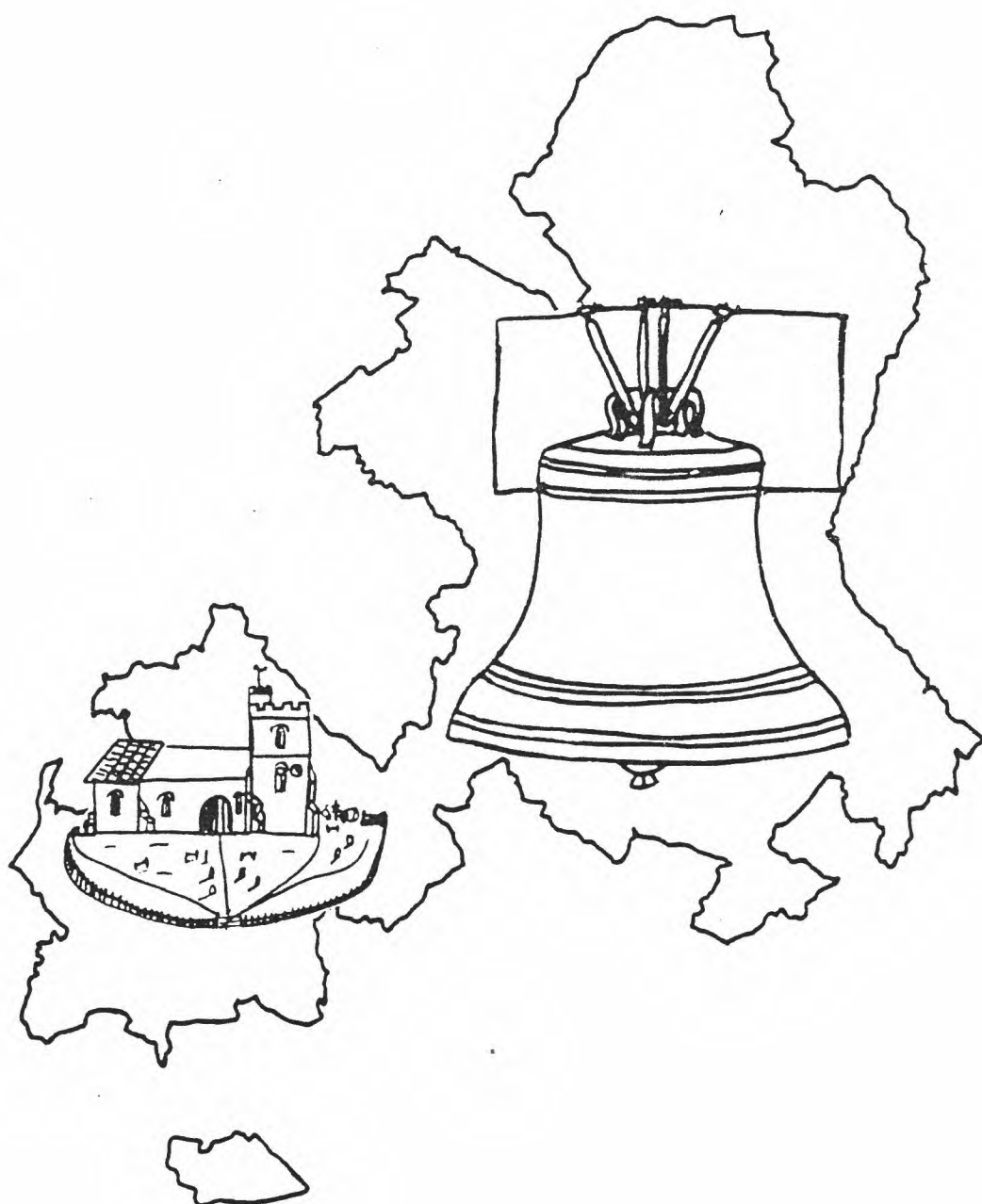


IN TOUCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH BUCKS BRANCH
OF
THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



A Page from the Chairman's Filofax!

This is the next long awaited edition of your Branch newsletter. Ros made a great job of the previous one but it has taken some time to elicit contributors.*

The newsletter exists for your benefit and amusement so come on let's have some more contributions from people!

There is a suggested 1988 Diary of events included in this edition for which we can thank or blame Godfrey Foat. May I ask tower captains and correspondants to confirm the projected arrangements with their respective vicars & PCCs as soon as possible.

You will note that there is a projected quarter peal week in the autumn. I so enjoyed arranging the last one that this time I am looking for a volunteer to arrange the next one. Seriously the last one was a great success and achieved a good deal, and it would be nice to repeat it.

