



In Touch

May 2015

Branch Summer Social and Striking Competition - Whaddon

Saturday 20th June 2015 - 5.00pm - 8.30pm



This year's summer social and striking competition is at Whaddon (6 bells).

It would be good to see as many towers as possible enter a band, just ring what you are happy with – call changes or a method. (Rules for the striking competition are on page 14)

Names for tea to Derek White, tel: 01908 501987, email: j588white@btinternet.com by Friday 12th June please.

Inter-Branch Joint Practice, Picnic & Striking Competition

Saturday 18th July 2015 - 3.30 - 8.00pm

This year's joint practice will be at Potterspury (6) (ground floor) from 15:30 to 16:30, followed by a 'bring your own' picnic at the Mount, Towcester (if wet, picnic in Chantry House at Towcester). This will be followed by the striking competition at Towcester (or Easton Neston if Towcester not available) starting at 18:00. The competition has three sections: rounds and call changes on eight, Bob Minor and Stedman Triples. Each branch enters a band in each section; the winner of the most sections wins the main trophy, and the winner of the Stedman Triples receives the George Holland trophy.

Forthcoming Events.....

Date and Time	Event	Location
Fri 5 th June – 7.40 to 9.00pm	Bob doubles, plain hunt and call changes practice	Wavendon
Sat 20 th June	Branch Striking Competition & Summer Social	Whaddon (see above)
Fri 3 rd July – 7.40 to 9.00pm	Bob doubles, plain hunt and call changes practice	East Claydon
Sat 18 th July	Inter-branch Joint Practice, Picnic & Striking Competition	Towcester & District (see above)
Sat 15 th Aug	Branch Outing	London
Fri 4 th Sept – 7.40 to 9.00pm	Bob doubles, plain hunt and call changes practice	Passenham
Sat 26 th Sept	Branch Half Yearly Meeting	Bradwell (see page 2)
Sat 17 th Oct	Branch Training Course	Various
Sat 7 th Nov	Branch Quarter Peal Week begins	Various
Sat 19 th Dec	Branch Practice & Christmas Social	Stony Stratford (tbc)

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Who's Who 2014—2015

Chairman	Graham Bartholomew	Loughton	chairman@northbucksbranch.org.uk
RDL Buckingham	Lesley Belcher	Hanslope	rdlbh@northbucksbranch.org.uk
RDL Milton Keynes	Graham Bartholomew	Loughton	rdlmk@northbucksbranch.org.uk
RDL Newport Pagnell & Archivist	Doug Hird	Newport Pagnell	rdlnp@northbucksbranch.org.uk archivist@northbucksbranch.org.uk
Secretary	Gary Reading	Loughton	secretary@northbucksbranch.org.uk
Minute Secretary	Ann Birch	Shenley	minutesssecretary@northbucksbranch.org.uk
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Emberton	treasurer@northbucksbranch.org.uk
Guild Reps	Linda Maycroft	Shenley	guildrep1@northbucksbranch.org.uk
	Patricia Rosewell	Wavendon	guildrep2@northbucksbranch.org.uk
	Vacant		
Newsletter Editor	Nick Read	Newport Pagnell	newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk
Branch Websites	www.northbucksbranch.org.uk <i>or</i> www.northbucks.org.uk (archive)		
		Guild Website	www.odg.org.uk

Training

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Michaelmas Training Day

Want to advance your repertoire of methods?

Saturday, September 26th 2015

10.00 – 18.00

Cost £15

The aim of the day is to provide the opportunity for students to learn more advanced methods than those offered on the Radley and Steeple Aston one-day courses.

The day will start with tutorials in the first Tower followed by practical ringing in other nearby towers. The course this year will not be centred around Shiplake but in various parts of the Guild.

Groups will be formed to cover the following range of methods:

1. Surprise Minor
2. Stedman Triples
3. Basic Surprise Major (e.g. Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire & Superlative)
4. Advanced Surprise Major (e.g. Pudsey, Rutland, London, Bristol & Spliced)

Further details and application forms can be obtained by sending an SAE to Ann Osborne. 10 St. Michaels Road. Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4RP or E-mail annosborne.1@btinternet.com by 17th August 2015.

Voice from the Chair.....

Thank you for electing me as chairman of the North Bucks Branch.

May I first say my big thanks to Brian for his hard work he has done in the last few years as chairman. Please make every effort to attend branch & social events this year, It would be nice to see some new faces.

Congratulations to the band who rang in the 8 bell competition at Winslow, what a surprise coming 2nd yes 2nd behind High Wycombe, what a shock!

Graham

Date for your diary.....

26th September 2015 3pm - 9pm

- Commemorative ringing, practice and service at St Lawrence, Bradwell.
- Deanery chairman's cup competition and light refreshments.
- Autumn meeting at the memorial hall, Bradwell, Followed by fish and chip supper and quiz in the memorial hall.

Deadline for next edition . . .

The deadline for contributions for the next edition of *In Touch* is **Tuesday 4th August 2015.**

Contributions to newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk please.

Nick Read

Branch News

8 Bell Striking Competition

This years 8 Bell contest was hosted by the Central Bucks Branch, and Winslow was tower of choice for the 6 Teams to test their skills with 252 changes of Plain Bob Triples.

The weather was fine and ideal for consuming some excellent ringing on these quite challenging bells. All the bands were congratulated by Peter Blight, our Judge, for delivering some enjoyable, competent and confident ringing. Encouragingly there were no fire-outs!

EBSB rang first with a peal speed of 3:08. A very enjoyable and competent piece of ringing attracting 68 faults Next were Tilehurst. Peal speed 3:10, backstroke leads caused some issues but the ringing was improving all the time. 67 faults North Bucks rang third, peal speed 3:10. Very good ringing with trips coming in clusters then settling again. 63 faults.



The North Bucks Team who came 2nd

Banbury branch were next, ringing at a peal speed of 3:16 this was the slowest ringing. They had a "senior moment" and recovered well. 86 faults. Oxford City were 5th to ring. They seemed to disagree about the speed they wanted to ring at. Peal speed 3:14, 77 faults. High Wycombe were last to ring pushing the bells along at 3:06 peal speed. Excellent ringing. 46 faults.

So High Wycombe retain the Trophy, the 10th time they have won the 8 bell competition. North Bucks score their 2nd Second place, the first was at the inaugural competition in 1982 and Tilehurst record their 5th Third place.

We are grateful to the ringers and incumbent at Winslow for the use of the bells, to Brian and Paul who acted as Marshals and kept the competition flowing. We thank the Winslow ringers who provided an ample supply of delicious tea, sandwiches and cakes, and Peter Blight our judge.

