



IN TOUCH

February 1998

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

AGM

Newport Pagnell

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Newport Pagnell

is the venue for the next Branch AGM on Saturday 7th March. Names for tea to Godfrey Foat (☎ 01908 313859) by Wednesday 4th March, please.

- 3.00 Ringing at Tyringham
- 4.00 Service ringing at Newport Pagnell
- 4.30 Service
- 5.00 Tea (venue to be confirmed)
- 5.30 Business Meeting
(followed by evening ringing)

Don't forget that everyone is welcome at Branch meetings, but only members can vote. If you aren't already a member, why not become one. Contact the Branch officers to find out the benefits.

CONTACTING BRANCH OFFICERS

Chairman and Archivist

Doug Hird ☎ 01908 614741
19 Priory Street, Newport Pagnell. MK16 9AF
e-mail bdhir1.b.hird@abbeynational.co.uk

Secretary

Helen Stanworth ☎ 01280 814172
11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham.
MK1 8 7BW

Minute Secretary

Nigel Tittley ☎ 01908 646632
"The Willows", 15 Drayton Road, Newton
Longville, Milton Keynes. MK17 OBH
e-mail nigel@tittley.com

Treasurer

Sheila Ware ☎ 01234 713667
18 Colsons Way, Olney. MK46 5EQ

Ringling Master

Richard Stanworth ☎ 01280 814172
11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham.
MK1 8 7BW

Assistant Ringling Master

Alexandra Tittley ☎ 01908 646632
"The Willows" 15 Drayton Road, Newton
Longville, Milton Keynes. MK17 OBH

Guild Representatives

Alan Marchbank ☎ 01908 611434
6 Broadway Avenue, Giffard Park, Milton
Keynes. MK14 5QF

Doug O'Neale ☎ 01908 674585
48 Parklands, Great Linford, Milton Keynes.
MK14 5DZ

Newsletter Editor

Nicola King ☎ 01908 614741
19 Priory Street, Newport Pagnell. MK16 9AF
fax: 0171 8307834
e-mail: kingni@which.co.uk

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Editor's word Please don't forget that having been elected mid-year, I am in post only for the previous edition and this one. If anyone else fancies a turn, please speak up! It is your chance to know the news before it happens, your chance to bully the branch officers into providing copy, your chance to have a good laugh at the photos of ringers that don't make it into the journal. If you've recently acquired a computer or word-processor, use this opportunity to do something useful with it. Although looking back at old issues of *In Touch* shows that manual typewriters do just as good a job at getting the information out and about.

Copy date for the next issue is Friday 6th June 1998.

As with the last issue, each tower has been provided with a copy of a 'leaflet' with this edition of *In Touch*. These first saw the light of day at the Great Brickhill meeting in September as part of a plan to make people aware of ringing, and, hopefully, prompt them into taking an interest and perhaps learning to ring. These are 'wedding specific' handouts. I know that some towers did make use of the Christmas version, so I would welcome your comments about the 'wedding version'. The tone is slightly different, but the purpose is the same.

Please feel free to copy, adapt and otherwise use the 'leaflet' in your churches this year. Hand them out during weddings, blessings, even wedding practices, or leave some in the church. If you like, I'll even give you a disk copy to edit, or if you ask me nicely, personalize one for your tower. Don't forget to add an address if you want people to send something to you.

I'd welcome any feedback about the 'leaflet', and particularly any 'success' stories, i.e. new recruits who saw it and thought, "YES - ringing is for ME!"



COMPUTERISATION OF THE ARCHIVES

Doug Hird – Branch Archivist

The task of computerising the minutes of our meetings is now very nearly complete with 275 accounts in the database. The few missing records, which have eluded us, are:

Meeting	Date
Quarterly	04 December 1965
Half Yearly	04 December 1971
Annual	03 June 1972
Half Yearly	02 December 1972
Half Yearly	01 December 1973
Half Yearly	02 September 1978
Half Yearly	01 September 1979
Annual	01 March 1980
Half Yearly	06 September 1980
Annual	07 March 1981
Half Yearly	05 September 1981
Annual	06 March 1982
Half Yearly	04 September 1982
Quarterly	03 September 1988
Quarterly	06 June 1992
Quarterly	05 September 1992
Quarterly	05 December 1992
Quarterly	04 September 1993

So we have a good record of about 94% of our meetings. Do you have a copy of any of these missing minutes? If you do, I would be pleased to copy them into the archive.

