

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



**Newsletter
January 2024**

Guild Officers 2023-24

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Newsletter News

The Guild's centenary year has finally arrived. In this newsletter you will find details of centenary merchandise and clothing, plus a full year of centenary events, as well as the usual Guild and Branch news. I hope you will all take lots of opportunity to celebrate this historic occasion!

Many thanks, as always, to all the branch correspondents and Guild officers who make these newsletters possible. Keep sending in your stories.

We have made some changes to the distribution list for newsletters. Previously, any tower with attached members (according to the Annual Report) received a copy. We have updated the list, with the expert help of the Master, and we hope that all "active" towers will now receive copies.

A reminder that, if you'd like to share copies of the Newsletter with any non-ringing members, 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), on request to me, the PRO or the Secretary.

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

May I wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope Christmas went well in your household, with even a little extra ringing?

There is (reputedly) an ancient Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times", usually used sarcastically. But I see the next year, our Guild's Centenary Year, as a most interesting year in store for all of us. Across the Guild Branch teams have joined with Guild Officers to put together a brilliantly varied programme of events every month, usually on the 2nd Saturday throughout 2024. See our website and this Newsletter for full details.

Many thanks to you all for what you have done and will continue to do as the year rolls by, to celebrate our Guild's milestone.

I am so looking forward to joining those events and meeting you all.

But don't keep it to yourselves – invite others who don't normally go to Guild or Branch meetings to join you at the events you are going to.

I am prepared with my Centenary merchandise, indeed a couple of jigsaws became Christmas presents for ringing friends in other parts of the country! Do get your mementos while stocks last.

Lastly I am continuing to arrange Quarter Peals on Thursday evenings under the name COOTS (as in Come Out On ThursdayS). Please see the Guild website and last June's Newsletter for more details. If you would like to ring some QPs please do get in touch with me.

May we all have a most interesting and enjoyable year!

Alistair Donaldson

The Secretary psyches herself up

I can't quite believe that 2024 is actually here. I seem to have been thinking about the events of our 100th anniversary on and off for the last 5 years, and now it is actually going to happen. What started as one of those "wouldn't it be nice..." ideas has rather snowballed. We now have 12 events across the Guild, one per month, running from ringing to singing, from dining to dancing, and everything in between. There should be something for everyone and we hope to see you at events throughout the year. Details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and on the website pdg.org.uk/pdg-100.

In 2024 we also welcome Bishop Debbie Sellin as the 39th Bishop of Peterborough, with the installation service in the Cathedral on Sunday 3rd March. The Guild's formation was proposed by the 29th Bishop of Peterborough, Theodore Woods, in 1923. As Secretary,

I have written to Bishop Debbie to invite her to follow her predecessors and be a patron of the Guild. That might be another first we can claim, a lady patron. It also offers an opportunity to ring and welcome Bishop Debbie to the diocese.

I was pleased to finish 2023 by attending the dedication service at Yarwell for the new Starsmore Jubilee Bell. We rang the new five prior to the well-attended service and the choir, assembled specially for the occasion, did a splendid job of the anthems. It was a delightful service and a joyous occasion. I also enjoyed the selection of ringing-related music, Ding Dong Merrily on High must have been the first hymn in the service plan! Thank you, Yarwell, for the invitation to represent the Guild at your service and long may you enjoy your new 5.

And with that, onwards, into 2024. May it be bigger, better and more chocolatey than 2023.

From the Bellboard Footnotes

(28th August – 31st December 2023)

First quarters

Louise E Griffiths (Abington)
Simon Horspole (Bozeat)
Holly Pedersen (Castor)
Clara Pedersen (Castor)
Jessica M Cosby (Desborough)

First as Cover

Deborah Bray (Castor)
Odette Dawkins (Cold Higham)
Jessica Pearce (Desborough)

First Inside

Holly Pedersen (Castor)
Andrew North (Duston)
Geoff Bridges (Nassington)
Paul R Salter (Pytchley)
Andy Netherwood (Shawell)

First Stedman

Edward B Groome (Peterborough St Mary)

First Triples inside

Deborah Bray (Peterborough St Mary)
Hilary Hardie (Peterborough St Mary)
Roy Snow (Peterborough St Mary)

First Surprise Major

Catherine E Hemmington (Weldon)



Louise Griffiths' 1st Quarter (Abington)



Clare Pedersen's 1st Quarter (Castor)

First on 10

Thomas Saunders (Cathedral)

First surprise as Conductor

Thomas Coulter-Brophy (Rushden)

Thomas Saunders (Cathedral)

First Spliced as Conductor

Toby A Bence (Cathedral)

First peal Spliced Minor

Julie A Tarling (Wilburton)



Hilary Hardie 1st Triples Inside (P'borough)

Tower Milestones

The first peal was run at Draughton (03 Sept 2023).

Yarwell noted their last quarters as a ring of 4 (07 Oct 2023) and the first quarters on the new 5 (31 Dec 2023).

Harringworth celebrated 800 years of worship with a peal (29 Nov 2023).

Incumbents

The Revd Dr Donald McFadyen left the Warmington Benefice on Christmas Day (ringing at Cotterstock 25 Dec 2023).

The Revd Keir Dow was installed as Vicar of the Nine Bridges Benefice and quarters were rung at Maxey and Ginton on the day of his installation (17 Sep 2023). As a former resident of Castor, there was a quarter at Castor ahead of his installation (16 Sep 2023)

There was some ringing to welcome the announcement of Bishop Debbie Sellin as Bishop of Peterborough. Expect more for her enthronement in March. (Quarters at Higham Ferrers 30 Sep 2023 & Orlingbury 28 Sep 2023).



Revd Keir Dow, starring as Gabriel

Birthday compliments

Sue Baker on her 60th birthday (quarter Braunston, Rutland, 18 Dec 2023)

Gail Stuart on her 70th birthday (quarter Cold Higham, 19 Sep 2023)

Julia Combe, a local resident who lives within the sound of the bells, on her 80th birthday (quarter at Higham Ferrers 28 Oct 2023)

Martin Christie for his 90th birthday and Elizabeth Pedley for her 50th birthday (quarter at Peterborough St Mary, 03 Sep 2023)

John Riley rang for his 70th birthday (quarter at the Cathedral, 26 Nov 2023)

Mark Webb had an undisclosed significant birthday (quarter at Castor 16 Nov 2023) & Nick Elks also admitted to a birthday but not a number (peal at Peterborough, St Mary 19 Nov 2023).

Wedding anniversary

40th Wedding Anniversary for Helen and Charles Cornford with a quarter of Ruby Wedding Doubles at Castor (08 Oct 2023)

Christine and Frank Jenkins marked the same milestone by ringing in the quarter at Thrapston (27 Sep 2023)

Peggy and Sammy Stapleton, Castor residents, had their Platinum Wedding Anniversary marked by general ringing (05 Sep 2023) and a peal at Castor (06 Sep 2023)



Charles & Helen Cornford (in 1983)

Movember

A band of gentlemen again faced public ridicule and not a little discomfort by growing their moustaches and ringing a peal for Movember at Great Easton on 30 Nov 2023.

Master's Musings

Second Saturday Sessions Statistics

Here are some data based on 2023:

6x ten-bell practices with a total of 117 attendances

1x "Beyond Plain Bob" focussed practise – 10 attendees

1x "Surprise Major" focussed practice – 14 attendees

1x "Intermediate 8-bell" focussed practice – 11 attendees

1x "Stedman" focussed practice – 20 attendees

1x "Plain Bob" focussed practice – 6 attendees

Also:

4x "Ringing Up and Down in Peal" courses – 20 students

2x "Leading Up and Down in Peal" courses – 10 students

6x other taught courses with a total of 39 students

38x helpers involved across all the courses.

Our thanks go to all the tutors and helpers who have given up their time to support these events, so that ringers across the Guild have the chance to progress.

