

SUMMER 92

IN TOUCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

OF

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



Steeple Keepers Beware

The Branch Towers and Bells committee has been kept busy in the last few weeks, keeping an eye on some of our three-bell towers.

Stoke Hammond

Our inspection of Stoke Hammond bells was most encouraging, so much so that we think the branch should adopt the tower quickly before Central Bucks realise what they are missing! They have two quite ancient bells and a Taylor tenor. The wooden frame was made when the tenor was cast in 1882 so the whole installation is in good condition. The only work needed is to re-secure one of the foundation beams which is a bit mobile at present. This would take a local builder about a day to sort out so there are no major concerns about these bells.

Willen

We inspected these bells about a year ago. They are a unique ring in that they were cast and hung while the church was being built in 1683. This would give them some interest value alone but the really odd thing about them is that they are hung diagonally across the tower. The fittings were more recent and were probably the work of Bond of Burford in the 1870s. When we inspected the bells, the treble headstock had collapsed some time previously and had been replaced with a new metal one swung by a wooden lever. The fittings for the other bells were still in place. The second was found to be ringable (by Barry at least!) but the tenor was in need of more determined attention. All of the bells have their original clappers, suspended from their cast in crown staples. Their leathers are, however, worn out and they strike the bell too low as a result. To remedy this was our first advice so that the bells could be safely chimed until a proper re-hang could be undertaken. Replacing the leathers is classed as maintenance and so does not need a faculty.

Re-hanging the bells does need a faculty, however. To quote Frost in "Towers and Bells"

"Before any work is undertaken on bells, their fittings, bellframes, or to the tower in which they hang, the correct legal permission must be obtained: this is known as a 'Faculty'. This process is a legal requirement and failure to comply with the provisions of this law may lead to the incumbent and PCC being taken to court, possibly resulting in a punitive fine and probably in heavy costs."

On a more recent visit to Willen we discovered that the second and tenor bells had been re-hung on shiny new metal headstocks with (rather weak) wooden levers. The work is certainly tidy but completely unsympathetic with the rest of the installation and has been carried out without a faculty.

We are about to find out what happens to a PCC which steps outside the law, an experience which, I am sure, we can all learn from. In the meantime, if you have any doubts about what you can or cannot do, please ask one of us at the next Branch meeting or practice. We would welcome the opportunity to root around in your bellfry. Doug Hird

These generous people donated money towards IN TOUCH'S costs when they paid these subs to Sheila. A thousand thanks from your editor & the Branch Officers.

****OLNEY**FENNY STRATFORD**BEACHAMPTON**GT BRICKHILL**BUCKINGHAM & MAIDS
MORETON**EMBERTON**OLD WOLVERTON**WOUGHTON & SIMPSON**LAVENDON**
MAIDS MORETON!**

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BRANCH QUARTERLY

Saturday June 6th 1992

- 4.30 Ringing at Emberton
- 5.30 Service at Emberton
- 6.00 Tea and short business meeting at Emberton Institute
(Adjacent to the clock tower)
- 7.15 Ringing at Olney

Names for tea to Sheila Watts (0234) 711113 by Thursday 4th June please

NB. Due to evening ringing being available at Olney for the quarterly, the branch practice on 15th May is now at LAVENDON.

BEST KEPT TOWER COMPETITION 1992

The final judging for the Best Kept Tower 1991/2 took place on 4th April. Three of the Guild Towers and Belfries committee travelled a round trip of 200 miles between all five finalists. The standard of the final towers was superb, but one tower eventually emerged triumphant. Congratulations to Chalfont St. Giles (who we later found out had spent the previous evening polishing the bells and vacuuming the entire tower!) who were the winners. Commiserations to the other four towers: Thatcham, Steeple Aston, Wokingham All Saints, and Tilehurst.



Bill's Friday lunchtime in the Robin Hood at Buffers Holt, snapped by B.Eglesfield's candid camera! Beware you could be next!

