



In Touch

August 1999

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Quarterly Meeting at Buckingham Saturday 4th September 1999

- 3.30 Ringing
- 4.30 Service
- 5.00 Tea
- 5.45 Business Meeting
Following by evening ringing
until 9.00

Names for tea to Helen Stanworth
(01280-814172) by **Wednesday 25th
August 1999**

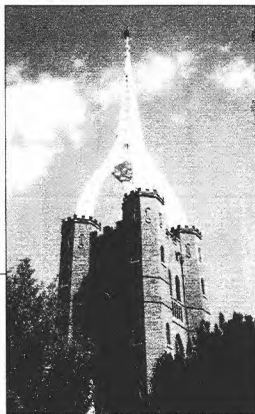
Teas may be booked at the branch
practice on Friday 20th August.

**NB Please note change of venue
for this meeting**

OK we know this isn't Buckingham
(an omission due to the photographic
inadequacy of the Editor), but

WHERE IS IT?

A prize to the first person with the
correct answer at the Quarterly Meeting



Spliced at last!

After a long time guessing 'When Will It Be?', Godfrey Foat and Christine Murphy delighted us all by announcing their engagement and setting the Wedding for Saturday 24th July 1999 at Newport Pagnell.

Christine and Godfrey met as ringers at Newport Pagnell tower some years ago, Godfrey later becoming tower captain until his recent move to Silsoe, Bedfordshire. The band turned out in force on the Wedding Day to ring Christine into the Church, and the married couple out. They were joined by members of the North Bucks Branch, the Manchester University Guild, and other friends. A peal of Grandsire Triples was rung in the morning by a mainly North Bucks band (see Peals & Quarters).

Christine, who was given away by her brother Philip, looked lovely in a dress she had designed and made herself, whilst Godfrey and the best man, his brother Graham, made a rather dashing pair (so we ladies thought, anyway!).

The reception was held at Silsoe Village Hall where a splendid buffet was provided. While we were all trying to keep cool on one of the hottest days of the summer so far, we were treated to a course of Plain Bob Major on handbells that one of the guests had thoughtfully provided for the groom and friends to show us their ringing talents.

We wish Godfrey and Christine every happiness in their future life together, and hope that we shall still see them around the North Bucks ringing scene. (Photograph on page 3.)

Who's Who 1999/2000

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In Touch is published by the Newsletter Editor on behalf of the officers and members of the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. Any view expressed in *In Touch* is that of the Author and copyright resides with the individual authors.

The Chairman's Soap Box

May the Force be with you

I have been looking for a way of describing this effect for some years. Peel ringers will be particularly familiar with it. Alan Marchbank and David Joyce have raised the subject with several learners at recent practices.

At the time, I didn't fully appreciate the reality of the way Alan Cozens described peel ringing to us once at a Hanslope practice in the 1970's. It went something like: After an hour you think "This isn't very promising, I hope it improves soon" After two hours you think "This isn't too bad, we should get this" After three hours you think, "Where am I? Who are all these people? What are all these ropes going up and down for?" At this point it is vitally important to not wake up. Your arms know what they are doing. Give yourself at least a lead to get your bearings before trying to use your brain.

The effect is this. The ringing is at, or more likely faster than, your maximum safe ringing speed but somehow the striking is just right. You are placing your bell perfectly and you have no idea how you are doing it. You are in fact following bells before you know which one to follow. This is, of course, impossible. Or is it?

Some years ago, before the Guild 8-bell striking competition, we had a practice at Wicken. We had time to ring the same touch about 4 times. The best ringing was the first and the fastest. Unfortunately the bells for the competition were heavier and we rang much as we usually do. Anyway, it was at this point that I realised how it was done. Ringing well has nothing to do with following other bells with ropesight unless the ringing is not of the best quality and none of the bells are odd-struck. What actually works is knowing what place you intend to put your bell in for the next few changes. You then just put your bell in that place regardless of what everyone else is doing. For complicated methods it makes things very much easier. You only have to worry about not falling off the line.

In Atlanta earlier this year Star Wars Episode 1 was showing. Now while it was a bit short on plot, it was good for setting the scene for the later films made some 20 years ago. Those old films introduced us to The Force, some sort of supernatural way that the heroes could react faster than the bad guys. Now we find that the heroes don't actually react faster, they just react to things that are about to happen a short way into the future. They know what is going to happen and so just have to do whatever is appropriate.

So that is how we can become Jedi ringers. We just have to know what we have to do next and then do it without thinking. Remember, there isn't time to think.

Doug Hird



Next Issue Copy Date:
11th October 1999

BRANCH HOSTS GUILD AGM

I guess it's fairly unusual for a bellringing organisation like the Oxford Guild to hold their major meeting of the year in a church with no bells, but that's what happened on Saturday 15th May when the North Bucks Branch hosted the Guild AGM at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone in Central Milton Keynes. The towers of Buckingham, Calverton and Downs Barn were open for those who felt in need of a bell rope! Hopefully our Guild representatives will report on the proceedings elsewhere, but it would be remiss of us not to give a hearty vote of thanks to the Branch members who took on all the arrangements, and masterminded the production and serving of 67 or so teas. Our grateful thanks go to the Stanworth family, David & Jill Joyce, Alan & Tine Marchbank, Christine Cable and Andrew Jeffries.