Whilst significantly less is planned for 2024 (see the Guild website or the calendar at the back of this newsletter for details), because of the centenary celebrations taking place on the Second Saturdays, we are always open to new ideas/requests for courses.

For more information contact:

Simon Dixon (master@pdg.org.uk), Cathy Dixon (pro@pdg.org.uk)

PRO's Prompting

PDG100 - Guild Centenary 1924-2024

Events

Our Centenary year is now under way, with celebration activities planned for each month of the year, at least one in each of the ten branches.

These are also advertised on the Guild website (pdg.org.uk/pdg-100). We hope that Guild members will attend and enjoy as many as possible.



Date	Branch	Event Description
Sunday 14 th January	Peterborough	Evensong in the Cathedral, preceded by ringing at the Cathedral, followed by a reception
Saturday 10 th February	Wellingborough	Social event, barn dance, buffet. Moulton Village Hall
Saturday 9 th March	Thrapston	Nene Valley ringing challenge. Fun mini outing/tower grab
Saturday 13 th April	Guilsborough	Guild Spring Meeting, 6 bell striking contest and Call Change competition
Saturday 11 th May	All	30 towers open day, Guild-wide
Saturday 8 th June	Northampton	AGM, with ringing, service & meeting in Northampton
Saturday 13 th July	Wellingborough/ Thrapston	Stanwick Lakes, ringing day out and public Wombell demos
Saturday 10 th August	Rutland	Ringing & picnic around Rutland water
Saturday 14 th September	Daventry	Guild Summer Festival & branch 8 bell striking contest
Saturday 12 th October	Kettering	Guild Anniversary Dinner, Kettering Park Hotel
Saturday 9 th November	Culworth	Guild Quiz & fish & chip supper in Syresham
Saturday 28 th December	Towcester	Carol Service at Towcester, preceded by ringing, reception afterwards

For more details, or to express an interest in the merchandise or events, please contact centenary@pdg.org.uk or speak to one of the organising committee (Helen Allton, Cathy Dixon, Giles Willson, Chris Fitzgerald, Simon Dixon, Richard Allton).

Merchandise

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the PDG, there is a range of anniversary merchandise available, featuring the 100th anniversary logo.

Ceramic Mugs

Celebratory mugs are available, with the anniversary logo. They cost £5 each. Order from centenary@pdg.org.uk



Calendars

We have produced a calendar with 14 images of towers across the diocese, the pictures being provided by members of the Guild.

The format is landscape A4, spiral bound, with a full page picture of each church, and a full calendar page with large boxes for your social events. There is a description of the location, and the anniversary event in that month is marked, with outline details.



£5 each (plus £2.00 P&P if required). Order from centenary@pdg.org.uk

Clothing

Order form here: pdg.org.uk/documents/pdg100_clothing_order_form.pdf

A range of clothing with the anniversary logo is available, including T-shirts, Polo shirts, Ladies' Polo shirts, sweatshirts, Hoodies, Zipper hoodies & Fleeces, in a range of sizes and colours. See the order form on the Guild website for details. Logos in black or white text, to suit the chosen colour. Prices £11.00 - £27.50. Order from centenary_clothing@pdg.org.uk.



Jigsaw puzzles

In 500 and 1000 pieces, featuring a specially commissioned painting of churches, people and other elements representing the diocese. More details will follow.

All merchandise available via the Guild website: pdg.org.uk/pdg-100/centenary-year-merchandise



Foundation of the Guild, January 1924

The Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers was founded 100 years ago this month, on the 5th January 1924. Most of the surrounding guilds and associations were already in existence by that time: Oxford DG 1881, Bedfordshire Association 1882, Ely DA 1897, Lincoln DG 1899 and Coventry DG 1907. Previously, the Diocese of Peterborough contained a mixture of smaller societies, the largest of which, the Central Northants Association, covered about half of the current area. The formation of a “federation of ringing societies in the Diocese of Peterborough” was proposed by the then Bishop of Peterborough, Theodore Woods, at a meeting of the Central Northamptonshire Association in June 1923. The proposal passed at the meeting was “That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Ringers should be formed; and that the president and secretary of this association be asked to confer with representatives of other associations, in the counties of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland, to report to our committee, for the information of the Bishop.”

An editorial in *The Ringing World* later that month applauded the creation of such an organisation as of benefit to the area, but noted that this would impinge on existing organisations, as the diocese included Leicestershire, then part of the Midland Counties Association. The Diocese of Peterborough no longer includes any churches in Leicestershire, the formation of the Leicester Diocese in 1927 and the Leicester DG in 1946 taking care of that. The seat has always been Peterborough since the diocese’s foundation in 1541 and this was never a centralised administration centre. Bishop Francis Jeune (Bishop from 1864 to 1868) would complain that the diocese “was in the shape of a pear, and that he lived at the end of the stalk”. Geography was and remains an ongoing challenge.

The Central Northamptonshire Association held a special general meeting in November to discuss the proposal further. The Midlands Counties Association had been contacted and were against their members decamping to this new-fangled organisation, as their response makes clear. “That the members of the Midland Counties Association, having carefully considered the proposal of the Bishop of Peterborough as to the formation of a Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Ringers, are unable to recommend that their members residing in the diocese of Peterborough should as a body join the proposed Guild. For forty years they have been members of the Midland Counties Association, and they have no desire to sever themselves from that body. At the same time, if individual members who live in the said diocese wish to become members of the Peterborough Guild, the committee of the Midland Association have no desire to place obstacles in their way, but they trust such members will continue to remain members of their old association.”

Representatives from societies across Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough had attended a subcommittee meeting in October which must have been sufficiently positive to proceed with the idea further. An editorial in The Ringing World in December applauds the formation of a Guild, as opposed to a loose confederation of smaller societies. It also noted with approval that this will be a diocesan association, rather than a county or territorial society. Some of the decisions made at that stage still echo down to us now.

On 5th January 1924, the Peterborough Diocesan Guild was formed at a meeting at Wellingborough. The various small societies that covered the area between them did not all come together immediately. Initially there were seven branches in the Guild. Guilsborough, Kettering, Northampton, Thrapston and Wellingborough were existing branches of the Central Northamptonshire Association, while Oundle and Peterborough branches were formed by the Oundle & Districts Association and the Peterborough & Districts Association, respectively. The prior structure of branches and organisations was retained under the new Guild, and that branch structure largely remains in place today.

In 1925 members of the Daventry & Weedon District Association decided to join the Guild and the Daventry branch was formed.

The Guild grew gradually, with the Towcester & District Association forming the Towcester branch in 1930 and in 1933 Rutland branch was formed. Rutland had no extant ringing local association at the time, the previous having folded around the First World War. This was not an entirely popular move, as some of the letters to the Ringing World of the time make very clear and the correspondence descended into personal insult.

The last area of the Guild to join was the extreme southwestern corner of the diocese. This is the area of the diocese furthest from the parent cathedral and for many years the Brackley Number 1 Deanery Association applauded the aims of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild but felt that they were too isolated from the rest of the Guild for it to be relevant. In 1949 the ringers of the area decided to join the Guild, forming the Culworth branch. At this point membership of the Guild covered the whole diocese and remains as such today.

Geography

The Guild has a battle against its own geography, and it is a struggle the diocese also encounters. The cathedral is at the far eastern edge of the diocese: there is only 1 ringing tower further east than the cathedral, in Ely. At the opposite extreme, Aynho is 58 miles from the cathedral as the crow flies. There are 8 cathedrals closer to Aynho than the seat of its own diocese. (Can you name them?*)

People

The Guild's five Executive Officers in the current arrangement are the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Master and Steward. These roles were not always in place. While there was a Treasurer in 1924, this role was combined with that of Secretary from 1933 to 1973. The Steward is an addition, being part of the Master's role until 1972. The Steward also has the longest average time in post, with 5 holders in 52 years.

