

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD
OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



Newsletter
March 2020

CONTENTS

The President's Postscript	03
Secretary Seeks....	03
<i>News from the Branches</i>	
Culworth	04
Daventry	08
Guilsborough	14
Kettering	17
Northampton	19
Peterborough	21
Rutland	30
Thrapston	31
Towcester	33
Wellingborough	35
Public Relations Officer's Piece	37
Other News	37
Guild Website	41
Guild Events 2020	42

*It's nice to see reports from so many contributors this time.
Please keep this going by keeping notes of activities in your branch.*

*The deadline for the next Newsletter is : **31st August 2020**
Please make a note of this date in your diary*

Please send your contribution either through your
Branch Press Correspondent or direct to :
e-mail : christopherpearson@btinternet.com or Tel : 01536 420822

THE PRESIDENT'S POSTSCRIPT

I have always encouraged everyone who “can ring rounds” to join our Guild as soon as possible so that they can feel part of the ringing fraternity which we represent and encourage in our area. Organisations of volunteers like ours, rely on enthusiastic people not only to keep it going but especially to keep it fresh and drive it forward. Enthusiasm can be continuous or more often come in spurts or cycles and be channelled into all or specific aspects of ringing depending on personal circumstances. Our organisation, with its annual election for branch and guild posts, provides for harnessing these enthusiasms. Please keep enthusing and help leading your branch and fraternity forward. As I step down as President, I am encouraged to leave the Guild in the hands of enthusiastic chief officers who have all been elected newly to post in the last 3 years and look forward to being able to prod from the “back benches”!

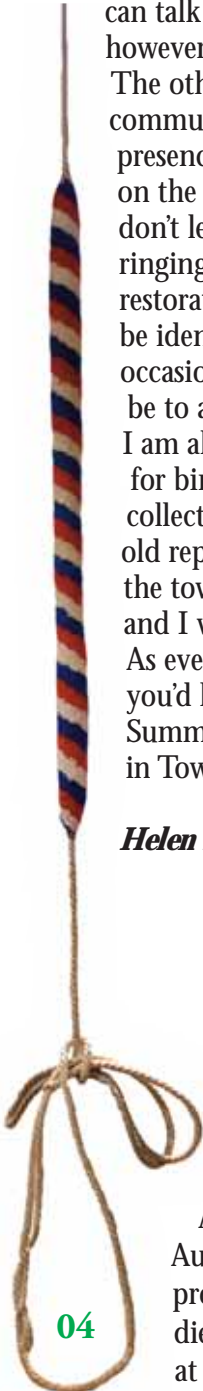
Geoff Pullin

THE SECRETARY SEEKS...

... All sorts of things - I'm after picking your brains. By the time you read this, the GMC will (hopefully) have approved a proposal to form a committee to plan events to mark the 100th anniversary of the guild's formation, in 2024. Volunteers for this will always be welcome, so if you feel you have something to offer, please get in touch. We're looking for people to get involved; be that with ideas, a project to mark the occasion, or skills in bringing them to fruition. The centenary should involve lots of ringing, obviously, but we want to consider lots of opportunities to bring the members of the guild together and celebrate our longevity.

This is where you, dear reader, come in. I can read the reports for what took place in our golden jubilee year of 1974, and the 75th anniversary celebration in 1999, but those just reports the facts. What I want to know is what stood out for you? What has stuck in your memory from those years? We should aim to make





the celebrations stand out, so tapping into your memories of previous events will help us make this forthcoming celebration equally as memorable. You can talk to anyone on the committee, e-mail me, write or talk to us, however you feel most comfortable sharing your thoughts.

The other item to be agreed by the GMC will be to improve the communication. To that end, the guild will be getting a social media presence. In order to make that attractive and to keep it fresh, I will be on the lookout for pictures to use – and I've no visual sense at all so don't let it be down to me! Please send pictures or video with any ringing related element - that could be churches, bells, installations, restorations, ringing in action, après ringing action etc. Your image will be identified and credited, so please include details of tower, people, occasion, etc. as appropriate. This will not replace the website, it will be to augment the guild's online presence.

I am also on the look-out for old reports. In preparing annual reports for binding, it has become apparent that the secretary's report collection is missing a few editions, 1995 to 1999. If you have a set of old reports that you're looking to dispose of (be that from tidying up the tower, downsizing, dusting the library, etc.) please let me know and I will happily take them off your hands.

As ever, if there is anything you want to suggest to the guild or ideas you'd like to try, do get in touch. Hope to see you at the Guild Summer festival, to be held at Helmdon, on 25th April, and the AGM in Towcester on 13th June.

Helen Allton

News from the Branches

CULWORTH BRANCH

A thanksgiving and memorial service was held at Stratton Audley Church for Phil Curtis on 26th September, a high proportion of the congregation were ringers. After Phil Curtis died in August, we wanted to celebrate his life with a quarter peal at his home tower of Brackley and it seemed wrong not to ring all

8 bells. The obvious participants were Julie Blencowe and Malcolm Taylor, both long standing Brackley ringers, Sara and Ian Chapple who had rung with him for many years, and (we hoped) his brother Brian and sister-in-law Lorna. Unfortunately, Brian had given up ringing due to eye problems and he didn't feel that he could take part. That left 5 of us. Malc was the obvious choice for tenor, Sara wasn't happy ringing inside for triples, but volunteered to ring treble. Julie had been suffering hand problems, and had been out of ringing for several months, but had recently come back for short rings. However, she had been saying that she wanted to get back to ringing, so decided this was the right time to give it a go. Lorna had also had to stop for a while due to health problems, and then found life too busy to fit in any ringing, but was happy to try. Geoff and Carole Pullin came on board to bring the numbers up to 7.

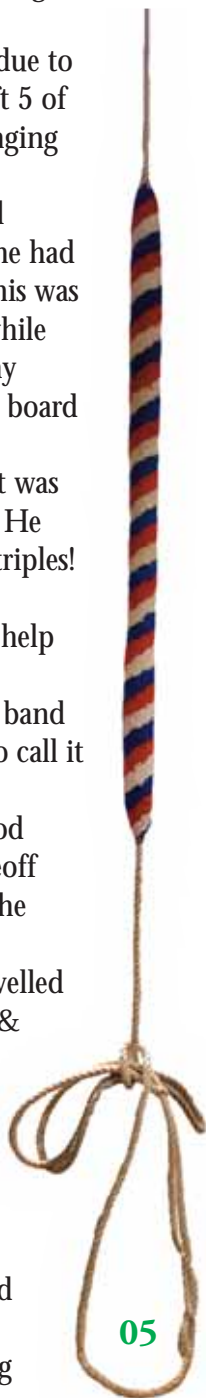
They say you don't appreciate what you have until you lose it. It was only after he died that we realised how much we relied on Phil. He was the only member of the branch who knew how to conduct triples! No one in the proposed band felt able to take on the task of conducting and we totally failed to find anyone else available to help out so we had to move to plan B

Paul Bennett from Evenley agreed to ring 7 while the rest of the band rang plain bob minor on the front 6. Geoff agreed to attempt to call it although not feeling very confident.

We all met up on October 19th and managed 35 minutes of good ringing before it became obvious that it had gone wrong and Geoff called it round. We hope Phil would have appreciated hearing the Brackley bells being well struck. So onto Plan C.....

On 6th November, Julie Blencowe, and Sara & Ian Chapple travelled to the easy going 6 at Stonesfield, where we met up with Lorna & Brian Curtis and local ringer Lindsey Thornton. Lorna had decided that in the interest of actually achieving a quarter the safest option was Bob Double (sorry Phil!) and we were delighted that Brian decided to make a ringing comeback and ring cover for us. This time all went well, and as at our previous attempt, all the ringers were friends of Phil's.

It was the 70th Anniversary of the Culworth branch last year and 49 ringers and their partners attended the celebration branch dinner in October. A challenge had been set to achieve 7 ringing



targets during the year and several certificates for the “7 challenges for 70 years” were handed out to those who had participated. This involved tasks such as leading a tower practice, learning a new method, calling some changes, it meant stepping out of your comfort zone and having some fun on the way. Well done to those who took part.

Lois Weedon news – Ramble and Ring - It's good to have some new ringers on board who are willing to get stuck into things. At our tower meeting for the last 2 or 3 years we had been discussing having a bell ringing walk but with the excuse that the ringers were too new or the lack of time, or some other excuse it just didn't happen.

However, this year, Trevor and Louise King decided they would take on the challenge and organise it, and what a good job they did. Every eventuality had been covered, even a back-up vehicle, (courtesy of one of our ringers, Jenny Field) just in case someone couldn't make the course! We invited ringers from the Culworth branch to join us and so on Saturday 7th September, 13 walkers and 1 dog assembled at Lois Weedon where we made our way by car share to Blakesley for our first ring at 9.00 a.m. We were told they weren't that easy going but we all managed to have a ring and hoped that our next set of bells would be better.



(Louise King took the photo)

With Trevor at the front with stick in hand to make the way clear and his phone on sat nav to check the route and with Louise at the rear with the first aid kit and risk assessment, we set off with the

sun shining and blue skies across the south Northamptonshire countryside towards Bradden, a lovely ring of 5 bells. It was now time for a little sustenance and luckily Joy had remembered the flapjack for everyone which fortified us on our journey to the pretty little church of Slapton surrounded by fields, with its 3 bells for chiming. We took in the delights of the wonderful medieval wall paintings that had been restored. Next stop was the New Inn at Abthorpe, only a short walk, where we were looking forward to our lunch. A good rest and lovely lunch and only two more towers to go. Walking across the fields the tower of Wappenham was in sight, we had made up time a bit as we didn't chime the bells for long at Slapton so we arrived at Wappenham half an hour before our appointed time. After ringing up (badly) we had a visit from a very worried looking church warden who was attending the church fete next door, apparently the brass band had just finished and someone had just started singing some lovely soft folk songs and then we started up! He asked if we could delay our ringing for a bit and said he would let us into the fete for free if we bought a cup of tea and cake, of course that wasn't a hardship to any of us, we didn't even need to give it a second thought so we raced next door to the fete, enjoyed the sunshine, music, tea and homemade cake. Looking back it was quite a good PR exercise for 13 bellringers to walk into the fete together and we managed to recruit another new ringer who had been thinking about joining us but just needed that little push! We were allowed back to ring when the tug of war was taking place, ringing some very acceptable rounds, call changes and plain hunt. The last part of our journey was easy going to Lois Weedon where we rang for a short time on our home bells which we were all used to. I am always amazed at the wonders of technology and Richard Gale even has a video of our route as evidence. Thanks to Trevor and Louise we all thoroughly enjoyed the day, excellent organisation, stunning country side, beautiful weather, good company and a chance to ring bells we wouldn't normally ring. And of course I forgot to mention one impeccably behaved dog called Mischief (by name not by nature!). We are all hoping they will organise another one this year.

