

IN TOUCH

The Quarterly Newsletter of the North Bucks Branch
of
The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers



North Bucks win at last!
Helen Stanworth with the Inter Branch Striking Competition Trophy

Quarterly Meeting at Fenny Stratford on Saturday 7th December 1996

3:30	Ringing
4:30	Service
5:00	Tea
5:45	Business Meeting
	Evening Ringing - subject to confirmation 8:30

Names for tea to Peter White (01908-642826), by **Wednesday 4th December**

Please **DO NOT** park in the chip shop car park next to the church

Your Branch Officers for 1996/7 are listed below, please keep "In Touch" with us.

Chairman

Brian Newman 01908-668347 6 Martin Close, Neath Hill, Milton Keynes. MK14 6JG

Secretary

Helen Stanworth 01280-814172 11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham. MK18 7BW

Minute Secretary & Newsletter Editor

Jill Joyce 01908-667025 4 Woad Lane, Great Linford Village, Milton Keynes. MK14 5HE

Treasurer

David Bardwell 01908-676841 21 Forrabury Avenue, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes. MK13 8NF

Ringling Master

Richard Stanworth 01280-814172 11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham. MK18 7BW

Assistant Ringling Master

Alexandra Titley 01908-646632 "The Willows", 15 Drayton Road, Newton Longville, Milton Keynes. MK17 0BH

Guild Representatives

Doug Hird 01908-614741 19 Priory Street, Newport Pagnell. MK16 9AF

Alan Marchbank 01908-611434 6 Broadway Avenue, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes. MK14 5QF

Archivist

Doug Hird 01908-614741 19 Priory Street, Newport Pagnell. MK16 9AF

VACANCY - All of our officers complete their service at the A.G.M. in March and a number have already indicated that they do not wish to stand for re-election. Please start thinking of who can be persuaded (or might volunteer) to share in running our branch for 1997/8, particularly for the following posts :-

Chairman

Minute Secretary

Newsletter Editor

Editorial

As you will have noticed, I have stuck to what I said at the last A.G.M. and will be standing down as editor after the February edition. If any of you are thinking of standing for the post in March you might like to chat to me beforehand, or to spend some time with me in early January to see how things come together (or not). Perhaps our younger members who are so computer literate might find that a year as editor will count towards a Duke of Edinburgh, Scouting or school qualification?

I produce In Touch on Microsoft Works, but if you haven't got access to a computer it is still possible to produce a newsletter - most contributions are typewritten or computer generated.

This will be the last edition before Christmas, so there are some items on Christmas and New Year ringing included. During the break you may have time to produce something for the first edition in 1997.

Jill Joyce

The next edition of "In Touch" (my final edition, as I am retiring at the A.G.M.) should be distributed at the beginning of February, please submit any articles or information, to the Editor, by the closing date :-

Sunday, 5th January

"In Touch" is published by the editor on behalf of the officers of the O.D.G. North Bucks Branch. Any view expressed in "In Touch" is that of the author and copyright resides with the individual authors.

ODG NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held at Newton Longville on 7th September 1996.

Chairman's Welcome - Brian Newman welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence were received from Ron Snack, Bill Yates, John Wells (Guild Master), Richard Stanworth (Ringing Master, who was sick), Anne Fletcher, Andrew Spencer, Peter Nicholson, Dave Goodger and David Joyce (Guild Steward, who was judging the Reading Branch Striking Competition).

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting and Striking Competition held at Milton Keynes Village had been published in the May edition of "In Touch" and were taken as read.

Matters Arising - There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere.

Election of New Members

Nomination forms had been received proposing election of the following :

Hanslope :	Jonathan Griggs Natalie Green	Proposed : Roy Keeves	Seconded : Sheila Blenkhorn
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Olney :	Rita Lee Colin Thomas Paul Ilulley	Proposed : Chas Knight	Seconded : Doug Hird
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All were elected as new members.

Officers Reports

1. Secretary

This is a fairly quiet period for the Secretary. Bradwell were thanked for holding the branch practice in August at short notice.

2. Ringing Master

In the Ringing Master's absence his report was read by the Chairman.

"Firstly, my apologies for not being present to give this report in person.

I am pleased to report some successes in the Branch. Congratulations to the band placed second in the **Guild Junior Striking Contest** - you will all have read about this in "In Touch". I hope they go on to do even better next year.

Our second success was in the annual competition against the **Towcester Branch**, held on a pleasant summer evening at Buckingham. After a five year run for the Towcester Branch, we won the overall competition by two sections to one, winning the Bob Minor and Call Change sections but losing the Stedman. We have yet to get our name on the George Holland trophy.

The **Mini Ringing School** held in June was considered a success by those attending, again reported in "In Touch". If anyone wishes to progress with Plain Hunt, Plain Bob or Grandsire, please let me have your name and when I have enough names, another mini ringing school can be arranged.

Unfortunately we were unable to raise a band for the **Guild 10-bell competition**. For next year I hope to get people willing to represent the branch in the 8 and 10 bell competitions to commit earlier in the year so that we can practice together as a band well before the competitions and hopefully improve our performance.

Finally, don't forget the **Call Change Striking Competition** at Maids Moreton on Saturday 21st September. This competition is aimed at those less experienced in competing in striking competitions so that they can get a chance to take part in a competition. The judges will not be hard on you, they will attempt to be constructive with their criticism so that you can learn from taking part and use the experience gained to improve your striking in the future. Please enter as many teams as you can. The rules allow you to join with other towers to make up bands so there is no such excuse as 'we couldn't get enough'. Telephone entries to me by Friday 20th.

Richard Stanworth"

3. Treasurer

The **Building Society account** stands at £940.23, compared with £1057.45 at the same time last year.