To speed up the process, I am making use of a bit of modern technology. The typed minutes have been scanned and converted to digital form by Optical Character Recognition software. The hand written minutes have been dictated into the database using Speech Recognition software. This software learns new words as more and more minutes are read into it. However, its mistakes sometimes indicate that a higher intelligence may be at work. Here are a few examples from four or five meetings:

Input text: Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held at Twyford Sat March 1st 1958

Result: Minutes of courtly meeting held at typhoid sat March 1 1958

Input text: Tea was partaken in the village hall and 38 members being present.

Result: Tea was heartbreaking in the village hall and 38 members being present.

Input text: The minutes of the half yearly general meeting held at Newport Pagnell were read by the secretary, and accepted by the meeting.

Result: The minutes of the half yearly general meeting held at Newport Pagnell were wrecked by the secretary, and accepted by the meeting.

Input text: Election of new members
The following ringers were elected:

Result: Collection of new members
The following ringers were affected:

Input text: Angela and Richard Gibb (Woughton)
Bob Winstanley (Loughton)
Len Reed and Heather Beck (Haversham)
Result: Angela and Richard Gibb (often)
Bob wistfully (Loughton)
Then read and further Beck (Havant)

Input text: These were proposed by David Ockwell and seconded by Derek Stainsby.

Result: These were proposed by David Ockwell and seconded by Derrick stactly.

Input text: He also reported that the Downs Barn fund stood at approx £640.

Result: He also reported that they Downs Barn funds stood at approx 6 unfolding pounds.

The software learns quickly, however, so by the time twenty or so sets of minutes had been dictated, it was able to recognise all of our names and even a few methods. So much for filling up the database! If you want anything out of it, please call me. It is quite easy to pull together information about individuals, towers or bells.

MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING HELD AT SHENLEY 6TH DECEMBER 1997



Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Doug Hird, welcomed all those present to the meeting, commenting that the bells were as good as ever.

In Memoriam

The Chairman asked all present to stand and remember Ed Lack of Newport Pagnell, who had died since the previous meeting. Ed was a former Branch Officer and prominent member of the Branch. He was also a competent organist. Barry Eglesfield then gave a short appreciation of Ed and his contribution to the Ringing Exercise.

Apologies for Absence

Received from Helen Stanworth, John Wells (Guild Master), Bill Yates, Nigel Titley, Doug O'Neale.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

In Touch were published in the November edition of *In Touch* and had been displayed on the notice boards before the meeting. One correction was that the meeting had recommended to Leckhampstead that they purchase ropes with Terylene tops. With this correction, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the September meeting.

Matters Arising

Old Wolverton. - Mick Nimmo was present and gave details of the project as planned and the current status. A number of options had been proposed. The plan is to re-hang the existing bells and augment them to eight. Four bellhangers have been asked to quote for the job, and the PCC has chosen Peter Hayward. The original plan was to hang the two new bells in a metal frame above the existing wooden frame. English Heritage did not agree to this proposal and wanted the new bells to be hung in a wooden frame. English Heritage later responded that they would allow the use of a metal frame for the new bells. A new proposal was prepared with the two new bells alongside the existing oak frame. The latest proposal was to re-hang the existing six bells in the wooden frame

and hang the new bells in a metal frame above them. At the time of the Shenley meeting, English Heritage had still to give their approval for this plan. The work is due to start after Easter 1998.

The bells-related part of the work is expected to cost £25,000, including the augmentation to eight. The bellringers have so far raised approximately £2,000, including an £850 grant from the Oxford Guild. It was unclear at this stage as to exactly what the Guild grant was for and from which Guild fund it had been made.