THE DOWNS BARN EASTER EGG HUNT

Following the decision made at this years AGM for the Branch to support the Downs Barn Bell Fund, some of us spent Easter Monday afternoon getting lost, confused, frustrated and, ultimately, refreshed on a treasure hunt.

The idea is this: our archivist, armed with a vague idea of a route and a number of old OS maps plans a 19 mile round trip. Then the clues are added, some corny, some devious and some in the form of photos. This year there were two additions. Extra marks could be gained for writing down the names of all the roundabouts on the route and, secondly, just to confuse you even more there was a commentary which described each church as you passed it and, of course, its bells.

Eleven cars started off, most taking about two hours to go round. One, the winners, took three hours which must show the way for future teams. The task was not without its difficulties as one roundabout didn't exist and one had been redesigned but everyone got round. Finally, the stressful business of marking the answers. Some were better than the correct answers. They might have even been correct but you don't get marks for being too clever! Some of the answers were definitely wrong although their owners took some convincing.

The winners were Jill & David Joyce with 50 marks, winning a selection of Easter Eggs specially imported from Belgium for the occasion. Equal second were the Barrotts of Downs Barn and the Snack/Marchbank team who had equal shares of the second prize, a bell cake. Fourth came the Newman team who won a small selection of eggs.

So £55 was raised for the bells, we all had some fun and the Downs Barn parishoners have seen something of the support promised by the Branch.

A successful afternoon.

Doug Hird



Niki & Doug

At Downs Barn Easter Egg Hunt...
.... Kris, Barry's navigator
about to loose her driver to the
lure of a nearby hostelry!

STOP PRESS NEWS:
Pat & Robert Newton,
ODGCBR Master & husband
are to give a Tenor
to Downs Barn.



DOWNS BARN APPEAL

At the Guild AGM on 16th May the Downs Barn Appeal will be officially launched as the Guild's project to mark the 450th anniversary of the Oxford Diocese.

At the branch AGM last month it was agreed that the branch should aim to provide one of the trebles to make up the ring of 8 at Downs Barn. The other treble has also been offered, so we should see a new ring of eight in the branch by the end of 1993. There will be several fund raising efforts over the next few months both on a guild and local level. Roughly £1500 has been raised locally so far.

One of the suggestions made at the AGM was that each tower that rings for weddings should donate the fees for one wedding to the appeal. This proposal was unanimously supported as an excellent way to raise funds. 30 towers each giving one wedding fee would pay for the treble! We already have the contributions from one tower, so please join them in getting the appeal off to a flying start.

The timescales are to place the order for the bells and fittings by August this year, to build the frame over Christmas, and to install the bells in Easter 1993, with the dedication in the Autumn. This means that we need the money for the frame at least by late autumn this year.

If you would like to sponsor a bell or fittings, the approximate costs are:

Headstock - £350; Clapper - £150; Ball Bearings and Housings - £150; Wheel - £500; Pulley - £75; Bell Bolts - £125; Stay and Slider - £100; Floor bosses - £20; Rope - £100; Rope guide and ceiling bosses - £45; Bell - £1300

Following the budget earlier this year, any donations over £400 may be made under the Gift Aid scheme, whereby the appeal can reclaim the tax paid. So the £400 donation actually becomes worth £500 to the appeal.

A PEAL OR TWO...

Milton Keynes

13th March. 5040 Doubles, Steadman, 10 each of St Simons, St Martins, P Bob & Grandsire in 2hrs 38.

1. Alan Faiers; 2. Bill Yates; 3. Justine Baker; 4. Ron Snack(C); 5. Monty Gilbert; 6. Johnathan Humbert.

First of Doubles for 2 & 6.

Loughton

13th March. 5040 Minor, 2 extents of Cambridge & 3 of Plain Bob, in 2hrs 50

1. Steve Crane; 2. Carole Huxter; 3. Derek Stainsby; 4. Godfrey Foat; 5.

Bob Winstanley; 6. Ron Snack(C).

