

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD  
OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



*Newsletter*  
*March 2021*

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## President's Preamble

Every month I feel that we might be allowed to ring again in just another few weeks, and by the end of that month that much hoped for day has receded a little further into the future.

Will that day ever come? The vaccine roll-out is gathering pace, remaining a ray of sunshine just over the hill. That day WILL come! Sometime this Summer I sincerely hope.

In the meantime we will have to make even more use of Zoom and Ringing Room to both keep up with our fellow ringers, and keep our "little grey cells" active.

To prepare us for restarting ringing the Guild is planning to run a series of "Virtual" ringing training sessions around Easter over Zoom, covering things like calling changes, theory of methods, and tower maintenance.

Please let me know what you would like a session to focus on and I will try to include it.

I do hope you will support this new venture and sign up for some sessions.

It was good to chat to many of you in November, even if "virtually", thank you for your comments many of which the Officers are taking forward. If real meetings seem unlikely after Easter I will arrange another "President's Progress" during May – watch your newsletters for more information.

Many thanks to our Secretary Helen for continuing to keep us all informed, challenged, and entertained over the winter, and to all the Officers for their hard work keeping us ringers together in so many ways. Well done to you all.

*Alistair Donaldson*

## The Secretary Sees

A light at the end of the tunnel. It's been a long dark winter and the first signs of spring are most welcome. While we may not be back to ringing quite yet, the government's roadmap to move out of lockdown gives us hope that we will start back to ringing over the summer.



That at least gives us an opportunity to plan for the future.

In the short term, the Spring Meeting will not be in April; restrictions make that a non-starter. The Northampton branch have offered to arrange this for 21st August, so get that pencilled in the diary. We may need to change its name, but that's a minor detail.

There are a number of activities ongoing, looking at how we move back into ringing. There are multiple people involved in the Survival and Recovery activity being undertaken by ART and the CCCBR. They have a toolbox of ideas that are well worth a look at.

It can be accessed here: <http://ringingteachers.org/survival-and-recovery-toolbox>

The Guild is also looking at moving forward with a youth ringing group, aiming to bring together younger ringers, to organise practices for them to socialise with their peers in a ringing setting. This will benefit from a team of people to support, so if you are interested in shaping the future of ringing, please get in touch. If you are a younger person, what ringing opportunities would benefit you and your peers? We want to hear from you most of all.

I find myself looking forward to the rest of the year more optimistically. Maybe it is just the slightly longer days, the glimpse of the sun occasionally or the way the garden is springing back to life. Maybe it is the fact that people are happily reporting they have had their vaccinations. Maybe it is that I can foresee a time when I can stop sending out updates on the state of ringing (or not). I hope that we are about to put this most difficult of years behind us and move forward together.

*Helen Allton*

## Newsletter Editor

After holding the position of newsletter editor for the past twelve years I have decided to step down from the post and allow someone else to take over.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed news items over the years, as without you my job would not have been possible.

*Chris Pearson*



# *News from the Branches*

## **Culworth Branch - No news this time**

## **Daventry Branch**

### **Never before**

When the November coronavirus pandemic shut-down was eased, it gave some opportunity for ringing well-spaced bells during December up to Christmas Day. At Daventry, we were able to ring in face coverings on five bells - 3, 5, 7, 9, 10 or six if treble and tenor were rung by the same household. The doors and window were wide open during ringing for the churchwarden's wedding and Sunday services. The Christmas Day service was hastily transferred to Zoom. At Badby in December we had the most services in a month since January 2020 and were able to ring for all four of them, using 1, 3 and 5, which were deemed to be warmer to ring than 2, 4 and 6 with the door wide open! There was similar ringing at Byfield, Litchborough and Staverton. We were plunged back into a further shut-down from Boxing Day until the time of writing.

### **'Meetings'**

Our new Guild President encouragingly visited the branch on November 7 by setting up a Zoom call. A few of us assembled for a natter.



*A format that we have got used to seeing on our screens!*



We held two branch gatherings using Zoom webinar kindly supplied by Leanne Martin.

It was nice to see so many faces at the Carol Gathering on December 12. I think 21 devices connected with 33 people plus a cat and a dog to be seen or heard.