Alan Marchbank

Listening & Striking Workshop

On Wednesday 15th April four students and a group of helpers met at Olney to pilot a Workshop on improving listening and striking skills; a very different proposition to the normal method-based training courses most people have attended. Time was limited so the Workshop aimed only to diagnose where people were with their listening and striking, sample some different techniques that they could use to improve these skills after the workshop and work out a forward plan.

Students alternated between two different types of activities so that at any one time only two students were working on the tower bells (thankfully the simulator meant that the neighbours were not subjected to the results of this.) Students went through a series of progressively more difficult exercises to test the various skills required to strike accurately. People varied in what they could do and as one commented; "that was an awful lot more difficult than it sounded." Time on the end of a bell rope was limited; one learning from the pilot was that taking everyone through the same set of exercises was not efficient. In future workshops it is proposed that students start with exercises targeted at where they perceive they are having problems and work from there.

When not in the tower, students tried out various teaching aids. !Strike is a computer tool that generates the sound of real church bells ringing with deliberately introduced striking errors which the user has to identify and correct. A CD with recordings of real ringing again included exercises designed to improve listening skills such as identifying how many bells were ringing, which bells were being used, which bells were in error and commenting on striking. There was much discussion around these two activities and students were pleasantly surprised at how well they could hear bells and diagnose errors. These teaching aids can be borrowed if required.

All the students agreed that the Workshop had been very useful in enabling them to think and learn about listening and striking in new ways. In particular, the teaching aids provided an opportunity to concentrate on listening alone (without having to ring the bell as well.) Everyone came away with ideas on how to improve their striking and after the pilot each student and their tower captain was sent suggestions on what they could do at their home tower to improve. One result of this is the Branch is now thinking of holding regular simulator sessions at Newport Pagnell for people to practice ringing by rhythm and hone listening skills.

Enormous thanks go to those who helped in the organising and running of the Workshop and to the helpers who gave up their time to assist.

Ann Birch & Lesley Belcher

Branch News contd.

14th March 2015 a day to remember

Exactly 100 years had passed when the branch came to together to:

- 1) commemorate the life of Mr Frederick Charles Andrews [<http://www.northbucksbranch.org.uk/the-branch/commemorating-ww1-bellringers/frederick-charles-andrews/>] who was the first North Bucks ringer to lose his life in the first world war, 14th March 1915;
- 2) conduct its AGM;
- 3) enjoy the return of the Annual Dinner following a long absence from the branch calendar.

The curious sound of bells ringing in Newton Blossomville attracted the villagers.



Brothers John and Dennis Letts (John previously Tower Captain at Newton Blossomville)

The day started with half muffled ringing at Newton Blossomville, a ring of 3 which is seldom rung, members of North Bucks were joined by members from Bedford who used to live in the village. The sounds of the church bells ringing brought out some locals to see what was going on. They were interested to learn that Frederick was also a bell ringer, it was known that he was a choir boy as he was one of the young men they commemorated in a display last November.

The ringing at Newton Blossomville was then followed by half muffled ringing at Clifton Reynes where Frederick rang regularly for services.

The sacrifice of Frederick Charles Andrews was remembered 100 years on.

A short but poignant service was held and our thanks go to The Reverend Canon Christa Pumfrey for conducting the moving ceremony.

During the service the branch WWI memorial candle was lit and Doug read a poem entitled Newport Bells [<http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/mkha/mkha/projects/jt/newport/docs/newport-ww1.html>].

This poem was written in 1916 by Ester Bateman and is about the impact of war on the town and the comfort the sound of the church bells brought her. Two of the hymns chosen were those sung at the original Chicheley memorial service held for Arthur William Wright, who will be commemorated at our branch practice in April.



The Memorial Candle

Our thanks go to Mike and Chris Davies who kindly provided light refreshments after the service.

Almost a game of musical chairs played out at the AGM

At 6pm members of the branch gathered at the Two Brewers, Olney for pre-drinks with the AGM commencing at 6.15pm. During the AGM 10 new members were approved and welcomed to the branch and we wish them every enjoyment in their future ringing. A few changes were made to the branch committee, Graham Bartholomew was elected Chair following Brian Newman's resignation we thank Brian for his commitment to the branch and wish him well for the future. Patricia Rosewell stood down as Minutes Secretary and was duly elected as a Guild Rep. Ann Birch stood down as Guild Rep and was elected as Minute secretary, the remaining officers stood and were re-elected. An update was given on the progress the branch committee had made in 2014 on ideas that were discussed in 2014 AGM:

- 1) Branch Practices,
- 2) Training and development,
- 3) Communication,
- 4) Socials.

Minutes of the meeting [<http://www.northbucksbranch.org.uk/the-branch/meetings/>] have been posted on the web site. A present of a gooseberry bush was presented and thankfully received by Linda Maycroft for her research into the lives of the bell ringers who died in service during the First World War and for organising the day's events.

Contd.

Branch News contd.

14th March 2015 a day to remember contd.

A waiting game by candle light

The candle lit annual dinner followed immediately after the AGM when those members staying were joined by some non-ringing family members.



The room was decorated with posters that branch members in 1915 would have frequently seen encouraging young men to sign-up and women to let their men go. 10 candles were lit one for each decade that had passed since Frederick lost his life. The candle holders were a little unusual as they were empty wine bottles collected by a couple of members who obviously enjoy red wine maybe a little too much and were personalised with a picture of poppies growing by water with the words "Remembering Frederick Charles Andrews 14th March 1915". The life story of Frederick Charles Andrews was shared.



The first challenge of the evening was to find your own seat by checking the 18 place cards that were set around the tables formed into an in facing square. The second challenge was to wait patiently for your meal to arrive while others tucked in. The winner of the "Greatest patience" award was our own treasurer Shelia, she was so good the first time that she won it again when the desserts were served. However the meals were delicious and plentiful and were well worth the wait.

Conversation flowed both across the table and amongst those sitting immediately next to each other.



The room was filled with laughter as Brian waited and waited and waited for the custard to pour from the small white jug. The evening ended with requests for the Annual dinner to stay on the branch agenda in 2016.

Linda Maycroft

New Teaching Aids Available

Over the last few months a number of new items have been purchased by the Branch and are available for loan.

The **Listen to Ringing Live CD** contains samples of live ringing with different exercises to practice listening skills. Ideal for learners to try when not ringing at a practice or for more experienced ringers to try at home. The CD consists of grouped exercises so there is always something for the novice as well as testing the more experienced – you try identifying 16-bell ringing!

The **Youth Toolbox CD** gives ideas and best practice for running Youth orientated groups. It includes advice on best practice and experience in recruitment and retention as well as meeting parental and other expectations. Theory on how to meet the needs and motivate different age groups is included. Finally it give ideas on activities for groups to maintain interest and develop knowledge with quizzes and other materials.

The **Teaching Toolbox CD** contains off the shelf course materials that provide everything you need to run courses for your developing ringers. The CD contains toolboxes for: Foundation Skills, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob Minor, much more Minor and Stedman Doubles.

