



In Touch

North Bucks Branch - www.northbucksbranch.org.uk

December 2017

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the winter edition of In Touch.

Hopefully you all had a Merry Christmas, and that the leftovers are at last gone, maybe a mince pie or two still finds space in the kitchen.

Christmas is ringing's busiest period, and I would love to hear your stories and events that have taken place.

As always, the branch officers need support, so with the up and coming elections of the officers, all support, both new and experienced, are most welcome. The branch does not run itself, and it is your input that helps it function.

In Touch exists only with your news, so however great or concise, event to come, or news of events that have happened, please do continue your excellent submissions. My thanks to all of those who have contributed over 2017.

Finally, I would like to wish all our readers and their families a happy, healthy and prosperous 2018.

Phillip Starr—Editor, In Touch

Next edition...

Please ensure that you send all submissions to newslettereditor@northbucksbranch.org.uk no later than **Friday 23rd March 2018** to be included in the next edition of In Touch. Don't be afraid to send them in well before this date, as my email account has plenty of space!

Whilst endeavours will be made to send out reminders, your support in keeping to this deadline is appreciated.

Christmas at St. Mary's Whaddon

Friday 1st of December saw the usual open practice night, and we marked the start of the Christmas season with a small celebration.

As ever, Mrs Sue White, wife of Whaddon's long serving Tower Captain Derek, presented her superb homemade shortbread and mince pies, to the delight of all. Other part nibbles, and a refreshing drink or two, were enjoyed, as we wished each other greetings of the season.



There is a practice on the first Friday of every month, except the holiday month of August, at St. Mary's Church in Whaddon. All are welcome to ring this pleasant six, regardless of your ability; ringing will be found for all who join us.

Phillip Starr



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Established 17th January 1881

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RADLEY ONE-DAY COURSE

Based at Radley (near Abingdon)

SATURDAY 7th. APRIL 2018

Cost £30.00 including evening meal

Methods offered:

**Plain Hunt on 5, 6, 7, 8; Grandsire Doubles and Triples;
Plain Bob Doubles, Minor and Major**

All subject to demand

These courses have been running for a number of years and are designed for learners of all ages and levels of competence. No need to feel nervous about coming as you will be with others at a similar level.

We aim to improve your confidence as well as your ringing with friendly support and tuition.

Details of ringing criteria and an application form will be available after 1st December

2017

From Ann Osborne, Email: annosborne.1@BTInternet.com

or

Tel: 0118 942 5876

Closing date for applications is:

1st February 2018

Maximum of 25 students

The Guild Six-Bell Striking Competition

On 7 October, two cars set off from Shenley and Loughton, three guys (Graham Bartholomew, John Brookman and Gary Reading) in one, three gals (Emily Banks, Becky Fawcett and Linda Maycroft) in the other, to represent North Bucks in the Guild striking competition. The venue was North Leigh, Witney, Oxfordshire, and the pretty Cotswold villages, towards the end of our journey, brightened the gloom from the grey sky.

We arrived just after 2 p.m. to hear an encouraging speech from one of the judges, Phil Ramsbottom from Birmingham. The second judge was Rosie Chetney from Oxford, who kindly stepped into the breach when the original judge had a family emergency that morning, I believe.

Ten of the fifteen branches were represented and we were drawn sixth, so we had plenty of time to listen to the bells and explore the very interesting church. There is a fifteenth-century Doom Painting above the entrance to the Chancel, depicting the resurrection on one side and the devil and no doubt some nasty happening on the other – fortunately it isn't too clear. Counteracting that is a beautiful little side chapel with fan vaulting and alabaster effigies of a knight and his wife. On the outside I spotted a miniature Cotswold-tiled roof protecting the end of a wooden beam protruding from the wall.



There was also the opportunity to catch up with a couple of ex-Bradwell ringers, Dave and Rosa Bardwell, who now ring at Tilehurst and send their regards to those in North Bucks who remember them.