First Peal for 1 (Congratulations) First of Minor & most methods for 2.

The above 2 Peals rung during the service of dedication of the Ecumenical Church of Christ the Cornerstone, at which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was present.

Wavendon

March 25th 5040, 2 extents of Cambridge Surprise & 5 of Plain Bob, 2hrs 41

1. Alan Marchbank; 2. Steve Crane; 3. Carole Huxter; 4. Monty Gilbert; 5. Trevor Bailey; 6. Ron Snack(C).

Rung for the Patronal Festival. First inside for 2.

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This Quarters Quarters.

Newport Pagnell

29th Feb. 1260 Steadman Triples

1. Peter Taylor; 2. Gillian Watson; 3. Doug Hird; 4. Godfrey Foat; 5. Roy Keeves; 6. Monty Gilbert; 7. Mike Lowndes; 8. G. Stratton.

Rung to the memory of H.C (Bert)Beard, longtime member of the church & a former Tower Captain. First Q of method for 2.

Milton Keynes

29th Feb. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1. Jeanette Ross; 2. T.K. Smith; 3. Gillian Watson; 4. P. Tibble; 5. Godfrey Foat(C); 6. P. Mathison.

First Q for 6 (Congratulations). First Q inside for 2.

Passenham (St Guthlac's)

11th April. St Guthlac Doubles.

1. Arthur Harrison; 2. Jo Neville; 3. B. Smith; 4. Bob Winstanley(C); 5. Alan Faiers.

Rung for St Guthlac's Day by members of the Sunday Service band. First in the variation for all.

Beachampton

20th April. 12260 Plain Bob Doubles.

1. Hilary Faiers; 2. Arthur Harrison; 3. Jo Neville; 4. Bob Winstanley(C); 5. Alan Faiers.

Rung by the Sunday Service band. First Q for 1 (Congratulations).

Bradwell

2nd Feb. 1260 Mixed Doubles (4Ms)

1. Ian Green; 2. Jenny Brookman; 3. Jill Joyce; 4. Becky Fawcett; 5. David Joyce (C); 6. Brian Newman.

6th Feb. 1260 Grandsire Doubles

1. Christine Abbott; 2. Fred Mynard; 3. Jenny Brookman; 4. Ted Fawcett; 5. Martin Patchey (C); 6. Brian Newman.

Rung for the 40th Accession or HM Queen Elizabeth II.

12th April 1260 Plain Bob Doubles & St Clements Minor.

1. Jenny Brookman; 2. Becky Fawcett; 3. Jill Joyce; 4. Fred Mynard; 5. David Joyce; 6. David Maybrey (C).

Rung for Fred Mynard's Golden Wedding Anniversary. First minor inside for 2.

Buckingham

24th April. 1280 Spliced Surprise Major, Lincolnshire, Pudsey, Yorkshire, Superlative, Cambridge, Rutland, London & Bristol.

1. David Joyce; 2. Jill Joyce; 3. Ron Snack; 4. Ruth Stokes; 5. Doug Hird; 6. Chris Stokes; 7. Richard Yates; 8. Barry Eglesfield (C).

A special footnote from Barry "rung in sweet anticipation of Tine & Alans baby".

The following 1/4s were rung to celebrate the welcome arrival of Alexandra Jane Marchbank at 11.45 on 5th May.

Calverton

6th May. 1260 Plain Bob Minor

1. Steve Crane; 2. Justin Baker; 3. Jo Neville; 4. Bob Winstanley; 5. Johnathan Humbert; 6. Barry Eglesfield (C).

Winslow

7th May. 720 London Surprise & 576 Cambridge Surprise.

1. Ruth Stokes; 2. Johnathan King; 3. Justin Baker; 4. Chris Stokes; 5. Doug Hird. 6. Barry Eglesfield (C).

Newport Pagnell

8th May. Bristol Surprise Major.