The **General Account** shows a credit of £314.46 for the year to date, compared to £320.32 for last year. However, the end of year account for 1995 showed a net loss of £137.67. We should try not to repeat this level of loss for 1996.

£831.50 has been received in **Subscriptions** to date, representing 142 adults and 29 juniors. Subscriptions had not been received from two towers. £448 had been paid to the Guild for 140 members, payment for the remaining 31 members, plus any additional subscriptions received, would be made next week.

Regular checks are made to statements for the **Ringling World account**, to ensure it remains in credit. It currently stands at £42.24.

Expenditure on **"In Touch"** stands at £158.20 for the year to date, with donations of £111.00. The production of "In Touch" is recognised as a cost to the Branch, but any additional donations will always be welcome.

Income for the **Guild Bell Fund** is currently raised by raffles at the Quarterly meetings - £57.50 in the year to date. Although the minute requiring a raffle to be held has been rescinded it is intended to run raffles until an alternative is in place - this will be discussed later.

4. Guild Representatives had no meetings to report on.

Forthcoming Events

1. Tower Leadership Course to be held on 28th September. Only 13 applications had been received to date, including 2 from our branch. Branch members were encouraged to attend.
2. Guild Youth Day - the Youth Weekend would be a single day in 1997, and may not be held at Dorney.
3. Cambridge Minor Course - to be held at Spelsbury on 11th January 1997.

Any Other Business

1. Assistant Ringing Master : as Denby Murduck had resigned due to work commitments a new Assistant Ringing Master was required.

Alex Titley was proposed by Tine Marchbank, seconded by Helen Stanworth and elected.

2. Millennium Project : as requested by the Guild Project Committee a Branch Liaison Team was required, initially to gather information on the current situation in the Branch. The following volunteered their services and the meeting agreed that they form the Branch Project Liaison Team :

Doug Hird (Downs Barn)
Tine Marchbank (Great Linford)
Hugh Butler (Great Brickhill)
Nigel Titley (Newton Longville)

The liaison team may wish to co-opt additional members to ensure coverage of the full geographical area of the Branch.

3. Finance and General Purposes Committee : David Joyce had attended a recent meeting and the following points may be of interest to the branch :
Rules Revision was getting closer, the situation regarding ringers from outside the Oxford Diocese boundary had been addressed.
Service Booklet was being compiled by Bobbie May and Ken Davenport. Any thoughts or suggestions should be passed to Bobbie May.
Bookstall : the Education sub committee had decided that we should have a Guild bookstall, but had not made a recommendation about purchasing any of Bill Butler's old bookstall.
Subscriptions : the level for 1997 would be decided at the Secretaries meeting in October. However, as the subscriptions had not been raised for three years and the Millennium project would require additional expenditure, an increase to £5.50 (split £2 to Branch, £3.50 to Guild) would be considered. Any thoughts from the branch should be passed to Helen Stanworth, our representative at the Secretaries meeting.
4. Towers and Belfries : Alan Marchbank, who is a member of this sub committee, gave a report on work undertaken. An inspection had been carried out at Old Wolverton, where the bells were hung in an extended wooden frame and had been rehung by Whitechapel in the 1950s. Some recommendations for DIY work were made, as funds for materials had been made available by the church.
There had been some interest expressed by Leckhampstead in getting their bells ringing for the Millennium, they may require help in maintenance of the bells and training a band.
An inspection may be carried out at Newton Longville in the not too distant future.
5. Lathbury Market was being held on 8th September. Bands had been organised for 11:30 and 2:00. Godfrey was still looking for people interested in ringing at 3:30.
6. Raffle : This had raised £19 and was then drawn.

7. 100 Club : David Bardwell was still waiting for information from the Borough on registration requirements, which may determine exactly how prizes can be distributed. To ensure that such a scheme was viable 50 members were required - these must be fully paid up members of the branch and aged over 16. The meeting was asked to go back to their towers to find out the likely level of support. We had at least 24 towers with members, therefore the minimum level of support was probable. We also required someone willing to run the 100 club - to maintain the records and organise the draws. It was hoped that the club would run from January 1997, therefore information would need to go out in the next In Touch. If this was not possible the start could be deferred.
- There was some discussion on what the funds would be raised for. David Bardwell suggested that the purpose of the club should be to raise funds for bell restoration in the North Bucks Branch of the ODG or for the ODG Bell Fund. The meeting made it clear that funds should only be available for restoration, not augmentation. Distribution of the funds raised would be determined at a meeting of the branch.

Vote of Thanks

Alan Marchbank thanked Rev Brian Saunders for taking the service, the organist Malcolm Hughes and Nigel and Alex Tittley and their helpers for the tea.

Trophy returns to North Bucks

The annual inter-branch striking competition was held at Buckingham on Saturday 27th July. On a pleasant summer evening we were able to sit in the grounds and enjoy the friendly rivalry that accompanies this event. The judge, Richard Stevens from Bicester, commented favourably on the atmosphere of the event prior to giving his verdict as follows :-

	<u>6 Bell</u> <u>(120 Bob Minor)</u>	<u>Call Changes</u> <u>on 8</u>	<u>8 Bell</u> <u>(168 Stedman Triples)</u>
North Bucks	14 faults	26 faults	39 faults
Towcester	16 faults	47 faults	23 faults

North Bucks won the 6 bell and call change sections, with the 8 bell honours going to the Towcester branch. After a gap of five years the inter branch trophy returns to the North Bucks branch, but we have still to get our hands on the George Holland trophy for Stedman Triples. Congratulations to those taking part who were :

Peter Tribble, Bob Winstanley, Michael Tinsley, Doug Hird, David Joyce, Barry Eglesfield, Richard Stanworth, Barry Smith, Peter Nicholson, Godfrey Foat, Brian Baldwin, Michael Hooton.

