've lost forever. There's a list on the notice board if anyone thinks that they may have some old rubbish sitting around at home which may be of interest. They are clustered around certain officers; that might be a clue.

I've spent a little bit of time just this week going through the more recent peals rung by branch members and the distressing thought, more distressing for him than distressing for me, is that the leading peal ringer for the branch is Bill Yates. For the last three years or so he's rung more peals than the rest of us all put together. I want whatever Bill's eating, or drinking!

The number of peals actually rung in the branch is not particularly high. Most of the peals rung by branch members are outside the branch. It's good that people are actually getting out and about and consorting with the enemy, so to speak. It would be nice to have some peals actually on our own patch. We'll be pressurising Gareth in particular for Newport bells for several peals.

Generally if there is anything else of interest in the archives that anyone would like to see researched, on any particular area, then let me know. If anyone thinks that they've got snippets of information that might be of more general interest then let me know. As regards the Data Protection Act, if anyone wants to know what I've got on them then ask. You can come round after the meeting and have a look if you like, since it's all sitting on my PC. It's all pretty easy to get out. If you want to know what you've been up to, then ask. I'll probably know.

Election of Officers

<u>Post</u>	<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Chairman	Doug Hird	Brian Newman	Richard Stanworth
Secretary	Helen Stanworth	Sheila Ware	Hugh Butler
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Tine Marchbank	Christina Jones
Ringling Master	Richard Stanworth	Hugh Butler	David Goodger
Assistant Master	Gareth Grayson	Hugh Butler	Brian Newman
Guild Representatives	Doug O'Neale & Alan Marchbank	Brian Newman	Richard Stanworth
Branch Archivist	Doug Hird	Brian Newman	Bill Yates
Newsletter Editor	Andrew Jeffries	Doug Hird	Brian Newman

All the above were elected unopposed.

No nominations were received for the post of Minutes Secretary and as Helen was not too worried by this, it was agreed to leave the post unfilled for the moment.

Forthcoming Events

A proposed calendar of events for 1998/99 was circulated. The only change from those details already advertised in In Touch was that, subject to confirmation, the competition against the Towcester Branch will now be at Olney, as Newton Longville was not considered a suitable venue. The proposal includes a branch practice about once a quarter when the focus will be on rounds and call changes.

The calendar does not include a joint meeting with the Luton District as was held last year. Following some discussion it was agreed that we try to hold a joint meeting with them, particularly as, by mutual consent, we will no longer be holding the joint meeting with the Bedford District.

The proposed calendar was agreed as a plan for the coming year.

Any Other Business

Guild Proposal to purchase a Mini-Ring. The proposal from the Guild had been sent round to all towers in the branch with members. Each branch has been requested to discuss whether to support the idea put forward by the Millennium Working Group.

Alan Marchbank provided the meeting with some background to the proposal. It had originally been a late item at the General Meeting in November with notice of the plan being sent round as a late addition to the agenda. The business plan put forward at that meeting had been rather shaky and with the project potentially costing every member of the Guild £2.50, it was felt a better understanding of the proposal and plans for its use and care were needed. Our Guild Representatives need to go to the General Meeting next Saturday with the feelings of the branch known to enable them to vote as the branch wishes.

The document circulated to the towers had no further material facts in it than the proposal presented at the previous General Meeting. It was still a poor business plan.

Various concerns and opinions were aired. Who was behind this plan ? - The Millennium committee, chaired by the Guild Master, including the Guild PRO, assistant treasurer and members of the General Committee.

There was still a lack of insurance details, particularly insurance needed at public events - public liability insurance could well be on a par with fairground attractions.

There was some discussion of the proposed events that the ring could go to and how it could be used. Did a peal rung for the Guild count as a Guild event ? Would this ring be used as a peal factory by those ringers with easy access to it ? Perhaps that would be one way of financing its running - use it for Guild or branch events at weekend and charge for peals rung during the week. There was concern that it would be a toy for members in southern branches.

Sheila Watts supported the proposal. She felt that it would be a tremendous advantage in generating interest from the general public.

