

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



**Newsletter
April 2023**

Guild Officers 2022-23

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Newsletter News

After the extraordinary events of 2022, this first edition of 2023 covers a much quieter period - Christmas and New Year and the season of branch AGMs. The next edition will once again feature exceptional Royal activities, with the first coronation in 70 years. I will be especially interested to hear from those who will have rung in both coronations. I am sure there will be a good number around the Guild.

As always, I am very grateful to the dedicated work of Branch Correspondents, who round up news stories and photos from the towers. Without them there would be no Newsletter.

An excellent suggestion was made at the GMC, to share the Guild newsletter with those members who no longer regularly attend ringing sessions, as a way of keeping in touch. This can easily be done by directing them to the relevant part of the Guild website (pdg.org.uk/latest-news/newsletters) or downloading a copy and emailing it to them. If a hard copy is preferred, one can be delivered in person (or posted).

If you want any additional copies for members in your branch, please let me know, so that I can ensure that enough are printed.

Please send any comments, complaints or contributions for future editions to me at newsletter@pdg.org.uk.

Jonathan Stuart

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President's Preamble

As I write this, I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Spring Meeting to be held at Orlingbury, a nice ring of bells. I can only hope that the weather will be kind: it's been rather unkind since Christmas, with freezes, wind and rain – it can only get better!

Rapidly coming to fruition is the "Ring for the King" initiative, not only to recruit ringers to ring for the new King's Coronation on 6th May, but also to ensure that Church bells are heard ringing out across the Diocese to celebrate the occasion – the first Coronation in my lifetime!

I am looking forward to the new initiative "Bell Sunday" on 14th May – do support your Incumbent if they choose to use some of the materials, and give them some good news stories of ringers. You can find more information about Bell Sunday at bellsunday.org.

I am very pleased that the Old Black Lion project has finally started on site, and the Pub and Ringing Centre can be expected to be Open for Business in 2024 – our Centenary Year.

We hope to be able to install soundproofing to St. Peter's Church during 2023 to enable that tower to take its place within the new National Ringing Centre, an initiative with the Central Council of Church Bellringers.

For those of you who would like to develop or consolidate your quarter peal ringing skills, I have launched the COOTS initiative, to provide an opportunity every Thursday evening. More details on page 8.

Over the next few months, the Guild will need to discuss and agree some changes to the way the Guild is managed: a revised set of Rules will be put to the AGM in June, and work continues on discernment of the best way to keep all our Branches active and supportive for years to come.

For more details of any of these activities do speak to one of the Guild or Branch Officers.

Alistair Donaldson

The Secretary turns Soothsayer

I'm not trying to challenge Mystic Meg, but I think I'm on pretty safe ground when I predict lots of ringing across the Guild in the next few months. Let's run through some of what is coming up.

I think it fair to say that there will be quite a lot of ringing for the Coronation. Please make sure that you record your ringing on Bellboard, no matter how short or long it is. Please make sure you link your ringing to the Guild event, <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/event.php?id=16512>. That way we'll be able to find and record all ringing across the Diocese for the occasion and record this for posterity. We'll collate and send to the Palace again. With different places having different events taking

place across the weekend, ringers ought to liaise with local organisations, and ring at an appropriate time for their tower.

Bell Sunday has already been mentioned. The diocese is behind this and has sent the link out to incumbents. If you have an example of an instance of bells interacting with faith, please get in touch, the diocese would like stories to share, to further support this event. <https://bellsunday.org/>.

The Guild AGM will be in Culworth branch on June 10th. The service will be held at Marston St Lawrence and the meeting in the impressive village hall. Towers before and after will be confirmed shortly. This is open to all members and friends, and we'd hope to see lots of you there. It's a great opportunity to interact with members from other branches and have your say in the running of the Guild.

At the AGM we'll also launch the logo and merchandise for the Guild 100th anniversary in 2024. Expect to see calendars, mugs and clothing sporting our special anniversary logo. You'll be seeing a lot of it, but you need to wait just a little bit longer yet... 😊 You can see the planned events in the diary section of this newsletter.

Saturday 17th June sees the Guild host the Ridgman Trophy. This is a striking contest on 10 bells for Guilds that border the Ely DA, established in memory of William J. Ridgman a former CUGCR President and Ely DA General Secretary. This will be held at Towcester, with ringing starting in the morning.

Moving to September we then have the Guild Summer Festival, which will be held in the Towcester branch. We're hoping to be able to ring on the newly augmented 8 at Pattishall, they just need some bells to ring now.

There's also some committee activity ongoing, although maybe less visibly. With the Second Saturday Sessions now establishing themselves, the time has come to separate the activity of the Recruitment and Training Committee, as those two elements require quite different skill sets; recruitment and initial training are quite different from advancing ringer's capability. Anyone interested in either of those elements should make themselves known to the Master. The other committee is taking a look at how the Guild is organised. Some branches are struggling, and feel that they may be unable to continue as currently structured. Branch structure has barely changed in nearly 100 years, and it may be that what worked in 1924 is not necessarily fit for purpose as we move into 2024. Each branch has been asked to provide one representative to identify a way forward for the Guild as a whole. Expect to see more on this as the year progresses.

Helen Allton

Treasurer's Titbits

At the recent GMC meeting, I presented the Guild accounts for the year to December 2022. The following is a summary of the overall financial position.

Total Funds £120,173:

General Funds £35,919

Bell fund £77,792

Training Fund £ 6,462

Expenditure exceeded income in the year by £3,582

Highlights of the Year:

Subscriptions increased from pandemic impacted 2021 to £4,159

Grant expenditure returned as ringing restarted:

12 bell related grants £7,235

1 training related grant £146

We have 2 pending bell grants totalling £15,500

Significant effort has been applied at Guild level for:

- Recruitment activity - around the Jubilee and that will be replicated in 2023 for "Ring for the King"
- Training - with the Second Saturday Sessions. We have invested £313 in this well-received programme. This expenditure has been more than covered by generous donations of £447. The programme will continue as long as the demand is there, so please make use of the volunteers' time to learn things.

We had a full year of the 100 Club delivering £904.

Planning for our 2024 Centenary celebrations started in the year and we have expended £147 on the activity as well as buying a stock of mugs to sell through 2023 and 2024 which sits as a new line in our balance sheet. Great Christmas presents!!

Future thinking

- The return of the Affiliation Letter in 2023 to our parishes will hopefully start to regenerate the Bell Fund again after the current round of grant activity.
- Bank interest was low for a second year but recent increases in interest rates has allowed us to gain more reward for our cash from 2023 onwards.
- Branches are currently sitting with £19,915 in funds and all but 2 have created a surplus this year. The branches should be looking at using their funds to deliver an increase in members or skills or improvements in member retention or equipment. The expenditure could be at Branch or Guild level. This is something for Branch Committees to think about.
- Over the last few years, the Branches have had great difficulty with their bank accounts. I am approaching Lloyds Bank, the Guild's banker, to see if we can agree a deal to reduce charges and ease the administration for change of bank signatories.

Chris Fitzgerald

Recruitment & Training News

Update on the Northampton Ringing Centre Project (Old Black Lion)

As reported in previous Newsletters, an exciting opportunity exists for the Peterborough Guild, in conjunction with the Central Council of Church Bellringers (CCCBR) and individuals, to establish a National Ringing Centre (NaRC) at the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) site at St Peter's, Marefair, Northampton, incorporating the completely renovated Old Black Lion Coaching Inn and utilising the combination of the St Peter's bells together with a Matthew Higby supplied set of training bells in an old stable block in the grounds of the OBL.

The CCT is tasked with generating economic activity to fund the ongoing maintenance and repair of the churches in their care. Initially they raised £1.8m to fund the OBL project, largely from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to develop the heritage assets. CCT are in the final stages of completing the contracts with the main contractor and the operator. Therefore, the way is clear for the National Ringing School based at the Old Black Lion.

A small planning group comprising Chris FitzGerald (Treasurer), Giles Willson (Northampton Branch) and Alistair Donaldson (Guild President) has been working on the initial brief to date in parallel with the CCT progress. A company limited by guarantee has been set up to run the NaRC.

The Guild has two roles in this project: providing sound control at St Peter's to enable unrestricted ringing; and contributing resources to training events once the NaRC is open. The sound control is projected to cost in the region of £15k. We currently have 3 offers of funding towards the project which will minimise the contribution required from the Guild.

An example of a similar training centre is the Mancroft Ringing Discovery Centre at St Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich. The Centre is both physically and financially based in the church, which provides it with support and free services. This amazing facility attracted heritage lottery funding of £500k with the aim of bringing the art and science of bellringing to the widest possible audience. £100k of the funding delivered an Exhibition Space to display their heritage assets. In July 2018 Matthew Higby & Company installed a set of 8 training dumbbells which simulates something similar to a 6 cwt ring of 8 real bells, although the largest bell weighs just under 2 cwt.

At the recent GMC meeting, some members expressed concerns about the site's accessibility, by train or car, including parking costs. And some did not feel a need for another training centre. Members were reassured that the Guild will not have any financial responsibility, beyond supporting the sound control installation at St Peter's.

Should you have any questions, contact myself (treasurer@pdq.org.uk) or John Beresford (steward@pdq.gov.uk) who are most involved with the project.

Chris FitzGerald

Introducing COOTS

(as in "Come Out On ThursdayS")

One evening in a hostelry, I had this mad idea to co-ordinate attempting a QP every Thursday evening that I can raise a band for, either 6-bell or 8-bell as requested by the band.

The idea is to give ringers an opportunity to consolidate or practice some methods that are on their "wish-list", e.g.

- plain methods such as St. Clements Bob Minor,
- some of the '41' regular surprise minor methods,
- some from the Pickled Egg Surprise Major series from Simon Linford's book.