We were privileged to have Kings College Cambridge and the Albert Hall providing carols. Michael and Barbara gave us their usual style of presentation, Val read Betjeman on Bristol bells. Leanne juggled the controls including 'mute all' and Michael recovered quickly from being cut off in mid-flow by chair Jane! Our internet provided staccato videos, a few jerky movements and tinned sound but it was nice to see people again!

To meet Guild rules, we decided to hold our AGM by Zoom at 6pm but moved the date to January 30 to give the Treasurer more time to finalise the accounts and have them examined. We weren't going anywhere else that month!

There were 32 present, including three visiting Guild Officers (President, Secretary, Steward) and Ed Mortimer Zoomed in from Canada (6" snow and -15oC). We are now veterans of using Zoom and Jane Rands kept us all in order. Michael Houghton set us off with prayers and remembering members who have died since the last AGM. The reports were short. All officers and committee were re-elected:

The 'Tower Rota' was left sparse:

**March 13** - Branch Quiz by Zoom organised by Shirley Waterhouse.

**May 8** - an outing was postponed to 2022 and replaced with a branch gathering by Zoom or in person depending on circumstances.

**June 12** - if meetings in person are possible by then, we are scheduled to host the Guild AGM at Weedon, otherwise the Guild will reorganize to cope, like 2020.

**July or August** - a branch walk organised by Alison Willgress, most likely without ringing.

The branch committee will meet to recommend a ringing programme to suit any relaxation of pandemic restrictions as the huge vaccination campaign takes effect.

It was noted that the branch website, which was set up in 2012, will need to be moved to a new provider after BT announced that its free Community facility will close in May 2021.



## **Towers**

Ian Willgess has kept us up to date with progress at Church Stowe. The tuning of the original 1590 bell 2 from the heritage ring of four caused them to sound in the minor scale, so it has been 'retired' to be a chiming bell, whereas the 1390 tenor has been given a new lease of life! A new bell 3 was cast in October, complete with canons and has been tuned to give a major scale ring of five. All the bells and the new treble, a recycled Warner bell, were cleaned and assembled with new fittings ready for delivery on February 1. They were unloaded under the gaze of well-distanced villagers by volunteers ready to install them under Stephen Westerman's direction. In the meantime a vast amount of major structural masonry work has taken place on the safely leaning tower with Saxon origins, so much so that the fresh mortar and render will need to be undisturbed by ringing of the bells well into the summer.



*Sir Peter Ellwood directs where new bell 3 and the new-to-Stowe treble are to go.*

Brian Foley has been testing his patience for many weeks trying to make the clock chiming mechanism at Holy Cross, Daventry work reliably. He Zoomed into our AGM to say he was getting there. We understand that now the night silencing system upsets the chime synchronisation!

## **People**

We have kept in touch through phone calls, local Zoom





meetings and bi-monthly 'omnibus' emails, which have been greatly enhanced by Helen's Guild updates, puzzles, encouragements and items of interest. Many of our members are in the first two priority groups for vaccination against COVID-19, so there has been much exchanging of experiences of booking systems and locations.

We do have some younger members! After a summer of A level chaos and his mother having a quadruple coronary bypass op in mid-August, John Thompson of Barby chose Northampton University, where most of his lectures are presently on-line. Miles Baker of Whilton, after 'being cheated out of' taking his A level exams, got to Durham University in a fairly severe lockdown!

Michael Highton has kept us up to date with his successful chemotherapy. He is due for an ablation to burn out the tumour in March. He adds that he would love to ring one last quarter with the footnote saying that it is to give thanks for a good outcome so far.

Jackie Bailey, Byfield is recovering well from her major operation and has had no more problem with suspected gall stones.

Jackie Gibbard, Willoughby is due to see three specialists somewhen, who, we all hope, will be able to diagnose the causes and sort out the extreme pain that has been debilitating her for so long.

Paul and Emily Richardson, Byfield are moving from Woodford Halse to a house with daughter Hazel in Kings Sutton which has an annex for 'oldies' and where they can be kept under observation!

John Neale, now retired from Daventry ringing, came to greet the ringers outside the tower before Christmas, bearing sweets ready for the time when we can ring again.

