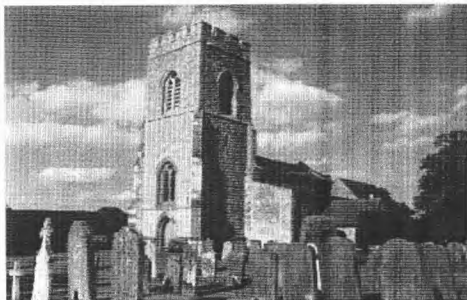


In Touch

June 2003



Quarterly Meeting – 7th June 2003
St Peter, Stoke Goldington

6 bells (13-1-22 cwt.)
At Stoke Goldington

3.30 – 4.30 ringing
4.30 – 5.00 service
5.00 – 5.45 tea
5.45 – 7.00 business meeting
7.00 – 9.00 evening ringing

Names for tea to Sheila Ware (01234 713667) or
sheilaware@stedman.clara.co.uk by **Wednesday 4th June 2003.**

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Editorial

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

North Bucks Branch

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Held at Olney on 1st March 2003

Chairman's Welcome

The chairman Barry Eglesfield, welcomed everyone to Olney and expressed the hope that this would be a short but lively meeting

Apologies for absence

Received from Laurence Gibson, Ann Mercer, Charlie MacDonald, Gill MacDonald, Nigel Harrison (Guild secretary), Tine Marchbank, Andrew Spencer, Anne Fletcher, Joathan Spencer, Peter Tampsett, Shirley Webb, Robert Christopher, Robert George.

Matters arising from the minuits

The minuits from the quarterly meeting held at Fenny Stratford in December were published in the February edition of In-Touch. It was agreed on a show of hands that the chairman sign the minuits as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minuits

There were no matters arising

Election of new members

Nominations had been received proposing 8 new members –

Tower	Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Emberton	Scott Forrest	Sheila Watts	Sheila Ware
Hanslope	Rebecca Thompson(Junior)	Sheila Blackthorn	Roy Keeves
Lillingstone Lovell	Thomas Moore(Re-election)	Bernard Phillips	Roy Culley
Newport Pagnell	Becky Paine (Junior)	Barry Eglesfield	Doug Hird
Olney	Mathew Soaman (Junior) Ben Brown (Junior)	Doug Hird	Sheila Ware
Whaddon	Daniel Beckwith (Junior & Re-election)	Derek White	Hugh Butler
Unattached	Victoria Stanworth	Alan Marchbank	Richard Stanworth

All were elected without dissent. The chairman asked those present to stand and they were welcomed to the guild and the branch.

Officers Reports

Chairman. It is difficult to imagine twelve months have passed since I was elected as chairman. The year has tipped along quietly, nothing startling has happened.

We've done quite well with the training side since Christine was elected as training officer and I give my thanks for all the work she has done, and to all people who have given up there time to help with these events. They don't just happen; it does take a lot of time and work to set up. We have managed to have several very useful training day's, which no doubt Richard will elaborate on. We did have a hiccup with the newsletter unfortunately, which has now been resolved. It did look as if we might not be able to continue with it but hopefully at the eleventh hour something has been pulled out of the fire. We will see how that develops. It's lovely to see all the youngsters here and I hope this meeting won't be boring for them, as they seemed to be when I was a lad. It's also lovely to be in this church with this fantastic organ which was played by Michael.

Secretary The pattern of monthly branch practises and quartley meetings continued as in Previous years. Average attendances remained at much the same level as the previous year. A 10-bell practise was arranged at Bicester, which was quite successful. A joint Surprise Practise was held at Hanslope with the Luton district. This was the only joint practise this year. Membership at the branch decreased again in 2002 with only 13 members elected. The Total number of towers with members is still 31. An officers meeting has been held each quartley meeting and the AGM. We also Hosted the Guild Autumn General Committee Meeting at Downs Barn in November making as small profits on the teas. I apologise for the short notice on of a number of the venues for practises and meetings. These Were caused by last minute making it difficult to get notices to out to you all. I have Made use of e-mail where possible and have built up a list of tower correspondents who are on e-mail.

