

January/February 1994

IN TOUCH

The Newsletter of the North Bucks Branch
Of
The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

Founded 11th June 1904



Special feature - Bletchley

From the new Editor ✂ ✂ ✂

Hello! This is the new editor of *In Touch* speaking. The new management is run by Nicki King and hampered and interrupted by Doug Hird. My first task is to thank Monty and Steve for continuing *In Touch* throughout the last year, and to wish Steve well in his return to education.

This is the first edition of *In Touch* we have put together, and we are using a Desk Top Publishing system - this is also the first document we have produced using the system so we apologise in advance for any defects, we can only improve! Now, this also has implications for would-be contributors to *In Touch*. A few of you already produce word-processed text, I can accept WordPerfect 5.0 or 5.1 and DOS ASCII texts on 3.5" disks, which will save me some typing. If you do supply text on disk, please mark the disk with your name and do your best to ensure it is virus-free. I will be away in Bournemouth until the end of February 1994, so please continue to give material for inclusion to Doug until then.

I would also like to thank previous contributors for their pieces, and to encourage everyone in the Branch to consider writing something for *In Touch*. Send us your outing reports, peal and quarter peal reports, letters, notes, questions, cartoons, poems, and anything else you would like to see in print. I would particularly like to see some items from our younger members (by which I mean the under 18s!!), out-of-school activities can count for a lot with prospective employers or colleges and printed material provides evidence of the commitment which many of our younger members show to the Branch and the Exercise.

I hope you like the new look *In Touch* and look forward to receiving your comments.

NICKI KING

Branch Officers and how to contact them:

Chairman:

Monty Gilbert ☎ 0908 311684

Secretary:

Position Vacant

Treasurer and Archivist:

Doug Hird ☎ 0908 614741

Ringling Masters:

David Joyce ☎ 0908 667025

Roy Keeves ☎ 0908 510105

Newsletter Editor:

Nicki King ☎ 0908 614741

Branch Representatives:

Monty Gilbert (see Chairman)

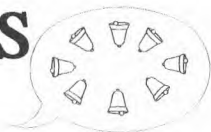
Carole Huxter ☎ 0908 672451

Refer to previous *In Touch* for addresses.

CONTENTS

- 2 Editorial
- 2 Branch Officers
- 2 Contents
- 3 Chairmans Voice
- 4 Letter
- 4 Secretarial Bits and Pieces
- 5 Fred Mynard - In memoriam
- 6 George Holland - an appreciation by BRE
- 7 Featured Tower - Bletchley
- 8 Treasurer's Notes
- 9 Around the Branch - news from Old Bradwell
- 10 Double Peal report
- 11 Ps and Qs
- 12 Forthcoming Events etc.

CHAIRMAN'S VOICE



In the previous issue, I forgot to mention Christmas and offer Seasonal Greetings to all our readers! Well, I hope you all had a merry Christmas, and I now wish you all the best for the new year.

The momentous bit of news is that the previous issue was the last one compiled by me (don't cheer too loudly, please) as we now have a volunteer for the position of Editor, and I leave it to her to introduce herself in this issue. I can now go back to wearing one hat only!

In my capacity as Chairman therefore I remind you of the coming Branch AGM, and the need for people to serve as officers for the forthcoming year. We are short of a Secretary already, as Steve Crane had to give up the post early due to other commitments for his job. We thank him for his efforts, and wish him well for the future. It is important that as many bands as possible from the Branch are represented at the AGM, and I would like to see more volunteers for holding office. **BOOK THE DATE NOW!** Saturday 5th March 1994 at Buckingham.

Congratulations to the band who successfully rang the double peal at Emberton. I did manage to listen to the first couple of extents, and a couple later on, and the striking was very good (though there were one or two moments of drama here and there.) Peals normally are a fairly private pursuit, with success or failure not affecting anyone outside the band, and can always be called off if conditions are bad: this one, with all the publicity, put a heavy responsibility on the band. Conditions were not ideal, and they appreciated the visits of those who came to listen. (Sponsors should send me any monies due, as advertised in the previous issue.)

I am awaiting delivery of the current issue of *Odd Bob*, if possible copies will accompany this issue, otherwise look out for them later,

particularly at the Branch practice on 21st January 1994.