David Joyce said that the Central Bucks Branch had voted in favour of the purchase of the ring but were not in favour of putting any branch funds into the project. He also felt that certain influential officers had already made up their minds

Bob Winstanley thought that the Guild was attacking the wrong problem - it's not recruitment that's the problem but keeping the ringers - when slow progress is being made at practices when they get five minutes a week if they are lucky. He felt that the money could be put to much better use by purchasing a number of simulators to place around the branches to help with training.

Doug Hird said that we had to decide if we want the Guild to buy it; Is it best thing to do ? If the Guild does go ahead and but the ring then the branch will need to assert itself in getting used to thing - indirectly our money will go towards buying this thing. we need to get a block booking in now to make sure it is used for its original purpose and not as feared.

In order to assist members to come to a decision Alan Marchbank read out parts of the proposal - the benefits - attracting public interest in ringing - the fact that it may be sold off after the Millennium.

Doug Hird thought that we had heard plenty of opinions regarding the proposal and that some decision needed to be taken. After a short discussion on the form of proposal, David Joyce proposed that the Guild be authorised to purchase the mini-ring and that it be written off immediately so that there was no ongoing liability for depreciation. This was seconded by Alan Marchbank. This motion was the put. The votes were 14 in favour and 17 against. The motion was therefore lost.

A second proposal, based on proposal b) in the Guild's document was then put. Alan Marchbank proposed that the Millennium Working Group be authorised to canvas donations from branches, Towers, Members, and appropriate sources of sponsorship. This was seconded by Brian Newman. This was essentially an enabling motion. It was put to the meeting and carried by large majority.

A third motion was then put to the meeting, proposed by Alan Marchbank that the ongoing running of the mini-ring be self financing. This would mean that any hiring costs could not be set until the actual costs of insurance etc. were known. This was agreed by a large majority.

Jill Joyce then questioned what was the definition of a Branch Event ? In order to clarify this situation for any booking of the mini-ring David Joyce proposed that the Branch Office be authorised to liaise with the organisers of any suitable local event and turn it into a Branch Event in order to be able to get a priority booking of the mini ring. This was seconded by Brian Newman and carried by a large majority.

Video. The secretary reminded members that she has a copy of the Central Council Bellhandling video which can be borrowed from her, subject to a £5 deposit

Bell Fund Stall. The secretary also has a catalogue of items for sale at the stall run by the EBSB Branch which members may wish look through.

Tyringham. Bellringers are required to ring for the Church Fete on 7th June at 22.30 p.m. and also later in the afternoon. Volunteers please.

Youth Training Day. Richard Stanworth asked that if anyone was going to this event then please contact him and we would try to liaise over transport and save on the number of vehicles going down to Bray.

Guild 8-Bell Competition. The ringing Master will be looking for a band to take part in this event. There is also the 10-bell competition later in the year.

100 Club. Doug Hird said that this was still trying to get going but the officers are looking for a person to run it who has no other commitments. Is anyone prepared to do this ? The officers will continue to look for a suitable person.