ART Learn to Ring at Lois Weedon - Trevor Field gained his Learning the Ropes Level 2 – Foundation Skills Ringing in July and Deborah & Ava Thurman and Olivia Kirkham gained their



Learning the Ropes Level 1- Bell Handling certificates in November. In December Lois Weedon held one of its very popular “Potatoes and Puddings” evening when 24 ringers and partners participated in the delights of 11 different puddings! Afterwards working it off by ringing carols on the handbells.

QUARTER PEALS - Whitfield - A quarter peal of Bob Minor was rung at Whitfield on 8th September in 39 minutes 1. Paul Bennett, 2. Sara Chapple, 3. Ian Chapple, 4. Daniel E Hughes, 5. G Nigel Williams, 6. Jason W Hughes (C) (first minor for Paul Bennett) Woodford Halse – On 21st February a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles was rung at Woodford Halse in memory of Derek Thornton (1925-2018), tower captain for 30 year and honorary life member of the Guild. 1. Catherine Fairbank, 2. Ian Chapple (C), 3. Anne Berrington, 4. Martin Rowling, 5. Geoffrey Stretton, 6. Tony Nash. (first quarter peal for Catherine Fairbank).

Brackley – A Quarter peal of Bob Doubles with 7,6,8 covering was rung on February 27th, 2020, at St Peter Church, Brackley, to mark the U.K. departure from the E.U.

1. Sheila Brown, 2. Sara Chapple, 3 Julie Blencowe, 4. Paul Bennett (first inside for Bob Doubles), 5. Ian Chapple (conductor) 6. Malcolm Taylor, 7. Martin Rowling, 8. Brian Sinclair (1st Quarter Peal).

A good number of ringers attended the branch Carol Service held at Brackley on 9th December, with Rev Will Adams officiating and Jenny Howes on the organ. Refreshment provided afterwards by Julie Blencowe and her team.

The January AGM was held at Syresham, ringing on the anti-clockwise 5 bells. A delicious tea was provided, organised under to direction of Sara Chapple. During the business 4 new members were elected. Sue

Gale at Marston St Lawrence and Olivia Kirkham, Deborah and Ava Thurman at Lois Weedon.

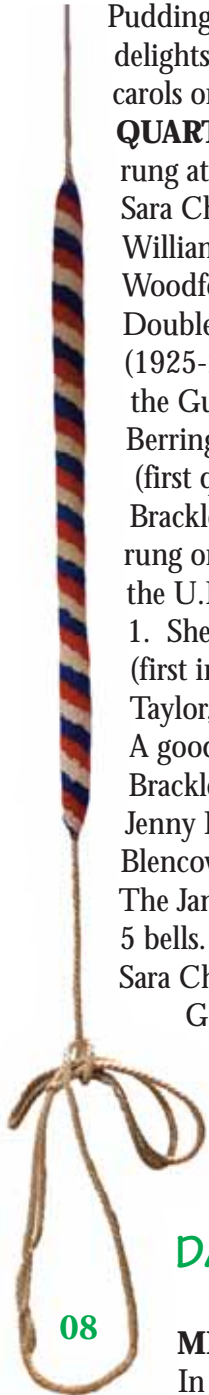
Joy Kirkham

DAVENTRY BRANCH

08

MEETINGS

In September, raising all six Badby bells in peal was followed by a



first – watching on cctv whilst the third bell was bounced on its stay to get the clapper ‘right way’! Sixteen rang under James’ direction and nine did not ring. Tea was served in the church’s adaptable platform area completed in 2018. Sixteen rang at Byfield in the evening. Kislingbury in October seemed to be a very popular venue where 30 people rang and eight more didn’t. There were cups of tea available throughout the afternoon as well as the large buffet tea provided by the Kislingbury ringers. The service was taken in inimitable style by the Revd. Stephen French complete with a ‘new’ ringing hymn accompanied faultlessly by his musical box. We welcomed the new Guild Secretary, Helen Allton, who had been put to work handing out the service sheets. At Holy Sepulchre, Northampton, 15 kept the bells going to a variety of methods under Jim White’s direction. 10 adjourned to the Sun at Heyford, ending with personal reflections from a Falklands veteran encouraged by Kim!

After 20 had rung and three hadn’t, Revd. Tim Fernyhough, played the organ and took our service at Litchborough on a very wet November Saturday. Jane looked after the ringing. Some ventured to use the Wombell now resident in the south aisle. Hot tea was served in the cosily warm village hall. Mark Brown was elected a new member for Badby. Cecil Swan had kindly provided parking advice for Duston, where, with the rain still pouring and an accompaniment of nearby fireworks, I had 13 ringing a variety of methods and one who didn’t ring. The weather was still poor in December when 25 turned up for ringing, tea and meeting at Nether Heyford. Ian Willgress was in charge and inspired by the high numbers of ‘didn’t ring’ in my reports nearly met his aim to ensure that all members attending did actually ring on this light six. His only failure was the Branch Secretary who was too encumbered with her role as musical director! At 7pm the Revd Stephen Burrow set off our carol concert following Gwynneth’s programme with carols and items flowing without announcements. Michael Haighton was at the organ, Barbara at the keyboard and wind instruments were played by Gwynneth, Shirley and Alison the Tuba. There were nine carols and six performances and closing prayers by the Rector. Chris FitzGerald served up hot mulled wine and there were mince-pies and cakes from tea for an evening feast before making for home in the wet gloom.

In January at Daventry 28 rang under Carole’s direction – all ten



bells every time. 17 claimed to be helping with teas, unable to climb the steps, too late etc ... and didn't ring. New vicar Revd Dawn Stokes took our service without mentioning bells, with Michael at the organ. We followed the Kilsby chorister who unhesitatingly prompted the last verse of the last hymn! With soup maker, Hugh, hospitalised, the tea was the more usual sandwiches and cake under Deena's organisation. The annual general meeting began with the chairman welcoming everyone including Paul Mason the Guild Peal Secretary. The Treasurer, Christine Rodhouse, reported that the prolonged process to transfer our accounts to Lloyds were nearly complete. Steward Brian Foley reported attending a Guild Stewards' meeting at Duston. We were pleased to elect three new members: Patsy Groom for Braunston and Roy Hammond and Ricky Flood for Daventry, all of whom were with us. Officers were re-elected with Gwynneth White volunteering "only for a year" to be Branch Ringing Master. Alison Willgress volunteered to fill the vacancy on the committee. Evening ringing under Gwynneth's direction followed attracting 19 including three regular visitors. Other than a ring on the front six while waiting for people to assemble, the ten bells were kept going – even the last touch scheduled as Yorkshire S Major was upgraded to Royal when a reluctant treble ringer was convinced to ring. Wetherspoons' bargain January was enjoyed by nine of us afterwards.

In February, Newnham ringing chamber was nicely crammed in the afternoon as Bob, designated by Gwynneth - "I didn't know I would be BRM when we booked this holiday" - to run the ringing, kept it going from rounds to Cambridge. 23 rang, including six from the Guilsborough Branch and 13 more who didn't but came to the warm church for chat and the service for which Revd Dawn Stokes was booked for a repeat! Newnham ringers provided a good buffet tea. Jane chaired the branch meeting. Gwynneth had provided the Ringing Master's report including the report of 80% of a quarter peal of spliced Cambridge and Yorkshire S Major which then, without notice, escaped in short order at Daventry. She reported that at the committee meeting it had been decided to stop the branch assisted 8-bell practices as they were not generally achieving their object. Instead it was proposed to offer to any tower that contacted Gwynneth for the branch to support them in their tower for an intensive session of whatever they wanted on a specific date, from call changes to calling to



whatever. It had also been suggested that attending branch meetings is beneficial where there is usually an assemblage of more competent ringers to aid progress. A special method for the day would be advertised so that appropriate homework can be done in advance! Six-bell branch quarter peals will continue.

A small gathering of 12 proceeded to Bugbrooke for a variety of methods, including All Saints Doubles before five retired to the Sun at Heyford.

TOWERS

Ann Maud told us that Flore major tower masonry repairs had been completed and that ringing had restarted on December 8.

Ian Willgress kept us up to date with work at Church Stowe.

Immediately after the Faculty was granted in early January, the church was closed until this autumn. New ladders were put in place on January 25 by Taylors; the belfry cleared of debris by Ian's volunteers on Sunday. Volunteers, including David Foster from Flore, helped the bellhanger to dismantle the bell fittings and lower bells 2 and 3 to the ground on Wednesday and bells 1 and 4 on Thursday.



Church Stowe tenor sits on the floor on January 30. It was last rehung in 1924. Cast in around 1390, its inscription reads AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA interspersed with stamp marks of King Edward III (died 1377) and Queen Philippa – a 'Royal Head Bell'

On Friday morning the bells were loaded on Taylor's lorry after each was

towed on a trolley up the long rising church path by a tractor using a long rope! The bells will remain at Loughborough for the necessary work while the rest of the £250,000 project of major building work takes place in the tower and church, including



provision of new electrics and lighting in the tower. The bells plus a newly cast treble to make them into a five and a second-hand bell of the right semi-tone to make them sound in the major scale will return sometime in the autumn when the building work is complete. The redundant bell will be hung dead for chiming. The money was raised within 18 months and in such a way that there was no need to apply to the Guild Bell Fund for a grant!

The Guild was warned by David Kelly of Keltek Trust that a Pastoral Measures Report had been produced by Churchcare concerning All Saints, Norton. Although this does not mean that the church will become redundant, it is a possibility. The Guild has formally advised the Diocese of its interest in keeping the fine five bells available for use and this has been put on file by the Assistant Diocesan Secretary, who deals with churches at risk of closure.

Remembrance Sunday was marked with half-muffled ringing on the ten at Daventry and at Badby, Braunston, Bugbrooke, Litchborough, Newnham and Weedon.