Alan Marchbank proposed that, because the state of the project plans were still unclear and as the work will not start until after the next Branch meeting, any decision on a grant be deferred until the next meeting. This was seconded by David Joyce, and agreed without dissent.

David Joyce suggested that as the branch funds were limited the greatest benefit to the project from the branch will be to offer help in kind or manpower to help reduce the cost of the work. Alan Marchbank encouraged Mick Nimmo and Old Wolverton to look to local help to reduce the cost of the project.

The Chairman encouraged the branch to support the Old Wolverton project and offer help in all sorts of ways in order to help keep the costs down. He asked Mick Nimmo to keep the rest of the branch informed on the progress of the project. Alan Marchbank said that he will obtain feedback from the Guild regarding their support of the project.

David Joyce suggested that towers within the Branch could support the appeal by giving a donation of one wedding fee to Old Wolverton.

It was agreed that this suggestion be included in the Newsletter.

MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING HELD AT SHENLEY CONTINUED

Olney & Leckhampstead Grants - David Joyce expressed concern that grants had been made at the last meeting without notice, particularly as these had been quite large grants compared to the total of the Branch's funds. He felt that members should be given notice when such items are to be discussed. The Chairmen replied that the matter had been put to the meeting and it had agreed to discuss the matters at that meeting.

In connection with this matter the Treasurer reported that the branch currently had £1,036 in its account, but that the grants to Olney of £100 and Leckhampstead of approximately £200 had yet to be paid.

Election of New Members

Nominations had been received proposing six new members -

Great Brickhill

David Middleton

Johnathan Pritchard (Junior)

Proposed by: Hugh Butler

Seconded by: Michael Clements

Loughton

Miss Katie Rodgers

Roger Blackburn

Proposed by: Derek Stainsby

Seconded by: Frank H Daniels

Shenley

Andrew McGregor

Dennis Hubble

Proposed by: John Brookman

Seconded by: Barry Smith

All were elected without dissent. The Chairman welcomed them all to the Guild and asked those present to stand and make themselves known to the meeting. As is normal with those elected at this meeting the memberships will commence at the beginning of the new year.

Teaching Minors

Hugh Butler had asked for this matter to be discussed. He had been giving the younger members of the band at Great Brickhill a lift home in his car after the practice each week so that they did not have to walk home alone in the dark. He had been advised that giving them a lift home was against the law. Did any other member know of

this and what should he do? From discussion in the meeting it was not clear that what he was doing was actually against the law. However, it is not advisable to be alone in a car with young children as this could leave one open to accusations of impropriety/abuse. Current advice is to have at least two adults present when children are being taught. This is as much to protect the adults as the children. David Joyce queried whether this matter had been raised with Hugh in the light of the latest information that had been distributed by the Diocese to PCCs. This was unknown. The Guild had not sent anything out recently.

The Chairman undertook to ascertain what had been distributed and how this would be relevant to Tower Captains and others teaching children to ring. Scouting has guidelines for working with children and the ODG should have guidelines which should be passed on to PCCs.

Any Other Business

Alan Marchbank briefly reported on the General Committee Meeting held in November. A fuller report will appear in the next *In Touch*. Subscriptions remain unchanged. A Guild bookstall is being set up. Affiliation Certificates are to be re-issued. A very late item was the proposal as part of the millennium project that the Guild should buy a mini-ring for publicity purposes. This was not agreed as neither a clear business plan nor detailed insurance arrangements were put forward. The matter was referred back to the proposers for more clarification.

Jill Joyce requested that future meeting use the standard agenda for quarterly meetings. This had been agreed at a previous meeting, and should be used at all meetings. Items can be skipped if there is no report or matters to discuss.

Mick Nimmo invited the branch to have a last ring on the six bells at Old Wolverton before work begins after Easter 1998. The invitation was accepted and would be arranged as an extra branch event when the date was known.