Janet Bowers is well and coping but not with Zoom!

We heard in January that narrow-boater Sue Merrett & Cassie were OK, and that the pandemic doesn't really affect them, other than the increased number of people walking along the muddy towpath. Unlike last spring, Sue is not inclined to sit outside at the moment!

Ed Mortimer has moved to St Albert, Alberta, Canada, to be with his mother. He sold his cruiser Wandering Canuck Too, after finding that having to self-isolate for months on the rivers and canals of France was not very satisfying. As mentioned, he attended our AGM.





Ian and Val Calvert, lately of Weedon, sent greetings from Tiptree, where there were two services on Sundays to cope with numbers but as there's only one bell to chime no problem with social distancing. Their ringing at Tollesbury awaits the clergy being willing to allow services.

John Harding, lately of Newnham, let us know that George Mitchell had sadly died in May. Those folk who took part in the Hardings' Bridlington weekends will remember George and Georgie's hotels where we stayed.

Jan Collins was about to start a different course of chemotherapy at Leicester in February.

The Vicar of Daventry sent an electronic Christmas card to all the ringers.

Richard and Val Hartley and Christine Rodhouse thanked their sponsors for the £710 that they raised for the NHCT Ride and Stride back in September.

The Revd Paul Trathen, was instituted as Rector of Byfield (the Fiveways Benefice) on January 6, 2021 via Zoom.

Sadly we have lost more members through death.

Eric Bates died on October 25, aged 89 years. Eric joined the Branch at Byfield around 1974 but had not rung for several years. His name was cast onto the new treble at Byfield in 1991. He had been organist at Byfield from 1949.

David Cooke died on October 26, aged 80. He had been poorly for a few years with a succession of ailments, which stopped him from ringing. He joined the Branch in 1995 after moving to Newnham when he was a craft instructor at HMYOI Onley. He made the glass display case for Fred Hutt's collection of ringing association badges in Byfield belfry. David helped with teas at our branch meeting at Newnham in February 2020.

Hilda Collins died peacefully on January 21 aged 95 with coronavirus. As Hilda Smith, she joined the Branch at Nether (or 'Lower' as it was until January 1, 1966)

Heyford in 1944 having learned to ring when the ban on ringing during World War II was lifted in 1943 along with Bill Collins, who she married four years later. Hilda was Branch Secretary and Treasurer in 1946 and then a member of the Branch Committee in 1980-1, GMC Rep 1984 – 91, Branch Treasurer 1986-8, a Synod Rep on the Guild Management Committee 1997 -2008 and was elected a Life Honorary Member of the Guild at the AGM in 2014. Hilda last rang at a branch meeting in



December 2009 but remained a stalwart attender until 2014. Hilda was also a member of the Ladies Guild.

Sadly, attendance at all the funerals was severely limited by government pandemic regulations.

*Geoff Pullin - Daventry Correspondent.*

**Guilsborough Branch - No news this time**

**Kettering Branch - No news this time**

**Northampton Branch - No news this time**

**Peterborough Branch**

**Castor, St Kyneburgha.**

During the current lock down, we have been doing the following.

- I am sending out regular emails to the Castor Tower Band. Relaying the Branch, Guild, CoE and HMG/PHE updates.
- We held our AGM on Zoom.
- Ringing a single bell for Sunday Service even for open church when there is no formal service.
- Tolling for villagers (hopefully not too often).

*Julian Burton - Tower Captain.*

**NASSINGTON St Mary the Virgin and All Saints  
March 2021**

Although we have had to curtail our ringing yet again since our last report in September 2020, we were able to do some ringing in the period.

During September and October, we rang for Sunday Services, with strict precautions in place, of course. We have been able to ring, successfully, Bob Doubles on



occasions. Also, we have rung Plain Hunt Doubles and Plain Hunt Minor, sometimes spliced, as well as lots of Call Changes. Everybody enjoyed being able to ring 'real' bells for this limited time. Recently we have tolled the tenor, half muffled, for a number of funerals, which have, unfortunately, been a consequence of the Covid pandemic.