Kim has implemented a Willoughby practice on Friday afternoons 2 - 4pm with tea or coffee at half-time. The first one saw a good gathering from both counties and they have continued ever since. Everyone welcome!

PEOPLE

Ernie Davidson died in November at Danetre Hospital, aged 96.

After retiring to the village from Northern Ireland, he was treasurer for the restoration and augmentation of Hellidon bells initiated in 1991 by his wife Rosemary whose 90th birthday his death overshadowed. He learned to ring with seven others at a special teach-in held at Priors Marston in August 1991.



Hellidon practice May 29, 2012 with Ernie on the left.

Dorothy Ogle also died in November while still in NGH after an operation 3 months previously. Her funeral was held in Willoughby Church was supported by 30 or so ringers from Rugby District and Braunston Monday Club.

Since the last Newsletter, Mike Harvey of Weedon has been in NGH with infections following bowel surgery. Mike has cleared the bugs and is now in Compton Ward for specialised physiotherapy to rebuild his strength. James Grennan was suffering and felt it necessary to resign as Branch Ringing Master in the Autumn. We hope that he can soon be fit to join us again.

Michael Houghton has been diagnosed with cancer and caught at an early stage. We were advised not to be sorry for him; we could talk about it with him, pray for him, or not, and he was available for our services for all but two in 2020!

Hugh Johnson underwent intensive physiotherapy in NGH for two weeks in January to get him mobile enough to get upstairs at home again.

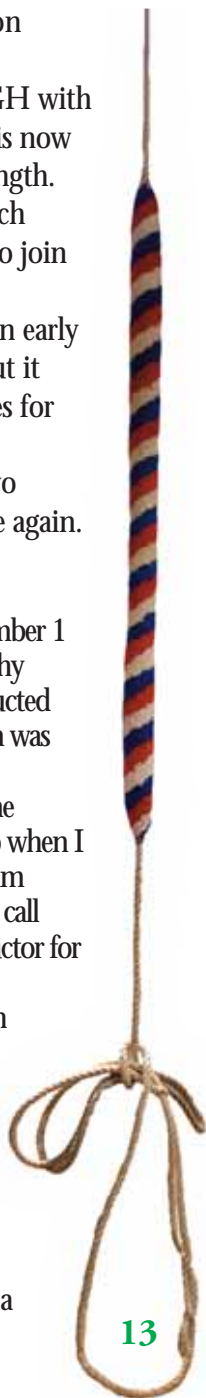
QUARTER PEALS

Branch quarter peals included Frances Williams' first, treble to Plain Bob Doubles at Badby in August and Grandsire Triples at Whilton on September 1 with two Whilton ringers. The September six-bell quarter enabled Dorothy FitzGerald to ring her first of Stedman Doubles at Nether Heyford conducted by Gwyneth. Our warm-up quarter for the Summer Festival competition was Grandsire Triples at Daventry

conducted by Jim White, before each rang the same bell at Rushden in the afternoon. We came fourth out of the six entries. My day was cheered up when I was drawn as 100-Club first prize winner of £64! Jane Rands answered Jim Grennan's request for more people to call quarter peals by volunteering to call Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles at Badby in October, her first as conductor for 15 years.

Other quarter peals enabled Leanne Martin to ring her first inside of Plain Bob Major, conducted by Jim White at Daventry and William Henderson to ring inside to two doubles methods at Litchborough in November conducted by Phil Saunders.

The Revd Dawn Stokes, was appointed 'Interim Priest in Charge' ('Vicar' to me) of Daventry and was licensed by the Bishop of Brixworth, on November 18. There was ringing on all 10 bells for the service. The quarter peal attempt the next day failed but a substitute of Plain Bob Triples was successful on December 1. Roger Fountain rang in a quarter peal at Harpole to mark his 80th birthday on December 23.



GUILSBOROUGH BRANCH

Cold Ashby.

Assisted by the Welford band, our Monday evening ringing practice, re-established in early 2019 has yielded dividends over the past 12 months. The new village ringers are now competent with their own six light bells as well as nearby Welford's eight heavier bells. Well done to all helpers and ringers alike.

Lilbourne.

Probably not really a true newsletter item but I've included a short narrative of a funeral procession with a difference which occurred at Lilbourne on Thursday Feb. 27th. 2020. The mourners traditionally walked down to the Church, preceded by a white hearse pulled by two Greys (white horses) decked out in a splendid livery complete with black cockades and black ear covers. At the request of the family, we started with 94 strikes representing the deceased age, then our five half-muffled bells sounded out during the procession followed by the toll of the tenor to the threshold of the Church. After the service we re-commenced the toll as a further mark of respect for the well known deceased lady and her family members.

We reset the tenor's backstroke end stop to allow a perfect stand between toll strikes. Since 2012 when our bells were refurbished, we have gradually re-introduced and added to, several village traditions of bell ringing for special occasions.

Bell ringers; Anth and Nick Hiams, Dorothy Westerman, Mike Price and Rob Palmer [toll]





Lampton.

Our inspection team visited the un-ringable four bell tower during December 2019 with a mission to gather missing data for submission to Dove's Guide and also take a look at the deteriorating condition of the bells, fixtures and fittings since they were deemed "un-ringable". It came as no surprise to find there are plenty of remedial actions to be carried out plus intervention from the professionals. Further details will be available when we have analysed what can be achieved to realistically bring this installation back to a ringable condition. Acknowledgements and thanks to Nich. Wilson (tower contact) and the Parochial Church Council for allowing our inquisitive visit.

Scaldwell.

The practice dates have been revised but were not displayed on Dove's Guide owing to their software issues. It now appears Dove are up and running again but here are the revised times.

Scaldwell : 1st. 3rd. and 5th. Wednesday each month at 7.00pm.

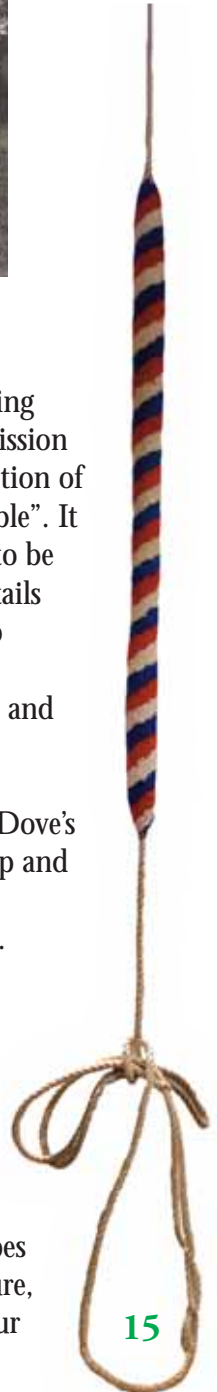
(Walgrave : Occasional, Wednesday)

Thornby and Welford.

Gordon Ball (maintenance team member) has spliced new tail ends to several ropes at both towers.

Crick.

2020 sees commencement of a general overhaul of several outstanding bell related issues in the tower. Twr. Capt. Nick Hiams also anticipates installing a complete new set of eight ropes during the third or fourth quarter of 2020. As an interim measure, Nick and Gordon Ball have spliced new tail ends to the back four ropes, plus other rope related remedial actions.



Hollowell. (not actually a branch tower but is within our catchment area).

We were contacted by the Church to render assistance to a short length of “broken” chiming rope complete with a crimson coloured sally, connected via steel rope to their single bell. Rather amusingly, when I arrived, there was a selection of five or six variable knot types in the rope from previous breakages. It seems at every breakage, a new piece of rope was added making the rope longer and longer until the sally was coiled up like a snake on the floor. We succeeded in splicing a new section of rope onto the sally, leaving it at the correct height and all is well.

A brief update from the Branch steward.

2018 saw remarkable in-roads into maintaining our branch bells. During 2019 the inspection and maintenance team have continued to roll out a programme of pro-active duties in an attempt to keep our heritage bell collection at their best. Alas, each time we visit a bell installation, we find other unforeseen remedial tasks to complete. Looking after ancient fixtures and fittings will always be prevalent. However, we pride ourselves in that we are able to find positive solutions to nearly all of what we encounter, but I’m certain one day we will be caught out by the frailties of components and professional refurbishment costs.

2020 will be a further continuation of our aims as per 2019. Once this inclement weather yields to warmer climes, we have also singled out several towers for in-depth inspections and follow up tasks.

Dove’s Guide, missing data fields.

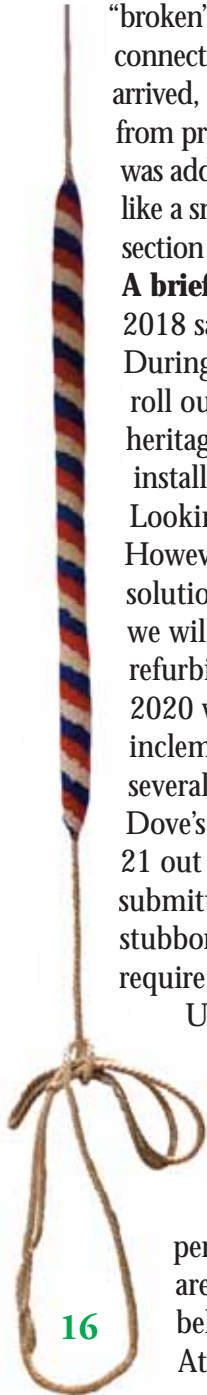
21 out of 31 branch towers now have 100% of data information submitted and published to Dove. There remains 10 locations whereat, stubborn pockets of missing data are yet to be processed but will require extra investments of time per location to procure during 2020.

Unfortunately, I foresee some data may never be available due to zero information and records.

Moving on to the Inventory.

On behalf of the Guild, I decided to pick up the latest inventory gauntlet at our last Steward’s meeting back in 2019. 12 months on, the dedicated website is full of listing permutations together with the older inscriptions. Later inscriptions are a different matter as many are not recorded other than on the bells.

At the moment, I’m simply gathering data and recording the facts



in an orderly fashion. However, the challenge altered course slightly as I was discovering or uncovering hitherto unpublished information about many towers and bells. What you view on the website is an increasing array of cross-checking information. Dove's Guide provides a lot of technical information on each tower, so I've added links where possible to avoid duplication of data.

Rob Palmer, branch steward.