1. Nicki King; 2. Ruth Stokes; 3. Ron Snack; 4. Godfrey Foat; 5. Chris Stokes; 6. Alan Marchbank; 7. Doug Hird; 8. Barry Eglesfield (C)

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Special ringing to mark 450th Anniversary of the Diocese

A reminder about the special ringing to mark the 450th Anniversary of the Diocese. The Guild hopes that a peal or quarter-peal will be rung in every ringable tower in the Guild between the Guild Festival and August 14th (the anniversary of the appointment of the first bishop before anyone asks!). If your tower would like to ring, but needs some help, please let one of the Branch officers know. I need to know the details of all the ringing by August 20th at the latest so that I can send it on to the Guild secretary who is going to collate all the information and send it to the Ringing World for publication. That doesn't give a lot of time after the last date, so please let me have any information as soon as you can.

A letter received
after a peal rung at
Calverton on 8 Feb.
(see last issue of In Touch).



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

23rd April, 1992.

Dear Mr. Marchbank,

I am commanded by The Queen to thank you for your letter. I apologise for the delay in replying, which is due to the very large volume of mail received by Her Majesty on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of her Accession.

The Queen much appreciated the peal of 5040 changes rung in her honour by the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers to celebrate Her Majesty's fortieth anniversary, and I am to thank you for your hard work and good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Scott.

(KENNETH SCOTT)



Alex Marchbank, limbering up her jaw muscles so as to be able to do loud, clear call changes!

North Bucks in the 1880s

This year, as Branch Archivist, I have concentrated on Branch information held outside North Bucks. The Bodleian Library in Oxford is an almost limitless mine of information, containing books which have been accumulated over centuries. However, the everyday life of the church has been well represented in weekly and monthly periodicals and there is hardly a church in the branch which does not appear at least once in these old periodicals with some reference to ringing.

Ringing in North Bucks is recorded in "Church Bells" for the first time on 20th May 1882. Great Paul was on its way to London from Loughborough and was attracting great attention along the way. The carriage stopped outside the church at Stony Stratford:

"While the bell stood close to the east end of the church, only a few feet distant from the altar within, the crowd surged around, pressing as near as possible, and loudly expressing pleasure and surprise. The thronged street and the clanging bells overhead united to leave an indelible impression upon the minds of all capable of thinking. Soon the bells ceased sounding and the ringers came down to see the great bell which they had been welcoming."

On February 10th 1883, the Stony Stratford ringers became the first to record their achievements:

"At Stony Stratford, Bucks, On Tuesday, the 30th ult., five of the Stratford ringers, assisted by J. Read from Wicken, rang a peal of 120 Grandsire Doubles in 6 minutes. J. Read, 1; G. Valentine, 2; W. Elms, 3; W. Smith, 4; A. Hardy, 5; W. Yates, 6, Tenor 13 cwt in F. This is the first peal rung on these bells by Stratford ringers."

In 1884 the Emberton band appear for the first time:

"At All Saints Emberton, Bucks, On Saturday evening the 5th inst., a muffled peal of 1884 changes (viz fifteen 120's and 84 changes in fourteen different callings) was rung in 1 hour and 24 minutes as a token of respect to HRH the Duke of Albany. G. Wilson, 1; W. Wright, 2; J. Brown, 3; W. Mynard, 4; H. Booth, 5, Tenor 9 cwt in G. This is the first date touch known by the present ringers in the north of Bucks."

By 1886 the Emberton ringers were looking outside their parish to advance their ringing even further. Not with the ODB, but with the newly formed Northampton Archidiaconal Church Bellringers association. This is the first, and last mention of this association and the Emberton ringers joined the ODB in 1892.

