

MAY '93

IN TOUCH

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



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

North Bucks Branch

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VIEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Our new team of officers met for the first time on 14th March, to agree on plans for the year. Changes of personnel mean new views and attitudes, and this is always a healthy consequence of elections.

Whilst the Sunday Service obligations of bands in the Branch must come first, there are other obligations that arise from these: it is our aim as officers for this year to bind together more closely the ways and means of meeting all our obligations, and we need every bit of help we can get to do this. If ringers' Guilds and Associations do not take an active role in co-ordinating the supply of ringers for Church services, plus supply for the future, plus keeping in good order the Church's equipment we use, no one else will. For these reasons I ask all members to consider whether our Branch should take more formal recognition, as Branch functions, of the ways and means our obligations should be met.

Our officers are endeavouring to maintain contact with the individual towers in the Branch, to determine what measures can be taken towards solving any problems. More attention will be initially given to inactive towers. At the same time, information is being sought about each tower for the Branch officers to maintain an up-to-date record - please help as much as you can when requested for this.

Finally, a word about finances. We have a healthy balance of funds at present. Officers are also looking at our general flow of monies in the course of a year. The spending of our present balance does need to be planned, as does the annual financing of the Branch. Your Treasurer will build up a budget from now on, and we hope to have details on the agenda at branch meetings. Please notify him if you have any intended proposal for expenditure.

Monty Gilbert
Chairman

13 MARCH 1993

In January of this year, with a little help from my friends, I managed to ring my first Quarter Peal. If this is the first rung on the metaphorical ladder of my ringing career, then being asked to write a review of the 7th Annual Dinner must surely be the second! Those who are regular readers of my column in the "Ringing World" will be aware that my capacity for written verbosity (not to mention exaggeration) far outweighs my ringing capabilities, although I am forever striving to narrow the gap! So off with the waffle and onto the main course.....

The venue chosen for the dinner was the tastefully refurbished Coach House Hotel near Newport Pagnell. I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the meal and the evening. The food and service were good and we had the sole possession of a large and private dining room. This was just as well as the noise from a certain table was, well, noisy!

After our meal, the outgoing Chairman, Alan Marchbank, made the customary speech and introduced the after-dinner speaker, the Reverend Stephen Weston, vicar of Stoke Goldington. At this point I settled myself down in my chair for a long speech peppered with the usual spicy anecdotes and quips. It proved to be a little like the "pudding", short and sweet! I think he was itching to get at those handbells! Although not a ringer himself, he was most sympathetic and appreciative to ringers, which was nice to hear.

Never having attended such an event before, I shouldn't have been surprised on entering at the sight of twelve handbells arranged neatly on the table. Later, my worst fears were realised when they were introduced as the after-dinner entertainment and it seemed as if everyone was expected to take a turn. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to those who could do it properly, especially Mr Egglesfield's solo Bob Minor aided by a spoon and three assistants (to hold the bells). As I find one bell at a time plenty enough to cope with, I think he was very deserving of his applause. I eventually took the plunge and elected to ring the Tenor to a "bit" of Bob Doubles. Why jump in at the deep end?

Now, have I forgotten anything? Did I mention anything about Sheila re-assembling Roy's glasses upside down? No? Well, I promised that I wouldn't so you'd better ask her for the details, or better still, take a good look at Roy's ears next time you see him! At least now you know what all the noise was about!

Well, by now you're probably thinking "What a load of old waffle!" Well, you're quite right but it does fill up some space and shows what a good time was had by all. Just think, you could be reading a load of dry old statistics about Quarter Peals or some such! Isn't that where I came in?

Colin Clapper, Hanslope.

Secretary's Scribbling

Diary

Elsewhere in this newsletter (probably the back page) you'll find the latest issue of the diary. Further details on some events are given below. I propose to update the diary frequently and distribute it to all Tower Captains. Because this may lead to some confusion I'm adding an issue date to each copy. Please check that you are looking at the latest one! I urge you to support as many of the branch events as possible. I am also hoping to adopt part of the (new) notice board at Great Linford for use by the Branch, and with this display latest information. Access times are limited and only members who visit the tower will benefit, but please note that this facility is available.