Richard Stanworth

Picnic Meeting

Attendance at the joint meeting with the Bedford District showed a great improvement over the previous year. Afternoon ringing at North Crawley started later than usual, due to a wedding at the church, and was subject to a delay due to a broken stay. A limited number of people volunteered to hold the bell in question between touches.

There were enough picnic tables at Willen Lake, but they were quite far apart, so as they were fixed, the tea was not as social as it could have been.

Evening ringing at Kempston was also well attended and ringing ranged from rounds to Cambridge Royal - all rung with mixed bands.

Are You Ringing for Christmas?

At Christmas everyone likes to hear bells rung, but quite a few of us abandon our home tower to visit relatives at the other end of the country. In theory, if everyone rings somewhere we will still get all of the bells rung but life isn't usually quite that simple. If you do go away, please try to visit at least one tower wherever you are to help with the ringing. If you are staying at home, are there any local towers that might only have enough to ring if you offer to help? This is the only time of the year that some people even realise that bells need people on the ends of the ropes to make the noise that we all think of as part of the Christmas experience. So, which tower will get you in their Christmas stocking this year?

David Joyce

Poor Turnout at Maids Moreton

Only two teams entered the call change striking competition on Saturday 21st September. This is really rather poor from a branch of nearly 200 members. David and Jill Joyce were kind enough to judge the competition. After some deliberation the judges placed the bands joint winners, as although the second team to ring amassed fewer faults during their 100 marked rows, they failed to complete sufficient call changes as specified in the rules. With only two teams entered, it didn't seem fair to eliminate them on this technicality.

The two teams who were joint winners were Maids Moreton and Buckingham (with a little help from Tingewick). Our thanks go to both judges and competitors, who were much encouraged by their efforts. We look forward to more teams entering next year.

Richard Stanworth



Maids Moreton

Ann Fletcher, Paddy McCowen, Tina Reeves, Lois Houghton-Brown, Andrew Spencer (not shown Tim Lewis)

Buckingham

Richard Stanworth, Catherine Stanworth, John Stanworth, Lois Houghton-Brown, Peter Nicholson, Helen Stanworth

This year's contest had the smallest turnout ever and I think that it is important to find out why. Although a few of you were on Gareth's outing that doesn't account for many! To help avoid a repeat in 1997, please tell your branch officers what kept you away. If you hate contests then say so, but why not encourage the rest of your band find out for themselves? If the rules prevented your band from entering, then please suggest some changes that could be made. Look through the rules that were printed in the August edition of In Touch to see what currently exists and the notes explaining why. Do you think that we should allow mixed bands to be put together regardless of their home tower? Should rule 5 be changed to allow either a different number or level of "expertise"? This rule is intended to stop an expert band stealing a win from a genuine learners band, but how could we change it to still allow more teams in? Should the contest be held at a different time of the year (was it wedding ringing that kept you all away?) or should it start later (or earlier) in the day? Would we be better if it was not held on a Saturday?

As you can see there are plenty of questions, but the answers lie with you - please say what you think, especially if you are a learner who wanted to enter and didn't get the chance.

David Joyce

A Word from the Chair

With thoughts turning to the New Year it is perhaps an opportune time to remind you of the Guild's Millennium Project. For those of you who were unable to attend the Newton Longville meeting in September we now have our liaison team to co-ordinate our efforts with the Guild's team. Their first task is to complete a questionnaire to find out just where we stand with regards to ringers so when they ask you for information please help them. To find out who the members of the liaison team are please read the minutes of the meeting.

I know that considering the number of towers we have in our branch, that either have no ringers or very few, it is going to be a challenge for us all to find new recruits, but if we don't eventually there will be no ringers. So if you have any ideas for recruiting new members please pass them on to either the liaison team or direct to the Guild's PRO whose address is in Odd Bob.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that I intend to stand down at the next AGM in March so please have a thought to whom you wish to take over and finally I would like to wish you all the seasons greetings.

Brian Newman



Ring out the Old .. Ring in the New

Our request for New Year ringing customs in the February edition of In Touch did not give rise to any additional ideas, but we are reprinting some of the suggestions made - perhaps you'd like to try them this year!

A number of towers ring out the old year half muffled - this means that there is a gap whilst one or more brave souls go up and take off the muffles, so the bells need to be reasonably accessible.

On larger numbers of bells a minor ring is rung for the old year and a major one for the new - the effect could be achieved by ringing the front six of an eight for the old year and the back six for the new.

The decaying old year can be marked by decaying rounds - first the treble, then the second etc stand on consecutive handstrokes finishing with the tenor ringing the twelve strokes at midnight. This requires a lot of control and perfect timing (a treble ringer with the speaking clock on a mobile phone!).

We have also heard of bells being fired. This involves ringing rounds, then every bell striking at the same instant for 3 whole pulls, then returning to rounds. This needs practising in advance as it needs good bell control and understanding that the ropes will actually look like very close backwards rounds.



News from Lathbury

As a special request from the organisers of the annual Lathbury Market, the bells at Lathbury church were rung on 8 September. The Newport Pagnell band rang at 12:00 and Doug Hird arranged a band to ring at 2:00.

At least two members of the Lathbury parish have shown interest in learning to ring - we hope they can get started soon.

The bells are not available for general ringing, but we hope that occasional Sunday service ringing will be possible.

Godfrey Foat

The Radley Ringing School - 12th April 1997

Last year, when I was asked to tutor at this event, I learnt that it had become so established that applications were being made for places before the event had been advertised. Please read the separate tower notice for fuller details. As well as being a good all-day school, there is a good social atmosphere, food and a chance to get involved with simulators or rope splicing in the evening. It isn't expensive but you do need to **apply to Peter Starling NOW** if you want to be sure of a place. The application form asks for a few details about what you are ringing now, what you hope to be up to by April & what you want to learn at the school.

