

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



Newsletter
September 2024

Guild Officers 2023-24

Post	Name	e-mail
President	Alistair Donaldson	president@pdg.org.uk
Master	Simon Dixon	master@pdg.org.uk
Secretary	Helen Allton	secretary@pdg.org.uk
Treasurer	Chris FitzGerald	treasurer@pdg.org.uk
Steward	John Beresford	steward@pdg.org.uk
Peal Secretary	Paul Mason	peal_secretary@pdg.org.uk
Report Editors	Gwynneth & Jim White	report@pdg.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Jonathan Stuart	newsletter@pdg.org.uk
Public Relations Officer	<i>[vacant]</i>	pro@pdg.org.uk
Webmaster	Richard Allton	webmaster@pdg.org.uk
Safeguarding Officer	John Beresford	safeguarding@pdg.org.uk
100 Club Co-ordinator	Cathy Dixon	100_club@pdg.org.uk
Youth Ringing Officer	<i>[vacant]</i>	

Newsletter News

This edition comes after a longer than usual gap, reflecting the distance between the Guild's Spring and Summer Festivals. Suddenly, we are well over halfway through our centenary year, and I have still not ordered that PDG100 polo shirt I promised myself! The monthly celebratory events have continued through the summer, and this edition includes reports on those. You will also find details of upcoming events and merchandise to celebrate the Guild's longevity.

Special thanks to all the branch correspondents and Guild officers who make these newsletters possible, in particular, Secretary Helen for spotting the typos and errors that I missed. Please keep sending in your stories.

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 for a small fee.

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.

All copy for the next edition to arrive by **31st December latest**, please. Thank you.

Jonathan Stuart

Contents

Guild Officers' Contact Details	2
Newsletter News	2
President's Preamble	4
From the Bellboard Footnotes	4
Master's Musings	10
Spring Meeting Report	10
Stanwick Lakes Day Out	13
Rutland Water Outing	14
Side-by-side, but 100 years apart!	15
Badby's Ceramic Ringing Room Clock	16
Rehanging at Harrington	17
Obituary – Noel Pearson	18
News from the Branches	20
100 Club Report	42
Ringing World National Youth Contest	43
Guild Future Events Calendar	44

President's Preamble

Wasn't the Spring Meeting a Grand Occasion! Thanks to some tight scheduling by Simon and Cathy Dixon, Secretary Helen and I managed to push through an amazing 12 call change bands at Guilsborough with barely a pause, while Simon Dixon and Richard Allton did similar stewarding of 9 method ringing bands at Cold Ashby. The judges congratulated the team for the slick organisation. Then there was the feeding of the 5,000 (OK, 120 actually) with Cake, and parking almost as many cars in a small village. It all went well, and the new Centenary Trophy for the winning call-change band was duly unveiled and presented. I shall remember such an enjoyable day for a long time.

May - the Guild Open Day. Another day I really enjoyed as a "Super Steward" (i.e. I got to sport a Gold badge), helping manage the queues at some of the towers. Again, a superb bit of planning by Simon and Cathy that was favourably commented on by many as they went round. And I got to catch up with several ringers that I haven't seen for many years (not PDG members!) which was an unexpected bonus.

Then I took my Maplestead Mini-ring to Stanwick Lakes for our Family Day - it rang almost continuously all day. Great to see it being used by ringers and non-ringers alike with varying success!

Lastly, I was really pleased to see the Young Ringers from Daventry branch turn in a most creditable performance in London for the Ringing World National Youth Contest. They came 4th out of 14. Well done all of you! With thanks to Justin, parents, helpers and supporters who all made it happen. Back next year?

Finally, I do hope many of you will join me and some illustrious guests at the Guild Centenary Dinner at Kettering in October – it should be a great evening.

Now, where is my DJ? Haven't worn it in years.....