Votes of Thanks

The Chairman thanked the Vicar, Rev David Yates, Rev Anne McKenzie from Bletchley, Veronica Taylor and the Choir, and the Shenley ringers for the arrangements for the meeting.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Alan Marchbank

On a number of occasions in the past, various people have been concerned for the safety of ringers when all the lights go out.



It's not just the obvious hazards of flapping ropes and missed sallies but the simpler things like negotiating the stairs and maybe even extracting oneself from the depths of the bellframe.

A number of towers have wisely invested in self-contained emergency lights that are normally off, but when the power fails an internal battery which is automatically kept fully charged, kicks in to provide a low but effective level of illumination. These usually have a 3 hour capability so might even be a reasonable insurance for peal ringers to invest in!!

In the past such units have sold for between £60 and £70 but I see that there are some being sold by Screwfix Direct (0500 414141) for between £27 and £32, depending on the number you want.

At this price there can't be too many towers that ring regularly that can't afford them.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Tine Marchbank

The "Better Safe Than Sorry" document is available from the Diocese of Oxford Training and Resources Department.

It was produced in response to the 1989 Children's Act and a more recent Home Office "Code of Practice for safeguarding the welfare of young people in voluntary organisations". This is commonly referred to as "Safe from Harm".

There was a great deal of concern and discussion at the last quarterly meeting relating to how we ensure a safe environment for youngsters who are learning to ring. A shortened version of "Better Safe than Sorry", was distributed to towers by Pat Newton some months ago.

The full document costs only £1.50 and is worth getting if you want a better understanding of the issue and why it was felt necessary to introduce these guidelines and legislation

The address for the Training and Resources Department is:

Diocesan Church House
North Hinksey
Oxford
OX2 0NB

☎ (01865) 208200

MONEY MONEY MONEY

Tine Marchbank

I came across a couple of column centimetres in the MK Citizen just after New Year from the Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations. They were advertising a session for "introduction to the National Lottery Charities Board's new grants programmes and the significant changes to their approach to making grants". The session was FREE (and probably over by the time you read this!) I sent off for the application form but found that this session didn't quite fit the need for St Andrew's. They do cover all sorts of other topics, e.g. Self Help Group Meetings (25th February 1998)

Developing a fund raising strategy (25th March 1998)

Managing Money (7th March 1998)

If you want to know more contact

Anchala Patel, MKCVO
Acorn House
351 Midsummer Boulevard
MK9 3HP
(01908) 661623

I'd never heard of MKCVO before but felt that anything to do with fund raising might be of help to someone.

RECENT RINGING

Downs Barn, Bucks. 21 October 1997. 1260 Cambridge Surprise Minor: Jon Hill (1st treble bob), Nicola King 2, John Brookman 3, Jo White 4, David J Maybrey 5, B Douglas Hird (C) 6.

Downs Barn, Bucks. 28 October 1997. 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Ann Griffin 1, Nicola King 2, Fiona Maybrey 3, David J Maybrey 4, B Douglas Hird (C) 5, Jo White 6.

Shenley, Bucks. 11, November 1997. 1260 Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles: Lorraine Brookman 1, Becky Fawcett 2, John Brookman 3, Derek Stainsby 4, Bob Winstanley (C) 5, Barry Smith. Rung half-muffled for Remembrance Sunday. First quarter with new muffles, last quarter before restoration work.

Woughton on the Green, Bucks. 23 October 1997. 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Jean Mattinsley 1, Zoe Storey, Brian Baldwin 3, Christina Jones 4, Peter Tribble (C) 1st doubles as conductor 5, Malcolm Storey 6

FIRST QUARTER

Calverton, Bucks. 11 January 1998. 1260 Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles: Catherine Stacy 1 (1st Q), Gareth Grayson 2 (1st in more than one method), Barry Smith 3, Malcolm Hooton 4, Doug Hird 5 (C), Bob Winstanley 6.