In the Jubilee year of 1887, Woughton on the Green were appealing to have one of their bells re-cast:

"A former generation of ringers tried to stop the crack at various stages by drilling holes and filing the bell to get at the end of the crack, but they did not succeed. The labour of these ringers must have been very great. An old ringer says that they spent very many nights at their laudable task, each in his turn taking the file as the other became tired."

According to "Church Bells of Bucks" they were successful. The founders actually recast two bells as another bell happened to "split when Messrs. Gillett's hanger was boring holes through the crown," a story strangely common to Gillett installations!

Next, the 1890s.

CUDDESDON '92

In April 1991 I decided to try bell ringing whilst taking a rest from other activities at Emberton Church. However the rest was short-lived.

I can't quite recall whether I actually volunteered, but I seem to have become the tower-keeper elect, and it was suggested to me that attendance at the Bell Maintenance part of the Cuddesdon weekend would be useful. It seemed an excellent idea and I should like to thank the Branch, Emberton PCC and Band for their support.

Friday 20 March arrived. I had identified the venue and planned my route (Junction 7 off the M40 and follow the sketch supplied). The only problem was that Junction 6 seemed to follow 8. I blamed myself for tearing down the outside lane, turned at 6 and cautiously returned to 7 and took the 'scenic' route, by lanes not shown on the sketch, to Cuddesdon where I discovered that Junction 7 Eastbound does not exist.

To more serious business, which started with a cheery welcome, room allocation and a cup of tea, briefing and dinner. We then assembled into Groups to meet each other and our tutors. The gypsies warning had been right - I was the Group and moreover my tutor was still on his way. Not wishing to talk to myself (not at this stage at least) I was adopted by another group until Bernard arrived.

A quick talk with him so that he could assess how much (or little) I knew was followed by a dash to Haddenham (8,17-2-14) for evening ringing.

Being last to leave for Haddenham (apart from one other driver who seemed to think I might know where I was going) it became clear that a pre-requisite for anything to do with bell ringing is an advanced qualification in orienteering. I overshot two turnings, went round a roundabout one and a half times and ended up interrupting a pool game in a pub (I did get out of the car) to ask where the church was.

An hour of basic ringing, closely observed by the instructors I suspect, was followed by our return to base (by yet another route), drinks and bed.

Next morning a stroll in bright but bracing conditions blew away the cobwebs, breakfast followed and I then set off to Whites at Appleton where I met Bernard, two other instructors and the five Saturday only course members.

Whites' workshops bristled with bells (27 I think, with more due in on the Monday) and we spent some time examining various components including bearings, wheels, clappers and pulley blocks. We saw their metal-working area, carpentry shop and tuning room where we had a demonstration using handbells.

More orienteering followed as we rushed to Sunningwell (6, 8½cwt - timber bellframe) where maintenance had been deliberately left to give us something to do.

Nine of us descended onto (or should it be ascended to) the bellframe and after some hesitancy got stuck in to checking all nuts and fixings, ropes, pulleys, clappers, stays, etc.. One possible problem was known about - the tenor was knocking. The rope was detached, the clapper tied, the bell swung and the knock reproduced. However it took some time to discover the cause which was a slight movement between headstock and bell. More tightening and the problem was solved.

A quick ring of rounds and we adjourned to a hostelry (surprisingly large for the size of the village) where we had a leisurely lunch.

Next to Hampstead Norreys (6, 10cwt - timber bellframe diagonal to the tower). I cheated on this leg of the journey and followed another competitor who could not shake me off on the 20 mile course.

Whilst waiting for the tower captain we tried short splicing which I found fairly easy due to past Scout training (at last I can say I have put it to practical use).

The climb into the belfry was distinctly hairy since you went straight onto the top of the bellframe and there was a very suspect, and in places non existent, floor below.

No hesitation this time and we all set to like experts. Since the maintenance had been left for considerably longer than Sunningwell there was lots to do (how did they know we were coming so far in advance?). There was much tightening of nuts (in one case finding it and putting it back on!), bearings were greased, the length of the new set of ropes adjusted and the set of the fifth increased at the request of the tower captain.