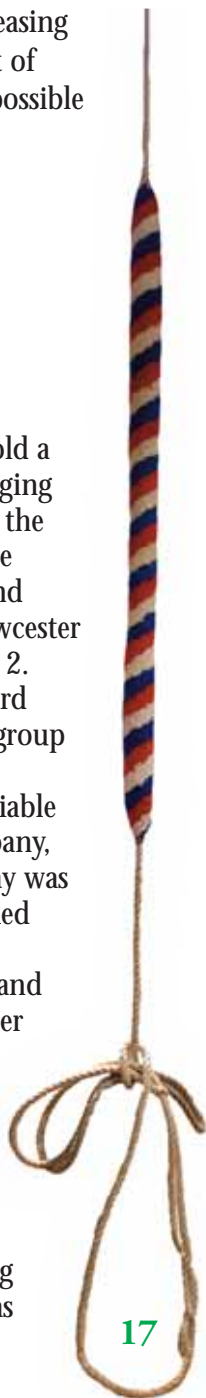
KETTERING BRANCH

We kick off this particular bulletin in style! September saw us hold a branch practice at Cransley, with 14 keen ringers attending. Ringing at this event ranged all the way from rounds and call changes all the way to London Surprise Minor. September was also of course the Guild Summer Festival. The Kettering Branch entered a team and came in a very strong second place, only being bested by the Towcester team. We rang Stedman Triples with a band of: 1. Peter Chilton 2. Helen Churchman 3. Sarah Bence 4. Nick Churchman 5. Edward Groome 6. Jim Bence 7. Toby Bence 8. Chris Stephenson. The group was capably kept in order by Toby who called our piece.

Our October event, the 'Welland Valley Wander', was an undeniable success, with 25 of us travelling between the towers of Stoke Albany, Ashley, Weston-by-Welland, and Wilbarston. Weather on the day was foul but 10 of our company still braved the conditions and walked between the towers. This day was by no means a wash out!

November saw a slight change to the usual calendar, with Mick and Maggie Dainty ably organising and hosting a fish and chip supper followed by a quiz night in Desborough. Ringing was of course the first item on the agenda and there was even some lovely Bristol Surprise Major gracing the Desborough soundscape. This was followed by a great supper and then we got thinking with the quiz. Thank you to Mick and Maggie for preparing this fantastic evening.

In December, 25 ringers travelled first to Corby where including other methods the specially nominated method for the tower was not unsurprisingly Corby Bob Doubles, we then moved on to Great Oakley for seasonal refreshments and ringing. The



augmentation of the existing 3 bells to a ring of 5 having been unfortunately delayed Members had been challenged to mug up on Stedman Singles and Plain Reverse Stedman Singles on 3 bells. For those that tend to ring on large numbers, it really was a different experience and a terrific way to round off the calendar year. Thank you to everyone who came along and a special thanks also to those that provided and served the refreshments. Our Annual General Meeting was held at Burton Latimer this year with a good attendance of members from across the Branch, with refreshments available as an additional lure. This was followed by our service and general ringing with something for all abilities. Finally in February we visited 2 towers with additional interest. Grafton Underwood with its links to the airfield just outside the village which served as a United States Air Force base in the 2nd World War, with a commemorative stained glass window in the church. This was followed by Warkton, where members could view the ornate decorated memorials to past residents of nearby Boughton House between ringing. The ringing here was quite challenging, with the longer than average draught and slight stretch of the ropes requiring care and concentration, but a useful experience, particularly for those newer ringers attending.

Further details of the Sponsored Cycle Ride we are organising around Rutland Water on the Saturday before Easter Sunday can be found elsewhere in the Newsletter

News from the Towers

Nothing particular to report from the towers within the Branch on this occasion.

Kettering Branch towers can now send their news to me at **dauiddainty926@gmail.com** If you want to be kept fully up to date with Branch activities, you can ask to receive the monthly newsletter by emailing our Secretary at **shaneward30@gmail.com**. We also now have a Facebook group, 'Kettering Branch Bellringers'; all are welcome to join the group and see all the latest branch news and events.

Thank you for taking the time to read our segment! Until next time...

David Dainty – Kettering Branch Correspondent



NORTHAMPTON BRANCH

Following the report within the September newsletter covering the Listening and Striking workshop held last August, we wanted to update the Guild on the training which is being undertaken in our Branch. We are fortunate that we have established an ART Teaching Centre based at All Saints in Northampton, this is led by Bridget Paul, who has numerous ART teachers to support her.

If you are not aware the ART teaching method splits the learning into five levels:

Level 1 – Bell Handling. This provides the pupil with knowledge about the bells, safety when ringing, how to ring a bell in a controlled safe manner as well as ringing up and down. Once this level has been achieved the ringer can ring rounds and some call changes, at this stage they can start attending Branch practices and ring on Sunday's.

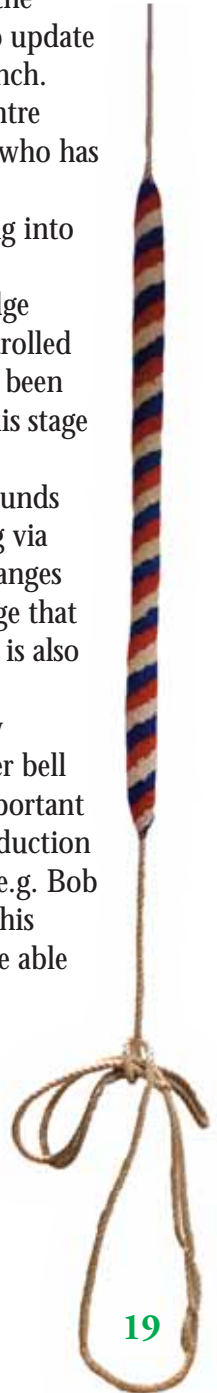
Level 2- Foundation skills. This will concentrate on ringing rounds and call changes, introducing leading and simple change ringing via kaleidoscope. As well as ringing, the pupil will be calling call changes too. Striking and listening is another key feature. It is at this stage that many ringers start making bad habits, so the basic bell handling is also closely monitored.

Level 3- Introduction to change ringing. As well as the theory behind change ringing, this level covers ringing behind as a cover bell and plain hunt. This means rope sight starts to become very important

Level 4 – Novice change ringer. This carries on from the introduction to change ringing and starts looking at ringing simple methods e.g. Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles, introducing dodging. To achieve this level, the pupil will have rung a quarter peal on the treble and be able to raise and lower bells in peal

Level 5 – Change ringer. At this stage the pupil will be ringing quarter peals inside to a variety of methods.

Each pupil has a log book, where their attainment is recorded and discussed, they are assessed by their tutors continuously and when the key stage or level is achieved, we are pleased to present their certificate of achievement.



We are pleased that the following ringers taught at the Northampton Teaching Centre have achieved the following levels:

Level 4

Clare Deane

Level 3

None recently – watch this space!

Level 2

Louise Griffiths

Ray Starmer

Level 1

David Neil

Wendy Gould

Fiona McKenna

Kim Jones



Louise receiving her level 2 certificate



Fiona receiving her Level 1 Certificate

We have numerous pupils coming up to their level 1, these are not just Northampton Town Centre ringers, we are pleased that other towers within the branch have recruited potential new ringers and sent them to the Teaching Centre to learn. Once they have achieved their level 1, they will start ringing at their local tower, as well as having the opportunity to progress through the next levels at the Teaching Centre.

Branch practices for 2020.

We have had a variety of debates over the years on how to make the branch practices as relevant and popular for all ringers in the branch. We have had a method for the practice, this has been popular for ringers to expand their knowledge however, the number of ringers attending has been variable to poor!

Going forward Northampton Branch are adopting a tower where there are no regular Sunday ringers – St Mary's Dallington, a ground floor ring of 6 (7-2-2). We are starting with (nearly) monthly practices at this tower for the branch, the idea is using a regular tower we can encourage more ringers to attend a practice. We also are running the practice earlier than most 18.00 – 19.30, this enables ringers to go to other practices later, go to the pub opposite or still have a Friday evening free! The confirmed practices at Dallington will take place on:

13 March

24 April

10 July

14 August

11 September

9 October

27 November

We are also pleased that at the AGM held in January we agreed to hold a quarterly practice at different towers with a service and tea

For more information or to check the practice is running, contact the

Branch Ringing Master Giles Willson:

E mail: giles.willson@ntlworld.com

Tel: 07732 331468 / 01604 459412

PETERBOROUGH BRANCH

Peterborough Branch Ringing Master's Report

Another busy few months of branch events. The 8 bell practices continue on the first Friday of the month at Castor, apart from in January. The newer ringers are moving on from rounds and plain hunt to trebling to triple and major methods, and the numbers attending have also allowed for surprise methods to be rung. The



session in December had only 7 ringers, but we were able to build on the Cambridge workshop, so rang surprise minor all evening. Not what was planned, but an enjoyable ring anyway.

A workshop for those wanting to move onto surprise methods, was split into a theory session on Cambridge in October, followed by a practical session in November. A very successful Bob Minor Workshop was held, jointly with Castor Ringing School, to develop the less experienced ringers and encourage them beyond Bob Doubles.

Ringing at the Cathedral continues to be a popular session ringing on higher numbers of bells, and I am very grateful to the Cathedral ringers for this opportunity and for their support for the session in October.

Another very successful Ringing and Cream Tea event was held in September. 14 ringers, accompanied by some non-ringers, visited Twywell, Cranford St John and Barton Seagrave Towers, followed by afternoon tea at Bosworth's Aspen Cafe in Burton Latimer.

Over the year I have been working with some volunteers at Wittering, to identify potential new ringers to both develop their own band, and to get the bells ringing regularly again. The first handling session for six potential ringers was held at Castor Ringing School at the end of November and they are developing well.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support branch events.

Hilary Hardie - Branch Ringing Master.

Bulwick

Our Wednesday evening practices continue to draw in the crowds, frequently producing standing room only in the restricted space of the winter months. The repertoire is rather more modest when Sue and Derek are in the far east but, nevertheless, Andrew keeps us all in order and we make good progress.

The highlight of our year was the tower diner in November when 19 of us sat down to an excellent meal at The Montagu Arms in Barnwell.

Pat Teall - Tower Correspondent.





