



In Touch

North Bucks Branch . www.northbucksbranch.org.uk . February 2016

Branch Annual General Meeting Saturday 5th March 2016



St Mary the Virgin, Great Brickhill

15:00 Open ringing
16:30 Service
17:00 Ringer's tea in the village hall
17:45 Annual General Meeting

Names for tea to David Middleton by email: dmiddleton@themail.co.uk no later than 29th February, please.

Formal notice of the AGM will be sent by email to members nearer the time and the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and any other relevant documentation will be placed on the North Bucks Branch website. If there is anyone without access to the internet who would like to receive notification of the AGM by post, please contact me on 01908 503971.

Ann Birch, Minutes Secretary

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Editorial

There never seems to be a quiet period in the North Bucks Branch. The New Year has fewer scheduled events so what happens? There is a surge of interest in quarter peal ringing led by the Newport Pagnell and Woughton bands. And at the same time we have a range of recruitment initiatives, resulting in new ringers learning how to handle a bell in a range of towers.

The Spring looks as though it will be busy too. The AGM at Great Brickhill will be followed in April by both the Branch Outing to Oxford and the St George's Day Wave. **Get those sponsorship forms printed and start collecting donations.**

Talking about the AGM **the positions of Guild Rep and Buckingham Deanery RDL posts are vacant. Please consider applying.**

Finally training in various forms is featured; a tower based ringing workshop; a spotlight on ODG training courses; and a Branch ART course. All teachers who are teaching new ringers or are interested in doing so in the future are invited to attend this one day training course about how to build solid foundation skills from rope sight and plain hunt up to plain bob doubles.

In Touch Editor

What's On

Branch Practice

Saturday 20th February, 4.00 to 5.30pm @ Great Linford

Branch AGM

Saturday 5th March, open ringing 3.00 to 4.30pm, AGM starts at 5.45pm @ Great Brickhill

Branch Outing

Saturday 2nd April, all day @ Oxford

St George's Day Fund Raising

Saturday 23rd April, all day

Branch Practice

Saturday 14th May, 4.00 to 5.30pm @ Old Wolverton

Branch Striking Competition & Summer Social

Saturday 18th June, 5.00 to 8.30 pm @ Wavendon (tbc)

Branch Open Practices

First Friday of the month @ Whaddon, 7.40 to 9.00pm

The first Friday of each month is a Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles practice. Please come even if you can only ring rounds and call changes. There will be the opportunity to have plenty of goes and then progress onto learning these methods and also how to call them.

Each practice will be held at Whaddon; to help them progress and in return for their support of Stony Stratford every Sunday.

For more information contact Michael Nimmo or Wendy Price.

Alternate Sunday's @ Calverton, 5.00 to 6.00pm

Calverton are holding an open practice every other Sunday between 5pm – 6pm. If you would like to attend just turn up, all welcome.

For more information contact Wendy Price.

Fourth Monday of the month @ Olney, 7.30 to 9.00 pm

You are invited to join the Olney band on the fourth Monday of each month for an 8 and 10-bell practice. The practice is targeted at those who wish to learn to ring on higher numbers using simple methods and with an emphasise on good striking.

For more information contact David Phillipson or Lesley Belcher.

Rope Splicing Workshop

Ever wondered who you can get to help you to splice a rope? Come along and learn the skill for yourself from an expert!

All Saints, Emberton

Saturday 7th May 2016

10.00 – 3.00pm approx, with a Pub Lunch

Tutor: Len Palfrey, Guild Towers & Belfries Committee

Please contact Sheila Watts if you're interested:

Mobile: 07703 279165

Email swandsw@btinternet.com

April will be a Busy Month for the Branch

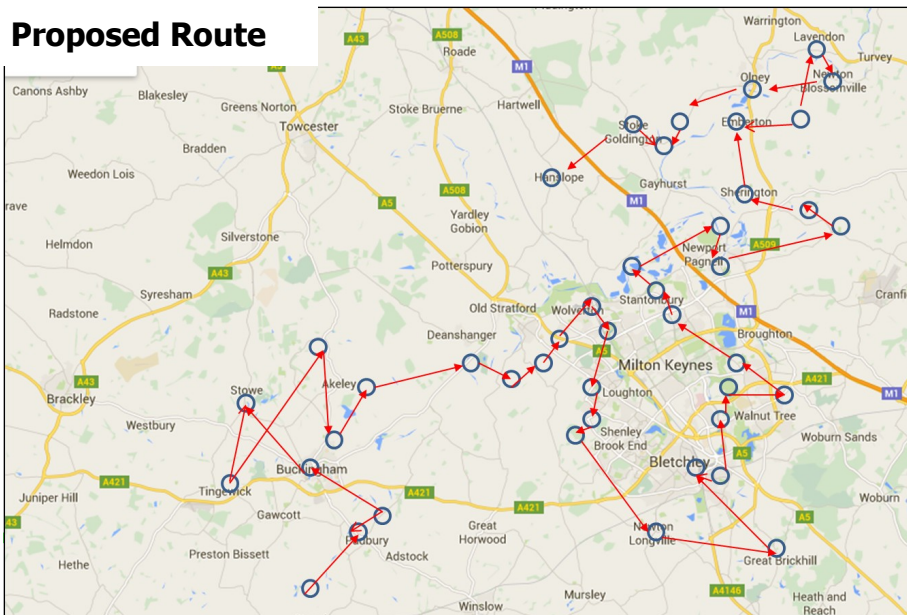
St George's Day Wave

It's just two months to go before we attempt the St George's Day sponsored wave and raise vital funds for the ODG Bell Fund and the Association of Ringing Teachers.

The word's got out and North Bucks is not the only group attempting a wave, can you help makes us the biggest group ringing at the most towers on St Georges day?

See our [website](#) for more details or contact [Linda Maycroft](#).