There have been 12 Presidents in 100 years. The first five were all members of the clergy while the first secular President was Christopher Groome from 1980. There have been 12 secretaries, holding office for between 2 and 23 years. There have been more Masters than any other Executive post, with 17 different individuals holding the post, and one year when it remained vacant. The first Executive role to which a lady was elected was Master, with Shelagh Collins, (later Melville) elected in 1964.

An increasing range of roles support the Executive. There are separate Report editor and Newsletter editor posts. The newsletter is the more recent and the chattier of the two reports. They provide different pictures of the activity within the Guild and complement each other. The Peal Secretary role has been of variable scale over the years, currently occupied by an active peal organiser, although that does feel a little like he is making work for himself. More recent additions are the outward focussed roles of Public Relations Officer and Webmaster. Both would have been unheard of to the Guild's founders. The most recent addition of Safeguarding Officer represents the Guild's need to reflect the concerns of wider society. The ability to add and change roles as needs change has to be a positive attribute and bodes well for the coming years.

This year and onwards

When I took office as Secretary in 2019, it was noted that the 100th anniversary was coming up. That idea has snowballed and 2024 sees us with 12 guild events this year, compared with our usual 3. These aim to bring ringers together as a Guild, reminding them that they are more than a loose federation of individual branches, but belong to something of wider scope and reach. Events are a mixture of ringing and social, and anyone is welcome to attend. We will also have a birthday cake – 12 times if it all goes to plan! To support the events there is an anniversary logo and a range of anniversary merchandise (see p8).

In the report that appeared in The Ringing World of 4th January 1974, the Guild's rules had just been revised significantly. In 2024 we find ourselves in a similar position. The Guild's constitution and rules underwent a thorough revision in 2023 which aimed to build on what we had in place but also providing a clear framework to allow the Guild sufficient flexibility to move forward into the future. In the current time there remains

an issue of successfully engaging members with the Guild, and successful new initiatives, such as Guild organised training events each month, are aiming to increase that engagement with both the Guild and between branches. 100 years after our foundation we're still here, still engaging with the diocese and ringers across the area and beyond. We approach the start of our second century aiming to continue to serve the Diocese of Peterborough and its ringers for many years to come.

Helen Allton, Guild Secretary

**Answer: Oxford, Coventry, St Albans, Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, Leicester, Lichfield*

Signposts and Checkpoints (Part 1)

Many people on journeys like to know where they are going and where they have been – using signposts and checkpoints to help them. It is not that much different with bell ringing. This article explores some of my thoughts on the matter – I hope it is of interest to you.



For a new recruit to bell ringing there may be many different people willing to give advice. In my opinion, this is not a bad thing, as long as the learner is not overwhelmed. As a teacher you are aware that all pupils respond to different approaches – what make sense to one of them may be gibberish to another.

Even when a novice makes their early attempts at ringing in rounds it is probably worth encouraging listening to their bell, using rope sight, and maintaining a rhythm etc as different indicators that they are doing the right thing.

One interesting concept that I was introduced to recently is that of trying to make their bell sound in a box, centred between the two on either side:

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Ideally, you want each bell to stay in the centre of their box, but if a novice finds that they cannot do this straight away, they can still be praised for staying in their box all the time, because at least it means they are not over-correcting:

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6



And what about when the developing ringer starts learning to ring changes? How much does the tutor encourage rope sight, changing rhythm, counting places and so on? Each technique has its merits but, as I had to do as a secondary school teacher, I would recommend introducing multiple ideas to the ringer and allowing each individual to find which suits them best.

I still use various techniques when I am ringing methods. In my next article I'll share some of them with you.

Cathy Dixon

Ring Out, Wild Bells!

(By a member of the Northampton & District Organists' Association, who wishes to remain anonymous.)

*Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.*

Gounod's setting of Tennyson's poem was written for voice and piano, but it works quite well as a voluntary for organ, if suitably adapted. In the last few days, it might have featured in New Year services where members of the NDOA (Northampton & District Organists' Association) have been the organists. It is, in any arrangement, a very suitable way to introduce a new year, which is what this edition of the Newsletter does.

Percy Fletcher, appreciated by organists for his Voluntaries on various hymn tunes, also wrote a setting of Tennyson's poem, as did Karl Jenkins. There might be organ versions of those; does any reader know? But enough about organ music; let us focus on the bell ringing that inspired the poem. It was apparently at Waltham Abbey on New Year's Eve 1849, while Tennyson was brooding on the death of Arthur Hallam – his sister's fiancée.

*Ring out the grief that saps the mind For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor, Ring in redress to all mankind.*

Despite a local myth that the bells were rung by the wind, they must in fact have been swung 'full circle' by a group of human bell ringers, and I am happy to dedicate this article to those energetic men and women who complement – and sometimes compete with – the organ at many kinds of church services around the country.

The Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers, founded 100 years ago this month, says that church bell ringing provides 'gentle but effective exercise' and 'a great

mental workout', both of which could apply to organ playing, I suppose. It also says that bell ringing provides 'excellent social activity' and 'travel to new places' which perhaps organ playing does not provide as such. But bell ringing also gives 'a sense of achievement in keeping an old tradition alive.' Does that sound familiar?

What this means is that organists should acknowledge that there is another group of people – the bell ringers – who contribute to the music of many of our churches. They are not only invisible, but they have to practise together, often at unsocial hours, and any mistake can be heard by the whole area. Unfortunately, their music is often drowned out by the organ during the wedding or funeral entry; or is it the other way round? It depends on where you are standing, I suppose.... As well as weddings and funerals, bells are rung for ceremonial occasions such as Remembrance Day. Then they use 'muffled' bells, or half and half. Sometimes the bells are rung half-muffled for the death of the old year, then the muffles are removed to ring without muffling to mark the birth of the new year.

*Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

In the Peterborough Diocese there are over 250 towers with bells that can be rung, and nearly 1,000 members of the Guild. But they could do with more, so that more sets of bells can be rung on auspicious occasions. There is at least one member of the NDOA who is a bell ringer, but perhaps more of us should consider taking up this activity. The problem is, of course, that it is not one of those activities that can be combined with playing the organ – at least not at the same time. Perhaps W. Heath Robinson could devise a system of ropes and pulleys that would enable the organist to ring a bell in the tower while playing. Until then, any organist who wishes to be a bell ringer will have to divide their time between the two activities. But they are both worthwhile, and complementary, and we should salute those who ring church bells across our district!

*Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be.*

For info on the association, see www.northamptonorganists.org.uk

Obituaries

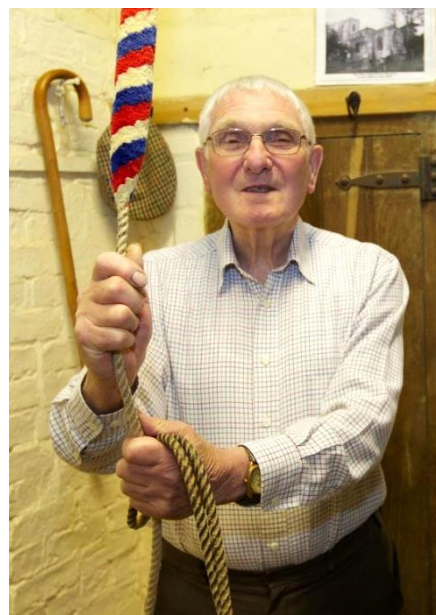
James (Jim) Linnell (07Feb1931 – 15Sep2023)

Jim grew up in Whittlebury, Northamptonshire. He learnt to handle a bell as a youngster in 1943 with Charlie Truman. Later he taught David Burbidge to ring at St Mary's church at Whittlebury. Jim was also a member of the choir at Whittlebury and later became a churchwarden.

William Yates met Jim and introduced him to change ringing, primarily on the six at Helmdon, Northants. In the late 50's the Monday evening practice at Helmdon was considered one of the most advanced in the Peterborough Guild, with Surprise Minor regularly rung. Jim's first peal was of Plain Bob Minor on the treble at Sulgrave on 19th December 1957, conducted by William Yates and rung to mark the first birthday of Bill's son Richard.