We have continued our regular Friday Morning Practices in Ringing Room, normally with eleven or twelve ringers. We have moved on from Plain Hunt Doubles and Plain Hunt Minor to Grandsire Doubles and Bob Doubles. Although it is not the same as ringing 'real' bells, it has allowed us to meet regularly to socialise and to learn new methods, such as Reverse Canterbury, Grandsire Doubles with bobs and Bob Minor, which we have very rarely rung on 'real' bells. Let's hope this progression transfers into ringing on the bells once we are allowed to do so again.

We have continued to support the trainee band at Wittering. They were just at the point of handling a bell when the first lockdown occurred, so have been unable to ring at all since then. To support them we have arranged a Ringing Room session on Tuesday evenings, where they have progressed from Rounds through Call Changes to Plain Hunt Doubles and now Grandsire Doubles. This is a significant progression, as one or two had only had a few lessons in handling. Thus, here at Nassington, we have been able to maintain the spirit of our band during these strange times.

***Brian Hardie - Tower Captain***

### **Peterborough, St Mary's.**

St Mary's has been ringing online, with the aid of Ringing Room since late April 2020. We regularly meet each Thursday from 7:15 - 8:00pm and although it doesn't replace the real thing it is good to catch up with folk with the aid of Zoom. Some have mastered Cambridge and looking forward to testing out our skills when we get back ringing.

Our thoughts have recently turned to when we all get parole from lockdown. After being forced to go cold turkey from QPs, we have got a lot of catching up to do and to be in tip top form for the Queen's 70th Coronation celebration.

If you would like to join us in the interim on Ringing Room or would like to join us for a QP or book a future peal please do get in touch.

***Andrew Christie***

***Bells@peterborough-stmarys.org.uk***



## **Ufford, St Andrew.**

Sadly, there has not been any ringing at St Andrews Church since last July although the tenor has been kept busy sounding over the village as it strikes in time with the clock chiming the hour. We have had maintenance work done cleaning and oiling the bells and recently work has been carried out in the bell room making good the louvred windows in readiness so once permissions are given, we are ready to let the bells of Ufford ring out again.

I have been ringing virtually with Nassington tower which has been so helpful and hopefully I will be back ringing for real as we are all hoping to be.

***Sally Hudson. Tower Captain/Correspondent***

*Terry Wright - Peterborough Correspondent.*

## **Rutland Branch - No news this time**

## **Thrapston Branch - No news this time**

## **Towcester Branch**

When I last compiled the Branch Newsletter we were in lockdown 1 we have subsequently had lockdown 2 and are now currently in lockdown 3!

Not to be thwarted by Covid on the 24th October 2020 the Branch ran its annual Fish and Chip Supper and quiz on zoom very successfully, the zoom master being Chris Bulleid and the quiz master Richard Yates.

There were approximately 6 teams. Teams split off into break out rooms and discussed answers. Congratulations go to the winning team Richard and Helen Allton, Jonathan and Barbara King and Simon and Kathy Dixon.

On the 25th October 2020 ringing commenced on 3 bells at Greens Norton and Bradden for the first time since lockdown in March 2020, Bradden had brand new ropes blessed by Rev. Lulu Perry. Also on the 25th George (11 years old) one of our junior ringers rang for service at Holy Cross Pattishall, he rang his bell up, rang call changes and rang his bell down perfectly, well done George and well done Margaret Bulleid who taught him to ring.

Our annual Branch Dinner that normally takes place at



the end of November had to be cancelled and as Richard Yates observed it was the first time in 50 Years that this has happened, it has now been re-scheduled for November 27th 2021.

Just shortly after this as of midnight on the 4th November 2020 we went back into deeper lockdown and all ringing and regular worship was suspended for 1 month!

Meanwhile our branch ringing master has continued with his twice weekly ringing room sessions where we have rung a variety of different methods including St Nicholas at Christmas, keeping up the camaraderie and good cheer. Although I know this is small fry I'm proud to say I've learnt to treble bob and have rung inside to plain bob triples. I've also compiled a list for good excuses for when one is back in the ringing chamber here are some of the more notable ones that have made us laugh:- 'trouble with the internet, my earphones fell out, twitchy finger, the sun was in my eyes, stop bashing the space bar, someone's ringing my bell, the young farmers come to collect my Christmas tree, I've burnt my space bar finger!' And of course there's the quote of 2020 "You're on mute!!" Seriously though Ringing Room has taken off all over the world and people are now ringing quarter peals both on tower bells and handbells... it's an amazing piece of technology and has certainly filled the void for the time being and has helped many with developing the skills associated with bell ringing.