Alistair Donaldson

From the Bellboard Footnotes

(1st April – 31st August 2024)

First Quarter

James Glover (Guilsborough)
Jackie Brandon (Bozeat)
Flynn Spires (Whilton)
Lewis Abbott (Peterborough St Mary)
Lauren Wade (Wing)
Esther Shackell (Desborough)
Zoe Turner (Stanwick)



Flynn Spires' First Quarter

First Covering

Fiona Barclay (Cold Ashby)

First on the Treble

Howard Murphy (Spratton)

First Inside

Jack Brown (Wilby)

First Minor inside

Pete Dyer (Orlingbury)

First Surprise Minor

Helena-Katie (Brooke)

First Spliced Triples

Deborah Bray (Peterborough St Mary)

Joseph Booker (Peterborough St Mary)

Graham Hill (Peterborough St Mary)

First Major inside

Hilary Hardie (Peterborough St Mary)

First Treble Bob Major

Hannah Baker (Nether Heyford)

First Surprise Royal / Cambridge inside

Pam Bailey (Rothwell)

Liz Reading (Rothwell)

First Stedman

Joshua Horne (Irthlingborough)

Carole Kendall (Towcester)

First Peal

Clara M Pedersen (Castor)

First Peal inside

Deborah Bray (Castor)

First Peal as conductor

Stuart Weston (Castor)

Incumbents

Angela Hammett's departure to her first parish in Norfolk was marked by a quarter at Towcester on 9th June



Celebrating Howard Murphy's 1st Quarter



*Cat Hemmington's Birthday Drinks
(Is Cathy paying? See p7)*

Events

The Mayor of Peterborough was installed and a quarter rung to celebrate (Cathedral, 16th June)

The Mayor of Wellingborough, Valerie Anslow, instigated ringing at Wellingborough to welcome the Waendel Walkers to town on their friendship walk. A quarter was rung on 17th May

Wellingborough also marked the Civic service with a quarter on 23rd June

The Lincoln Guild is 25 years older than us, and this has been marked with ringing at Peterborough Cathedral.

Northampton All Saints celebrated Northampton Saints winning the Gallagher Premiership final with an extent of All Saints doubles on the Sunday morning (9th June)

Daventry marked the town's Motorbike Festival with a quarter (8th June) and open church & tower event.

Market Overton rang for the Town feast (29th June)

Bozeat rang for the Open Gardens event (13th July)

The Rose Queen & King Parade at Harpole was marked by ringing as the parade passed (14th July)

People

Tony Finke's service as Tower Captain at Yardley Hastings was marked with a quarter on 14th April.

James Benner marked the 50th anniversary of his first peal for the Guild by returning to Guilsborough on 25th June

Paul Mason marked 50 years of learning to ring with a peal at Southill, Beds, on 9th July

Stuart Weston marked or celebrated (but didn't seem sure) 25 years of ringing by conducting a quarter at Castor on 12th July

Paul Bailey was wished the best for his new knee with a quarter for the Farmer's market at Higham Ferris on 29th June.

In a similar vein, Sue Marsden rang her first peal on her new hip at Burton Latimer on 2nd July



Deborah Bray MSc

It is the season for educational achievements.

Kaiden's GCSE results were celebrated with a quarter at Weedon Bec on 30th June.
Chris Winkless-Clark completed his PGCE and is heading to Cambridge, which was marked with a quarter of Cambridge at Peterborough St Mary on 7th July.

Deborah Bray's MSc in Sustainability was celebrated with a quarter of Graduation Doubles at Castor on 18th July.



Castor celebrates 900 Years

Tower milestones

The bells at Weedon Lois marked the 100th anniversary of their casting with a peal on 15th April

Castor marked the 900th anniversary of the consecration with a peal on 17th April, including 3 firsts.

Pattishall marked their service of thanksgiving for the installation of the bells with a quarter on 27th April.

Birthdays

Welcome to Robyn Tucker, a great Granddaughter for Robin Wilson, with the appropriately named Robin Surprise Minor at Yelvertoft

The births of Hazel Rose Manktelow (22/6/24) and Mara Rose Downey (28/6/24), were celebrated with a quarter including a selection of parents & grandparents at Bozeat on 13th July.



Pattishall Thanksgiving for New Bells

Birthdays where the number of turns around the sun was not disclosed include:

Cat Hemmington, who claimed 25 years since her first peal but was giving nothing away about her age (Rushden on 13th May)

Brian Goode, lifelong village resident of Castor. The footnote doesn't give an age, but as they rang Ninetieth Birthday Doubles, we can probably guess!

Linda Smith had a "special birthday" with a giveaway method of Seventieth Birthday Doubles(Castor 31st August)



Stanworth Family Celebrations

Sunny Pederson's family celebrated their 9th birthday by ringing at Peterborough St Mary on 19th May

Megan Louise Dabell's 18th was marked by proud grandparents with a quarter of Eighteenth Birthday Doubles at Alwalton on 1st June

Celia Stanworth's 40th was marked with a peal at Yardley Hastings on 17th June

Robert Wood, Celia & John Stanworth marked their year of big birthdays (70, 40 & 40) with a family quarter at Easton Neston on 22nd June

Julie Tarling marked approaching and passing 50 with peals at Desborough on 4th May and Higham Ferrers on 10th May.