Proposed Route



It's now time for:

Tower Captains or Correspondents to confirm tower availability with Linda Maycroft

Ringers to confirm their availability to ring at their tower with their tower captain

Ringers to volunteer to man towers where we may be short of ringers - look out for emails advertising vacancies

Everyone to gather sponsorship pledges, or if you've decided to raise funds another way, it's time to get organised.

Sponsorship forms are enclosed with this copy of In touch, or they can be downloaded from the Branch website.

Linda Maycroft

The Branch Outing

SATURDAY 2 APRIL to OXFORD CITY CENTRE

This year the Branch outing is taking us to the city of Oxford with the opportunity to ring at five towers during the course of the day, all within walking distance, and with ample free time to wander and admire this beautiful city.

We are hoping to ring at the following towers, subject to confirmation:

- Lincoln College (8)
- St Aldates (6)
- St Giles (8)
- St Mary Magdalen (10)
- St Thomas (10)

The cost will be £5 per person, with under 18s and those in full-time education free. Payments must be made no later than Saturday 26th March, either by bank transfer to: ODGCBR North Bucks Branch, Account No: 83602488, Sort Code: 60 16 45, Reference: Ox followed by 'your name', or cash to any of the branch officers. No cheques please.

Transport to and from Oxford is not included in the cost. It is recommended to either use public transport, or drive and then use the Park and Ride facility.

Further details and a map will follow to those who have booked.

Hilary Reading



St Thomas, Oxford

ODG 10-bell Training Day

The Oxford Diocesan Guild 10 bell training course was held on 5th December 2015. Five students - none of us very young, alas - assembled in the spacious and comfortable ringing chamber of St Nicholas, Newbury (21 cwt). Our tutor for the day was Mike Hopkins Till, supported by around 14 helpers.

Mike gave a brief reminder of the particular challenges of 10 bell ringing for those (like me) with little prior experience. In particular, he reminded us that the big difference in weight between the treble and the tenor means the smaller bells have to ring at a speed which initially feels abnormally slow.

We started as you might expect with rounds and call changes to develop a feel for the rhythm of ten bells. These went quite well and we quickly advanced to plain hunting. Personally I was a bit taken aback by an unexpected problem in counting places - I found it difficult at first even to count to 10 quickly enough. Clearly that is something one can practise out of the tower (and preferably somewhere rather private to avoid funny looks).

By the end of the morning session we had all rung quite respectable plain courses of Grandsire Caters, and got through some simple short touches. One or two also rang some Stedman.

The afternoon session was in St Mary's, Thatcham. The lunch break in local pubs was rather long as there was an inconveniently timed wedding in the church. Mike sternly warned us against taking the usual advantage of a long lunch break, so I took the opportunity to visit the West Berkshire Museum. This has ten galleries housed in an interesting 17th century building, and covers a range of topics concerning local history. The exhibits and their significance are very well explained, and I didn't have enough time to do them justice. The displays are regularly changed, and I intend to go back when I have the chance.

Thatcham bells are much lighter than Newbury at 13 cwt, and so ring a little quicker. My cerebral motherboard wasn't running quite fast enough to cope as well as I had at Newbury. The slight reduction in thinking time because of the relatively rapid ringing made a big difference. I got through some more touches of Grandsire but needed rather more support from my mentor. I needed even more support for my last ring of the day, when I had a go at Stedman Caters. It came round, but to quote Eric Morecombe, the notes were not necessarily all in the right order.

I am very grateful both to Mike and to the band of helpers - you can't practise ringing ten bells unless there are another nine who can do so!

Laurence Gibson

Training & Development Fund

The Branch's Training and Development Fund provides support for the improvement of ringing at all levels. Up to 50% of the cost of the training course can be claimed with a maximum of £50. Opportunities for learning present themselves in many ways. Activities that qualify for support are:

- Attendance at courses arranged by the Oxford Diocesan Guild, the North Bucks Branch or any other ringing organisation.
- Resources that support the recruitment of ringers and teaching of ringing in North Bucks such as booklets, handouts etc.

To apply for support, contact either the [Secretary](#) or [Treasurer](#).



This was a very enjoyable and encouraging day, and I would certainly recommend the course.



Each student was allocated a "mentor" for the day, who stood by the student at all times when ringing to give direction and advice as required.

ODG Training Courses 2016

Michaelmas Training Day

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

Steeple Aston Course

Provides tuition & practice on basic methods from Plain Hunting to Plain Bob Major.

Ten-bell Training Day

For those who would like to develop their 10 bell ringing skills; methods will include Grandsire and Stedman Caters.

For further information visit the [ODG website](#).

Hanslope's Ringing Workshop

On Saturday 30th January ringers and friends of Hanslope rang together at Emberton and Weston Underwood. The ringing workshop provided intensive practice of Plain Bob Doubles and Cambridge Surprise Minor (including touches) for three of its ringers.

I took up bell ringing 5 years ago and it has certainly been a journey of many ups and downs!

I had always wanted to ring bells from a young child but the opportunity only arose when I moved to the local area.

The Tower Captain Roy Keeves and the rest of the band have had to put up with my many squeals when I go wrong or when I miss the sally. I know it must be very frustrating for them at times; however they have shown great patience and continue to give lots of encouragement.

Many ringers say that when you have mastered a method you can't believe why you couldn't do it earlier, that it becomes second nature and it is so true. Suddenly it all clicks into place and you can finally see the bells instead of it being a mixture of panic, shaking legs and blurredness!

I am so thankful and appreciative that other ringers give up their time in order to give me the opportunity to practice.

Of course a lovely reward at the end is the lunch in a local pub and a well deserved chilled glass of vino or a pint!

Thank you again to all who supported Tracey and I on Saturday 30th Jan 2016; your time has truly not been wasted and much appreciated.

