



In Touch

November 2000

Inside this issue

Guild 6-Bell Competition	3
North Bucks -V- Towcester	5
Quarters	6
Brain Benders	8
Hungerford Weekend	9
Bill's Birthday	10
A Weekend Trip?	11
The Big Teach	13
Quarterly Minutes	14
Calendar 2000/01	16

Quarterly Meeting at Fenny Stratford Saturday 2nd December 2000



An old photo of St Martin, Fenny Stratford
c.1875 - now 6 bells, 8-0-4

In 1724, Browne Willis, Lord of the Manor, laid the foundation stone of the new chapel at Fenny Stratford in the parish of Bletchley. Work proceeded, and in 1727 the first bell, "a gift from Gloucestershire", was hung in the tower. In 1823 the chapel was much enlarged and improved to cope with a thriving congregation. In 1834 Fenny Stratford quarrelled with Bletchley. The dispute was taken to the Archdeacon, who declared Fenny as completely separate from Bletchley and an independent ecclesiastical Parish. From that date the records always refer to the church and not the chapel. The Revd. A H Barrow was appointed in 1883 and proved an energetic Rector - installing a new clock and five new bells from Gillett & Co., Croydon, in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. These were recast in 1912 by Messrs. Bowell of Ipswich and placed in a new frame. *Church Bells of Buckinghamshire* by Cocks states:

The Curfew is tolled on the tenor, for a few minutes nightly at 8 pm, during the winter

Death Knell: as soon as notice is sent to the clerk

On Sundays, for Services, the tenor is rung for ten minutes, then all the bells are chimed. The tenor is also rung for a few minutes after the Morning Service.

Ring on chief Church Festivals. Tenor rung for Vestry Meetings.

There is a small endowment (land) for ringing the Curfew

Quarterly Meeting

3.30 Ringing
4.30 Service
5.00 Tea
5.45 Business Meeting
Followed by evening ringing

Names for tea to:
Mrs Pat Perkins
by 29th November 2000
Tel: 01908-642159

Please DO NOT park in the chip shop car park next door to the church—there is a public car park off George Street (further up Aylesbury Street on the opposite side to the church)

Who's Who 2000/2001

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The Chairman's Soap Box

On Change

At a recent meeting to discuss next years census, an observation was made that local populations are now so varied in their demographic composition that any sort of classification is likely to be misleading. In fact it seemed likely that the only groups of people that share common characteristics are members of clubs.

It struck me that this might not always be the case for bell ringers, or perhaps just for areas like North Bucks. Since I learned to ring in the 1970s the population of North Bucks has increased massively and the economy changed from largely rural to a major part of the national economy. With an increase in population comes diversity. Both of these are now characteristics of the membership of our branch. I believe that this partly explains why some ringers don't associate with others. Of course, the size of the branch probably explains more of this. We can't make ringers more friendly if they don't want to be, but we can create opportunities to meet. The branch practices and meetings were originally set up to do this. It doesn't seem that they were intended to prompt great improvements in ringing. Striking competitions should lead to better ringing though this challenge has historically put off North Bucks bands more than in neighbouring branches. Those that have worked have been of a more social nature such as the competition with the Towcester Branch. Over the years other social events have been tried. Dinners, barbeques etc. We haven't had a dinner for some time and it seems that the idea is now ready for revival. Watch *In Touch* for details of an opportunity to meet other demographic types.

Doug Hird

**Next Issue Copy Date:
Saturday, 20th January 2000**



We seem to have been particularly good at Quarters in the past three months. This was helped by the Queen Mother's 100th birthday, of course, but congratulations go to those who achieved some notable firsts, particularly amongst the conductors. I shall look forward to receiving the Christmas Quarters and those for the 'real' Millennium.

The next issue of *In Touch* (February 2001) will be my last for the moment as I shall not stand for re-election at the AGM in March. Now is the time to start thinking about whether you could take on the job of Editor for a few issues. Remember that you can really 'do your own thing' - it doesn't have to look like this or any of the previous editions, and it would be good to see some fresh ideas. Do contact me if you'd like to discuss what's involved (without commitment)!

Sheila Watts, Editor

Hanslope rub shoulders with the big boys!

(or the Oxford Guild 6 Bell Striking Competition)

On Saturday
7th October,

by Natalie Green

bells were more
difficult than Gt.
Haseley and we

five ringers from Hanslope plus Alan Marchbank from Gt. Linford travelled to Gt. Haseley to take part in the ODG 6-bell striking competition. As winners of the branch event, this was Hanslope's second attempt at competing with the "big boys" – the likes of Reading and High Wycombe. The guild competition consists of two heats, the top 3 from each heat going into the final. Our aim this year was simply to do better than last year, when we were placed fourth in our heat.

At Gt. Haseley we were the first to ring and our strategic plan was put into action. Much thought and discussion had gone into "what to ring" (Grandsire Doubles) and "who should ring which bell". However our complete lack of pre-competition practice was notably illustrated by Nick, who asked this question just before we were about to ring: "what do you do at a single – is it thirds from the back?" How we fell about! What we all want to know is, Nick, was this your attempt at humour to calm our nerves, or had you really forgotten what to do?

Anyway, we rang well – certainly better than last year, and in our relaxed mood we wandered the country lanes with canine mascot Scrappy and listened to the other bands. The band from Reading, last year's winners, made an impression for two reasons: firstly they made a method mistake in what was otherwise a very fine touch of Cambridge Minor and secondly, one of their band displayed unabashed confidence by stating that the heat was simply a dress-rehearsal for the final. Now call me a simple village chick (if you dare!), but I am not ashamed to say that Hanslope's attitude and expectations were rather more humble – just to qualify for the final would be an achievement in itself.

