



OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

North Bucks Branch Newsletter

November 2003



St Lawrence, Bradwell

St Lawrence's Church dates from the 13th Century. Around the mid 16th Century the tower was added, using materials salvaged from Bradwell Priory, and redundant bells from the Priory Church. The saddleback roof was added in the 19th Century.

The bells themselves are of interest; two of the six (the treble and second) are the oldest in the county, and among the oldest in the country. These bells are two of only five made by Michael de Wymbis of Fenchurch Street (Wymbush industrial area is

named after him) and date from 1310. Another of the four original bells was made by John Walgrave of Aldgate in the City of London between 1420 and 1440. The bell was named Augustine and we know this from the Latin inscription 'Vox Augustine sonet in aura Dei' ('May the voice of Augustine sound in the ear of God') which was cast on it. The bell can no longer be used because it has cracked, but it is still in the church and can be seen hanging in the south aisle. Two bells, cast by Alfred Howell, were added by the Baily family in 1909.

Quarterly Meeting Saturday 6th December 2003

- 3.00 Ringing at St Lawrence, Bradwell
- 4.00 Service
- 4.30 Tea
- 5.15 Business Meeting, followed by ringing at Bradwell until 8.30 p.m.

Names for tea to: Gordon Abbott
by **Monday 1st December**
Tel: 01908-318019

Our thanks to the MK Web Religion pages for this information: <http://www.mkweb.co.uk/religion>
More information on the bells is in the North Bucks Branch website: <http://www.northbucks.org.uk/>
The 4th bell was cast by M & S in 1981—a new line for Marks and Spencer?!

North Bucks Wins the Guild Six-Bell Competition!

Success at last. Big celebrations as North Bucks are victorious at the Guild Competition in October. Further details on page three.



Who's Who 2003/2004

Chairman

Mr Barry Eglesfield, 15 Chardacre, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes. MK8 8JN
Tel. 01908-566050

Secretary

Mrs Helen Stanworth, 11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham. MK18 7BW
Tel. 01280-814172, Email. helen.stanworth@tesco.net

Treasurer / Acting Newsletter Editor

Mrs Sheila Watts, 18 Colsons Way, Olney, Buckinghamshire. MK46 5EQ
Tel. 01234-713667 / 01908-653214
Email s.k.watts@open.ac.uk/sheilawatts@stedman.clara.co.uk

Ringling Master

Mr Richard Stanworth, 11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham. MK18 7BW
Tel. 01280-814172, Email. richard.stanworth@tesco.net

Assistant Ringing Master

Mr Simon Head, 8 Isis Walk, Bletchley. MK3 7DA
Tel. 01908-368854

Training Officer

Post currently vacant

Guild Representatives

Mr Alan Marchbank, 6 Broadway Avenue, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes. MK14 5QF
Tel. 01908-611434, Email. 113151.211@compuserve.com

Brian Newman, 6 Martin Close, Neath Hill, Milton Keynes. MK14 6JG
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Archivist

Mr Doug Hird, 78 Lakes Lane, Newport Pagnell. MK16 8HR
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Bellhandling Video

The Branch has a copy of the video produced by the Central Council entitled 'Bellhandling—a tutor's companion'. This is aimed at those teaching bell handling but may also be helpful to those learning to ring.

The video may be borrowed from the Secretary free of charge. However, a deposit of £5 will be required against safe return of the video.



Grants

Applications for grants for assistance from individuals for training or from towers for work or for the provision of things that keep bells ringing shall be submitted to the Secretary. Details of applications received will be sent out to towers as soon as possible after receipt. All applications received and sent out at least one month before a meeting will be considered at the next general meeting of the Branch.

Training Grants

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

Our Grateful Thanks...

..... to all those who contributed towards this issue of the Newsletter.

We seem a little short of Quarters and Peals—did the summer heat take its toll on ringing activity? If you have any unpublished Quarters do please send them in time for the next issue.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is:
Friday 30th January 2004

Sheila Watts & Sheila Ware
Acting Editors

Winning Ringing!