Shortly before our slot we were asked to go up the wooden boxed-in staircase at the back of the nave, to ensure a quick turnaround. After several minutes in there, we were glad to step out into a big ringing chamber – bigger than Shenley but with much lighter bells, the tenor being 9 cwt. The 4, 5 and 6 were nearly in a straight line and the corner of the staircase was a distraction between the treble and 2. However, the bells were a pleasure to ring, though the deep-set tenor gave Linda a moment of panic and tested her muscles!

Our two minutes practice was very lumpy, which didn't help any nerves. However, we must have made good use of it as the judges' comments on our test piece (240 changes of Grandsire Doubles) was that we rang very steady rounds, with errors in the changes occurring in clumps.

As Phil Ramsbottom said, everyone had turned up knowing which teams would do well – the important teams were those who turned up anyway. Having gone along fully expecting to be last, we were pleased to come ninth and were especially pleased to have two Big Ring Pull (BRP) recruits in the band. The BRP keeps on giving as it's now proving a useful benchmark. It's not usually known how long people have been ringing for. Personally, I find it encouraging to know that in 5 years we can teach people to ring with enough confidence to put in a good performance at Guild level, on strange bells, with the added pressure of being marked.

The results were:

Tower	Faults
1. Thatcham	26
2. High Wycombe	28
3. Tilehurst	29
4. Wallingford	32
5. Shrivenham	45
6. Drayton St Leonard	52
7. North Leigh	55
8. Aylesbury	61
9. Shenley & Loughton	73
10. Oxford St Giles	80

Becky Fawcett

Towers & Bells December 2017

There is a bit of a common thread running through these. See if you can spot it.

Olney - In the 2008 augmentation, the old ring of eight were extensively tuned, including the two Alfred Bowell trebles that most of us thought wouldn't amount to much. The result was the impressive ring of ten we now have. The anticipated popularity of this ring has played out in numerous peals which have had to be carefully managed considering the close proximity of some residents. Sound control was always the intention but the open structure of the spire made that difficult to achieve effectively. So, phase two of the project started earlier this year.

This has been a considerable DIY effort. Ringers from Olney, Sherington and Newport have given up many Saturday mornings and weekday evenings to transform about 100 large pieces of timber and plywood into a substantial new roof. The centre portion opens to allow sound through when needed and this is controlled by a cable that is routed to the clock-room.



Access to the roof is through a sliding trap-door on rails and a spare ladder is going to provide new views over the town and countryside through the lowest windows of the spire. The construction of the existing sound proofing of the belfry windows has been re-visited. Extra plywood layers and soundproofing materials have been fitted and any gaps around the edges have been filled.

Lifting all the heavy materials into the belfry has been a great effort. The chain hoist and rope pulleys have been brought out of retirement and suspended from the old oak lifting beams in the spire. A team of willing helpers have cut pieces to shape while others manoeuvred awkward pieces through the open trap doors. More daring members of the team have been up ladders and on the roof putting it all together.

The project only met one insurmountable problem. Repairs to the tracery in the west window, carried out many decades ago, are failing. This is causing the stone to split and may constitute a safety issue. Professional repairs are going to be needed so the sound proofing here will need to be temporary until that can be remedied.

The recent branch practice was well attended and was a good opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the construction. Even in its incomplete state, there is a noticeable difference in the sound level near the closest properties. Monday evening practices have resumed so you are welcome to come to hear what difference has been made to the internal sound.

Loughton - Rumour has it that work to re-hang and augment these is due to start soon, These are based on an old ring of 4 in a Victorian copy of a "King-Post" frame, that were made up to a six in 1908 by Alfred Bowell.

Hanslope – This project continues. It isn't surprising that Alfred Bowell worked on these bells. Pretty much everyone had a go at them in the last hundred years. In 1906 he re-cast the old third and added a treble to make the ring up to six.



Here we see local Hanslope people, the new bell showing off one of Bowell's trademark girder headstocks.