Just before we descended for a well earned cup of tea we discovered that the crown of one bell was beginning to crack, almost certainly being caused by an iron staple. Bernard would pass on the bad news.

Some quick rounds followed (the new ropes seemed like elastic to me), I said farewell to the others and hurried back to Cuddesdon for a 6pm dinner.

After dinner we relaxed (??) taking part in one or more activities. I elected to make sure I could do a long splice and as I had never rung handbells thought I would try method ringing on them. No one told me I would have to handle two bells at once! I did however just about manage plain hunt on eight (with more than a bit of help). Other activities included tunes on handbells, and a ringing simulator.

We were up reasonably early on Sunday to ring for services at Wheatley (6, 10 cwt - no insulation between ringing chamber and bell chamber immediately above) and Shabbington (6, 9½ cwt - anticlockwise). Unfortunately time did not permit us to stay for the service.

The remainder of the morning was spent on a theory session about good striking, striking competitions and the mysteries of judging.

In the afternoon we put theory to the test.

Three bands were formed and we went to Garsington (6, 9½ cwt). The competition was organised in a similar way to the real thing with a tower steward, independent judges, practice, warning bell and go.

Despite being a fun event (mistakenly referred to as 'joke' by the course organiser!), tension ran high as we competed and judged the other teams. We all rang one minute of rounds, three minutes calling into Queens and back for a final minute of rounds. We then headed back for the post-mortem.

Apparently it was very close, but since my marking did not agree with the judges placing of the other two teams it seems logical to me that our placing of third was wrong! Seriously though it was good fun and we learnt a lot.

The afternoon finished with tea and cake, farewells, departure for home and responsibility for our tower.

In summary, the course was first class. We learnt a lot in a pleasant sociable, atmosphere and had a most enjoyable weekend. Thanks are due to all involved.

QUIZ NIGHT SAT 25th APRIL.

Teams from Bradwell, Gt Linford, 2 from Calverton, and the local pub quiz team met at the Prince Albert in a fund raising quiz.

The competition comprised of 10 sections with 10 questions to each. 2 points were awarded for each correct answer or 1 if it was nearly right. The 'scores on the doors' were announced after every 2 sections.

First came 'In Door Games' & 'Africa'. Even at this early stage the pub team showed their skill by scoring 36, followed by Calverton 'B' (32), Calverton 'A' (30), Linford (28) & Bradwell (26).

The next two sections were 'USA' & 'Animals'. The pub team excelled themselves by scoring another 38 points. The pub team were now up to 74, Bradwell were up to 56, Calverton 'A', 56, Linford 53, Calverton 'B' slipped to 52.

Rounds 5 & 6 were on 'Numbers' & 'The Good Book'. Everyone did very well on these questions except poor old Calverton 'B' who began to get a bit behind. The pub team remained in front with 108, with Calverton 'A', Bradwell, & Linford neck & neck with 87, 87 & 85 respectively. Calverton 'B' had 77.

The next two sections were on 'General Knowledge' & 'Quotations'. For the first time the pub team didn't win the round, that honour going to Calverton 'A', but Calverton 'B' came a real cropper, only scoring 5. Bradwell & Linford faded somewhat. This left the scores thus Pub team 136, Calverton 'A' 118, Bradwell 111, Linford 103 & Calverton 'B' 82.

Section 9 came as a shock to the Pub team as it was on bellringing! Amazingly they did score 1 as they got half of the 'Which 2 metals make up bellmetal?' question correct! The tower teams did better, with Calverton 'B' scoring 12 & the other 3 all scoring 14.

The last section was on 'Current Affairs', leaving the scores as follows: 5th Calverton 'B' with 106, 4th Linford with 129, 3rd Bradwell with 139, 2nd Calverton 'A' with 145 & 1st The Albert team with 149.