Dorrie Mutch, Hanslope



The most valuable thing that has worked for me is having the opportunity to ring on an arranged morning where we visit different towers with the whole purpose of practising a particular method.

Having the extra time to focus has meant that you get that eureka moment!

Calling Grandsire Doubles

Grandsire Doubles is a combination of the very easy and the very hard. The plain course only has three pieces of work, which makes it easy. But because the plain course doesn't last long, it needs more calls, and more types of call, to make a 120 than Plain Bob, for example. That provides quite a lot of scope for different callings.

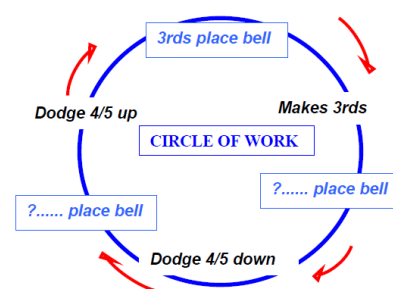
To get into conducting Grandsire, it is best to start off with something easy. While ringing the 5th, make 3rds as normal at the first lead. Then at the next, call a bob. Very conveniently, the following piece of work is 3rds again. The bob takes you back to the start. So just repeat PBPBPB and it will come round in 60 changes. That's a good start but we need 120 changes. The difference between a bob and a single is that the bells near the treble do slightly different things. So, if we swap one of these bobs for a single, the bells won't come round in 60 changes as two bells will be swapped. Repeating the calling for the next 60 changes will bring it round in 120 changes. So that is PBPBPS PBPBPS or PBSPB PBSPB or PSPBPB PSPBPB. In this, the 5th is said to be the "half-hunt" bell. A bit like the observation bell in Plain Bob Doubles.

There is only one other bell that this calling is suited to. Call a bob at the first lead. Then the 3rd comes back to 3rds at the next lead. Repeat this in the same way and you get another three 120s. BPBPSP BPBPSP or BPSPBP BPSPBP or SPBPBP SPBPBP. Here, the 3rd is "half-hunt."

In both of these, you know who is dodging up at all the calls so don't let them come down before the bell that was in the hunt. You also know there is no call when they are making 3rds.

Doug Hird

Grandsire Doubles *The circle of work*



Calling positions
Calls are made at handstroke when the treble is in 3rds place: they take effect 2 blows later.

Next: How to escape gracefully when it seems to have all gone wrong.

From the Archives



Following on from the highly commented on picture of Nick Read and co, we have from 20 years ago ... recognise them now?

The caption reads:

"Congratulations on being placed 2nd in the recent Guild Junior Striking Contest. Scott Ayers, Katie Saunders, Alex Titley, Gareth Grayson, John Stanworth, Jonathan Hills."

Christmas Social Round-up

Hanslope Christmas Dinner

This year we held our annual Christmas Dinner at the Barley Mow in Cosgrove. All of our ringers (except one) were able to be there with their partners, and we were pleased that some of the regular visitors to our practice nights were also able to join us. This meant that we were quite a large group and so we were given our own room, complete with a roaring open fire, at one end of the pub. This probably turned out to be good move on the part of the landlord, because I do recall that it got very noisy at times! I cannot remember what particularly caused all the merriment, apart from some very silly cracker jokes and the funny party balloons which when released would zig-zag down the room whilst emitting a loud buzzing sound; but I do know we all agreed that it was one of our best ever Christmas get-togethers. The food and drink were excellent and reasonably priced, and the pub staff were friendly and they all made us very welcome. If any other towers or individuals are looking for somewhere for a good night out, we can thoroughly recommend this as a venue.

Sheila Blenkhorn



Emberton Christmas Dinner

Following on the success of last year's dinner, band members asked if we could do it again. So, this year we chose The Cowper's Oak at Weston Underwood, which is one of our two favourite après ringing pubs (the beer is good, apparently).

Perhaps it was a mistake to think we'd have a quiet meal three days before Christmas, as the pub was packed and noisy. But it soon subsided, and eighteen ringers (age range 13-82) sat down to an excellent meal.

The village carol singers arrived at one point, and we sang with such gusto that we were asked to join them, but by then the next course had arrived!

Josh was sorry we hadn't brought the cracker handbells that entertained us last year, so we'll just have to do better in 2016!

Sheila Watts



What's Happening at Wavendon

February finds Wavendon gamely pushing through the lean times and managing to regain some momentum despite a temporary dip in numbers.

We continue to practise at Woughton on alternate Thursdays, with our learner of two years' experience currently recapping some Plain Hunt, first tried at least a year ago and rung impressively last week after a long hiatus. With little assistance she was able to apply this to PB Doubles on the treble as well as Grandsire; time now to try ringing inside at our first home practice of the year on Ash Wednesday?

Another priority is last year's beginner, who submitted a spring-and-summer's worth of bell ringing as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's (Bronze) Award. Now we're looking for development opportunities for the next six months of ringing, and may be looking to our sister church in Milton Keynes Village (All Saints) and perhaps Newport too, for experience of different towers and novel bells. A test-run last week at Downs Barn went well enough to make regular Fridays there an attractive proposition.

Since ringing tutor Brian is in such demand, we'll be hosting a third learner too - a recent novice from Newton Longville who is also enjoying Brian's tutelage. Not the most obvious 'cluster' as mooted by branch officers at last year's Autumn Meeting, but thanks to good communication between fellow ringers who are now friends, we hope to find ways to support as many members as possible here in the south-east of North Bucks.

Thank you to those in the Woughton band who are as generous as ever in giving up their free time this Lent to help at our Wavendon practice - the first trial of what may be a monthly *Wednesday* meeting - leaving us needing only one more weekly practice to maintain a minimum of four per month. I'd like to acknowledge also the kind support with offers of help which I've received from several different towers: from ringers I'm not close to as well as those I know quite well.