Still only Eight

Again this year I could only find eight ringers available on the day of the Guild 10-bell competition so we were unable to enter a team. My thanks to those who did offer to come. One of these years we will find ten ringers all available on the day.

Richard Stanworth



Christine & Godfrey Foat

Hanslope wins at Bradwell

This year's Branch Striking Competition was held at Bradwell before the quarterly meeting on Saturday 5th June. We had five entries who all rang a method of some sort. The bands rang in the order - Hanslope, Shenley, Bradwell, Buckingham & Maids Moreton B, Buckingham & Maids Moreton A. The judges were Roy and Judy Woodruff from Aylesbury. Our thanks to them for giving up an afternoon to come and sit in the allotments near the church on a rather dismal day. The biggest problem for them was the noise from the nearby railway line obscuring the ringing. After tea Roy announced the result as follows:

1st	Hanslope	19 ½ faults
2nd	Bradwell	26 ½ faults
3rd	Shenley	30 ½ faults
4th	Buckingham & Maids Moreton A	35 faults
5th	Buckingham & Maids Moreton B	57 faults

Hanslope will be eligible to represent the branch in the Guild 6 bell competition in October.

Richard Stanworth



Winners of the 6 bell competition - Hanslope
L to R: Jonathan Griggs, Richard Haseldine, Natalie Green,
Ian Thompson, Roy Keeves, Nicholas Gray

Back in the USA

Arranging ringing can be complicated enough, but when there is a 5 hour time difference the only useful method of communication is e-mail. A recent business trip to Florida sounded like too good an opportunity to miss so a few e-mails sorted out a rather spread out outing. The Miami band doesn't seem to exist any more so unless you intend to take a whole band there is no ringing there. The weather is good though! The next tower is some way off. In fact Charleston has three ringing towers. One was out of action but the Saturday morning practice at St Michael's and the evening ringing at Stella Maris were worth the trip. Charleston is an old town that makes a lot of its history. Sunday morning heard us at Hendersonville trying to ring Plain Bob Doubles. It was good practice but was never going to last for a quarter peal. Then on to Marietta, just north of Atlanta. Here, ringing is a bit stronger and we managed a quarter peal of Plain Bob Major before the Monday night practice. All in all, a good outing. We met a lot of interesting new people and were made very welcome everywhere we went.

Doug and Nicki

OUSCR achieves 20 years



On 26th June, the Open University Society of Change Ringers celebrated its 20th anniversary.

Ringers - both students and staff - from all over the country came to Milton Keynes for a dinner at the University's main campus, at which Sir John Daniel, the Vice-Chancellor, was guest speaker. During the afternoon ringing took place at Wicken and Cosgrove.

The Society meets four or five times a year at venues ranging from Scotland to Kent to Cornwall, although a fair proportion of the meetings are based centrally around the Midlands. In September they will be ringing in the Channel Islands.

New members are always welcome - if you have any connection with the OU then give the Secretary, Sue Tompsett, a ring on 01203-504967, or Sheila Watts on 01908-653214.

BRAIN BENDERS ANSWERS

MAY ISSUE

Picture: Charles Knight, Tower Captain at Olney (the winner was Leigh Burgess, Wavendon)

Wordsearch: The 25 words connected with ringing were:

canon, cover, lead, lip, wheel, learner, single, gudgeon, clip, ringer, headstock, peal, false, tone, drum, surprise, change, sally, stay, intouch, bell, clapper, splice, bob, box

(the winner was Rebecca Stanworth, Buckingham)

Three Ringers Puzzle:

Question: Two men and a lady whose surnames are Minor, Major and Royal (not necessarily in that order) ring at three different churches with 6, 8 and 10 bells. Minor doesn't ring at the six bell tower, nor Major at the eight bell tower, nor Royal at the ring of ten. The lady said that she thought this was a remarkable coincidence and Minor agreed with her, although the ringer from the ten bell tower was unimpressed. If the lady's name is not Royal, which tower does each belong to?

Answer: The lady's name is Major and she comes from the six bell tower. Royal rings at the eight bell tower, and Minor at the ring of ten.

Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition

This year it was the turn of the Witney and Woodstock Branch to host the Competition, at the tower of South Leigh. The method was Plain Bob Triples - a controversial choice. There were nine teams in all (4 branch teams and 5 tower teams), and the Reading Branch were the winners. The results in order were: Reading Branch, Aston Clinton Tower, Reading St Mary & St Lawrence Tower, East Berks & South Bucks Branch, High Wycombe Tower, Witney & Woodstock Branch, Tilehurst Tower, Abingdon Tower, South Oxon Branch.

Disgusted of Dadford (not very!)

As part of their report on the build up to the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Central TV sought the opinion of several residents of Dadford about the effects of making the main road through the village one-way and effectively cutting off the village. One of the doors they knocked on turned out to be the home of one William Yates. He was not too worried by it, as he had got used to it over the years. (Actually they had woken him up from a nap, so I'm not sure if he was fully awake at the time!)