I will be going again this year, as either a tutor or helper, and it would be a great help to the organisers (and me) if I could bring a couple of extra helpers along too. *If you are willing and able to strike accurately for three 90 minute sessions of Bob Doubles or similar, with hardly any 'sitting out' all day long*, then have a chat with me at the next meeting.

David Joyce

Will you be 250 years old next year? - "The Cumberlands" will be!

No doubt some of you will have heard of this very long standing society of ringers as 'a London based elite' but knew little more than that. There are a few members based in our branch (so that disproves the London based as well) and we would be keen to hear of any others in the vicinity. The society is planning a number of different ways to celebrate during 1997 (and late 1996 for potential Christmas gifts) which need not be exclusively for members - if any of you are interested in more details of any of these, please speak to one of us, as we have further details in a little booklet. The highlight is to be a dinner at Middle Temple Hall with a public concert at St Martin's in the Fields on the previous evening. Short term mementoes are "own label" wines (Southern Australia) and beer (Elgoods of Wisbech), with longer lasting items including a new Saydisk recording of London bells; a glass paperweight; limited edition prints of our London towers and a silver or gold pin / pendant.

Locally we hope to be able to get together for a least one Cumberland peal and there are also thought of getting together for a less formal dinner in or around Milton Keynes. Contact Alan & Tine, David & Jill, Godfrey or Ron for more details.

QUARTERS

Thornborough, St Mary

Thursday 4th July 1996

1260 Doubles (3m incl. Stedman)

1 William A Yates (C)

2 Peter Nicholson

3 Gerald Kingston

4 Andrew Spencer

5 David Goodger

In memory of Frank Canvin, after the dedication of a tablet recording his work in this church as bell ringer, vergier and sexton.

Maid's Moreton, St Edmund

Sunday 28th July 1996

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Catherine Stanworth

2 Peter Nicholson

3 William Yates

4 Gerald Kingston

5 Richard Stanworth (C)

6 Helen Stanworth

For the Baptism of Christopher Michael Schumal, Thomas Edward Langley and Heather Elizabeth Langley. Also a wedding anniversary compliment to 5 and 6

Hanslope, St James the Great

Sunday 4th August 1996

1264 Plain Bob Major

1 Kevin Haseldine

2 Carole Harner

3 Natalie Green

4 Alan Cozens

5 Jonathan Griggs

6 Ian Thompson

7 Richard Haseldine (C)

8 Nicholas Grey

Stowe, Assumption of BVM

Thursday 15th August 1996

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1 John Stanworth

2 Ann Fletcher

3 Peter Nicholson

4 Gerald Kingston

5 William Yates (C)

6 John Hearn

Maid's Moreton, St Edmund

Thursday 22nd August 1996

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1 Helen Stanworth

2 Andrew Spencer

3 Gerald Kingston

4 Richard Stanworth

5 William Yates (C)

6 David Goodger

In memory of Charles Gough 25 March 1893 - 4 August 1996, elected a member of the ODG in 1909

Bradwell, St Lawrence

Sunday 1st September 1996

1260 Doubles (Plain Bob & Grandsire)

1 Christine Abbott

2 Becky Fawcett

3 David Bardwell

4 Michelle Copson

5 David Joyce (C)

6 Gordon Abbott

Rung to mark the first anniversary of the church renovation

Emberton, All Saints

Sunday 15th September 1996

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Sheila Watts

2 Karen Evers

3 Chris Evers

4 Wendy Haslam

5 Denby Murduck (C)

6 Emma Price

To welcome the arrival of Chloe Louise Lightfoot, grand-daughter of the conductor and niece of the 2nd

Maid's Moreton, St Edmund

Monday 16th September 1996

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Helen Stanworth

2 Andrew Spencer

3 William Yates (C)

4 Peter Nicholson

5 David Goodger

6 Michael Tinsley

A welcome to Rev Hugh Kent prior to his induction as Rector of the Parish of North Buckingham

Thornborough, St Mary

Sunday 22nd September

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1 Helen Stanworth

2 Ann Fletcher

3 William Yates (C)

4 Peter Nicholson

5 David Goodger

Rung prior to the Service to license Rev Pauline Hardy for ministry in the parishes of Radcliffe-cum-Chackmore, Nash with Thornton, Beachampton and Thornborough

16 Wandsworth Place, Bradwell Common

Monday 12th August 1996

1276 Plain & Little Bob Minor

1-2 Alan J Marchbank

3-4 Ronald J Snack

5-6 Godfrey L Foat (C)

16 Wandsworth Place, Bradwell Common

Monday 16th September 1996

1996 Minor (Kent, Plain & Little)

1-2 Alan J Marchbank

3-4 Ronald J Snack

5-6 Godfrey L Foat (C)

16 Wandsworth Place, Bradwell Common

Monday 30th September 1996

1440 Plain Bob Minor

1-2 Alan J Marchbank

3-4 Ronald J Snack

5-6 Godfrey L Foat (C)

Points from the Quarters . . .

For the first time there were no "firsts" recorded in the quarter peals received. Happy occasions were marked, such as the arrival of a grand-daughter for Denby Murduck, but also sad occasions, especially the death of Charles Gough, by far the longest serving member of the Guild.

The handbell group rang a date touch of 1996 changes - will any tower bell date touches be rung?

. . . News from the Towers

Bradwell : Naomi Skinner was awarded her blue bell club award (but still doesn't like catching the 'furry bit').

Great Brickhill : As part of the drive for new ringers for the Millennium, a request for new learners made it as far as the local paper.

Newport Pagnell : Bell club awards have been made to Carol Smith and Sue Alcock (blue), Charlie Russell (green), Loretta Ramsay (red) and Gareth Grayson (gold). As a Champion Campanologist Gareth is now concentrating on getting his picture into "In Touch" as often as possible.