The Pub team very generously passed the trophy to Calverton in recognition of the quiz being a ringers event. £39 was raised for the Bradwell Church Building Fund. Thanks to everyone who took part in what was very enjoyable evening.

by Ted Fawcett.

Those who were'nt there missed an excellent evening...ED

Ted's Bellringing Quiz

1. According to Dove, what is the lightest ring of 8 in the N.Bucks Branch?
2. According to Dove, what is the heaviest ring of 6 in the N.Bucks Branch?
3. What are changes on 11 bells called?
4. When a new bell is tuned, a certain set of harmonics is used. What is this range called?
5. Of which 2 metals is bellmetal comprised?
6. You are going 3-4 up at the first lead end of Plain Bob Doubles. Which bell are you ringing?
7. In what year was the first peal of Steadman Triples rung?
8. How many bells hung for full circle ringing are there in New Zealand?
9. You have just dodged 5-6 down at the 1st lead end of Cambridge Surprise Minor. Which bell are you ringing?
10. Crowland (or Croyland) Abbey is believed to house the 1st ever ring of bells in the country. What county is Crowland Abbey in?

ANSWERS ON PAGE: 13

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OUT OF TOWN

As I am sure you will all know, Linda and I have been members of the Society for Mucopolysaccharide Diseases for some years now, ever since Colin was diagnosed as suffering from one of those diseases. It has long been an ambition of mine to find some other ringers within the MPS Society and arrange some ringing with them but, being a very small group of people there seemed very little chance of that coming about.

Things changed, however, last September at our Annual Conference. I bumped into the wife of a ringer I had known during my years in Leeds whose own son had been diagnosed as an MPS sufferer. Chris Grandidge had not rung for over seven years but, after a little persuasion over the telephone he agreed he might attempt a quarter peal - just to see if he still remembered how to do it!

The opportunity came on Sunday 23rd February 1992 as an MPS Family Day was being held in Nantwich near to the Grandidge family home. Alan and Christine Marchbank agreed to make the long trek North, Alan to ring and Tine to organise cheerleading, and Alan's brother and Sister-in-Law were due to meet us as well to make a Minor band. At the last minute these two had to drop out but the lovely lady from Acton by Nantwich managed to find two more ringers to help, and we rang a very creditable quarter of Plain Bob Doubles - Chris ringing faultlessly throughout.

This year is the Tenth Anniversary Year of the MPS Society and this small success has convinced me that something bigger and better can be achieved for the Conference this September in Bristol.

Thank you Tine and Alan, and to the locals from Acton and Nantwich. Without your help we would not have managed what we did.

Ron Snack.

Acton by Nantwich, Ches. 23 February 1992
1260 Plain Bob Doubles. Ann Owen 1,
Marion Moulton 2, C N Grandidge 3,
D Allman 4, R J Snack (C) 5, A J Marchbank 6.
Rung to welcome Chris Grandidge back into the
fold, after some few years of not touching a
bell rope.

OXFORD DIOCESAN BELL FUND - LEAP YEAR FUND RAISING

Many Charities picked on this 29th February as a suitable day for special events and appeals, but this is not just a once off as the ODG has used this day on at least three previous occasions. The friendly competition between the branches of the Guild to raise most money from sponsored ringing on the day has its own trophy for the most successful. Although our contribution is much higher than in previous years, I fear that we will not win the trophy.

Our total of £180.59 was raised from the Sweep on the length of speeches at the Annual Dinner, the Games Evening at the Shoulder of Mutton and three successful sponsored Quarter Peals which are recorded elsewhere in this edition.

A special mention of Terry Smith, who left his front page slot of the local paper and rang his first quarter peal on an inside bell. His colleagues at work were so pleased that they contributed over £33 in sponsorship.

A big thank you to all who arranged or contributed to any of these activities. It is nice to know that some of us think of the Bell Fund.