Castor Ringing School

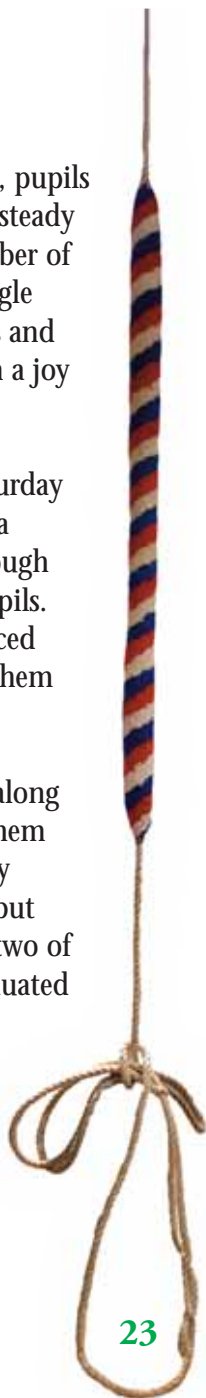
In a year that was dominated by a lack of progress in Parliament, pupils at Castor Ringing School came along, week by week, and made steady progress along our Record Board. Indeed, so great was the number of promotions that we had some weeks last Autumn with every single pupil in the two final columns on the board, Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Bob Minor. Their enthusiasm and perseverance have been a joy to behold and make everything that we do worthwhile.

During the course of this year we have run two Bob Minor Workshops. The first took place in May during our normal Saturday morning session and was attended by nine pupils. The second, a much larger all-day event run in conjunction with the Peterborough Branch, took place in October and was attended by fourteen pupils. My grateful thanks go to all our regular Tutors and the experienced ringers from the Branch who came along for the day. Between them they provided three prime rings for every pupil, a total of 5040 changes! Sadly, we can't claim it as a peal!

At the end of November, six new recruits from Wittering came along for their first visit. We adjusted our time schedules to provide them with some intensive tuition throughout December and I am very pleased to report that, not only are they making good progress, but another two have now joined us. At the other end of the scale, two of our pupils, Jane Robinson and Julian Burton, have recently graduated from the Ringing School having each rung a quarter peal on an inside bell. Congratulations to you both. I am pleased to say that they have both accepted my invitation to continue attending, but now as Helpers rather than pupils.

I look forward to the remainder of this year in the confidence that Castor Ringing School will continue to offer expert tuition to all who wish to come along to learn the basics of Change Ringing. Long may it continue to do so.

David Teall - Head Tutor



St Kyneburgha, Castor Tower

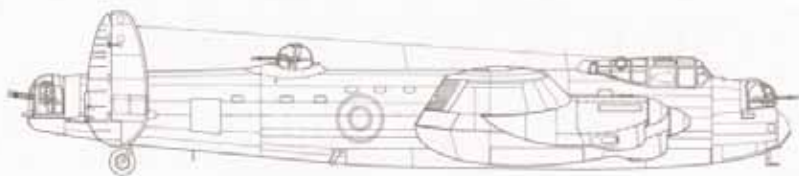
On Wednesday, 11th December, 2019, the band rang a Quarter Peal of Winchendon Bob Triples, 8 bells, in memory of the crew of Lancaster NG270, in 54m (10–0–9 in G).

Rung half muffled in remembrance of the crew, this being the 75th anniversary of the loss of the plane.

1288 Winchendon Bob Triples Composed by Tim E Rose

1 Taliya Rubendran, 2 Sue Marsden, 3 Nick Elks, 4 Diana Street, 5 Andrew Christie, 6 David Banks, Stuart Weston (C), 8 Julian Burton
The Lancaster NG270 was a Mk1 Lancaster built by Armstrong Whitworth Coventry and had only arrived at RAF Woolfox Lodge on the 9th November 1944, fresh from the factory and No. 5

Maintenance Unit, who prepared the aircraft for operational use. At 18.52 Hrs the aircraft lifted off from the end of the runway on the start of its training flight. Due to the high ice index ice formed on the bomber's wings and control surfaces Tragedy was only minutes away at 19.10Hrs. Lancaster NG270 nose-dived into the ground near Ailsworth, Northamptonshire (now Cambridgeshire) with the loss of the seven crew members.



Robert Allen, Twinwood Aviation Museum, wrote to Stuart “Thank you all so much for this really wonderful gesture. After 75 years the crew are still remembered which is fantastic and their memory lives on. I will put the photograph and video clips on the museums Facebook page thank you so much it is greatly appreciated.”

Robert Allen, Twinwood Aviation Museum, wrote to Stuart “Thank you all so much for this really wonderful gesture. After 75 years the crew are still remembered which is fantastic and their memory lives on. I will put the photograph and video clips on the museums Facebook page thank you so much it is greatly appreciated.”



William Baxter retires as Tower Captain for the Castor Benefice this month. William has managed the towers, their maintenance, ringers, and service ringing some 15 years. On Monday 2nd December at the Castor Bellringers Annual Christmas Dinner, William was presented with a bell (ironic) scotch (needed) and a cartoon drawn by John Elson and shown here. Annie was presented with flowers for her patience when he was away ringing and doing all the other required tasks. It has been a pleasure to serve

with William. His encouragement and fortitude has kept this wonderful activity at the heart of our church and villages. William said "I did work it out once that i had climbed right up to the bells over 2,000 times" I think he worked that out many years ago!

Now living even closer to the church William plans to keep an ear on the ringing and helping the new Tower Captain follow in his footsteps.

May he ring for many more years

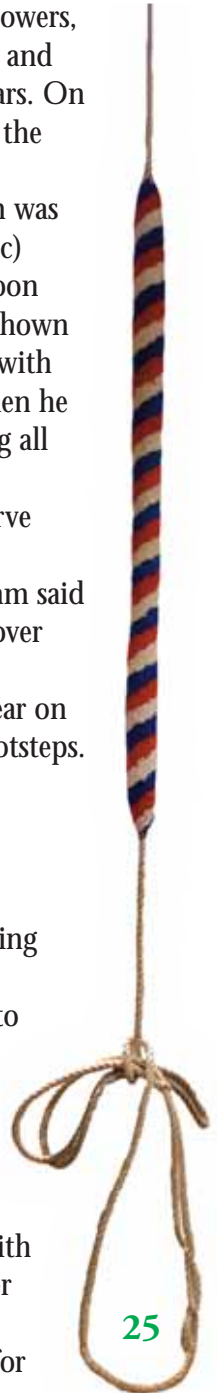
Julian Burton - Tower Captain.

The Experience of Learning to Ring, Castor Ringing School

I am proud to have recently 'graduated' from our fabulous Ringing School at St Kyneburgha, Castor.

Just under two years ago I contacted David Teall about learning to ring. He accepted the challenge with enthusiasm and kindness.

After a tour of the bells and watching one being rung, stood at Handstroke and Backstroke, I started the intimidating task of learning to handle a bell. From Backstroke alone, Handstroke to Transfer to putting it all together and breathing at the same time seemed impossible for what felt like weeks! With regular times when I felt I was going backwards and would never get 'it' to moments of complete clarity, it was a bit of a roller-coaster. Stand 10 times after a whole pull was a huge challenge for



me, miss one and start the counting again but eventually I was moved on. The Tutors all spent time watching as well as standing with me to help me finesse my technique and get to be in control of a bell. At times it was a little confusing, but I soon learned to take bits from everyone. Being in an environment where it was encouraged to ask questions and watch other people and critique their technique was a huge help as well. Once I could handle a bell, I started attending Nassington's tower practice as well as Castor and soon found out why ringing different bells at different towers improves your ringing skills and confidence. I was moved on to rounds once I could ring steadily. Why is it when adding timing to the mix, any handling skills you had disappear? Stays are touched and bells drop along with your confidence! This was really well the experience of the Castor teachers was essential to build you back up again and ring and increase confidences.

The next progression at Castor is 'whole-pull Kaleidoscope' as you start to learn the concepts of change ringing. One faster, one steady, one slower, one steady. With good ringers each side of you who really helped me think about the weight of my pull. So, a couple of weeks later I'm doing Kaleidoscope at handstroke and backstroke. I was just getting comfortable when I was promoted to the Plain Hunt column which, not only introduced the concept of hunting, but also an open handstroke at lead. Here we go again ... more handling issues and someone telling you to count your places when all you can think about is bell order! As you begin to settle into Plain Hunt, and in my experience, to begin with, that was completely based on bell order, you're promoted again to trebling and covering to a Doubles method. You really do have to count your places then, so this helps you to concentrate on that as well as starting to develop your rope-sight. For rope-sight improvement I was advised to stand behind the tenor

and see if I could see who they were following. It was really helpful and encouraged because the ringers are used to being watched and having people stand behind them.

At this point you get a Ringing Circles book. Oh my, this really is a brain overload. I'd been ringing Plain Hunt on the 5 & 6 at Castor and Nassington and trying to count those pesky places but thinking about blue lines ... there was a lot of 'feel the fear and do it anyway' going on! But, once again, you're gently encouraged and helped at Castor with some theory as well as practice getting a 'prime ring' with people who are steady ringers.



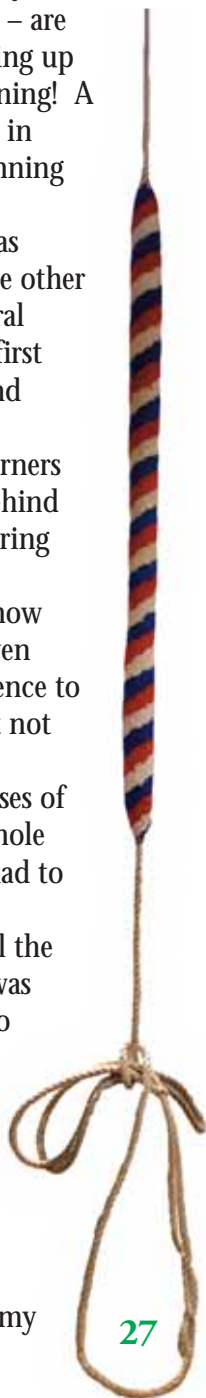
Once David feels you are ready for it, you move up to Bob Doubles on an inside bell. All the tips for method ringing – where you start, which way are you going, when you pass the treble, knowing the circle of work – are imparted but, when you start ringing it, knowing if you're dodging up or down requires some serious mental agility on a Saturday morning! A 'top tip' one Saturday morning about whom I was dodging with in third place made the whole thing so much easier and I was beginning to feel comfortable.