Simpson – At the recent meeting at Olney, we voted a small grant from the Bell Fund to Simpson. Here, Alfred Bowell added a treble in 1926, constructing an extra bell frame on top of the existing 2nd. The stay of the 2nd only just misses the treble's slider.

Calverton – Rumour has it that these are to be re-hung soon. Good news as these are a nice ring with the potential for new ringers in the Stony Stratford area. These are a Taylor, Oxford, five that were re-hung and made up to six in 1905 by Alfred Bowell. The old wooden frame is probably now nearing the end of its life and there is plenty of room in the tower for more bells.

Cosgrove – Not in North Bucks but within easy walking distance of Old Wolverton. We hear that these are to be restored soon as well. This is another of the many rings that Alfred Bowell gave a new lease of life about 100 years ago. His straightforward engineering approach to bell-hanging resulted in many rings like this, in new steel frames and new fittings. Now, time is catching up with them again. The frames need modern rust-proofing and the fittings need to be updated.

Lathbury – All interested parties have been engaged and we are working on the formalities of getting this project started. More actual activity is expected next year. There was no Ipswich input to these. The local Gillett monopoly, managed by a jeweller in Newport, saw to it that most of the jobs here went to Croydon.

Astwood – This church has been redundant for a while and is likely to be sold as a private residence soon. We are engaging with the church authorities, MK Borough council, the Keltek Trust and the local contact to find a satisfactory outcome for the bells and frame.



Doug Hird

MK50 Birthday Ringing update

A brief update on the challenge to ring a Quarter Peal in every tower in the boundaries of the New Town of Milton Keynes in 1967 (11 towers).

As previously reported there have been successful quarters rung at Shenley, Woughton, Bletchley, and Milton Keynes Village.

Since then, quarters have been achieved at Fenny Stratford, Loughton, Wolverton and Bradwell. And a special quarter has been achieved at Simpson where a band took on the challenge and succeeded in ringing the method Simpson Doubles.

The remaining two towers have home bands that are arranging quarters this month – Linford and Stony

Anne McIntyre

City of Things

City of Things was a sonic investigation of Milton Keynes by artist, Caroline Devine to celebrate the 50th birthday of the city. Presented as a sound installation in centre:mk throughout October 2017, City of Things included sounds, signals and voices of the city which were woven into the composition. Devine developed the work over a year, during which time she listened to and recorded the city. Some of the material included in the sound installation can be explored through the online soundmap that accompanied the exhibition: <https://www.cityofthings.co.uk/> (hopefully still live by the time this note is published)

The reason for writing this is that among the sounds used by the artist were the bells of St Lawrence's, Bradwell, ringing call-changes. - they're on the website.

It's good to think that bellringing was thought to be an iconic sound of the New City, alongside the dawn chorus in Linford Wood, the roar of the crowd cheering on the Dons at Stadium:MK, and choirs singing Tallis's Spem in Alium in Stony Stratford

Martin Petchey

MK50 - 4th November 2017

Milton Keynes Council had asked the branch to ring at every tower in the borough to mark the 50th birthday of the new town. So I thought it would be appropriate to call up a band of MKC staff (past and present) to cover one of the towers for this event.

Accordingly the following ringers met at Wavendon at 10:30am:

Veronica Baker (probation service) from Maids Moreton
Margaret Bullied (teacher) from Pattishall
Jill Faiers (teacher) from Pattishall
Ann Fletcher (IT department) from Buckingham
Mary Hartley (care and commissioning) from Cranfield
Terry Page (teacher) from Loughton
Paul Wheeler (IT department) from Milton Keynes village

(Paul is the only current member of staff)

We were ably supported by staff spouses, Andrew Spencer from Buckingham and Chris Bullied from Pattishall.