Please note that for Quarterly meetings we do have a standard Agenda covering all the basics, (see elsewhere in this issue), and that for the AGM we need to confirm any long-term obligation we have undertaken (for the information of those who did not attend at Hanslope, we had overlooked one commitment that had been made in a previous year.)

Finally: there was support at the Hanslope meeting to continue with a Branch dinner, scheduled for Saturday 26th February 1994. To make it possible we need more support than just those who attended that meeting, so that is another date you need to book - **NOW!**

MONTY GILBERT

MENU

Branch Dinner

Saturday 26th
February 1994

Book with
Monty ... **NOW !!**

LETTER

This letter was received in reply to one published in the last *In Touch*

WHY IS THAT PERSON SHOUTING NUMBERS AT ME?

May I please be allowed to make use of a little of your valuable space to respond to the rather sexist piece written by "Doug" in the last issue of *In Touch*.

First of all, it is not only men who shout numbers at people, I know a fair few women who can call changes quite well - some of them even managing to cope with calling bells down. HEAVEN FORBID.

That, of course, brings me on to my second point - why not call bells down?

I think, if you study the facts very closely, you will find that this method of calling changes is not really too difficult. It is a way of calling that I was brought up with when I started ringing and I certainly did not find that it confused me. Nor was I conned into believing that calling changes was difficult or required any great skill, and my progress was not slowed at all, although that may have happened lately.

The instruction "four to two" is quite specific and tells the four to follow the two. The ringer of the third, having listened to this instruction, will immediately think to himself "I am currently following the two, the four has been told to follow the two, therefore I must follow the four".

Nothing too difficult there I would have thought.

Anyway, does it really matter what way changes are called? Surely it is good experience for learners to be exposed to all methods of jumbling up the bells.

RON SNACK

SECRETARIAL BITS AND PIECES

DIARY

Would tower captains/correspondents please check if they are listed as hosting any event, and contact one of the officers if there is any problem. Although we check shortly before the event, it's better if we can insert changes early.

MARCH AGM

The format is as set out below, but as there will not be another Newsletter before then please check the Ringing World advert or ring one of the Officers to confirm:

- 3.30 - 4.30 Ringing at Thornborough
- 4.00 - 5.00 Ringing at Buckingham (Note the overlap of times - we are extending the ringing time at Buckingham)
- 5.00 Service at Buckingham followed by Tea and Business Meeting

Evening ringing at Buckingham after the Meeting

NAMES FOR TEA BY WEDNESDAY 2nd March 1994 to Peter Nicholson 0280 814201

LIST OF SUNDAY AND PRACTICE TIMES
Updating or confirmation is still needed, anyone who has better information is invited to put the new editor right ...

QUARTERLY MEETINGS - STANDARD FORMAT

Welcome.
In Memoriam.

Agenda items:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (either as circulated, or as read out)
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Election of New Members
5. Officers reports - if needed
Secretary
Ringing Master
Treasurer
6. Forthcoming Events
7. Any other business
8. Votes of Thanks

IN MEMORIAM

This issue of *In Touch* has two pieces remembering the lives of two long-serving Branch members who have recently died. The first is about Fred Mynard of Old Bradwell, the second is a personal memory of George Holland of Maids Moreton, by Barry Eglesfield.

Ringers in the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild were saddened to hear of Fred Mynard's death on 13th November 1993. We had known of his visits to hospital over the last few months, but he had said very little about them. We offer our sympathy and prayers to his widow Gwen, and daughters Rita and Dilys and their families.

Fred lived, worked and rang in the same locality all his life: which was a life of quiet service. He was born in Olney, his father, Frederick J. Mynard, was a well-known local ringer. When he was four, the family moved to nearby Emberton, where Fred lived until 1955 when he moved to New Bradwell where he remained until his death.

At Emberton he first took hold of a bellrope at the age of nine. His father was very active as a ringer and conductor in the area, and in June 1923 at that tower had taken part in a double peal of Minor (14 extents of 14 different methods.) The 70th anniversary prompted an attempt to duplicate the feat, but this failed, although another attempt in December was successful, sadly too late for Fred to share in the band's triumph. Fred was an able ringer, his membership of the Guild stretching over 55 years and four towers, Emberton, Bradwell, Great Linford and Old Wolverton. Ringing memories of Fred and his father remain at Emberton church, where there is an old photograph of the local ringers which includes Fred as a young boy. Many of us will remember his quiet attendance at local practices and service ringing, and his willingness to help other ringers, especially learners.