That was the article headline in Milton Keynes Citizen on 9th October! It went on to say "The bells are ringing for the team of campanologists from St James Church in Hanslope. They have just won the Oxford Diocesan Guild 6-bell Striking Competition. Hanslope were representing the North Bucks Branch of the Guild in the heats at Great Horwood last Saturday.

Each team is required to ring for a set length of time, aiming to ring with no mistakes in precise and consistent rhythm. The judges deduct marks for every deviation. Hanslope scored only 29 faults beating High Wycombe with 36 and Reading 39.

Conductor Jonathan Griggs said, "The standard in the final was extremely good and we were competing against bands from much larger towns and cities who consistently reach the finals."

The winning band were: Jonathan Griggs, Natalie Green, Richard Stanworth, Tony Gray, Nick Gray and Roy Keeves."

1st	North Bucks	29 faults
2nd	East Berks & South Bucks	36 faults
3rd	Reading	39 faults
4th	Chiltern	43 faults
5th	Sonning	51 faults
	South Oxon did not finish	



Excerpts from a Hanslope Bell-ringers Diary

Thursday 19th June 2003

Another balmy evening, could this be a heatwave summer? Tomorrow night = Striking Competition @ Emberton. Another win? A bit embarrassing if our name goes on the cup for a 6th yr running? Maybe time for another band to win - ha, at least then we avoid the trauma of the Guild final - now that would be good.

Friday 20th June 2003

Still sunny. Did NOT win the striking comp. Didn't even come 2nd! S'pose it's good that another band

have finally kicked us into touch, but feels a bit odd. All this discussed over consolation drinks at the Cowpers Oak (and planning next year's come-back?).

Saturday 26th July 2003

Hot day again. Church open-day. But no trophy on display in the tower this year. Shambolic.

Sunday 17th August 2003

Still hot! "I don't believe it" (in Victor Meldrew voice) - actually scored a quarter of Hanslope SM at the 1st attempt this morning. Afterwards to Cozie's for a BBQ. Very funny - chatting with Cozie and a whole plate of burgers fell onto the ground. So we did the honourable thing - dusted them off and served them up! Don't think anyone suspected.

Thursday 11th September 2003

Fantastic weather still, the best summer ever. Bizarre news at ringing tonight, neither Bradwell nor Shen/Lought can ring at the Guild final, so we've been asked. Do we really want to do this? Well, yes, actually. Four of us up for it, that's a majority. Here we go again.

Saturday 4th October 2003

Colder. Arrived early @ Gt Horwood so time for a quickie in the pub with Nick. Discovered there by Roy and co. Oops. To the Church, 6th ringer Barry only just arrived in time. Not good for the nerves. Bells heavy/awkward but rang ok, despite cramp in arm. Tea and results of heats @ Mursley - we're through to the final!

Not prepared for this - have brought no food for the hound so mad dash to find a village shop and a tin of dog food. Barry also not prepared (or maybe thought we wouldn't make it to the final?) - had to be elsewhere for the evening. Panic over - rules allow Richard Stanworth to step in, lucky he was there. Now dark and cold. We are 4th to ring, but the 3rd band are much too good. Enter Church, nightmare scenario - ground floor ring, long drop, no guides, beam-me-up-Scotty. Things get worse. During the 2 minute practice - all ropes long, tail-ends flapping, Roy misses his sally, striking rubbish. This is the LAST time I ever want to do this. Takes ages putting knots in the ropes (just to delay the agony further). And then . . . can't remember the test-piece at all, sort of in a

trance of total concentration. Finally over, stand the bells. HUGE relief. Collective opinion - didn't disgrace ourselves, but how did it sound? Want to go home. Long, long wait for the obligatory speech and final results, announced in reverse order. 6th: not us, 5th: not us, 4th: not us. What's going on? 3rd: not us. Wait for it . . . 2nd NOT US. Reading and High Wycombe (EBSB) look as sick as parrots. We can't believe it. It's us - we are the winners! What a feeling. Definitely one for the diary.