Cathy Dixon's 60th was marked with ringing, including a peal at Burton Latimer on 2nd July

Jonathan Stuart marked turning 70 with a quarter at Cold Higham on 2nd May.

Jane McKee (70th) & Jean Tinsley (75th) joint birthdays were celebrated with a quarter Peterborough St Mary on 28th July.

Brian Foley's 80th was marked with a peal of 80th Birthday Delight Major at Weedon Bec on 13th July, the tower he has been Tower Captain of for many years

Also 80 was Keith Doherty, who joined in ringing at Stoke Doyle on 10th July.



Birth of Hazel Manktelow & Mara Downey



Celebrating 65th Anniversary, Kevin & Marion Broad

Wedding celebrations:

Claire Jones & Tim Hudson

(Weldon 21st April)

Juliet Bunce & Jonny England

(Whilton, 22nd June)

Isabelle Harvey & Henry Pickering

(Achurch 22nd June)

Taliya & Anujen (Peterborough St

Mary, 7th July)

Anniversaries:

6th Celia & John Stanworth (Burton

Latimer 2nd April)

30th Cathy & Simon Dixon (Burton

Latimer 6th August)

34th Paula & Terry Wright (Wansford 12th May)

40th Denise & Mark Smith (Castor 2nd June)

45th Pam & Paul Bailey (Rushden 18th July)

50th Castor residents Chris and John Murrell and Carole and Roger Dewey (Castor 10th August)

60th Cathleen & Paddy Wilkinson on 9th May (Peterborough St Mary, 25th April)

60th Barry & Mollie Care who have been ringing together at Moulton for 65 years

(Moulton 6th April)

65th Kelvin & Marion Broad with
quarters at Welford on 25th May

65th Margaret & Terry Fussey
(Peterborough St Mary, 6th June)

65th Nesta & Max King (Castor, 8th
August)

65th Sheila & David Loake
(Desborough 18th August)

D-Day ringing reported at:

Barnack, Barrowden, Bozeat, Castor,

Cold Ashby, Corby, Cottesmore, Crick, Desborough, Duston, Easton Maudit, Edith

Weston, Elton, Ginton, Great Casterton, Great Cransley, Greatworth, Gretton,

Harpole, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Isham, Ketton, Kislingbury, Long

Buckby, Maidwell, Marston St Lawrence, Nassington, Northampton, Peterborough

Cathedral, Pytchley, Rothersthorpe, Rushden, Scaldwell, Spratton, Stoke Doyle,

Thornhaugh, Thorpe Mandeville, Tinwell, Towcester, Ufford, Uppingham, Walgrave,

Wansford, Weldon, Whissendine, Wittering, Wollaston and Yarwell.



Juliet Bunce & Jonny England Wedding Band



Sheila & David Loake's 65th Anniversary

Master's Musings

Making Changes?

In light of the success of this year's Spring Festival (see below), and the introduction of a separate trophy for the best Call Change band in the Six Bell Striking Competition, it is probably a suitable time to consider whether any changes are needed. Feedback and views from the wider Guild membership will be invaluable.

I therefore ask that you get in touch with me, either by phone 01933 403855 or by email master@pdg.org.uk, to let me know what you think.

Some points to consider are:

1. Should the method ringing competition and the call change competition be run at the same time or would a separate session (morning & afternoon, or different date) be preferable?
2. Is it better to know the time slot allocated in advance or should the draw be done just prior to the ringing?
3. Usually, some other local towers are open for ringing prior to the competition, but should this open ringing be extended while the competition takes place?
4. Do the rules need any amendment?

Any thoughts, please get in touch.

Simon Dixon master@pdg.org.uk

Spring Meeting Report

April in the Peterborough Guild usually brings the first Guild meeting of the year. This is the Spring Meeting and features the six-bell striking contest. This year, it's our fourth event but that didn't change the plan for the day. The contest is open to bands within the Guild, who ring 120 changes of a method or call changes. In the past, the best band won the Weaver Shield. This year, the Weaver Shield was presented to the best method ringing band, while the new Centenary Trophy was presented to the best call change band.