Richard Stanworth

60 YEARS AGO

A former Bletchley resident, Mr George T Underwood, of Tacoma, Washington, USA, who used to reside at 21 Oxford Street, Bletchley - he left England for Tacoma in March 1925 - was one of the eight men chosen to ring the four-hour peal on the bells of Holy Rosary Cathedral at Vancouver, during the reception of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

He was a member of the Guard of Honour earlier in the day. Mr Underwood is a native of Walton, but he lived in Oxford Street during the 11 years he worked in the LMS Carriage Works at Wolverton.

It was as a member of the North Bucks Guild of Bellringers that he learned the art of change-ringing, and he often rang at the towers of Simpson, Old Bletchley and Fenny Stratford churches.

On leaving for Canada, where little is known of the art of bellringing, as there are few peals of bells, Mr Underwood kept up his interest in the art and has often visited Vancouver to keep up his knowledge.

From the files of The Citizen Newspaper, June 24 1999

BRAIN BENDERS

Answers to these puzzles
will be given in the
next issue of
In Touch



A leading North Bucks ringer
(Worrying, isn't it?)
Can you name him?

Two Beetles

Two beetles, who were a grandfather and his grandson, were sitting side by side on the bell frame. At exactly the same moment they set off in different directions at different constant speeds. The grandfather crawled to visit his cousin who lived near the bearing of the tenor bell, and his grandson went to the corner of the tower. They each took an hour to reach their destinations. If each of them had visited the destination of the other, grandfather would have got to the corner of the tower 1 hour and 4 minutes after his grandson reached the tenor bearing.

How many times faster did the younger beetle crawl than his grandfather?

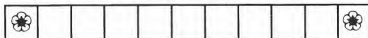


Blended Bloomers

										Do grasp nan might break a Welsh emblem	The answers to these clues are all names of flowers. Unravel the letters in the shaded box to reveal the name of the final flower.
✿	✿						✿	✿	✿	A proposal of marriage and a tandem ride for this young lady	
								✿	✿	She sounds like a rather prissy maid	
✿	✿									Gloves for the domestic chores	
									✿	Automobile society?	
✿						✿	✿	✿	✿	These could be groups of sheep or birds	
✿	✿									These birds sound happy as cats	
✿								✿	✿	If such a trailer might grow into this bloomer	
									✿	A sweetheart for a Harlequin	



Devised by Sheila Blenkhorn



The second Ringing World Road Show was held in and around Tewkesbury on Saturday 17th April. One of the cars heading out of Milton Keynes at around 7am (what a daft time to have to be awake) had David driving, Jill navigating and Chrissy & Andrew asking all the questions from the back seat. Experience had taught us that the ringing events can get rather overcrowded, so we were pleased to get to Evesham over 30 minutes early. We managed to get into the ringing chamber with enough time to carefully observe the first set of rounds. This was followed by a pretty rough attempt at Grandsire Cinques – why is it that these events are plagued by folk who can't ring on higher numbers and then get upset when they find the rest of the band equally out of their depth? The next touch was rounds and call changes, so our two learners were quickly pushed onto the 5th & 7th with us standing with them. Both rang really well, which is more than can be said for the folk who grabbed the little bells and couldn't keep them at the balance every stroke and the lady who managed to wander the tenor between 8ths and 16ths place! As we left, there were ringers queuing in the chamber below, up the stairs and way out into the Churchyard.

Tewkesbury school was rather chaotic for parking, but we managed to find our way in eventually and started a quick tour of what was on offer. It was disappointing that the two major foundries were missing, but it did mean less gossiping from David & Jill with all of their old cronies. The space available indoors was so minimal that it was hard to move around or to clearly see some

Ringing World Road Show

of the exhibits, but we were slowly able to get around. In the middle of the room was one of the Matthew Higby portable rings (that the ODG decided not to buy) and at some point the grabbing graduated into a striking contest.

We fought our way outside and took our turn on the Lichfield mini ring – very impressive from outside and excellent handling from inside if you did as you were told and rang with a smooth and gentle style. Again, our lot did well and learnt a lot from watching others make rather a mess of it. The highlight of the afternoon was a short walk down the road to grab the light ten in the shed of the Bagley household. They were great fun to ring and, as before, quite a few folk provided a bit of a cabaret with their efforts.

Back at the school, George Dawson's larger portable ring was ready and after quite a lot of watching we managed to get our turn. Surprisingly, these were harder to handle than the much smaller ones that we'd been practicing on elsewhere. Things had quietened down inside so we wandered back in and spent some time copying Newport Pagnell's tuning details from the Gillett & Johnson records for Gareth. A bit more wandering brought us to the second hand bookstall where David rummaged around trying to find copies that he used to own. After a quick look through the Central Council's library

of ringers badges we slipped away to attend a Steve Coleman lecture on lowering in peal. Steve has a fascinating way of getting over his message – seeing him balanced on a table swinging one leg and both arms around at once is hilarious. It's now very hard to think of a bell ringing down and its clapper swinging without picturing Steve flailing around imitating it. The most interesting piece of advice was that if the chiming in rounds is a bit poor, catch in Queens as ragged Queens is much kinder on the ear than catching in bad rounds – try it next time and see!