In March 1968, Jim rang a peal of seven Minor methods at Lois Weedon with Betty Mansfield, conducted by Charlie Truman. Betty later married Jim on 10th December 1970.

In the late 60s and early 70s, Jim was an active member of Raving Ringers and rang on numerous ringing tours with Ron K Russ, Barry Saunders, Ray Vickers, Barry Eglesfield and others. One of the significant tours was to Ireland in 1970.



'Yates goes west' tours as they became known were annual events organised by Bill Yates and took place over a number of years in the 60s until 1970. Towers visited included Exeter Cathedral, Wells Cathedral, Chewton Mendip, Ditcheat, Ilminster and other Somerset & Devon towers. The tours also visited Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Jim organised much of the ringing, which usually started with immaculately struck Stedman and included standard Surprise Major and Royal. Cambridge S Maximus was rung during a visit to Surfleet.

He was elected a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths on 11th February 1959, proposed by William Yates and seconded by Herbert C Edwards, his election being ratified on 7th March 1959, proposed by Alf Peck and seconded by Albert Hughes.

Jim rang a total of 428 peals and conducted one - all were on church bells. 184 were rung with the Peterborough Diocesan Guild, 177 with the South Northamptonshire Society, and seven peals were rung with the Ancient Society of College Youths. His first ASCY peal was on the eight at Woburn in November 1960. He rang 24 peals of Surprise Maximus and helped 25 ringers ring their first peal including Charlie Truman, Richard Yates, and Barry Eglesfield. Jim scored most peals (54) at Saint Mary, Easton Neston, Northamptonshire.

A notable ASCY peal was rung in April 1983 of Stedman Doubles on the challenging old six at Towcester, conducted by Charlie Truman, with Alan and Graham Paul, Richard Yates, and Barry E Saunders. Jim's last ASCY peal was of 5039 changes of Grandsire Caters at Holy Cross, Daventry in September 1995, conducted by Richard C Stevens and in fond remembrance of the composer of the peal, Charles H Kippin.

Jim took up the position of Ringing Master at Greens Norton when Arthur Mansfield died in 1981. He served as Towcester Branch Steward from 1973 to 1977 and Ringing Master from 1981 to 1985.

Jim was a man with many talents and interests; gardening, singing, fishing and wine-making to name a few. One vintage of his Elderflower wine is still talked about today by those who sampled a few too many glasses. Above all, bell ringing has been ever-present in his life, he had a keen ear, an elegant and economic ringing style that eludes many ringers, a real ringing talent.

Led by Alan Paul we will raise a glass and remember Jim and many others that have gone before him at our regular weekly gathering at The George, Tiffield.

Jim was much loved and will be missed by many. He is now reunited with his loving and much-loved wife, Betty. May he rest in peace.

Nigel Williams

News from the Branches

Daventry Branch

Meetings

At Nether Heyford in September, twenty-one rang and two didn't. Our service, which again took under 30 minutes, was well prepared by the Rural Dean, Revd Stephen Burrow, with a leaflet containing a new-to-us ringers' hymn, a picture of the Lincoln Cathedral ringers' jack (jug) and of a stained-glass image of St Dunstan.

Tea in the church rooms opposite was much appreciated. It included a cake with candles and singing 'Happy Birthday' to Alison Willgress. Although absent, we were in our secretary's mind - she sent a message from a Center Parcs forest about our car outing on Saturday 7 October.

In October, twenty-four rang at Litchborough and there was some very good ringing by the six 'Ring for the King' recruits who were there. The Rector, the Revd Sue Stanley, was well briefed and didn't mention bells in the service with hymns accompanied by Martin Heath at the organ. The very welcome hot baked potato tea was delivered to the tables in the chancel, choir and south aisle by Christine, Val and Richard and followed by cakes.

We were sorry to hear and see that secretary, Alison, is having difficulties after her eye operation and thank husband Chris for bringing her to the meeting.

Brian Foley told us that he had inspected Fawsley and keeps Dodford bells maintained but will be retiring as Branch Steward in January. George Wrycroft, Napton, has expressed an interest in doing the job, so Brian will be involving him in a Guild Stewards' practical session.

There was support for making our February meeting at Byfield and Woodford Halse a mutual meeting with the Culworth Branch, who now meet on the same days as we do and have low attendance numbers.

In November, we had a cracking afternoon and evening. There were at least 28 who rang at Flore, and two didn't, with copious rounds & calls, Plain Hunt, Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles and Cambridge Minor to finish.

At the service the vicar gave an excellent sermon based on Adam & Eve.

The Flore ringers (including Ann Maud & David Foster who helped but couldn't be there) provided a magnificent tea of sandwiches and cake - so much cake! It was a tight squeeze in the back of the church, but we chatted and filled up well.

Jane Rands was concerned about the heating at the Great Brington meeting in December and it was decided that the Christmas meeting be moved to plan B. It was announced that 16 December will be at Whilton church & village hall.

Evening ringing started at 6.30pm at Weedon. 21 people rang (including visitors Liz Reading, Simon & Cathy Dixon) and we rang rounds/calls, plain hunt 7, Bob Doubles, Bob Minor, Grandsire Triples and some good attempts of Cambridge and Yorkshire Major with a cut-off of just after 8pm. 15 retired to the Plume of Feathers for a drink and natter.

In December, at Whilton, 25 rang with lots of call changes, Plain Hunt and a bit of Plain Bob and Grandsire Triples and eight didn't (mainly in the hall preparing teas, thanks!). Tea followed in the village hall, which has been refurbished since our last visit with new heating and a large screen tv showing a continuous video of a roaring log fire to add atmosphere with the Christmas tree! Jim Grennan gave our usual omnibus thanks for the arrangements, splendid tea including "Christmas Lunch" sandwiches and Christmas tree cup-cakes.

A whole course of Cambridge S Major and a lower in peal preceded our carol service, which the Spencer Benefice Curate, Rev Kim McClohy, kindly led for us. Gwynneth produced the service sheet for the nine carols and eight lessons and a meditation with the usual selection of MATT cartoons to keep us smiling. It was nice to chat with former Weedon members, Ian and Val Calvert, on their Christmas visiting trip up from Tiptree, Essex, before we dispersed into the dull evening.

Outing

Sixteen arrived at Brinklow for the outing on October 7 including three of our 'Ring for the King' recruits and Cathy Dixon, Guild PRO. An emergency key holder eventually arrived, and Jim White managed the shorter than expected session. A benefit, and a first for several, was finding the bells set at backstroke. We left them like it, but not quite at first go!



Cathy contemplates Ring for the King recruit Janice's reach

Later we learned that the key holder had apologised for our delayed access saying that he was a day late, having noted that our visit was on Sunday at 10am!

The ground floor ring in the central tower at Wolston puts the ringers centre stage for the congregation. Carole coaxed some nice Stedman Triples at the start. At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Ian ended the session with the only major ringing and a good lower of the eight – well done Freya. All then fed at the Rose and Crown, Wolston, where Jane expressed our thanks to Alison Buck for organising three nice light eights and lunch.



Rose & Crown, Wolston Left to right: Cathy Dixon, Kim Gibbard, Freya Bartlett, Alison Buck, Laura Bartlett, Carole Pullin, Janice & Jeremy Barker, Jenny & Bobby Lunn, Jane Rands, Gwynneth & Jim White, Alison & Ian Willgress photo by Geoff

Other events

Guild Summer Festival

After Daventry hosted the Guild 10-bell practice in the morning of 9th September, Weedon was the first tower for the festival afternoon. The branch team came a close second to Towcester branch on the back 8 bells at Towcester in the Harry Wooding Memorial Trophy 8-bell striking competition. With Ian Willgress in charge, the full practice time of 5 minutes was used within a second or two, as is his wont, and our ringing was the fastest of the five teams. The judge said that a few small blemishes rippled through to the following changes, causing the extra faults.

Ringing on 10 or 12 bells continued until dusk in the continuing heat - still 30 deg C.