In the 38 years since the Weaver Shield was first presented, in 1986, the most teams entered was 17, on two occasions. So, when 21 teams entered in 2024, it presented an unexpected challenge to Simon & Cathy Dixon, to produce a ringing order. Having two trophies allowed the contest to be split across two towers, with 12 call change bands at Guilsborough and 9 method bands ringing at Cold Ashby.

At Spratton, Richard Allton & Paul Mason ran the open ringing. At Guilsborough, the 12 bands were chivvied into place by Alistair Donaldson & me. With just one swap, the bands stuck to the 12-minute time slots, almost to the minute. At Cold Ashby, Simon Dixon stewarded, with Richard Allton as photographer. One small delay was caused by a late, illness induced, band change. Even so, the contest was also completed in good time.

The record number of bands also presented challenges to the host branch. Additional parking was arranged at a barn and the Sports Club. Then the branch had to lay on teas for over 120 people. Guilsborough branch rose to the occasion; I have never seen such an impressive spread. Cold Ashby community hall was packed to the rafters, with ringers enjoying meeting friends and the vast array of cake.

Talking of cake, there was yet another PDG100 birthday cake. This time, Alistair and I managed to cut it without being caught on camera.

The meeting was held in a packed church. After a short business element, attention turned to the results of the competitions.

The judges were from Kent. Stuart Cox judged the call changes while Neil Jones took on the method ringing bands. Both judges were complimentary about the standard of ringing and the number of bands entered, even if that did make their task harder. The judges made comments on each band in the order they rang, before giving the scores in reverse order.

Each band was presented with their certificate before the winners were presented with the trophies. This was the first time that the Centenary trophy had been presented. Chris Bullied collected it on behalf of the Pattishall band while Richard Allton took the Weaver Shield for the Towcester branch.



Magnificent Tea Spread

Call Change results

	Position	Rang	Faults
Pattishall	1	5	18
Ecton	=2	2	23
Greens Norton	=2	8	23
Daventry	4	10	24
Daventry Young Ringers	5	12	35
Welland Valley Gentlemen	=6	4	36
Desborough	=6	7	36
Badby	8	11	41
Cransley	9	1	42
Whilton	10	9	45
Welland Valley Ladies	=11	3	60
Rushton	=11	6	60

Method results

	Position	Rang	Faults	Method	Peal speed
Towcester	1	2	95%	Cambridge	2:51
Peterborough Cathedral	2	9	94%	Cambridge	2:35
Rothwell	3	7	88%	Bob Doubles	2:38
Pattishall	4	5	86%	Grandsire	2:55
Rushden	5	3	79%	Cambridge	2:50
Whilton	6	1	78%	Bob Doubles	2:57
Yelvertoft	7	6	77%	Bob Minor	2:59
Castor	8	4	67%	Winchendon Place	2:29
Braunston	9	8	60%	Bob Doubles	3:01

It was good to see that there were bands from seven of the Guild's ten branches. It was also great to see the number of bands with recent learners. Some had only been ringing for about six months and the Whilton call change band was formed entirely of Jubilee learners. Being on the short side, I particularly liked the foresight of one band who brought their own boxes with them, in case there weren't enough of suitable height available. The band photos were not universally welcomed, there was some grumbling (which I ignored). If there was a prize for most enthusiastic band being photographed it would go to Cransley, who threw themselves into putting on their best poses.

The day finished with open ringing at Cold Ashby before everyone dispersed back to the 4 corners of the Guild. It was an excellent day, and all who contributed are to be heartily thanked for their efforts. We do it again next year on 12th April 2025. Get it in the diary now.

Helen Allton



Towcester, Weaver Shield winners



Pattishall, Centenary Trophy winners

Stanwick Lakes Day Out



Saturday July 13th saw the Guild set up home next to the Visitor Centre at Stanwick Lakes, for a day out. The aim was to both enjoy ringing and to raise the awareness of ringing among the general public.

The marquee contained Guild merchandise for sale. There were hand bells and bellplates for people to try, as well as a couple of model bells for information purposes. There were light-hearted competitions for everyone to have a go at, and a section for youngsters to enjoy craft activity, colouring a variety of bell-related images. Interestingly, some adults also sat and coloured, for relaxation. Smaller visitors were able to make their own bell (from a paper cup, a pipecleaner and a jingle bell) that seemed to go over very well. Lots of very artistic bells were produced. We can expect to see pink and purple clappers being the norm from here on!