Ringings Software is a particular hit with younger ringers. **!Strike** lets you see how good your listening is, and helps you practice to listen more accurately. It generates the sound of real church bells ringing with one or more bells not striking when it should and allows you to correct the striking.

For more information have a look at the loan page of the branch website - www.northbucksbranch.org.uk/the-branch/loan-items. If you would like to borrow any of these items please contact the secretary.

Branch News contd.

Brian Newman

Brian joined the North Bucks Branch in 1988, ringing at Bradwell. He was a welcome 'ready made' ringer having learned in the Central Bucks/Chiltern Branches some years earlier, and had useful contacts with the Oxford Diocesan Guild as he knew Pat Newton, one of the Guild Officers, well through family connections. He was very much involved with the Branch Downs Barn project, supporting the efforts of Dave and Fiona Maybrey and Doug Hird in the initial fund raising to buy Kingstone bells. It was Brian who fostered the support of the Guild for the project through his past association with Pat Newton, who was by then Guild Master. Downs Barn was eventually adopted as the Guild Project to mark the 450th anniversary of the Founding of the Diocese of Oxford.

Brian has been a great supporter of towers in the Stantonbury Parish, ringing regularly at Great Linford, Downs Barn and Bradwell. Great Linford tower in particular is very grateful for his continued support and for just always 'being there', particularly for Service ringing.

When the Olney project was launched, Brian volunteered his time and expertise working in the tower, initially with the installation of the lifting beams, and then in both the strip out and re-fit stages of the project.



In the Big Ring Pull project, Brian was very practically involved; part of the team installing the Charnborough Ring in Middleton Hall (in temperatures of -13C!), accommodating the Charnborough Trustee overnight, ringing and floor walking throughout the day and then ready in the evening to take it all down and pack it away.

Brian has served as our Guild Representative on a number of occasions for a number of years and served on the Guild Finance & General Purposes Committee for a long period. He has been our Branch Chairman more than once, at times when it was difficult to get another volunteer.

One of his most recent duties as Branch Chairman was to attend Owen Warren's funeral in recognition of Owen's long membership of the Guild.

Brian and his wife Jasie have now moved away to Winslow, and we understand he is keenly supporting that tower and teaching new learners! We thank him for his loyal service to the Branch over many years, and wish them both well in their new home.

The NBB Eight Bell Band

Since the last edition of In Touch the band has joined the practices of Great Brickhill, Downs Barn, Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford.

Method ringing ranges from Grandsire, through Stedman to Kent and into the easier Surprise Major methods. The practice also includes a few pieces of (hopefully fun) ringing in which listening and striking skills are developed. The emphasis of the practices seems to be subtly changing. Last year saw a number of members rapidly developing and extending their Surprise Major ringing and this has been consolidated with quarter peals some of which you'll see in the Quarter Peal columns later. More are in the pipeline. This year ringing seems to be concentrating more on learning to ring confidently on eight. Again, once these ringers have developed sufficiently Quarter Peals will be arranged for them.

The April practice hosted by Newport Pagnell concentrated entirely on Stedman Triples. A number of practices over the next few months will also be themed, including a repeat of the Stedman Triples, a 10-bell practice (which will do wonders for everyone's rope sight and listening skills) and a Surprise Major practice.

These practices are held **once a month rotating around the local 8-bell towers**. They are held on the practice night of the local band but run by the branch so a big thank-you to those towers for allowing us to take over their practices and hopefully they will let us come again.

If anyone else is interested in joining the 8-bell band then please contact me for more information.

Lesley Belcher

Bits and Bobs

First Pealers

Dear Society Secretaries,

There's lots of talk on social media about FirstPeal2015, dozens of first pealers already this year, and factual updates in the Ringing World. But... it would be lovely to have more human interest articles about them regularly in the Ringing World. Just a short write-up about the first pealer and any back story to the peal, plus pictures of course! Can you get this message round your contacts please, and encourage peal organisers, first pealers or someone else in the band to do this for as many of these peals as possible please?

Ringing World email address for articles and photos:
editor@ringingworld.co.uk

Branch News contd.

A Perfect Saturday: Bells, Good Food, Pubs and a Good Laugh.

The clock on the wall advised it was 7.15am and there I was in the hall, coat and shoes on, holding a note book and my red diagrams book (just in case.) Lesley my travelling companion was driving her car up my drive; time keeping is one of her specialities. A few moments later we were leaving Milton Keynes on our way to Bardwell in Suffolk, no I'd never heard of it either.

Well Bardwell is a lovely village deep in the Suffolk countryside, enjoying the benefit of two pubs including the 6 Bells Inn, which as we were to find out a little later was slightly out of date as the church now has a ring of 8. The other pub, The Dun Cow, was the venue of the ITTS Module 2 – Teaching Elementary Change Ringing. We'd made good time on our journey and pulled into the car park a little earlier than expected. We were cheerfully greeted by Ruth and Graham. Graham had helped the North Bucks Branch prepare themselves for the 2012 Big Ring Pull recruitment drive which is, incidentally, ultimately responsible for the early start. I was one of the 43 members of the public who started to ring as a result of the Big Ring Pull initiative.

So why was I on this course with only 3 years' experience of ringing? Well the answer was simple who could refuse Lesley's impassioned appeal for someone who she could mentor, apparently everyone but me! Then I found out that the entry requirement was a QP of Bob Minor inside. Oh dear, I had only completed a quarter on the treble, so an emergency teaching session was organised and some of the best ringers in the branch were mobilised to ring with me the following day and by some miracle a quarter of Bob Minor on the 2nd was completed. My sincere thanks go to each member of the band that day for their wonderful support. I couldn't have done that without them.

So there I was in Bardwell, uncertain of what to expect not really totally sure what I wanted to get out of the day but with an open mind I was prepared to listen. I'd heard all the rumours/opinions about ITTS before, the gulf between those in favour and those against was as wide as the Atlantic Ocean, but I LOVED IT and came away with a growing sense of passion and desire to implement some if not all of the ideas learnt. You see, everything made perfect sense to me:

Consider the learner and their preferred method of learning, not one size fits all, and indeed a combination of the following may be required:

Visual – seeing it - the blue line, drawing it out on the black or white board

Audio – listening – saying your places out loud, hearing the bells, being talked through the logic
Kinaesthetic – feeling – having a go, feeling the difference between holding a bell on the balance and pulling it off.

Then consider the variety of teaching methods available. Church bells aren't the only tool, some others include: hand bells (I remember using these at Great Linford in order to see what was happening when we were plain hunting), Able (this was something my daughter used a lot when we started learning together), !Strike (I'd used this recently on a listening and striking pilot training Lesley had run and the results were really interesting), simulators (I know a lot of people hate these but actually I find them OK, once they have been set up correctly), and DVD's (the rope sight DVD is a good one.)