Young Ringers' Event

Saturday 23rd September saw a total of 18 young ringers from across the guild come to Daventry for an afternoon of ringing and pizza. This was the second such event and our young ringers are really coming on! Many youngsters were challenged to ring progressively heavier bells with some making it round to the 18cwt tenor. After ringing, all retired to the church hall for pizza, doughnuts, fizzy pop and of course a good chat!

Thanks go to the Baker family for arranging and running the event, Holy Cross Church for free use of bells and hall and to Daventry Branch meeting raffles which subsidised the pizzas. Some funds were left over for the next event!



Left to right: Stanley Norris, Edward Barton, Daniel Camps, Bobby Lunn, Olivia Hunt, Kirsty Pearce, Jessica Cosby, Matthew Allcott, Daniel Counsell, Grace Allcott, Freya Hillman, Freya Bartlett, Kaiden McCreath, Niamh Montgomery, Miles Baker, William Hen Henderson, Holly Rogers, Ciarán Montgomery

After this, Justin reported that he had contact from Colin Lee and Andrea Haynes, who run the Oxford Diocesan Guild young ringers team and the Coventry Spires young ringers. They were arranging a young ringers' walking and ringing tour of three central Northampton towers on 2nd December and invited our young ringers.

Feel Good Fest

Justin and Leanne organised a stand at the Daventry Town Council activities exhibition 'Feel Good Fest' (postponed from August due to Storm Antoni) which was held indoors on Saturday, 21st October in William Parker School (to avoid Storm Babet!). Some ten people provided their contact details as being interested in coming for a taster evening. We seem to have five who have 'stuck', leading to 6.30pm starts with muffled bells having to be reinstituted before main practices. Leanne was recorded by Nlive Radio at the event, talking to John Leivers about ringing.



Justin on duty early on at the Feel Good Fest

Listen here: player.autopod.xyz/452628 Leanne starts at 1h:34min.

Quiz

The Branch Quiz took place at Daventry Band Hall on Saturday, 11th November with quizmaster Nigel Allcott keeping us entertained. There were eight teams, eight rounds plus three picture rounds. Winners of the quiz were "The Back Six", Val and Richard, Christine and Matthew Rodhouse and Nikki and Simon. Winners of the booby prize were

the “No Hoppers”, Liz Heath, Jeremy and Janice Barker, Caroline Matthews-Maynard. A fish and chip supper from nearby Michael’s Golden Chippie was enjoyed at half-time.

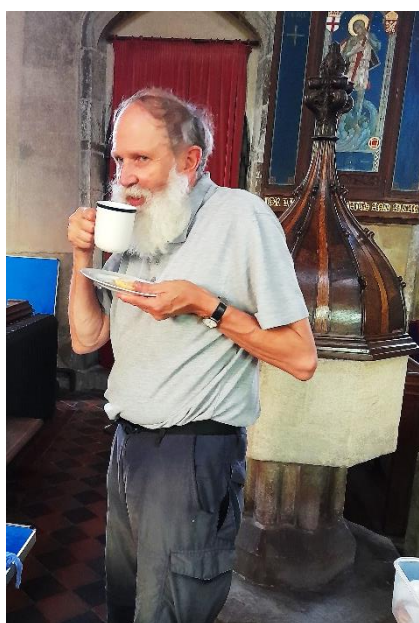
People

I had a message in mid-October from Hazel, daughter of Paul Richardson (Kings Sutton ex Byfield, now 96) to say that he fell at the GP surgery having a flu jab and broke his pelvis! He was in the Horton for a week or so. Then a month later we heard that Emily, Paul’s wife, had died. Paul and Emily moved from Surrey to Woodford Halse in 2011 and both joined the Byfield ringers and Daventry Branch in that year before moving to co-locate with daughter Hazel in Kings Sutton in 2021.

Geoff Pullin

Guildsborough Branch

October Ringing tour 9th October 2023



One of the last days of summer, a Monday, and a beautiful day, perfect for ringing. A group of ringers from Pitsford, Scaldwell and further to the south toured around some of the lovely villages to the east of Kettering; Irthlingborough, Cranford St John, Twywell, Grafton Underwood, Sudborough and Islip. We encountered some really nice bells, well suited to a group of learners, accompanied by their teachers and ringers wanting to “grab” a tower or two. People came and went during the day, supporting those who stayed the course.

Well struck rounds and call changes were the order of the day. Some method ringing was slipped in, when there were enough ringers present, but our focus was on doing the best striking possible and enjoying the day. During our tour we encountered every reaction possible to our visit. Some of the learners encountered spiral staircases for the first time and rang on 8 bells. Others saw how the locals can forget we are coming (more a case of the left hand not knowing what the right was doing) not quite a lock out but close. We were welcomed with open arms and congratulated on being better than the usual ringing! While at another village, someone came out to complain at us disturbing their working day. Thanks must go to Islip for allowing us to make tea and eat our



now famous Pitsford sausage rolls and cake in their church, and for doing the washing up for us afterwards.

Practice ringing at Pitsford is now established as 4–6pm on Mondays with tea and cake served halfway through. Do come and join us if you can.

(Tour report by Elaine Greatrex)

Fiona Barclay

Kettering Branch

Since the previous Newsletter, our Branch programme has involved the following activities:

Saturday 16th September Ringing Meeting at Ashley St. Mary the Virgin and Wilbarston, All Saints

This was a popular meeting, both towers attracting 22 ringers.

Saturday 30th September Rutland Branch Mini-Tour

Members of the Branch turned out to support the Rutland Branch on their tour at Weldon, Geddington and Corby.

Saturday 21st October Ringing Meeting at Barton Seagrave, St. Botolph

This meeting was well supported, with 23 attending. We were joined by Liz Reading and Anthea Hyams from the Guilsborough Branch. Due to our Ringing Master becoming unavailable at short notice the ringing was organised by Anne Cook, one of the Barton ringers, who rose to the task, getting everyone involved with ringing, from Rounds and Call Changes through to an attempt at Yorkshire Surprise Major. Some of our younger and less experienced ringers found the visit quite challenging, as the bells are hung in anti-clockwise order, being a little uncertain where to look and what to look for. Refreshments were kindly provided by our Secretary Nick Watts and his wife Mary.

Saturday 21st November Ringing Meeting at Thrapston, St. James

Our planned visit to ring for Evensong at Peterborough Cathedral on the 22nd had to be postponed due to uncertainty over arrangements for Safeguarding. The Thrapston Branch came to our aid at short notice, making the tower at Thrapston available for us on the Saturday. Chris Pearson organised the ringing with something for all. Chris had to leave early, so our thanks to committee member Bill Adcock for keeping things going. Once again it was good to see lots of people new to ringing joining us and swelling the numbers. There was one surprise moment, when the bells had just been stood and those ringing walked away to make way for others, when the 4th started to ring and rang itself down. The stay had broken, but ringing was able to continue with members of the Branch Committee taking it in turn to ring and hold the bell on the balance.

Refreshments were available downstairs, courtesy of our Secretary Nick Watts.



Saturday 16th December Ringing Meeting at Rothwell, Holy Trinity

The focus of this meeting was to introduce new ringers from across the area to Branch Activities.

Members of the Branch Committee had been tasked with identifying beginners who would be eligible for election to membership at the AGM in 2024, which resulted in some 26 individuals being identified. Each was sent a personal written invitation by Jane Marsh, the Branch Chairman.

14 individuals from 5 towers responded to the invitation, which led to a very full ringing room at Rothwell, with a total of 41 being registered. Murray Coleman kindly took small groups up to the Belfry to see the bells in operation.

When all were gathered, Jane Marsh introduced herself, followed by the current Branch Officers along with Cathy Dixon, Guild PRO. Jane went on to summarise what the Guild does and the benefits of membership. Application forms were given to all the prospective new members present.

Ringing for the first part of the meeting concentrated on Rounds and Call Changes for the benefit of the new ringers, organised by our Ringing Master and supported by their instructors. There was a break for seasonal refreshments served by Jane and the Branch Committee members.