As part of the usual preparations for the Annual Report letters were again sent out to all Towers for which we have contact details, requesting that they check these details are correct Any mistakes. The rate of return has improved from last year but there are still a number which have not been returned. Please return the letter, even if the details are correct. That way I can ensure that the branch records are up to date.

Treasurer. Copies of the accounts had been circulated to those at present. A few of the main Points were highlighted. The balance increased from £836 at the beginning of the year to £1031 at the end of the year. Subscriptions were collected from 200 members. In touch publishing costs were £119, down from previous years as Doug had very not Claimed expenses, and there had not been an issue in November. These costs had been offset by donations from tower towards publication of In Touch, which we were very grateful for.

On a show of hands it was agreed that the accounts be adopted. The chairman thanked Sheila Watts for the hard work she puts in keeping the accounts.

Ringing Master. The monthly branch practises have included a range of special methods, Some more popular than others. Future special methods need to reflect what the branch as a whole can aspire to, rather than a few individual preferences. Only one rounds and call-changes practice was held, at Simpson. This was almost too well supported, mainly, I think, because they had been out of action for so long.

We just about mustered two hands for the Guild eight bell striking competition, although we were unlucky that both bands were drawn in the same heat. A team was also entered in the ten-bell competition at Banbury in November. Although we finished seventh out of seven, we performed well considering our lack of a ten-bell tower, and that was better than the other eight branches that didn't even enter.

In our own branch competitions, we had a reasonable number of teams for the six-bell event at Maids Moreton. Richard Yates was the judge and placed Hanslope first. The beginner's competition was postponed for a month because of the death of the Queen Mother and was held at Calverton. There were only seven eligible ringers, from Newton Longville, Stowe and Tingewick. We had to adapt the rules slightly in order to make two teams, nominally from Newton Longville & Stowe. Malcolm Hooton kindly judged this and declared the Stowe team to be the winners.

We did not fare well at the Inter Branch competition, held at Wicken in September. The Towcester branch won all three sections of the competition. It was clear that our call-changes team was a lot less experienced than their team, and perhaps we should consider defining some eligibility rules for this section. Training has been much better organised, thanks to Christine Ryan, with these training sessions, Cambridge, Grandsire and Bob Minor. This had brought much more focus on training and some positive progress has been made.

Training officer Christine Ryan gave a short review of the courses run so far and asked for feedback on the type and number of courses needed. Should there be more courses run or are three per year enough? There was general comment that this was a supply and demand situation and may need to be reviewed periodically.

Branch Archivist Not a great deal of new information has been added to the archive in the past year. In sorting out problems with computers and the website a certain amount of tidying up of information held in the archive has been done. This has concentrated on improving the quality of the sources were possible so that one can be directed to the original source for further research if required. On e source of information used is old copies of the Ringing World. We are particularly short of information in the 40's & 50's. It is also hoped improve the search capabilities on the web site so more general searches can be performed across all information held. For example there are often useful pieces of information held in the accounts relating to individual towers, which currently are not easily selected. Any suggestion for improvements or requests for information should be e-mailed to Doug Hird.

Election of Officers

Post	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Barry Eglesfield	Alan Marchbank	Derek Stainsby
Secretary	Helan Stanworth	Derek Stainsby	Sheila Ware
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Sheila Blenkhorn	Alan Marchbank
Ringing Master	Richard Stanworth	Sheila Watts	Roy Keeves
Assistant Master	Simon Head	Ted Fawcett	Doug Hird
Training Officer	Chritine Ryan	Alan Marchbank	Richard Stanworth
Guild Representatives	Alan Marchbank	David Joyce	Scott Ayers
	Brian Newman		
Branch Archivist	Doug Hird	Richard Stanworth	Hugh Butler
Newsletter Editor	Scott Ayers	Alan Marchbank	John Stanworth

All Nominees for the post were elected unopposed

The chairman thanked all the officers for there hard work throughout the year and he expressed the hope that the members appreciated what they do.
Grants

Richard Stanworth Opened this item by giving a short resume of the discussion at the quartly meeting at Fenny Stratford. At that meeting the matter of the level of training grants had been agreed. There had been some discussion on setting guidelines to indicate what sort of things the branch should give grants to towers for. There was also felt to be a need to define any notice required before an application was considered. The meeting considered these matters and discussed the need to define what grants could be given to what they could not be given too. There were two main points raised. One point of view was that members should know in advance what any money given might be used for.