I will seek to book towers as near as practicable to the ringers who are in the band for that evening.

If you would like to join COOTS, please will you let me know when you are available, and what you would like to ring.

So that I can best coordinate ringers, conductors and towers, I have set up an initial booking calendar on DOODLE: please click on tinyurl.com/2efw82mk, create a profile and fill in your availability. Don't forget to click the "Save" button! This will enable all of us to see how each evening's bands are shaping up. Note that you can change your availability at any time, just log in and click the "Edit" pencil.

Then please let me know by email:

- Where you live (approximately!) so I can choose appropriate towers
- What methods are on your "wish-list", to learn or to consolidate.
- If you are willing to call a QP, or if you are just happy to ring to support others.
- Any other comments or restrictions I should know about?

I have set up a WhatsApp Group for COOTS members so that we can keep in touch, especially if there needs to be any late changes. If you are happy to join the COOTS WhatsApp Group, please let me have your mobile number and I will add you.

If you would prefer not to use DOODLE, please just email me your availability and 'wish-list' directly. I have set up this specific email for COOTS : coots.alistair@gmail.com.

Lastly, if you know of someone who would benefit from joining COOTS, including members of surrounding Associations, please do pass the information on to them or ask them to get in touch with me.

In case you are wondering, COOTS is not an original name: some years ago, I used to ring with a “Kentish” group who came out on Tuesdays for a ring and pub lunch, and I thought why waste such a nice catchy name? More recently another COOTS from the Dorchester area had an article in the Ringing World. Both have been running for many years – a good omen?

Movember Ringing

We have a new rule: no new peal arrangements to be made after we’ve finished our first pint! I think this idea came up before the introduction of the new rule.

It started with a bit of a rant from me about how there are lots of methods named for odd collections of things (flowers, birds, lighthouses, curries) but still a whole host of meaningful events for which there isn’t a method named. Like Movember. And it kind of went from there. The first three of us signed up there and then. A fourth was a regular Movember participant and quickly recruited. The fifth took a little while to find, and sadly the sixth remained elusive.



I’d hoped to get enough to ring major, but it proved surprisingly difficult to get chaps to sign up. Availability, vanity and lack of spousal approval seemed to be the main inhibitors.

Growing a moustache during the month of November is an idea that originated in Australia around 2003 and has since spread to over 20 countries around the world. Movember seeks to raise money for and awareness of three key areas of men’s health: prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health and suicide prevention. It is very popular amongst UK University sports teams, and hopefully now middle-aged ringers too!

It has been fun, and I think we have all enjoyed the attention and comparing moustache styles. We have managed to raise a bit of money and prompted some worthwhile discussions about men’s health and mental health, in particular, along the way. I think most of us would do it again. It has also been an eye opener to see how many people are familiar with the appearance of 70’s porn stars!

Nich Wilson

Retirement of Bishop Donald

Bishop Donald took his last service as Bishop of Peterborough on 8th January in the Cathedral. He had been Bishop for 13 years. A quarter was rung before the service at the Cathedral. A quarter was also rung at Rushden to mark the occasion, where the band chose Chester Surprise Minor, as Bishop Donald has been Archdeacon of Chester from 2002-2009.



Peterborough Diocesan Guild

Peterborough, City of Peterborough

Cathedral Church of St Peter, St Paul, and St Andrew

Sunday, 8 January 2023 in 53m (21-1-20 in E)

1320 Little Bob Maximus

Composed by Richard I Allton

- 1 John Riley
- 2 Margaret Bulleid
- 3 Sue Marsden
- 4 Bill Croft
- 5 Sarah Bence
- 6 Richard Allton (C)
- 7 Helena Thorpe
- 8 Chris Bulleid
- 9 Jim Bence
- 10 Keith Brown
- 11 James Thorpe
- 12 Toby Bence

For evensong with prayers of farewell and thanksgiving for the ministry of The Right Reverend Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough

Peterborough Diocesan Guild

Rushden, Northamptonshire

St Mary

Sunday, 8 January 2023 in 44m (9-1-2)

1272 Chester Surprise Minor

- 1 Jenny A Ball
- 2 Pam M Bailey
- 3 Steven A Millington
- 4 Cathy J Dixon
- 5 Thomas Coulter-Brophy
- 6 Simon J Dixon (C)

Rung as a farewell to Bishop Donald Allister as he retires today from the Peterborough Diocese. The method was chosen as he was Archdeacon of Chester from 2002-2009.

1st in method - 2 & 5

Interviews with two young ringers

Jessica

We asked Jessica Pearce, 14, who is a regular ringer at Desborough, St. Giles and the youngest member of the Kettering Branch team in the 8 Bell Striking Competition at last Year's Summer Festival, about how she got into ringing, what she enjoys about it and what changes she would like to see.

How did you get into Bellringing?

Jessica: My dad and brother started to ring when I was young, and I wanted to start as soon as I was old enough.

How long have you been Bellringing?

J: 4 years but COVID stopped learning for a long part of that.

How long did it take you to be able to handle a bell?

J: I think aged 10 it took me 3 or 4 months to be able to ring a bell by myself - learning once or twice a week.

What, in particular, about bellringing appeals to you?

J: I find it great fun and especially ringing at different towers.

What are your overall impressions of the Kettering Branch and Guild ringing meetings?

J: Branch meetings are fun, especially different and interesting towers, but can get boring if there is not enough ringing for me or if other young people are not around.

What did you most enjoy about taking part in the Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition?

J: It was great experience, good practice and fun - I would like to take part again.

Where is the most interesting place you have been bellringing?

J: Kettering Tower, as it wobbles when the bells are ringing!

How could Branch / Guild events be changed to better suit the young ringers?

J: Interesting question! Different towers, competitions perhaps judging each other in teams, being able to meet other young ringers.

What is your next Bellringing aim/challenge/target for 2023?

J: I missed ringing at Peterborough Cathedral last time round, so really want to ring at the next opportunity, plus perhaps reach a chance to try a quarter peal.



*Jessica ringing with David
Photo: Simon Pearce*

David Dainty

Harry

There are a number of young ringers across the Guild. Here are some thoughts from one of them who is well known across most of the Rutland Branch (and beyond!)

Hi Harry, do you mind telling me how old are you?

Harry: 14

And when did you start ringing?

H: October 2021, about 18 months ago

What got you interested in ringing in the first place?

H: My mum and I visited a church where a group of visitors were ringing and got shown up the tower.

How long did it take you to be able to handle a bell on your own?

We had a load of private sessions so it was less time than it should have been, probably about a month.

Other than actually ringing, what other interests have you in bells?

H: The workings, the history of them. I'm interested in what is going on upstairs. Every church I go to, I would like to look up the tower, if possible.

You've been on one of the Guild training courses on "Bell Maintenance", how was that?

H: We went to Rothwell. We learnt how to change a stay, attach the ropes to the wheels, splice the ropes and so on.

How much support do you get from your mum and dad?

H: They love me doing it. Dad is a steeple keeper but not actually a ringer, Mum learnt with me and is keen, so I get loads of support.

Is there anyone who has really helped you with your ringing career?

H: Henri Kiddle and Alan Wordie. You, when I meet you at ringing, and Ted Phillips with the belfry.

What towers do you regularly ring at?

H: Uppingham, Lyddington, North Luffenham, Seaton. Caldecott, Gretton, Harringworth, Wing, Hambleton.

Do you think it helps you, ringing at lots of different places?

H: Yeah, you get to meet new people, and it's always important to try out new bells.

What is the heaviest bell you have rung so far?

H: The tenor at Lewisham and Peterborough Cathedral. Both about 21cwt – over a ton.

And the lightest?

H: In Charlestown in Cornwall, about 1cwt. But I've also rung the Wombell when it was at Uppingham and my mini-ring at home.

Tell me about this mini-ring.

H: I've made mini-rings out of a wheelbarrow wheel, some weights, rope and a pulley, which rings normally although the rope doesn't move very far. For my birthday, my mum and dad also bought me a proper bell mini-ring which we put up in the shed. They make a really pretty noise.

Which do you prefer?

H: Heavy. I love tenors!

I understand you are part of the Lilliputians – who are they?

H: Lilliputers. They are a youth ringing group, mainly based in York and Devon, but all across the country. The last outing they did was to Bath, and we went to London. They get together every few months, usually travelling by train.

[Author's note – see The Ringing World, 31st April 2023, page 300]

Do you think more should be done locally for young ringers, if so, what?

H: Yes definitely. More recruitment of young ringers, days out so they don't get bored. I know my school want me to do something for the DofE.

Do you think it makes any difference being a young ringer rather than an older person starting to ring?

H: Yes, they will get it eventually, but I've only been ringing for 18 months and hope to be ringing my first quarter peal soon.

You are obviously ringing methods now, where do you think you will be in your ringing career in a couple of years?

H: Same amount of ringing, but more complicated things.

What advice would you give to a young person like yourself who is thinking about bellringing as a hobby?

H: It is a brilliant thing, a brilliant social activity – you meet loads and loads of new people. It's very fun. It's good exercise. It's good for your mental health and physical health. It's just a good thing to get involved with.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about?

H: I always used to be fascinated with churches when I was younger, interested in the architecture, the stained-glass windows, the feel and the size, the acoustics. Some people might think it going to be very snooty, and religious and that you have to say a prayer every time you touch a rope but not everybody is religious who rings bells. Everyone is very flexible.

Cathy Dixon



Harry with local ringers at North Luffenham

Brian Austin - A Life of Bells & Bellringing

Brian Austin was born on 25 December 1929 in Rothwell. He attended Holy Trinity Church as a Chorister up until the time when his voice broke, and he stood down from the choir and left looking for some other activity to occupy his time.