Annual Dinner tickets will be on sale soon. The first was a great success, apart from the noisy disco, and we are hoping that the next one will be an even greater success.

My personal wishes for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous ringing New Year.

David Phillipson
Chairman

* The editor apologises for holding up production of the newsletter by firstly moving house (23 Frankston Avenue, Stony Stratford, MK11 1DR, Tel: MK 561307) and secondly moving work (MK Archaeology Unit, 16 Erica Road, Stacey Bushes, Tel: MK 312475).

This issues gold stars go to Bob Winstanley who sent in his article early and Sheila Watts whos neatly typed contribution appeared by return of post.

Ros Tyrrell

A Word (or three) from the Secretary

Well, here we are again almost at the start of a new year, with a new diary of events to look forward to.

It is very pleasing to see how much is going on around the Branch, I am sure there are more full reports elsewhere, but here is a brief round up:

EMBERTON (see Sheila Watts' contribution)

OLNEY

Chas Knight is back in action after his short stay in hospital and its all systems go at Olney on Thursday nights from 7.30.

MILTON KEYNES VILLAGE

After contact with various ringing authorities not least of whom was David Phillipson, the PCC, hope to launch a project to carry out tower repairs which will make the bells ringable again.

Watch this space for more information, I am sure support for their fund raising ventures can be counted on from the Branch and Guild.

STOWE

Again the ringing and church authorities have led the way into discussions to augment the existing 5 by the addition of a treble, probably located on a Grillave above the existing frame.

DOWNS BARN

The bells of Kingstone have been purchased and placed in storage at Taylor's foundry. The Downs Barn appeal needs a sizable sum to have them installed and offers of help in either fundraising or steel fabrication (the frame is likely to be a DIY project) will be most appreciated.

I am sure to have missed some points - and I apologise for this - it is not intentional.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a most favourable New Year.

BARN DANCE - FEB 13th - AT THE CROSS + STABLE - BAR + BAND
TICKETS FROM ANDREW KING

A M

1988 DIARY OF EVENTS

Located in the newsletter as a loose sheet is the 1988 Diary of Events, produced most ably by Godfrey.

If tower captains/correspondants could note the dates when their towers are provisionally identified for a Branch event, and let me know if it is or is not available for use, as soon as possible, it would make my job so much easier.

Major events like the Branch/ODG striking contests and Quarterly meetings I will deal with as I have this year - no, I'll try to do it better!

STOP
PRESS!

ANNUAL DINNER

The North Bucks Annual Dinner will happen on 20th February 1988.

Details are not yet available, ie venue, time or price, but speakers will be ODG Master - Ron Thorne and North Bucks President Venerable John Bone. Notices to each tower will be out by Christmas.

EMBERTON RINGS OUT ONCE AGAIN

I'm pleased to be able to report that the Tower at All Saints, Emberton, is now safe for ringing.

On Sunday 6th September the local band were able to ring for Sunday Service - something we had been unable to do for a full year, and on Thursday 10th September we celebrated with a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Minor, rung by local ringers and those who had supported our "towerless" year.

My thanks must be recorded for the generous grants towards the repairs from the Borough of Milton Keynes, Bucks County Council, Bucks Historic Churches Trust and, of course, our own Branch. Due to their generosity and village fundraising, it proved unnecessary for me to plague everybody with sponsorship forms for the proposed sponsored Peal at Olney (The Peal was attempted, but unfortunately was lost).

So ... come and see our new west wall archway, new tiled floor, and even new ropes on Sundays 9.15 - 9.45 a.m., or the changed practice night of Fridays 7.45 - 9.00 p.m.

Sheila Watts

QUARTER PEALS AT ALL SAINTS, EMBERTON

10th September, 1987
1284 Plain Bob Minor

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. L. Bendelow | 4. Sheila Watts |
| 2. A.D. Osborne | 5. G.L. Foat |
| 3. O. Warren | 6. D. Phillipson (C) |

First Quarter Peal away from cover - 1.

In thanksgiving for the re-opening of the tower after major repairs, and with best wishes to Lawrence Bendelow, leaving for Barnfield College, Luton.

31st October, 1987
1284 Plain Bob Minor

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. L. Bendelow | 4. Judy Crocker |
| 2. G.L. Foat | 5. B.D. Hird |
| 3. A.D. Osborne | 6. D. Phillipson (C) |

For the Patronal Festival, and to welcome Judy Crocker to the All Saints Band.