We have started work in the tower to clean the frame before repainting and frighten the spiders away.

Godfrey Foat

Newton Longville : Numbers on practice nights mean that the even bells are rung regularly - a bit of help would give the odd bells a chance.

Olney : A number of learners have been taught and a regular practice is held on Thursdays from 19:30 to 21:00. The monthly advanced practice still takes place.

Shenley : As winners of the Branch 6 bell striking competition, the band went to the Reading branch to represent us in the Guild final. Unfortunately they came fourth in their heat with 39 faults, one fault behind Aston Clinton who went on to come fourth in the final, which was won by High Wycombe.

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH - MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

A REMINDER:

Only a few of the survey forms sent out with the last In Touch have been received back by the Branch Officers.

Please be proactive =>

Check the details =>

Update the information =>

Send the form to one of the Branch officers

It costs the Branch money to follow up on unreturned forms so please help us to keep costs down and send us the information requested.

Over the next few months there will be additional requests for information as part of the ODG Millennium initiative. Your assistance in responding promptly to these requests will help us all to provide the information for the Guild and keep our costs under control.

D.R. Bardwell

Branch Treasurer

Creating your "Blue Line" using a spreadsheet

For those of you with a computer that has either Excel or Works spreadsheets, there have been some articles in The Ringing World that describe how to use these programs to generate your own blue lines. Using Excel was described on p534 in the 24/05/96 edition and a Works variant was on p752 in the 26/07/96 edition, but had typing errors that are corrected on p819 in the 09/08/96 edition! Further bits & pieces have since arrived (30/08/96 p873) which offer a modification to allow the place notation to be typed into the spreadsheet and another (27/09/96 p977) that offers a fresh way of generating the same results by typing in the place notation. A further article is promised shortly, but will probably have been published by the time you get to read this.

If you are interested in knowing more, but don't take The Ringing World, you ought to be able to borrow the copies or even the pre-written spreadsheets from someone in the branch. The example below (using Works) might help you to decide whether you want to bother or not, a colour printer would obviously produce a friendlier sheet. My own opinion is that the lines produced with Works are beautifully accurate, but not thick enough, but drawing them in thicker could be part of your learning process? The examples produced with Excel are better because line thickness can be controlled.

Having shown a draft of this article around Bradwell tower one night, Ian Green took away a copy and has written an excellent macro for Excel which only requires the user to input the place notation for a full lead, the number of bells and a title. From this minimal effort by the user, the necessary formulae and charts are set up automatically. Those who want to could, of course, then modify line thickness, colour, which bells etc can then tweak the chart in whatever way meets their personal preferences. Copies of several examples are now available on a 3½" floppy disk, which may be borrowed from me if you are interested. Perhaps some of our computer buffs might be willing to liaise with the Ringing Masters to supply 'Blue Lines' for the special methods in advance of the monthly branch practices?

David Joyce

London Minor



Newport Pagnell and Great Linford Invade Lincolnshire

September was an extremely busy month this year, the 21st Sep was no exception, there was the 6 bell call change striking competition, Hanslope's outing, the Newport parish outing to Worcester and my little outing to Lincs. The hardest part of arranging this outing was getting the people interested.

I was disappointed that we had to go with the bare minimum, 7 overall, 6 free ringers. And to top it, I had an eight bell tower.

Four of us left Newport/P at 8:00 arriving at Crowland Abbey at 9:30. It was splendid, the wind did blow but the sun did shine most glorious. Crowland Abbey has one of the longest drafts in the country, with ropes at 90 ft long and guides that were there to amaze.

The bells are the first tuned bells in England and among the first in the world, but they are all running on new fittings and go really well. Our next tower was Deeping St James, these produced the best sound by far and were enjoyed by all, every bell was heavy, the treble closing in at 8cwt and Tenor at 17cwt. They rang incredibly slow and had a stunning hum.

Then we all marched off for lunch and had fish and chips, I think. Market Deeping was the next venue, we were locked out, I ran around looking for the key, we got it and rang very briefly on these very easy going 13cwt 6.

Down the road we went to West Deeping a very light 6 with nice tone, it was a ground floor ring with guides, no problems.

Tea next at Stamford, I have never seen so many towers in one town, but could I find a food shop? NO!

Our next tower greeted us with ringing bells as they had a wedding, the captain and a few others stayed around for us to make up numbers. The bells were incredibly loud and so much hum you couldn't pick your own bell.

Our last tower was 20 seconds down the road, the bells had a lovely rich sound, but the ceiling was too low, the sallies disappeared all of a sudden in a flapping fury of rope, these were the most difficult.

It pays to have plenty of people, at least double your highest number of bells. It was a shattering day, but the generosity of everybody that opened up for us staying as well to help ring was really helpful, we were all grateful.

An exciting day for all, especially me, because now it's all over. I'll use this as an opportunity to "Thank You" to all those that attended the outing, I appreciate it.

Gareth Grayson, Newport Pagnell

Are your tower details correct in the OGD Annual Report? Please check the ringing times and correspondent details, then notify our Branch Secretary, **Helen Stanworth**, of any corrections.

Newport Pagnell : Progress Report

At a meeting at Newport Pagnell church on 24 September, between the Church treasurer and secretary and our Architects, the quotations for the work on a ringing platform and meeting room were reviewed. Three quotations have been received and the lowest, including all architects fees etc., was for £28,000. This was reviewed by the PCC on 26 September where concern was expressed that this was far more than a first proposal for £18,000. Current funds set aside for the project are £5000 from the ringers and £13,500 from the Church.

The outcome is that no work will start on the project in 1996, and there is some question as to how to obtain the remaining funds.

Godfrey Foat

Get Practising!