Just as I was learning to ring Bob Doubles on an inside bell, I was offered an opportunity to treble to a quarter peal. David and the other Tutors and Helpers allowed me to go back a step and I had several weeks trebling to touches of Bob Doubles. I probably rang my first quarter peal too soon if I am honest, but it was a great feeling and shortly followed by my second which was much better.

A Branch Outing gave the opportunity for a group of Castor learners to actually ring Bob Doubles with David (he normally stands behind the learner when they ring so I actually don't think I'd seen him ring other than helping with those learning to handle a bell!). David trebled and smiled at us as we were passing the treble, so we'd know what to do. Calm and reassuring, supportive and teaching us even when not stood behind! I know I wouldn't have had the confidence to ring Bob Doubles in front of so many experienced ringers had it not been for the team at Castor.

Back at the Ringing School, and a few more weeks of plain courses of Bob Doubles, then some bright spark said "Bob". Crikey – a whole new range of emotions and stress! For a couple of weeks I just had to do at least one plain course of Bob Doubles just to give me the necessary confidence. The wonderful team at Castor gave me all the time and suggestions of how I could learn to remember what I was doing, what to do when the Bob was called and what I had to do next. Eventually, with lots of help and gentle prompting from whoever was stood with me, I began to feel more relaxed and settle into the concept of a touch. Soon, two of us at a similar level were ringing together to give us both a longer ring in preparation for a Quarter Peal. Last November I rang my first Quarter on an inside bell. It took a few courses to start to relax but, at the end, I enjoyed it!

The following Saturday I received a Graduation Certificate and my time as a pupil at Castor Ringing School had come to an end. I



was

delighted to be asked to go back and be a Helper as this has given me an opportunity to pay back for all the hours of help and support that have gone into my ringing.

Learning to ring at Castor Ringing School has been a journey of highs and lows and sometimes complete confusion! I have loved every minute and I'm grateful for the help and support from all the Tutors and Helpers at Castor. Knowing people are there just to help you means you don't feel guilty for taking up someone else's ringing time as I did during a regular practice. I know a ringer (from a different area) who has not had the benefit of a Ringing School and, in the same time I took to do my Quarter Peal inside, they are still only ringing rounds, call changes and Tenoring to Plain Hunt. It's clear to me the benefits of learning to ring at Castor with such a great group of teachers and helpers.

Starting a new hobby is always fun, but meeting so many lovely people and being supported by some excellent Tutors and Helpers, has made my journey even more enjoyable. My grateful thanks to them all. I'd also like to thank the regular Castor Band for allowing the Ringing School to use their bells and, of course, my own band at Nassington for helping my learning, and any other ringers who have been good enough to ring with a novice like me. It means a lot to all learners, so please keep helping us!

Jane Robinson.

Ringing Remembers Recruit & Castor Graduate.

Kings Cliffe.

We celebrated Christmas and New Year in style by ringing for every service and were greatly appreciated by the village.

Our practices continue to be well attended and provide the opportunity for a number of regular visitors to advance their skills in ways that would be impossible in their own towers.



A Rose between two Thorns.

Ann and Phil are both working on Double Oxford under David's tutelage.

Pat Teall - Tower Correspondent.

Notes from Glington Tower February 2020

As always, we are indebted to our many non-resident ringers who continue to help us out for special events, as well as stalwart members who regularly arrive for Sunday morning ringing – often travelling quite a distance to attend.

On an extremely hot, August bank holiday Sunday, we had a wonderful time at the Christening service of Nicky, Alex's baby son. Most members of the tower were able to attend, and a lovely time was enjoyed by all.

In October our other friend, Celia (now living in Towcester), gave birth to a little girl, appropriately named "Hope", whom we are looking forward to welcoming to Glington at some time.

Approaching Christmas, St. Benedict's church staged its own "tree festival", filling one aisle with small trees decorated by each village organisation. The bells' group decorated its tree with small tinkling bells which looked very jolly and provoked much interest. Our bells' social was held prior to the holiday and was a happy event supported by partners and friends.

Moving forward to Christmas, we were able to ring for every service held in Glington including the midnight service. Again, we were indebted to our newest recruits in collaboration with Mandy and Michael from Maxey.

To greet the New Year, we are hoping to welcome yet more interested young people, in fact our tower captain is busier than ever with requests!

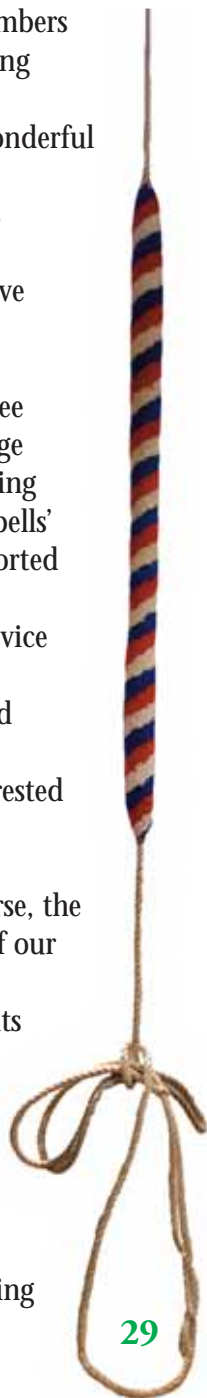
We have five weddings booked for this year already, and, of course, the ringing for VE Day on May 8th when we hope to ring at four of our local towers.

We meet every Thursday from 7:30pm until 9:00pm. If the lights are on do come on in!

Jill Cowcill - Tower Correspondent.

NASSINGTON TOWER REPORT January 2020

We continue to ring with a full band for all services held at Nassington. I make no apologies for including this as our main purpose in each report, as ringing for the Glory of God and calling the faithful to prayer, is why we have all our practices on both Monday on open bells and Friday on muffled bells. These



continue to be popular, allowing us to support our learners as they make progress. Whilst we have continued to concentrate on Bob Doubles, we've also had some specific Grandsire practices. We have encouraged everybody to ring these methods on different bells to widen their experience. Our Ringing Remembers Recruits have improved to the extent that they are now able to ring Quarter Peals.



Jane Webb, Julie Pocock, Helen Cornford, Jane Robinson, Caroline Mould and Alex Heaton with their first Quarter Peal certificates presented at the Branch AGM recently.

We celebrate their success.

We have continued to support learners from other Towers by having the Castor Ringing School ringing at Nassington, together with extra sessions for some new ringers from Wittering.

Having so many learners means that we do have to replace the odd stay and also maintain the bells regularly, which is done by our Steeple Keeper, Ronnie Fraser.

We have had two visiting bands over the winter. One included a number of younger ringers and the other rang a Quarter Peal of Rossandale Surprise Minor very competently.

Thank you to all those who continue to make Nassington such a friendly, welcoming and also improving tower.

Brian Hardie - Tower Captain

RUTLAND BRANCH

30

Branch Picnic & Barbecue

In September, in the small village of Hambleton overlooking

Rutland Water, a very successful “Bong for Your Burger” social event was held. It was a wonderful afternoon and the weather stayed fine for the occasion. There was ringing on the 5 bells of Hambleton tower before the picnic at the home of one of our newest ringers. Ringing Master Louis Totaro presided over the barbecue and great fun was enjoyed by all.

Website

Although still a “work in progress” Rutland branch has a revamped and updated website. www.rutlandbellringing.org It is now possible to contact the Tower Captain or Correspondent of any Rutland tower via an email form on the website. All email addresses are anonymous until the recipient chooses to respond. This should make it much easier for potential visiting bands to make contact.

The tower at All Saints, Oakham, now has a simulator in situ. This was a project spearheaded by the Ringing Master and Tower Captain, Louis Totaro, with the intention of making it portable. This would enhance training opportunities across the county. The branch received funding from the Guild to make this possible. This is the second simulator in Rutland, Uppingham tower has had a fixed simulator for about 5 years.

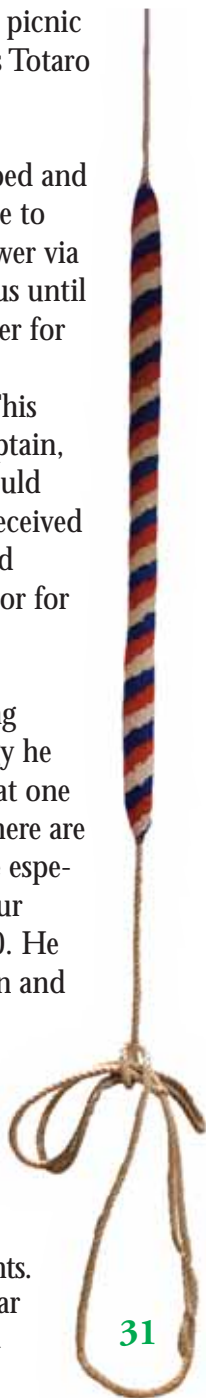
Branch Ringing Master

After three busy years as Ringing Master, Louis Totaro is stepping down from the role. Our grateful thanks for the time and energy he has spent leading the branch. Louis continues as tower captain at one of our busiest towers and, knowing how many other demands there are on his time – work, family, scouting – to name but a few, we are especially grateful to him for making time for the membership. At our AGM in January Alan Ellis was elected Ringing Master for 2020. He will be supported by two deputy ringing masters, Brian Newman and Roger Scholes.

Sue Webster - Rutland Branch Correspondent

THRAPSTON BRANCH

2019 has proved to be a very eventful year so far, with many highlights. Our year started with a very merry group ringing in the New Year at Woodford. A very purposeful A.G.M at Thrapston followed a few days later when a busy and varied ringing programme was



agreed for the Year, including continuing our very successful 6- bell monthly practices at St. Nicholas Islip.

Our first Branch Practice of the year took place at Weldon; always a good time to visit this very interesting Church especially with the wonderful array of Snowdrops carpeted throughout the Church yard. March and April led us to monthly meetings at Gt. Addington and St. Rumbold's at Stoke Doyle, which was extremely well – attended both by local ringers and visitors from afar.

In April we also took part in the Six – bell striking Competition at Cotterstock. The weather wasn't very kind to us but the Cream Teas were wonderful. We were delighted to be placed second.