Membership Certificates

I have received from the Guild all the Members' Certificates for those members who were elected during 1992/3 and these have been distributed. However, I suspect that there are still members, who joined before this period, who still have not received there's (I'm one of them!). In order to resolve this problem please let me know if you are still waiting for your certificate. It doesn't matter how long ago you joined, or if you have been reelected. Let me have your name and date of election, and I'll request your certificate.

June Quarterly Meeting

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on June 5th at Maids Moreton with early afternoon ringing at Wicken. The timetable is:

3:00 - 4:30	Ringing at Wicken;
4:30 - 5:00	Service ringing at Maids Moreton;
5:00 -	Service (at Maids Moreton);
Followed by	Tea;
Followed by	Quarterly Meeting.

Evening ringing at Maids Moreton will be from (approx) 7:30 - 9:00.

Please let George Holland or me know by May 30th if you require tea.

This represents a slight change in format of recent meetings and will be the format used in future. Meeting details will also appear in The Ringing World.

6 Bell Competition

Now is the time to think about entering a band into the Branch Striking on June 4th. The rules for the competition are being tidied up, but the basic requirement is for the band to ring 240 changes of any method. If a large number of entries are received this may be reduced to 120 changes. Further details will be sent directly to Tower Contacts shortly.

Joint Meeting with the Beds Association - The 'Picnic'

Our annual afternoon/evening get-together with the Beds Association will be on Saturday 7th August. Ringing will be at Stagsden and Olney, with the intervening picnic at Bromham Park. I'll have more to tell you about this event in the next newsletter, but for now please note the date in your diary.

AGM Report

Andy King has kindly prepared the minutes of the last AGM (March 93) and these will be available for inspection at a future meeting. The report runs to five pages so I haven't included it in the newsletter. I have extracted points of general interest and mentioned them here and in the diary.

Branch Officers Contact Information

Details of the current Branch Officers will in future be given on the inside front cover of the newsletter. Although this is generally static information some details may change (e.g. Telephone numbers) so keep an eye on it.

Guild Rule Books

I have received several hundred copies of the ODG Rules booklet. Unfortunately they're supplied in a complicated kit form! However, I hope to have them all assembled by the June Quarterly.

Easthampstead Ringing Course

This year the Guild's weekend ringing course at Easthampstead will be held from 10th to 12th September. If you wish to attend now is the time to apply. General details of the course have been circulated to all towers but if you have a specific question give me a call. I attended the course a couple of years ago and can thoroughly recommend it. Its a good introduction to many aspect of ringing that you would not normally encounter within the branch.

Raffle Tickets

By now you should have been approached and asked to buy an ODG raffle ticket. If not see your Tower Captain. I have plenty spare and will bring what's left along to the Quarterly Meeting in June. All monies and counterfoils need to be returned to me by June 13th if I'm to return them to the Guild in time.

Downs Barn - Weddings

By the time you read this the Downs Barn bells should be in and ringing. Those of you who haven't managed to 'grab' them may be interested to help out at some of the forthcoming wedding. Brian Newman has all the details and I'm sure will welcome extra support. Please check arrangements with Brian first.

Guild Annual Report

Details of Branch towers and membership have been sent to the Guild for inclusion in the 1993 annual report. This suggests that the report should be out soon. I understand that the charge for copies of the report will be £2.50 plus 50p P&P. When I have more information I'll pass it on.

Contacting The Secretary

Finally, a note on how to contacting me. I'm keen to help with any branch problems that you may encounter, so please give me a call or write. **But be warned!** If I'm not in (i.e. out ringing) you'll get the answering machine. I too find them difficult to talk to but they do serve a purpose. Alternatively, you can normally catch me at Great Linford (Tuesday 7:30-9:00; Sunday 10:15-10:45). You might even get an opportunity to ring!