The methods for the 8-bell and 10-bell Guild Striking Competitions next year will be Grandsire Triples and Little Bob Royal. We hope to get our bands together in good time for the events next year to allow for more practice beforehand. In the mean time practice them as often as you can. (Little Bob Royal will be included in the methods to be rung at Kempston in April.)

Richard Stanworth

100

More information about the 100 Club should accompany this edition of In Touch - ask your tower correspondent if you haven't seen it.

A volunteer to act as 100 club co-ordinator is required, contact the Branch Treasurer, David Bardwell for details.

Loads of Bobs !

Many of us may call the boring 120 of St Simons by putting Bobs in when making long 5ths. If you fancy a change then call one at every lead except when you are making long 5ths. This will also work for St Martins and for Reverse Canterbury, but not for Plain Bob Doubles.

David Joyce



Calling your first quarter peal - Lesson Two

In the August edition of In Touch, I gave some general comments and advice on preparing for and coping with your first attempt at calling a quarter - hopefully this article will give you a bit more specific advice on how to keep track of where you've got to.

Although some people think differently, most agree that quarter peals should adhere to the general rules for peals - if you are starting with doubles, all you need to know is that it should be at least 1250 changes long and cannot include "false" touches. In practice this means either 11 extents for a 1320, or 10 extents and a 60 to get 1260 changes. Apart from keeping right and remembering to call all of the bobs & singles, the hardest part is counting the extents rung as your head is already far too full of numbers all ready. A good view of the clock can be very useful - at 4 minutes per extent your quarter would take 42 minutes, which might be a bit quick, but is close enough for the mental arithmetic.

If you are going to call Bob Doubles, I would suggest the following system to take away the worry of counting. Call the first extent with the 2 as observation, the next with the 3, then the 4 and the 5. You have now rung 4 extents without needing to count - do the same pattern again to reach 8 completed and then halfway through to reach 10 extents called. Finally, either call the next extent or a 60 to finish! The sort of things to watch carefully for are that each 120 actually finishes (and in rounds) before you start the next one. As you will see from the following list, there can be a very short, or very long gap between Bobs when the calling changes - PBPPPPPPBP, PBPPPPPPBP, BPPBPBPPBP, PBPBPPBPPB.

Some conductors prefer a variation on the above system by calling the first extent as In, Out, Make, the second as Out, Make, In then Make, In, Out and finally calling yourself observation. I find this more popular with conductors who are less able to spot who is the bell making 4 blows behind each time. You should be able to improve your confidence at this by using the following tips at the previous lead. If the observation bell dodges 3-4 down with you then they will be observation at the next lead when you will call a Bob and run out. If you make seconds and the observation bell takes you off lead, then you will call a Bob and run in at the next lead end. If after making long fifths you take the observation bell off lead, then you will call yourself to make the Bob.

If you are lucky, your first attempt will include 1 or 2 experienced conductors who should be able to reassure you or nudge you when necessary, but I would suggest that the most essential key to success will be a very reliable treble ringer. The plan outlined above can still be used if you ring more than one method - perhaps the first 4 of St Martin's, then 4 of St Simon's and 2½ of Plain Bob to finish with will be more than enough to cut your teeth on! If you or your band can't cope with too much, then do what I did for my first as conductor (long ago, when our young village band wanted to ring our first quarter as a special tribute) - we rang the same extent 11 times and I called out how many we had done each time we passed through rounds until we reached the end!!

David Joyce

Millennium Update - from our resident Guild Steward

The Millennium Project Liaison Team was elected at the September Quarterly - expect a visit to your tower to discuss this before the end of the year. Please be ready to co-operate with their requests for information as there is a lot of preparatory work to be done to fairly tight timescales. Until our team make contact with you, I can give you some background information because Guild Stewards have been given courtesy copies of some of the paperwork and all of the lovely abbreviations !!

Several of the Guild Officers had made some preparatory work that was presented to Guild Committee meetings and eventually (in May 1996) the Guild AGM formally agreed to support a project to get all of the towers with bells that are ringable to actually have a band to ring them. It was also recognised that some of the unringable bells might also be restored for the millennium - they would need ringers too.

The Guild has established a Millennium Working Group of some 12 people who will try to drive through the overall project, but also to liaise and support each Branch through a Project Liaison Team of 3 or 4 local enthusiasts. The MWG held their first meeting in June 1996 and (in early July) a request for information was sent to each branch. The letter also outlined several of the training and publicity events that will be run to support the branches. An initial study based just on guild members per tower showed that we have only 13 out of 46 towers where the bells don't outnumber the guild members.

It was recognised that the initial study was a very crude measure and there is now a 2 part survey that should be returned to the MWG by the end of October 1996. Part 1 is a summary of who our PLT is; who is willing and competent to help teach learners; who is willing, but would welcome some training to increase their confidence; who is willing and able to help with publicity. There is also a request for information about any planned restorations (and the implications for training there) and towers that may need help with D.I.Y. maintenance. Part 2 is a more accurate record of each tower and the number of guild members, non-members & learners at each. We have also been asked to show which have indicated that help will be needed with training sufficient extra ringers.

Future key dates mentioned are :- late 1996 - MWG to produce some recruitment posters etc; early 1997 - MWG to analyse PLT surveys and produce an action plan; Easter 1997 - formal public launch of the project via the Diocese and the media; 1997 onwards - set up training for trainers and keep up the publicity. Please help the PLT to help the MWG to help us all.