With a little ingenuity I hope we can eventually look forward to giving our learners some experience of ringing for service as well as the chance to participate in ringing for special occasions such as weddings and the St George's Day Wave. With the help of fellow tower captains and branch officers alike, the goal of bringing regular service ringing back to Wavendon Church seems not so far away.

Patricia Rosewell, Wavendon



Fellow ringers who are now friends seem to be forming a "cluster" in the South-East of North Bucks.

Can you help us achieve our goal of bringing regular service ringing back to Wavendon?

Patricia Rosewell

NBB Tower Census

The Branch census caused quite a stir, particularly as it was completed at a time when the Central Council survey was thrown into disarray with a high profile resignation.

It was quickly forwarded around the Guild and then outside; website activity was intense. Within a week the Carlisle Guild were in contact wanting to know how we did it and wanting to share our files (which was done with all data deleted.) And only last week the East Berks and South Bucks Branch of the ODG asked us to help them too.

Linda Maycroft, Lesley Belcher, Patricia Rosewell & Sheila Watts



I have seen your 2015 survey and think it is fantastic. I wonder if you could let me copy it to do in our Guild (Carlisle)?

Chris de Cordova

The Maids Moreton Open Day

We all know through experience that responding to a survey can lead to all sorts of trouble; phone calls from over-enthusiastic wine salesmen, circulars from funeral pre-payment plan providers and all sorts of other unsolicited contact. The 2015 NBB Tower Census was no exception. How nice it was to have, at one of our practice nights last November, a visit from our then Buckingham Deanery Ringing Development Leader. Even better, she joined us at The Wheatsheaf for a post-practice drink. Then, suddenly, the trouble started. "What are you proposing to do about the dwindling population of ringers in the Buckingham, Maids Moreton and Stowe consortium?" said she. But she had picked her moment and the drink was beginning to talk. "Not a lot – but perhaps we should" was the semi-sozzled reply. With that we quickly resolved to hold an open day in the New Year, on the second Saturday of January, during which we could assess what interest in ringing there was amongst the local population. Maids Moreton, with its easy access, easy bells and brand spanking new kitchen and loo, was chosen and the great publicity machine ground into action. The main thrust was an A5 sized leaflet drop – we decided on 2000 – throughout Maids Moreton, Dadford (change here for Stowe) and parts of Buckingham. Some of the leaflets were held back and placed in pews before services. Our leaflet was based on the one which can be found at:

www.bellringing.org/finder/hosted/435/open-day-publicity-poster/

We used Banana Print of Market Harborough who charged just under £70 including VAT and delivery. Ordered Thursday evening, despatched Friday afternoon and delivered Monday morning – nothing to complain about there! Our local paper has an 'Around the Villages' section and our village contact in Maids Moreton was only too happy to give our event a mention over several weeks before the big day. Our bi-monthly magazine full of adverts, called MK18, gave us a free entry on the 'What's On' page for which we were most grateful. Of course the event was also announced in church.

For the big day we assembled a display in the church centred on the smart posters that the Branch owns. There were old photos, old books, a broken clapper, a stay, a rope – in fact anything we could lay our hands on. Up with the bells we installed four 100W light bulbs and a fairly inexpensive security camera and down in the church, at the other end of a long wire and pinched from a bell ringer's bedroom, we had a television screen which gave a remarkably clear picture of the bells in action. Finally we prepared a visitors' book and with this we captured addresses, email addresses, phone numbers and a note as to which publicity item had drawn in the visitor. This book showed us that all the publicity channels had been effective and, indeed, nearly 80 people, including ringers and helpers, passed through the church that day. We opened shop at 10.00am and the first visitors arrived within seconds. Our last visitor arrived just 15 minutes before our 4.00pm closing and at no time during the day were we without visitors. What emerged from conversations was that the majority of visitors were from homes where they could hear the bells on Sundays and practice nights. Ample refreshments were available all day and visitors were invited up to the ringing floor in small groups of four or five where they were given a short talk, shown a model of a bell in frame and allowed to have a good tug at the ropes!

Very quickly after the Open Day all potential ringers were contacted and asked to confirm their interest and then training dates were offered and agreed. We now have 14 would-be ringers in concentrated training and who we hope will be able to ring on their own at practices from the beginning of March. So far it's been great fun and we are so grateful to our ex-RDL and the other qualified trainers who journey to us and who are providing so much help.

Bob Christopher

The power of leafletting

Leaflet through own door	25
Word of mouth	10
Leaflet in Buckingham Church	3
Leaflet in MM church	2
Buckingham Advertiser	4
MK18 (free business magazine)	4
Leaflet displayed in shop window	3
Can't remember	4



Demonstrations in the tower



He's addicted to YouTube videos of ringing!

Recruitment News

Recruitment activity has definitely increased over the last 6 months. Unlike the Big Ring Pull much of this has been initiated and run by individual towers many outside Central Milton Keynes. Where it can the Branch is supporting these activities through the sharing of ideas or turning up and helping at events or practices.

Newport Pagnell

Before Christmas the ringers invited the town to have a go on the day when the Christmas lights were switched on. A lot of interest was shown but, in the end, we gained two youngsters with parents who were lapsed ringers. It was a good opportunity though and a lot more of the town will be more positive towards peals etc. Added to this is one of Adam's friends so the number of youngsters is getting back to normal. They should be able to ring unaided when we get into wedding season which usually helps with motivation.

Doug Hird

Bradwell

We still have all four of our learners, they're progressing well, ringing rounds and contributing strongly to the tower in both the ringing and social aspects. We met all of our ringing commitments over the Christmas period this year and this was due in part to us having the additional ringers available. The congregation and wider village don't tend to notice whether we're doing rounds or Cambridge, but they do notice if the bells aren't being rung at Christmas!

Ian Green

Bletchley

Now the new Bletchley ringers are getting to a stage where they can ring rounds, a bit of help is needed on Tuesday evenings. If anyone could come along occasionally to make up the numbers it would help a lot. Get in touch with Doug for more information.