Congratulations to our six ringers.

May brought a very successful Outing to the Northern end of the Diocese including one of our favourite venues at Deene; the lighter days allowing us to ring with no recourse to torches and flashlights. A celebration meal at one of the local watering-holes concluded a very happy day. Our thanks to Ted and Diane Buckby for organising this. We were able to ring at The Cathedral for Evensong in June. Our thanks to the Cathedral ringers for making us so welcome.

July brought more celebrations with our Summer at Ringstead, wonderfully hosted by Chris and Frank Jenkins; although rain did 'stop play' for a while but as always a 'back-up plan' was in place.

Through the Autumn we had our regular Branch meetings at Twywell, Brigstock and Woodford. An excellent Annual Branch Dinner at The Wheatsheaf at Titchmarsh followed in late November and a very enjoyable evening was shared by all. The New Year A.G.M.held at Ringstead was also very successful. Laurence Stapleton had decided to step down from being chairman. He had been in post for 35 years but ill- health had made his decision a very difficult one. The thanks of the whole branch were extended to Laurence for his faithful and diligent

service. Julie Catlin from Thrapston was duly elected as our new

Chairman. As we start a new Ringing Year The Thrapston Branch is very much in good heart. Two more Towers, Ringstead and Brigstock now have regular weekly practices and with support from neighbouring Towers and Branches

we are progressing to more Surprise Minor and Major ringing at Practice Nights as well as welcoming new and old ringers and visitors to our meetings. We look forward to many happy ringing times ahead



TOWCESTER BRANCH

How amazing is it that I've been ringing church bells for 5 years? I would never have believed that a hobby could be so fulfilling and offer so many new experiences and friends. Therefore, it's with some trepidation that I look to the year 2020 as we will be moving away from Towcester and heading south west to Somerset. When people ask if I'll miss Northamptonshire my comments are 'Definitely going to miss the bellringers!' So, it's with great thanks to this branch of lovely bell-ringers that I report on our branch activities for the past 6 months and for the last time.

Let's start with the our very successful Quarter Peal week in September, which was wholly due to Chris Bulleid putting out a wish list for us all and then making it happen! 21 people were involved in ringing the 8 Quarters and these ranged from two of our 2017 recruits ringing the treble to more long-standing ringers managing Stedman and Spliced Surprise. It was a busy week with a lot of beer drunk but we are planning and looking forward to doing it again this year..



Geoff White (On the left) achieving his first quarter in September 2019

As successful as the QP week is the continuing winning streak of the Branch in striking contests The Harry Wooding Memorial Trophy was successfully retained at the Guild 8 bell striking compe- tition with Grandsire Triples. This complements the 6 bell trophy and our recent win against North Bucks. It should be said that these winning ringers are not the same as those achieving their first QPs earlier, but they are very much our inspiration! As usual our Autumn Quiz

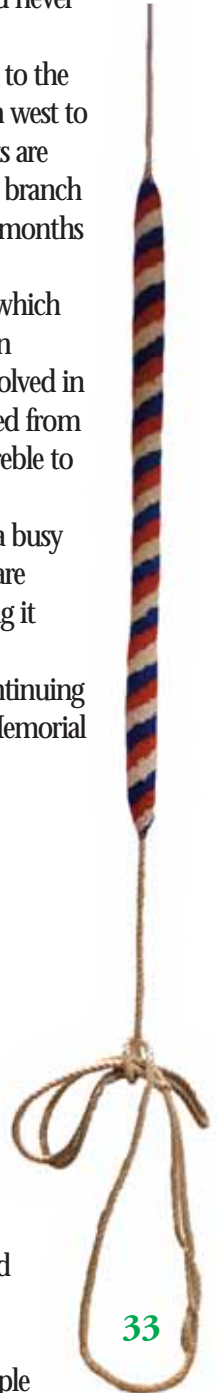
was well attended and enjoyed by all. Many thanks to Anne Fletcher for setting the Quiz questions and John Pardoe for organising the fish and chips. Ringing beforehand was at Towcester and much enjoyed by those who attended. Once again, we were able to fill a private dining area at The Boat inn with 50 people



David Gott on the right achieving his first quarter in September 2019



Luisa Barrios on the left achieving her first quarter just before Xmas



at our 57th Annual Dinner. It really is a lovely annual event and each year I am surprised by how much we enjoy the formality and traditions of the get together. We were delighted that Rev Paula Challen was able to join us to give a response to the toast to the church and we thoroughly enjoyed a handbell rendition of 3 leads of Oxford Treble Bob Major by Chris and Margaret Bulleid, Anne Fletcher and Andrew Spencer.

At the dinner we were able to collect £200 to go towards the Towcester Bells Repair Fund. This money raising project has been a busy time for the Towcester bellringers and they have successfully raised the £ 13,800 needed to replace the original Todmorden wheels and give the bells some general repairs.

In January we held our AGM at Cosgrove. Our early ring at SS Peter and Paul was well supported, indeed there were a

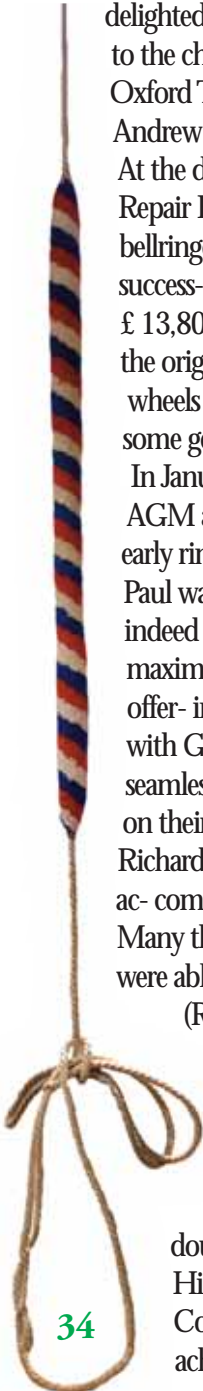
maximum number of people in the Bell Tower! We even had baby Hope offering support to a surprise method. Richard Allton kicked off the ringing with Grandsire Minor which initially caused confusion but was then rung seamlessly. It was lovely to have Alfie and George (both 12) with us. The look on their faces showed the thrill of ringing in a new tower with different bells. Richard Yates took the always touching service and the hymns were beautifully accompanied by an old friend of Towcester Branch, Jonathan Humbert. Many thanks to Ruth Stokes and her team for a fabulous tea and to top it all we were able to welcome 5 new members. John Armitage and Joanna Gush

(Roade), Janet Bond (Wicken), Alfie Newnham and George Brand (Pattishall) Towcester Branch continues to offer recruitment and training to new and developing bellringers. This is done across several towers and it is very helpful that following our Open Day in 2017 we now have 2 practices aimed at giving our new ringers more rope and ringing time. Bradden on a Wednesday is an opportunity to try doubles methods with good support from experienced ringers, and Cold Higham on a Saturday morning focuses on Foundation Skills.

Congratulations should go to Caroline Blackwell and Janet Bond for achieving ART level 5. Also well done to Jill Faiers for getting level 4, Andy



Helen Alton fundraising for Towcester Bells plus displaying The Branch's trophies.



Blackwell for level 3, Geoff White for getting level 2 and Alfie Newnham and George Brand for achieving level 1.

Our branch practice on the lovely newly hung bells at Weedon was fabulous. Fabulous because we had a great turn out including many of our new and younger ringers and fabulous because we had an enthusiastic and encouraging group of ringers. We enjoyed ringing on the lovely 8 and look forward to returning soon. Other branch practices have been postponed or cancelled due to other commitments but we did squeeze an evening at Gayton this February where a group of us again enjoyed good company and good ringing.

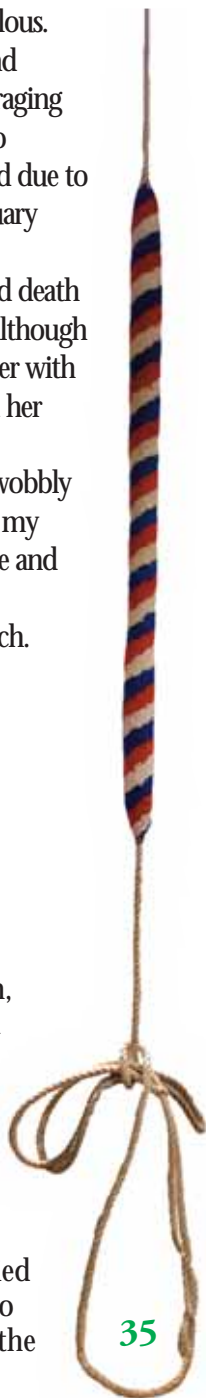
Before I come to the end of this newsletter, I should mention the very sad death of Claire Delves. Claire joined us as a learner and member 4 years ago. Although she was not well enough to ring recently, I know that ringing provided her with so much joy and pleasure and contact with groups of people that offered her support during difficult times.

As I look at my newsletter notes it amuses me that on another page is a wobbly line that I can now recognise as Cambridge. What did I used to do with my time before I had methods to learn, practices to go to, dinners to organise and outings to attend? The surprise is not just Cambridge but the enjoyment and fun provided by ringing and particularly Towcester Branch. As usual welcome anyone to our practices which can be found at www.towcesterbranch.org.uk

Nic Boyd

WELLINGBOROUGH BRANCH

In January, Bozeat held an open day. Open from 1pm until 4pm, approximately 50 visitors came to the church to see banners and photographic displays of towers, bells and bellringers past and present from Bozeat tower, and also Easton Maudit & Wollaston. A working bell model and a video of a bell being rung up were on display in the church. Most importantly, tea and cake were on offer. About 30 people went up into the belfry for a demonstration and to have a go at ringing back strokes. From this, about 10 potential recruits were identified and the organising of tied bell practises has begun. Everyone who came to visit was very interested in the bells and appreciative of the efforts to keep them ringing so it seemed an excellent PR exercise for ringing in general.



At Earls Barton, a very successful open event was organised towards the end of 2019 which resulted in 3 new recruits beginning to learn to ring. Orlingbury tower participated in an outing to London with Kettering and Cransley. The towers visited were West Ham, Limehouse, St. Giles Cripplegate, St. Magnus the Martyr and Merton. Lunch was at The Crosse Keys in the City and the whole thing was organised by Rhys Skillman.