Ringer's Relief No. 1

A distant band, on hearing of the Downs Barn installation, decided to organise a ringing outing. To make the most of the day it was agreed that all towers within the Milton Keynes boundary would be visited, starting with Downs Barn and continuing to the remaining eleven towers. To minimise travelling time the organiser calculated the shortest route that encompassed all towers based on the line-of-sight distance between each tower.

1. In which order were the tower visited?
2. What was the distance between each tower (line-of-sight)?
3. What was the total journey distance to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ mile (starting from Downs Barn and ending at the last tower again line-of-sight)?

Send your answers to the Secretary to arrive not later than 30th June 93. The first correct answer drawn at random will be the winner. The winner will receive a certificate, their name in print (in the next issue of In Touch - Wow!) and a small prize.

- Note:
1. Judge's (that's me!) decision will be final;
 2. Correct answer will be based on distances taken from the 1992 Official City Map of Milton Keynes;
 3. No tower should be visited more than once;
 4. A list of towers can be found in Dove (7th Edition).
 5. Entries only accepted from branch members.

The correct solution will appear in the next issue of In Touch.

SC May/93

Some of Our Quarters.

Beachampton.

28th February. 1260 Doubles: New Grandsire, April Day, Cliffords Pleasure & Reverse St Bartholomew and 300 Grandsire.

1. Arthur Harrison; 2. Derek Stainsby; 3. Jo Nevill; 4. Barry Smith; 5. Bob Winstanley (C).

Rung for Deanery Service.

Passenham

14th March. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles.

1. Arthur Harrison; 2. Malcolm Hooton; 3. Shirley Waterhouse; 4. Bob Winstanley (C); 5. Barry Eglesfield.

Rung in memory of Bill Easter.

11th April. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles.

1. Ian Ranson; 2. Bob Winstanley (C); 3. Malcolm Hooton; 4. Derek Stainsby; 5. Monty Gilbert.

Rung for Easter, St Guthlac's Day & in memory of Alice Dumbleton. First on working bell for 1

Stoke Goldington.

8th March. 1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor.

1. Owen Warren; 2. Sheila Watts; 3. Roy Keeves; 4. Nicholas Gray; 5. Richard Haseldind; 6. Monty Gilbert.

Rung with the compliments of the Stoke Goldington band to Timothy A Wooding his 50th birthday, this day.

Stop Press.....

Downs Barn. Some will have heard the news, others more fortunate will have heard the bells! The installation of the frame and seven of the bells started at 8.00am on 1st May and by 5.58pm the same day gransire triples (albeit without a cover) was being rung. Not a bad days work eh? The treble arrived on the sunday evening and was installed the next day with 3 leads of Bristol being rung to try them out. For the full story buy the Ringing World in September when the front page will be dedicated to the project.

Ten Bell Contest. The ODG 10 bell contest was held at Appleton on Saturday 15th May and 7 teams including one from North Bucks tried their skill with a false touch of Grandsire Caters. The teams rang in the order Banbury; Old North Berks; Chiltern; Central Bucks; East Berks & South Bucks; North Bucks and finally Reading. The North Bucks band stood as follows ; Barry Eglesfield (c) 1; Godfrey Foat 2; Phil Haslam 3; Alan Cozens 4; Monty Gilbert 5; Ron Snack 6; Doug Hird 7; Roy Keeves 8; Alan Marchbank 9; David Joyce 10.

The judges, Andrew Wilby and Christopher Groome, placed the bands as follows; 1st Reading 75.5 faults; 2nd EBSB 80.5 faults; 3rd Old North Berks (the locals) 106.5 faults; 4th North Bucks 132.5 faults; 5th Central Bucks 193 faults; 6th Chiltern 209 faults; 7th Banbury 251 faults.