Doug Hird

Newton Blossomville

It's good to hear that the three bells (5¼ cwt) at Newton Blossomville are no longer silent.

One of the Churchwardens, John Taylor, is currently teaching some villagers to handle a bell, and they are now ringing for Services whenever possible. John learned to ring many years ago at Clifton Reynes, and after a long absence felt that it would be good to hear the bells at St Nicolas again.

Sheila Watts

Newton Longville

Newton Longville, although a thriving tower in the past and with a new ringing gallery installed some ten years ago has been somewhat moribund until recently. We managed to ring for weddings, Christmas and Easter but there was no regular practice or Sunday ringing. The band was aging and those local ringers who came to help for special events were not interested in improving their ringing.

In summer 2015, we decided to place an advert in our local village magazine, "The Pump" asking for apprentice ringers. To our surprise, within two weeks we had seven enthusiastic learners and we restarted Thursday practices. It soon became apparent that we really should split the practice into two, a learners-only practice on Wednesday where we taught the basics of bell handling and the normal practice on Thursday where we started to teach rounds and call changes. With help from the Branch (especially Brian Baldwin and Lesley) the learners soon progressed to ringing in rounds and we eventually stopped the Wednesday practice. We now ring reasonable rounds and call changes on anything upto 8 bells on Thursdays and are starting to think about plain hunting. We have occasional shared practices with Woughton and are starting to think about regular Sunday ringing.

We are working on raising and lowering and once that is sorted out we will have several new prospective members presenting themselves.

Now all we need are new ropes, and a rehang!

Nigel Tittley

Ringling starts again at Bletchley

The bells at St Mary's in Bletchley have not been rung by a team from St Mary's for over 15 years. I decided to volunteer for Bell Ringing after some pictures were shared about musical notes coming out of the church and going out into the community. Paul and Peggy Faithfull have got a group together to teach us how to ring the bells. I had no idea what to expect. The first thing that really stuck in my head was 'don't look up, look straight ahead and to either side of you'. How to hold on to the rope and pull on the Sally to make the bell ring and ensure that you have control of the bell was next. Week by week you learn what to do until something 'clicks' and you are able to do it without over-thinking. Many thanks to Doug coming along and giving us extra help. I am enjoying learning a new skill, knowing that God has called us to ring the bells and let people know that we are here as a church in their community.

Susan Winter, St Mary's, Bletchley

From Recruitment to Retention

The increase in recruitment activity within the Branch has led to about 40 new ringers being taught to handle a bell, and previously silent or struggling towers ringing out again. A year ago, Newton Longville, Bletchley and Newton Blossomville had no practices and Stowe, too is hoping to resurrect its Monday practice once bell handling training at Maids Moreton has been completed. What success!

We now need to plan ahead to maintain momentum and think about retention. With so many new ringers in the Branch, how do we:

- Keep new ringers interested?
- Provide sufficient rope time for new ringers to progress at a rate that is rewarding for them and keeps more experienced ringers engaged in their local practices?
- Minimise that "Oh, no, not Bob Doubles again" feeling?
- Help each other and learn about new ways of doing things?

On Saturday 21st May the Branch invites all teachers who are currently teaching new ringers or are interested in doing so in the future to attend a one day training course about how to build solid foundation skills from rope sight and plain hunt up to plain bob doubles.

The course will be run by Frank Seabright a tutor with the Association of Ringing Teachers. We are hoping to run the course at Olney (we need a tower with a simulator) and all course fees will be paid by the Branch.

If you want to find out more why not visit the ART [website](#). Even better, why not have a look at the Branch website and see what previous course delegates from North Bucks have got to say about it - [Brian Baldwin](#) and [Linda Maycroft](#) to name but two? Alternatively there is the [ART blog](#) in which new ringers and teachers share their stories - my favourite is the 60 year old who scored her first peal within two years of learning to ring.

I will be sending out an invitation and more information in the coming weeks. Let me know if you are interested or want to find out more by email or phone (contact details on the back page of in Touch.)

Lesley Belcher



Having been a Tower Captain for 40 years and just spent two years teaching a new band in a local tower, virtually from scratch, I have held ART at arms length for some time now with a slightly arrogant attitude of "what can they teach me that I do not already know". I am pleased to say that this was quickly dispelled ...



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.

The North Bucks Branch Bell Fund



Further consideration has been given to the size of grants, particularly in relation to smaller projects. Feedback has suggested that, a banded approach would best support small and large projects, the details of which are still being developed.

The complete version of the proposal to set up a North Bucks Branch Bell Fund can be found in the November 2015 edition of In Touch and on the Branch website. This proposal will be put to the next Branch AGM in March. However, please feel free to contribute to the development of this sooner via e-mail or over a pint in the traditional manner.

Doug Hird

Original Proposal

Grant = 1% of estimated project cost (including VAT)

Minimum grant = £50

Maximum grant = £450

For Consideration

What happens with smaller projects when the minimum grant (£50) represents a significant proportion of the total project cost?

The Bell Ringer's Hymn

The hymn on the right was sent in by Charles Knight and analysed by Nick Read. The 'metre' for the tune is 7.6.7.6 D (this denotes the number of syllables in each line of words. 'D' just means double so it is really 7.6.7.6.7.6.7.6.)

As well as 'Belfry Praise' (which is used for the ringer's hymn 'Unchanging God, who livest') there are a host of other tunes which would fit the words e.g. Ellacombe (The day of resurrection), Aurelia (The Church's one foundation), Thornbury (Thy hand, O God, has guided), and Wolvercote (O Jesus, I have promised – old tune)

The hymn sounds very Victorian or from the halcyon Edwardian days! I doubt whether many modern thinking clergy would be comfortable with its use - similar to a verse in the hymn 'All things bright and beautiful' which only appears on the older hymnbooks ...