A set of guidelines should be put in place to define what grants can be given to. Grants should not depend on a vote of those who happen to be present at a particular meeting. It was pointed out that the guild regularly give grants to the Bell Restoration Fund and the Bell Fund, based purely on the decision of those present at the AGM, and this was analogous to giving grants from branch funds without a specific set of rules. Alan Marchbank highlighted the fact that there is a distinct gap in what the Guild funds are able to give grants to. This is the area of maintenance, that is, keeping bells ringing. He felt that as members we

have to look at our obligations to support the objectives to the guild - and one of the primary objectives is to see that bells are rung on Sundays. We need to be able to look at a cause that needs aid to enable bells to be rung on Sundays, and decide if we are in a financial position to give some money to that cause. He was strongly against imposing a set of rules that state that we don't do something. These could prevent us sometime in the future from supporting a very needy cause that falls outside the scope of any rules we make today. There was a danger that a set of rigid rules for grants could easily leave the branch with heaps of money in the fund and lots of unringable bells.

It was generally agreed that some structure needed to be defined as to how to apply for grants from the branch and that these needed to be publicised before a meeting so that interested members could attend and vote on the application. Following discussion on the process of grant application, Alan Marchbank proposed the following motion:

"Applications for grants for assistance from individuals for training or from towers for work or for the provision of things that keep the bells ringing shall be submitted to the secretary. Details of applications received will sent out to towers as soon as possible after receipt. All applications received and sent out at least one month before a meeting will be considered at the next general meeting of the branch." This was seconded by Simon Head. The chairman then put the proposal to the meeting and it was carried on a show of hands.

Grant application

An application has been received from Emberton requesting a grant to help towards the purchase of a new set of ropes. This had not been discussed at the quarterly meeting in December because, at the time, it was thought that it was required to be published before the meeting in In-Touch. The officers had discussed this and they recommended to the meeting that a grant be made to Emberton. The total cost of new ropes was just under £940. Richard Stanworth proposed a grant of £200 to be made to Emberton. Malcolm Hooton Seconded this. David Joyce proposed an amendment that the amount of the grant be £100. This was seconded by Jill Joyce. The amendment was put to the meeting and was defeated by 18 votes to 5.

On behalf of the Emberton ringers, Sheila Watts thanked the members for making the grant towards their new ropes.

Forthcoming Events

A list of events planned for this year has been circulated. Richard Stanworth highlighted points to note:

The April Branch practice will be one week early because the third Friday is Good Friday.

The Branch Striking Competition will be held on the third Friday in June instead of the branch practice, in order to avoid clashes with weddings and encourage more bands to enter.

There is a Cambridge training day in May.

The inter branch striking competition in July will be one week early so as not to clash with the Ringing Road show.

There may be a coach outing to the Ringing Road show - any one interested please give their names to Scott Ayers - posters advertising the show are available for all towers.

The Guild 8-bell striking competition will be at the beginning of May - team members needed

The Guild is running a training course at Steeple Aston in the Autumn. Graham Clifton is looking for members of the branch to help if possible.

The branch is to host the Guild festival in 2004 as part of our centenary celebrations. Ideas are needed for the event. It was suggested that evening activities be avoided as we are right at one end of the Guild area and also evening events are not so popular with families.

It was realised that the Beginners Striking Competition has been omitted from the Calendar. It was agreed to hold this on Friday 20th April, venue to be arranged.

The Towcester Branch has invited us to a joint practice on Saturday 24th May. It is hoped to hold it at Towcester, but this is still to be confirmed.

Derek Stainsby announced that the Launton Handbell Ringers would be performing at Loughton Baptist Church next Saturday, 8th March.

Vote of thanks

On behalf of the members, the chairman thanked all those who helped to make the day happen; the clergy for taking the service, Michael Tinsley for playing the organ, those who had helped in anyway. The members showed their appreciation in their usual way.

There being no other business, the chairman closed the meeting.
The draw and further ringing followed.

Barry Gets Lost – And That's Before We Started Ringing!