Tower Progress Chart

Use this chart to determine the progress made so far by your band and in your own ringing career, if you've forgotten a method or "got a bit rusty" then mark your current state (imagine being asked to ring it now, with no warning). You should also see from this whether you are pulling your weight as a member of the band, or whether you being a little lazy or selfish by expecting others to help the beginners while you sit out !

You don't have to put your name on this - just use it to boost your ego or prick your conscience, you could even use it to judge (but perhaps not publicly) some of your fellow ringers ! It has been laid out so that it can be used as a progress aid in the tower, perhaps as a reminder to the Tower Captain of who needs to be helped in a particular task.

My main purpose in producing this chart is to encourage everyone to think about what they are learning and realise just how much there really is to learning it thoroughly. There do appear to be, for instance, far more people wanting touches of Cambridge than there are willing to call simple touches of Plain Bob. I believe that however much help you are asking for from your fellow ringers, you must be prepared to put back in by helping those "below" you who also need help.

The Beginners Sheet

A number of you will probably not be able to score a 6 or 7 on this sheet - when did you last "catch" another member of the band when they got lost or really listen to what you were striking? To be fair, have you ever been told you ought to? Notice that I expect treble ringers to at least be able to call "Go and Stop" for a plain course as their contribution.

You will notice that the markings for your contribution to the band has what appears to be an unusual progression. You **cannot** reach 7 until you can see and hear what is going on when you are ringing. Think back to your early days as a learner (or last practice night) and try to recall how much difference it made when your helper could actually see what was going wrong. At branch ringing you should always ask the ringing masters for a helper if you need one, but don't expect to be given your best friend or a member of your local band - what you need to make the most of is a fresh (and honest) view of how you are coping.

The Initial Methods Sheet

Although you will have started on this sheet long before finishing the previous one, you must remember to keep going back and improving your basic skills. The most important thing to bear in mind as you progress with **this** chart is that until you have reached 5 as a ringer you haven't learnt it well enough. Until you have reached at least 3 as a conductor, you aren't putting enough back in to help others.

How far you progress with these methods is very much your own choice - if you want to ring methods that are beyond that available in your own tower, then please make sure that you "earn your keep". If you take up someone else's valuable practice time then you must make sure that you have done your homework extra thoroughly. You should also be conscious of what that band are going ~~without~~ for your ~~benefit~~ - a tower with lots of its ~~own~~ learners must give them priority. By offering to turn up for some of their Service ringing, particularly when they might otherwise be meeting short, is an excellent way of showing your gratitude to the whole band.

Hopefully, thinking about how much you have (and haven't) learnt will help you to develop a broader base to develop from, as well as becoming a more helpful member of your band and of the branch.

D.M.J.

The Beginners sheet

Call Changes Ring	Call	Plain Hunt Doubles Ring	Call	Plain Hunt Minor Ring	Call	Covering to Doubles Ring	Call	Name	Treble to Bob Doubles Ring	Call	Treble to Grandsire Ring	Call	Treble to Bob Minor Ring	Call	Treble to Cambridge Ring	Call
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
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							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X
							X			X		X		X		X

My progress as a learner of this method

- 0 I haven't looked at this method yet
- 1 I need help to write out this method
- 2 I can write out this method from memory
- 3 I need a helper behind me to ring this method
- 4 I can ring this without help with a good band
- 5 I can ring this even if the band is not expert
- 6 I can help others without getting myself lost
- 7 My striking is accurate when I ring this method

My ability to contribute to the band ringing this method

- 0 I have never tried calling this method
- 1 I think I know what to call, but haven't tried it yet
- 2 I can call this with a helper and a good band
- 3 I can call this without a helper, if the band is good
- 4 I can call this without help and cope with other learners
- 5 I can see what other ringers are doing and help them
- 6 I can hear when other people are making striking errors
- 7 I can stand behind learners and genuinely help them

The Initial Methods Sheet

[illegible]