Brian's family happened to live next door to the Tower Captain at Holy Trinity, Albert York and Brian's mother suggested that he may like to join the Bellringers. The rest as they say is history. Although Brian acknowledges that he was not particularly happy with

the situation at the time. Once started “that was it”. Brian was taught to ring in time him to participate in the ringing to recognise first VE Day and then VJ Day.

On leaving school Brian went to study at the School of Architecture in Leicester and his ringing career / journey blossomed. Brian joined the Tuesday practices at Leicester Cathedral lead by Harold Poole. His ringing in Leicester culminated in him ringing a Peal of Cambridge Surprise Maximus. During this time Brian normally returned to Rothwell at weekends and rang for Sunday services, for Matins and Evensong.

When he qualified as an Architect Brian joined a practice in Kettering before being called up for National Service. Brian was commissioned in the Royal Engineers being stationed in Hampshire. In 1954 Brian took part in a Quarter Peal at Blackmoor, Hants the band being comprised of Ex-servicemen.

On his return to civilian life Brian married his lifelong girlfriend Gwen (nee Johnson) who had learned to ring at Rothwell in the early 1950s. The couple moved to Kettering and rang at SS Peter & Paul. This was followed by a move to the nearby village of Thorpe Malsor. The bells at All Saints had not been rung since 1939. After some remedial works the bells were made ringable and Brian set about teaching some volunteers in the village. The band were at the stage of ringing call changes when individuals began to drift away. Brian and Gwen now had 3 sons to keep them busy and they moved back to Kettering.

Whilst bellringing has not been Brian’s sole interest, he has taken part in some 155 Peals, conducting 2 of them himself. He rang in the first 12 bell peal for the Peterborough Diocesan Guild, Grandsire Cinques at Surfleet in 1958: and the first Peal of Maximus (Kent Treble Bob at Evesham). And in 1985 Brian rang the 10th in the first peal of Surprise Maximus for the Guild by a resident band, at Kettering. Brian has been a member of 5 territorial guilds / associations and became a College Youth in 1969. He has rung in 5 Peals for the Ancient Society of College Youths, including Stedman Cinques at Kettering.



Brian has over the years held Branch and Guild Offices and was a Central Council representative for the PDGCBR between 1959 and 1964. He became an Honorary Member of the Central Council 1965-1969 during which time he was a member of the Towers & Belfries Committee which produced the Towers & Belfries Handbook in 1973.

Having served as the Guild Steward he was appointed Towers and Bells Advisor to the Diocese of Peterborough in 1973, a position he held for 30 years. During that period Brian advised on over 80 projects ranging from covering a wide variety of works including

augmentations, re-hanging, sound control measures and other associated matters connected with bells and towers.

Among his many architectural achievements whilst working as the senior partner at Featherstone Austin, Brian was asked by the Bishop of Peterborough to design a new church at St. Benedict's, West Hunsbury, Northampton. It is no surprise that the design included a tower. In less than 5 years after the dedication of the church, there was another dedication, this time for a light ring of 6 bells. The first peal rung on the bells was rung on the bells in 1990, with Brian as a member of the band.

Brian joined his local Rotary Club in 1983 and in 1994 took part in the first peal rung entirely by members of Rotary International.

Prior to the COVID-19 lockdowns Brian was a regular attender at the Wednesday morning practices at Rothwell and at service ringing. Finding climbing the 54 steps more challenging Brian joined local ringers to celebrate the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee at St. Andrew, Great Cransley.



Brian now spends his time with family and friends, playing chess with a neighbour and getting out for walks with wife Gwen.

David Dainty

Joe Rollings - Peal & Quarter at 90

Joe Rollings turned 90 at the beginning January. A local lad, born in Stanwick, he regularly rings at four different towers.

He celebrated in style, having a 90th birthday at a party with over 100 guests, including several of his ringing friends, where he was seen enjoying himself all evening, right up to midnight. Isham ringers bought him a celebratory balloon, which spent some time residing in the rafters in Isham church!



Two ringing performances marked his birthday, including a quarter in which Joe himself took part.

Pytchley, Northamptonshire

All Saints

Friday, 13 January 2023 (8-0-0 in G)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 B Joe Rollings
- 2 Tanya D Clayton
- 3 Debbie J Sampson
- 4 Jenny A Ball
- 5 Alan Bull (C)

Rung as a 90th birthday tribute to the treble ringer , and to fulfil his ambition to ring a quarter in his 90s

Peterborough Diocesan Guild

Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire

St Mary the Virgin

Tuesday, 3 January 2023 in 2h 54 (10-0-13 in F)

5152 Zatisall Delight Major

Composed by Richard I Allton (No 2853)

- 1 Michael H D O'Callaghan
- 2 Paul M Mason
- 3 Simon J Dixon
- 4 Philippa M Whittington
- 5 Nicholas R Wilson
- 6 Christopher M Pearson
- 7 Richard I Allton (C)
- 8 Frank W Rivett

100th together: 3&7, 5&7. 100th peal in the tower: 1.
Completes the Delight Major alphabet: 8.

With best wishes to Frank and Philippa on their imminent move to Norfolk, this maybe their last regular peal here - 'Zatisall'!

Rung on the 90th birthday of Joe Rollings, member of the local band.

Obituaries

Kevan James Chapman (1948 –2023)

Read by Roy York at the Funeral Service

It is a great privilege for me to be invited by my cousin Bryan to read the eulogy he has written of his brother Kevan's life on behalf of himself, Christine & Rita.

Now, says Bryan, just what can we say about Kevan – a most loved husband, son, brother, uncle, and more recently great uncle?

Kevan James Chapman, the elder son of Eric and Doris Chapman was born in Finedon at his grandparents' house at 21, Hawthorne Road, Finedon on 23rd February, 1948. He attended Finedon Infant School, Finedon Mulso School and in 1961 the brand new Irthlingborough & Finedon Secondary Modern School.

At the age of 12 Kevan decided to follow in his father's footsteps and take up bellringing. Eric, who was Tower Captain at that time taught Kevan first to handle a rope to control his bell. Kevan did not take very long at all to master the art of handling a bell and was soon participating in bellringing methods – and once Plain Bob Minor was conquered, other methods soon followed. In fact, he rang his first quarter peal on 15th September, 1963 to be followed by his first peal on 20th February, 1965 – quite some feat, I'm sure you will agree!

As a teenager Kevan was an avid trainspotter and on several occasions with friends would take a bus to the railway at Roade for a 4 to 5 hour stint of trainspotting. And when the Pullman or Flying Scotsman was coming through Northamptonshire on the London to Glasgow line Kevan would be one of the first down to the Finedon Station Road bridge to see them. In his later teens Kevan enjoyed going to the Star Hall Boys' Club in Laws Lane.

On leaving school Kevan gained employment at Burton's in the menswear tailoring department in Wellingborough and after a few years moving to the Northampton branch. He was then asked to become manager of the Kettering branch - staying there until taking early retirement at the age of 55 to spend time with his wife Rita. In 1979 Kevan & Rita were married on 6th September at Kettering Registrar office and lived in St. John's Road in that town. It was there that Kevan & Rita made friends with their neighbours Kathy & Ray. After a short time Kathy & Ray decided to move abroad to Australia which allowed Kevan & Rita to enjoy several trips to Oz to visit them and their daughter Alexia. One great highlight for Kevan whilst in Oz was to ascend Sydney Bridge – a smile of absolute triumph depicted on the back of the order of service.

After a while Kevan & Rita moved to Brampton Close in Barton Seagrave before settling in Finedon in 2002. It was at this point that Kevan returned to St. Mary's to continue bellringing. As well as being Assistant Tower Captain at St. Mary's, Finedon for many years Kevan did all those behind-the-scenes tasks such as adjusting the church clock when it gained, or lost time, clearing jackdaw nests from the bell tower and keeping the whole area tidy.

Kevan was a member of the Wellingborough Branch of Bellringers and was former Ringing Master of the branch for many years up until late 2022. He greatly enjoyed his bellringing and made many friends whilst ringing in the Wellingborough area and beyond - some of those friends are here today. He enjoyed ringing Quarter Peals, the last of which was at Rushden on Remembrance Sunday 2022.

Kevan, on behalf of Bryan, Rita, Christine, and the family may you Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory! Amen.

Brian Chapman

News from the Branches

Culworth Branch

Sara Chapple has been busy reading through the archives again for the next instalment from the minute books.

Brackley area ringing after the war.

The bell ringers' festival took place on April 27th 1946, with Byfield, Boddington, Eydon, Moreton Pinkney, Culworth, Sulgrave, Woodford, Lois Weedon and Helmdon taking part. The financial statement said there was a balance of between £8 and £9 – not too precise! The secretary said it had been the custom to make grants to any of the members stricken with illness or infirmity. He understood that friends in Sulgrave had made a collection of £2.17.0 to present to Mr Marshall who had been a ringer for many years. He proposed that a grant of £2.3.0 should be made to bring the total up to £5. This was unanimously agreed. A further grant of two guineas was made to a Boddington man who had been a ringer for at least 30 years. He had been ill for nearly 12 months and was unlikely to work again. It was noted that several members of the clergy with belfries in the deanery were absent. It was hoped that they would do their utmost to support the Association.

Only four parishes had teams for the 1947 festival, with four priests present. The secretary had long been trying to retire, having done 28 years, but was then persuaded to continue. However, he said that he had completed the final year to which he had agreed and said that he thought it was time for a layman to take over. Mr Walker of Eydon was elected unanimously. (This means that the Association went back to at least 1919)

Fred Hutt of Byfield appeared for the first time in the minutes of 1948, the first mention of someone I remember!