Ringing Room also commenced for Pattishall junior ringers on Saturday mornings, a little light relief from home schooling, hosted by Alan Faiers and run by Margaret Bulleid for Alfie, George and Giorgia, they managed to plain hunt fairly successfully. Margaret Bulleid also commenced one to one tied bell practice for the juniors at Holy Cross Pattishall.

There has of course been little or no ringing at all within the branch apart from on Christmas Day when 6 Bells were rung at Pattishall for Christmas Day service, one resident remarked it was joyous to hear the bells and it gave them hope...we were so glad to hear that. In Bradden 5 Bells were rung, 120 of Grandsire and later in the day 120 of Stedman. Bells were also rung in Towcester and Ashton. All the above done according to current guidelines.

In December 2020 Phil Cahill sadly passed away as many of you would remember he was instrumental in getting Blisworth Bells re-hung and augmented to 6. He worked tirelessly to raise the money needed and we have a lot to thank him for. He was a school teacher and a very talented artist, he painted a picture of the Greens Norton ringers which hangs in the Butchers Arms in Greens Norton.





I also have to report that Father James Atwell who was vicar of Towcester at the time of the bell project and branch chairman then subsequently provost of Bury St. Edmunds and then translated to be Dean of Winchester, had sadly passed away in December 2020.

On the 5th December 2020 Jim and Betty Linnell celebrated 50 years of marriage, the branch sent them a congratulatory bouquet of flowers. Our Branch steward Jonathon Stuart sent this report to be included in the newsletter:-

‘The acclaimed ring of twelve at St Lawrence's Towcester was due a refurbishment in April 2020 but, like so many projects, this was delayed by Covid restrictions and closures. Work started in the autumn when churches reopened, and was finally completed in December. This involved replacing the wheels on 6 to 12, which had been inherited in 1990 with the bells from Christ Church, Todmorden. The wheels dated back to 1897 and had reached the end of their useful lives. Other work included replacing worn bearings, work to sliders and improvements to rope paths, all completed in time for Christmas ringing, only for new closures to be reimposed immediately afterwards. The band are understandably impatient to be making full use of their bells again, but for now they remain silent.’

Attached was this rather dramatic picture of Chris Bulleid removing some stubborn bolts, we always knew he was a bright spark



## Happy 90th Birthday James (Jim) Linnell.



On Sunday 7th February friends of Jim Linnell joined him on a surprise Zoom Call to celebrate his 90th Birthday. There were friends from all over the diocese and also some from as far away as Cumbria, Jim who was elected to the Ancient Society of College Youths in 1959, was also delighted that Susan (Swaz) Apter, Master of the ASCY, joined the call to add her congratulations on his landmark birthday.

Once everyone had joined the call and surprise was sprung Nigel Williams introduced Jim with a résumé of his peal history, he has rung a total of 428 peals and a few of the landmarks from these are:

He rang his first peal on 19th December 1957 to celebrate the first birthday of Richard William Yates (the current Chairman of the Towcester Branch PDG) and this peal was conducted by William (Bill) A Yates Richard late father.

His slowest peal was 5056 Cambridge Surprise Major at Sherborne Abbey which was rung 4 hours 8 minutes on 10th September 1966.

His quickest peal was 5040 Spliced Surprise Minor at Helmdon which was rung in 2 hours 6 minutes, now there is still some debate regarding the correct record of the time for this peal – however Jim maintains that he can't possibly remember and this is how it's recorded in the Ringing World.

Then in March 1968 Jim rang his first peal with a certain Betty Mansfield who of course became Betty Linnell in 1970.

Details of all these peals are recorded below.