Flanking the marquee was the Maplestead miniring, which made a tinkling noise most of the day. Ringers and non-ringers alike had a go at this - with varying degrees of success! A couple of touches were attempted and some even came round, Cambridge Surprise Minor being the most adventurous.

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1754524>

At the other end of the marquee was the Wombell, the Guild's training bell. This allows a more usual ringing style, and our trainers gave any number of people a go at backstrokes. It is set with quite a low sally and tail end, ideal for the youngsters.

The sun made a guest appearance, and the rain held off until we were all setting off home, having broken the displays down. It could have been a lot worse!

The winners of the various contests were announced at 5pm. "Guess the number of bells in the bottle" produced a very wide range of guesses, with the correct answer being 429. Tracey Pinchin was closest and won the bottle of Bells whiskey.

"How long is a piece of string" required people to guess the length of the bell rope. A fairly short 14.85m rope gave varied entries. Tracey Pinchin was again closest. We hope that she bought a lottery ticket pronto, after that degree of luck!

This event was something very different for the Guild. The proximity of the adventure playground and nature reserve gave those with children a chance to get out and about, while also supporting a ringing event. It was also a chance for non-ringing partners to enjoy the day out, while not feeling like a complete spare part at a ringing event. The picnic benches were occupied throughout, and it was good to see so many people come out.

Helen Allton

PDG100 – Rutland Water Outing

Something for everyone

For the 100th Anniversary celebrations for the PDG, we have aimed to arrange events that would appeal to all – ringers and non-ringers, old and young, experienced ringers and novices.

The Rutland Water Tour and Picnic on Saturday 10th August did just that. It also combined ringing and social activities as well as being both indoor and outdoor.



We visited five different Rutland Branch towers in the afternoon, then congregated at one of the visitor sites on the banks of Rutland Water. With over 46 ringers, along with non-ringing family members and friends and several dogs, it had quite the party feel about it, especially as there was cake!

We asked a novice and a very experienced ringer for their feedback too...

Edward: “I was excited to start learning to ring bells because I love trying new things and it wasn’t something I’d heard of before. I enjoyed learning, as it engages my brain, and the atmosphere is very nice. The other ringers were welcoming and always happy to answer any questions. Learning the different techniques for ringing was initially difficult, but everyone was very patient and with lots of practice I can now ring confidently. I enjoy visiting other towers, getting to look round other churches and meeting more of the bellringing community, as everyone is very friendly. I really enjoyed the Rutland tour, as it allowed me to go to many churches and practise what I’ve already learned. I am now looking forward to taking part in the PDG 8 bell striking competition with other junior ringers.”

Brenda: “Saturday 10th August started quite dull with rain looking likely. However, apart from a few minutes of fine drizzle, all was well. We started at the second tower with both experienced and less experienced ringers, only a few more trickled in. For me it was on to Hambleton to run the ringing there. Far more people turned up by then, old friends and new acquaintances, young and those of advanced years with good ringing all round.

“The picnic was next for us on the edge of the reservoir. What a lovely occasion that was. All ages of ringers and some still too young, friends you hadn’t seen for ages and a great atmosphere. Some of us completed the day in a time-honoured ringers’ way in the pub. A truly lovely occasion.”

Thanks go to the local ringers who welcomed us at the towers and those that acted as stewards and ran the ringing at the towers. Plus, thanks for the good weather!