In 1949 the festival was attended by Mr Whitmore, the ringing master of the Guild, plus two members of the Daventry Branch and Mr Yates of Towcester (another known name). Mr Whitmore addressed the meeting on the benefits to be gained by the Association linking with the PDG. It was agreed to hold a meeting in the autumn to decide how this could be done. There is a separate minute for the Culworth Branch PDG, starting in this year, but the Brackley Deanery Association appears to have continued in parallel.

In 1952 Mr Fred Parsons was congratulated on reaching 50 years as a bell ringer. 1953 saw the agreement to pay 25 shillings towards the cost of a coach for ringers to attend the meeting, and in 1955 it was noted that the Brackley Deanery had become the Culworth Deanery. It is interesting to note that at no time did anyone from Brackley (or any of the southern towers) attend the festival. In 1956 a collection was taken for the Bow Bells appeal, which totalled £1.9.0.

In 1957 the renovation of the Bagley Memorial Stone was discussed. It was agreed that the Culworth branch of the Guild should deal with it. (Not much changes!)

There were no minutes for the 1959 meeting, but in 1960 it was agreed that a meeting should be held to decide the future of the association. This is the last entry in the book.
Sara Chapple

Branch News

AGM - 30 ringers attended our AGM in January, ringing took place at Lois Weedon, followed by a service ably led by Graham White (Charwelton) informing us all about Saint Dustan, the patron saint of bellringing. Thank you to Linda Adams for playing the organ for our hearty singing. The service was followed by a delicious tea served by the Lois Weedon ringers. At the meeting we elected 3 new members, Tom Tresham (Eydon), Vicky Powell and Martha Parham (Syresham). The Branch President's Cup this year was awarded to Paul Richardson who at 95 is an inspiration to us all. Having rung for the Queen's coronation, he hopes to ring for the King's coronation in May. He has also audited the branch accounts for many years.

Quarter Peal - Congratulations to two Whitfield ringers on ringing their first quarter peal, Eleni Oakton and Laura Brown and thanks to ringers from other branches for supporting them. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles 1.Eleni Oakton, 2 Sara Chapple, 3.John Pardoe, 4.Ian Chapple, 5.G Nigel Williams (C) 6. Laura Brown

Branch Practices – sometimes we struggle with numbers at branch practices and we are always pleased to have visiting ringers, however there was a good turnout to our branch practice at Helmdon in February. We welcomed 3 visitors and also had all the committee members attending as there was a meeting afterwards; branch Ringing Master make a mental note ...that's how you get people along....plan a committee meeting!

Ring for the King - Paul Bennett and Andrew North have been very busy teaching new recruits, hopefully a report on their progress will follow next issue.

Branch Outing - It takes a whole lot of time and effort to organise a successful ringing outing. There are lots of questions to consider - it's not just a case of booking the churches and turning up. Where will the bus pick us up? What, that early?! Where's Sally? How many bus stops are there in Farthinghoe? A route has to be planned, timings taken. Where will the bus park safely? Then, of course, the local hostelrys have to be sampled (not such a hardship!), quality of the food has to be tried, will they be able to accommodate a bus load of ringers? Perfect, fits all our requirements, booking made... only to be told the following week that the pub had stopped trading. Back to square 1, more sampling to be done! Lunch booked, again! Emails to follow up and so on and so on... Thank you, Ian and Sara, for the time spent in planning an excellent ringing tour and for your organisational skills. We all enjoyed ourselves as you can see from Jenny Griffith's report below.

Culworth Branch 'Post-lockdown' Outing - 18th March 2023

The weather was forecast 'sunny with heavy showers' and with instructions to meet 'promptly' at the various pick-up points for the minibus which had our seats reserved. We left in good fettle to cross the boundary of Banbury, into the Cotswolds. It wasn't

long before we were pulling up outside the Church of St Mary, on the Main Street in Middle Tysoe - too soon, in fact 40 minutes earlier than predicted! This gave us plenty of time to stretch out legs, listen to a bit of history about the church and bells from Graham (who'd rung here before), whilst watching the daffodils dancing in the morning sunshine.

The church was originally built in the medieval period and restored during the Imperial period; apparently there was a service going on in the church when the battle of Edgehill started - the congregation ran out to see what was happening and the village tailor received a mortal wound as a result!

The 6 bells were originally installed in 1719 and around 1910 the parish attempted to raise money for a completely new ring of 8 bells, but this was put in abeyance and the 6 were rehung instead. The 5th is the last known bell of the Bagley dynasty. Until the mid-1990s they were rung from ground floor, but now access is up an internal wooden staircase to the first floor, through a very neat church of regimented blue kneelers. A swift ring-up followed with call-changes and a touch of Grandsire and it wasn't long before we had to hop back onto the coach to the village of Halford.

Again, this was a St. Mary's Church, of Norman origin, with a 14th century font almost overpowered by an elaborately carved oak cover. Here the bells used to be an unringable 3, until augmented in 1996 by the addition of the treble and second from Little Packington, which gave an unusual weight distribution, but with the help of a Millennium grant, they became a ring of 6 with a new treble dedicated in 2000; the 4th is believed to be the oldest inscribed bell in the county. They are hung in a 2-tier arrangement, giving a 'snug' arrangement in the ground floor ringing chamber, and soon we were clattering away with some complicated call-changes and more Grandsire.

Our next stop at St Gregory's Church, Tredington, promised tea and coffee. Not to be disappointed, the local ringers had put on a wonderful spread! An imposing, large airy church with spire, in the centre of the village, it was established before the 10th century and is a major landmark in the Stour valley. We finally found a tower that Graham had not rung at, and he claimed that by the end of this particular tour, he would have rung at 1008 towers (certainly he wasn't keen on keeping to round numbers!). The large open ringing chamber on the ground floor with a long rope draught gave a challenging ring, but despite this, the heavy 6 rang beautifully, having been overhauled in 2022, by Taylors. In colour-matched jumpers, our band were joined at the end of our visit by the local band of ringers and we delightedly came away, well-rung and well-watered!

Our next stop was to lunch: the highlight of the trip for some but, so far, we had had a good solid ring at the previous towers. Some nifty reversing into the yard of the White Bear in the centre of Shipston on Stour, we were soon being fed and watered in the barn and discussing animatedly about how the last 3 towers had fulfilled our expectations. After a huge lunch for some, a vote of thanks to Ian and Sara for organising the tour. We were keen to relax and catch up in some of the beautiful warm spring sunshine outside

but, remembering why we were here, we ambled across the main street to St Edmund's Church, originally built in the Medieval period.

The 5 existing bells were recast into a ring of 6 in 1695, but on 1st May 1700, the churchwardens presented the ringers and their accomplices to the Consistory Court at Worcester, for ringing without permission and "for breaking the 6th bell, at a very unreasonable time in the night"!! This may have accounted for a somewhat 'reserved' selection of ringing from us, but a successful ring of Bob Doubles abated any doubts of the abilities of those present. After using the wonderful facilities, (twinned with Latrine No 995 in Giharo, Burundi!), we burst forth into the sunshine, to pile on to the coach for a ride deep into the Cotswolds, to St Eadburgha's Church, Ebrington, built in the 13th century, on high ground to the southwest of the village.

St Eadburgha was reputed to be a granddaughter of King Alfred and founded Pershore Abbey: within this church porch, there was a stone coffin which may date to late Saxon period, indicating that there was probably a church here long before the current building; and in the north side of the chancel, there is the tomb of Sir John Fortescue (d. 1484), who served as Lord Chief Justice to Henry VI. With so much history around, the first floor ringing chamber of six gave us an interesting arrangement, with the 3rd bell so tucked into the corner, it made it unnoticed to some! The final of these 6 bells was recast in 1955 by Taylors, when these bells were last rehung, and still carries around its bell-mouth its original inscription "William Bagley made mee 1642 AD"; thus making the earliest bell as also the newest!

Old ringing traditions are maintained at Ebrington: with a local peal of called changes named 'George Surprise', named after a previous Tower Captain; a specialism of 'firing' the bells simultaneously, traditionally rung to wish every success to the bride and groom as they leave the church; and the ringing for Doubting Thomas' Day, 21st December, from 5.45am till dawn, followed by a traditional Ebrington farmhouse breakfast. As keen as its previous ringers, we made called changes (maybe Ian's Surprise?!) and Grandsire ring out across the escarpment towards Chipping Campden and happily left under a blue sky and a peaceful early evening, to our final tower.

Mickleton Church of St Lawrence was built in the 12th century and has a fine array of hand-stitched kneelers; the tower has 8 bells, the oldest of which dates from 1668 and they were rehung in 1954. The ringing chamber is on the ground floor and there was not a lot of room for anyone else in addition to those actually ringing. But ringing at an 8+ bell tower seemed to attract a lot more ringers than at the previous towers and the room filled up rapidly! Several rounds of Plain Hunt were made, giving us all a final, solid ending to a very successful ringing tour. As we made our way back to the coach, the large black cloud threatening to dump its load upon us drifted our way and as we made our way back to our respective drop-off points, the rain lashed down! But we were content with our day and our tour of the Cotswolds. Most of all, very proud of our efforts, after a gap of 3 years since our last Ringing Tour.

Jenny Griffiths

Daventry Branch

BRANCH MEETINGS

November

At Kislingbury in November, Justin kept us in order as 19 people rang, including four visitors. Three more did not ring. Lay Reader Ron Bridges led our service with Richard Buck summoned from London to 'grab' the organ! Sandra Blair and Shirley Faulkner kindly provided copious cups of tea all afternoon. Later, Bugbrooke's five bells were kept going by 15 ringers and two observers.