So was it worth the effort? David & Jill got to meet up with loads of old friends and catch up on gossip. Chrissy & Andrew got to see a lot more of the ringing world outside of our local patch and also managed to grab a few towers. The range of bells enabled them both to improve their handling and extend their experience, and also to see a lot of other learners struggle beyond their abilities – sometimes it's helpful to see the results of bad teaching, to show our learners why we are nagging them about some of their own handling.

The next road show might be a couple of years away, but please try to make the effort to attend. Publicity for this one was rather poor – nothing on the RW web page and minimal comment in the various email chat lists, so not reading the Ringing World meant not seeing any publicity or details. If you do go to the next show, why not offer a few spare seats in your car to other members of your band?

David Joyce



The Lichfield Mini Ring

This cake was made to celebrate Catherine Stacy's first peal, rung at Clifton Reynes on 13th May (see page 9).

It was also for her 16th birthday on this date.

(photo courtesy of the Ringing World)



Under 18 Striking Competition

This was held at Marston, a 5cwt ring of six in Oxfordshire, on Saturday 26th June. They are not an easy ring, especially the third which is particularly oddstruck.

Four teams took part and three branches were represented. We managed to raise two bands this year.

The bands were: North Bucks A
Plain Hunt

- 1: Catherine Stanworth
- 2: Christine Cable
- 3: Catherine Stacy
- 4: John Stanworth
- 5: Gareth Grayson
- 6: Emily Payne

North Bucks B
Call Changes

- 1: Sarah Gordon
- 2: Nikki Dowsett
- 3: Gareth Grayson
- 4: Hannah Dell
- 5: Karen Hillary
- 6: Robert George

The Result

- 1: South Bucks
- 2: North Bucks A
- 3: Oxford City
- 4: North Bucks B

As usual all those who took part got a certificate and the teams that came 1st, 2nd and 3rd got trophies.

I think the ropes were quite long. There wasn't much room for people to get into the ringing chamber as the gap between the wall and the organ was small. I think we coped with the oddstruckness of the third as best we could.

This is the second time we have come away with the runners up trophy and the first year we have entered two bands.

Catherine Stanworth

PS from Gareth – I would like to thank David, Doug and Richard for making the time to take their U18s to the competition. It was nice to see two bands this year as last year we failed miserably. A big thank you goes to the younger ones as well for putting on a brave face and missing out on other past times to turn up to a daunting competition.

Overheard recently....

Oh yes, I can ring down. I just can't get the hang of the rope bit.



North Bucks A Band



North Bucks B Band

With Regret

The increased attendance at the monthly Olney practice, as reported in the last In Touch, unfortunately did not last. The last few practices have not been really viable, so we have decided to cancel future monthly meetings. The weekly Thursday local practice continues as usual.

Many thanks to all those who have supported us over the past few years.

Roy Keeves & Sheila Ware

Guild Express Communications Network

No, we are not resorting to racing pigeons! This is the new Guild method of getting urgent information out to the Branches. Bobbie May, Public Relations Officer, uses e-mail to contact your 'on-line' Branch officers. Messages are regularly received from her on topics ranging from Choir Practice for the Guild Festival, to ringing arrangements for special Services.

Diary Dates outside the Branch

August			
14	7.00	PDG Towcester Branch Practice	Cosgrove
21	7.30	Biggleswade District Practice	Great Barford
		Luton District Practice	Flitton
September			
25	3.00	PDG Towcester Branch Meeting & 6 Bell Striking Competition	Bradden
	7.30	Luton District Practice	Wappenham
			Totterhoe
October			
2		PDG Towcester Branch Outing	Bury St Edmunds
30	2.00	PDG Towcester Branch Training Day	Road
	7.00	PDG Towcester Branch Quiz Night	Stoke Bruerne
November			
6		Bedford District Practice	Stevington & Pavenham
27		PDG Towcester Branch Dinner	Towcester
	7.30	Luton District Practice	Toddington
December			
4	7.30	Bedford District Practice	Bromham
11		Biggleswade District Practice & Social	Biggleswade
18	7.30	Luton District Practice	Houghton Regis
January 2000			
29	3.30	PDG Towcester Branch AGM	Pattishall

Tied Bell Practices at Maids Moreton

We have been having tied bell practices on Saturdays at Maids Moreton for about 4 months.

This started after my dad and two sisters, Rebecca and Victoria, went on the bell handling course at Steeple Aston.

Rebecca is now just about ringing on her own.

Catherine Stanworth

SUSSEX BY THE SEA

Every year in May, twelve North Bucks Branch ringers, plus friends from Irchester, Rugby and Birmingham, go away on a week's ringing holiday. The venue this year was East Sussex, organised by Freda & Mike Bennett from Rugby. Most of us stayed in chalets on the Glyndley Manor Estate at Stone Cross, Pevensey, whilst the Haslam family stayed in a nearby converted oast house.

We started by ringing at Pevensey for Sunday service, and possibly enduring the longest Trinity Sunday service any of us had experienced for a while! Three full days of ringing followed – on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, when we rang at 21 towers from above Brighton over to Kent. Tuesday and Thursday were days for rest and doing other things (so we went ringing....). The practice nights at Lewes and Rye were enjoyed.

On the Friday night we celebrated Mike Bennett's 60th birthday over a festive pub meal. The week was much enjoyed by all, except possibly Samuel Haslam (aged 4). Sam became unwell during Monday ringing and ended up in Eastbourne hospital. However, in true ringing spirit he was not to be deterred and was back by Friday insisting on learning how to hold a rope and chime a bell under the tutelage of his parents and grandfather!