The latter part of the meeting was turned over to method ringing up to Grandsire Caters, with the final touch representing service ringing for the Christingle Service in the church.

There had been 41 attendees: surely, a record for this Branch!

I spoke to some of the attendees after the event and asked for brief thoughts and what they enjoyed most, and got the following responses:

- Well attended;
- Very busy;
- Interesting;
- Good to ring with other of a similar level;
- Well organised.
- Explanation of the Guild and how it works; and
- Nice to listen to the bells ringing.

News from the towers

Cottingham, St. May Magdalene: the new team of bellringers have now rung for the Carol Service as a team, with some help to raise and lower the bells. They also rang before the two fundraising Ghost Story events held in the church.

Desborough, St. Giles: At St Giles Desborough we have been blessed with a good number of new recruits in the last couple of years and four of them are young people. We are

keen to keep them engaged and, by popular demand, this year saw a repeat of last year's Christmas Outing. I hope you are wondering what that might be ...

Well, it was a trip to Thunderbowl in Kettering! The group was 24 strong, mostly ringers but a few family members came along too. We took over four adjacent lanes and had a great couple of hours trying our hand at bowling. Most people scored at least one strike and there was an excellent atmosphere of fun and encouragement as well as a fair bit of banter. Much like ringing, bowling is an all-age activity, even though some of our older members suffered a bit the day after. Unlike a ringing striking competition, in bowling, of course, the higher your score the better you did. The scoreboard shows the scores of some of the young people (all higher than me I must admit). No doubt this is an annual fixture from now on.

11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0.0
Kirsty	9 -	7 1	9 -	6 3	6 1	5 -	3 /	3 5	7 -	5 -	80
Jess 1	7 -								6 3	4 4	90
Matthew	5 -								1 7	6 3	81
Jess 2	7 2								3 3	6 -	76
Daniel	3 -								3 3	6 2	69
Jane p	9 -	8 /	4 3	9 -	8 /	4 1	7 -	8 1	9 -	7 / 8	101

Great Oakley, St. Michael: After a lifelong involvement and some 39 years as Tower Captain at Great Oakley, Diana Talbot has stood down from the role whilst awaiting a replacement hip, which has now been successfully undertaken. Jenny Loxton has taken her place. Diana originally learnt to ring as a youngster at Rothwell under Harry Baxter. At 17 she went off to start her nursing training and stopped ringing. On moving to her current home in the parish of Great Oakley, which will be 40 years ago in 2024, Diana went for refresher training to Rothwell, and started to ring at Great Oakley on the original 3 bells now augmented to a ring of 5.

Harrington, SS Peter and Paul: Whilst the bells are away at John Taylors foundry, work is underway to train a new band to ring the bells on their return to the tower. A morning taster session for interested individuals is planned for early in the new year at Rothwell.

A New Band at Rushton, All Saints: Rushton has been without a full band for several years. Things started to change when Ring for the King took place on Sunday 19th May, with a band of ringers from local churches. During the ringing, Steve and Lisa Pawluk came along to watch. They were invited to join in by ringing the back strokes with the assistance of Michael Dainty, Tower Captain, and things have developed from there.

I asked the new ringers about their experiences so far:

Steve Pawluk

How did you become interested in bellringing?

I had asked Michael (Dainty) about it about a year ago when chatting in the pub and fancied a go. The 'Ring for the King' ringing was publicised in the village. We went down to the church and was able to have a go at ringing.

How have you found the process of learning to handle a bell?

Initially I was terrified. Everything seemed so fast.

What do you feel have you achieved to date?

Things are now starting to slow down, and I have a greater understanding of what is going on

Do you have any goals / targets that you have set for yourself in Bellringing?

My main goals were to ring for Sunday service and for a wedding, which I have now achieved.

A lovely story is when Steve rang for his first wedding, he was so thrilled that he asked the Bride and Groom to autograph the Order of Service for him as a memento!



The Rushton band, joined by ringers from Cransley. (From Left) James & Heather Wootton, Fran, Andrew Osbourne's partner, Lisa & Steve Pawluk, Andrew Osbourne.

Lisa Pawluk

How did you become interested in bellringing?

I used to hear the bells being rung and see the bellringers through the open tower door. I, always wanted to have a go at something I could do with my husband, Steve. I thought it would be nice to put something back into the village now that my children are grown up.

How have you found the process of learning to handle a bell?

I had the opportunity to ring the back stroke, with assistance, at the Ring for the King on 6th May 2023, and attended my first practice on Tuesday 9th May. I didn't know how the hand stroke and back stroke worked at the start. There was a lot more to it than I expected, and it was a while before I began to understand.

What do you feel have you achieved to date?

I am now much more confident and understand how the bell works. I am able to control the bell, and understand how call changes work.

Do you have any goals / targets that you have set for yourself in Bellringing?

I would like to be able to go to the tower and be able to ring any of the bells confidently, and to ring for weddings.

Heather Wootton, who has rung previously in Essex, has returned to ringing along with her husband James who joined for a bit of fun. Andy Osbourne, who rang previously at Rushton has re-joined the band.

Our next meeting is the Annual General Meeting, which is being held at Desborough, St. Giles on Saturday 20th January 2024

My thanks go to Jane Marsh for the photographs and local tower correspondents for their contributions.

David Dainty

Peterborough Branch

St Mary's Peterborough

Reflecting back on the past 12 months it does feel that normal service has resumed at St Mary's.

- All peal booking fees are gift aided to St Mary's and resulted in around £500 being handed over with the bulk going towards our summer fundraiser charity, Food for Nought.
- Quarter peals have peaked with 37 rung. Although the majority were Doubles, that was in part due to concluding our Alphabet Trio Challenge, which we started before the pandemic. It was pleasing that 15 quarters were either Triples or Major as our regular ringers have advanced this past year.
- We've been able to ring every Sunday morning service and readily find an excuse for gathering a band to ring a quarter for additional services.
- We named 3 new methods or variations at St Mary's; King Charles III Doubles and Westminster Abbey Coronation Place Triples for the Coronation. The Ball Was Out Doubles was a Wimbledon tribute to the band at All Saints, Birchington. They appear to have a similar DNA gene as many of our regular ringers.
- Two of our younger ringers, Katie and Mimi, have passed their Level 2 in the ART accreditation. It's very apt that a quarter is required to pass Level 3. Our thanks to Gavin Simpson for tutoring and mentoring them.
- Finally, and not least, a big thank you to everyone who has supported the ringing at St Mary's. As we've been able to build back slowly after the pandemic. We could not have done this without the regular good sports who like being challenged.

We now look forward to 2024, hosting the Branch AGM and many Centenary ringing tributes to kick off the New Year in a fitting way.

Andrew Christie - Ringing Master

Nassington

There has been lots of ringing in the last Quarter, particularly around the Christmas period with extra services. We rang for Christingle, Carol and Crib Services across the Benefice.

The band continues to ring regularly for Sunday services. The Monday evening and Friday morning practices can be very busy as we have welcomed new, and some returning, ringers to our practices.

Over the last few months, in preparation for the additional bell at Yarwell (see below) we have been concentrating on learning a different Doubles method each month, including Cloister, Reverse Canterbury, St Simons and St Nicholas (obviously for December). We will continue this in 2024. There were also several weddings and funerals, and bells continue to be rung at these special services. We also rang a first QP inside for one of the Wittering ringers in September 2023

Hilary Hardie, Tower Captain

Yarwell

The main excitement in the quarter has been the casting and installation of the new bell to augment from 4 to 5 bells.

The new bell was proposed as a fitting tribute from the village to recognise the Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Unfortunately, it took longer than anticipated to get the required permissions, which is why it was cast in 2023. In recognition of a well-known family in the Village, who had left a significant bequest to the church, the bell is called the Starsmore Jubilee Bell. The inscription on the bell says "Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee" and "Glory to God", with the names of Jack and Grace Starsmore on the headstock.