Ann Fletcher



(L-R; Jill Faiers, Chris Bulleid, Terry Page, Mary Hartley, Andrew Spencer, Margaret Bulleid, Veronica Baker, Paul Wheeler, Ann Fletcher)

Branch Annual Ringing Outing

September 2nd 2017

This Year the branch outing was to Northampton, visiting four towers in the town centre and one in Abington Park. The Day started out at 10am at St Giles Church, where we were met by Giles Willson. St Giles dates from the 17th century and has bells in a central tower. We started out with some rounds and plain hunt on 10 and then we went on to ring Grandsire Triples and Stedman Triples.

The next church was All Saints in Northampton town centre where we were met by Bridget Paul. All saints also dates from the end of the 17th Century and has 10 bells. Here we rang some more Grandsire Triples with Bobs and Stedman triples. The majority of also stayed here for a lovely lunch in the café adjoining the church.

Our next church was St Peters which was a short walk away. Here we were also met by Bridget Paul. St Peters is the oldest of the four churches in the centre of the town and dates from 1160AD. It has 8 bells. Here we rang Little Bob, Grandsire triples and Kent Treble Bob.



From here we went to Holy Sepulchre or St Seps as its known locally. St Seps is a very impressive Norman round church with a 14th Century tower and a 13th century chancel. It also has a warriors chapel with remembrance book. It is well worth a visit as there is a huge amount of history both about the church itself and Northampton town itself. We were met here by Colin Sampson, we rang little bob major, Kent treble bob and some more Grandsire Triples.

This was the last town centre church so we picked up the cars from the mayorhold car park and made our way to the church of St Peter and St Paul which is the smallest of the churches and located in Abington Park, it has 6 bells. We were met here by Barbara Starmer. We started out with bob doubles and grandsire doubles. We then finished off with plain bob and little bob.

It was a very enjoyable and interesting day, giving everyone the chance to visit new towers and ring new bells. The turnout was somewhat disappointing though in that we had only 9 accomplished ringers so we

were limited in what we could ring, but we still had a lovely day with everyone getting a chance to ring at each church.

Many thanks to all the tower captains for allowing us access to their towers and special thanks to Bridget for liaising with them all and helping to make our day a success. We do hope you will let us visit you again in the future.



Liz Sheaf

JACK PIGGOTT

Jack was a much loved member of two Branch Churches – All Saints', Emberton, and St Mary's, Shenley. An Australian by birth, he lived in Emberton for many years, and learned to ring there. In his later years he moved to Shenley and became a loved and respected member of their community.

We were all pleased to be able to ring for Jack's funeral on 14th November – half muffled at Shenley for the funeral service, and open at Emberton for the interment and wake. Later that evening it was the monthly 'advanced' practice at Emberton, and Kangaroo Treble Bob Minor was rung both in Jack's memory, and also for the ringing master's departure for a trip to Australia the next day!

Peals

S Mary and Giles, Stony Stratford

Tuesday, 27 June 2017 in 2:49 (12-1-16 in F)
 5088 Evesham Surprise Major
 Composed by BYROC (Gen)
 1 Raymond A Vickers
 2 Julie A Haseldine
 3 Ruth Stokes
 4 Lesley J Belcher
 5 Richard Haseldine
 6 Andrew Haseldine
 7 Stephen H Stanford
 8 Christopher C Stokes - *Conductor*

Rung in thanksgiving for the life of Larry Sedgley Francis, a lifelong worshiper at this Church.