Ensure the foundations are mastered before moving on e.g. bell handling, control, style, listening skills, rope sight, theory and of course striking.

Think about how to make mastering the foundations fun with simple exercises that can be slotted into a weekly practice; good fun for the learner and the more experienced ringers alike as we were to find out in the local church later.

Building and maintaining a team's spirit is important – suggestions included celebrating achievements, giving each other encouragement, tower or branch outings, social events outside the ringing chambers.

Consider what makes people leave – as well life cycle events there are also a number connected with how people are developing including stagnation, not reaching expectations, too much pressure, becoming bored. Unfortunately I recognised all these in my own and my daughter's experience. Luckily we've not felt them at the same time so I have kept going. For me the quitting points came when learning Plain Hunt, perhaps learning on three bells, then four may have helped and again learning Plain Bob Doubles was a miserable time, perhaps with the small chunks approach and applying my style of learning would have prevented 12 months of frustration, embarrassment and dejection nearly getting the better of me.

Build up expertise through breaking methods down into bite sized chunks was an important lesson learned throughout the course. Exercises such as the Mexican Wave, ringing your bell x times and stand, encouraging leaner participation by asking them to choose the number of chimes, Bastow Minimus. I wonder now, how many months could I have saved if the learning Bob Doubles approach taught in this course had been applied. My tower colleagues were really patient and encouraging but I just wasn't getting it.

Branch News contd.

A Perfect Saturday: Bells, Good Food, Pubs and a Good Laugh contd.

The practical sessions at the local church were great fun. I was really nervous about joining in, having only just completed my QP of Bob Minor a few days before, but join in I did and I did OK. The exercises were simple; there was a lot of laughter and camaraderie around the group.

Before I knew it the day had come to a close and we were back in the car starting the long trip home. We were both mentally drained but really excited about what we had learned. Actually when I said the day was over it wasn't really, we split up briefly to have an evening meal with our families and then with our partners met at the aptly named Bell Inn at Beachampton for the odd tipple or two.

So what's next ... well I've introduced a couple of the exercises into our tower practice, I've written my own development plan and goals for the rest of the year, I've had a good read through all the course materials and now I need to take the online test and continue the application of the learning.

So the acid test would Lesley and I recommend the ITTS course. Well I can say with 100% conviction that we both DO!!!

Linda Maycroft

The day I went to Radley

I have been asked to put a few words together about my day down in South Oxfordshire at the Radley One Day course organised by the ODG Education Committee. The ODG organise two courses a year. In the spring there is one around Radley and in the autumn there is another course centred around Steeple Aston. I put my name down for the Radley course in late January and a form soon came back that asked about what I was able to do and what I wanted to learn, I went for Grandsire Doubles, this needed to be completed with your Tower Captain, but that was soon done and the form was dispatched off.

Nearer the time I got instructions of how to get to Radley and with building anticipation, eventually the day came. This meant an early start as we needed to meet up the hall next to the church and Radley from Sherington was over 50 miles away. So arriving at the centre there was quite a buzz as most people like me were all quite excited about the day to come.

So the time was nigh, and we were now on the course, we all found each other and our Grandsire Doubles group (6 learners) started round a table we were given a pack of information about the method and we started to talk about what we knew about the method and it was apparent at this moment that we were a group of very mixed abilities, from people who were just plain hunting to people who were wanting to learn the bobs and singles. as we rang rounds.

This did not phase the instructors at all, and we were soon off to our first tower in one of the neighbouring towns (Headington) where we were tested out to see how we coped with general bell handling, as we rang rounds.

You were the only learner on the ropes as there were 5 other expert ringers, as well as the instructor. So it did not matter what level you were at you got the instructors full attention and all the other ringers could work around you. So we all took turns in doing this and then again took turns in being involved in ringing the method where you felt comfortable. The first session was soon over with every ones sprits being high as we had all got on to the bells.

Next stop was the pub next door for lunch where we all chatted around our experiences, with the trainers and the other ringers, it was all quite a jolly affair. The other ringers all very interested to hear about our Big Ring Pull, and the others ideas that their and other areas have tried.

With the food finished we were off to our next tower (Wheatley) where the learning started getting serious and you needed to think about what you were doing and what you were trying to learn, but the band of learners were all very supportive of each other. Between the serious ringing the instructor would have little games to play, that would keep us all smiling and keep the session rolling along.

And before we knew it we had finished and it was downstairs for tea and more chat where we were all sharing our experiences. We were then off to our 3rd and final tower of the day (Little Milton). Here for me it was turned up a step and I found this the most challenging, although this is true for all of us. After this session has finished we had had 3 x 1.5 hour sessions of ringing, although you were only ringing for about a 6th of it, but with all the thinking you knew you had had a full day's worth.

So we then all headed off to the final event of the day was the evening meal back at Radley and the presentations of the certificates, where there was another bout of congratulations.

I hope I have not bored you too much with this article, but I wanted to details some of the way the course was ran. I have to say that I totally enjoyed the experience, but I did find it more tiring than I thought I would.

Would I go again and would I recommend this course, the answer to both those questions would be yes.

*Mark Vale
Sherington / Newport Pagnell*

Branch News contd.



From Towers to Trenches, we remember them.....

So far we have remembered Mr FC Andrews from Clifton Reynes at the AGM in March and with QP's in Newton Blossomville and Clifton. In April we remembered Mr AW Wright from Chicheley where we held our April branch practice and a QP is in the planning phase. The lives of Mr F Rainbow from Maids Moreton and Mr CA Howe from Linslade were remembered during May's branch practice at Buckingham. At each of these events the branch memorial candle has been lit.

In this edition of in touch we will remember the life of Mr EJ Webb.

Edmund John Webb aka Jack Wharton was born in 1891 in Great Milton, near Oxford. He moved to Maids Moreton around the time of his Mum's marriage to Mr W H Wharton of Wellmore, Maids Moreton and it was here that he learned to ring and successfully rang the treble to a peal of Grandsire Doubles. After leaving school Jack was employed by Major Lynch at Moreton Lodge as a gardener until c1910 when accompanied by William J Gough, steward of Lord Penrhyn he moved to Llandegar near Bangor in Wales. He was employed by Mr Gough as a gardener.

In the final quarter of 1911 Jack married Hilda Hedges the daughter of Thomas and Julia Hedges from Fenny Stratford in Bangor Anglesey. Hilda was at that time employed as a Servant in Llandegai, Caernarvonshire. Jack became a member of the Penrhyn Fire Brigade during which time his two children were born.

Jack continued his interest in bell ringing and sometime in 1911/12 joined the band at St David's. It was at St David's that he made rapid progress in his ringing, mastering the standard methods and Double Norwich and Cambridge Surprise Major. Although he hadn't had the chance to ring a peal in any of these methods he was looking forward to doing so on his return from the war.