He also served the Church through the choir. At the age of 11 Fred won the All-England Choral competition as a boy soprano. Later he held the position of Choirmaster at St Lawrence, Bradwell for some twenty years. Fred had hoped to pursue singing as a career, but the Second World War came and the opportunity was lost.

During the war, Fred's skills were put to use in manufacturing shells, keeping him from active service, but he did serve in the local Home Guard. His working life of 47 years was spent as an Axle Turner, in the Wheel Shop of the British Railways Workshops at Wolverton.

Fred did not keep person records of his ringing, but we know he rang at least four peals locally, and he was always willing to stand in for a quarter peal. He took pleasure in his own successes, but in a modest way, and his wife Gwen would only receive a brief report (this applied to failures as well, with no time wasted on recriminations.)

Local members of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths rang a half-muffled peal in memory of Fred on 20th November at Great Linford, and a number of quarter peals were rung throughout the Branch.

MONTY GILBERT



GEORGE HOLLAND

Soon after I learned to ring in July 1960 I was introduced to George. I suppose from the first time, even in my elemental stages of ringing, I found that his bell handling and certainly his heavy bell ringing stood out in the Branch to our group of youngsters. It was an awesome sight to see the care he rang any tenor almost like a machine, while most others struggled on them. We were also struck by his quiet and calm nature. He rarely raised his voice, even when provoked by the most obstreperous young reprobate.

An other remarkable thing, well at least to us in our tender years (if you can imagine that) was the fact that whenever we went to ringing practice at Christchurch Cathedral Oxford and said where we rang his name was always mentioned in reply. He was revered among many notable ringers including people such as Walter Judge and Alan Pink for his accuracy and reliability round the back end in peals.

I suppose at that time he seemed such a healthy tower of strength that we thought he would still be ringing tenors at 100. I was privileged that George rang in my first peal and kept a watchful eye on my first as conductor. Afterwards I rang many peals and quarters with him.

Unfortunately age took its toll, and George did not fulfil all his ambitions. He always expressed the desire to ring the tenor at Westbury in Wiltshire, 35cwt, which we were going to arrange for him. He also wanted to go back to Woburn as he was always proud of a peal of Bristol he conducted there.

It was therefore my sad pleasure to be organist at his funeral. The hymns *All things bright and beautiful* and *O Jesus I have promised* were very appropriate as we thought of George leading down the bells of Maids Moreton the night before his death.

BARRY EGLESFIELD



George Holland (right) with Bill Yates (centre) and Jonathan Humbert (left) at the editor's wedding at Lincoln College, Oxford, 1990.

BLETCHLEY - THE COVER STORY

Most of us are familiar with Bletchley church. The interior was re-ordered in the 1970s, the bells are a pleasant 15cwt ring of eight. The peal boards and other plaques in the ringing room, however, hint at a past in which Bletchley ringers played a key part in the North Bucks Branch's activities.

The Bells

In 1629, four old bells were recast into five bells. In 1712, at the expense of local historian Browne Willis, these bells were recast into a ring of eight by the Rudhall foundry in Gloucester. The bells were hung in a wooden frame, set diagonally across the tower. Willis also paid for a substantial restoration of Bletchley church, as well as being responsible for the building of Fenny Stratford Church.

The Bletchley ringers made good use of their new bells. Some of their activities are recorded by the Rev Cole, who was vicar of Bletchley in 1766.

"Coming home from St Alban's the ringers did me the honour to ring the bells on my arrival, they all eight came into the kitchen, as usual with them four times a year & drank as much as they pleased in Reason & Sobriety."

and on Christmas Eve:

"As they were to ring the Midnight peal, Tom went with his fellow ringers to sup at the Ale-House as usual, till near 12 O clock."