Quarter Peals

SBABC quarter at Loughton

Whiting Society of Ringers joined with local ringers at Loughton to ring a Quarter Peal for Bellringers Strike Back Against Blood Cancer. One of the band, Pauline Kennard, has been sponsored a very significant sum of money to ring 300 quarters during 2017 and was keen to squeeze one in on a visit the area. We were happy to oblige and completed a very enjoyable quarter of 11 doubles methods - the Plain Bob group and the Reverse Canterbury Group plus Grandsire

Whiting Society of Ringers

Loughton, Bucks, Buckinghamshire

All Saints, Loughton

Friday, 3 November 2017 (11-0-8 in G)

1260 Mixed Doubles (11 Methods)

120s of St Nicholas, Winchendon Place, St Remigius,

Huntley, Reverse Canterbury, St Simon's,

St Martin's, St Osmond, Eynesbury, Plain Bob, 60 Grandsire

- 1 Anne F M Phillipson
- 2 Pauline M Kennard
- 3 Martin Petchey
- 4 Philip R Wild
- 5 Simon J O Head (C)
- 6 Keith Wagstaff



Back Row: Simon, Keith, Martin
Front Row: Phil, Pauline, Anne

<p style="text-align: center;">Holy Trinity Old Wolverton 24th November 2017 1260 Grandsire Doubles 43 minutes 1) John Mercer 2) Wendy Price 3) Michael Nimmo (C) 4) Liz Wagstaff 5) Doug Hird 6) Keith Wagstaff Rung as part of the ringing for MK50 birthday celebrations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Holy Trinity Old Wolverton Friday 11th August 2017 1260 Grandsire Doubles 43 Minutes 1) John Mercer 2) Wendy Price 3) Michael Nimmo (C) 4) Liz Wagstaff 5) Adrian Gates 6) Roger Everson Rang in memory of Pat Gates. Mother of Adrian and churchwarden of this church.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stony Stratford Monday 4th September 2017 1260 Bob Doubles 46 minutes 1) Kieran Salter 2) Malcolm Hooton (C) 3) Wendy Price 4) Christopher Crompton 5) David A Sanderson 6) Derek White Birthday compliments to Wendy 1st quarter 6 (<i>aged 78!</i>) 1st quarter 1 (<i>away from cover</i>)</p>
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<p>Oxford Diocesan Guild Bletchley, Tuesday, 29 August 2017 1260 Doubles (2m) 1 David Beckley 2 Anne McIntyre 3 Terry Page 4 David Lapham 5 B Douglas Hird (C) 6 Keith Wagstaff Rung half muffled in memoriam Trevor Kingham</p>	<p>Oxford Diocesan Guild Loughton, Buckinghamshire All Saints Sunday, 29 October 2017 (11–0–8 in G) 1260 All Saints Place Doubles 1 Terry Page 2 Ann Birch 3 Anne McIntyre 4 Gary Reading 5 Simon J O Head (C) 6 Graham Bartholomew Rung as part of the 'Ringing for MK50' celebrations</p>	<p>Oxford Diocesan Guild Bradwell, Buckinghamshire St Lawrence Saturday, 2 December 2017 in 44m (7–2–15 in A#) 1260 Mixed Doubles 10 C.O.M. Grandsire, Plain Bob, St Simon's, St Martin's 1 Christine Abbott 2 Becky Fawcett 3 Anne McIntyre 4 Edward Fawcett 5 Simon J O Head (C) 6 Gordon Abbott Rung as part of the 'Ringing for MK50' celebrations</p>
<p>Oxford Diocesan Guild Fenny Stratford, Buckinghamshire St Martin Friday, 10 November 2017 (8–0–4 in A) 1260 St Martin's Bob Doubles 1 David Lapham 2 Ann Birch 3 Anne McIntyre 4 Gary Reading 5 Simon J O Head (C) 6 Robin Starr Rung prior to Patronal Service and visit of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and as part the 'Ringing For MK50' celebrations</p>	<p>Oxford Diocesan Guild Simpson, Buckinghamshire St Thomas the Apostle Saturday, 9 December 2017 in 43 (7–1–7 in A□) 1260 Simpson Doubles Simpson Doubles, Fifield Bob with an Antelope Single 1 Brian Baldwin 2 Peter Tribble 3 Martin Petchey 4 Christina Tribble 5 Simon J O Head (C) 6 Paul Crombleholme Rung for MK50 First in variation for all and believed the first time this variation has been rung alone to a quarter peal</p>	