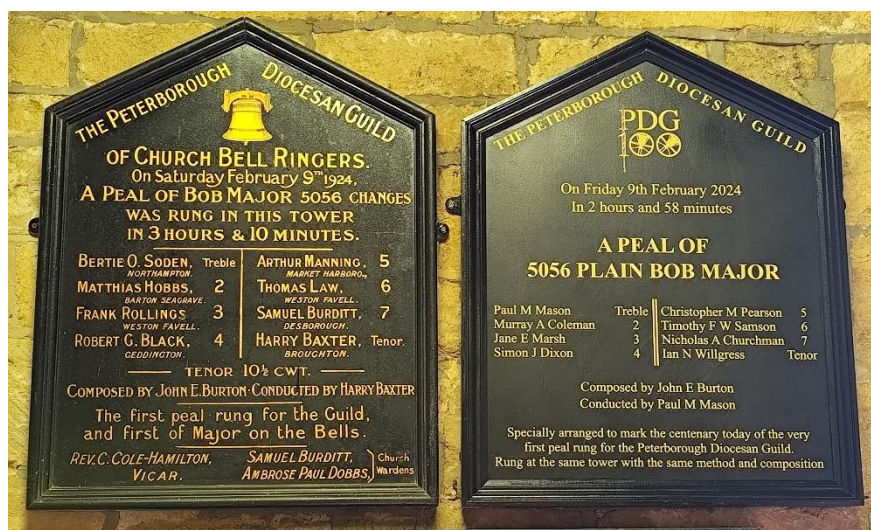


Cathy Dixon, with help from Edward Barton and Brenda Dixon

Side-by-side, but 100 years apart!

As reported in previous issues, the first peal rung by our Guild was one of Plain Bob Major at Desborough on Saturday 9th February 1924, rung in the stately time of 3 hours 10 minutes by a joint band of members from the Kettering and Northampton Branches.

Only the previous year had the 6 bells been augmented to 8, with the old 5 staying in their timber frame. The unsatisfactory M&S treble, in a separate frame bolted over the top of the second bell, was recast and hung in a new metal frame above, along with the two new trebles. Ringing was from the ground floor then, with quite a long draught of rope, so ringing would not have been as easy as it is now.



Nevertheless, the men displayed in the last Newsletter proudly posed around the peal-board, which has graced the ringing room wall ever since.

One hundred years later, a representative band of Guild stalwarts met to repeat the performance on the exact anniversary, and now a matching peal board sits side-by-side with the original.

Murray Coleman

Badby's Ceramic Ringing Room Clock

After 50 years or more without a clock in the ringing room at Badby, Susan Rose took pity on the tower captain, who kept having to tuck his pullover sleeve clear of his watch to know when to stop. On Sunday, April 28th, a special personalised 26cm diameter English china clock arrived. Its decoration celebrates these bells of character, the Guild's centenary and the project to rehang the bells.



Badby's new ceramic clock

Susan learned to ring as a child in Turvey. Upon moving to Badby she rang on average once every other year, such occasions being noted for her running commentary as to whether she was too close or too late. Having moved to Newnham, she is still a great supporter of Badby church and is the deanery synod rep.

In early 2023, we had a spell when we were too few to ring all six bells, so Susan began to ring on Sundays. In December 2023, she announced that she would come to practice nights (and despite our “oh, yes?” response) lo and behold, she did and has been a regular attender ever since - spreading her infectious enthusiasm as she goes. Susan was in our team for the Spring Festival at Guilsborough this year.

Susan is willing to make you a special clock designed in her Newnham studio and fired in Longton, Stoke on Trent. Contact her at susan@susanrosechina.co.uk.

Her latest project is a generic bellringers' china mug with a limited edition version to raise funds for Badby Bells Improvement Project.



*Limited edition china mug
in aid of Badby Bells*

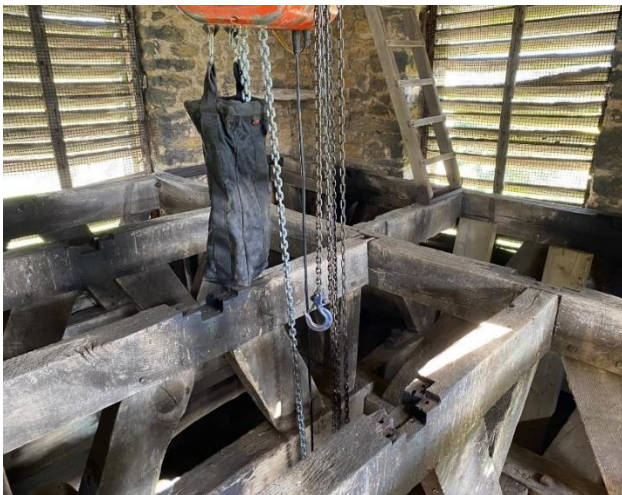
Geoff Pullin

Rehanging at Harrington

The project to re-hang the bells at St Peter & St Paul took place throughout April and stretching into early May. The work was led by 'Kit' Bardesley, the Bellhanger for John Taylors of Loughborough, assisted by a large group of volunteers jointly from the village and members of the Kettering Branch. Taylors had agreed a significant discount on labour costs if a minimum of two volunteers could be provided to assist on a daily basis.