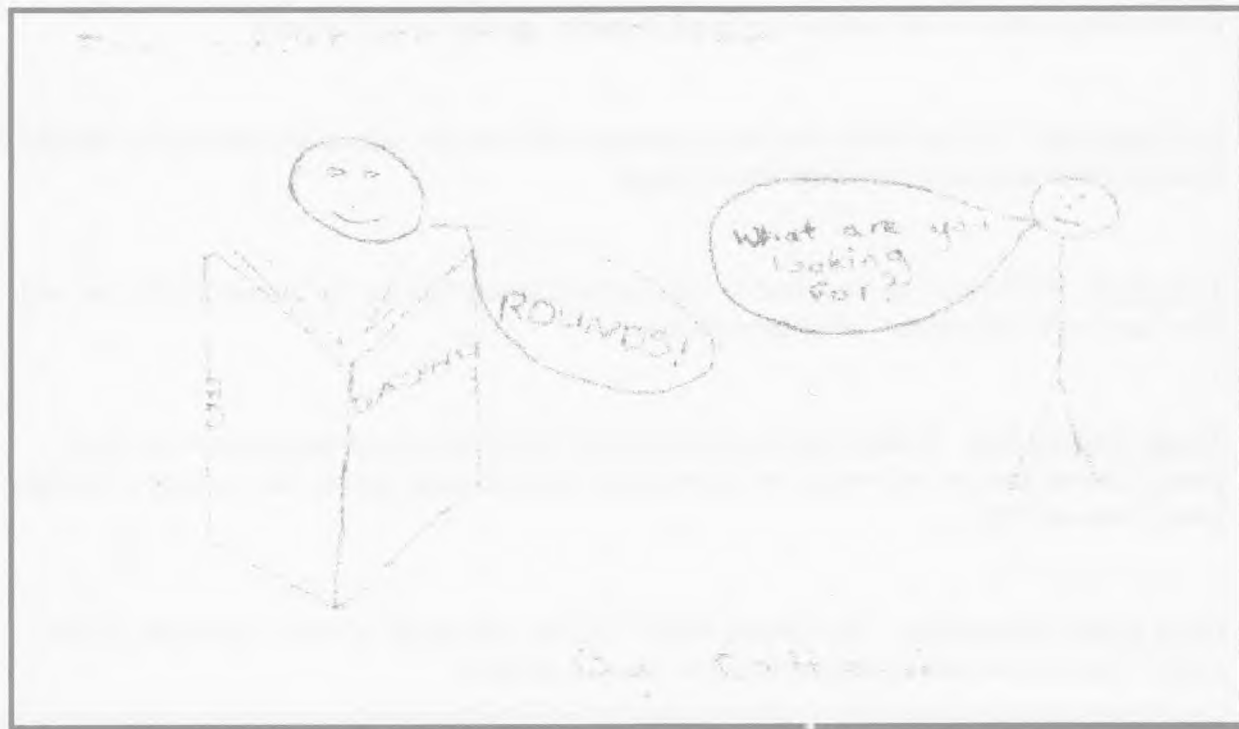
Thanks

David Joyce wished to thank all the officers for serving the branch and particularly to thank Sheila Ware and Nikki King for standing in to fill the vacancies during the year

The Chairman then thanked the Newport ringers for arranging the tea and bells, the Rev Lewis for taking the service and Nick for playing the organ. He also thanked the churchwarden at Tyringham for meeting us and letting us in there, and hopefully for locking up again afterwards. Members showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

This is a new cartoon by *Catherine Stacy* of Newport Pagnell Bellringers, hopefully to become a series about the sillier aspects of Ringing.

(Apologies for the bad scanning in of the picture, AJ)



From The Chairman

My Top 10 Ringing Faults

These are my Top 10 mainly because, without them ringing would be so much easier.

They fall into two categories: handling errors and teaching errors.

The view that handling errors will sort themselves out is rarely, in my view, justified. Handling faults usually prevent our learners from progressing and so they give up. All are avoidable and most can be corrected eventually. From the teacher's point of view, however, it will take longer to make a bad ringer into a good one than to teach a new one correctly. Perhaps this goes some way to explain why the exercise has tolerated such a high turnover for so long. Watch how few hardened peal ringers will volunteer help to a learner with handling faults and how many will help those who just look like they can do it.

"Teaching errors" covers what the teacher does to the band as a whole ranging from 'one to one' guidance to the general management of ringing. The effect is the same. Learners become confused by conflicting or inappropriate guidance and switch to an activity that is better run.

So, starting with the worst:

1 Holding the tail end in the fingers.

This single fault is the cause of virtually every symptom you are likely to see. Windmills who scoop the rope (and adjacent ones) towards themselves every handstroke, sallies that are hard to catch, backstrokes that never rise and plenty of others. Fault Number Nine is often a

symptom of the insecurity that this condition causes.

The cure? Hold the tail end with the thumb. This is the grip that holds monkeys in trees so it should work. When teaching, spend some time with the bell down with the learner just catching the sally and letting go while holding the tail end with the thumb. About ten minutes of this at the stage between ringing each stroke separately and together will work wonders. If the learner starts to look agricultural, do it again. Patience here will save days of hard work and tedium in the future.