Sam's first steps in ringing

Mobile!

Branch members will probably have noticed Gareth Grayson's increased mobility around the Branch. Congratulations go to Gareth on passing his driving test at the first attempt!

Bellhandling Video

The video entitled 'Bellhandling – a tutor's companion' may be borrowed from the Secretary free of charge. It is aimed at those teaching bellhandling but can also help those learning to ring. A deposit of £5 will be required against safe return of the video.

Quarters & Peals

St Mary, Shenley

7th March 1999

1260 Doubles – Reverse Canterbury,
Plain Bob, Grandsire

- 1 Anne McIntyre
- 2 Becky Fawcett
- 3 John Brookman
- 4 Ted Fawcett
- 5 Bob Winstanley (C)
- 6 Barry Smith

A compliment to Rev. David Yates, in appreciation of his work in the Watling Valley Team Ministry

St Guthlac, Passenham

11th April 1999

1260 Doubles – Reverse Canterbury,
Plain Bob, Grandsire

- 1 Malcolm Hooton
- 2 David Joyce
- 3 Bob Winstanley (C)
- 4 Richard Yates
- 5 Monty Gilbert

Rung for St Guthlac's Day (April 11th) and as a compliment to Bill Yates on his completion of 50 years as Secretary of the Towcester Branch of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild

St John, Wicken

2nd May 1999

1288 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Catherine Stanworth (1st on 8)
- 2 Roger King
- 3 John Stanworth (1st Triples inside)
- 4 Richard Yates
- 5 William Yates
- 6 Richard Stanworth (C)
- 7 George Green
- 8 Helen Stanworth

St Peters, Northampton

7th May 1999

1250 Superlative Surprise Major

- 1 Jonathan Griggs
- 2 Carole Harmer
- 3 Ian Thompson
- 4 Alan Cozens
- 5 Roy Keeves
- 6 Nick Gray
- 7 Richard Haseldine (C)
- 8 George Green

A 58th birthday compliment to Roy Keeves, and 25th Wedding Anniversary compliment to Nick and Beverley Gray

SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

30th May 1999

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Emily Payne (1st Quarter)
- 2 Loretta Ramsay
- 3 Nick Read
- 4 Catherine Stacy
- 5 Gareth Grayson (C)
- 6 Jonathan Stacy

Rung as a compliment to Gerald Stratton, who retired from the Choir after 30 years of service (see page 10)

St Andrew, Great Linford

20th June 1999

1260 Doubles - Plain Bob & Grandsire

- 1 Andrew Jeffries (1st away from cover)
- 2 Gareth Grayson
- 3 Catherine Stacy
- 4 Brian Newman
- 5 Alan Marchbank (C)
- 6 Doug Hird

Rung on the day of the Water Festival in remembrance of the Rt. Hon. Cardinal Basil Hume

All Saints, Loughton

20th June 1999

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Frank Daniels
- 2 Anne McIntyre
- 3 Becky Fawcett
- 4 Jonathan Waters
- 5 Ted Fawcett
- 6 Bob Winstanley (C)

For Service at the conclusion of a Festival of Flowers and Music, in celebration of the refurbishment of the Organ

All Saints, Calverton

27th June 1999

1260 Doubles – Reverse Canterbury,

St Martins, St Simons, Plain Bob,
Grandsire

- 1 Anna Sexton (1st for ten years)
- 2 Peter Tribble
- 3 Bob Winstanley
- 4 Doug Hird
- 5 Monty Gilbert (C)
- 6 Anne McIntyre

Rung for Calverton Fete

St Andrew, Great Linford

11th July 1999

1260 Doubles – Plain Bob &
Grandsire

- 1 Catherine Stacy
- 2 Alan Marchbank (C)
- 3 Gareth Grayson
- 4 Doug Hird
- 5 David Joyce
- 6 Brian Newman

Rung to celebrate the change of name of East Midlands Electricity to PowerGen (see page 11)

St Laurence, Bradwell

11th July 1999

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Christine Cable
- 2 Christine Abbott
- 3 Jill Joyce
- 4 Brian Newman
- 5 David Joyce (C)
- 6 Gordon Abbott

Rung to celebrate the change of name of East Midlands Electricity to PowerGen (see page 11)

St Edmund, Maids Moreton

24th July 1999

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 George Edmans
- 2 William Yates
- 3 Andrew Spencer (C)
- 4 Gerald Kingston
- 5 David Goodger
- 6 John Stanworth

Peals

St Mary, Clifton Reynes

13th May 1999

5040 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Nikki King
- 2 Catherine Stacy (1st Peal)
- 3 Godfrey Foat
- 4 Gareth Grayson (1st inside)
- 5 Charles Knight
- 6 Doug Hird (C)

(see page 6)

SS Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell

24th July 1999

5040 Grandsire Triples (3 hrs)

Comp. Parker's 12-part

- 1 Catherine Stacy
- 2 Nikki King
- 3 Doug Hird
- 4 Peter Tribble
- 5 Charles Knight
- 6 Alan Marchbank
- 7 Richard Stevens (C)
- 8 Gareth Grayson

Rung as a compliment to Godfrey Foat and Christine Murphy on their marriage

Around the Towers

A Compliment to Gerald at Newport

A Quarter Peal was rung on 30th May as a compliment to Gerald Stratton, who retired from the Choir after 30 years of service. Gerald Stratton has been a long-standing member of SS Peter & Paul and has helped organise many events. One of his greater achievements was organising the start of the Newport Pagnell Festival in aid of the major Church restoration appeal. Gerald started ringing at the age of 14 years and has now been ringing with us for 57 years. We hope that he will continue to ring with us for many more.