We were drawn in the heat of the Guild 8-Bell Striking Competition that took place at Sonning. There were five teams in this heat, with the first three to go through to the final at Wokingham St Paul in the afternoon. We were drawn to go last, the other teams being

two from St Mary & St Laurence Reading, St Giles Reading, and the Witney and Woodstock Branch. About ten minutes before we were due to ring, Barry rings up to say that he couldn't find the tower. It turned out he was at Sonning Common, which is some way from Sonning. Further, he was presently driving away from Sonning Common in the opposite direction to Sonning! The only way to get to Sonning was through the middle of Reading and there was no way that he would arrive in time to ring. Fortunately John had come along as he was not working and was able to stand in at short notice. We rang what we thought was a creditable test piece in the circumstances, although the judge thought that we rang rather fast – the fastest of all the teams. Thanks to those who took part – David, Jill, Alan, Michael, Helen, Catherine, Richard, and especially John. The results were:

1st	St Mary & St Laurence, Reading	91 faults	in 9min 2 sec
2nd	Witney & Woodstock branch	197 faults	in 8min 53 sec
3rd	St Mary & St Laurence, Reading	232 faults	in 9 min 50 sec
4th	North Bucks Branch	269 faults	in 8 min 31 sec
5th	St Giles Reading	388 faults	in 9 min 20 sec



Cambridge training course

Due to the demand expressed last year for learning and developing the ringing of Cambridge Surprise Minor a group of 7 helpers and 3 trainees met at Stowe church for further intensive training.

ODG North Bucks Branch - Six Bell Striking Competition

RULES

1. Entries must be made to the Ringing Master by the closing date notified in In Touch
2. Ringers should ring regularly at the tower, within the branch, that they represent. At least 5 members of the team must be paid-up members of the branch.
3. No ringer may ring for more than one team.
4. A tower may enter more than one team.
5. Up to two minutes practice ringing per team will be allowed before the test piece.
6. The start of the test piece will be notified to the judges by ringing two whole pulls on the treble.
7. The test piece will consist of at least 20 rows of rounds, followed by 120 changes in one or more methods, or 120 rows of call changes. If method is rung then plain courses are acceptable. If call changes are rung, then at least 10 changes must be called and at least three different bells brought down to lead.
8. Where possible, a judge from outside the branch will be appointed for the competition. He or she will be asked to offer constructive comment and advice on the ringing by each band, as well as presenting their markings. The judge's decision is final
9. A branch officer or other suitable person will act as tower steward and timekeeper. The steward may be asked to indicate the end of the first 20 rows, and the 140th row if call changes are rung.

Beginners Striking Competition

Ten beginners took part on Friday 25th April at Fenny Stratford. Because of problems with the sally on the fifth catching in the ceiling boss, we adapted the rules slightly to make up three teams. Two teams had three beginners each in the team, and the third team had four beginners. Each team had two or three experienced ringers ringing with them as well as Christine and Richard standing by. As all the beginners came from, or ring at, Newton Longville, the teams were Newton Longville 'A', 'B' and 'C'. The test piece was reduced to two minutes rounds for each team as this was the longest that a number of the ringers had ever rung for.

David Joyce kindly braved the rain to stand in the church porch and judge the competition. His comments on the teams were:

Team A: There was a lot of swapping in and out of rounds

Team B: these bunched up into little groups, rather than sounding evenly

Team C: There was a lot of swapping and repeated rows – they took longer to correct any mistakes.

David judged team A to be the winners, team B runners-up, and team C third. Many thanks to him for judging the event.

Those taking part were:

Team A: Louise, Vicky and Hazel

Team B: Stephan, Rebecca and Jenny

Team C: Eleanor, Faith, Daniel and Anna

Branch Six Bell Striking Competition

The branch striking competition will be held at Emberton on Friday 20th June, starting at 7.30 p.m. prompt. This is a change in order to try and avoid clashing with weddings, so I hope to see more entries than we have had in the last few years. Remember you can ring plain courses, plain hunt, or call changes. You will find the rules elsewhere in this newsletter. Entries to the Ringing Master by **Thursday 19th June**

Inter Branch Striking Competition

This is coming up in July. The date is one week earlier than usual in order to avoid clashing with the Ringing Road show. We need ringers for three separate bands if at all possible – a six-bell team, a team for call changes on eight, and a Stedman Triples team. That is 22 ringers in all, surely not too difficult to find from our membership. The Ringing Master will be contacting you soon, but if you would like to take part, please contact him.