David Joyce

NORTH BUCKS. BRANCH - TOWER RINGING TIMES

Tower	Bells	Sunday	Practice		Notes	Contact	Phone no.
			Day	Time			
Astwood	3				Chime	Mr Wrighton	01230-65381
Beachampton	5	11:00 (1), 09:30 (2, 3 & 4)	-	-		Jo Nevill	01908-666937
Bletchley	8	09:30-10:00	Mon	19:30-21:00		Paul Faithfull	01908-379025
Bradwell	6	09:30, 17:30 (2, 3, 4 & 5)	Wed	19:30-21:00		Michelle Copson	01908-222187
Buckingham	8	17:15 (1), 09:15 (3 & 4)	Wed	19:30-21:00	Last of Mth #4	Bill Yates	01280-814937
Calverton	6	By arrangement	Wed	20:00-21:00		Shirley Waterhouse	01908-618754
Chicheley	6	17:30-18:00 (1)	Mon	19:30-21:00	Check Venue alt #5	Mr D Robertson	01234-391371
Clifton Reynes	6	By arrangement	-	-		Mike Davies	01234-711082
Downs Barn	8	10:00-10:30	Tue	19:30-21:00	Not 1st. Tuesday	Fiona Maybrey	01908-562233
Drayton Parslow	6	17:30-18:00 (2 & 4)	-	-		Rev N Cotton	01525-240287
Emberton	6	09:15 & 17:30 (3)	Tue	19:45-21:00		Sheila Watts	01234-711113
Fenny Stratford	6	09:00	Thu	20:00-21:00		Peter White	01908-642826
Great Brickhill	6	By arrangement	-	-		Hugh Butler	01525-281663
Great Linford	6	10:15-10:45	Tue	19:30-21:00		Alan Marchbank	01908-611434
Hanslope	8	10:15-11:00	Thu	19:30-21:00		Sheila Blenkhorn	01908-510105
Haversham	3					Rev Simon Weedon	01908-312136
Lathbury	5	UNRINGABLE				Godfrey Foat	01908-313859
Lavendon	6	10:15-11:00 (3)	Wed	19:30-21:00		Brian Clifton	01234-712774
Leckhamstead	5	No ringing	-	-		Mr P.B. Cash	01280-860412
Lillingstone Lovell	5	09:00-09:30 (2, 4)	Thu	19:30-21:00	1, 3, 5 of Mth.	Robin Culley	01280-860665
Little Brickhill	3						
Loughton	6	10:30	Mon	19:30-21:00	alt with Shenley #1	Derek Stainsby	01908-666492
Maids Moreton	6	09:00 (1), 17:15 (2), 10:45 (4)	Wed	19:00-20:30	All except last Wed #4	David Goodger	01280-812868
Milton Keynes Village	6	10:30-11:00 (2, 4)	Tue	20:00-21:00		Patricia Gifford	01908-665439
Newport Pagnell	8	08:50-09:30, 17:30-18:00	Wed	19:30-21:00	Sun eve. by arrangement	Jeanette Ross	01908-676467
Newton Blossomville	3					Jack Letts	01234-881581
Newton Longville	8	By arrangement	Thu	19:30-21:00		Alex Titley	01908-646632
North Crawley	6	17:30-18:00 (2, 4)	Mon	19:30-21:00	Check Venue alt #5	Kerry Rose	01234-391785
Old Wolverton	6	10:00-10:30	Tue	19:15-21:00		Mike Nimmo	01908-321011
Olney	8	-	Thu	19:30-21:00		Charles Knight	01234-713719
Ravenstone	3				Swing Chime	Len Adams	01908-551212
Shalstone	5	No ringing	-	-		Arthur Hurdman	01280-700014
Shenley	6	09:00-09:30	Mon	19:30-21:00	alt with Loughton #1	Derek Stainsby	01908-666492
Sherington	5	10:30-11:00 (1), 09:00-09:30 (2,3,4,5)	-	-		Ella Field	01908-610560
Simpson	6	-	Thu	20:00-21:00	1,3 alt #2 (5 chk venue)	Brian Baldwin	01908-670579
Stoke Goldington	6	09:15-10:00 (2)	Fri	19:30-21:00	2, 4 alt #3	Owen Warren	01908-551416
Stoke Hammond	3	-			All visitors welcome by arrangement	Mr P Heaton	01525-270289
Stony Stratford	8	09:00-09:30	Mon	By	arrangement	Malcolm Hooton	01908-565380
Stowe	6	09:00 (2), 17:15 (4)	Thu	19:00-20:00		Bill Yates	01280-814937
Thornborough	5				Steel	Ray Goodger	01280-812976
Tingewick	5	-	Mon	19:30-20:30		Lois Houghton-Brown	01280-848658
Twyford, Bucks	6	By arrangement		By	arrangement	Mr E Herring	01869-277671
Tyringham	5	No ringing	-	-		Marion Hansford	01234-711566
Wavendon	6	No ringing	-	-		Rev David Lunn	01908-582839
Weston Underwood	6	By arrangement	Fri	19:30-21:00	2, 4 alt #3	Owen Warren	01908-551416
Whaddon	6	-	Tue	19:30-21:00		Barbara Brown	01908-502470
Woughton-on-the-Green	6	09:30	Thu	20:00-21:00	2, 4 alt #2	Brian Baldwin	01908-670579

PLEASE PASS ANY AMENDMENTS/UPDATES TO D. BARDWELL (01908-676841)

Other Events Within and Without the Branch

This section is intended to bring you information about some other ringing events, that are not organised by our own Branch or Guild. This information is not kept as complete or up-to-date as our own Branch diary, so please keep an eye on Odd Bob and The Ringing World. If you wish to check before attending, or want to know further details, please contact the following people :-

Olney - A Monday evening 8 bell practice is run by Roy Keeves (01908-510105) from 7:30 to 9:00 each month. There is a core of regular attendees, but new faces are always made welcome. Methods rung range from Rounds to Surprise Major, with a special method sometimes being chosen in advance.

Central Bucks Branch - Mark Sellin (01296-392175).

Towcester Branch - Bill Yates (01280-814937).