December

We were joined by Ian and Val Calvert, up from Tiptree for the day, at Byfield in December. The church was nice and warm, allowing for plenty of chat, catching up and recruiting of readers for later. Seven succumbed to the heat with only 16 willing to climb the spiral to ring. We had soups, sandwiches and cakes and, later, mulled wine and warm mince pies. Miles Baker proposed the vote of thanks, including Lyn Grennan, Alison Buck and the Byfield ringers for splendid catering and Logan for his vigorous washing up. Bishop Ed Condry then led our carol service with eight readings and nine carols accompanied on the piano by Meriel Gardner.

January AGM

On the third Saturday, 40 people braved the cold to attend at some point. In the afternoon, 29 rang on eight or ten bells including a visitor from Wycombe and eight of the ten 'Ring for the King' new recruits at Daventry. The latter started at 2pm with extra one-to-one bell handling sessions. Ten more members preferred not to ring.

After a service taken by Rector Dawn, with hymns accompanied by Martin Heath, cups of tea were available in the church hall, thanks to Deena Johnson, to accompany bring-your-own teas. We were pleased to hear that Hugh Johnson got home from his time in hospital on January 6.

Jane Rands had the Branch AGM underway in good time. The committee report for publication in the Guild's Annual Report was quickly approved.

Ringling Master Justin reported 78 items published on Bellboard for the branch during the year, including tolling and general ringing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, her death and the accession of King Charles. He also mentioned the number of new recruits for the Jubilee earlier and now for the Coronation.

Steward Brian Foley mentioned the effect of the long hot summer on wooden frames and the completion of the long outstanding tower rendering at Church Stowe. Ian Willgress advised us that the ringing for the dedication service in February will be by invitation, but the branch meets there the week after.

We elected and welcomed as new members: Laura and Freya Bartlett (Byfield), Kaiden McCreath (Daventry) and Julie Sargent (Weedon).

With Guild President, Alistair Donaldson, supervising the swift re-election of Jane Rands as our chairman, we thanked Christine for 11 years as Treasurer, and voted in Helen Camps (Whilton) to take over. Brian Foley agreed to act as Branch Steward for one more year on the basis that we try to find a replacement. Ian and Alison Willgress swapped places, so Alison became our Guild Management Committee (GMC) rep and, after 8 years in that post, Ian will become a branch committee member along with Kim Gibbard, James Grennan, Leanne Martin, Gwynneth White and the addition of Laura Bartlett and Jenny Lunn.

The programme was agreed, after a full day outing in May was substituted for a half-day so we can return to ranging further afield.

Alistair brought us up to date on Guild matters: updating the Rules and Constitution; development at The Old Black Lion, Northampton, and he introduced 'Reshaping the Guild'. He passionately went through the reasons for suggesting reform and asked the branch committee to respond at the GMC. The meeting closed at 7.17pm.

Twelve made it back to the belfry and with our regular Cannock visitor joining us, we rang on eight or ten bells till 9pm.

February

We met at the leaning tower of Church Stowe to sample the new ring of five, installed in February 2021. The 1590 bell, tuned to the minor scale, was retired and replaced by a new bell, cast with canons and tuned to the major scale with a new treble sourced by Taylors. The 1390 bell remains in service as the tenor! Due to works to the tower fabric, the new bells could not be tested by Taylors until October 2022, and were dedicated on February 11, 2023. Despite the long wait, there were only 18 present, of whom 6 were visitors to ring. After the short service, we moved to Heyford for tea and evening ringing.

The branch committee met in February to discuss the Reshaping the Guild that the President spoke about at our January AGM. The consensus was that people choose to support towers or groups, local or not, with those who share their outlook on ringing. Rearranging branches would detract from recruiting and retaining new ringers. I suggested the Guild appoint Ringing Promoters to recruit, train and enthuse in locations where there are no ringers. Our representatives passed this to the GMC, but the President wasn't sure where these extra people will come from.

March

At Braunston we started at 2.30pm with some recent recruits ringing rounds. Altogether 29 rang, including Janice & Jeremy (Ring for the King recruits from Daventry), Freya, Laura and Stan (three generations of new ringers from Byfield), Bradley (from Braunston) and a visitor each from Derby and High Wycombe. Seven more didn't ring – mainly preparing tea and chatting.

Vicar Revd Kathryn Evans, with Simon Galt unleashing the organ, encouraged the "noisemakers" to sing at the top of their voices with her although she had to prompt the organ for the final verse of Tell out my Soul!

The splendid buffet tea provided by the Braunston ringers, under the expert organisation of Annette Iles and Pat Milner, was much appreciated, with Ian Willgress proposing a vote of thanks.

Later, 15 of us visited the too-rarely rung fine five bells at Welton including our High Wycombe friend and a rare glimpse of locals Nikki Butt and Simon Creasey.



Most of the youngsters at Badby

April

For April 1, the Baker family suggested, and then organised, a young ringers' ring and pizza. Badby was chosen and 18 under 21s signed up. With Justin as chief assister and Miles running the ringing, only two over-aged rang during the afternoon. Much energy was put into the bells of character to get them in place and, together with lots of rounds and call changes, plain hunt and bob doubles were achieved. The stairs directly from the church to the ringing room were used for the first time at such an event.

Theresa fetched plenty of Dominos Pizzas and Catherine Allcott provided plenty of cake to complete the afternoon.

Ring for the King

Justin's request at our October meeting, for all towers to recruit soon for Ring for the King's Coronation, sprung to life very quickly in mid-November. He revamped his successful Whilton door-to-door leaflet for the Platinum Jubilee, to cover the coronation and aimed at Daventry town. Some 500 A5 leaflets had soon been pushed through letterboxes in outer estates. By December, five had arrived, growing to 10 by January, including another Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award candidate. All are making progress with Tuesday training from 6.30 pm before normal practice and some Saturdays. Four of them came to Badby for the young ringers' event on April 1.

People

Graham White got back on his bike last autumn and to work full-time. After a bit of chiming in his usual haunts, he rang again for the first time on October 30, the first time since August 7. He spent the intervening time in the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford.

Patsy Groom moved back to Kent in November having had an unfortunate time since moving to Braunston in August 2019. A specially baked cake was enjoyed at Hellidon Tuesday coffee morning (with ringing!) on November 1 as a bon voyage.

After practice at Staverton on Thursday, November 24, the company marked the retirement of Philip Saunders, and thus his last regular attendance at Staverton practice, by heading to the Countryman. Phil has been working and ringing around here during the week since 2002 and was a regular at Staverton Thursday practices. He remained a very active tower captain at Springfield, Essex over the weekends. During this time, he has rung and conducted at least nine quarter peals at Staverton and 14 quarter peals of multi-method doubles at Litchborough, not to mention the 62 over the weekends at Springfield! His enthusiasm will be missed.



Last night before retiring home to Essex for Phil Saunders at Staverton Countryman.

L to r: Val, Colin, Brian, Simon, Christine, Phil, Richard

David Foster (Flore) rang his first quarter peal of minor on an inside bell when Heyford practice night turned into a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor, conducted by Ian Willgress on December 16. David also rang in the March quarter peal on the treble to Plain Bob Triples at Weedon. This was a bit different, as it was rung on the back seven bells without a cover bell, due to the prior indisposition of the treble stay. With grateful thanks to organiser Alison Willgress for standing down.

The December branch 8-bell quarter peal was Yorkshire S Major, rung before the Carol Service at Daventry on Sunday December 18, conducted by Jim White.

The New Year was welcomed on Bank Holiday Monday afternoon with a quarter peal of Grandsire Caters at Daventry, organised as his first of Grandsire Caters by Miles Baker, and conducted by Ian Willgress.

Year 6 Freya was brought to the first Hellidon session of the year by her Dad. Freya kindly raised all five bells to applause! Her grandfather Stan brought her to a repeat performance at half-term and he is learning to ring as well.

Congratulations to Matt Allcott on ringing his first quarter away from cover, by ringing the treble to Plain Bob Doubles conducted by Gwynneth at Whilton on Sunday March 5.



The quarter peal band in anticlockwise order from Matt (treble) at front right

Angela Waldock (Badby) has moved to Aberdeen to be near her daughter Emma and two grandchildren. She has already been to a practice there where she met Sarah Hyatt (ex Farthingstone). Angela learned to ring in 1998 when she brought her daughter along to ring and has put in at least 1,126 attendances since then! In 1999 she organised the first Badby May Day outing. In those pre-Satnav days, cars were seen arriving at towers from different directions and with such tight timings they came to be called Rallies! Angela went on to organise another 11 rallies, with husband Nick finding the best pubs for lunches.

Geoff Pullin

Guildsborough Branch

Guildsborough Branch AGM was held at Guildsborough Village Hall on the 7th of January. All the current officers were returned. Soup, scones and cakes were served, and there was a lively discussion about the proposed changes to branch structures. There was near unanimity that the status quo was unsustainable.

Several new ringers have started in the branch, possibly as a result of the Ring for the King campaign. Pitsford's bells have been rehung and several people from Pitsford have their L-plates on. The dwindling cohort of ringers at Scaldwell have joined forces with both the Pitsford learners and the (out of branch) band at Boughton, to make productive practices. This collaboration is proof positive that changes to the branch structures are needed.

Paul D Clewett passed away on the 7th January 2023 following a short illness. Paul was taught to ring at Pitsford by the late Eric Frost. Following his marriage to the late Valerie

they settled in Spratton where he joined the band, eventually taking over as Tower Captain. Paul served as Guilsborough Branch Steward and later Chairman. The Branch has lost a good friend and a loyal servant and will be sadly missed. May he rest in peace.

Fiona Barclay

Kettering Branch

Branch Ringing Meeting 26th November 2022

This meeting was held at Great Cransley, St. Andrew. The ringing was attended by 14 Branch members. The ringing was organised by members of the Branch Committee and comprised Rounds & Call Changes, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Bob Minor.

Afterwards the activity moved to the Village Hall for a 'Bring & Share' supper followed by a Quiz Night kindly organised by Margaret & Michael Dainty. The quiz was won by a team comprising Bill and Liz Adcock and Mary & Nick Watts.