When war was declared Jack travelled to nearby Carnarvon to enlist, he joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, for a time the regiment was stationed at Northampton and Jack made the most of the time there by assisting with the ringing at St Edmund's church. Later Jack became a corporal in the 1st/6th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

On the 2nd July the division was ordered to refit for Service in the Mediterranean. They sailed on the 25th July via Alexandria and reached Lemnos between the 29th and 7th August. On the 9th August the units landed at Suvia Bay, Gallipoli. Whilst deployed in August Offensive of the Battle of Gallipoli Jack was injured and was transferred to the military hospital in Alexandria, it is likely that he died during the transfer and was buried at sea. His name is recorded on panels 77-80 of the Helles Memorial, Turkey.

The bells of St David's were rung half muffled for the memorial service which was held on the 12th September 1915 and on the following day a peal of Grandsire Triples was rung in memory of Edmund John Webb aka Jack.

From towers to trenches, we remember..... *Arthur William Wright*

On the beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon of the 18th April members of the branch met at Chicheley to commemorate the life of [Arthur William Wright](#). A good and varied practice was held and members rang Grandsire, Cloisters, Beverley, Stedman & Kent amongst other methods. It was agreed that the bells would not be rung half muffled on this memorial occasion, in order to reflect the wishes of Mr. Wright's parents 100 years earlier.



The North Bucks Branch Memorial Candle was lit and burned brightly throughout the practice and later refreshments. A framed life story was also on display and Linda also told members a little about the life of Arthur and advised that the living relatives of Arthur were delighted he was being remembered. Visitors to the church who were staying at the hotel next door asked lots of questions about ringing and expressed an interest in learning. Hopefully they will call into their local church and commence their ringing journey soon. Following the ringing members tucked into Lemon Drizzle, Victoria Sandwich cake and cup cakes while enjoying catching up with each other.

Linda Maycroft

Other News

News from the ODG

This year's guild AGM took place in Cowley, a suburb of Oxford, on a glorious Saturday afternoon, the traffic was light and the A34 was a relative breeze to navigate. The church of St James is pleasantly situated within its churchyard. The blue bells were just going over but the fluffy white clouds of cow parsley were coming into their own under the broad leaf trees. We sat on a wall and enjoyed the sounds of the 6 bell ring and the warmth of the early summer sun, before joining the service. The sermon was very interesting and gave a potted history of the early origins of the first peal.

After the service we walked around the corner to the church's meeting place where we had the opportunity to enjoy a traditional bellringers tea, browse through the book shop and the plant stall. Patricia bought a couple of books while I bought some plants and a wooden light pull.

The AGM started a little late as unfortunately we were short of the quorum of 50 required to enable the voting. During the meeting we learned that

Sadly Geoff the wood turner had recently passed away, he had made the light pull I'd bought

The bell fund had received a £10k legacy from Mary Lee

Planning was now underway for the Guild Festival to be held on the 9th July 2016, this festival only happens every 5 years so worth saving the date in your diary.

A new contact has been found for the Kimberley project (a project to send a ring of redundant bells to South Africa for installation). It now looks like the project will go ahead subject to the appropriate fundraising. The church at Kimberley spends all the money they raise to feed c200 people with a meal 3 times a week in a programme they call "feeding the masses".

Kevin Davenport and John Harrison were awarded distinguished membership.

Despite another 4 members arriving we were still unfortunately 1 member short of the quorum needed, so an extraordinary meeting will be held fairly soon to elect the guild officers, approve: the minutes, accounts and proposed donations as well as to ratify the non resident ringing members and the change in name for the children's officer.

If this meeting is held near our branch perhaps you would all be good to support it so we can reduced the numbers required for the quorum as well as to complete the remaining business. We still have a vacancy for a 3rd branch rep so please let one of the officers know if you are interested, you could have been the crucial 50th attendee today and it's not an onerous task, honest!

Linda Maycroft & Patricia Rosewell



St. George's Day
April 23rd 2015 - 6pm

Dear Secretaries

First of all I so wish to thank all your ringers who made such a terrific effort, mid week, to ring out helping the country celebrate its national day. And so ends another year of the Campaign, the 5th, which has seen a terrific increase in interest not only within your ringing community but, even more exciting, outsiders who all think the idea of our lovely churches ringing out to celebrate our St. George's Day a true and fitting way.

In spite of making every effort each year it was the first time I have managed to engage with national media and whilst the BBC's The ONE Show might not have had quite the dignity I had hoped for, nor followed the format that I had been led to believe at least it featured the ringing. Giving publicity to ringing is an important aspect of the Campaign as I am constantly hearing from towers that they do not have enough ringers to go around and are worried about the future.

May I take this opportunity to make a request. Would you be so kind as to contact all your ringers to ask them for feedback regarding the Campaign. If they could bear in mind that it is run entirely by myself at my expense which is why there are no certificates produced etc. I am also very conscious that you were not 'asked' if you wanted a Campaign for St. George's Day. However in the very beginning I approached The Ringing World and asked a few ringers and they thought it an excellent idea and so proceeded. Neither have I been contacted by a single ringer to say that they do NOT want the Campaign.

To give weight to the continuation comes from the Deans of the Cathedrals who have all been incredible supporters from the beginning. The questions are:

Do they wish the Campaign to proceed?
Do they wish for me to continue to run it?
If not, who do they wish to run it and how will that be financed?

I am unable to engage with the media successfully if no one engages with me. Sadly I have come across regular ringers who have never heard of the Campaign and are much aggrieved at not being kept informed by secretaries. The future of the Campaign holds a possible inclusion of English Heritage, Hand Bell Associations, Town Cryers, and the English Food & Drinks Industry. By widening the participants, always aware of the importance of a 'Ringing' theme, would in turn widen the audience and perhaps bring in new ringers. Would the ringers be willing for this to happen? Do any of the ringers have opinions on how they would like the Campaign to progress?

There is no doubt I am open to suggestions and look forward very much to hearing your views.

With My Very Best Wishes, Libby

Libby Alexander

Ringling for England Campaign - April 23rd 2015
www.ringingforengland.co.uk
Telephone: 07799 23 04 23

Tower News

Hanslope

On Saturday 11th April, we held an Open Towers Day in aid of our restoration project when there were sixteen towers open in the area around Milton Keynes.

Although the day began with rain, this soon stopped and it remained fine and sunny for the rest of the day. The day was fairly well attended and, although we had perhaps hoped for few more people, there were ringers from as far afield as Portsmouth, Bath Abbey, Cheshire, Essex, Gloucestershire and Yorkshire. The final tower of the day was Hanslope where we also served tea and cakes.

We are grateful for all those who helped to make the day a success, the incumbents, tower captains and those people who helped on the day to steward the towers for us. Our thanks are also due to those towers where they provided welcome drinks and snacks for the ringers.