The action moved to Brightwell Baldwin: to the village hall for tea and cakes (tasty) and then to the church for the results of the heats (also quite tasty). To our surprise, we qualified in 2nd place for the final – but even more encouraging was the fact that with 106 faults, we were only 5 faults behind Reading. Now we were in with the big boys: the full line-up for the final being Reading, High Wycombe, Aston Clinton, Faringdon, Hanslope and Newbury. (Footballing equivalent: Man. Utd., Liverpool, Leeds, Chelsea, Barnet and Arsenal). In the church, people could be heard mumbling "where is Hanslope?" and "who are these Hanslope ringers?"

Listening to the first 4 bands was unnerving: the standard of ringing was very high and all I hoped for was that we wouldn't disgrace ourselves and finish a poor sixth. Just as the pub was about to open (Nick and Ian had been sitting outside for half an hour, looking thirsty) it was our turn to ring. Our two minutes practice was poor – the

couldn't get a decent rhythm going. But what followed was quite extraordinary: as the minutes ticked by and the changes tapped along, the bells were ringing out some superbly struck music. None of us could explain what had happened, or why, but we had definitely given our very best effort. Even more extraordinary, as we left the church, other ringers were congratulating us on our ringing and it then occurred to us that we really had rung well and might even be certified in the top three.

Two judges from Winchester praised the exceptional standard of ringing and briefly commented on each band. Then they announced the results in reverse order: 6th place Newbury, 5th place Faringdon, 4th place Aston Clinton. Now we were on the edges of our pews. 3rd place Reading (a collective intake of breath from surprised ringers and I nearly fell off my pew). Then the judges announced that the marks for the final two bands were very, very close and they had actually disagreed on the winner. To resolve a winner they had averaged their scores, with High Wycombe winning by the narrowest of margins and Hanslope in second place.

So there it was: the humble village band had surprised not only themselves, but also a number of other ringers in the guild. Someone said that it was good to see a new name on the certificates. Not many people had heard of us – we don't ring peals, we don't have a 12-bell tower and we don't feature much in *The Ringing World*, but on this particular day we were proud to make a name for ourselves.

The band:

- 1 **Roy Keeves**
(overcame his deep-rooted inhibitions as a treble ringer, due to constant reminders of comments made in a recent striking competition: you done a good job, Roy)
- 2 **Alan Marchbank**
(sterling performance on the odd-struck bell at Brightwell Baldwin)
- 3 **Natalie Green**
(not bad for a girlie)
- 4 **Nick Gray**
(ate lots of cake and once again fulfilled his potential to say something outrageous at an entirely inappropriate moment)
- 5 **Jonathan Griggs**
(cool-hand" conductor – the mover, the groover, masterminded the strategic plan)
- 6 **Ian Thompson**
(tenor ringer par excellence, displayed uncharacteristic control both during and after ringing)

Ringing and Cadbury World Outing

Nicola King

A packed mini-bus and Andrew and Lyndsey in a car toured Birmingham on a sunny August day. We visited the eighties of Edgbaston and Harborne before lunch, had lunch on the shady green at King's Norton and then girded our loins for the two ten bell towers of King's Norton and Northfield. Picking eight and ten bell towers might have seemed a bit ambitious, but it gave everyone who wanted to a good chance to practice their plain hunting on larger numbers and on different bells. The bells were all so well maintained that there were no handling problems.

After the ringing everyone went to Cadbury World, which was a bit of a laugh and then we had singsong in the bus on the way home. Thanks to Alex for bringing her tapes!

Here's a picture of everyone except me!



Extra Practices?

Gareth Grayson

There are a few practices that could be of use to people that are interested in the learning curve of ringing. At the moment we appear to have set up a structure of ringing in the area that looks like this:

2nd Tuesday of the month: Downs Barn

3rd Wednesday of the month: Newport Pagnell

4th Thursday of the month: Olney

The idea of these practices is simple, to gather people together and ring what we can, the best we can. At the moment we are working on Cambridge and Yorkshire Major as a basis for the advancing practice, and plenty of doubles and minor methods to fit in with other people's needs.

Given that these are organised roughly two weeks before, it is a good idea to 'phone the Chairman or myself for up to date information. Our numbers are in Who's Who inside the front page.

Ye Belfry Law

If your bell you fail to stand
Into your pocket put your hand,
And take therefrom without delay
The fine which you will have to pay.
For this and each repeat offence
The penalty is ten new pence.
If your sally you should miss
Ten pence you'll also pay for this.
But if an oath or curse you make
After some cock-eyed mistake,
The rest of us will loudly cheer
For you will have to buy the beer!

*Spotted in the ringing chamber at
Aldbourn, Wiltshire*

Guild Ten Bell Competition



You can't win them all! North Bucks came fourth out of four branches entering the striking competition at St Thomas, Oxford, in early September.

The test piece was 216 Grandsire Caters, and the Kingston-upon-Thames judges placed the teams as follows:

Reading Branch – 92%

East Berks & South Bucks Branch – 81%

Old North Berks Branch – 74.8%

North Bucks Branch – 62.5%

Our Ringing Master admitted that we would have probably done better if the band had practised together beforehand, and if a bob had not been called late!

On a more positive note, it should be borne in mind that:

- We were the only band that did not have a ten bell tower in their branch
- Eleven branches of the Guild did not manage to enter at all

Our thanks go to the North Bucks ringers for giving up their Saturday to represent us: Gareth Grayson, Roger King, Doug Hird, Jonathan Griggs, Alan Marchbank, David Philipson, Ian Thompson, Roy Keeves, Richard Stanworth, John Stanworth.

North Bucks beats Towcester Branch (mostly)

Haslope were the hosts for this year's Inter-Branch Competition, held on 29th July. On home ground, North Bucks felt quietly confident, and we were hopeful of winning both the overall trophy, and the George Holland Trophy, which is awarded to the winners of the Stedman Triples section.