HAND BELL QUARTERS

All at 16 Wandsworth Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

15 December 1997, 1344 Plain Bob Major: Alan Marchbank 1-2, Ron Snack 3-4, Godfrey Foat 5-6 (C), Jo White 7-8.

12 January 1998, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: Alan Marchbank 1-2, Ron Snack 3-4, Godfrey Foat 5-6 (C).

19 January 1998, 1260 Kent TB & Plain Bob Minor: Alan Marchbank 1-2, Ron Snack 3-4, Godfrey Foat 5-6 (C).

26 January 1998, 1260 Kent TB & Plain Bob Minor: Alan Marchbank 1-2, Ron Snack 3-4, Godfrey Foat 5-6 (C).

TOM PEACH

Lavendon ringers, still sadly missing John Wetherall whose death was recorded in the last issue of *In Touch*, were dealt another blow with the death of Tom Peach just before Christmas.

Like John, Tom was a founder member of the band formed on January 1st 1975 to ring the bells, which had only just been rehung and augmented to six. Since 1975, and until very recently, Tom had been one of the mainstays of the Tower, always available to ring his favourite fifth bell.

As a mark of respect, Lavendon bells were rung half muffled before and after his thanksgiving service and that evening a quarter peal was rung in his memory.

St. Michael's, Lavendon
30th December 1997

1260 Doubles (Stedman, Grandsire, Plain Bob)

1. Sally Adnitt
2. Josephine Smith
3. Ann Clifton
4. Brian Clifton (C)
5. Ken Wildman
6. John Lay

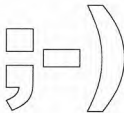
Rung half muffled in memoriam - Percy Thomas Reginald (Tom) Peach. Born 25 January.1919, died 19 December 1997, aged 78.

Brian Clifton,
Captain of the Tower, Lavendon

BRANCH E-MAIL DIRECTORY

Some branch members have access to e-mail, either at home or at work. Anyone who would like his or her e-mail address included in a printed list to appear in the next edition of *In Touch* should e-mail the editor. I won't include anyone's e-mail address who doesn't expressly wish it to be included, even if I know what it is!

kingni@which.co.uk



OLNEY OPEN TOWER MORNING

Charles Knight

(taken from the Olney Parish Magazine)

On a Sunday morning in October, after the Morning Service the usual coffee-drinking throng was strangely absent. They hadn't simply left immediately the service ended, so where were they? The answer lay beyond the little door in the corner of the tower and up the steps, all 48 of them. The ringers were showing off their freshly decorated, carpeted and furnished Ringing Chamber. The finishing touch had been a set of benches to replace our assorted old items in various states of decay. Made by David Harris, they were paid for by numerous individuals and groups from the congregation, local ringers, and a grant from the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild.

Thus the Opening was a Thank You as well as an invitation to come and see us and what we do "up there". Before the service we had rung all eight bells, but thinking a reasonable number of visitors might come up afterwards we decided to ring the 7th and tenor bells down making safe space for visitors to stand in.

A trickle of people arrived after the service, and after a brief introduction we rang 'rounds' on the

front six (i.e. the lighter six of our bells). Still the congregation were coming through the door and flowing into the room, making the decision to lower the "back two" a wise move. The ringing had prompted more questions, including, of course, "Can you get pulled up by the bell?". Answer, not if you have been taught properly and do as you were taught. Another question, "Can you vary the speed at which you ring?", led to a quick explanation of why that is necessary in order to change the order of the bells as they sound and hence leads to Change Ringing. This was demonstrated by ringing a course of Grandsire Doubles, a very old and still popular method rung on five bells, the sixth bell covering, or drumming, behind.

By this time the room was full of visitors, it really was most gratifying. After a few more words of explanation and encouragement to potential recruits we set about ringing the bells down to complete the session and re-set the clock chimes.

Thanks are due to all those who did the often filthy work to improve the Ringing chamber; those who made donations for the seating; to the ringers; and all the congregation who ventured beyond the other side of the little door.