2 Looking up at backstroke to watch the sallies of the other ropes.

This unusual condition is limited to towers where there is something to see when you look up. Ringers with this condition do not ring at Stoke Goldington. Any ringer who is looking up is not likely to see anything of any use as the sallies will be at different heights, moving quickly and spread around the ringing room. The ringer has to move their field of vision up and down as well as side to side.

The cure: Watch the arms and eyes of the other ringers. Both of these are at about the same height, conveniently at eye level. The arms give a good indication of where the sallies are and the eyes give a good indication of what the other ringers think they are going to do next. Most of the guidance a learner will get from other ringers will be visual (it is usually less disruptive than shouting). After a while, experienced ringers give up on those who can't see their efforts to help.

3 Calling bells down in call changes.

This is simply lazy and makes the ringing of call changes even harder than they normally are. The conductor, recognising that learners find it hard to find the bell to follow when hunting down, just tells that bell who to follow. Of the other bells, one has to change position but is told nothing, another needs to do nothing but is rudely awakened for no good reason.

Use call changes as an opportunity to learn how to hunt down. Give a learner time to work out who to follow next. Check that they have guessed correctly by asking and then congratulate them when they get it right. The best calling I have come across is at Hanslope where just the numbers of the two changing bells are called.

4 Not enough ringing

A lot of our practices lack direction and structure. OK so not everyone turns up at 7.30 so forward planning is out. Try to aim for something fairly advanced as early as possible so your experienced ringers don't get into the habit of expecting London at 8.50. Try to alternate between basic and more advanced ringing (or "a good thing and a bad thing" as one of the Newport band recently observed) so no one sits out for too long. Tell everyone what is coming up next, and after that, so they have time to think about it. If more ringers turn up, change the plan and let everyone know. This way you pack as much ringing into the evening as possible.

5 Describing a dodge as making a bell ring over and under another.

This is extremely unhelpful and is the usual cause of 3-4 dodges being made in 1-4 or ringers getting lost immediately after a dodge. A ringer cannot judge when to pull if they are waiting for another who is in turn

waiting for the first. Concentrate on counting places and striking over the bells below the dodge.

6 Not placing bands.

When a method is called for, most ringers will catch hold of a sensible rope. However a lot of time can be wasted by allowing ringers to ring inappropriate bells. Try to arrange bands such that the quality of the ringing will be the best possible while ensuring that someone in the band is challenged. It will take a few practices to form a judgement of who should be able to ring where but a few small adjustments will often work wonders. Top Tip: don't put all of your learners on the even bells in Plain Hunt. Within a few blows they will all be in 1-2 and may never escape.

7 Standing behind a learner and providing a commentary on what they have just done rather than helping out when they are unsure of what to do next.

Say as little as possible and give the learner the opportunity to work it out alone. Watch their eyes. You will be able to tell that they are about to go wrong when they look the wrong way. Just point them in the right direction and remind them where they are if it seems necessary.

8 Leading without attempting to do so with reference to the bell striking last in the previous row.

There is more to leading than just being first. In many bands not everyone gets the same opportunity to lead so some will simply guess. Again, make use of call-changes and make the leading bell look at the last bell.

9 Looking up at backstroke to watch your own sally coming down.

Again, a rare condition which is the result of lack of practice in the early stages of bell handling. Remember, while you are looking up you are missing vital information which is freely available to everyone else. Even our most accomplished mimics of bad handling don't attempt this.

10 Calling for Rounds when one member of the band goes wrong.

All conductors start off as bob callers and sorting out mistakes can be difficult. Don't be afraid to guess. If you catch the mistake as soon as it happens only two bells will be involved and it is surprising how often a guess will be right. After a while you get to recognise more of what is going on and can sort out with more confidence. The band will expect to be sorted out and won't take offence or switch off to outside communication when someone else calls something.

In any week I can be guaranteed a few examples of these. In the coming weeks, I will be (in true Eglesfield fashion) on the lookout. Any examples I come across will be sorted out. If, of course, there is nothing to sort out I will happily get the first round in.