My skills as a ringer of this method

- 0 I Can't ring this method
1 I need a helper for plain courses
2 I need a reasonable band for plain courses
3 I need a helper for touches
4 I need a reasonable band for touches
5 I can survive most bands without going wrong
6 I can help others without getting myself lost
7 I can ring this in spliced

My skills as a conductor of this method

- ```

0 I have never tried calling this method
1 I can call Go and Stop for plain courses with a good band
2 I can call Go and Stop for plain courses with most bands
3 I can call simple touches with a good band
4 I can call simple touches with most bands
5 I can call complex touches with most bands
6 I can correct other peoples mistakes whilst calling touches
7 I can call this in spliced and keep it right

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### Some basic touches for the budding conductor

One favourite escape when asked to call a touch is to claim that you don't know any - from now on that won't work! In the months ahead I will try to develop a range of touches for specific methods, but for this edition I will supply you with a few simple starters.

Touches are simply a mixture of plain leads, bobs and singles. Not all methods have bobs and singles - even those that do can have plenty of touches that avoid singles if they scare you. If you write out the effect of calls and see how they change the work at a lead, you will see exactly when a call should be made. The call should always give a "whole pull" warning of the alteration, so work out which row is the first to be altered so that you know whether calls should be made at the preceding handstroke or backstroke. Don't always trust the ringers diary as some of the marks are a little out! The essential thing is that you must write it out as often as necessary to understand it.

As a general rule calls are made at backstrokes, but Stedman (except doubles) and Grandsire are the most common exceptions. As your confidence builds, you will become better at making the call at exactly the same time whether you are the first or last bell to strike. You may wish to copy the style of some conductors who call Plain Bob right at the beginning of the row because only the front bells are affected, and call Stedman right at the end of the row because only the back bells are affected.

Although it is traditional that the "back end" bells tend to be fixed or observation bells, all simple touches can be started at any lead if you wish to call from a lighter bell. You may get some unusual rows come up which split the tenors and break up the rhythm a little, or snooty comments if you get 65's at backstroke, but don't worry.

#### Plain Bob Doubles

Call a Bob each time you make long 5ths to be unaffected, or call yourself to run in, then run out, then make the whole for 120 changes. You can rotate this to "out make in" or "make in out" but the order mustn't change.

#### Grandsire Doubles

Ring the 3rd or 5th and call a Bob at alternate leads (plain leads when you make thirds, call at the other leads as you reach 4ths over the treble at handstroke). This will produce a touch of 60 changes, replace one of the bobs with a single and repeat to get all 120 changes.

#### Stedman Doubles

As you go in "quick" call a single at backstroke in 2nds place just before you lead, then repeat this 60 changes later as you go in quick again. Always offer to call this if you want to avoid getting affected by singles!

#### Plain Bob Minor

Call a bob every time that you are in 5-6 (up and down) and ring plain leads at all of the others. This will be 120 changes long and is a standard "building block" for many other touches and quarters. A cowards 120 can be rung by just calling a single when you make seconds and repeating.

#### Little Bob, St Clements, Cambridge Surprise Minor etc.

Simple Plain Bob touches will work as above, but a little preparation is wise to know which leads come up when. The touch length will double if the method has a treble bob hunt bell and be shorter for Little Bob.

#### Kent Treble Bob Minor

The only short touch of this is rung more often than plain courses - call a bob every lead for 3 leads. If you avoid the 2, 3 or 4 you will do the same work each time. For a 240, call bobs as you enter and leave the long front work.