Gareth Grayson

Supper at Buckingham

On May 9th, the ringers of Buckingham, Maids Moreton and Stowe spent a pleasant evening having supper at Buckingham vicarage.

After the meal, Revd Meara surprised us with the news that Bill Yates wished to retire as tower captain of Buckingham. As Bill had served nearly 50 years in this role, the vicar decided not to accept his resignation. He asked Bill to continue as tower captain in an honorary capacity, and appointed a ringing master to take on all responsibility for the ringing. We were delighted to hear that Andrew Spencer had agreed to serve in this role.

We wish Andrew every success in his new task and give thanks to Bill for his many years of service.

I will continue to be tower secretary.

Peter Nicholson

The Bells ring again at Tingewick!

Renewed enthusiasm and vigour has returned to St Mary's Tingewick, thanks to Lois Houghton-Brown for recruiting some new ringers and encouraging the 'old', and to David Goodger from Maids Moreton, for his excellent instruction.

As a novice, I watch in amazement as everybody makes it easy and effortless, whilst I suffer from aching muscles and exhaustion! Fortunately, we are being taught to ring in the correct way, so hopefully it won't require as much effort in time. Jill Cochrane and I started at the same time, and we both agree that if it wasn't for David's enthusiasm and the fun that we have, we would not have continued. Much of it at our expense - Jill's Cabbage Soup diet, mistaking 'that's all' for pretzels, breaking ropes! He's got his work cut out.

Everybody says that if you can ring Tingewick bells, you can ring anywhere. Our aim is to ring these bells well and regularly, especially for Sunday services and festivals, and once we have mastered them, we can think about some trips out. We definitely need more practice though.

Thanks must also go to the ringers of Maids Moreton, Buckingham and Stowe for their patience and tolerance, and allowing us to invade their practices every Wednesday night. Not to mention the drinking afterwards. Grandsire doubles - here we come!

Isobel Sparrow

News from Wavendon

We crashed our way back on to the bellringing map with our striking competition win earlier this year, which was a lovely start for us.

Since then, we have managed to hold a good practice most Fridays, usually with all six bells in action. However, despite an announcement in his Sunday service from Rev. David Lunn, we haven't had much response from the locals, but then again, we haven't really had any complaints either! We are planning to make another announcement in the hope that we can persuade some of the locals to join us, as this would be the important boost that the practice really needs and would furnish us with a good regular home band for the tower.

At present, we are very much reliant on help from ringers at other towers and as much as we are grateful for their help, we are aware that this can't continue indefinitely. We need a local band so that we can supply ringing for Sunday services and weddings, and at the moment, we just haven't been able to do this. We have had several visits from a local couple, but they haven't come back to see us for a few weeks - hope we didn't scare them away!

We would like to say an enormous thank-you to Gareth Grayson, Catherine Stacy, Andrew Jeffries and everyone else who has come along to lend their support to us. We really wouldn't have been able to make a start without them and hope very much that they will continue to join us on Fridays if they are able.

If anyone would like to come along to the practice on Fridays, you will be more than welcome. We usually start between 7.30 and 8.00 pm, and often go for a little drink afterwards.

We are hoping to ring a quarter peal or two to celebrate our forthcoming wedding - if anyone is interested in taking part, please give us a call on 01908 587440.

Leigh Burgess & Simon Head

Eviction at Olney



Olney tower's resident birds are now looking for new homes. Steeplejacks M. Hird & Sons (no relation to the Chairman.....) have been employed by the Church to bird proof the spire whilst they are doing other high-level work. A fine mesh UV resistant polyethylene net has been secured over every opening, and all debris has been removed from the belfry. Conditions within the tower are now much improved and Charles Knight hopes that carrying sacks of bird down the tower will not feature in his life in future.

Sheila Ware

Fancy a Change?

Bored with plain bob? Here are two wacky little methods that will spice up your practice nights. You won't find them in the 'red book' but they will certainly amuse both learners and 'old-hands'.

Agricultural bob

This method is based on bob doubles but with the treble and tenor continually changing roles. The treble begins as normal, but hunts right out to 6th place where it becomes the tenor, covering. At the point where it goes into 6th place, it knocks the tenor away from cover and the tenor hunts down to lead, assuming the role of the treble. Bells 2,3,4 and 5 ring bob doubles, thus at the first lead end they will make 2nds/dodge 3-4/make long 5ths whilst the tenor leads. Carrying on, the tenor hunts out to 6th place and becomes the 'tenor', allowing the treble to hunt down as the 'treble'! With it so far? Here are the first two leads written out:

123456	362541
214356	326451
241536	234651
425136	243561
452316	425316
543261	452136
534621	541236
356421	514326
365241	153426
632541	154326
635241	513426 etc.