Thursday 30th October 2003

Must remember to write article on our striking success for the belfry chicks' newsletter.





By Sheila Blenkhorn

Last July we decided to combine a short break in Lincolnshire with a visit to the Ringing Roadshow 2003. We drove up on the Friday afternoon through pouring rain that didn't stop completely until later that evening and I had visions of some sort of muddy Glastonbury scenario the following day for the Roadshow! However, much to my surprise, Saturday dawned bright and sunny with no sign of the previous day's rain. We made our way to the showground shortly after 10.00, thinking to avoid the crowds that would arrive later from farther afield, and were surprised to see that there was already a steady line of moving vehicles entering the showground not to mention several long rows of parked cars.

This year the Roadshow was held on the Lincolnshire Showground on the outskirts of Lincoln. It was an excellent venue and well suited

both to the needs of all the various exhibitors and to the people attending the show. In previous Roadshows the space has been rather cramped which meant it was sometimes difficult to get close up to view some of the stands. At Lincoln there was one large exhibition hall where most of the bigger stands and the main exhibitors such as the foundries were situated. Off the hall was a restaurant and also two rooms where a varied programme of practical workshops, demonstrations and discussions were held throughout the day. Just across from the exhibition hall was a large marquee that contained all the smaller stands and outside on the grass were displays such as the portable rings and carillons. There was a varied selection of catering units situated around the ground plus a beer tent which, once again, was a great improvement on previous Roadshows. It was larger and better staffed which made it much less crowded and it also had a much more varied selection of real ales available – too many to try them all! The drainage must be very good at the showground because amazingly the grass had completely dried out after the rain of the previous day and the area in front of the beer tent became a

natural meeting place with many folks just sitting outside chatting together whilst eating and/or sampling the beer. Later in the afternoon everyone gathered there to watch a spectacular flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight which was on its way back to RAF Scampton after a performance in Sunderland.

All in all it was a most enjoyable day – there was so much to see and do that we stayed all day. Speaking personally, one of the best things about these occasions is the chance to meet up and chat with many ringing friends and acquaintances from all over the country, whether they are people from your own area who you see nearly every week or those who you meet occasionally, perhaps on a 'grab' or an outing, or even someone with whom you had completely lost touch.

Finally, in the late afternoon and early evening as we all made our way towards home there were local towers open along all the main routes away from the showground so no one needed to divert off their route to have a ring. We managed three towers before we gave in and went home exhausted!

BRANCH CENTENARY & GUILD FESTIVAL

Saturday 12th June 2004
Newton Longville

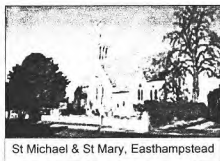


A day of celebration and fun for the Branch and Guild. There will be a Festival Service and Lunch, and we hope to have a 'Raising & Lowering Contest', a Mini-Ring, Sideshows, Jousting, etc. etc. With your help we can make this a really memorable day for North Bucks. The Secretary will be writing shortly asking for your support, and PLEASE do come along to the Quarterly on 6th December at Bradwell to help make plans for the day. Book the 12th June in your diary now!

I started off on the Friday morning at 7.45, with the route to Cookham firmly planted in my head. A quick glance in Dove informed me that I would be ringing at a 14cwt 8. Arriving at Cookham Church I was very nervous, wondering whether I was good enough to be on this course.

There were 6 students and it did seem as though everyone was feeling the same. The day started with an hour's introduction to Grandsire Triples and the course structure. The helpers started to arrive at 11.00 and then the ringing started. There was a rushed raise and then we were split into 3 pairs with one ringing the treble and the other ringing inside. We rang a plain course of Grandsire Triples each – I think this was more to let John Wells assess the needs and standard of each of his pupils. There then followed the same until lunch at 1.00. There was a very good lunch at a local pub who coped well with the numbers of hungry ringers that swamped them.