Members of the current Olney Sunday Service Band in their newly refurbished ringing room

NEWS FROM NEWPORT PAGNELL

Five Bell Club Awards have been won in the last two months:

Blue: Jonathan Stacy and Angela Brant
Green: Catherine Stacy, Carol Smith and Julie Caudle

At the Tower AGM on 6 February 1998, Gareth Grayson was elected Ringing Master in place of Godfrey Foat who has decided to step down after 10 years in the post. Carol Smith remains as Tower Secretary.

Gareth was the first of a growing band of Ousedale School members who are members of both the choir and bellringers. We know he will lead the band enthusiastically.

We loose Charlie Russell in March, when his father becomes Rector at Wing. Charlie is looking forward to this interesting ring of six.

LATHBURY UPDATE

Plans are progressing on further building work to the tower this summer. Regardless, and with a view to having service ringing when the work is complete, five recruits were attracted by ringing at the Christmas Carol Service, and teaching has begun.

BUCKINGHAM

The young Stanworth girls have shown considerable initiative in using their school magazine as a medium for encouraging young people to come forward to learn to ring and to publicize the 'Ringing in the Millennium'.

Any method which shows that ringing is an interesting activity which young people can do, is to be applauded (Ed.)

DOWN'S BARN

Many of you will already know that the Maybrey family is/has moved to the Isles of Scilly. This will leave/has left a gap in our band, both in our practices and our Sunday service ringing. We wish them good luck and calm seas in the future. Dave has ambitions to have some ringable bells installed down there, so perhaps an extended branch outing will be called for someday.

Down's Barn bells are a branch asset, indeed many members contributed time, money and effort to having them installed. Everyone is welcome to practice with us on Tuesdays. We have now increased our ringing to all Tuesdays in the month, including the first.

We can only practice on the eight if eight people turn up, so if you would like to extend your experience to eight, or just fancy a change of scene, please do come along. With a bit of juggling we have rung Stedman Triples and Cambridge Surprise Major, and hope to be able to continue to do so in the future, but if you want to ring rounds on eight or try plain hunt on eight and normally ring on six, then come along!

Our Sunday morning ringing is more problematical. Although we have had regular support at our practices from members of the Shenley and Loughton bands, they can't come on Sunday mornings. If you have a spare half an hour at 10.00 am you will be very welcome.

AROUND OUR TOWERS

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers North Bucks Branch

Calendar 1998



FEBRUARY

Fri. 20 th	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Little Bob Minor	Stoke Goldington
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MARCH

Sat 7 th	3.00 – 3.45	Open Ringing Annual General Meeting	Tyringham Newport Pagnell
Fri. 20 th	8.00	Branch Practice Special Method: Lincolnshire S Major	Downs Barn

APRIL

Sat 4 th		<i>Youth Training Day</i>	<i>E Berks & S Bucks</i>
Sat 11 th		<i>Handbell Day</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Fri. 17 th	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds and Call Changes	Emberton
Sat 25 th		<i>Radley Course</i>	<i>Old N Berks Branch</i>

MAY

Mon 4 th		<i>Eight Bell Striking Competition</i> <i>Guild Ringing Day</i>	<i>E Berks & S Bucks</i>
Fri. 15 th	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Kent Treble Bob Minor	Cosgrove
Sat 16 th		<i>Guild AGM</i>	<i>Churchill</i> <i>Chipping Norton Branch</i>

JUNE

Sat 7 th	3.30	Quarterly Meeting and Striking Competition	Maids Moreton
Fri. 20 th	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Cambridge Surprise Minor	Loughton

JULY

Sat 25 th	6.00	* Inter-Branch Striking Competition	Newton Longville
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AUGUST

Fri 21 st	7.30	Branch Practice Focus on Rounds and Call Changes	Lillingstone Lovell
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SEPTEMBER

Sat 5 th	3.30	Quarterly meeting	Hanslope
Fri 18 th	7.30	Branch Practice Special methods: Stedman and Grandsire	North Crawley

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 31st January 1998.

Italicised events are Guild events.