Unloading steel beam sections under the instruction of Bellhanger, Kit



Electric hoist ready for action

Gabriella Smith, one of the Parishioners involved in the project, took on the role of organising a rota of volunteers, which worked very well. Gabriella is also one of the new learners at Harrington, having been assigned to the Rothwell tower.

The delivery of steelwork and various sundries took place on the Tuesday 2nd April directly after the Easter Bank holiday.

The first morning involved unloading the delivery and sorting items in order of use and raising the electric hoist up into the Belfry manually, to enable other items to

be raised with ease.

Work then started to repair and reinforce the frame, which included installing two steel beams, which each came in two sections, directly under the frame to provide support. The oak frame was reinforced by various steel plates, and a considerable amount of unsound timber was cut away from the various beams, the resulting voids being filled later with a specially made 2-pack resin-based filler.

By Tuesday 9th April the steel beams were in-situ and in the process of being concreted into the tower walls.



Resin set atop a removable truss

The bells were delivered back to Harrington a week later, with a small crowd of fundraisers and villagers coming along to welcome them back. Once unloaded, the bells were dressed with freshly cut flowers, and a short service to bless the bells was held in the Churchyard, led by the Rector, the Rev. James Watson.



The Bells in the base of the tower decorated with flowers

The next phase was to raise and re-install the bells back into the frame one-by-one. Bells 1, 4, 5 & 6 were in situ by the end of the day. The bells were all in place and the clappers were installed on Thursday 25 April. The following week, a scaffolding was erected to allow wooden rope guides to be installed between the floor of the Belfry and the ceiling of the Ringing Chamber

A test ring was held on Thursday 2nd May, involving Alistair

Donaldson, Bill Adcock, Murray Coleman, John Beresford, Jim & Sarah Bence, and the Bellhanger, Kit. The final touches and tidying up of the Belfry were completed on Friday 3rd May.

A Tower Renovation Dinner to recognise all of those taking part in the project was held on the evening of 27th June at the Swan in Lamport.

Whilst it was hoped to bring the bells into regular use, a delay has been experienced with the raising of the ringing chamber floor to accommodate a new kitchen facility and toilet at ground floor level. This work is now scheduled to commence 2nd September. Once the works are complete, it is hoped to bring the bells into regular use without further delay.



Andy Bimson, Branch Steward, making adjustments to a Slider

Obituary

Noel Francis Pearson (18 December 1933 - 16 April 2024)

Born into a church family one week before Christmas in 1933, Noel was a committed Christian all his life, dedicating much of his life to St Mary's, Finedon and latterly St Peter's, Irthlingborough.

He trained as a Lay Reader for the Diocese of Peterborough, and with a small army of equally dedicated readers regularly took Evensong in many far-away village churches, when the local incumbent was otherwise engaged.

Both he and his late brother Denis (AKA 'Aitch' one-time Ringing World cartoonist) were Architects by profession and accomplished artists. Following the splendid conversion of the North transept at St Peters into a useful meeting room cum kitchen, Noel was commissioned to paint a mural depicting the life of St Peter's Church, including the rebuilding stone by stone of the detached tower after it started to lean in the 19th century.

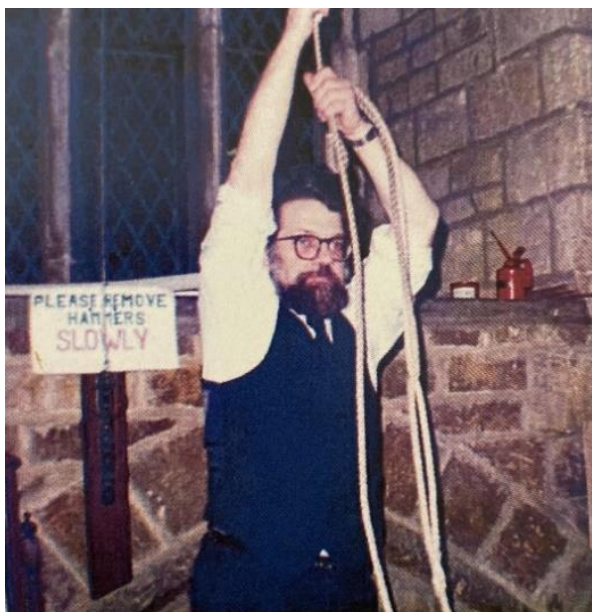
He was taught to ring by John R Main, then captain of Finedon, in 1950 when he was 17. All his life he kept meticulous records of towers visited, Quarter Peals and Peals. His first Peal was 5040 Grandsire Triples at Finedon in 1960, rung half-muffled in memory of John Main, who himself had rung at Finedon for 65 years and must surely have been an inspiration to Noel.