A PEAL AT GT LINFORD

21st November 1987, 2h 57 (16)

5040 Cambridge Surprise Minor (7 different extents)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Christine Marchbank | 4. Doug Hird |
| 2. Ron Snack | 5. Alan Marchbank |
| 3. Bob Winstanley | 6. Bill Yates (C) |

A Sixth birthday compliment to Colin Snack

BP BELLRINGING SOCIETY VISIT MILTON KEYNES

On October 3rd the BP Bellringing Society enjoyed a day in Milton Keynes. When the trip was being organised, it was noticed that one or two eyebrows were raised and sentiments such as "We trust that this is nothing to do with the forthcoming privatisation" expressed, so perhaps it should be explained that the Society is composed of current or past employees of any BP company, and that there is no intention of expanding it into the country's largest association by opening membership to shareholders. In fact the Society was founded after an appeal for ringers for the BP annual Carol Service at St. Giles Cripplegate was answered in sufficient numbers of other ringing events to appear feasible.

The morning ringing was at Simpson and Woughton (people being amazed at the similarity of the Brian Baldwins who met them at each tower) and Bletchley (where, after a touch of Bristol failed to prosper, the very young son of a member added to the canon of "He's fallen in the water" sayings by announcing "They've stopped"). After lunch, they rang for a wedding at Stony Stratford, but moved on to Calverton before the bagpipes started up. At Thornborough they were converted to the idea that steel bells can have their charms. A very pleasant day concluded with ringing at Whaddon and Shenley, and the Society would like to express its gratitude to the incumbents and ringers at all the towers visited.

Contributed by Bob Winstanley

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH SIX BELL STRIKING CONTEST 1987

All Saints, Calverton (11 ½ cwt) on May 30th had to be called off after the clapper of the tenor fell out while our chairman was ringing (for Emberton).

St Mary the Virgin Clifton Reynes (10-2-14) on August 15th was the setting for the replay. The various bands gathered on a pleasantly sunny afternoon, wishing we had organised a picnic. This of course would have spoiled our chances of good weather so perhaps it was as well we hadn't.

Our judges were Martyn and Kate Mariot from Bedford and the tower stewards were Alan Marchbank, Chris Murphy and David Phillipson.

The bands in the order in which they rung:

1. Emberton (call Changes) had 117 faults and came 5th.
David Phillipson, Sheila Watts, Lawrence Bendelow, Justine Bendelow, Rebecca Lewis, Celia Lewis.
2. Gt Linford & Old Wolverton (Bob Doubles) had 58 faults and came 2nd
Christine Marchbank, Alan Marchbank, Deborah Watson, Heather Beck, John Randall, Ros Tyrrell.
3. Buckingham (Gradsire) had 46 faults and came 1st.
WA Yates, RW Yates, George Holland, Andrew Roberts, Jeff Orchard, Peter Nicholson.
4. Bradwell (Bob Doubles) had 86 faults and came 3rd
Christine, Gordon and Ross Abbott, Andrew King, Jenny Brockman, Derek Stainsby.
5. Branch All Stars (I Don't remember what they rang I'm afraid) had 96 faults and came 4th.
This was a scratch band of various ringers including Ron Snack and others whose names I seem not to have made a note of!

The Branch Chairman thanked the judges and hoped they had not been too uncomfortable in a distant corner of the church yard. We are grateful to them for their perceptive comments and constructive criticisms. Thanks were also offered to the incumbent of Clifton Reynes for allowing us to use the bells and to the Branch Secretary for organising the contest.

Congratulations to the winners Buckingham who should have gone on to represent the Branch at the ODG Six Bell Competition. It turned out that they had a long standing arrangement to ring a peal at Grantham on the same day, so the band who were runners up were lined up for this honour (More of this follows later).

Gt Linford/Old Wolverton received the St Laurences'/St Andrews Challenge Shield and Emberton were presented with the broken stay.

The O.D.G. Six Bell Striking Contest 3.10.1987

As a result of Buckinghams prior engagement the band from Gt Linford & Old Wolverton gathered with some trepidation for the first heat. This was at St. Lawrence the Martyr, Combe, Oxon (12.10.15) . We competed against

1. Wokingham who rang Grandisire Doubles and made 57 faults
2. Kidlington who rang Cambridge Minor and made 50 faults
3. Aston Clinton who rang Grandsire Doubles and made 240 faults
4. Gt Linford/Old Wolverton we rang Plan Bob Doubles and made 147 faults
5. Stanton in the Vale who rang Plain Bob Minor and made 66 faults.

The other heat was rung at Stonesfield after which everyone gathered for tea and judging at Northleigh.

The following bands went forward to the final at St Marys' Northleigh (9-13-15): Thatcham, Kidlington, Aston Clinton, Appleton, Wokingham and Amersham.