On the day, the judge, Jason Carter from Moulton in Northants, awarded the overall trophy to North Bucks for winning two out of three sections (Call Changes and Cambridge), and the Stedman trophy to Towcester. It was good to see so many North Bucks ringers turning up to compete and we were pleased to win back the Inter-Branch Trophy. Here's to next year for the Stedman!



Richard Stanworth receives the Inter-Branch Trophy



The North Bucks teams, pictured with the Stedman Trophy (which they didn't win!)

Results:

	Call Changes	Cambridge	Stedman Triples
North Bucks	28 faults	17 faults	48 faults
Towcester	40 faults	32½ faults	39 faults

The North Bucks bands were:

Call Changes
Catherine Stanworth
Sheila Blenkhorn
Chrissie Cable
Helen Stanworth
Catherine Stacy
John Stanworth
Gareth Grayson
David Middleton

Cambridge Minor
Sheila Watts
Derek Stainsby
Jill Joyce
David Joyce
Jonathan Griggs
Doug Hird

Stedman Triples
Jonathan Griggs
Natalie Green
Richard Stanworth
Roy Keeves
Ian Thompson
Nick Gray
Doug Hird
Steve Crane

The Ringing Master Writes...

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.

Look in the calendar at the back of the newsletter for the dates of the practices, but in particular the next

focus on call changes is at Milton Keynes Village on 15th December.

Remind your instructor to bring his/her Ringer's Diary – they may get called upon to ring a method in the diary at short notice just to keep them on their toes!

Branch practices will always be tailored to be beneficial to the ringers present, whatever their ability. We will always ring plain hunt, plain bob and Grandsire 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.

Training

There are a number of ways in which we can help you progress in ringing:

- **Arranging a Ringing School** – either plain hunt or plain bob. If you would like to attend then please let the Ringing Master know. Dates will be arranged once we have some

attendees. The school normally runs for about three hours on a Saturday afternoon.

- **Helping at your tower.** If you would like help 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. If we come to help then we will expect to run the ringing and attempt to structure the session to give most benefit to those present.
- **Bell Handling Workshop** – If you would like help with ironing out bell handling problems then the Ringing Master is willing to give advice or arrange a workshop.

Tower Captains – if you have ringers who would benefit from further training which you cannot give them in your own tower, then nominate them for a branch training session when we can give them some intensive tuition and practice.

Quarters



Quarters rung to celebrate the
100th birthday of Her Majesty
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

St Mary, Shenley
Friday 4th August 2000
1260 Doubles (2m)
1 Becky Fawcett
2 Lorraine Brookman
3 Ann Birch
4 Peter Tribble
5 John Brookman (C)
6 Ted Fawcett
1st as Conductor

St Peter, Stoke Goldington
Friday 4th August 2000
1260 Cambridge & Plain Bob Minor
(720 Cambridge, 540 Plain Bob)
1 Sheila Watts
2 Roy Keeves
3 Ian Thompson
4 Steve Crane
5 Nick Gray
6 Jonathan Griggs (C)

St Laurence, Bradwell
Saturday 5th August 2000
1260 Doubles (480 St Simon,
480 Plain Bob, 300 Grandsire)
1 Christine Abbott
2 Jenny Brookman
3 Jill Joyce
4 Brian Newman
5 David Joyce (C)
6 Gordon Abbott

Ss Peter & Paul, Newport Pagnell
Saturday 5th August 2000
1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor
1 Catherine Stacy
2 Peter Tribble
3 Gareth Grayson
4 Doug Hird
5 Alan Marchbank
6 Barry Eglesfield (C)
Rung on the back 6

St James, Hanslope
Sunday 6th August 2000
1264 Plain & Little Bob Major, spliced
1 Natalie Green
2 Jenni Mountford
3 Sheila Watts
4 Nick Gray
5 Ian Thompson
6 Roy Keeves
7 Steve Crane
8 Jonathan Griggs (C)
Also for Morning Service
1st Quarter Plain & Little for 3,4,5,6,7,8
(and as Conductor)



Assumption of the BVM,
Lillingstone Lovell
Wednesday 14th June 2000
1260 Doubles (3m/5v)
1 Elaine Kister
2 M Woodcock
3 R Jones (C)
4 D Moore
5 R Day
For Pentecost

Assumption of the BVM, Wavendon
Wednesday 28th June 2000
1320 Norwich Surprise Minor
1 Bob Winstanley
2 Mary Rixon
3 Richard Casserley
4 Colin Walter
5 James Ingham
6 Barry Cowper (C)
By the Chiltern Midweek Group
To celebrate the 32nd Wedding
Anniversary of 4.

St Laurence, Bradwell
Monday 31st July 2000
1260 Doubles
(300 Stedman, 960 Plain Bob)
1 Jenny Brookman
2 David Joyce
3 Jill Joyce
4 Christine Cable (most methods)
5 Ian Green (C) (most m as C)
6 Brian Newman
To celebrate the Golden Wedding
Anniversary of John and Elizabeth
Lonsbrough

St Edmund, Maids Moreton
Friday 4th August 2000
1260 Grandsire Doubles
1 Helen Stanworth
2 Catherine Stanworth
3 Margaret Vince
4 John Stanworth
5 Michael Tinsley (C)
6 David Goodger
In memory of John Tudball
2—1st inside in method

St Peter, Tyringham
Sunday 20th August 2000
1260 Reverse Canterbury Doubles
1 Leigh Head
2 Charles Knight
3 Simon Head
4 Doug Hird
5 Gareth Grayson (C)
1st in method as Conductor

St Edmund, Maids Moreton
Friday 25th August 2000
1260 Grandsire Doubles
1 Shirley Webb
2 Helen Stanworth
3 Catherine Stanworth
4 Gerald Kingston
5 Richard Stanworth (C)
6 John Stanworth

Rung to celebrate the Wedding of
Michael John Tinsley and Caroline Ann
Raffell on Saturday 26th August 2000.
Also a 14th birthday compliment to
Catherine Stanworth and to celebrate
the seventh anniversary of her starting
to ring.