Ringling and Computers

Considering the mathematical content of change ringing, it is hardly surprising that bell ringers were among the first to make use of modern computer technology to explore technicalities of both ringing and computers. A recent article in *The Ringing World* described how one of the first "homework" programs in this country was a ringing program with MUG connections. A short while ago we were all talking about

ringing simulators that make use of computer technology.

In recent years a number of bell ringing related computer programs have been advertised in the pages of *The Ringing World*. No longer do we have to beg for access to huge mainframe machines. All you young people won't remember that. Now we have a good range of interesting PC packages and a lot of standard Microsoft packages can be put to good use.

Our branch archives are now held in an ACCESS database that can hold tables of names, peals, bells and churches. It can also store pictures and sounds. Historical branch accounts are recorded in an EXCEL workbook. (Has anyone come across a PC program that will provide a tonal analysis of the sound of a bell?)

Software written specifically for ringers includes:

BYROC by David Beard. This is a set of programs which work together to generate compositions. Only in DOS at the moment but no doubt a windows version could be made.

MethodMaster by Chris Adams draws the blue line and generates statistics for methods and runs in Windows.

BlueLine is a DOS program of unknown origin, which was around a few years ago. With a bit of fiddling with printer settings it was possible to ring whole peals on a till roll using this. I printed out a number of 720s before we rang the double peal at Emberton.

TowerBase by Andrew Craddock contains a database and a simple "front end" which allows you to find information about just about every ringable tower. The version I have is DOS based but the information can be exported into an ACCESS database without difficulty.

The Central Council method collections are available on disc. However, the format is unnecessarily complicated. I have a

reasonably up to date copy of this information in ACCESS format.

A couple of years ago I experimented with the idea of drawing methods in EXCEL from the place notation. This was fairly successful but very fiddly. It was a good vehicle for learning EXCEL macros. Shortly after, a number of alternative approaches were discussed in The Ringing World. The degree of difficulty involved in all of these convinced me that this was not the best approach. The best approach seemed to be to build a program from scratch.

The result, **Method2000**, first built for Windows 3.1 in Visual Basic 3 and now successfully expanded to work in Windows95 and NT by visual Basic 5. The primary aim was to produce an aid to method learning by providing a range of visual representations of methods. The program uses an ACCESS database to store the contents of the Central Council method collections (or at least all of the symmetrical methods) which allows other programs to look at the data. I can recommend QUEST by Level5.

At some point the program will go on sale with profits going to branch funds, but until then, any branch member who would like to try out what is best described as the "beta version" is welcome to have a copy.

Doug Hird

Ringling Master's Report

Striking Competitions

Unfortunately we were not able to enter a team in the Guild 8-Bell Competition - too many of us were away for the May Day Holiday. I do wonder whether this is the best date for this event as the best entry that I can remember in recent years was on a Saturday when it wasn't a Bank Holiday.

The Guild 10-bell competition is on July 11th at Thatcham. I need to get together a band for this day. If you have experience of ringing on ten and I haven't asked you before, please let me know if you would like to take part in the event. The method this year is Grandsire Caters. It is on the same day as the Guild Festival so there should be a chance to ring at other towers in the area on that day.

We also have our annual 'battle' against the Towcester Branch (friendly of course) on Saturday 25th July. This has sections for all abilities, so if you would like to take part, please let me know and you can be practically guaranteed a place.

Branch Practices

As mentioned at the AGM there will be a practice once a quarter when the focus will be on rounds and call changes, especially for our new recruits as part of the Millennium Project. Please come along and join in as the more experience you can get of ringing on different bells, the quicker you will improve and gain in confidence.

All are welcome, and don't forget to bring your instructor to help out. We can only make a success of these practices if we also have experienced ringers to help and

provide a strong framework around the less experienced ringers

Training Sessions

If you would like help at your tower over the next year then please let the Ringing Master know and he will see what can be done. Please remember however that we all have commitments to our own towers and can only help you out when we have the time available, so don't expect an instant response to your request for help. Please note that at any tower where we come to help we will expect to run the ringing and attempt to structure the session to give most benefit to those present.