*'The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly
and ordered their estate'*

which is never sung these days.

THE SACRED BELLS OF ENGLAND
HOW GLORIOUSLY THEY RING
FROM ANCIENT TOWER AND STEEPLE
FOR COTTAGER AND KING
WE LOVE TO HEAR THEIR VOICES
WHILE O'ER THE FIELDS WE ROAM
HOW SWEET TO THINK THE ECHO
MAY REACH OUR HEAVENLY HOME.

CHURCH BELLS OF HAPPY ENGLAND
YOUR SONGS OF OLDEN TIME
ARE CHANTED DOWN THE AGES
FOR VESPERS AND FOR PRIME
ON MERRY CHRISTMAS MORNING
ON HOLY EASTER DAY
FULFIL YOUR VESTAL CALLING
BID CHURCHFOLK UP AND PRAY.

CHURCH BELLS OF CHRISTIAN ENGLAND
RING OUT YOUR MESSAGE WIDE
WHENE'ER OUR LORD IS BLESSING
THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE
OR WHEN THE TENOR TOLLING
WITH PASSING-KNOLL WE HEAR
MAY ONE AND ALL REMEMBER
A SOUL TO GOD IS NEAR.

Peals

South Northamptonshire Society

Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire

Saturday, 14 November 2015 in 2hrs 50 mins (12cwt)

5088 Lessness Surprise Major

Composed by BYROC

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

A birthday compliment to Malcolm G Hooton.

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Olney, Buckinghamshire

SS Peter and Paul

Sunday, 6 December 2015 in 3hrs 16min (24cwt)

5000 London No.3 Surprise Royal

Composed by C H Kippen

- 1 Alan J Marchbank
- 2 Julie A Haseldine
- 3 David Phillipson
- 4 Ruth Stokes
- 5 Lesley Belcher
- 6 Richard A Horne
- 7 Andrew Haseldine (C)
- 8 B Douglas Hird
- 9 Christopher C Stokes
- 10 Stephen H Stanford

To congratulate the Venerable Karen Gorham, Archdeacon of Buckingham, on being appointed the 36th Bishop of Sherborne. Rung during the 'Olney Dickens of a Christmas'.

900th Peal together 2 and 7. David Phillipson, ringer of the 3rd, has circled the tower to peals, the first person to do so and completed in only ten peals. First of London Surprise Royal 8

Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Guild

Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire

SS Mary and Giles

Friday, 15 January 2016 in 2hrs 44mins (12 cwt)

5152 Stony Stratford Surprise Major

Composed by A B Mills

- 1 Paul F Curtis
- 2 Ruth Curtis
- 3 Paul M Mason
- 4 Ian Butters
- 5 Nicholas A Churchman
- 6 Alan Regin
- 7 Ian G Campbell
- 8 Andrew B Mills (C)

First peal in the method.

Stony Stratford S Major

x5x4.5x5.36.4x4.5.4.56x7hl LE12

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Saturday, 13 February 2016 in 3 hrs 1 min (15 cwt)

5088 Yorkshire Surprise Major

Composed by D. F Morrison No. 2392

- 1 Christopher E Bulleid
- 2 Lesley J Belcher
- 3 Jane C Spencer
- 4 Andrew J Spencer
- 5 A John Stanworth
- 6 B Douglas Hird
- 7 Stephen H Stanford
- 8 Michael R Spencer (C)

Specially arranged as a late 60th birthday compliment for the conductor.

Quarter Peals

It looks like the Branch is back in the habit of ringing quarters. In the Newport Deanery, the quarter peal week prompted a renewed interest and confidence in some of our ringers and good progress is being made. Evensong ringing at Newport is now assured by the organisation of regular quarters. These alternate between 6 and 8 bell attempts. The 6-bell quarters concentrate on doubles and minor and give opportunities for hunting and covering as well as building experience in the basic methods. The 8-bell quarters intend to do much the same on eight, using basic methods to build experience on higher numbers. In the MK Deanery, similar work is being done. The Woughton band are gaining experience in the methods rung in their first peal in 1927 for a repeat performance. These are turning out to be useful in the understanding of method construction and learning in general. At Downs Barn, 8-bell quarters are also being organised in basic methods to give the local band more experience.

Doug Hird

Woughton on the Green, Buckinghamshire

St Mary

Saturday, 21 November 2015 in 40 mins (7 cwt)

1260 Double Oxford Bob Minor

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

First in method - 2, 3 and 4

Olney, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 22 November 2015 in 45 mins (7 cwt)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Judy Gay
- 2 Liz Sheaf
- 3 B Douglas Hird
- 4 Roger Gay
- 5 Charles J Knight
- 6 David Phillipson (C)

Rung prior to Choral Evensong First Quarter Peal on an inside bell - 2

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 29 November 2015

1264 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Adam Hird
- 2 Alan Marchbank
- 3 Martin Petchey
- 4 David Phillipson
- 5 Roger Gay
- 6 Scott Ayers
- 7 Charles J Knight
- 8 B Douglas Hird (C)

To congratulate the Venerable Karen Gorham, Archdeacon of Buckingham, on becoming the 36th Bishop of Sherborne.

1st on 8 - 1, 1st on 8 this century - 3

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 6 December 2015

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Keith Wagstaff
- 2 Mark Vale
- 3 Charles J Knight
- 4 Liz Wagstaff
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)

With sympathetic thoughts for the people of Cumbria suffering as a result of the recent flooding.

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Tuesday, 8 December 2015 in 48 mins (15 cwt)

1260 Stedman Triples

- 1 Stephen H Stanford
- 2 Lesley Belcher
- 3 Ruth Stokes
- 4 Andrew Spencer
- 5 Christopher C Stokes
- 6 Sebastian Lucas
- 7 Tony Gray (C)
- 8 Nick Gray

Stowe, Assumption of the BVM

Thursday, 10 December 2015

1260 Grandsire Doubles

1. Sue Lucas
2. Raymond Vickers
3. Margaret Vince
4. Sebastian Lucas
5. Laurence Gibson (C)
6. Peter Nicholson

Rung for the opening of the Christmas tree festival held in the church on that day.