The last three Quarter Peals were rung on the 4 bells in October and November. A visiting local band rang back to back QPs in October; the first of 11 minimus methods, and the second of Yarwell Treble Place and Reverse Treble Place Minimus. A band of Nassington ringers rang the final QP of Bob Minimus on 23rd November, a first in method for all 4 ringers, and the first as the conductor.

The new bell was cast at Taylors Foundry in Loughborough on 21st September. A group of 16 people from Yarwell, and local ringers, had a tour of the foundry and then watched the casting. A special afternoon for everyone. After the casting the ringers had an opportunity to ring the Loughborough bells.



Molten metal poured into the mould at Taylors Foundry



The bell was delivered to the church on Monday 18th December and welcomed by the Vicar, Rev Jane Tailby, and local bell ringers. Once wheeled into the church, it stayed in the main aisle whilst the work to the existing frame was undertaken. Local ringers assisted the bell hanger from Taylors with the work.

On the Tuesday evening, the church hosted a Carol Service. It was an opportunity for the villagers to see the bell before it was taken into the tower, as so many people had contributed to raising the funds.

The bell was taken up into the Tower on the Wednesday, and work continued to put it into place and also to make the existing bells easier to ring.

The first ring of the bell was on Friday 22 December, and then local ringers and the installation team rang all 5 bells together for the first time.

The first service ring of the new 5 was on New Year's Eve, for the Benefice service, held at Yarwell. Several visitors joined us to ring, including representatives of the Guild. Then Rev Jane Tailby led the service of dedication, and the choir sang some ringing-inspired anthems.

After the service, the local ringers involved in the project and in the installation rang two Quarter Peals, in celebration of the augmentation to 5 bells.

Hilary Hardie and Alex Heaton



Rutland Branch

As we prepare for a New Year and the forthcoming AGM, the Branch is pleased to be able to report that ringing regularly takes place in most of our 34 towers. Two or three have ongoing issues, which are going to need some remedial work but, generally, Rutland is in good shape.

With training of new recruits beginning in earnest in February, Rutland achieved 46 new ringers this year. At the time of writing, 30 have gained full membership, with the remaining 16 still having training. Of those new ringers, 27 were able to contribute to the celebration ringing for the Coronation of King Charles III in May. We are delighted to report that they continue to ring regularly on practice nights and for Sunday morning services and participate in special events. New ringers are added to our newsletter

mailing list at the outset of their teaching, so they are encouraged to feel part of the ringing community from the very beginning. One new ringer has taken up a place on our branch committee, as Social Secretary.

In the first week of December, we had a wonderful practice with ringers from Uppingham and the local villages, being joined by ringers from Ashley, East Carlton and Wilbarston. This was a pre-Christmas social ring, for those wanting to ring on 8 bells rather than 5 or 6. The cross-boundary practice was enjoyed by all, and just goes to show there are, in fact, no boundaries. After a very well attended practice, refreshments were enjoyed. A huge thank you to Sian and Tanya for the festive pies and mulled vino. Was that the reason for so many visitors?

After the intensive recruitment campaigns and teaching programme of 2023, a short but well-deserved rest is being taken by the trainers and mentors.

It will all begin again, probably in February/March. A course on learning how to teach bell handling and how to support new ringers has been planned with the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART). It will be held at Uppingham on Saturday, 27th January.

We plan to build on the success of this year by developing the next generation of trainers and keep our Rutland towers ringing.

Sue Webster

Towcester Branch

The Guild Summer Festival, hosted by Towcester Branch on Saturday 9th September, was unseasonably warm, 26C recorded at one point. Summer seemed to have arrived again! Many ringers took the opportunity to start the day with the Guild 10 Bell Practice at Daventry in the morning, where the repertoire ranged from Call Changes up to London Royal, so everyone had a chance to develop their skills of ringing on ten bells.



Winners (clockwise): Margaret Bullied, Ruth Stokes, Chris Bulleid, Robert Wood, Chris Stokes, Toby Bence, Richard Allton, John Stanworth (plus Hamish Stanworth, future ringer)

The festival activities started in the afternoon at Weedon Bec and Cold Higham, with open ringing for all attending. This ranged from Rounds and Call Changes to Surprise at both towers. Both were ground floor towers, making it possible to escape ringing chambers for much needed fresh air!

Weedon Bec Church was also open for the Heritage Open Day, and the volunteers had a display of local history, including information about those related to Weedon Barracks who are buried in the churchyard. The main part of the day was at St Lawrence's, Towcester. Over 70 people attended throughout the day and, although rather warm for ringing, the weather was perfect for sitting in the Chantry garden, listening to others ring, drinking thirst quenching tea and coffee, and eating a delicious tea provided by the talented cooks in our branch. Well done to all the teams that entered; Daventry, Towcester, Guilsborough, Wellingborough and Kettering. The judges were highly complementary about the standard achieved. Congratulations go to Towcester on winning the trophy and hosting an excellent tea.



Lanhydrock, Cornwall

Ever busy, the Branch moved on to Quarter Peal Week, which was dedicated to Jim Linnell, who died in Northampton General Hospital on Friday, 15 September 2023 at the age of 92. (*See obituary, p15.*)

The quarter peals were hit by a rise in Covid infections, but we managed to ring 10 quarters, with a notable first for Alan Faiers of a quarter peal of London Surprise Minor.

In early October, several members of the Branch took part in an informal ringing tour to Cornwall, organised by Nigel Williams. Again, the weather was absolutely amazing, with blue skies and a pleasant temperature.



Ringing tour of Cornwall, 2023

We rang at sixteen towers, making our way down very narrow winding picturesque country lanes to find quintessentially pretty churches in beautiful settings. A good time was had by all, and everyone had a chance to increase their skill level, tower grab and enjoy each other's company at mealtimes, which included some delicious food and drink. Our thanks go to Nigel Williams for his excellent organisation of a very successful tour.

On Saturday 28th October, the Branch held a Fish and Chip Quiz Supper in Cold Higham, compered by Hilary Aslett. The supper was preceded by ringing in St Luke's (6). A variety of methods were rung; Call Changes, Bob Minor, Grandsire, Cambridge and London. Thanks go to Hilary for another great quiz, making us get our thinking hats on!! Congratulations go to the winners, the Visiting Alehouse team.

On the 18th of November, a rather chilly morning I recall, some 15 ringers arrived for a morning practice on the eight bells at Whilton, ringing call changes, plain hunt 7 and Grandsire triples. It was lovely to see Richard Yates having a ring. Afterwards several ringers had an excellent lunch at the New Inn.

The 60th Annual Towcester Branch Dinner on 25th November held at the Boat Inn, Stoke Bruerne was a great success, people enjoyed excellent food, handbell ringing and entertaining speeches expertly MC'd by Nigel Williams. Thank you again Nigel.



A very happy Pattishall Tower Captain, Chris Bulleid

Pattishall Augmentation

And now for a momentous occasion! After 16 months of silence at Holy Cross, Pattishall, the bells finally returned on 20th November. Six bells went away in August 2022 and eight returned with their new frame!



Supporters of the Pattishall augmentation project

Then the hard work began to build the frame and then install the bells. A group of volunteers helped the bell hangers with this task. Margaret Bulleid provided sustenance each day for which they were all very grateful, especially when she made cake!

The Blessing of the Bells took place on Sunday 3rd December, conducted by the Venerable

Richard Ormston, Archdeacon of Northampton, where he anointed the two new bells, the treble and the second, with holy oil and blessed all the bells with holy water. The whole event was extremely well attended, and tea, coffee and cake were served afterwards.

Installation was completed on 20th December and the new Pattishall 8 were rung for the first time! Rounds and call changes, Grandsire, Cambridge Major and a particularly good rendition of Stedman Triples. The bells sounded wonderful, and they rang beautifully. Congratulations go to Chris Bulleid for the project and Nicholson Engineering for the implementation. The 8 bells were rung for all the significant events over the Christmas period and rang in the New Year too.