Jim has always been there to teach people in the art of Church Bell Ringing and then encourage them to develop and expand their skills and knowledge. On the call was, Luisa Barrios, Georgina Morrell, Geoff White and David Gott who were recruited through the Ringing Remembers initiative and Jim has been actively involved in their training. Also, on the call were some of the people that Jim had helped through their firsts in peal ringing, they were:

David Burbidge who rang the Treble to Doubles at Whitebury in July 1960.

Robin Rogers who rang the 3rd for his first minor inside at Towcester in December 1961, this peal was also of note as it was the first peal on the bells since 9th November 1912 when Grandsire Doubles rung.

Barry Eaglesfield who rang the Treble to Lincolnshire S. Major at All Saints Northampton in April 1963.

9 years old, Richard Yates trebling to Plain Bob Minor at Maids Moreton in October 1966.

Jim has also been a long-time holder of a Season Ticket at Franklins Gardens the home of Northampton Saints and to mark his birthday there were video messages from Graham Mckechnie Northampton Saints Historian and BBC Northampton sports presenter and also Northampton Saints Captain Lewis Ludlam. Following this everybody was split into smaller groups or rooms and Jim was able to move between them and share memories and stories of not the events already mentioned but many more on more of a one-to-one basis.

Despite the current situation we all find ourselves in, Jim managed to have a wonderful time and managed to mark his 90th birthday, all that remains now is for us to safely get through the current lockdown, for the pubs to re-open and to have a pint or two with Jim and relive all these stories again.

*By Jon Lovell & G. Nigel Williams*

First Peal.

**PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD**

**SULGRAVE, Northamptonshire, St James**

**Thursday, 19th December 1957 in 2 hrs 50 mins. Tenor**

**10 cwt 5040**

**Plain Bob Minor**

**1 James Linnell**

**2 Barry E Saunders**

**3 William J Chester**

**4 Montague Saunders**

**5 George Shellard**

**6 William A Yates (C)**

**First peal: 1.**

**First peal inside: 5.**

**Rung for the first birthday of Richard William, son of the conductor**



Slowest Peal

**PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD**

**SHERBORNE, Dorset, Abbey Church of St Mary**

**Saturday, 10th September 1966 in 4 hrs 8 mins. Tenor 46 cwt 5056**

**Cambridge Surprise Major**

**Composition: Charles Middleton**

**1 Stanley M Ruddlesden**

**2 Graham C Paul**

**3 Barry E Saunders**

**4 Alan A Paul**

**5 James Linnell**

**6 Charles E Truman**

**7 Malcolm J V Chown**

**8 Barrie Hendry (C)**

**100th peal: 3.**

Quickest Peal

**PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD**

**HELMDON, Northamptonshire, St Mary Magdalene**

**Saturday, 20th January 1962 in 2 hrs 6 mins. Tenor 10 cwt 5040**

**Spliced Surprise Minor**

**(10 methods: (1) London, Wells (2) York, Durham (3) Beverley, Berwick (4, 5) Surfleet, Hexham (6, 7) Cambridge, Primrose)**

**1 Mrs G Shellard**

**2 Barry E Saunders**

**3 Charles E Truman**

**4 James Linnell**

**5 George W Holland**

**6 William A Yates (C)**

**First peal of Spliced Surprise Minor by all the band.**

Towcester Peal

**PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD**

**TOWCESTER, Northamptonshire, St Laurence**

**Saturday, 16th December 1961 in 3 hrs 5 mins. Tenor**

**16 cwt 5040**

**London Surprise Minor**

**1 Thomas E Roberts**

**2 William J Chester**

**3 Robin H Rogers**



**4 Charles E Truman**

**5 James Linnell**

**6 William A Yates (C)**

**First peal of Minor inside: 3.**

**First on the bells since November 9th, 1912, when a peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung.**

Sadly I have to report that just shortly after his 90th birthday celebrations Jim's wife Betty sadly passed away. She was a lovely kind hearted lady and will be greatly missed by us all. RIP Betty Linnell.

There is news that many ringers within the branch have received their first Covid jabs so there is a chink of light at the end of the very long dark tunnel and in the fullness of time we will all hopefully return to towers to ring.