Wellingborough Branch - John Holmes (01933-405169).

Luton District - David Adams (01582-868534).

Bicester Branch - Simon Cole (01869-247525).

Northampton Branch - Mrs Dorothy Stopps (01604-890638).

Bedford District - Eddie Lambert (01234-363513).

Date	Time	Event details	Location
Mon 28th October	7:30	Eight bell Practice	Olney
Sat 2nd November	2:00	Towcester Branch Training Day	Road/ Stoke
Sat 2nd November	aft	Bedford Branch Practice	Clapham & Bletsoe
Mon 4th November	7:30	Bicester Branch Practice	Bicester
Sat 9th November	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	Aston Abbots
Sat 23rd November	6:30	Luton District Evening Meeting	Westoning
Mon 25th November	7:30	Eight bell Practice	Olney
Tue 3rd December	7:30	Bicester Branch Practice	Islip
Sat 7th December	eve	Bedford Branch Practice	Felmersham
Sat 7th December	7:00	Luton District / Herts C.A. Surprise Practice	Tring
Sat 14th December	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	Cuddington
Sat 14th December	6:30	Luton District Evening Meeting	Houghton Regis
Sat 28th December	7:00	Towcester Branch Practice	Easton Neston
Sat 11th January	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	Long Crendon (10)
Sat 18th January	aft	Bedford Branch AGM	Bedford, St Peter
Sat 25th January	3:30	Luton District AGM	Barton-le-Clay
Sat 25th January	eve	Luton District AGM	Luton
Sat 25th January	3:00	Towcester Branch AGM	Potterspury
Sat 1st February	aft	Bedford Branch Practice	Little & Great Staughton
Sat 8th February	3:00	Central Bucks Branch AGM	Aylesbury (8)
Sat 22nd February	6:30	Luton District Evening Meeting	Studham
Sat 8th March	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	Swanbourne (6)
Sat 22nd March	6:30	Luton District Evening Meeting	Leighton Buzzard
Sat 5th April	aft	Bedford Branch Practice	Bedford, St Paul
Sat 12th April	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	Waddesdon (6) steel bells
Sat 26th April	3:30	Luton District Quarterly Meeting	Tilsworth
Sat 26th April	eve	Luton District Quarterly Meeting	Totternhoe
Sat 10th May	6:30	Central Bucks Branch Practice (to 8:30)	March Gibbon (5)
Sat 24th May	6:30	Luton District Evening Meeting	Kensworth & Whipsnade
Sat 14th June	5:30	Central Bucks Branch Striking Contest	Steeple Claydon (6)

Godfrey Foat has compiled a list of Open Days and Guild AGM's which may be of interest to anyone who is planning an event that ought not to clash.

Remember that a comprehensive list of meetings is published regularly in the Guild "Odd Bob" and some are advertised in the Ringing World as well. The information about our neighbours can only be published here in "In Touch" if someone lets us know - if you have any details (or corrections), please contact the editor.

If you visit our neighbours' events, please let them know about our branch and encourage them to visit us.

Don't forget all of the local tower practices in our branch each week. If you visit any of these events, why not take along another member of your local band? However, it would be courteous to check with the organiser before taking an entire band along!

Last revised 14/10/96

39 Grandsire Doubles

Call a Bob at the second lead and then keep ringing for two more leads until you find that rounds will come up at a handstroke, just as the treble leads. This touch is normally only called by mistake, when the second call of a normal 120 gets forgotten!

ODG North Bucks Branch Diary

Date	Time	Event details	Location
Fri 15th November	7:30	Branch Practice Special method = Yorkshire S Major	Stony Stratford
Sat 23rd November	2:30	Guild Autumn Committee Meeting	Combe
Sat 30th November	6:30	Guild Ten Bell Training Course Methods = Rounds, Call Changes, Plain Hunt	Banbury
Sat 7th December	3:30	Quarterly Meeting	Fenny Stratford
Fri 20th December	7:30	Branch Practice Special method = Little Bob Minor	Simpson
Sat 11th January	10:00	Guild Surprise Minor Training course Methods = "From Cambridge"	Speisbury & Enstone
Fri 17th January	7:30	Branch Practice Special method = Kent & Oxford TB Minor	Calverton
Fri 21st February	7:30	* Branch Practice Special method = Surfleet S Minor	Old Wolverton
Sat 1st March	3:30	* Annual General Meeting	Newport Pagnell
Sat 8th March	2:30	* Guild General Committee Meeting	Uffington
Fri 21st March	7:30	* Branch Practice Special method = Stedman Doubles	Sherington
Sat 29th March		* Guild Handbell Day	Reading
Sat 5th April		* Guild Youth Day	E Berks & S Bucks Branch
Sat 12th April	9:00	Guild Ringing Course (all day) Methods - see tower notice	Radley
Fri 18th April	7:30	Branch Practice Special method = Grandsire Caters & Yorkshire S Royal	Kempston
Mon 5th May	3:00	* Guild 8 bell Striking Competition Test Piece = Grandsire Triples	South Oxon Branch
Mon 5th May		* Guild Ringing Day	South Oxon Branch
Fri 16th May	7:30	Branch Practice Special method = Rev Canterbury Doubles	Leckhampstead
Sat 17th May		Guild Annual General Meeting	Sonning Deanery Branch

Any event marked with * was awaiting confirmation when this list was prepared, if a more recent list is unavailable then please check with the Secretary for the current situation before attending.

Rounds, Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob & Grandsire will always be available at Branch Practices. The special methods are intended to be a focus for the more advanced method ringing.

The Branch Mini Ringing Schools are specially tailored for a very small number of pupils to get intensive, high quality, training in one basic method. Please write to the Ringing Master if you wish to be considered as a pupil for a future school or are interested in different types of school.

Last revised 14/10/96