Jill Cooke

Wellingborough Branch

Since the last report, the Wellingborough Branch has held Surprise Practices at Yardley Hastings, Rushden and Wollaston and practices at Irchester and Great Doddington. In September we held our Annual Outing to Wicken, Old Wolverton, Olney, Clifton Reynes and Emberton, where we had refreshments.

At the Guild Summer Festival, held at Towcester, the Wellingborough Branch band were placed 3rd. A good turnout for the Annual Branch Quiz, held at Earls Barton in December, when Bozeat/Easton Maudit teams took 1st and 3rd place and Rushden 2nd place.

The Wellingborough Branch looks forward to the activities planned for the Guild Centenary Year and sincerely hope we will be well represented.

Bozeat

Our three new recruits are making really good progress, thanks in particular to time spent running silent practice evenings. This brings our village team membership to 15 which is very encouraging for the future. However, visitors are always welcome to our Thursday practices.

Combined with Easton Maudit, our sister tower, we were able to enter 2 teams in the Wellingborough Branch Quiz, bagging first and third places.

We are working with the local RSPB Group on their funded Swifts in Towers project. Please contact us or Mid-Nene RSPB for more details, if you are interested in this scheme. These iconic summer birds are in need of help, and Church Towers are ideal bases for their unobtrusive nest boxes.

Tony Manktelow

Earls Barton

I'm pleased to say that we are now ringing on all eight bells at more practices and Sunday services. During the last few weeks, some big steps forward have been made by some of our ringers as well. Two of our beginners, Mike O and Robin rang rounds on eight for the

first time, and another, Rachel, rang Plain Hunt on five for the first time, both her own and the official versions.

Latterly, and at the last practice before Christmas, at least three of us, Ellie, Sylvia, and myself and possibly Simon, rang a full plain course of St. Nicholas for the first time. The Christmas Period has been very busy, as usual, with six extra church services that we rang for, though we thought that ringing three times in one day was a bit much. At least the usual morning service was cancelled, otherwise it would have been four!

All being well we will have two more of our ringers being nominated as Guild Members at the forthcoming AGM.

Andy Smith

Great Doddington

There is little to report from Great Doddington, apart from the fourth bell which is still being investigated for a problem that sees it drop dramatically without warning. Tim and I have tightened the frame and fittings. After discussion with Paul Mason, the current plan is to lift the bell, closely inspect the bearings and, if necessary, replace them. We hope this will be done in the Spring.

John Holmes

Moulton

Moulton band carry on much as usual, ringing each Sunday morning, and our Monday evening practice to which we welcome the occasional visitor. Please come and join us if you are looking for local ringing practice nights to visit. You would be welcome. Christmas service ringing was difficult with a few of us away, and winter colds keeping one or two away, so numbers were down a bit, but we managed.

Barry Care

Rushden

While ringing for a wedding/christening we heard a loud bang when the clapper of the 6th decided to break. The clapper shaft had broken and the ball at the end crashed to the floor causing the ringer to jump out of her skin wondering what had happened. The clapper was removed and taken to Loughborough and a new one was made and fitted.

We have rung Quarter Peals for Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, Advent Sunday, and Carols by Candlelight Services. An Eighth Peal was rung for the Christmas Eve Celebration Service, to enable ringers that can no longer manage a Quarter Peal to ring for Christmas. Christmas Day ringing was lovely with many comments from the congregation.

Pam Bailey

Wellingborough

It seems an age since we have been able to ring the bells at All Hallows. With the help of the Guild and the Wellingborough Branch we were given the go ahead to ring the bells. John Beresford was able to give the bells a good overhaul, but fate intervened when the clapper left the treble and, as it fell, broke the slider bar in two. Once these two items were repaired, John was able to give us the all-clear to ring. My heartfelt thanks go to all who helped in any way to enable us to ring our bells again.

We have received positive reports from the public about how nice to hear the bells again. Now we have the problem of needing learners and ringers to have a band.

Bob Addie

Wollaston

We rang our bells for Wollaston Open Gardens in June as we have done in the past and made it an open event for anyone wishing to try handling a bell.

Since then, we have been practising some method ringing with the help of John and Janet from Finedon, Harry and Steve from Irchester and Andy from Earls Barton. We are very grateful for their assistance and have seen some progress.

We have also been testing out the Ringing World's 'Call Changes of the Month' in their education column, and we have mastered Mexican Wave and are getting to grips with Big Change, Little Change. It extends our repertoire of calling and helps our bell-handling skills at the same time. It is also great fun.

Having rung for Remembrance Sunday, with Jack doing an excellent job of ringing the half-muffled tenor for the 11 o'clock service (thank you Steve for putting the muffles on), it is now Christmas again. We have fitted in a lot of ringing this season, with Carol Services at Wollaston and Irchester, a Christingle Service at Wollaston (see the photo) and Midnight Service at Irchester and then Christmas Day Morning Communion.



Christingle Ringers Ben, Jack, Mel, Thomas, Enya, Kate, Jean.

I am very grateful for the commitment of the band at Wollaston and thank them for making our Wednesday practice night's such fun.

We look forward now to 2024 and hopefully nailing a few more methods.

Jean Rose

100 Club

At this time of year, we have a chance to look forwards and well as backwards like the Roman god Janus, after whom the month of January is named.

Looking backwards, the winners for 2023 were:

MONTH	No of paid-up members	1 st Prize winner	1 st Prize value	2 nd Prize winner	2 nd Prize value	3 rd Prize winner	3 rd Prize value
January	152	101We	£50.16	156Ke	£18.24	139Pe	£12.16
February	141	43Pe	£46.53	40We	£16.92	149Pe	£11.28
March	149	65Th	£49.17	184Cu	£17.88	153Ke	£11.92
April	153	94To	£50.49	2To	£18.36	22Th	£12.24
May	155	66No	£51.15	136Cu	£18.60	92Gu	£12.40
June	149	4Th	£49.17	82We	£17.88	26Gu	£11.92
July	144	56Ke	£47.52	185Cu	£17.28	138Pe	£11.52
August	151	49Gu	£49.83	69We	£18.12	31Ke	£12.08
September	149	138Pe	£49.17	70Pe	£17.88	172Ke	£11.92
October	152	182No	£50.16	134Th	£18.24	108Da	£12.16
November	154	156Ke	£50.82	12Ke	£18.48	80Ke	£12.32
December	156	125Ke	£51.48	15Gu	£18.72	42To	£12.48

With winners spread across the Guild, hopefully there have been a lot of smiles as envelopes have been opened to reveal a winner's cheque.

Looking forwards, with the 100th Anniversary of the Guild being celebrated in 2024, a target has been set to get 100 new members for the 100 Club (there is no restriction on numbers, despite the name). So, if you are interested, or want an additional number for the draws, or know someone else who might be interested, please get in touch.

Cathy Dixon 100_club@pdg.org.uk

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.

January 13th, 2024

Kettering – 10 Bell Practice 10:30

Gt Oxendon – Ringing Up & Down in Peal 15:00 (booking required)

January 14th, 2024

Peterborough Cathedral – **PDG100** Guild Evensong 15:30 (ringing from 14:00)

February 10th, 2024

Wellingborough Branch – **PDG100** Social Event

March 9th, 2024

Moulton – 10 Bell Practice 18:30 (note time)

Thrapston Branch – **PDG100** Nene Valley Challenge a.m.

April 13th, 2024

Guilsborough Branch – **PDG100** Spring Festival

Great Oakley – Bell Maintenance 10:00 (booking required)

May 11th, 2024

Across the Guild – **PDG100** Tower Open Day

June 8th, 2024

Northampton Branch – **PDG100** Guild AGM

June 29th, 2024

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

July 13th, 2024

Stanwick Lakes – **PDG100** Guild Day Out

August 10th, 2024

Rutland Water – **PDG100** Tour & Picnic

September 14th, 2024

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

Daventry Branch – **PDG100** Summer Festival 15:00