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 13 December 2015

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Alan Marchbank
- 2 Christina Tribble
- 3 Brian Baldwin
- 4 Martin Petchey
- 5 Peter Tribble
- 6 Graham Bartholomew
- 7 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 8 Scott Ayers

Rung for the Christingle Service.

Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire

St Mary

Thursday, 17 December 2015 in 45 mins (14 cwt)

1280 Superlative Surprise Major

- 1 David Middleton
- 2 Claire Reading
- 3 Alan M Shepherd
- 4 Robert Tregillus
- 5 Robert J Hornby
- 6 Edward W Houghton
- 7 Matthew R Johnson (C)
- 8 Roderic K Bickerton

Quarter Peals

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 20 December 2015

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Nat Masters
- 2 Mark Vale
- 3 Scott Ayers
- 4 Liz Wagstaff
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 6 Keith Wagstaff

Rung before the Carol Service.

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Sunday, 27 December 2015 in 45 mins (15 cwt)

1344 Rutland Surprise Major

- 1 Ann Fletcher
- 2 Ruth Stokes
- 3 Claire Reading
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Andrew Spencer
- 6 Tony Gray
- 7 Jonathan Spencer
- 8 Christopher C Stokes (C)

For Wicken's Patronal Festival.

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 27 December 2015

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Charles J Knight
- 2 Nick Read
- 3 Martin Petchey
- 4 Alan Marchbank
- 5 Simon Read
- 6 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 7 Adam Hird

For Evensong. First as cover - 7

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

SS Peter and Paul

Sunday, 10 January 2016 in 55 mins (21 cwt)

1288 Little Bob Major

- 1 Adam Hird
- 2 Nick Read
- 3 Peter Tribble
- 4 Brian Baldwin
- 5 Charles J Knight
- 6 Mick Nimmo
- 7 B Doug Hird
- 8 Simon J O Head (C)

Rung for Evensong.

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Wednesday, 13 January 2016 in 47 mins (15 cwt)

1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Roy Keeves
- 2 Alan Cozens
- 3 Brian Berry
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Tony Gray (C)
- 6 Gary Reading
- 7 Ian Thomson
- 8 Phil Haslem

1st Quarter in Yorkshire Surprise Major - 6

Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire

St Mary

Thursday, 14 January 2016 in 45 mins (14 cwt)

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 David Middleton
- 2 Brian J W Foley
- 3 Roger W Powell
- 4 Robert Tregillus
- 5 Edward W Houghton
- 6 Roderic K Bickerton
- 7 L Roy Woodruff (C)
- 8 John H Emmett

Welcoming the birth of Monty Emmett Smith on 28th December 2015, grandson of 8, and an 80th Birthday compliment to Richard F Waddy.

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 17 January 2016 in 45 mins (10 cwt)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Keith Wagstaff
- 2 Liz Wagstaff
- 3 Graham Bartholomew
- 4 Mick Nimmo
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 6 Adam Hird

Birthday compliment to Charles Knight.

Loughton, Buckinghamshire

All Saints

Saturday, 23 January 2016 in 48 mins (11 cwt)

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Becky Fawcett
- 2 Hilary Reading
- 3 Anne McIntyre
- 4 Graham Bartholomew
- 5 Simon J O Head
- 6 Gary Reading (C)

1st in method inside - 2

Birthday compliments to Derek Stainsby (86) Tower Captain, and also Katie McIntyre (25) daughter of 3. Also a welcome to German exchange student Maite, a guest of 2 & 6.

Woughton on the Green, Buckinghamshire

St Mary

Saturday, 23 January 2016 in 41 mins (7 cwt)

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

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

First in method - 4

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday, 24 January 2016

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Mark Vale
- 2 Graham Bartholomew
- 3 Linda Maycroft
- 4 Gary Reading
- 5 B Douglas Hird (C)
- 6 Nick Read

For Evensong.

Quarter Peals

Wicken, Northamptonshire

St John the Evangelist

Tuesday, 26 January 2016 in 50 mins (15 cwt)

1280 Double Norwich Court Bob Major

- 1 Ruth Stokes
- 2 Julie Haseldine
- 3 Stephen Stanford
- 4 John Stanworth
- 5 Nick Gray
- 6 Tony Gray
- 7 Christopher C Stokes
- 8 Andrew Haseldine (C)

Downs Barn, Milton Keynes

Cross & Stable

Friday, 29 January 2016 in 41 mins

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Hilary Reading
- 2 Gary Reading
- 3 Graham Bartholomew
- 4 John Brookman
- 5 B Douglas Hird
- 6 Charles Knight
- 7 Alan J Marchbank (C)
- 8 Steve Thomason

The Band wish to associate Martin Petchey with this Quarter and wish his father a speedy recovery to full health.

Congratulation to Simon Read on his election to the St Paul's Cathedral Guild.

First on 8 - 1 and 8

Tyringham, Buckinghamshire

Monday, 1 February 2016 in 48mins (13 cwt)

1260 Stedman Doubles

- 1 Roy Keeves
- 2 Alan Cozens
- 3 Nick Gray
- 4 Ian Thompson
- 5 Tony Gray (C)

Hanslope retired band.

Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Sunday 7 February 2016 in 45 mins

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Liz Wagstaff
- 2 Mark Vale
- 3 Nick Read
- 4 Graham Bartholomew
- 5 Charles J Knight
- 6 B Douglas Hird (C)

For Evensong. First of Minor - 1 and 2

Woughton on the Green, Milton Keynes

Saturday, 13 February 2016 in 43 min (7 cwt)

1260 Grandsire Doubles

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

Rung half-muffled, in memory of Ron Petchey (1922-2016), ringer at Barking, Essex, for over 60 years, and father of the ringer of 4

Leading Quarter Peel Ringers

And who do we find in the top 50, but our very own Simon Head. Well done Simon and well done to all those who helped him ring his 141 quarter peals in 2015.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Mervyn A Arscott 345 | 18 Alison Daniels 224 | 35 Graham P Tucker 175 |
| 2 Adrian C Malton 339 | 19 Ann-M Webb 223 | 36 Sandra M Titherly 174 |
| 3 Claire C Nicholson 323 | 20 Ann Evans 222 | 37 Reg Hitchings 172 |
| 4 Phillip A Butler 318 | 21 Patricia Cresshull 218 | 38 Christopher C P Woodcock 170 |
| 5 Janet C Garnett 315 | 22 Richard Sales 214 | 39 Andrew K Woolley 167 |
| 6 Louise G Pink 309 | 23 Alan D Pink 212 | 40 Siân E Austin 165 |
| 7 Katie Wright 303 | 23 Lesley Steed 212 | 41 Simon W Edwards 162 |
| 8 Susan M Sawyer 296 | 25 David Steed 210 | 41 Alistair Donaldson 162 |
| 9 Alison R Williams 272 | 26 Andrew H Ball 208 | 43 Teresa J Humphrey 158 |
| 9 Roy Williams 272 | 27 Mike Seagrave 201 | 44 Morley Bray 157 |
| 11 David A C Matthews 249 | 28 Vicky LeFèvre 199 | 45 Samuel M Austin 147 |
| 11 Bjørn E Bradstock 246 | 29 Valerie J Stone 198 | 46 Lesley A Tucker 145 |
| 13 Roderic K Bickerton 237 | 30 Martin J Blazey 194 | 47 A Roy Shallish 144 |
| 14 Charles Pipe-Wolferstan 232 | 31 Giles R Morley 189 | 48 Clive B Moore 143 |
| 15 Simon D G Webb 231 | 31 Raymond P Jones 189 | 49 Simon J O Head 141 |
| 16 David F Webb 225 | 33 Pauline M Kennard 184 | 50 Gerald V Skelly 139 |
| 16 Ian D Cresshull 225 | 34 Liz Griffith-Jones 179 | |

Branch Accounts

The Branch accounts will be presented to the AGM on Saturday 5^h March

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS - NORTH BUCKS BRANCH
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - GENERAL FUND 2015

INCOME		£	£	EXPENDITURE		£	£
January	Balance brought forward:						
	Bank Account	1,448.74					
	Cash in hand	23.14					
			1,471.88				
	2015 Guild Subscriptions 196 senior x £8.00	1,568.00					
	2015 Guild Subscriptions 25 junior x £6.00	150.00					
			1,718.00		2015 Guild Subscriptions 221 x £5.00		1,105.00
	Printed copies of In Touch	70.00		Feb/May/Aug/Nov	In Touch - printing expenses	218.84	
	In Touch donations	43.00			In Touch - envelopes & postage	69.69	
			113.00				288.53
				March	2015 Calendar Cards		21.95
				March	AGM & Dinner expenses		28.89
				June/Sept	Vouchers for Striking Competition judges		41.85
August	Ringers' Outing - fees and donation	177.00		August	Ringers' Outing - tower donations etc		156.00
				August	Engraving of striking competition trophy		5.00
September	Autumn Meeting - food and hall	155.30		September	Autumn Meeting - food and expenses		195.30
	General donations	104.00			Renewal of Branch websites - Fasthosts, LCN, BRP		123.59
	Ringling World advert - Hanslope	49.50			Ringling World Advertising Account		58.26
					Guild Representatives' expenses		51.38
					Secretary's expenses		45.34
					Treasurer's expenses		40.03
					2015 Data Protection Registration		35.00
					Honorarium for Auditor		15.00
	Guild Bell Fund donations	10.00			Guild Bell Fund - from donations		10.00
				December	Balances carried forward:		
					Bank Account	1,556.32	
					Cash in hand	21.24	
							1,577.56
		3,798.68					3,798.68

Note: The grants of £750.00 awarded to Hanslope on 1 March 2014 and £450.00 to Loughton on 26 September 2015 have not been paid, so the balance carried forward is £377.56

I confirm the above account is a true record of the transactions in the year to 31 December 2015 and has been compiled from the books and records, as presented to me.

Alison Fowler, Hon Branch Auditor

A.F. Fowler

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS - NORTH BUCKS BRANCH
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUND 2015

INCOME		£	£	EXPENDITURE		£	£
January	Balance brought forward:						
	Building Society account		1,184.30				
Jan - May	Donations at Branch practices		59.00	Jan - May	Donations to towers at Branch practices		40.00
				20-Mar-15	Purchase of Training Software		48.00
				May & Oct	4 x Grants for ART Module 1 & 2 Training Courses		60.00
17-Oct-15	Branch Course - donations for refreshments		6.00	17-Oct-15	Branch Course - tower donations		40.00
				17-Oct-15	Branch Course - expenses		3.00
				December	Balance carried forward:		
					Bank account		1,058.30
			1,249.30				1,249.30

I confirm the above account is a true record of the transactions in the year to 31 December 2015 and has been compiled from the books and records, as presented to me.

A.F. Fowler
Alison Fowler
Hon Branch Auditor

Who's Who

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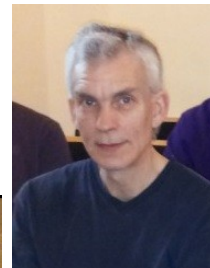
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Lesley Belcher

Next Edition

The deadline for contributions for the next edition of In Touch is **Sunday 8th May 2016**.

Please send your contributions to newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk