

North Bucks Branch Quarterly Newsletter
OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



Issue No 5
June 1983



HOLY TRINITY OLD WOLVERTON

Cover picture

Old Wolverton may have had a Saxon church before the tenth century but there is no actual recorded proof of this. The first record comes in the 14th century of a Norman church, built with a tower, nave and chancel. After the Black Death the church fell into disrepair and was subsequently partially rebuilt. The tower was strengthened and heightened and an aisle was added. This stood until the 15th century when the church was rebuilt. Four bells were hung in the tower in 1714.

At the beginning of the 19th century the nave was destroyed and the Radcliffe Trustees built a new church in the Norman style in 1815. The medieval tower remains and in 1820 John Briant of Hertfordshire hung six bells there. Recently Holy Trinity, Old Wolverton has lacked a regular band of ringers. This April, however, practices were restarted on alternate Tuesdays with the help of the Great Linford ringers and friends. A keen band of learners is progressing well and it is hoped to start Sunday service ringing with the local band this summer. Visitors to practice nights are very welcome. The pattern in June is Old Wolverton Tuesday 7 and 21 June and Great Linford on Tuesday 14 and 28 June.

Report from the AGM

The AGM was held at Lavendon on Saturday 5th March 1983. About 50 members were present, and apologies were received from about a further 20 members.

1. The Minutes of the half yearly meeting at Buckingham were read, approved and signed, with the addition of a note that, after discussion, the Branch considered that the Guild subscription should include a free copy of the Annual Report to each member.
2. The following new members were elected:
Belinda Andrews, Shelley Barfoot, Jason Barfoot, Alex Corner, Anna French, Tracey Madkins (all Beachampton) Tom Barlex, Andrew Browne (both Bradwell) Gordon Ellis (Newport Pagnell) Jill Floyd, Andrew Floyd, Margaret Fielding, Doreen Garner, Hilary Towers (all Wavendon).
3. The Secretary presented his report.
4. The Treasurer presented his accounts for the previous year which were approved.

5. The Ringing Masters presented their report.

6. Elections

		Proposed	Seconded
President	Ven John Bone	M.Petchey	D.Stainsby
Chairman	Brian Baldwin	"	C.Barnett
Ringing Masters	David Ockwell	J.Murray	F.Mynard
	Derek Stainsby	F.Mynard	D.Ockwell
Secretary	Doug Hird	M.Petchey	A.Jones
Treasurer	Brian Baldwin	"	"
Committee Reps	Chris Barnett	B.Baldwin	M.Petchey
	John Murray	"	"
Organist	Gordon Bignall	"	"

7. The '983/84 programme was adopted with minor amendments.

8. The ex-Secretary reported that the previous night he had been told that there was a ring of six and possibly a ring of ten available for the new churches in Downs Barn and the City Centre. The cost was respectively about £3500 and about £6500. After extensive discussions it was agreed the Branch should

i) take steps to acquire the bells, subject to detailed enquiries showing that the bells were suitable.

ii) set up a fund on the lines of the Guild Bell Fund, to raise money for the bells. The committee would consist of the tower captains of the Milton Keynes towers and the branch Officers. More details and definite proposals would be brought before the September meeting.

9. The Branch supported the idea of the abolition of the Guild Stewards and the strengthening of the Deputy Master post.

10. A variety of business was brought under 'any other business' including a complaint that certain Officers and members were ordering their beer in straight glasses.

New rings of bells in Milton Keynes

As outlined to you at the AGM in March, the next few years hold the exciting prospect of two new rings of bells in the branch. My objective in this article is to keep you up to date with progress and stimulate a wide ranging debate, interest in and involvement with these major projects.

Downs Barn

The new church plans are at a very advanced stage with construction in early

1984 now very much a reality. Yes, just six months away. The TOWER is being funded by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation and a number of options are available and being discussed regarding the frame and fittings. The BELLS are to be provided by the 'RINGERS'. David and Fiona Maybrey are going to need a little support from us all, not only to find a suitable ring of six but preparing the bells and installing them. Whilst much of the work will be done by experts there is plenty of scope for willing hands and the main problem, as always, of FUNDS.

A committee is being established, made up of branch Officers and representatives from Downs Barn, to carry this project through to successful installation and act as Trustees for the funds. An initial target of £5000 has been set but this may vary depending on the actual solution chosen. Hugh Butler has opened the fund with £5 and the profits from the Barn Dance will also help. YOU CAN HELP- PLEASE CONSIDER WAYS THAT YOUR TOWER CAN HELP TO ESTABLISH A NEW TOWER AND BELLS AT DOWNS BARN.

City Centre

These are still early days and, whilst the principles have been clearly established, no detailed timescale or design brief have been finalised for the proposed Church in the City Centre. The immediate problem is that a decision is needed in the reasonably near future as to whether we accept the offer of the fine ring of bells that were previously installed at Feltham (10). This dilemma is being given close attention right now and I will keep you informed and seek your agreement before the Branch commits itself.

General

Without doubt these tasks are going to demand a lot of time, faith, funds and hard work to succeed. It is also important that all other repair, maintenance and enhancement to existing rings of bells does not suffer during the same period. To this end the Branch Officers will be trying to identify what is likely to be needed on this front in the next few years, such that our priorities and resources can be co-ordinated throughout the Branch. If you have any queries, views and better still offers of help or funds, please ring me on 670579, or write. You also have the formal meetings of the Branch to ensure that your point of view is heard. The next opportunity is the Branch Committee Meeting at Woughton Church on Friday 24th June at 7.30pm.

Brian Baldwin

Branch Striking Competition

The Branch Striking Competition, held on 23rd April at Simpson, was once again well-attended with seven bands taking part. The standard improves annually and this year's contest was closely fought with very few marks separating the bands. Old Bradwell were unable to maintain their grip on the trophy this year and it was won by Stony Stratford, with Buckingham a very close second. Third place went to Old Bradwell, Bletchley were fourth, Great Linford and Newport Pagnell took fifth and sixth places respectively with Woughton on the Green picking up the wooden spoon. Our thanks go to Messrs Woodruffe and White who judged the competition and the Simpson/ Woughton ringers who provided us with a delicious tea.

Guild meetings

The Cotswold Village of Enstone was the setting on March 12th 1983 for two meetings of the Guild - the AGM of the Bell Fund and a meeting of the Guild General Committee.

Bell Fund

This was by far the shorter of the two meetings (40 minutes- a record?). The Treasurers presented their report and from this we learnt that during 1982 grants were made as follows:-

Beerham, Berks - £50 for a new headstock

Amersham, Bucks - £1000 towards £40,000 for major restoration

Quainton, Bucks - £1000 towards £17,000 for a rehanging scheme

Chalbury, Oxon - £500 towards their target of £8000 for rehanging

Fund raising for 1982 realised just over £8000 (marginally less than 1981- a record year). This was made up of £4300 from the branches - special mention for the East Berks and South Bucks branch who raised £1340 - with the remainder coming from Guild events. During 1982 judicious use of the Stock Market produced £5000 from cashing in shares and investing in other stock. The capital account at the end of 1982 stood at £34,042 compared with £26,013 in 1981.

Sponsored ringing was not considered a success if held annually and this fund raiser will now be held every four years i.e. in a Leap Year.

Two thousand books of raffle tickets have been printed - one book per member - for the annual draw which will take place at the Guild Festival on 2 July.

Books are now available and members are asked to sell as many books as possible. Prizes are £100, £50, and £25 'plus many others'

General committee meeting

The Education sub-Committee reported first on their activities for 1982. Several courses of one day's duration were organised for both beginners and advanced ringers. Educational aids are being finalised and a film 'Birth of a bell' is available on loan from the Guild General Secretary. The tenth Easthampstead course was held and the 1983 course has again been booked from 23rd to 25th September.

(See next article - Ed.) The committee have been asked to look for other venues in the Diocese but no decision has yet been reached. Any suggestions?

Messrs Diserens and Butler were appointed Guild Assessors for the Central Council Graded Ringing Assessments Scheme.

Towers and Belfries sub-Committee had a busy 1982. Amongst their activities were gathering information on bells in redundant churches, a maintenance course at Woburn and inspections at Aylsbrough and Datchet. Works of rehangng or augmenting were completed or started at Mollington, Quainton, Aylesbury, Amersham, Thalfont St Giles, Bray and Windsor. An item will appear in the next edition of EdBob reminding us of the inspection and advice service of this committee.

The main item of interest and that which caused most debate from the Finance and General Purposes Committee was the change of rule 7(c) and 7(e). Those who attended the Branch AGM at Lavendon will recall the enormous support for the change in the rule which would dispense with the posts of four Guild Stewards and substitute three Deputy Masters, one for each county. This had been referred from the Guild AGM in 1982 to the Finance and G P Committee for further debate and decision at the Spring General Meeting. In the meantime the Finance and G P Committee had further discussed the questions and had decided to retain the Guild Stewards but give them a job - virtually that of Guild Ringing Masters. Despite a counter-proposition from North Bucks the Finance and G P recommendation was accepted, but not without the matter again being referred to the Finance and G P Committee for the rule to be tidied up!

The Annual Report is ready for production. The cost is £625 for 500 copies and it will retail at £1.25 each. The publishers are anxious for feedback on content, style, technical merit and artistic interpretation. Newbury Branch will be proposing at the AGM that the Report be given free to all members. The cost for 2000 copies would be about double that for 500 copies.

No review of peal fees, at present 10p per rope, is to take place but the question will be raised annually. In 1982 total fees amounted to £167 - the cost of reporting peals in the Annual Report is about £70.

Nomination to the AGM for Guild Officers were agreed i.e. Master, Secretary and

Treasurer. The Deputy Master will be standing down as he will be going abroad later in the year.

The 8 bell striking competition is to be three courses of Stedman Triples.

The Peal Secretary is to be empowered to reject peals which do not comply e.g. incorrectly reported, a member of the band not a Guild member etc.

Finally the Guild AGM was to be held on Saturday 21st May 1983 at Stoke Poges.

Chris Barnett, Branch Representative

Easthampstead 1983

This year's annual course is to be held at the Mansion, Easthampstead Park, near Wokingham from Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th September. Anyone who is able to raise and lower a bell unaided is eligible to apply and students can be accommodated at all levels. This year there will be groups for Plain Hunt/Bob Doubles, Bob Minor, Stedman and Kent, Conducting for Beginners, Elementary Surprise Ringing (Major and Minor) and Advanced. It is a busy and friendly weekend; regular readers of In Touch will remember Jo Nevill's amusing account of her experiences at last year's course. Application forms and further information may be obtained from: Mrs B May, 4 Halfacre Close, Spencers Wood, Reading RG7 1DZ. (0734 884172). Please enclose a large stamped addressed envelope.

Branch Barn Dance

SATURDAY 9th JULY at WAVENDON COMMUNITY CENTRE

It would be nice to know that somebody from every tower will be amongst the 100 or so who will gather together for the third annual Barn Dance. Music Folk are the group again and a licensed bar has been arranged. If these two ingredients are not enough then the bells are available from 7pm, raffle prizes and supper will help to make the evening a repeat of last year's success. The most important additive is YOU. Tickets are available from Brian (670529) Doug (614741) and David (315816) Prices are £2.50 and £1.50 (16 and under) cash in advance or £3.00 and £2.00 on the night. Ticket price includes supper.

All profits (target £50) will go to the new Bell Fund, the first objective being the new ring of six at Downs Barn.

The Editors

Please note that the Editors of In Touch, Peter and Kirsty Wilson have moved house. Their new address is 21 Wolverton Road, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes (565202).

DIARY

Branch Practices

3 June	Shenley	Single Oxford Minor
1 July	Stowe	All Saints Doubles
5 August	Woburn*	Erin Triples
3 September	Maids Moreton+	Norwich Surprise
7 October	Olney	Double Norwich Major
		Oxford Bob Triples

Surprise Major Practices

17 June	Buckingham*	London, Superlative, Cambridge
15 July	Newport Pagnell	Superlative Rutland Cambridge
19 August	Newton Longville*	Superlative, Rutland Cambridge
16 September	Bletchley	Lincolnshire, Rutland Yorkshire
21 October	Hanslope*	Lincolnshire, Bristol Yorkshire

* Tower to be confirmed

+ Half yearly meeting

Friday practices start at 7.30pm