The 19th century saw the beginning of the breaking up of the Rudhall eight. In 1827 the 7th was recast by Taylor's of Oxford, in 1867 the 6th was recast by Robert Stainbank and in *Church Bells* of 18th September 1893 we find the following report:

"Messrs. Gillett & Co of Croydon have been entrusted with the rehanging of these bells. On examination it has been found that the tenor bell will have to be recast, in consequence of which an additional £40 will be required. An appeal is therefore made to the public for assistance, and a bazaar is shortly to be held in aid of the fund. These beautiful bells are much admired in the neighbourhood, and we hope the public will liberally subscribe to the greatly needed restoration."

Apparently, the total cost came to £125. Again the ringers made progress on their restored bells. *Campanology* in 1896 contains many reports such as

"On Wednesday evening October 28th at St Mary's for practice, 480
Grandsire Doubles (16 Bobs and 8
Singles)
W Sear 1 E Marks 4
A G Crane 2 A Atkins 5
R Sear 3 F Hedges 6"

In 1924 the local band rang 252 changes of Stedman Triples. The last touch to be rung on the bells before being rehung in the present steel frame. On All Saints day the bells, tuned and one recast, were dedicated by the Bishop of Buckingham.

The Ringers

The Bletchley ringers have been a focal point of the North Bucks Branch for most of its 90 year history. In 1897 Valentine Sear wrote:

"I should like to see this parish [Little Horwood], with several other parishes, form a Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. I should like to see a few belfrys round Bletchley join this Guild and hope each local band will try and do their best to form a Branch."

When, in 1904, the Branch was successfully founded the Bletchley ringers immediately played an active part. Three members of the Sear family were elected instructors, and the Rev Bennitt a member of the Committee. The Sear family were the mainstay of ringing in the area for over a century. In 1903 Valentine was followed as tower captain by Harry. Harry was born in 1878. His first peal was at Epsom 1898 and 179 followed. He was married in 1908 by Rev F E Robinson and died in December 1964 having completed some sixty years as tower captain at Bletchley. Walter, his brother served for twenty five years as Branch Secretary, a feat not missed by the members. On the 24th September 1932 at Simpson there was a Presentation made to mark the occasion of the completing of seventeen years as Branch Secretary. Since Harry Sear's death the Bletchley ringers have been led by Roger Cadamy, Terry Page and now Paul Faithfull.

DOUG HIRD

BRADWELL RAISED UP!

Hold the publication of the eighth edition of Dove! Bradwell is no longer a ground floor ring. We at Bradwell are very pleased to announce completion of the new raised ringing floor and balcony. Yes, all you budding Romeos and Juliets should come along for a practice.

Our first ring from the new raised floor was on 22nd September and to our discomfort we found the bells painfully noisy. Luckily the addition of new bellropes did not cause many handling problems, but the noise levels did mean that for a short while, many of us rang with ear plugs in or ear defenders on. Yes, they were that loud.

We only managed to ring for a week at this stage before we had to stop again for interior masonry work to be done. This took four weeks rather than the expected one but on 20th October we started again. The sound control problem was improved substantially by layers of carpet samples being placed beneath the bells on the wooden sound-proofing floor. Gordon Abbott went to a number of carpet shops explaining our predicament and we have to thank Carpet City, CMK; Carpet Right, Watling Street, Bletchley; and Allied Maples Carpets for giving us dozens of samples to do the job.

Generally the new floor has been well received among the ringers and the congregation and ringers look forward to seeing anyone who might like to ring the bells, perhaps from 14 feet higher than when they last rang on them.

TED FAWCETT



BRADWELL BEFORE



BRADWELL AFTER

TREASURER'S NOTES

My first note is to urge all towers and all unattached members to pay their subscriptions for 1994 as soon as possible. The sooner we can collect everyone's payment, the more interest we can expect, and the more money the branch will have to spend.

This brings me to my second note. At the December quarterly meeting at Hanslope I put forward my first thoughts on a branch budget. Two things became clear immediately.

1. At present, Branch outgoings only just balance income.
2. The Branch has a balance in hand, after all outgoings, of approximately £800.

The feeling of the meeting was that this should be used, especially considering the interest rate continues to fall. I am inclined to agree. The actual benefit to ringing should be more important than the increase in our bank balance.

So how do you, the members of the Branch, want to spend the Branch's money?