Branch Ringing Meeting Saturday 17th December 2022

Our pre-Christmas Branch Ringing Meeting December 2022 was split between Arthingworth, St. Andrew & Desborough, St. Giles.

The numbers were somewhat disappointing at Arthingworth, but the lure of seasonal treats, provided in the church at Desborough by Bill & Liz Adcock and Jane Marsh, brought out a total of 15 ringers including the Guild President Alistair Donaldson. The ringing was organised by members of the Branch Committee and included Plain Bob, St. Clements Minor, Grandsire Triples and Stedman Triples.

Branch AGM 28th January 2023

Attendance at this year's AGM totalled 36, although this was an aggregate of those who attended the ringing before, those who were there for the business meeting, and those who rang after. Included in the ringing "before" was a visitor from Cannock.

Many had not, for a long time, climbed the 52 steps to Kettering Parish Church's tower or were making the ascent as first-time ringers at this church. Ringing was mainly confined to rounds and called changes on the twelve or, more often, the back ten. The service was led by the Rector, Revd. David Walsh, and his homily included interesting observations from his recent sabbatical in Korea, where bells can be very large and are struck on the outside rim with a hammer. It had not been possible to engage a regular church organist for this service but Kettering's Verger, Ian Greenwood, 'stood in'.

Jane Sibson, Pat Edkins and Anne Cook provided a 'high tea' with options of chili con carne/ vegetarian chili/ shepherd's pie, followed by delicatessen sponges. Simon Pearce called a vote of thanks to the caterers, the Rector and Mr. Greenwood and we

were off into the business meeting! An amazing 18 people (14 adults, 4 junior) - several of them present in person - were elected to the Guild as new members; and four more – two apiece at Kettering and Wilbarston towers - were proposed, seconded and elected as “returning members”.

Christopher Groome was present in person to receive his “50-year membership” certificate. And, finally, we were able to fill our Branch Ringing Master vacancy when Chris Pearson agreed to take it on; his wife Frances also joining the Committee. All other members of the Committee indicated that they were willing to serve another year and all were confirmed in post.

Apart from this influx of bellringing new blood and the completing of our Branch Committee, we had four other major items of business.

Firstly, we approved the moving of our Branch events to the ‘third Saturday’ of the month, as the fourth had proved problematic during 2022/23. It was confirmed to us by the two members of the Guild Executive present, that Peterborough Guild ‘Second Saturday’ events were here to stay and would not cease after the Guild Centenary celebrations in 2024. It was pointed out, and noted, that Kettering and Wellingborough Branches would now both be using the ‘third Saturday’.

Secondly, we were unable to reach a position on the ‘Rethinking the Branches’ paper despite being made aware how close to collapse our neighbour, Thrapston Branch, was. Members, speaking from the floor, said they had not had enough time to take in this crisis in local bellringing, and urged more discussion.

Thirdly, the Branch received an update on the St. Peter’s/Old Black Lion project for a bellringing training centre near Northampton railway station. Without being greatly excited about the prospect of new training facilities less than thirty miles down the road, we were nevertheless interested in our exposure and financial commitment. John Beresford said as things stood, this was very limited.

Fourthly, Sarah Bence, who had volunteered to sit on the Guild’s “Rules Sub-Committee”, gave the meeting a verbal report on how their work was simplifying the Guild’s rules and making it relevant to the 21st century – a necessary task.

Back up the 52 steps to the tower again! In the post-meeting ringing, overseen by the Ringing-Master-elect, a touch of Grandsire Triples was successfully rung.

Branch Ringing Meeting 19th February, Peterborough Cathedral

By ten past two, over twenty of us were assembled by the Cathedral gift-shop counter ready to go up. A flight of steps upwards, and a baffling series of passages and duckboard-walks through various chambers in the tower, led us to the Cathedral ringing room with its large and well-planned ringing circle.

Some of the regular Peterborough ringers were there to help. Chris Pearson was in charge as Branch Ringing Master. Rounds on twelve, and rounds on the back ten, were rung while we settled down and got used to the handling. For those not immediately involved in the ringing, Murray Coleman led a party of visitors to view a piece of winding-gear from long ago, now on display.

Back in the ringing room, the rounds and call-changes were interspersed with a plain course of Grandsire Caters and a half-course of Yorkshire Royal. We finished for the Evensong itself at three-thirty.

Feedback afterwards was incredibly positive. We look forward to a similar level of attendance from our Branch when we come back here in nine months, for the Evensong on 19th November.

Branch Steward's Meeting 17th March 2023

Andy Bimson, Kettering Branch Steward, invited those members of the Branch who had attended the Basic and Intermediate courses as part of the Guild Second Saturday sessions to discuss a plan of work for the coming year. Five of the six members who had attended the training joined the Friday night practice at Pytchley, All Saints and after retired to the re-opened Overstone Arms.

Andy's on-going plan is to visit all 28 Branch towers on a 5-yearly cycle, or 5-6 towers per year. Those present advised of their availability, some only being able to assist at weekends and others at any time.

Andy detailed the outstanding repairs that his previous inspections had identified, at Cranford St, John, Cottingham and Weston-by-Welland, and the re-positioning of the Sanctus bell at Great Oakley St. Michael and All Angels, necessitated by the installation of the 2 new trebles last year. Work on the Ellacombe Chimes at Thorpe Malsor, All Saints was also discussed.

Andy informed the meeting of plans to re-hang the bells at Harrington. Work to remove the bells from the tower likely to take place later this year under the auspices of John Taylor & Co Loughborough. A working party could be required to take the ropes off and remove the bell wheels. The floor to the bell chamber was reported to be in a poor condition and may need some temporary measures to enable work to be carried out safely.

In closing the meeting, it was agreed to set up a WhatsApp group for those who attended to enable easy communication of work planned and the availability of individuals to assist.

Branch Meeting Saturday 25th March 2023

The afternoon meeting was split between Cranford St. John, which rang well, having been checked and oiled by George Potter, one of the local ringers, in preparation for the visit, and Islip, St. St. Nicolas.

28 members, including visitors from Guilsborough and Thrapston Branches and some of our new young members from Desborough, rang Rounds & call Changes, Plain Hunt and Plain Bob under the guidance of Chris Pearson Branch Ringing Master. Hot and cold drinks were available, along with a selection of homemade cakes provided by Frances Pearson and Jane Marsh.

Moving on to Islip, a total of 32 ringers was registered as attending, a record for a ringing meeting in recent times. The start of ringing was delayed by the stay on the Tenor fouling a beam above the bell. A CCTV camera is installed above the Tenor bell to monitor for any errant behaviour. Jim Bence went up to the Belfry and hit the errant stay with a wrench, first left, then right and finally downwards which seemed to do the trick. The issue resolved, the bells were raised and all had an opportunity to ring, having made their way up the steep and narrow spiral staircase.

I am indebted to the Branch Secretary Nick Watts for filling in the gaps for meetings that I was unable to attend. There is no information to report from individual towers on this occasion.

David Dainty

Peterborough Branch

Castor Ringing School

We teach from basic handling through rounds to methods on Saturday mornings at St Kyneburgh's, Castor, and it's been a very busy period for us. A number of new ringers joined us, who either wish to progress beyond rounds, or to learn to handle. We've also seen several existing pupils progress through the methods, so we now have a cohort regularly ringing Bob Doubles. Some have now rung their first QPs on the treble or tenor, and two have rung a QP inside, at which point they have graduated from the school.

With the interest generated from the publicity for Ring for the King, we've had a larger than usual number of new recruits. This has put pressure on the facilities and teachers. For sessions in late March and April, we split the sessions, so that those ringing rounds and learning methods continued at Castor each Saturday morning, whilst we held intensive handling sessions at Nassington. Most of the Nassington learners are now ringing rounds, so will be able to ring for the Coronation in their respective towers.

Hilary Hardie, Head Tutor

St Mary's, Peterborough

There is something in the eastern waters of the river Nene, as it heads out to the Wash, which the local towers attribute to a love of quarter peals. It's also ironic that the short stretch of A1260 runs through Peterborough and over the Nene, so is another symbolic endorsement to ringing quarters!

Pre-pandemic, we started a new challenge at St Mary's to keep our brain cells ticking over, called the Alphabet Trio Challenge. The rules of the challenge are to work our way through the alphabet, ringing three different doubles methods or variations, starting with the same letter. Although good progress was made in 2019 and the start of 2020, it was then put on hold until July 2022 when we recommenced with the letter 'R'. On St George's day we concluded with the trio of Z's: Zizania, Zip-a-dee-doo-dah and Zip-a-dee-ay.

The great thing about doubles and triples ringing is that it creates opportunities to bring in newer ringers, to help top and tail and gain valuable experience on rhythm, speed and confidence.

We have two new ringers who recently accomplished Level 1 ART, Emilia and Katie, and progressing really well, so that Level 2 will be signed off in May. Our grateful thanks to Gavin Simpson with his tuition and support.

Finally, a big thank you to all the ringers who come from further afield, supporting the Thursday evening practice, and experiencing a full workout session.

NB. We practice every Thursday evening, apart from the first Thursday each month when we support the Glinton ringers at St Benedict's.

Andrew Christie, Ringing Master

Nassington

We continue to hold busy and interesting practices on Monday evenings and Friday mornings. As the band has become more experienced, we can ring beyond Bob Doubles, including St Simons and Reverse Canterbury Doubles, and Minor methods such as Bob Minor and St Clements. Recently, we've introduced a method of the month, which has included Nassington Bob Doubles and Little Bob Minor for those wishing to try them.