From Irchester tower, both Margaret & Alan Fuller and Marion & Jim Whittaker celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries in November 2019.

At Ecton, following very generous support from the Church and Village, as well as grants from the branch and guild, the clappers have been refurbished and reinstalled and new ropes have been ordered.

At Yardley Hastings, 6 ringers were recruited for 'Ringing Remembers' and taught using the ART methodology, of which 5 have continue ringing. Practises are well attended including up to 6 strong ringers regularly visiting from other towers. Harvey has organised an outing to North Bucks and the Ouse Valley in the spring, and in the summer, a masterclass in touches of Grandsire doubles will be organised. Our branch steward Tim also visited to inspect the pulleys, he suggested rebuilding 6 of them, but nothing to worry about in the immediate term.

In June 2019, Thomas Mullett, just 15, decided he would like to learn to ring the bells at Wollaston. He was taught initially by John Beresford and was a regular at our weekly practices until we had to close the tower during September and October 2019 for essential maintenance work to be carried out in the spire. During our 6 weeks closure, Thomas continued to learn by attending practices at Irchester tower, and under the tutelage of Harry Curtis made significant improvement. As Thomas's Mum,

Julie, had to ferry him to Irchester, sweet-tongued Harry persuaded Julie to have a try at ringing as well. Julie is now progressing well and we

were delighted to ring for her wedding to Paul Rogers, on Saturday 15th February. Ringers from Irchester, Earls Barton and Wollaston attended the wedding and rang with the bride following the ceremony performed by Rev. Dawn Airey. As far as I am aware, Julie



is our first 'ringing bride'. We wish her and Paul a very happy life together.

Thomas Coulter-Brophy -Wellingborough Correspondent

PRO's PIECE

In bright, early autumn sunshine a very successful Summer Festival was held at Rushden. Afternoon ringing preceded the main event at Stanwick, where 15 ringers came to enjoy some excellent ringing on the lightweight six.

Six teams were registered for the 8-bell competition itself. It was a pleasure to be able to sit in the warm and sunny churchyard and listen to the bells as well as enjoying a wonderful tea provided by the ringers and friends at St. Mary's.

Special thanks went to Derek and Sue Jones for stepping in as judges at very short notice. After much deliberation Towcester were announced as the winners with Kettering and Wellingborough taking the 2nd and 3rd places.

Towcester were also very well placed in the 12-bell striking competition for The Robert Smith Trophy. Not only did Towcester host this event but they were very commendably placed 3rd.

The final transfer of the old front eight bells from Kettering was finally completed, through the Keltek Trust, to Strensham in Worcestershire. The article about the bells and Strensham were front page news in The Ringing World for January 24th.

The 'Pop Up' Banners have been well used this year for Church Open Days , hopefully to encourage new ringers and give visitors and friends a small insight into the world of Ringing. There are also publicity leaflets available as well as Guild T-Shirts and Fleeces to order.

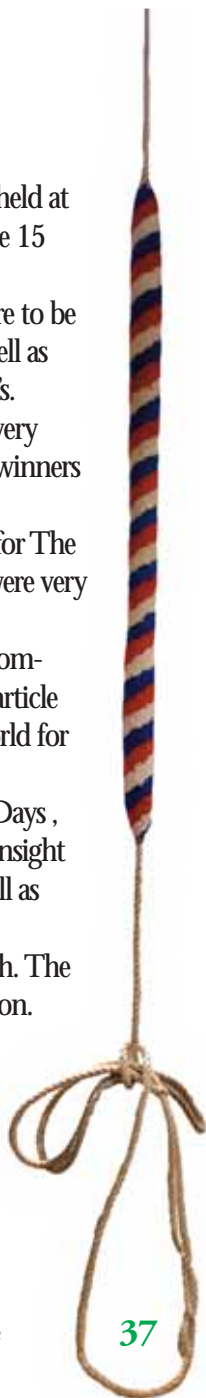
The next Guild Event will be The Spring Festival on Saturday April 25th. The Culworth Branch are hosting this with the 6-bell competition at Helmdon.

Do come along , with your team and enjoy ringing these lovely bells for this Festival.

Alison Byrnes PRO

WEBMASTER'S WITTERINGS

The Guild website had 62,518 hits in 2019 (55,037 in 2018), with the Latest Guild News, Towers and Events pages being the most popular.



Please help us all to keep up to date by notifying me of any errors, amendments, latest ringing news, practice nights, events and changes to tower correspondent which need to be accompanied by a DPA Consent Form please, as they happen.

Geoff Pullin

National Trust Quarter Peal

I got together a group of National Trust Volunteers and members to ring a quarter peal at Moreton Pinkney

Moreton Pinkney, Northamptonshire
St Mary the Virgin
Thursday, 30 January 2020 (6-2-26 in A)
1260 Doubles (1p/2m)
Stedman, Grandsire, Plain Bob
1 Nick Lowe
2 Hilary Aslett
3 John Keddie
4 Ian Chapple
5 Nigel Williams (C)
6 Jonathan Stuart

For the 125th Anniversary of the founding of The National Trust and the 40th anniversary of the acquisition of Canons Ashby House by the Trust. The band included two volunteers at Canons Ashby and four local NT members. The House lies about a mile from this church

Hilary Aslett

An update on Kettering's old bells.

When Kettering's old 12 bells were replaced in 2004, the front 8 bells were rescued by the Keltek Trust and the six heaviest found homes around the world.

3rd: Maplebeck, Nottinghamshire, 3rd of a four

4th: Treble of six at Sibson Leicestershire

5th & 6th: both installed for chiming in Holonga, Tonga & Ireland, respectively

7th: replaced the cracked 2nd at Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire

8th: replaced the 7th of an 8 at Coleorton, Leicestershire.

The two smallest ones only dated from 1979, and were offered by the Keltek Trust to Church Knowle in Dorset. After more than a decade, however, this project never got off the ground and instead the bells were offered to Strensham, a redundant church in Worcestershire under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. You've probably heard of Strensham because of the services on the M5.

Although it is a closed church, there has been lots of activity going on



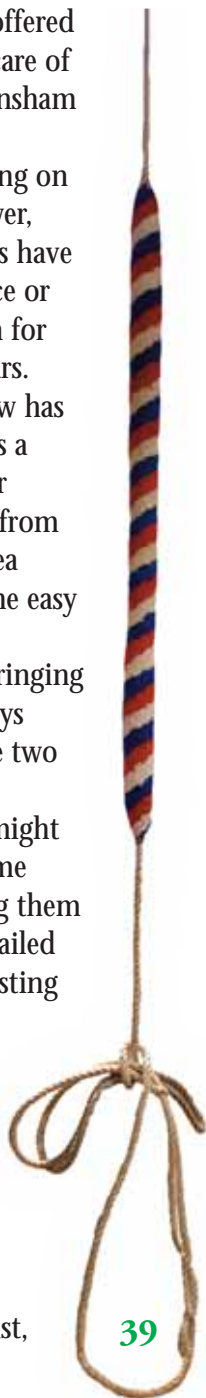
in the bell tower, where the bells have been rung once or twice a month for the last 20 years. Strensham now has a reputation as a teaching tower where ringers from around the area make use of the easy going bells to develop their ringing skills. It's always

been a long term plan of mine to see if it was possible to squeeze two more bells in to offer a better teaching facility.

I asked Matthew Higby to look at how the two Kettering bells might actually fit at Strensham. The bells themselves would require some minimal tuning, and luckily there was just enough room to hang them next to the existing medieval frame. Matthew put together a detailed plan which would also include some restoration work on the existing bells which were last rehung in 1911. The Keltek Trust then confirmed that we could indeed have the Kettering bells subject to obtaining permission to hang them.

The first of the required permissions was from the Churches Conservation Trust, and since the church is no longer part of the Worcester Diocese, we also needed to obtain Grade I Listed Building Consent. Having submitted the necessary plans and drawings, both of these permissions were successfully obtained.

So, in August 2016, the bells were obtained from the Keltek Trust, who kindly donated one of them. Following tuning at



Loughborough, the bells were delivered to the tower ready for the work to begin.

The CCT then gave permission to retune Strensham's 3 oldest bells dating from 1704/5, which was done at Matthew Higby's workshop.

The results are superb and these bells now perfectly match the other bells which are all modern sounding 20th century bells.

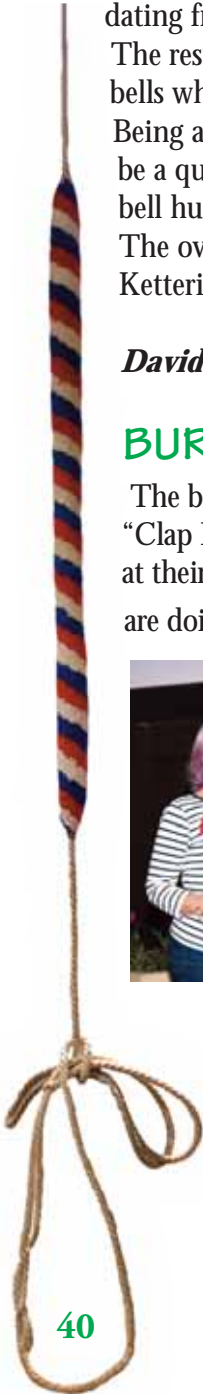
Being a volunteer led project on one evening a week, it wasn't going to be a quick job, but we weren't in any hurry. One by one we got each bell hung, and finally everything was finished in December 2019.

The overall result is a superb sounding ring of eight in which the Kettering bells have found a new home and a new purpose.

David Bagley

BURTON LATIMER ST MARY THE VIRGIN

The bell ringers at St Mary the Virgin have been taking part in the "Clap For Our Carers" at 20:00 on Thursdays by each ringing hand bells at their homes in appreciation of the work all NHS workers and carers are doing during this difficult time with the Coronavirus Pandemic



The Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers New Website



Welcome!



Bell Ringing



Learning to Ring



About This Guild



Latest Guild News



Guild Officers



Branch Officers



Tower Information



Events



Competitions



Guild Newsletters



Guild Shirts



Bell Maintenance



Bell Fund



Bits & Bobs



History



New Website Address <http://www.pdg.btck.co.uk/>.

GUILD EVENTS 2020

Due to the current situation with Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic please see Guild Website for more details as most events in the up and coming months have been cancelled