Cross & Stable, Downs Barn
Sunday 10th September
1260 Grandsire Doubles
1 Gareth Grayson
2 Catherine Stacy
3 Rachel Stacy
4 Nicki King
5 Doug Hird (C)
6 Daniel Morris
3—1st in method
6—1st Quarter

St Edmund, Maids Moreton
Sunday 24th September 2000
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1 Helen Stanworth
2 Catherine Stanworth
3 Andrew Spencer
4 Hugh Butler
5 John Stanworth
6 Richard Stanworth (C)

Rung to celebrate the Ruby Wedding
Anniversary of Hugh and Enid Butler,
married here on this day in 1960.
Also for the baptism of William James
Stuchbury (great grandson of the late
George Holland).

St Martin, Fenny Stratford
Sunday 15th October 2000
1260 Doubles (2m)
1 Daniel R Morris
2 Nicola A King
3 Catherine Stacy
4 Gareth D Grayson
5 B Douglas Hird (C)
6 Sarah Gordon
1—1st away from tenor
6—1st Quarter

Secretary's Snippets

Bellhandling Video

The branch 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.

Tower Contacts

Has there been change of officers/correspondent at your tower? Please remember to let the Secretary know of any changes - we have a duty under the data protection principles defined in the Data Protection Act to ensure the information we hold is accurate and up to date. Please help us to comply with this. **Unless you let her know now, the information currently held will be published in the Guild Annual Report for 2000.** Please also let her know about any changes to practice nights and Sunday ringing.

Guild Millennium Committee

This committee is still seeking reports, photos, etc about any special ringing events for this Millennium year. They are also interested in any special ringing for the 100th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Please send anything you may have to the branch secretary for forwarding to the committee.

Secretaries Meeting

Highlights from meeting attended by branch secretaries at Radley on 6th October -

- Branches agreed that no increase in subscription necessary at present, although there was discussion on the future of the 50p levy made for Millennium activities.
- The method for both Guild striking competitions next year will be Grandsire - in order to try and encourage as many entries as possible.
- The use of e-mail for distributing notices was discussed. There were reservations about its use but could be used where appropriate (see minutes of quarterly meeting for further details).
- Pudsey Appeal - this had been planned for 24th November but as BBC have moved date of *Children in Need* to 17th November the Peel appeal will run from 17th to 24th.

Peals

St John the Evangelist, Wicken
Saturday 5th August 2000
5088 Rutland Surprise Major (2h 56m)

- 1 Richard Yates
- 2 Charles Truman
- 3 Richard Stanworth
- 4 Andrew Spencer
- 5 James Linnell
- 6 Jason Carter
- 7 Nigel Williams (C)
- 8 Christopher Bulleid

Rung to celebrate the 80th Birthday of
William A Yates

Ss Peter and Paul, Buckingham
Saturday 21st October 2000
5040 Stedman Triples (3h 12m)
Comp. F H Dexter's No. 2 arrangement
of Thurstan's 4-part

- 1 James Linnell
- 2 Roger King
- 3 Richard C Stevens
- 4 Andrew J Spencer
- 5 B Douglas Hird
- 6 Richard S Stanworth
- 7 Richard W Yates (C)
- 8 Michael J Tinsley

To celebrate the second Millennium,
and as a farewell compliment to the Rector
the Revd. Canon David Meara on his
departure to St Brides, Fleet Street



Zoe Harmer, pictured above on the left, arrived on 26th August 2000 weighing in at 7lb 2oz. Congratulations to Carole and Tim.

Julia Louise Crane, featured here on the right with her parents Kay and Steve, was born on 4th October, weighing 6lb 9oz. This was Julia's first visit to the belfry, where she unfortunately witnessed a quarter peal attempt of Double Norwich Court Bob Major come to grief fairly near the end....

New Arrivals!

In the May issue of *In Touch*, the impending arrival of two new ringers for the Hanslope band was announced. Four months or so later, here's the result!



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

BRAIN BENDERS

MORE ANAGRAMS!

(with thanks to the
Stanworth family)

The letters in each phrase can be
rearranged to make the name of a
well-known Branch bellringer.

How many can you work out?

Dig freely barrels
Her noble ash link
Carried his handle
Jars and clonk
A hedonism
Briar myths
Man loch to loom
Yes revoke
The hurl bug
Win banal bird

?

This smart
little chap
grew up to
become one
of the more
accomplished
ringers in
the Branch

Who is he?



BRAIN BENDERS ANSWERS

FROM THE AUGUST ISSUE

MIXED NOTICES

The Question:

Here are five warning notices which you might find in any church tower, but the words have got mixed up. Can you sort them out? There are three words to each notice.

CLOCK IN DANGER, DURING PROGRESS UP, PEAL HAMMERS HEAD, RELEASE RINGING BELLS
SILENCE YOUR MIND

The Answer:

DANGER BELLS UP, MIND YOUR HEAD, PEAL IN PROGRESS, RELEASE CLOCK HAMMERS
SILENCE DURING RINGING

The "Who am I?" picture: Simon Head, Wavendon

Back in November 1999 it seemed an awfully good idea to volunteer to organise the annual bellingring weekend for Hanslope tower and their friends! Several months later, and still no suitable accommodation found, we were wondering we we had been a little hasty...

A Weekend in Hungerford

Sheila Watts & Sheila Ware

Gordon Ellis, now unattached members of the Branch living in Hertfordshire.

The last tower of the day was the six at Shalbourne. We had been hearing dreadful things most of the day about them—longest draft in Wiltshire, you

have to be good to ring there, etc. Some of us were thinking it might be prudent to head straight back to the hotel, but we were pleasantly surprised and enjoyed our time there.