Learners from across the area continue to join our practices and we've also been joined by several new ringers, so we've had to hold additional handling sessions. All of them are progressing, so the practices allow for everyone at all stages of their bell-ringing journey. The after-school sessions are still popular, with the majority of our youngsters now ready to ring with the main band on Monday evenings.

We continue to ring for Sunday services at Nassington and at the other towers in the Benefice, where possible. In addition, we've rung for a number of funerals and have supported other towers with our ringers, as necessary.

The church has been holding a series of multi activity sessions in the village in the school holidays and, as part of that, we've demonstrated bell ringing and arranged visits up the tower to show off the bells. This has generated a lot of interest in bell ringing.

Hilary Hardie, Tower Captain

Rutland Branch

The Rutland Branch AGM was held on January 14th at Great Casterton, with ringing prior to the meeting, and earlier at Ryhall. All Officers were voted in to continue for the forthcoming year. Ian Bell from Brooke became a committee member, with David Rippin stepping down after many years of commitment. In recent weeks David has been unwell and we all wish him well as he recovers from a serious illness

Last year we reported the death in July, of Tony Clark, Tower Captain at Wing. He had reached the age of 99. On 28th January of this year, family and friends gathered to share coffee and cake and memories of a mutual friend, on what would have been his 100th birthday. A Quarter Peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung in his memory, Grandsire being his favourite method.



Tony Clark

Welcome to our trainee ringers.

A huge welcome and well done to all the new trainees in Rutland who have stepped forward to take the challenge of learning to ring church bells. Since Autumn last year, nine have successfully become Members and continue to progress well. On the verge of becoming Members, we have another 10 – 11 new ringers, with a further 10 - 12 ringers all keen to 'Ring for the King'. We anticipate all 30 new ringers should be able to ring for the coronation in May. This has been achieved by a fantastic effort by trainees and the teachers and others who have given their time to promote bellringing.

To help the new ringers progress to the next stage in their ringing we have held two 'progression' events, with another planned for later in March. To promote confidence and competence, the new ringer rings rounds and call changes with a helper standing by and a band of experienced ringers around them. These events have proved to be both very productive and enjoyable.

Ringing again at North Luffenham

Vic Arnold has stepped down as Tower Captain for North Luffenham for health reasons and is not currently ringing. On Bellboard, Vic is accredited with ringing 2 Peals and 23 Quarter Peals, the first is recorded as taking place at North Luffenham in 2004 and the last entry in 2013. His favoured place was ringing the Tenor. We all send our best wishes

to Vic in his ringing retirement, although I'm sure he will continue to observe and support Rutland ringing with interest.

Sharon Bromilow has taken on the role of Tower Captain at North Luffenham. In recent months there hasn't been much ringing taking place there, partly due to Vic being unwell, Covid and other factors, but this is now changing. On Tuesday evenings Wing and Hambleton have been sharing practice sessions and now North Luffenham joins that grouping, with practices on a rota basis.

Fourteen people attended for the first practice session on 21st February, which was Shrove Tuesday. To mark the occasion, pancakes and coffee was shared and enjoyed by all.

Sue Webster

Thrapston Branch.

A very quiet time in the Thrapston Branch, at the moment. But just like the first green shoots of Spring appearing in our local churchyards, we are looking forward to hopefully being able to celebrate King Charles' Coronation with a 'Ring for The King' event at most Towers within the Branch area.

In early March we heard the sad news of the passing of Frank Coales from St. Nicholas Twywell. Frank hadn't rung for some time, retiring initially to Norfolk, but he dropped in every so often to visit friends and ring at local meetings. In previous times he had been a very active member of the Thrapston Branch as well as running the family butcher's shop in Twywell which was renowned for its very high-quality meat and pies.



Our new furry recruit enjoying tea and cakes at practice night

We were able to host a very successful Stedman Workshop at St. James' Thrapston with thanks to Cathy and Simon Dixon and all the supportive and very experienced ringers who came to steer the learners through their paces. It was a very worthwhile and purposeful afternoon.

We were also able to hold a joint practice with the Kettering Branch at St. Nicholas Islip. For those who know the Tower, it's very cosy up there, but with groups going up and down the thirty-nine steps in rotation, it was a pleasure to welcome over thirty people to the practice.

As we were locking up, a local couple came by and asked about the bells. 'It's lovely to hear them again' they commented. 'Yes, it is', I replied, 'would you be interested in ringing? We need new bell ringers'.

Sadly, the replies were not of the right persuasion but just like our springtime churchyards there are green shoots of recovery on the horizon.

Alison Byrnes

Towcester Branch

Towcester Branch 59th Annual Dinner

The Boat Inn, Stoke Bruerne

Towcester Branch were delighted to hold once again a very successful Annual Branch Dinner. Ringers, non-ringers and guests were duly welcomed by the MC for the evening, Barbara King.

The first thing anyone visiting would notice about an Annual Branch Dinner was the joy of seeing bell ringers in 'real' clothes, no longer the many layers of sweatshirts and jumpers required for the cold, damp church towers but instead the glamour and glitter of dinner dresses and evening suits. What a joy to behold.



Pre-dinner drinks were bought and consumed, whilst raffle tickets were sold by Jill Cooke and her trusty team Elaine Leslie and Jill Harvey. All proceeds to go to a very worthwhile cause, Northampton Special Care Baby Unit, fundamental to the care given to our newest bell ringer, Hamish Stanworth (he doesn't know this yet) and I can imagine his nursery rhymes will include a plain course of Plain Bob Triples. We were delighted to have Hamish join us for the dinner, snuggling up to his mummy all evening and then getting cuddles from Gail Stuart and Jill as the evening wore on (I must add here that Hamish is only a few months old and very cute!!).

Grace was kindly said by the Revd Angela Hammett, Curate of Tove Benefice, joining us for the first time with her husband Chris.

The starter and main course of the dinner was served with our MC breaking the moments with timely Toasts. We sadly remembered ringers we have lost in the last year, specifically Brian Gross from Greens Norton and Towcester. With much sadness we toasted the passing of our late Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Thanks, and toasts, given to all those whom rang for her passing and her funeral. Conversation amongst dinner guests turned to the difficulties of ringing on full muffled bells for the first time: the effects, the memories and the honour to do so.

Desserts were served to very full tummies, with the MC and the Branch Chairman, Jonathan Stuart, offering toasts as we went along.



The dinner ended with the Loyal Toast to our new King, King Charles III, with talk of getting ready to ring for his Coronation – what an honour that will be.

Margaret Bulleid and her band of handbell Ringers, Chris Bulleid, Barbara and Jonathan King gave a splendid performance, ringing 3 leads of Oxford Treble Bob Major and Chris calling the touch in a very small voice. I've never heard him be so quiet – he's not like that at Pattishall! But what a joy to see and hear, and such great skill.

The Revd Angela Hammett gave a lovely speech and encouragement to continue with ringing and how ringing is so welcome in the church. A toast then offered to all guests and members at the dinner.

Derek Jones, Past Ringing Master and Guild President, stepped in at the last minute to give a speech as, sadly, both Cathy and Simon Dixon (Guild Ringing Master) were too ill to join us for the evening. Helen Allton proposed a toast to the guests and visitors. Her rousing speech was full of fun and laughter.

The evening was completed by an address from Jonathan Stuart as Branch Chairman, the raffle then drawn, many prizes donated and won. We were delighted to raise £200 for the SCBU at Northampton General.

A branch Dinner is an absolute delight, an event that must continue, for tradition, for the coming together as a branch and for the chance to see everyone in a warm, dry place.

Thank you to all the organisers – looking forward to the dinner in November 2023 which will be the 60th!

Odette Dawkins

February Branch Practice at St Mary's, Wappenham

This event was well attended by 18 people including a welcome visit from the new guild president, Alistair Donaldson. A variety of methods were rung including Grandsire, Plain Bob Doubles, Called Changes, Bourne, St Martin's, Stedman, Spliced Surprise Minor and Little Bob. Several members lunched together afterwards at The Crown in Weston.



Towcester Branch AGM

This year's AGM was held at Roade. There was ringing, first at Ashton on their anticlockwise 5, and then ringing and a service at Roade, followed by a delicious tea and meeting, where members were elected to office. The Branch provisional programme for the year ahead was discussed and some exciting ringing and experiences are planned, including a day's ringing and gliding!!

Margaret Bulleid and Chris Bulleid presented ART certificates to Alfie, Charlie and George, our youngest branch members who are making excellent progress. Alfie and George gaining their level 2 and Charlie achieving his level 1.



Alfie receives ART certificate

I was also mentioned in dispatches, having achieved my level 4 some time ago and received my certificate some time later in the pub after ringing!!

George also received a certificate for ringing his first quarter inside to plain bob doubles.

Congratulations go to George.



George receives ART certificate



Charlie receives ART certificate

March Branch Practice, Grafton Regis & Cosgrove

We held a Branch Practice on Saturday 25th March at Grafton Regis and Cosgrove.

It had been some time since members had rung at Grafton Regis, as restoration works in the tower two years ago had blocked rope paths, until Taylors of Loughborough recently fitted new pulleys and ceiling bosses to enable ringing again.

Sixteen ringers attended, and rang a mixture of rounds, called changes, Grandsire, Erin, Stedman, Bob Doubles, Bourne and a touch of Double Oxford Minor. Afterwards several members had lunch at The White Hart in Grafton Regis.

It's so lovely to see the signs of new life, snowdrops, daffodils, buds and lambs when enroute and at different ringing venues. The nights are lighter and the days are getting warmer.

We have a lot to look forward to especially the planning for ringing for the King in May. For some of us a once in a lifetime event. So here's to more exciting and memorable ringing ventures, carpe diem!

Jill Cooke



Me receiving my certificate

Wellingborough Branch

At the Wellingborough Branch AGM, held at Rushden on Saturday 21st January, a minute's silence was held in memory of Shirley Berrill and John Chambers, members who had recently passed away.