I am afraid we did not stay till the judging of the final. After listening to some interesting ringing we began to feel the evening chill, and realised that it must be opening time!

The winners and placings of the final will appear in ODD BOB which will be out shortly.

It struck me that harvest festival weekend is a very pleasant time to be visiting country churches. Combe church was particularly attractively bedecked.

Ros Tyrrell

EASTHAMPSTEAD '87

Every year the hardworking Education Committee of the O.D.G. organise the weekend Ringing Course at Easthampstead Park. This has grown to be a high point in the year for many of the helpers and even some of the students look forward to it!

The Course lasts for three days and can be divided into three main sections:

During the daytime seven or eight ringing groups disappear to towers in the area to ring together in their chosen method. Groups vary from Plain Hunt to Stedman and Surprise.

After dinner there are a number of optional streams such as Tower Maintenance, Handbell Ringing or Conducting for Beginners.

Before Dinner the Bar saw a steady trade but after the option sessions it really comes into business. Mass tune ringing on handbells, community singing and stories and knowledge shared all require that liquid stimulation! To many the friendships made and renewed are the most important part of the weekend.

There is a little time left between midnight and seven a.m. to study your methods and catch up on sleep.

1987 was my second year at Easthampstead and I saw more of the challenges that the organiser have to face. Arranging towers for eight groups with six or more sessions each; getting helpers for each group who not only know more than the students but can work with the group instructor; dealing with broken clappers and ropes; keeping the more boisterous younger members under control.

A great deal of effort is put into making the Course a "Learning Experience", why not go yourself next year?

I will happily give you a further insight into a most enjoyable occasion.

Godfrey Foat

DEAR UNCLE BARRY

(The North Bucks Problem Corner)

In this, hopefully, regular section of the Branch Newsletter we invite you to seek advice and information from one of our experts. Please send your questions to the editor who will pass them on.

Dear Uncle Barry,

Which is the biggest Bell in Britain?

The heaviest bell is 'Great Paul' at Saint Paul's Cathedral, it weighs over 16ton 14cwt. The heaviest ringing bell is 'Emmanuel' at Liverpool Cathedral which weighs 4ton 2cwt. Oxford has 'Great Tom' which was the heaviest bell in England when cast in 1680, it weighs 6ton 4cwt and sounds wonderful.

Dear Uncle Barry,

The ringing in our tower is not that good, we can tell that something is wrong but cannot always work out what! Our tower Captain keeps telling us to 'listen to your striking'... but what does he mean?

It sounds as if your tower Captain is not sure himself if you are having to ask me!

Ringling should be to an even beat, the gap between each bell sounding should be the same and there should be an 'extra' gap before the treble rings at handstoke. So rounds should sound:

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 . 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 . 1 2

You should listen to the gap between your bell and the bell in front and then compare this with the gap between the two bells in front of you. If they are not the same then you must either ring closer or later until the sound is even. Do not forget to listen to both Hand and Back strokes, they often need different pulls to get it to sound right.

One well known peal ringer 'nods' every bell while he is ringing and seeks a perfect metronomic rhythm, if you can get to think this way then you will be able to put yourself right and also help other to improve by telling them what they are doing wrong and how to correct. If you are going to comment always be constructive and avoid general comment.

Dear Uncle Barry,

I hope one day to be invited to ring a Peal. Should I wear any special clothes or eat special food beforehand?

Wear clothes that you have tried and are comfortable in. Do not drink too much before a peal - it lasts a long time. No special food is required although there are many who swear by a very hot Curry!

R N E H P E T S L E N I R E H T A K
 Y J A M E S B W E M E L O H T R A B
 T H Y J L B E O R F I R M I N I N G
 R O S S E F N O C E H T D R A W D E
 A P G B A V E L E L Y O U E R A M S
 M E X I C V D A N I T R A M V U N T
 E N T P H O I S T X I T E I G O A N
 H H T G A S C O U R N V D G O S O I
 T E N O D U T T U E I S P I I M J A
 E K J U D E L L E R R Y T U I T V S
 G U T H L A C N I H T I W S R E N L
 R L T N A N T H O N Y S N E E S I L
 O S W A W R E T E P L H B E N L O A
 E V E S S A M O H T O U T H E R I D
 G R E G O R Y P D J H E L E N O O G

BELLWORD SQUARE

Anthony	Giles	Luke
All Saints	Gregory	Martin
Bartholemew	Guthlae	Oswald
Benedict	Hubert	Peter
Chadd	Helen	Paul
David	Holy Trinity	Remigins
Ebbs	James	Swithin
Edward the Confessor	Joan	Stephen
Firmin	John	Saviour
Faith	Jude	Simon
George The Martyr	Katherine	Thomas