Mildenhall, Wiltshire 6, 7-0-26

In the end, the Internet came up trumps with a web page for the Marshgate Cottage Hotel in Hungerford, Berkshire (just down the Canal from Hungerford Church). The right number of rooms to house the fourteen of us and even a welcome for Scrappy the dog.

We proceeded to organise a fairly relaxed ringing itinerary, with plenty of spare time to look around Hungerford and the villages of east Wiltshire.

The weekend (29th September 2000) duly arrived, and we all met up at Compton Parva (6) in Berkshire on the Friday afternoon for the first ring. It was good to be joined by Lindy and

Wiltshire (8). A lovely thatched village, a beautiful church, and bells that were awfully oddstruck. We struggled! BBC Wiltshire Radio were doing a live broadcast down the road, and we went out on air—perhaps it was just as well we were broadcasting to Wiltshire only..... The first English handbells were cast in the village, as were three of the Church bells.

After lunch it was on to Mildenhall (pronounced Minal). This was a real treat, the church featuring in Simon Jenkins' book *England's 1000 Best Churches*. The exterior is modest, but it has one of England's most eccentric Regency interiors. The box pews are shoulder high, and there are twin pulpits. The bells were good, but the most interesting feature for many was the unusual 'crib sheet' arrangement hanging at eye level between the ropes.

Then it was on to Pewsey and Milton Lilbourne, both sixes, where we enjoyed some good ringing.

Ringling over, we returned to Hungerford to freshen up for the evening meal at The Pelican, Froxfield. A festive meal was enjoyed by all and the 'arranged' part of the weekend was over.

Sunday morning ringing was entirely optional—the tower captain at Hungerford had said that anybody was welcome to join the local band at 9.30 a.m. Seven of us duly turned up, to find a breathless tower captain saying she had only just remembered we might be coming—they had cancelled Sunday ringing due to lack of ringers. We were there, so we rang with her on the eight, and she was pleased. Two of our number decided to stay to the Service, but were bemused to find an empty Church. The service time had been changed for Harvest Festival! We had a pleasant 'grab' ringing for a Service that didn't exist....

All in all, it was an excellent weekend—lovely weather, beautiful churches and villages, good company, and good ringing. Here's to next year's expedition!



Tower-dog Scrappy came too



The 'crib sheets' at Mildenhall



Gerald Kingston decided that one party for Bill Yates' 80th birthday was not enough. So he arranged a trip to the Great Central Railway to dine on one of the steam trains on 13th September. Richard Yates would drive the coach full of Bill's many friends. However, we were worried when fuel supplies began to dry

up. But the first passengers met the coach as it returned from Milton Keynes with a delivery of school children to Buckingham.

Richard assured us that he had enough fuel to drive us to Paris. We started the long journey round Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, picking up eager groups of ringers and friends dotted along the highway. Bill did not know anything about the trip, he thought he was having a quiet evening out with his son-in-law.

As we approached our final pick-up, Green's Norton, Richard warned us not to tell Bill our destination. Bill was astonished to see a coach arrive at his daughter's house and even more amazed to see the driver and all the passengers. When Bill enquired where we were going, his grandchildren had the good sense to tell him we were off to Alton Towers.

We set off north towards Loughborough. Against his sister's good advice, Richard decided to use the M1. We travelled about 10 miles in the next hour, because of the lorry blockades. A short cut through the Watford Gap service area was taken, and a cheer went up at the sight of the open road. We arrived at Loughborough, to the sight of the train fully steamed and impatient to be leaving. Sadly this meant we had to forgo the pleasure of the station bar, and lost our chance to socialise there and soak up the atmosphere.

Happy 80th Birthday, Bill

On board our first class dining compartments, we selected from the menu. The smartly dressed table staff served a top quality meal. We enjoyed the challenge of the soup course as we steamed along. Naturally, wine and beer, and port in due course were ordered and consumed. After the main course, the train reached a station and stopped for about 30 minutes. The station was set in the Edwardian age, with gaslights, old luggage and quaint equipment in the office areas. All those over 40, made comparisons with stations they had known in the old days.

When we reboarded, dessert and coffee were served. We reached the end of the line, the locomotive was coupled onto the other end of the train for the return trip. We all had a fabulous evening out, and we are very grateful to Bill for the excuse, Gerald for his idea and organisation, and Richard for driving. Our return journey on the M1 was quick and uneventful, just as it should be. I am sorry we were late and didn't have a chance to savour the first station, or make any of the train journey in daylight. As someone said it just means we'll have to go again...

Ann Fletcher



A Tale from Cranfield, Bedfordshire

A village that has waited 70 years to have its church bells ringing safely again has been thwarted just days from success, because English Heritage is concerned about the historical value of 10 decaying timber beams. The parishioners have wanted a new bellframe in the tower of Sts Peter & Paul, their 12th century, Grade I listed church, since 1930. The determination grew even stronger in 1997 when the church bells fell silent because the old frame was deemed too frail for ringing to continue.

Victory appeared to be within their grasp as work to install a metal bellframe neared completion. The old bells were due to return on October 2, a special

Millennium Bell had been cast, and invitations had been issued for a service of dedication. Then, floorboards in the tower were lifted to reveal the ancient oak floor beams. English Heritage decreed that the timbers were of such historical value that they could not be removed. Plans were halted.

The Revd Hugh Symes-Thompson, the rector, said: "The timbers were only put there as a means to an end, so bells could ring. It's the end we are trying to preserve, which is bells going on ringing, rather than bits of wood. If the bells aren't ringing, a little bit of what has been going on for centuries, the tradition of calling people to worship with bells, has stopped." He added: "No one gains any great benefit from the beams remaining up there. You can't easily see them. There's no public access to them, it's not safe." Cranfield's battle to restore bell ringing has now cost the village

about £90,000.