Richard Stanworth

Secretary's Report

Quarterly Meeting at Maids Moreton Saturday 6th June 1998

4:00	Ringling
4:30	Service
5:00	Meeting
6:00 - 8:00	Striking Competition & Barbecue

Names for barbecue to David Goodger (01280 - 812868) by Wednesday 3rd June. Competition entries must be made to Richard Stanworth (Ringing Master) on Buckingham 01280 - 814172 by **Friday 5th June**

O.D.G. Barn Dance

The Festival Barn Dance will be held on Saturday 11th July 1998 from 7.30 - 11.30p.m. at The Black Barn, Rushall Farm, Bradfield. Tickets are available from the branch secretary at a cost of £6.00 (to include 2 course supper), or direct from Mrs R. A. Morgan, (to whom cheques should be made payable), Rosene, Dark Lane, Bradfield, Berks, RG7 6DE.

Numbers are limited so early booking is advisable, by **Thursday 1st July** at the latest.

Have You Seen Them?

The Annual Guild Report for 1997 and the Guild Newsletter "Odd Bob," issue 52 has been sent out to all towers in the branch with members. If you haven't seen either of these yet, please ask your tower correspondent about them.

Further copies of the 1997 Guild Report can be purchased from the Report Editor: John F. Payne, 53 Walker Road, Maidenhead, Berks. SL6 2QU. at a cost of £2.50 + 50p Postage.

Get Selling

Don't forget to sell your tickets for the Bell Fund Draw.

All monies, counterfoils and any unsold tickets should be returned to the Branch Secretary by Friday 19th June or direct to the promoter by 28th June. Please make all cheques payable to "Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers". Any spare tickets should be returned to me as soon as possible.

Bellhandling Video

The branch now has a copy of the video produced by the Central Council entitled 'Bellhandling - a tutor's companion'. This is

aimed at those teaching bellhandling but may also be helpful to those learning to ring.

The video may be borrowed from the secretary free of charge. However a deposit of £5 will be required against safe return of the video.

Helen Stanworth

The junior members at Newport Pagnell have written a report on their tower outing to the south, published below. This outing journeyed to six towers in the south of the county.....

Bell Ringers' Outing Of The Year

On Saturday 25th of April 1998 the members of Newport Pagnell Bell Ringers went to churches around the area of South Bucks. The Churches we went to were Mentmore, Cheddington, Aston Abbots, Linslade, Drayton Parslow and Stewkley. All of the towers were very nice, but some had very light bells, unlike Stewkley which had very heavy bells.

Mentmore Church was described by local people as having "a nice ring", the bells of Mentmore were cast between 1668 and 1669 and hang in their original left-handed frame. All the bells were cast by Anthony Chandler who was the local bell founder, stationed at Drayton Parslow, and the clappers are the originals.

Cheddington Church had an original ring of five cast, various founders made the bells. These are: James Keene, John Dief, John Saunders and Richard Chandler around 1634 and 1638, but nobody knows when the new treble was cast. During the time of this ring of five, the bells were hung in a left handed frame.

Aston Abbots has yet another ring of five. Again Anthony Chandler cast the 1, 2 and the 4 in 1652, and Edward Hall cast the 3 and 5 in 1739 and 1740. Apparently the clappers of the back three bells are encased in wood, could these be the originals?

According to people all the stays are at the wheel end of the stock, except the second.

At Linslade, there is an original ring of 5 and the only ring of bells by William Chapman in the county, cast in 1781. In 1869 John Warner & Sons added the treble. This ring of six was not installed into this tower until 1869. The Chapman bells came from Old Lansdale, the tenor weight in the Whitechapel Foundry is listed as 7cwt.

A Chandler cast the bells at Drayton Parslow in 1669. J. Taylor cast two of the bells and Bartholomew Atton cast the tenor in 1591. These bells have hastings stays and the weight difference between the 4, 5 and 6 is rather irregular.

Finally at Stewkley another original ring of five ranging from 1636 to 1837. The treble is one of the few remaining bells by Richard Chandler and all the bells were re-hung around 1870 in a massive old frame.

The day with the bell ringers was really enjoyable, we would recommend it to anybody.