The next tower was Burnham, a 12cwt 8, here we again mainly concentrated on Grandsire Triples but they were touches rather than plain courses. We did take a look at a plain course of Plain Bob Triples, just to get a taste of it. By the end of this session I felt that I understood Grandsire Triples, and was even wondering why I had struggled with Grandsire Doubles so much. We finished at 4.30 and headed off towards Easthampstead. Arriving at 5.00 to check in to our rooms, the rooms were basic but easily adequate as we were only really there to sleep. Once I had unpacked we headed back to the main house where we had an introductory talk from the organisers. Dinner followed and I was pleasantly surprised at the standard of the food; there were three courses and there was a variety of options catering for vegetarians and carnivores. My evening session was on rope handling and I would advise it for anyone whatever their level. The session was at Easthampstead, a 6cwt 8 – I discovered that I had a lazy hand. The session was really good and I will be working on using both hands equally. After this session I was mentally exhausted and decided to skip the session on handbells.



St Michael & St Mary, Easthampstead

On the Saturday morning the breakfast was as good as the previous evening's food. We spent the first 1½ hrs discussing how to survive Stedman Triples, and looking briefly at St Helens, Single Oxford Bob Triples and

Easthampstead Course

by Christine Cable

time at Hurst looking at St Helens and plain courses of Stedman Triples. At Wokingham we were looking at Single Oxford and Stedman Triples with bobs in. Then at the last tower we looked at Plain Bob Major and Stedman Triples. We also had a bit of fun – to improve our listening skills we were told that three of us were to ring facing the wall, this was really interesting particularly when we were asked to start dodging with our neighbour. Even the helpers were keen to have a go. In the morning we had spoken about the singles in Stedman Triples but had not rung them; when we were each asked what we wanted last, I chose a touch of Stedman Triples with bobs and singles. I have never enjoyed ringing as much as I did when ringing that touch – the striking was good and even the helpers appeared to enjoy it.

For my evening session I did the Improve your Striking option, and I feel that it was pitched at a lower level than a couple of us were at, therefore I did not actually enjoy that option and feel that it should be advertised as being for the group number 1. The community singing was not really my cup of tea so I did not attend that either. My head was tired and I felt that the sleep would be better for me.

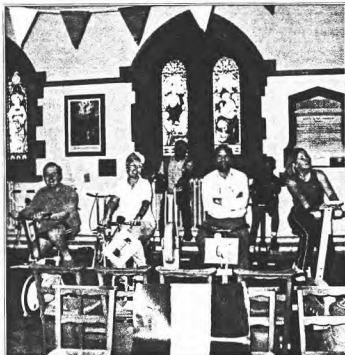
On Sunday morning I had to get up early and pack before breakfast and service ringing at Shinfield (11cwt, 6). My options for Sunday were the Bell Maintenance with Graham Clifton. During the morning I made a long splice on some very old and tired rope. Whilst during the afternoon I was taught all about the different types of bells and bits surrounding the bells. I felt that this was a very worthwhile session although we didn't actually go into a bell tower for it.

I really enjoyed the course and would recommend it to anyone whatever their level. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Branch for contributing to this course for me. I left on Sunday afternoon sad that the weekend was over. It was really inspiring and confidence building ringing with such really good ringers – I was even invited to ring in a peal. I am now looking forward to next year, when hopefully time allowing I will go on the Surprise Major course.

Plain Bob Major. We then went to three towers: - Hurst (14cwt), Wokingham St Paul (15cwt), and Twyford (12cwt). We spent the



Christine in the winning Bradwell team at the North Bucks Six Bell Competition



BUCKINGHAM CHURCH

Pedalling to the Promised Land

by Andrew Spencer

The chairs in Buckingham Church have served well for the last hundred years or so, but are now well past their best and someone (the Rector) had the idea of a sponsored cycle ride to the Promised Land as a way of raising money towards their replacement. Of course, actually cycling to Jerusalem is beyond the ability of most of the congregation so an alternative plan was formulated where teams of riders and individuals take part on exercise bicycles adding up their total mileage and changing the scenery in the Church as they progress.