English Heritage ruled the beams, the longest about 30ft, the shortest about 8ft, were "contemporary with the bellframe and an integral part of it. The whole is rare and historically important. It should be preserved. The bellframe dates from around 1600 and also re-uses timbers from an earlier bellframe, which has been dated from between 1479 and 1507. It is our duty to preserve listed buildings. It should be possible for the beams to be preserved and the bells to be rehung."

The Church Council has unanimously resolved that if agreement with English Heritage is impossible, the matter should be taken to a Church of England consistory court.

Extracted from a Sunday Telegraph article, 15 October 2000

Over the Branch Border (please check these events before setting out!)

November			
4	3.00-5.30	Pavenham, Felmersham	Bedford District Meeting
11	6.30-8.30	Steeple Claydon	Central Bucks Practice
11	7.00-9.00	Greens Norton & Blakesley	Towcester Branch Practice
11		Quiz Night—Weedon	Peterborough Diocesan Guild
25	7.00	Brafield-on-the-Green	Northampton Branch Eucharist
December			
2	6.30-8.30	Biddenham	Bedford District Meeting
2	7 for 7.30	Towcester Town Hall	Towcester Branch Dinner
9	6.30-8.30	Soulbury	Central Bucks Practice
2001			
January			
13	6.30-8.30	Long Crendon	Central Bucks Practice
27	3.00-8.30	Roads	Towcester Branch AGM
27	4.00	Moulton	Northampton Branch AGM
February			
3		Dinton/Cuddington	Central Bucks AGM
10	2.30-4.30	Elstow	Bedford District Meeting
March			
10	6.30-8.30	Padbury	Central Bucks Practice
24	7.30	Kempston	Bedford District Barn Dance
April			
7	3.30-8.30	Goldington	Bedford District Quarterly Meeting
21	6.30-8.30	Swanbourne	Central Bucks Practice
May			
12	6.30-7.30	Granborough	Central Bucks Practice
12	7.30-8.30	North Marston	Central Bucks Practice
19		St Peter, Bedford	Bedfordshire Association AGM



Bright Ideas no. 1

A while ago, at a branch practice at Sherington, someone had the idea of ringing Cambridge Minor on 5. "You just ring as if the treble was there." Now, as we get to ring quite a lot as if the treble was there, it seemed possible. At least you know the treble is in the right place.

A logical extension of this has now been suggested. On a minor five, try the same thing but leaving a gap for the tenor. This makes it easier to conduct as you have now got a treble so it is easier to see where the lead ends are. There is one small problem. How to spot the calling positions? Indeed, who should call the bobs?

Doug Hird

Weekend Ringing Trip Advance Notice

I'm plotting a ringing weekend to the Welsh borders, probably during February or early March. This is planned to involve driving down on a Friday night and staying in a Youth Hostel for two nights (but there's no age restriction!). On Saturday there will be ringing at several towers and an evening meal out. And on Sunday we'll drive home fairly slowly, ringing at some more towers on the way. Likely cost per head is around £50 to cover the cost of hiring a mini-bus, the fuel, and Youth Hostel nights; food and tower donations will be extra. All ringers in the Branch are welcome!

If anyone would like firm details when I've got things organised and worked out proper costs, can they please contact me soon so I can see if this scheme is a runner.

Please email nicola_king@hotmail.com or 'phone 01908 614741 (there's an underscore between the nicola and the king bits of the email address).

Thanks.

Nicki King

Points from the Peals (and Quarters)

The Millennium peal at Buckingham was successful at the second attempt. The first attempt in January came to grief after the conductor mis-called it. He shall be nameless but has a well known local octogenarian for a father!

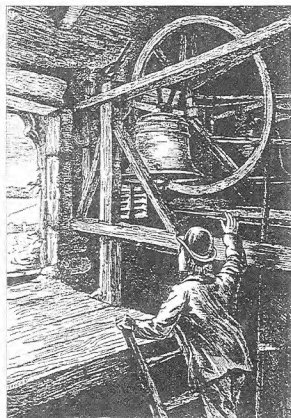
A quarter of Grandsire Triples was attempted at Buckingham after Michael and Caroline's Wedding on 26th August but it came to grief after two bells crossed over. A certificate recording the quarter the previous day at Maids Moreton was presented to them at the evening reception.

Hugh Butler was particularly pleased to ring the quarter peal at Maids Moreton on 24th September for his and Enid's Ruby wedding anniversary as they did not have the bells on their wedding day. Many of his family arrived to hear the last part of the quarter and thanked the rest of the band for taking the time to allow Hugh to ring on the anniversary. His grandchildren seemed particularly impressed with grandpa ringing the bells! A certificate has been given to Hugh and Enid recording the quarter peal.

Number Crunching

From the Belfry Notices
at Skipton, North Yorkshire

Bells	Changes	Time taken
1	1	2 seconds
2	2	5 seconds
3	6	15 seconds
4	24	1 minute
5	120	5 minutes
6	720	25 minutes
7	5,040	3 hours
8	40,320	24 hours
9	362,880	9 days
10	3,628,800	90 days
11	39,916,800	32 months
12	479,001,600	32 years



Liz Knight of Olney found this in *Ratcliff's 1898 Olney Almanack*. It advertises the booklet *Shut in to Serve* by Lydia Phillips (1s. 6d. cloth)

"A useful story, for boys, of the crippled son of a country squire. A simple tale, in which a little lad is made the means of causing a careless cynical man to think of truer and higher aims of life."

The Data Protection Act

To comply with the above Act, a new procedure will be followed when you renew your yearly subscription to the Guild, and when new members are elected.

On 1st January, the usual subscription reminder form will be sent to your tower correspondent so that your subs can be collected and returned to the Treasurer. However, in future we will also require the signature of each member on the form, giving consent to their details being stored by the Branch Officers. This procedure will be followed each year on renewal of membership.