There was as usual for the spring meeting a two parter starting with the AGM of the Bell Fund.

There was a no change in the officers and trustees of this fund, so they are as reported in the Guild's annual report.

As to funds there was as expected a downturn in income due to the vagaries of the stock market. To offset this there were fewer bids for grants. The trustees have tried to keep the grants at 15% of the proposed cost of any project, but at the moment the grants are more like 12.5%. If the income picks up then either more can be given to those already granted or others may be considered out of this coming year's income. It's worth noting however that some £4000 of the £30,000 of capital that was used during the millennium project has been repaid into the fund. It is also their intention that any surplus left after the grants have been awarded be used to clear this arrears situation.

The committee accepted this report, copies of the minutes will appear in Odd bob along with the audited accounts.

We then moved to the main committee meeting.

The only things to note from the matters arising was a report that one tower had to stop ringing on health and safety ground due to the means of access to the ringing room not meeting requirements, it's a vertical ladder with no hoop supports, this will no doubt be dealt with in due course.

Child protection matters are still long and drawn out as it seems most parishes are still not complying with the law.

The accounts are very healthy and with some £16,000 in the bank.

The reports of the sub-committees were taken and will appear in either Odd bob or the guild report at some stage.

There was no change in membership of any of the sub-committees.

Peal secretary was not present so the Master read that one, no real change. Colin Turner still heads the list having now rang 4000 peals. His conductor, who's name escapes me, is the youngest person to reach 3000 peals. Sad life some people must lead!!!!!!!!!

The peal fee stays the same at 35p.

Annual reports are out and for sale @ £5.00

It was decided that as there was to be no raffle this year and because we had such a healthy bank balance, we would donate £1000 to each the Bell & Restoration funds. This was passed by the committee after a failed amendment by J Harrison to split the donation £500 to the bell fund & £1500 to the restoration fund.

A grant of £460 to purchase a digital camera for the shiplake ringing centre was also passed.

Guild bookstall is doing reasonably well, Pat N. wishes to pass her thanks on to all the guild stewards who help with the selling. There was no festival this year but was noted that North Bucks have offered to host the event in 2004. (We will have to start planning....pronto!)

None of the guild officers have indicated that they wish to stand down so their names are the ones to go forward at the AGM.

Brian Newman, Guild Representative.

Are our ringing efforts appreciated?

As a veteran of hundreds of weddings over the years I've sometimes wondered whether the happy couples have ever appreciated the sound of the bells as they enter or leave the church. Some feedback from a work colleague suggests not. She was recently married at Milton Keynes village tower. When she came she told everyone how lovely her wedding had been showed off the pictures. It looked lovely the sun was shining, the guests were smiling and the bride was of course the picture of happiness. She said she knew that the bells had been rung because she saw the ringers leaving, but she herself could not remember anything about the bells. What conclusions could we draw from this? That the standard of ringing was excellent? If it had been poor surely even a non - ringer would have noticed. That the period of ringing was too short or too long? Surely she would of commented that it was poor value for money or that it disturbed the photographer too much. Perhaps it was just right and was just another piece in her perfect day, and this level of invisibility (inaudibility?) is what we should all be striving for in our wedding ringing efforts.

Nicola King

Applications for Grants

Following the motion passed at the AGM applications for grants will be dealt with as follows:
Applications for grants for assistance from individuals for training or from towers for work or for the provision of things that keeps bells ringing shall be submitted to the secretary.

Details of the applications received will be sent out to towers as soon as possible after receipt. All applications received and sent out at least one month before a meeting will be considered at the next general meeting of the branch.

Training Grants

Following the motion passed at the quarterly meeting in December 2002 grants will be given towards training courses as follows: 50% of the cost up to a maximum of £50. Applications for grants should be made in writing to the Secretary. It would help us if you apply before you attend the course if at all possible .

There have been three applications for training grants towards the cost of attending Easthampstead Course. This will be discussed and voted on at June meeting.

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 bell handling but may also be helpful to those learning to ring. The video may be borrowed from secretary free charge. However a deposit of £5 will be required against safe return of the video.

Helen Stanworth