The ringers discovered this involved leaving England on the Friday evening with a short speech from the remarkably well preserved 150 year old founder of the Raleigh bicycle company, followed by some English bellringing and a barrel of Hook Norton beer in the back of the Church. Teams of cyclists rode through the night and day crossing the channel into France late on Friday reaching Italy on Saturday afternoon, Greece on Sunday morning, finally island hopping by ferry to the Promised land and Jerusalem on Sunday afternoon.

Church decorations were changed as we passed through each country including national flags and artifacts and most importantly food and drink. The bellringers made a major contribution with 10 ringers cycling their leg through central France on Saturday morning before settling down to a French buffet lunch at the street café set up inside the church. So valuable was the ringers' contribution that they won the trophy for Best Team Performance in the event, a cup now proudly displayed in the ringing chamber. Money is still coming in, and the cyclists are looking forward to comfortable chairs.



St James the Great, Hanslope
Saturday 17th August 2003
1344 Hanslope Surprise Major



- 1 Peter Tribble
- 2 Alan Cozens
- 3 Natalie Green
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Jonathan Griggs
- 6 Nick Gray
- 7 Richard Haseldine (C)
- 8 Chris Stokes

For Service
1st Hanslope SM—2, 3, 5 and 6

Quarters

St Mary, Padbury
Saturday 27th September 2003
1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Helen Stanworth
- 2 Richard Stanworth (C)
- 3 Catherine Stanworth
- 4 Peter Nicholson
- 5 John Stanworth
- 6 Michael Tinsley

Rung to celebrate the Ordination of the Revd. Jenny Shields at the time of her Ordination in High Wycombe

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held at Tingewick on 6th September 2003

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to Tingewick, with an especial welcome to Graham Clifton, the Guild Master.

Apologies for Absence

Received from Gillian and Charlie Macdonald, Sheila Watts, Sheila Ware, Doug Hird, Peter and Christine Tribble. The Chairman expressed his disappointment at the poor attendance at the meeting.

Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the Quarterly meeting held at Stoke Goldington in June had been published in the August edition of Branch Newsletter. It was proposed by Brian Newman, seconded by David Joyce, that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting. This was agreed by the meeting.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Election of New Members

A Nomination had been received proposing one new member.

Great Linford

Alex Marchbank (Junior)
Proposed—Tine Marchbank
Seconded—Brian Newman

She was elected without dissent.

The Chairman welcomed Alex to the Guild and asked her to stand and make herself known to the meeting.

Officers Reports

Treasurer The Secretary read out the Treasurer's Report. The Branch account balance at the Building Society stands at £1470.41. £165.00 of that is to be sent to the Guild as their proportion of the Guild Subscriptions, so our funds are actually £1305.41. Thank you to those towers who have paid their 2003 Guild Subscriptions (that's 180 members). Two towers remain with subs unpaid – Great Brickhill and Newton Longville. Thank you for contributing towards the Guild Bell Fund today. £12 has been raised.

David Joyce commented that naming towers that had not paid appeared to be working as the number outstanding had been halved.

Ringling Master Richard Stanworth reported that the Branch Striking Competition, judged by the Guild Master, had been a success. The Friday evening format had been generally agreed as a better way to hold the competition. We will continue with this format for next year. We were successful in the Inter Branch competition against the Towcester Branch, winning

both trophies. The standard of ringing was not that high, but was sufficient on the day. Similar comments from members and the Chairmen echoed concern at the standard, although socially it had been an enjoyable evening. The format of each section being judged jointly by a member of each Branch was considered acceptable by both sides and it is proposed to continue with this format for the present time. Even though this year the date had been brought forward, it was still after the end of the school term and people were away on holiday. Chris Bulleid, the Towcester Branch Master, had proposed moving the competition another week earlier next year, to 10th July 2004, so that we can draw on a larger pool of ringers. This was agreed by the meeting as a good idea.

Grant Applications

One application had been received from Christine Cable of Bradwell who has a place on the forthcoming Easthampstead Course. The Branch officers had discussed the application and wished to propose that the meeting approve the maximum grant available. Alan Marchbank proposed that a grant of £50 be made to Christine. This was seconded by Richard Stanworth, and on a show of hands was approved by the meeting.