Newly elected members must follow the same format, and copies of the new membership nomination form have been sent to your tower correspondent with *In Touch*.

The subscription reminder form and membership nomination form state:

"The information collected on this form will be published in the Guild Annual Report and will be held by the Branch Officers. It will be used solely for the legitimate purposes of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers and the North Bucks Branch. The information provided by you will NOT be used for mailing purposes nor passed on to third parties. Please sign below to confirm your consent to your personal data being processed in the manner set out above."

Do please contact the Secretary or myself if you have any queries.

Sheila Watts, Treasurer

This is an idea that some of us in the North East of the branch have been talking about for some time. The aim is to avoid some of the problems we all have with recruiting and retaining learners. For example, in a climate of instant results, learning to ring simply takes too long for many people. We also have difficulty retaining ringers where there are too few others at the same level and so lack a team spirit.

The Big Teach aims to overcome these by recruiting a lot of ringers all at once and teaching them in a weekend to be able to ring rounds. By the end of the weekend we, and they should have a good idea if ringing is for them, saving months

The Big Teach

by the current process. We should also retain a higher percentage of such a group than usual. These can then

choose from the various towers they will have enjoyed during the weekend. This event is centred on the North MK / Newport Pagnell area for convenience. If it works, there is no reason why other areas could not also get the same treatment, with a suitable rest for the teachers of course.

As you can see, the idea is still being formed. There may be issues and ideas we haven't thought of. If you have any thoughts, let Doug know.

Doug Hird

Structure	Itinerary
5 minutes on each stage. 6 learners at once – 33 minutes between goes, 2 goes per tower. Each learner gets 14 goes.	
Day 1 • Backstroke • Handstroke – Pulling off, letting go • Handstroke – Catching • Combined – Holding tail end, letting go • Combined – Catching • Combined – Debugging • Consolidation – Both strokes with help • Starting & Stopping – Holding on balance & standing Belfry visit – Newport Pagnell is the most practical	Day 1 Downs Barn – 9.00 – 10.45 Bradwell – 11.00 – 1.00 including Lunch Olney – 1.30 – 3.00 Newport – 3.30 – 5.00 Belfry – 5.00 – 6.00
Day 2 • Both strokes with help • Following adjacent rope with help • Following adjacent rope with help • Debugging style • Following adjacent rope with help Open Rounds with help	Day 2 Downs Barn – 11.30 – 2.00 including Lunch Great Linford 2.15 – 3.45 Emberton – 4.00 – 5.30 Debrief – 5.30 – 6.00
Advertising Posters 3 weeks before event Local press etc. 2 weeks before event Reminders in churches 1 week before event Target groups Youngsters in first years of secondary education Their parents Younger people moved into MK area Dates January / February 2001 Aim to miss Church, Branch, School or local events	Recruiting Church talks 2 weeks before event – handouts needed School talks during following week – handouts needed Aim for 40 in total. If too many could do a second weekend. Requirement to be able to ring on Sunday mornings Recruit from churches: Downs Barn, Bradwell, Great Linford, Newport Pagnell Emberton, Olney Recruit from schools: Ousedale Stantonbury
Arrangements Bells silenced prior to arrival Video link of bells while ringing to be set up A pre-course session for teachers to set a consistent teaching approach Numbered, named colour coded badges to keep track of who has done what Will need to collect money for lunch, progress cards etc. Transport may be an issue if there are a lot of younger learners without parents. May need to hire a minibus. Child Protection etc. Forms for parents to fill in Forms for teachers to fill in	Resources Will need other resources between goes. Explanatory sheets on: • Rounds • Fittings • Maintenance • Call changes • Methods • History • Intro to ringing • Intro to the ODG and North Bucks Branch • Local practice nights Access to the branch web site (and others). Demo bells – Stony Stratford, Newport, Stoke Goldington, Olney Simulator software

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held at Lillingstone Lovell on 2nd September 2000

Chairman's Welcome

Doug Hird welcomed everyone to Lillingstone Lovell for the Quarterly meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Received from the Maids Moreton Band, Ann Fletcher, Andrew Spencer, Jonathan Spencer, Sheila Watts, Sheila Ware, David & Jill Joyce, Chrissy Cable, Roy Keeves, Sheila Blenkhorn, Sue Russell, Peter & Evelyn Nicholson, Bill Yates and Derek White.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were published in the August edition of *In Touch*. It was agreed that they be taken as read and it was also agreed that the Chairman sign the minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Millennium Plaques - Brian Newman asked about the status of these, as the cheque for the Bradwell order had not yet been presented. It was reported that the plaques were on order. The delay had been in getting responses from all the towers who had expressed an interest. In view of the numbers ordered Foilprint had reduced the price to £28 each, so some of the towers who ordered early will get a refund along with their plaque.

Data Protection Act - Doug Hird reported that he had been doing some work on this. He had filled in the 'on-line' form which then had to be posted off. A response to this is awaited.

Powergen Money - It was agreed at the last meeting that this money be given to Simpson, subject to there being £500 of reasonable work needed. Doug had spoken to Brian Baldwin about what was planned at Simpson. There is still some work to be done on the church but Brian hopes to get access to work on the bells so that hopefully they can be ready to ring when the church re-opens. It is hoped to rebuild wheels, send the clappers to be re-bushed and replace the ground pulleys. This is a good opportunity to do the work while the bells are still out of action. Brian estimates that the work will cost between £1000 and £1200, so the £500 will go some way towards this. He is also hopeful that the church will contribute a similar amount. The plan is to have them ringing again by the end of the year.