**Betty Linnell 8.5.1937 - 18.2.2021**

Looking through all the cards, letters and messages Jim has received over the last week it is clear to see that Betty was loved and admired by so many people from all walks of life.

Betty was born in Duncote, Nr Towcester in May 1937 and lived there for all her life.

Her close family revolved around Greens Norton Church and her Father Arthur Mansfield was the tower captain for many years.

After learning to ring as a teenager she soon caught the ringing bug and Betty rang the first of her eight peals at Lois Weedon in December 1954.

Betty married Jim Linnell a fellow ringer from Whittlebury in 1970 and Jim took over from Betty's father as Greens Norton Tower captain.

Although Betty rang hundreds of quarter peals she will always be remembered best for her incredible loyalty to Greens Norton Bellringers and being instrumental in teaching new ringers along with the support she gave to neighbouring towers Bradden and Easton Neston. During the 60s, 70s, and eighties Betty was the assistant secretary to Bill Yates for the Towcester branch and she worked tirelessly arranging some very memorable ringing outings across the country. Many ringers still remember those special days with such fondness. Her favourite method was always Kent!



Betty organised many bell ringing tea meetings , and social events for the Towcester branch and will be remembered as a quiet, kind lady who always went out of her way to help others and encourage new ringers. She hardly ever missed a practice night at Greens Norton and was always there for all service ringing. Her loyalty, sound faith and dedication was at the the centre of everything she did even after Betty received a cancer diagnosis she still rang for services whenever and wherever she could.

The bell ringing community gave Betty an amazing platform to make lifelong friends and we are all better people for knowing her.

*Sarah Drage*

### **Work to the Bells of St Lawrence Towcester**

Just over thirty years ago, in 1989, eight bells were acquired from Christ Church Todmorden, Yorkshire, and hung in the tower of St Lawrence in 1990, along with four new bells. The new bell frame was built locally by the late Nigel Brewer of Farm & Industrial Buildings of Northampton, and the labour was



provided by the Towcester ringers and friends; it used frame sides from the redundant church of St John the Divine Leicester (the ten bells of which form the basis of the peal of twelve at Peterborough Cathedral). Many of the original wooden fittings from Todmorden, nearly 100 years old at the time, were re-used. The installation, masterminded by Andrew Wilby, was and has been a great success, and the St Lawrence Society of Ringers is rightly proud of their wonderful

bells. Last year an appeal was launched to replace or repair many of the original fittings, including new wheels for the heaviest bells, which had come to the end of their useful lives and were beginning to cause issues for the ringers with the “feel” and “go” of the bells.

Thanks to the generosity of the ringers, people and



organisations of Towcester and the surrounding area, and the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of ringers, the necessary funds were raised, and the work took place between 14th and 24th November last year. The new wheels and fittings were supplied by Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough, with two members of their bell hanging team there at various points to work alongside the local ringing volunteers, namely Brett Masters, John Stanworth, John White, Chris Bulleid, and Jonathan King.

It would not be true to say that everything went smoothly or to plan, but challenges were expected and eventually all were overcome!

A summary of the main work undertaken:

- **Replacement of the wheels of the 7 oldest and heaviest bells**
- **Replacement of the worn slider runner boards and slider pins**
- **Adjustment to some clappers to improve evenness of striking of the bells**
- **Maintenance or replacement of bearings**
- **Revision of roping of bells 4 and 5 to reduce wear and tear**
- **Tidy up and clear out of thirty years of accumulated detritus**

Moral support (and coffee) was provided by those members of the band who remembered doing all this kind of thing thirty years ago, but now couldn't imagine hopping in and out of the bell frame in the way they once did! Far more importantly, the Reverend Paula Challen and husband Steve at the Vicarage provided cake at regular intervals.



The bells were tested individually following the work, with marked

improvement to their handling as a result. Now all we need is the chance to ring them all properly once more, which sadly is not possible under current restrictions, although special dispensation was given nationally to allow the bells to be rung for Christmas, albeit only six were rung, rather than all twelve.