Godfrey Foot

Friday 13th Jinxes Quarter

A quater at Shenley to celebrate the dedication of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone was lost when a rope broke in the eighth extent. Having warmed up with Kennington, Sleighford & Hudibras, the band had rung three extents of a unnamed variation & were cantering home with Plain Bob when disaster struck. However we are sending the variation (Plain Bob with a Wallflower Single & a Grandsire Extreme) to Ringing World & asking that it be named CORNERSTONE DOUBLES.

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Answers to Ted's Ringing Quiz

1. Newton Longville (12cwt).
2. Shenley (17-1-11).
3. Cinques.
4. The Simpson sequence.
5. Copper & tin.
6. 5th.
7. 1731.
8. 76 bells.
9. 2nd.
10. Lincolnshire.

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OLNEY BELLS (8) 24-3-14 Thursday Practice 7.30-9.00

Some months ago the tenor wheel was deemed to be unsound. Initially we hoped minor repairs would suffice but matters were such as to require replacement. Getting the wheel off the headstock was easy; the route to the ground less so. A half wheel is just too big to fit in the top end of our staircase! So, we removed a few louvres from the south light and lowered the bits on a long rope. The two halves and bits went on a roof rack to Whites at Appleton, the replacement coming back the same way. The new wheel was just the same size as the old one but it went back all the way up the stairs. Not one for Angela Newing but a trick suggested by Whites. If you remove the rim, with great care not to damage anything you can just get the "spokes" through the narrow opening, then reassemble it all on the headstock - we encountered no fitting problems. One day the louvres will be refitted properly! We have now also fitted a set of new ropes, and a visiting peal band has given them a good stretching. (They didn't get the peal.) All the work has been paid for out of wedding fees.

Charles J Knight, Tower Captain

DIARY OF EVENTS

MAY

Friday 15th	Branch Practice	Lavendon - Note change of venue
Saturday 16th	ODG 10 Bell Contest and AGM	Abingdon
Monday 25th	Branch Open Day	In aid of the Down's Barn Appeal
Friday 29th	Branch Practice	Wicken *

JUNE

Saturday 6th	Quarterly Meeting	Emberton and Olney
Friday 19th	Branch Practice	Newton Longville *

JULY

Friday 3rd	Branch 6 Bell Contest	Stowe
Saturday 11th	ODG Festival	Oxford
11th July to 14th August	Ringin to celebrate the 450th Anniversary of the Diocese of Oxford	
Friday 17th	Branch Practice	Newport Pagnell
Saturday 25th	Striking contest vs. Towcester Branch	Newton Longville * <i>Bell & Wagon</i>

AUGUST

Saturday 1st	Joint Meeting with Beds. Association	Weston Underwood *
Friday 7th	Branch Practice	Turvey* + Old Bradwell (Special practice: Bob Minor and Loughton
Friday 21st	Branch Practice	Bletchley

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5th	Quarterly Meeting	Calverton*
Friday 18th	Branch Practice	Buckingham

OCTOBER

Friday 2nd	Branch Practice	Emberton and Clifton Reynes*
Saturday 3rd	ODG 6 bell final	EBSB
Friday 16th	Branch Practice	Hanslope
Friday 16th to Sunday 18th	Easthampstead Course	
Friday 30th	Branch Practice	Woburn*

NOVEMBER

Friday 6th	Branch Practice	North Crawley and Chicheley*
Friday 20th	Branch Practice	Buckingham

DECEMBER

Saturday 5th	Quarterly Meeting	Fenny Stratford and Simpson*
Friday 18th	Branch Practice	Stony Stratford

Venues marked * have not yet been confirmed. Will all tower correspondents please confirm the availability of these towers.

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The Editor: Ros Tyrrell can still be contacted at home, 23 Frankstone Ave, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK11 1DR. MK 561307, or temporarily, at Northants Archaeology Unit, 0604 700493.

+ The Copy date for the next issue is 1st August.

Don't delay write your article today!

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