Some areas are covered by previous resolutions such as grants for education or by traditional expenditure such as for restoration projects. Other suggestions have included underwriting a 'Branch Outing', or the Branch Dinner, or curing every odd-struck bell in the Branch.

So, please think hard about this and bring your ideas to the AGM on Saturday 5 March 1994 at Buckingham.

DOUG HIRD

SNIPPETS

The Downs Barn "After Christmas event" was attended by about twenty people. The service was devised by Fiona Maybrey, and Fiona and Doug officiated. The service consisted of hymns and readings appropriate to the season, and Doug gave a short talk on the Star of Bethlehem and the Magi. The service was followed by some ringing after which the ringers were pleasantly surprised to hear that their efforts had directly helped a local resident. On hearing the bells ringing a man, concerned by the health of a relative, sought out the church and its priest for comfort, and of course Ros went to offer support. Our bells carry a message to all who will hear them.



Doug and Nicki recently visited the excellent new ring of twelve at Amersham for evensong ringing. The welcome shown by Alan Ainsworth and his band was reciprocated by the gift of a video of the casting of Downs Barn bells. This video also included the tuning of Amersham's new second bell which, coincidentally, occurred on the same day.

Branch members are urged to try this fine ring, especially during open ringing at the ten bell competition in July.

DOUBLE LENGTH PEAL AT EMBERTON

70 years ago a band local to All Saints, Emberton, rang a double length peal of 10,080 changes in 14 minor methods at the second attempt. It was the longest length rung by all the band except the conductor - Charles Clarke and the most minor rung for the Bedfordshire Association. The first attempt on the previous Whit. Monday had failed after 5 hours ringing when a rope broke.

On Saturday 11th December 1993 a band from the ODG, mainly the North Bucks Branch, repeated the performance ringing the same 14 methods in 5 hours exactly. This also was a second attempt, the first go in June failed in the 6th extent. The longest length rung by all the band, this is also the most Minor rung on tower bells for the Guild.

The details of the peal are as follows:

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS.

Emberton, All Saints, Bucks. 9 cwt.

Saturday 11th December 1993, 5 hours.

10,080 Minor (14 Methods)

(One extent each: Violet, College Pleasure, London Scholars Pleasure, College Exercise, Cambridge Surprise, Woodbine, Oxford Treble Bob, Kent Treble Bob, Double Oxford, Double Court, College Bob, St. Clements, Oxford Bob, Plain Bob.)

Treble	Alan J Marchbank
2	L Ruth Stokes
3	John S White
4	B Douglas Hird
5	Christopher Stokes
6	Barry R Eglesfield (C)

Rung for the 70th Anniversary of the 1923 double peal.

Longest length rung by all.

Most Minor rung on tower bells for the Guild.

As Sheila Watts, Emberton's tower captain, was heard to remark afterwards;

"It was a tremendous feat to repeat the 1923 double peal. The only difference being that this team did it on glucose tablets rather than beer!"

The whole band wish to record their thanks to Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware who made all the necessary arrangements with the church and the Village to let attempts go ahead and to Shirley Waterhouse who so often made the method practice possible.

ALAN MARCHBANK

PEALS

Society of Royal Cumberland Youths

Great Linford, Bucks.

20th November 1993, 3 hours 17 minutes

5040 Doubles (2 extents Stedman; 10 extents St Simon's Bob; 11 extents Grandsire; 9 extents St Martin's Bob; 10 extents Plain Bob)

1. Susan M Ferrie
2. A J Marchbank
3. L Ruth Stokes
4. R J Snack (C)
5. D M Joyce
6. Christine E Marchbank

Rung half-muffled in memory of Frederick W Mynard, a local ringer who died on Saturday 13th November 1993. Also in memory of Colin Snack and Katherine Marchbank.

First of Doubles: 1.

QUARTER PEALS

Newport Pagnell, Bucks

14th November 1993

1260 Stedman Triples

1. R Haseldine, 2. Nicki King, 3. G L Foat, 4. B D Hird, 5. R Keeves, 6. M W Lowndes (C), 7. P D Taylor, 8. G R Stratton.

For Evensong on Remembrance Sunday and in memory of George Holland and Fred Mynard.