*Sarah Gordon,
Zara Ford,
Hannah Dell,
Sarah Pilkington
and Rachel Stacy
(Junior Bell ringers at
Newport Pagnell)*

✓ send a large vote of thanks to the junior bell ringers for this article, put together quickly and well. (AJ)

PEALS & QUARTERS

QUARTERS

Buckingham

SS Peter & Paul
Tuesday 10th March 1998
1260 Grandsire Triples

1. Peter Nicholson
 2. William Yates
 3. Ann Fletcher
 4. Richard Stanworth
 5. Michael Tinsley
 6. Andrew Spencer
 7. Richard Yates (C)
 8. David Goodger
- In memoriam Ellen
Nicholson and Jimmy
Briggs

Emberton

Sunday 15th March 1998
1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Emma Price
- 2 Rebecca Milman
- 3 Phil Haslam
- 4 Owen Warren
- 5 Ian Thompson
- 6 Roy Keeves (C)

Compliment to Rebecca
Milman on her 18th
birthday.

Stowe

Assumption of B V M

Monday 13th April 1998
1260 Plain Bob Minor

1. Helen Stanworth
2. Ann Fletcher
3. Peter Nicholson
4. David Goodger
5. William Yates (C)
6. John Hearn

In memoriam
Pamela Kingston

Wicken, Northants

St John Evangelist

Friday 6th March 1998
1260 Lincolnshire

Surprise Major

- 1 Stephen Crane
- 2 Natalie Green
- 3 Jonathan Grigs
- 4 Ian Thompson
- 5 Nicholas Gray
- 6 Alan Cozens
- 7 Richard Haseldine
(C)
- 8 Roy Keeves

Whaddon

St Mary

Monday 20th April
1998
1260 Grandsire Doubles

1. John Stanworth
2. William Yates
3. Richard Yates (C)
4. Perer Nicholson
5. Michael Tinsley
6. David Goodger

In memory of Ken
Hodgson and Ellen
Nicholson

Woughton-on-the- Green

Saturday 18th April 1998
1260 Grandsire Triples

1. Christine Abbot
2. Christina Jones
3. Paul ??????
4. Brian Baldwin
5. Peter Tribble (C)
6. Gordon Abbot

Rung in honour of the
marriage of the vicar's
son.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

North Bucks Branch

Calendar 1998/9

MAY

15th 7.30 Branch Practice
Special Method = Kent T B Minor Cosgrove

16th *Guild Annual General Meeting* Churchill

JUNE

6th 4.00 Striking Comp'n & Quarterly Meeting Maids Moreton

19th 7.30 Branch Practice
Special Method = Cambridge S Minor Loughton

JULY

11th *Guild Festival* Bradfield

11th *Guild 10 Bell Striking Competition* Thatcham

25th *6.-8.00 Striking Comp'n v Towcester Branch Olney

AUGUST

21st 7.30 Branch Practice
Focus on Rounds & Call Changes Lillingstone Lovell

SEPTEMBER

5th 3.30 Quarterly Meeting Hanslope

11-13th *Easthampstead Course* Easthampstead

18th 7.30 Branch Practice
Special Method = Stedman & Grandsire Doubles North Crawley

OCTOBER

<i>2nd</i>		<i>Branch Secretaries Meeting</i>	<i>Radley</i>
<i>3rd</i>		<i>Guild Six Bell Striking Competition</i>	<i>Wendover</i>
16 th	*7.30	Branch Practice Special Method = Double Court Bob Minor	Whaddon

NOVEMBER

20th	*7.30	Branch Practice Special Method = St Simon's & St Martins Doubles	Fenny Stratford
21st		<i>Autumn General Committee Meeting</i>	<i>Newbury Branch</i>

DECEMBER

5 th	*3.30	Quarterly Meeting	Bletchley
18 th	*7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Bradwell

1999

JANUARY

15 th	*7.30	Branch Practice Special Method = Little Bob Major	Stony Stratford
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FEBRUARY

19 th	*7.30	Branch Practice Special Method = Winchendon Place & St Nicholas Doubles	Thornborough
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MARCH

6 th	*3.30	Annual General Meeting	Downs Barn
19 th	*7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Milton Keynes Village

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 30 April 1998

Italicised events are Guild events