#### Plain Bob Triples

Call alternate plain leads and bobs for an 8 lead touch of 112 changes. Other than from the 2 or 3 you can do this by calling bobs when you are long 7ths and make, and having plain leads when you are in 5-6 up and down.

#### Grandsire Triples

Call 2 Bobs then 2 Plain Leads three times to get 168 changes. The conductor usually calls this by calling themselves into the hunt and out again at the next lead - depending on where you call the first Bob, this could be from the 7th, 6th, 4th or the 2nd.

#### Stedman Triples

Whenever you are dodging 4-5 down, call a bob at your last handstroke in 5ths and then another 3 whole pulls later. If you go in quick the second call will be in 2nds after you led, if you went in slow it will be the handstroke that is your second blow at lead. This touch is 168 changes long and can be found in the diary as 50 or 05.

#### Plain Bob Major

The common touch is a 160 of 2 plain leads followed by 3 bobs and then repeated. The usual version is "Bob Plain Plain Bob Bob" as this lets the 7 & 8 run in and out respectively at the halfway point.

#### Kent Treble Bob Major

The same 3 lead touch works as for minor - the length is 96 changes and all bells above the 4 do the same thing each lead. This will also work on higher numbers if you are ever asked to call a short touch of Kent Maximus!

#### Cambridge, Yorkshire Surprise Major etc.

Often the simpler methods are rung for just "half a course" which is actually 4 leads (128 changes) long. The plain course is called round by shouting "Plain Hunt" at the backstroke just before the 4th lead end. This is the same position that a bob would be called at, so learning exactly where is useful preparation for longer touches.

If you can build up your confidence on just the few simple examples above, you will soon find the occasion arises where you are able to offer your services to avoid the band only being able to ring boring old plain courses. You may not always remember and get it right every time, but you will be making progress - shout the calls out loud and clear and the band will believe that you are confident, even if you are really terrified! If you have learnt some of these touches but want someone behind you at the next meeting as a "safety net" then please ask the ringing masters - a volunteer conductor is quite a rare treat and well worth encouraging.

Date: 17-May-93

## North Bucks Branch Diary

### May 93

Fri 21 \*Branch Practice Old Wolverton  
Methods: S Simons D; S Clements Mi

### Jun 93

Fri 4 \*Branch 6-Bell Competition Fenny Stratford  
Note change of venue  
Sat 5 \*Quarterly Meeting Maids Moreton  
Early afternoon ringing at Wicken  
Fri 18 \*Branch Practice Twyford  
Method: Reverse Canterbury Doubles  
Sat 26 Double Peal attempt by Branch Band Emberton

### Jul 93

Sat 3 Annual Guild Festival and Barn Dance Chipping Norton  
Full details with Tower Contact  
Fri 16 \*Branch Practice Whaddon  
Method: Double Court Minor  
Sat 31 \*Striking Comp. against Towcester Branch Wicken  
See July/Aug. In Touch for details

### Aug 93

Sat 7 \*Joint meeting Beds. Assoc. (inc. picnic) Stagsden/Dlney  
See July/Aug. In Touch for details  
Fri 20 \*Branch Practice Stowe  
Method: Single Oxford Minor

### Sep 93

Wed 1 \*Best Kept Tower competition closing date  
Contact Secretary for entry form  
Sat 4 \*Quarterly Meeting Great Brickhill  
Early afternoon ringing venue: tba  
Fri 10 Easthampstead Course (10th to 12th Sep) Easthampstead  
Fri 17 \*Branch Practice Stony Stratford  
Method: Double Norwich Court Bob Major

### Oct 93

Fri 1 ODG Secretaries' meeting Radley  
Sat 2 Central Bucks Branch 6-Bell Competition  
Fri 15 \*Branch Practice Lavendon  
Method: Primrose Surprise Minor

### Nov 93

Fri 19 \*Branch Practice Newton Longville  
Method: Erin Triples  
Sat 27 ODG Autumn General Committee Meeting Steeple Aston

### Dec 93

Sat 4 \*Quarterly Meeting Hanslope  
Early afternoon ringing at Tyringham  
Fri 17 \*Branch Practice Drayton Parslow  
Method: Stedman Doubles

For further information contact the Secretary: Stephen Crane (0908) 674192

Please support your Branch by attending events preceded by "\*".