Election of New Members

Nominations had been received proposing four members -

Tower	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Whaddon	Peter Beckwith Reg Ludlow Roger Green (re-election) Nicholas Green (Junior, re-election)	Derek White	Robin Culley

All these were elected without dissent. None of them were present at the meeting but the Chairman said that he hoped to welcome them to the branch at a forthcoming event.

Officers Reports

Secretary - The annual meeting of Branch Secretaries will be held at Radley on 6th October. If there are any items which members would like raised at this meeting then please let Helen know by the branch practice on 16th September. This is a get together where the secretaries meet with the Guild Secretary and are able to discuss

some of the aspects of running the Guild. This meeting also chooses the methods for the striking competitions and discusses the level of subscription. Whilst the meeting cannot set the subscription it does make recommendations to the F&GP committee regarding any proposed changes. The Guild Secretary has also made a proposal to distribute some of the notices for towers via e-mail. He would send an electronic copy to the branch secretary who would then forward it to tower correspondents who are willing to receive notices via e-mail. This would involve them in printing out the notice for their tower notice board. It is hoped that this will speed up the distribution of notices. Those towers who do not wish to or are unable to receive notices via e-mail will continue to receive paper copies. These notices will be restricted to those of only one or two pages. Large notices, such as the minutes of the AGM will continue to be sent out as paper copies. The secretary will initially contact those tower correspondents with e-mail addresses. In future it may be possible to find members who will act as the e-mail correspondents for towers for the purpose of distributing notices.

Ringin Master - In the Inter-Branch Striking Competition held at Hanslope we won the Inter-Branch trophy by winning the Cambridge Minor and Call Change sections but unfortunately failed to win the George Holland Stedman trophy, despite ringing one of our better attempts at Stedman. It was again pleasing to have a good number of members taking part in the event. This year we have also got together a band for the Guild Ten Bell Striking Competition which takes place on 9th September. Hanslope, who won our branch six bell striking competition, will be representing us in the Guild competition which takes place on the first Saturday in October.

Treasurer - The Chairman read a brief report from the Treasurer: The Branch Account balance at the Building Society stands at a healthy £1,499.12. £500 of this is the 'Powergen money' to be paid to Simpson. All towers have now paid their Guild Subscriptions for 2000, for which I am very grateful. The Branch membership currently stands at 236. Thank you for participating in the raffle today - £17 has been raised for the Guild Bell Fund.

Guild Rep - David Middleton had little to report. The last meeting was the Guild AGM which has been reported in Odd Bob. The next meeting is the Committee meeting on 25th November. If there is anything which members would like raised, then please let him know.

Forthcoming Events

All events are as published in In Touch. Richard Stanworth drew attention to the next event which is the branch practice at Loughton. The venue for the ten bell practice could not be advised as we are still having trouble getting a tower.

Any Other Business

The Guild had re-issued the Tower Affiliation certificate and the secretary now had these for distribution to towers with members. The numbers sent had been based on last year's list of towers with members, so she still had to get some additional certificates for those towers which had become towers with members this year.

The Secretary also had some Membership Certificates for new members. These were distributed to representatives from their home towers.

Vote of Thanks

The Chairman then thanked the ringers at Leckhampstead for allowing us to ring, the Lillingstone Lovell band for their hospitality, Margaret Culley for taking the service, and Beth King for playing the organ. Members showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.15 p.m. The draw for the raffle and further ringing followed.

Joint Practice

The joint Surprise Major practice with the Luton District of the Bedfordshire Association will be held at Bletchley on Saturday 27th January 2001 from 7.30-9.00pm. Please support this if you can ring surprise major methods

Millennium Plaques

The additional Millennium Plaques with individual ringer's names have now been received and are being distributed by hand.

If you haven't got yours yet, please contact the Secretary

North Bucks Branch—Calendar 2000/2001

NOVEMBER	17	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Yorkshire Surprise Major	Stony Stratford
	24		<i>Pudsey Peal Appeal (Children in Need)</i>	
	25		<i>Autumn General Committee Meeting</i>	<i>Wokingham</i>
DECEMBER	2	3.30	Quarterly Meeting	Fenny Stratford
	15	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Milton Keynes Village
2001				
JANUARY	*19	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Superlative Surprise Major	Downs Barn
	*27	7.30	Joint Practice with Luton Branch	Bletchley
FEBRUARY	16	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Surfleet Surprise Minor	North Crawley
MARCH	3	3.00 4.00	Ringing Branch AGM	Whaddon Bletchley
	*16	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Thornborough
	*30	7.30	10-Bell Practice	Kempston/TBA
APRIL	*20	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: London Surprise Minor	Bradwell
	*27	7.30	Beginners Striking Competition	Emberton
MAY	*18	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Kent Treble Bob Minor	Stowe
JUNE	*2	3.30	Striking Competition & Quarterly Meeting	Great Linford
	*15	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Wavendon

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 21 October 2000
 Italicised events are Guild events

Observations on the 10-bell Competition

It was Bobbie May who actually said something. She was taking photos of all the bands after each finished ringing and commented that the North Bucks Branch had fielded an entirely male band. We had noticed actually.

So why is this? Why don't women get asked into these bands? It's much the same for peals and quarters. It's not as if women don't ring as well as the men. The problem is one of male insecurity that has always been with us.

Look at the situation when these things get organised. If the whole band is sitting around at your local practice, or more likely in the pub afterwards, someone just says have we got eight ringers for a

quarter this Sunday and there you have it, a well balanced band. But if your organiser has to bring together ringers from all over the place they have to phone round and go to practice nights. The contact here is face to face. Here the male organisers are at a natural disadvantage. They can ask other men to ring with them (it's just another excuse to go to the pub after all) but the women are a problem. It is exactly the same as asking them out so the "fear of rejection" program automatically cuts in. So they don't ask. The solution is of course simple. It is the age-old solution to most problems. Ask a woman to arrange the band. But who to ask? And what if she won't help?

NUNTIUS