Forthcoming Events

An up to date calendar had been circulated to all present. Richard Stanworth drew attention to changes made to the programme since the last meeting. We cannot get Downs Barn for the September practice, but Doug Hird has arranged for Newport Pagnell to be available. However this will be a late start because of a choir practice. Towers proposed for Branch practices in the second quarter of 2004 are Blethley in April and Beachampton in May. The Branch striking competition in June is planned to be at Weston Underwood. It was asked if Downs Barn would be substituted for Newport Pagnell in January, as some members are not too keen on ringing at Newport. It is hoped to arrange this but, as Newport is already confirmed, it will not be cancelled until Downs Barn can be confirmed.

Branch Centenary and Guild Festival

Details of the arrangements so far were outlined. The Church at Newton Longville is available for us all day on Saturday 12th June. This date has been published in Odd Bob as the date of the Guild Festival, as well as being the main day for our Centenary celebrations.

A suggestion had been put forward at the officers' meeting that a separate sub-committee be formed to organise the Centenary celebrations.

The format of the day is not finalised but will include some form of service and a barbecue or pig roast at lunchtime. We have the use of the Old Rectory Gardens for lunchtime and some sort of family entertainment, such as side-shows from school fetes and the like suitable for non-ringers as well as ringers. We may be able to get a mini-ring, such as the Lichfield Diocesan ring, to interest the ringers.

A one-off competition is planned. This will be a rise and fall contest on the back six at Newton Longville, in which one band from each Branch will be invited to enter.

The aim is to concentrate the activities between 10am and 4pm on the day, bearing in mind that the Branch is at one end of the Guild area.

Although the Centenary year of the Branch has already started, it was generally agreed by the meeting that the official Centenary year be for twelve months beginning on 1st January next year. We can then aim to get the Guild Festival out of the way and then arrange things like peals and quarter peals during the second half of the year.

Concern was expressed that Newton Longville was perceived to be 'slipping away' from the Branch, and with the Festival planned to be there, we need to ensure local involvement with the event.

Graham Clifton offered to arrange to book a jousting game if required, but a decision would be needed soon, as it gets booked up well in advance.

Alan Marchbank reported on the possible rehanging of Newton Longville bells, which has been considered as a possible Branch Centenary project. He had examined the bells along with Christine Ryan and they had agreed that the next stage was to approach the main bellhangers and obtain quotes to take out the present installation and produce a new ring of eight in a ten-bell frame on two levels. This would fit in with the Church plans for a ringing floor that would be accessible from the spiral staircase. The Church currently needs £130,000 for stonework repairs, so the proposal for restoration of the bells will need to be carefully considered. The Branch may be able to help by finding alternative funding, such as getting the frame made locally at reduced cost by a sympathetic fabricator, and obtaining grants from other bodies. This is a sizeable project and the Church is very keen. This is still nowhere near a formal plan but it may be sufficiently advanced by next year that it could be launched at the Guild Festival but would not be finished within the Centenary year. Any proposal will need to be discussed and agreed with the Church authorities before any formal announcement can be made. It was noted that the members present support in principle the idea of the rehanging of Newton Longville bells being adopted as a Branch Centenary project.

A discussion on the forming of a sub-committee was in favour of approaching towers to get involved, rather than individuals. Alan Marchbank proposed that: "We invite each tower to indicate what they can contribute to the success of the Guild Festival. This can be

either by the tower or an individual from the tower undertaking one of the activities already identified, or suggesting some other activity that they can organise. They should also nominate a person from your tower to represent you on an organising sub-committee." This was seconded by Simon Head and on a show of hands was adopted by the meeting.

The Centenary dinner also needs commitment from members in order to ensure sufficient support. It was suggested that this be canvassed along with the invitation to help with the Guild Festival. This should all be included in a more general letter to towers about the Festival and Centenary. It was suggested that during this time of planning for the Festival and Centenary more speedy feedback would be needed from members and towers. More use could be made of the e-group to help with organisation and as many members as possible should be encouraged to join. Another idea suggested was to hold a short meeting after a Branch practice if there was an item needing to be discussed. As these dates were already in the calendar it would not involve finding another free date. These were accepted by the officers and will be used as necessary.