Finally, and most importantly, we raised a total of £600.00 for the Hanslope Bell Restoration Project. The fund now stands at just over £45,000.00

Sheila Blenkhorn

Wavendon Tower

Wavendon Tower continues to benefit from a collaboration with Woughton, sharing ringers for practices, weddings, and quarter-peals and commemorative touches. We were glad to ring a touch of Plain Bob Doubles on Friday, May 8th, in recognition of the VE Day anniversary - giving us a chance to discuss the significance of the occasion with our younger ringers. We dedicated this touch to a member of St Mary's congregation: Roland Pumfrey, who died on May 6th aged 95, had served throughout WW2, including (at the age of 20) the evacuation from Dunkirk.

Looking to the future: in response to just a little more intensive tuition, our newest (teenage) recruit has made remarkable progress, and has now rung in rounds & called changes on two different bells. Jessica is learning to ring as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's (Bronze) Award, but we all benefit from reminders about good technique, thanks to Brian Baldwin! Two of us in the tower will be signing up to learn how to teach bell handling, so as to share in bringing on any further new recruits, since we're still a little short of 'critical mass'; we're hoping that the Branch's review of recruitment and retention will bring some valuable insights which we can put into practice in strengthening the band.

We're happy to welcome individual visitors to our Friday practices (feel free to contact me at 07740 774 624 to check that we're meeting) and will gladly host a joint practice by arrangement!

Patricia Rosewell

An outing to Loughborough

In April bell ringers from Stoke Goldington, Weston Underwood, Emberton and Hanslope again joined forces with Roade in Northants, for one of their 'special' outings.

This time Alan Cozens of Roade had arranged for us all to visit John Taylor & Co., the Loughborough Bell Foundry. We started with lunch at a local pub (of course) and then met at the Foundry for a very interesting tour lasting 90 minutes. It was very comprehensive, starting from the historic origins of the company through to the present day.



We were not able to see a bell being cast as the Prime Minister had made a visit in the morning during his election campaign, and the casting had been carried out then!



No ringers' tour to the Foundry is complete without a ring on the Foundry's own bells, a light ring of 12 installed in part of the factory. We did really well, despite the bells being somewhat different to most of our own.

Our thanks go to Alan for arranging the day, and we are now wondering where his next 'adventure' will take us....

Peals & Quarters

Hanslope, Bucks
St. James the Great,
Sunday, 22 February 2015 in 46 mins (22 cwt)

1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Phil Haslam
- 2 Alan Cozens
- 3 Brian Berry
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Tony Gray
- 6 Ian Thompson
- 7 Richard Haseldine (C)
- 8 Roy Keeves

For morning service and for the lives of Emily Mary Keeves (1914-2015) and Dorothy Thompson (1918-2014)

Wicken, Northamptonshire
St. John the Evangelist
Tuesday, 24 February 2015 in 49 mins (15-1-20)

1280 Belfast Surprise Major

- 1 Ray Vickers
- 2 Lesley J Belcher
- 3 Andrew Spencer
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Richard Haseldine
- 6 Chris Stokes
- 7 Andrew Haseldine (C)
- 8 David Phillipson

First quarter peal of Belfast: 8.

Woburn, Bedfordshire
St. Mary
Thursday, 26 February 2015 in 50 mins (24-1-16)

1250 Cambridge Surprise Major

- 1 Bob Churchill
- 2 Raymond Watkin (C)
- 3 Lindsey Brett
- 4 Roger Powell
- 5 Bob Tregillus
- 6 Brian Foley
- 7 Simon Head
- 8 Roderic K Bickerton

Remembering Bob Winstanley who enjoyed ringing many quarter peals at Woburn.

Wicken, Northamptonshire
St. John the Evangelist
Tuesday, 10 March 2015 (15-1-20)

1344 Cornwall Surprise Major

- 1 Ray Vickers
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Lesley Belcher
- 4 Andrew Spencer
- 5 David Phillipson
- 6 Tony Gray
- 7 Nick Gray
- 8 Chris Stokes (C)

First quarter peal in method: 6 and 7.

Newton Blossomville, Buckinghamshire
St. Nicholas
Saturday, 14 March 2015 (5¼cwt)

1260 Original Singles

- 1 Adam Hird
- 2 Charles Knight
- 3 Doug Hird

Rung on the 100th anniversary of the death of Private F C Andrews, Army Cycle Corps, of Newton Blossomville.

Woughton On The Green, Buckinghamshire
St. Mary BVM
Sunday, 22 March 2015 in 42 mins (7cwt)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Brian Baldwin
- 2 Christina Tribble
- 3 Martin R Petchey
- 4 Paul Crombleholme
- 5 Peter Tribble
- 6 Simon J O Head (C)

First quarter peal in method: 4.

Loughton, Buckinghamshire
All Saints
Sunday, 22 March 2015 in 43 mins (11-0-8)

1260 Doubles (3m)

(3m: 360 St Simon's, 360 St Martin's and 540 Plain Bob Doubles)

- 1 Anne McIntyre
- 2 Claire Reading
- 3 John Brookman
- 4 Gary Reading
- 5 Ted Fawcett (C)
- 6 Graham Bartholomew

Rung to celebrate the life of Bob Winstanley and as a mark of appreciation for his service to bell ringing and the Church.

Wicken, Northamptonshire
St. John the Evangelist
Friday, 27 March 2015 in 45 mins (15-1-20)

1250 Spliced Surprise Major (2m)

(Cambridge and Yorkshire)

- 1 Lesley Belcher
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Claire Reading
- 4 Andrew Spencer
- 5 Nick Gray
- 6 Doug Hird
- 7 Tony Gray
- 8 Chris Stokes (C)

First quarter peal of spliced: 3.

Peals & Quarters contd.

Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire

St. James

Friday, 27 March 2015 in 43 mins (16–0–10)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Paul Bagni
- 2 Wendy Price
- 3 Susan Freer
- 4 David Moore
- 5 Michael Nimmo (C)
- 6 Robert Freer

350th quarter peal: 5. First quarter peal inside: 3. First quarter peal away from tenor: 1.

Clifton Reynes, Buckinghamshire

St. Mary the Virgin

Thursday, 16 April 2015 in 42 mins (10–2–14)

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Ruth Stokes
- 2 Barry Eglesfield
- 3 Lesley Belcher
- 4 Phil Haslam
- 5 Doug Hird
- 6 Chris Stokes (C)

Rung to remember the life of Frederick Charles Andrews. A Clifton Reynes ringer who died whilst fighting for his country on 14th March 1915.