Bobs are the same as for plain bob, but can be called when either the treble or the tenor is leading! Be sure to call a touch where it comes around with the treble and tenor in their correct places, otherwise 'rounds' will sound like this: 623451!

Variable hunt

In a variable hunt method, any of the working bells may be called to become the treble. In theory, variable hunt could be applied to any non-principal method, but bob doubles will suffice for this explanation!

The change of treble should be called as the 'new' treble is on its way down to lead, and with the 'current' treble hunting out or at the back. As the new treble leads, all other bells make 2nds/dodge 3-4/make long 5ths. The new treble continues hunting until another call is made. For example:

123456	
214356	
241536	call: "make the 5 the treble"
425136	
452316	
543216	
542316	5 is leading: other bells make 2nds/dodge 3-4/
453216	long 5ths
435126	
341526	
341526	call: "make the 2 the treble"
132456	
123546	call: "BOB" (nothing happens here: the treble is
215346	not the treble!)
251346	2 is leading: make the bob!
523146 etc.	

In bob doubles, it is possible to change the treble every 6 changes! Throw in some bobs as well and bob doubles will suddenly become as challenging as when you first rang it! Once this is mastered, try ringing some easy spliced methods with variable hunt thrown in, for example bob doubles and reverse canterbury or plain and little bob minor.

As for touches, just make it up as you go along – usually rounds will occur quite by chance. If you manage to get to rounds without the treble as the 'treble', all the better!

Jonathan Griggs

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.

Anyone who is able to help out at other towers on their practice night, please let me know as there are one or two towers in need of help to progress with change ringing.

Richard Stanworth



'Scrappy' - Tower-Dog at Hanslope, appreciates the Plain Bob at March in Cambridgeshire during the May tower outing

PowerGen Celebrations

Those of you who do not read *Ringing World* might well wonder why bellringers were involved with celebrating the change of name of East Midlands Electricity to PowerGen on 12th July! (See page 9.) A full page advert appeared in the 25th June issue asking for up to three groups of ringers in Milton Keynes and other areas to ring Quarter Peals on Sunday 11th July. For each group that rang a Quarter, £500 was pledged towards the "local bell restoration fund". Needless to say, Quarters were rung, and money is awaited.

Come to a Branch Quarterly Meeting or read in Touch to find out more and help us decide how this 'Electricity money' could best be used!

Sheila Watts

**OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS
NORTH BUCKS BRANCH**

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held at Bradwell on 5th June 1999

Chairman's Welcome

Doug Hird welcomed all those present to the meeting, with a special welcome and thanks to Roy and Judy Woodruff, who had earlier judged the branch striking competition.

Apologies for Absence

Received from Peter White and Hugh Butler.

Minutes of previous Meeting

These were published in the May edition of In Touch. It was agreed that the chairman sign a copy of these as a true record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Annual General Meeting.

Election of New Members

Nominations had been received proposing eight members – all were elected without dissent.

Tower	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Fenny Stratford	Jennie Waller (Junior) Lisa Cook (Junior)	Clive Raven	Margaret Champion
Newport Pagnell	Zara Ford (Junior) Hannah Dell (Junior) Sarah Gordon (Junior) Rachel Stacy (Junior)	Gareth Grayson	Catherine Stacy
Wavendon	Leigh Burgess Simon Head (re-election)	Catherine Stacy	Gareth Grayson

Officers Reports

Secretary - Nothing to report.

Treasurer - The current balance in the Building Society Account is £774. There are currently 179 paid up members, of whom 28 are Juniors. There are still two towers yet to pay their subscriptions. Please remember that nomination forms for new members should be accompanied by their subscription. The raffle today raised £16.50 for the Guild Bell Fund.

Ringling Master - Nothing to report.

Forthcoming Events

Richard Stanworth gave details of some forthcoming events :

- The 10-bell competition on 10th July. Volunteers are needed with experience on higher numbers.
- The annual competition against the Towcester branch on Saturday 31st July starting at 6.00 p.m. Three separate bands are needed - 22 ringers in all - we need as many volunteers as possible for the three sections - 6 bell, 8 bell (Stedman Triples) and call changes on 8. The calendar gives the venue as Easton Neston, but this is still subject to confirmation. If not there, then it will be at Wicken.

Unfortunately Olney will not be able to host the September Quarterly Meeting. An alternative venue is being sought and will be published in the next In Touch.

The next branch event is on 18th June - the Branch practice at Emberton where the focus will be on rounds and Call Changes. Higher standards will be catered for if time allows.

Richard also gave details of a ringing school being organised by the Banbury branch in August. Details will be circulated to all towers, but anyone interested can get details from him after the meeting.

Any Other Business

The Secretary had received a letter from the Guild Secretary asking for volunteers to help form a Guild choir at the Guild Festival in July. If anyone is interested then please obtain details from the Branch Secretary after the meeting.

The Secretary expressed her thanks to all who helped with the Guild AGM. Letters of thanks have been sent to the Rev Michael Burns who took the service and Michael Tinsley who played the organ. A letter of thanks has also been received from the Guild Secretary thanking us for hosting the Guild AGM.