Cosgrove, Northants

15th November 1993

1440 (720 each of Violet and Woodbine)

1. Paula Cochrane, 2. B D Hird, 3. Ruth Stokes, 4. C Stokes, 5. J White, 6. B Eglesfield (C).

Rung half muffled in memory of Fred Mynard.

Old Bradwell, Bucks

17th November 1993

1260 Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles

1. Christine Abbott, 2. Jenny Brookman, 3. Jill Joyce, 4. E Fawcett, 5. D Joyce (C), 6. G Abbott.

Half-muffled in memory of Fred Mynard. First quarter peal on the new raised ringing floor.

Emberton, Bucks

22nd November 1993

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1. Sheila Watts, 2. G Foat, 3. Anne Stainsby, 4. B K Smith, 5. M W Gilbert (C), 6. D Stainsby. Rung half muffled in memory of Fred Mynard, and of Mrs Margaret Daniells (née Lovell), who were associated with the bellringers at All Saints Emberton for many years.

Emberton, Bucks

3rd December 1993

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1. Sheila Watts, 2. B Eglesfield, 3. N Gray, 4. P Haslam, 5. I Thompson, 6. R Keeves (C).

Rung to welcome the Rev. Annette Nixon, Parish Deacon, to Emberton.

Newport Pagnell, Bucks

5th December 1993

53 minutes

1264 Plain Bob Major

1. Lorretta Ramsay, 2. P D Taylor, 3. J Lonsbrough, 4. P Tribble, 5. N Gray, 6. R Keeves, 7. M W Gilbert, 8. B D Hird (C).

Great Linford, Bucks

21st December 1993

1260 Doubles (60 Stedman, 600 each Grandsire and Plain Bob)

1. A Curtiss, 2. R Winstanley, 3. Shirley Waterhouse, 4. C Stokes, 5. A Marchbank, 6. B Brearley.

For the 30th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. Dr. John Ponter, Rector of this parish.

720s

Old Bradwell, Bucks

21st November 1993

720 Plain Bob Minor

1. Jenny Brookman, 2. E Fawcett, 3. Becky Fawcett, 4. M Petchey, 5. I Green, 6. D Joyce (C).

Rung after a failed quarter attempt prior to Sunday morning service. In thanksgiving for the life of Fred Mynard.

North Bucks Branch Diary

January 94

Fri 21	*Branch Practice Method: Grandsire Minor	Great Linford
Sat 29	First Peal attempt Followed by Service and Party	Downs Barn

February 94

Sat 12	Computer Simulation	Spelsbury
Fri 18	*Branch Practice Method: Single Oxford & Double Court	Loughton
Sat 26	*Annual Branch Dinner See inside for details	Venue: ***

March 94

Sat 5	*Branch AGM Early afternoon ringing at Thornborough	Buckingham
Sat 5	Cuddesdon Training Day	Radley
Fri 11	Evening of Music Music by Jonathan Humbert	Downs Barn
Sat 12	ODG Spring General Committee Meeting	Tilehurst
Fri 18	*Branch Practice Method: Oxford Treble Bob	Emberton

April 94

Sat 2	ODG Handbell Day The ability to ring Plain Bob Major in hand is required	Reading
Mon 4	Easter Egg Hunt	Downs Barn
Sat 9	Wine and Wisdom Evening	Downs Barn
Fri 15	Junior Ringing Weekend (15 -17)	Dorney
Fri 15	*Branch Practice Method: Double Norwich	TBA

May 94

Mon 2	ODG Ringing Day 8 Bell Competition	Banbury Branch
Fri 20	*Branch Practice Method: Winchendon & St Nicholas	Steeple Aston
Sat 21	Guild AGM	Tingewick
		Downs Barn

June 94

Sat 4	*Quarterly Meeting and 6-Bell Competition Note: This year both events on same day	Bradwell
Fri 17	*Branch Practice: Method: Little Bob Minor & Cambridge	Chicheley

July

Sat 2	Guild Festival and Barndance 10-Bell Striking Competition	Amersham & Aston Clinton
-------	--	-----------------------------

September 94

Fri 9 - Sun 11	Easthampstead Course	Easthampstead
----------------	----------------------	---------------