Woughton on the Green, Buckinghamshire

St. Mary BVM

Thursday, 23 April 2015 in 38 mins (7cwt)

1260 Spliced Minor (3m)

(Cambridge Surprise, Plain Bob and Little Bob)

- 1 Brian Baldwin
- 2 Christina Tribble
- 3 Peter Tribble
- 4 Martin Petchey
- 5 Robert Tregillus
- 6 Simon J O Head (C)

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St. John the Evangelist

Tuesday, 28 April 2015 (15–1–20)

1344 Superlative Surprise Major

- 1 Ray Vickers
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Andrew Spencer
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Lesley Belcher
- 6 Doug Hird
- 7 Mark Jacot
- 8 Chris Stokes (C)

A fond goodbye from the Wicken band to Mark Jacot.

South Northamptonshire Society

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Saturday, 2 May 2015 in 3h 7mins (15–1–20)

5120 Cornwall Surprise Major

Composed by Roderick R Horton

- 1 David Phillipson
- 2 Julie A Haseldine
- 3 Andrew J Spencer
- 4 Lesley J Belcher
- 5 Ruth Stokes
- 6 Christopher C Stokes
- 7 Andrew Haseldine (C)
- 8 Richard A Horne

Rung to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the first recorded peal: also to celebrate the birth of HRH Princess Charlotte.

Woughton On The Green, Buckinghamshire

St. Marys BVM

Saturday, 2 May 2015 in 42 mins (7cwt)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Brian Baldwin
- 2 Christina Tribble
- 3 Peter Tribble
- 4 Paul Crombleholme
- 5 Martin R Petchey
- 6 Simon J O Head (C)

Rung to mark the 300th anniversary of the first true recorded peal which was rung on 2nd May 1715 at St Peter Mancroft Norwich and to celebrate the birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's daughter.

Hanslope, Buckinghamshire

St. James the Great

Sunday, 3 May 2015 in 52 mins (22cwt)

1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Lydia Bates
- 2 Jill Belcher
- 3 Brian Berry
- 4 Lesley Belcher
- 5 Roy Keeves
- 6 Ian Thompson
- 7 Tony Gray (C)
- 8 Nick Gray

Rung for morning service and for the 300th Anniversary of the first peal on 2nd May 1715.

First quarter peal on 8: 1.

Emberton, Buckinghamshire

All Saints

Wednesday, 6 May 2015 in 51 mins (9–0–18)

1440 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Wendy Haslam
- 2 Linda Maycroft
- 3 Lesley Belcher
- 4 Roy Keeves
- 5 Phil Haslam
- 6 Chris Stokes (C)

First quarter peal inside. Rung to celebrate the birth of HRH Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana of Cambridge on 2nd May 2015.

Peals & Quarters contd.

Loughton, Buckinghamshire

All Saints

Monday, 11 May 2015 (11-0-8)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Alexandra J Marchbank
- 2 Graham Bartholomew
- 3 Hilary Reading
- 4 Steve Thomason
- 5 Alan J Marchbank (C)
- 6 John B Marchbank

Rung for the 70th Anniversary of V E Day.

First quarter peal inside: 3 and 4.

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St. John the Evangelist

Tuesday, 12 May 2015 (15-1-20)

1280 Glasgow Surprise Major

- 1 Ray Vickers
- 2 Julie Haseldine
- 3 Andrew Spencer
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Lesley Belcher
- 6 Chris Stokes
- 7 Andrew Haseldine (C)
- 8 John Stanworth

First quarter peal in method: 8.

Padbury, Buckinghamshire

St. Mary the Virgin

Sunday, 10 May 2015 (10½cwt)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

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

Rung half-muffled in memory of Private William Smith, 1st Battalion, Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry, Killed in Action, Flanders, on 7th May 1915, and Private Thomas Abbott, 2nd Battalion, Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry, Killed in Action, Flanders, on 16th May 1915. The first of 15 quarter peals to commemorate the men of Padbury who died in the First World War.

Peterborough Diocesan Guild

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St. John the Evangelist

Thursday, 14 May 2015 (15-1-20)

1344 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Raymond A Vickers
- 2 Richard Haseldine
- 3 Ruth Stokes
- 4 Andrew Spencer
- 5 Sebastian Lucas
- 6 Lesley Belcher
- 7 John Pardoe
- 8 Christopher C Stokes (C)

Rung for Ascension Day.

Competition Rules

North Bucks Branch: 6 BELL STRIKING COMPETITION RULES

Aims

- a) to encourage good striking, in a competitive but friendly atmosphere.
- b) to reap the benefits of socialising between towers.

Who Can Take Part

- a) A tower may enter more than one band.
- b) A tower band should comprise at least 50% tower members. Any ringers in a band who are not tower members must have some links with that tower, e.g. as regular visitors. They should also be Branch members.
- c) Alternatively, two towers may join forces to ring as a joint team.
- d) Other bands may enter the striking competition however unless they meet the eligibility criteria for the ODG 6-bell competition they will not be eligible to be chosen to represent the Branch at this competition.
- e) The Branch can agree to provide a coach/conductor for a tower which asks for it. This person will be a Branch member.

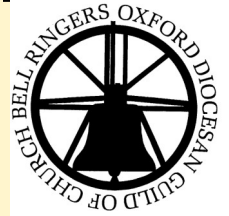
The Ringing

- a) Two minutes' practice will be allowed prior to the test piece, after which all bells should be stood.
- b) Bands should signal that they are ready by ringing the treble for two whole pulls.
- c) The test piece is one minute of rounds, followed by 120 changes of any method or 120 rows of call changes. If call changes are rung, then at least two bells (other than the treble) must be brought to lead and at least 12 changes must be called. Plain courses of a method, or plain hunt, are acceptable.
- d) The test piece should finish with some rounds but these rounds will not be judged.

Entry to the ODG 6-Bell Striking Competition.

- a) The ODG 6-bell striking competition is open to one team from each Branch. A Branch wishing to participate must be represented by a Tower Band from within the Branch.
- b) The Tower Band must consist of members who normally ring together at the same tower for Sunday Services, whether or not they ring at more than one tower and shall be chosen by the Tower in any way it thinks fit. One substitute member shall be permitted who shall be a member of the Branch in which the tower is located.
- c) North Bucks Branch will choose the Tower Band to represent it based on the results of the Branch 6-bell striking competition. The chosen Tower Band will be the highest placed Tower Band that entered the Branch 6-bell striking competition.

**OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS
NORTH BUCKS BRANCH**
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on
14th March 2015 at The Two Brewers, Olney**



Chairman's Welcome

The meeting was chaired by Doug Hird in the absence of the Branch Chairman. Doug welcomed 18 members and James Champion, ODG Secretary, to the AGM.