A letter has been received from David Scrutton of Stony Stratford concerning branch practice nights. He asks whether the branch practice night might vary in order to allow those members with other commitments on Fridays to attend practices on

other evenings. A discussion followed on the options available for branch practices. Options discussed were:

- Saturday evenings. Neighbouring branches successfully hold practices on a Saturday. There might be a problem with the Milton Keynes towers as they often have a number of weddings on Saturdays in the summer months.
- Other weekday evenings as a separate branch practice. This would clash with a number of tower practice nights and might diminish attendance at the branch practice and/or individual tower practice nights, to the detriment of both. Cancelling tower practice nights leads to instability of bands due to lack of continuity.
- Joining a tower practice night and making it a branch practice. Whilst this would probably benefit the tower visited, it leads to branch practice nights moving around during the week according to the tower visited. This will again lead to lack of continuity in attendance.

The general feeling of the meeting was that only one member has requested a change, the majority are happy for the present arrangements with branch practices held on a Friday night to continue.

Gareth Grayson asked whether there was still a requirement for the periodic practice with focus on rounds and call changes. Perhaps there was now a necessity for the level of this practice to be raised. This led to some discussion on the planning of practices and the advertising of some practices as special for rounds and call changes, and others to have a special method advertised. The rounds and call changes indicates the sort of level which is guaranteed to be catered for at that practice. It does not preclude other methods being rung if these will be beneficial to the ringers present. A practice will always be tailored to be beneficial to as many of the ringers present as possible. The advertising of a special method is a means of ensuring that those that wish, can look up the method and know that it will be rung, rather than finding that there are insufficient ringers able to ring that method. In addition plain hunt, Grandsire and Plain Bob will always be rung if requested.

The Secretary reminded members that the last date for giving her tickets and money for the Guild Bell Fund Draw was the June branch practice at Emberton.

Doug Hird reported that he is putting together a plan for millennium ringing, both at midnight and midday, in order to ensure as wide a coverage as possible, and avoid duplication. He will be contacting towers and ringers to find out where they are planning to ring and when.

Doug is also hoping to hold a New Years party at Downs Barn, certainly for the Milton Keynes ringers, and any others who wish to come. Once he has booked the building, other details - refreshment etc. will be sorted out.

Sheila Watts was congratulated on her first edition of *In Touch*. This was endorsed by the meeting (applause).

The Chairman thanked the Bradwell band for their hospitality, the vicar for taking the service, and the organist. Appreciation was shown in the usual manner.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.05 p.m.

Milton Keynes Afloat

A group of ringers from Milton Keynes Village took to the water for a bellringers' outing in April. We hired a narrowboat on the Grand Union Canal starting from Blisworth and headed north to Braunston. It was rather an unusual bellringers' outing since we didn't ring a bell all weekend, but we learned how to handle ropes of a different kind. Our route was meticulously planned to include mealtime stops at canalside hostleries for sampling of the local ales. We had a lot of fun and it was an excellent team-building exercise. The party of eight agreed that we should repeat the experience next spring. Maybe next time we can plan our trip to take in a few bell towers as well!

Viv Coggins



Front row L to R: Margaret Parsons, Sara Wheeler
Middle: Peter Tribble, Viv Coggins, Paul Wheeler
Back: Christina Jones, Malcolm Parsons, Jim Coggins

North Bucks Branch – Calendar 1999/2000

August	20	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Grandsire Triples	Newton Longville
September	4	3.30 4.30 5.00 5.45	Quarterly Meeting Ringing Service Tea Business meeting & evening ringing until 9.00 pm	Buckingham (please note changed venue)
	10-12		<i>Easthampstead Course</i>	<i>Easthampstead</i>
	17	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Stowe
October	15	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Grandsire Doubles	Leckhampstead
November	19	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Oxford TB Minor	Chicheley
December	4	3.30	Quarterly Meeting	Woughton
	17	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Great Linford
January 2000	1	12.00	Millennium Ringing	Everywhere !!
	21	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Beverley S Minor	Shenley
February	18	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Oxford TB Minor	Weston Underwood
March	4	3.30	Annual General Meeting	Olney
	19	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Old Wolverton

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 20 July 1999
 Italicised events are Guild events

Branch Practices

Once a quarter the branch practice focuses on rounds and call changes, especially for our new recruits who may feel intimidated by everyone ringing changes. 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.

We will always welcome you to branch practices; they are for the benefit of ALL members, whatever level you ring at. Don't forget to bring your instructor to help out. We can only make a success of practices if we also have experienced ringers to help and provide a strong framework around the less experienced ringers.

As discussed at the quarterly meeting, branch practices will always be tailored to be beneficial to the ringers present, whatever their ability. Look at the Calendar above for the dates of the practices, but in particular the next focus on call changes is at Stowe on 17th September.

We will always ring plain hunt, plain bob and Grandsire at any branch practice for those who request it, so don't be put off if you can't ring the special method. This is merely a focus for those who wish to try something different.

Richard Stanworth

MONTY MOVES.....

We hear that Shenley tower will be losing Monty Gilbert from its band. Monty and Ann hope to be moving to Kislingbury, Northamptonshire (a 5 bell tower!) at the beginning of September, which will enable Monty to be much nearer his job. We wish them every happiness in their new home.