Any Other Business

Graham Clifton commented that the ideas for the Guild Festival sounded exciting. The event just needs selling to the rest of the Guild. He thought the family fun day format was a good idea. He thanked the Branch for their welcome, saying that he had never been to Tingewick before. He had found his visit 'most interesting'. He suggested that Tingewick might be a suitable tower to hold a belfry maintenance course. The Guild would be able to provide tutors if required. As it was more than ten years since the Branch had held a maintenance course this would be considered for the future.

The Newsletter Editor had resigned since the last meeting. Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware had kindly agreed to take this on temporarily and the Chairman wished to formally record a vote of thanks to them for this. A permanent newsletter editor is still needed if there is anyone interested in the post.

The Chairman also reported that Christine Ryan would like to stand down as Training Officer, due to other commitments. He thanked her for her work in this post. A replacement is needed and the Chairman felt that someone fresh to the committee should fill the post. He asked everyone to give this some thought before the next meeting.

The Chairman also raised the idea of arranging a Christmas party for the youngsters. This could be for ringers with non-ringing children or for ringing children with non-ringing parents, or both. He asked members to give this some consideration.

The organisation of the training day in October was discussed. It was believed that this was already organised by Christine but this will need to be checked with her.

Richard Stanworth had been advised that Bradwell

would be unable to represent the Branch at the Guild six bell striking competition. Shenley, who came second, were also unable to go to the competition, which is at Great Horwood. Richard asked the meeting if Hanslope, who came third in the Branch competition, should be invited to represent the Branch. It was agreed that they should be invited, but that a definite commitment was needed so that an alternative could be found if they were unable to go.

Richard had forms for helping with the course at Steeple Aston on 1st November. If anyone could help would they please take a form and fill it in.

Doug Hird was looking for ringers to help at Olney on Sunday evening in order to allow some visiting ringers from Australia to ring.

David Joyce announced that he had the remnants of

Godfrey Foat's bookstall from which items could be purchased. Godfrey had passed this on the Sheila Watts to sell and she had forwarded it to him. He understood that the money raised would be given to the Branch. There are a number of out of print books and old editions of other publications that may be of interest.

Thanks

Richard Stanworth proposed a vote of thanks to the Tingewick band and Lois Houghton-Brown for their hospitality; The Rev David Hemsey for taking the service; and to Michael Tinsley for playing the organ. The members present showed their appreciation in the usual manner. The Chairman then closed the meeting at 7.10pm.

North Bucks Branch—Calendar 2003/2004

NOVEMBER	21	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Focus on Rounds & Call Changes	Milton Keynes Village
	22		<i>Ten Bell Striking Competition Autumn General Committee Meeting</i>	<i>Bicester Vale of White Horse</i>
DECEMBER	6	3.00	Quarterly Meeting	Bradwell
	19	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Surfleet Surprise Minor	Woughton
JANUARY	16	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Gainsborough Little Bob Major	Newport Pagnell
FEBRUARY	20*	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Single Oxford Bob Minor	Maids Moreton
MARCH	6	3.30	Annual General Meeting	Great Linford
	19	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Hanslope Surprise Major	Hanslope
APRIL	16*	7.30	Branch Practice Special Method: Horton Surprise Minor	Calverton
	23*	7.30	Beginners' Striking Competition	Wavendon
MAY	21*	7.30	Branch Practice	Beachampton
JUNE	11		Branch Centenary	Ringing World
	12	10.00 - 4.00	Branch Centenary Celebrations & Guild Festival	Newton Longville
	18	7.30	Six-Bell Striking Competition	Weston Underwood

Items marked * were unconfirmed as at 2 November 2003
Events in *italics* are Guild events, etc.

DEAD RINGERS? *from Matthew Sowman*

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a "bone-house" and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they thought they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the "graveyard shift") to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be "saved by the bell" or was considered a "dead ringer".