In Memoriam

Members stood in silence to remember Branch members who had passed away over the last year:

Owen Warren of Stoke Goldington
Lou Moodie of Newport Pagnell
Bob Winstanley of Loughton
Robert George of Maids Moreton

Apologies for absence

Ruth Groves (Guild Steward), Hilarie Rogers (Guild Master), Stuart Gibson, Bob Christopher, Derek White, Phillip Starr, Scott Ayers, Mark Vale, Ted and Becky Fawcett, Hilary, Claire, Alice and Sophie Reading, Alan, Tine, Alex and John Marchbank, Richard and Helen Stanworth, Brian Newman, Roger and Judy Gay, Jonathan Griggs, Roy Keeves, Jean Mattinsley, Lesley Belcher, Tricia Rosewell

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Autumn meeting held at Newport Pagnell on the 13th September 2014 were published in *In Touch* and circulated prior to the meeting. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Nick Read, seconded by Sheila Ware and agreed by show of hands.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Officers' reports

The Officers' reports were circulated prior to the meeting.

Sheila Watts, Treasurer, had closed both building society accounts and opened one bank account which made the accounting much simpler. The General Fund balance is quite high at the moment, but £750 is due to be paid to Hanslope tower soon. She encouraged towers to make requests for grants. There were still 11 towers who had not yet paid their subs this year.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by David Phillipson, seconded by Nick Read and agreed by show of hands.

Election of new members

Nominations were received for the following:

<u>Tower</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Downs Barn	Amanda Kidrowicz	Alan Marchbank	Paul Barrett
Downs Barn	Katie Percival	Alan Marchbank	Hilary Reading
Downs Barn	Chloe Percival	Alan Marchbank	John Marchbank
Great Brickhill	Rebecca Brown	David Middleton	Brian Baldwin
Wolverton	Roger Everson	Mick Nimmo	John Mercer
Woughton	Martin Petchey	Brian Baldwin	Jean Mattinsley
Olney	Tony Locke	Liz Sheaf	David Phillipson
Olney	Karen Paine	Liz Sheaf	David Phillipson
Hanslope	Tracey Fields	Sheila Blenkhorn	Roy Keeves
Hanslope	Lydia Bates	Sheila Blenkhorn	Roy Keeves

All were approved by show of hands.

Election of Branch Officers

<u>Post</u>	<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Chairman	Graham Bartholomew	Nick Read	Sheila Watts
Secretary	Gary Reading	Graham B'mew	Sheila Blenkhorn
Minutes Secretary	Ann Birch	Linda Maycroft	Liz Sheaf
Treasurer	Sheila Watts	Sheila Blenkhorn	Linda Maycroft
RDL Buckingham	Lesley Belcher	Linda Maycroft	Gary Reading
RDL Milton Keynes	Graham Bartholomew	Sheila Watts	Gary Reading
RDL Newport Pagnell	Doug Hird	Chas Knight	Liz Sheaf
Guild Rep (1)	Linda Maycroft	Ann Birch	Nick Read
Guild Rep (2)	Tricia Rosewell	Sheila Watts	Nick Read
Guild Rep (3)	Vacant		
Newsletter Editor	Nick Read	Linda Maycroft	Sheila Watts
Branch Archivist	Doug Hird	Liz Sheaf	Graham B'mew
Independent Examiner	Alison Fowler	Sheila Watts	Sheila Blenkhorn

(In response to a query, James Champion clarified that the Independent Examiner needs only to be independent of the Branch Committee members.)

Minutes of the AGM contd.

All were approved by show of hands.

Doug thanked the officers for their work over the last year.

Report on Actions resulting from 2014 AGM Discussion Groups

Linda Maycroft delivered the report on behalf of Lesley Belcher.

The Committee had worked on the outcomes of the break-out groups at last year's AGM.

Branch Practices

The Committee had tried different timings of the Branch Practices over the last year, holding some in the morning, some in late afternoon and some in the evening. It had not made any difference to the attendance. It was agreed that experimenting with different timings should continue for another year.

Eight and ten bell practices

The eight-bell practices had been a success with good progress being made.

The ten-bell practices had been dropped towards the end of the year due to a lack of support, but Graham was keen to continue to try again to develop a ten-bell band. Terry Page stressed the need to ensure that there were sufficient ringers attending the practices to be able to ring on the ten. Doug said that with electronic methods of communication it should be possible to ensure that there were enough ringers at the practices. Nick felt it was worth trying again to link up with other ten-bell towers outside the branch to assist this branch in developing ten-bell ringing. Doug thought that the development of the eight-bell band could move into ten-bell ringing. It was always going to take time to build up ten-bell ringing in a mainly six-bell branch.

Training and Development

The Ringing Up and Down course held in the autumn had been a success with a good mix of ringers attending the course. Another training course is planned for the autumn.

The North Bucks Branch won the striking competition with Towcester Branch for the first time in many years. The new trophy (made by Andrew Spencer of Buckingham) was doing the rounds of the Branch towers.

Efforts are now being made to improve striking within the Branch. A pilot session with Shenley and Loughton ringers is being planned, with help from the Guild.

The Quarter Peal week was a success with another planned for this year.

Communications

The new Branch website had gone live. Any feedback on it would be very welcome.

Tidyclub was now being used for communicating with branch members. There were a number of other features offered by Tidyclub, including sending out texts, which will be considered in the future.

Nick said that at the next committee meeting the officers will be discussing whether there was scope of sending out a regular newsletter by e-mail. More and more people communicated by e-mail so we should be consider changing how we communicate.

Social

This year saw the return of the Annual Dinner which was taking place immediately after the AGM.

There had been a Branch outing last April, organised by Graham. Another is planned for August, probably to London. Sheila Watts urged financial caution when planning the outing.

An Autumn social is being planned which will mean there will be a Branch social event each quarter.

Forthcoming Events

Open Towers day on the 11th April in aid of the Hanslope Tower bell restoration fund. There will be 16 towers open in the Branch.

The ODG Ringing Day is on the 4th May in the Central Bucks Branch with the eight-bell striking competition being held at Winslow.

The ODG AGM is on the 16th May at Cowley in Oxford.

The Branch Social and Striking Competition is on the 20th June at Whaddon.

The National Youth Contest is being held in Oxford on the 11th July.

Any other business

- Graham explained that it had been decided that the competition for the Chairman's Cup should be held at the same time as the Branch Striking Competition. However, this year the Striking Competition is being held at Whaddon and it was felt that these bells would be too difficult for inexperienced ringers. It was suggested that the Chairman's Cup competition could therefore be held at the Autumn meeting which this year will be at Bradwell.

- James Champion reminded everyone of the Guild Young Ringers Awards and to send in nominations.

- Sheila Watts proposed a vote of thanks to Linda for all the work she had done on researching the lives of the Branch ringers who had died in World War One. She also thanked Linda for organising the day's events (the service earlier in the afternoon, the AGM and the dinner) and presented Linda with a thank-you gift.

- Doug proposed a vote of thanks to everyone at Clifton Reynes for the service and tea.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.