Since March last year, the ringers have remained in regular contact with each other, substituting our usual Friday evening practice in the tower with Zoom meetings and quizzes. We also managed to hold an online Annual Christmas Dinner, welcoming 40 members and friends to





a very enjoyable evening; sadly, the event coincided with news of the death that day of James Atwell, who we had been hoping to see online at the dinner along with his wife Lorna. James was vicar of Towcester at the time of the original bell scheme thirty years ago, and he was a tremendous support to us all in our efforts.

*Joanne Wilby, St Lawrence Society of Ringers*

Stay safe

*Jill Cooke - Towcester Correspondent.*

## Wellingborough Branch - No news this time

## Public Relations Officer's Piece

### WEBMASTER'S WITTERINGS

We have been given notice by BT that they are not hosting or supporting the BT Community websites after May 24. We are currently investigating the best way to continue the website. Further details will be distributed as soon as they are certain.

In the meantime, please ignore the figures printed in the October Newsletter. They became totally scrambled when I sorted the spreadsheet layout. It seems a good time to publish the usage of the BT Community site whilst it has been operating. As expected, 2020 showed a reduction in use on some of the regular stalwart pages because they were somewhat irrelevant to our lack of activities!



Visit Counts for www.pdg.btck.co.uk								
Page	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Welcome!	19,733	16,101	15,144	13,837	12,997	11,457	8,761	4,571
Bell Ringing	857	1,131	1,065	925	965	677	741	468
Learning to Ring	814	1,145	1,061	1,041	1,044	810	793	490
About This Guild	988	1,275	1,225	1,099	1,122	874	910	756
Guild Officers	2,001	2,614	2,406	1,960	1,979	2,005	1,405	803
Latest Guild News	6,186	6,549	4,503	3,444	3,224	2,314	2,223	1,396
Branch Officers	1,875	3,457	2,468	2,414	2,976	2,999	3,285	1,816
Towers	2,402	4,608	4,745	4,590	4,202	3,273	1,774	
Events	1,737	4,325	4,280	2,907	3,179	2,028	1,439	860
Peals & Quarters	697	1,146	1,347	1,040	881	715		
Competitions	1,048	1,503	1,301	1,339	1,205	991	1,042	698
Guild Newsletters	748	1,209	1,000	930	701	552	608	443
Guild Shirts	516	950	874	777	813	456	526	345
Making Progress	761	964	905	696	707	539	543	123
Training Fund	566	709						
Bell Maintenance	2,020	3,376	2,525	1,854	2,009	1,675	1,564	1,059
Bell Fund	845	2,130	1,585	1,235	1,025	728	678	454
Keep Fit	1,371							
Bits & Bobs	1,695	2,302	2,856	1,641	1,773	999	651	578
History	1,066	1,709	1,676	1,048	1,375	906	1,655	26
Constitution & Rules	642	1,027	1,093	958	690	540	837	0
Social Regulations	1,098	1,007	94					
Biographies A-G (was Obituaries)	1,332	2,169	1,898	1,413	1,140	207	0	0
Biographies H-R	660							
Biographies S-Z	502							
Inventory	704	1,112	953	897	316			
Donations	357							
Photos	552							
Photo identification	89							
AGM 2020	406							
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,268</b>	<b>62,518</b>	<b>55,004</b>	<b>46,045</b>	<b>44,323</b>	<b>34,745</b>	<b>29,435</b>	<b>14,886</b>

## Additions

**Bell Ringing page** - After an article in the RW about chiming, especially with Ellacombe chimes, I added a bit about chiming to this page.

**About this Guild page** - The hopefully complete list of Life Honorary Members has been added, unless you know otherwise.

**AGM 2020** After the AGM had to be postponed from June, a new page was added (and later removed) to deal with the running of the AGM operated through Zoom on-line in September.

**Guild Officers page** - The archive list from 1924 of our CCCBR Representatives archive was researched and completed.





***Biographies pages*** - Biographies for all of our late CCCBR representatives and most of executive officers have been added.

***Photos page*** – 1924 first PDG peal band added; lot more names identified in 1974 photos. Lot more to go – can you help? 1927 –AGM at Finedon - Does anyone have or know where there is an original photograph of this photo please?

***Geoff Pullin PRO***



# 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: [www.pdg.org.uk](http://www.pdg.org.uk).**

# GUILD EVENTS 2021

**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**