Six new members were elected to the Branch and Josh Horne of Irthlingborough was presented with his First Peal Certificate. Harry Curtis and Kevan Chapman stood down as joint Ringing Masters and were thanked for their years of service to the Branch and Guild. Thomas Coulter-Brophy was duly elected as Ringing Master and Helen Manktelow as Assistant Ringing Master.

The Branch Programme of events for the year were discussed and agreed by the members. The Secretary advised members of proposed changes to the Guild which are under discussion by Guild Representatives.

Since the AGM, we have held Surprise Practices at Finedon and Wilby, an afternoon practice at Stanwick and an evening practice at Earls Barton.

Towers in the Branch have started recruiting and training ringers for the King's Coronation and are progressing nicely. Tim Samson, our Branch Steward has also been busy working at Mears Ashby, Ecton and Whiston on their bells.

The Branch was saddened to hear that Kevan Chapman of Finedon passed away after a short illness on 25th February, just two days after his 75th birthday. Members of the Branch, along with our Guild President, attended the funeral on 30th March and Tim Samson did an excellent job of organising the ringing before and after the service. May he rest in peace.

Rushden

On January 8th we rang a Quarter Peal for the retirement of Bishop Donald (see article on p10).

In February we held an open evening in an aim to recruit new ringers ready for the King's Coronation. Unfortunately, they were so keen to learn that we encountered a broken stay. We were extremely delighted when a relapsed ringer, who learned to ring at Newport Pagnell, decided to return to ringing.

Quarters Peals have been rung in memory of Kevan Chapman and another on Mothering Sunday.

Pam Bailey

Earls Barton

Following on from having most of our clappers re-bushed last year, we now have two new rope bottom-ends fitted. This was done very quickly but both are receiving mixed reviews, for the time being, from those who ring them.

At the Branch AGM we had four new members elected, which is probably a record for us. This included two new ringers, Kirsty and Bonnie and two experienced ringers, Sylvia and Mike who have moved into the village. Our other three learners are all progressing well and at least two of these will hopefully be nominated and elected later this year.

On Sunday 5th March we had a Quarter Peal 'Practice' which turned into a successful attempt, though slightly longer than the usual 1260. It was Josh's first quarter, at first attempt on the Tenor, and Sylvia and Mike's first quarter with the Earls Barton band.

My thanks to Martin Tanner for helping with the 'Practice' and to everyone involved for sticking with me when I threw a wobbler and caused the slightly longer 50min length.

Andy Smith

Moulton

Moulton are raising money to restore two clappers. A car book sale and a giant bric-a-brac stall was held on Saturday 8th April.

Barry Care

Yardley Hastings

Whilst Yardley Hastings, St Andrew, may sometimes appear to be somewhat non-existent, we are busy. We practise every Wednesday and have not missed a practice for a very long time. We ring for all Sunday services, have missed none this year, and only two last year.

We are teaching children to ring for the Coronation, and we ring or chime every day, but more of that later. The children, six from the village and one from Earls Barton, started back in mid-December. They range in age between eight and twelve and are taught as a group of four after school on Mondays and a group of three on Thursdays. It is fascinating watching them progress. Three of the primary school children are disadvantaged by being light in weight and quite slight but the fourth who is only fractionally heavier is ringing quite beautifully. The other three, all at secondary school, vie with each other on

a weekly basis as to who is best. They all ring our 5th, and we will have two capable of ringing the tenor.

Of course, the important question is, can we keep them? Well, three are on record as saying they want to continue and really enjoy it, so we shall have to think of ruses that keep them interested. They will all ring on May 6th.

We have taken to electronic ringing with a degree of enthusiasm. We have a camera in the bell chamber so we can see our bells moving. The children like that but we now also have two laptops running simulated ringing. Initially it will be used to teach rope sight, it is easy to slow the ringing down so learners and those struggling with rope sight are able to grasp the principles more quickly. Who knows, we may even finish up with a dumbbell.

We have entered our second year of Ukraine Peace Bell ringing or chiming 31 times. We tend to use the 5th but the 4th also sounds good chimed, especially when one or two strikes are missed, and the sound continues to echo in the bell. As a band we are surprised that, as far as we know, we are the only ringing tower in the world that daily remembers Ukraine.

Tony Finke

Wollaston

We had an enjoyable ring on 17th December to mark what would have been the 100th birthday of Ronald Henry Rose (father-in-law to Jean). The Rose family attended and appreciated hearing the ringing as they laid wreaths on the grave.

As life resumed normality at Christmas, our services were all held indoors. Our band rang for the Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas, the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve, and the Christmas Morning Family Communion Service.

We took the opportunity to get into the spirit of Christmas for the Christingle Service and wore our Christmas jumpers and hats (see photo).

As is now our tradition, St Mary's Wollaston rang in the New Year, so it was very late to bed (or early in the morning depending on your point of view) and then up again after a few hours' sleep to ring for the Sunday service. We rang the bells from 11.40pm until 12.15am with Jack Brown pulling a very slow 12 on the tenor bell, followed by all the other 5 bells joining in with fast rounds. We then welcomed the New Year with a few bottles of bubbly and what seems to be a new tradition, a potato from Harry Curtis.



*Ringers (left to right)
(Back) Mel, Jack, Thomas, Ben
(Front) Enya, Kate, Jean*

All the work on our ropes has now been completed so we are looking forward to a year of uninterrupted ringing.

We have now welcomed another new learner to our tower, and Sharon is progressing well. Jack, Mel and Ben are now moving on to Plain Hunt and it was good to have Thomas back from university to join us in our Christmas ringing. We welcomed Mel into the Wellingborough Branch as a Guild member at our business meeting in July 2022, and hope to add Ben to our ranks as a member in July 2023.

I am very grateful to Kate, Enya, Janet, John, Harry, Martin, Steve and Andy for their support to the Tower over this last year. *Jean Rose*

100 Club

The recent winners are:

MONTH	Subscribers	1st	Prize	2nd	Prize	3rd	Prize
Nov 2022	154	27Da	£50.82	172Ke	£18.48	45Da	£12.32
Dec 2023	154	153Ke	£50.82	143Pe	£18.48	15Gu	£12.32
Jan 2023	152	101We	£50.16	156Ke	£18.24	139Pe	£12.16
Feb 2023	141	43Pe	£46.53	40We	£16.92	149Pe	£11.28
Mar 2023	149	65Th	£49.17	184Cu	£17.88	153Ke	£11.92

You may notice that, in this period, one number was drawn out twice. The chances of this happening are very slim, but it just goes to show that some people can be lucky. If we have 150 paid up members or more, all winners get enough prize money to pay for at least one more year's subscription!

Details of monthly winners are published regularly on the Guild website and Facebook page.

All the profits go to the Bell Fund and this is a good source of regular income. As there is no limit on the number of members, do get in touch if you want to join. I do encourage payment by bank transfer, and send out reminders by email, but most branches have their own 100 Club representative (as listed in the Guild report) if you prefer face-to-face contact.

My thanks go to all the Branch representatives who have helped recruit new members, collect subs and pass on information.

Cathy Dixon 100_club@pdq.org.uk

Recent Guild members' firsts, reported on Bellboard

(Records from 1Oct2022 to 1Apr2023)

First Quarter

Geoff Bridges (Barnack)
Sally Watts (Caldecott)
George Brand (Cold Higham)
Josh White (Earl's Barton)
Helen Loxston-Baker (Great Oakley)
Steve Fuller (Nassington)
Eleni Oakton (Whitfield)

First away from cover

Sally Watts (Medbourne)
Matthew Allcott (Whilton)

First quarter on treble

Geoff Bridges (Barnack)

First Quarter on tenor

Matthew Osborne (Barnack)

First Quarter of Doubles inside

Stephen W Smith (Orlingbury)

First Inside

Andrew Blackwell (Gayton)
Steve Fuller (Nassington)
Catherine A Samtani (Orlingbury)

First Inside & First as Conductor

Deborah Bray (Peterborough St Mary)

First Quarter of Minor inside

David Foster (Nether Heyford)

First Bob Minor

Jane Robinson (King's Cliffe)

First Triples

Deborah Bray (Peterborough St Mary)

First Triples inside

Jane Robinson (Peterborough St Mary)

First Treble Bob / Surprise

Jonathan Stuart (Gayton)
Gavin Simpson (West Deeping)

First Surprise Major

Thomas Saunders (Cathedral)
Thomas Coulter-Brophy (Rushden)

First Surprise Major inside

Mark Webb (Cathedral)

First Spliced Surprise

Mike Price (Yelvertoft)

First Peal

Thomas Coulter-Brophy (Ecton)

GUILD EVENTS 2023 - 2024

Please watch out for announcements about future Guild Events, broadcast through the usual channels, including the Guild website www.pdg.org.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/PDGCBR.

April 22nd, 2023

Wellingborough Branch - Spring Festival and 6-bell Striking Contest

May 13th, 2023

Towcester – 10 Bell Practice

Gt Oxenden – Ringing Up & Down in Peal (booking required)

June 10th, 2023

Culworth Branch – Guild AGM

Evenley – Leading Up & Down (booking required)

July 8th, 2023

Rothwell – 10 Bell Practice

Gt Oakley – Bell Maintenance (booking required)

Weedon Bec – Intermediate Practice

September 9th, 2023

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

Towcester - Summer Festival and 8-Bell Striking Competition

November 11th, 2023

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

January 13th, 2024

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

January 14th, 2024

Peterborough Cathedral – **PDG100** Guild Evensong

February 10th, 2024

Wellingborough Branch – **PDG100** Social Event

March 9th, 2024

Thrapston Branch – **PDG100** Nene Valley Challenge