His peal ringing peaked in the 1980's when he notched up 53 peals, but following retirement he downsized to Quarter Peals, usually one a week, until declining health forced him to retire from ringing shortly after the millennium. However, whilst his reduced mobility prevented him from ringing, his brilliant mind was put to good use on Sunday evenings at The Lamb in Little Harrowden, where surely the best pub quizzes in the area were held. Indeed, due to a diminished attendance one week, Noel joined our team 'Them Down There' and for the first (and last) time we won. Noel enjoyed that evening and I could just detect a wry smile through his 'Pluto' style beard.

He is survived by his wife Rosemary and three children, Matthew, Francis and Elizabeth. Irthlingborough church was packed for his funeral, the bells of St Peter's were rung open before and after the service by his many ringing friends, and the organ expertly played by his son Matthew, who had composed an aria for the occasion.

Rest In peace thou good and faithful servant, thy work here is done.

Tim Samson



Peterborough Diocesan Guild

Orlingbury, Northamptonshire

St Mary

Sunday, 21 July 2024 in 46m (10-2-18 in F)

1272 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Timothy F W Samson
- 2 Pamela M Bailey
- 3 Cathy J Dixon
- 4 Joshua A Horne
- 5 Jayne M Horne
- 6 Simon J Dixon (C)

Rung in thanksgiving for the life of Noel F Pearson one time ringer at Finedon and Irthlingborough and lay reader in the Peterborough Diocesan Guild. The family were in the village pub garden to hear the ringing. The ringers of Saint Peters Irthlingborough wish to be associated with this commemorative ringing.

News from the Branches

Culworth Branch

Training Day at Brackley

Culworth branch is fortunate to have a cohort of dedicated ringers who come to individual tower practices regularly. However, many of our ringers seem less keen to join us for branch practices, perhaps (mistakenly) feeling that they lack the breadth or depth of skill or knowledge. The branch aims to ‘add value’ in developing our ringers, so we thought it would be a good idea to supplement activities with additional opportunities for learning. Coincidentally, we received a couple of offers from skilled ringers who sometimes join us for practices, to present some ringing theory. They both felt, with justification, that theory is underplayed when, naturally, we fill our practices with activities involving rope-time, resorting only rarely to white-board style explanations or routinely expecting ringers to do homework.

So, what do we mean by ‘theory’? Perhaps this definition is as good as any, taken from the late Peter D. Wenham’s series of booklets ‘Bell Ringing by Instalments’ (available on the PDG website at <https://pdg.org.uk/homepage/content-3/making-progress>).

“There are many things in ringing that can be called ‘Theory’, because we can enjoy ringing without bothering about them. However, there are many ringers who enjoy their ringing that bit more when they understand something about ‘Why’ as well as ‘How’. In many cases, knowing the theory also has a practical application, such as helping you to keep your place or to learn new methods.”

In this spirit, on a Saturday in May 2024, we ran a Basic Theory session at Brackley, which was open to all. Robert Wood from Towcester Branch gave a masterful talk to 18 attendees, including two visitors from Daventry branch. The remaining attendees from Culworth branch were mostly ringers who we rarely or never see at branch events - so it was gratifying to have encouraged wider involvement. Robert’s presentations - one on plain hunt and a second on plain bob - were well pitched for the audience, and there was excellent engagement with lots of questions and anecdotes from the audience, which Robert handled beautifully. Participants reported afterwards that they now understood some things which were previously mysteries that had to be taken on trust. Such was the success of the event that we have run a further workshop (on rope-splicing) and will most definitely run similar events in the future. *(Andrew North, Syresham)*

Astwick - Back and Beyond

Our group of churches are in southernmost Northants, and they back onto Oxford Guild territory, so we are part of the Culworth branch and yet furthest to the west in the Diocese of Peterborough. We do though exist and thrive! We might not get to HQ often, but we do have fun with our church bells and ring for most services. In fact, we are quite a friendly bunch, we pay our dues and attend Guild activities, when

possible, to play our part. It's just more difficult to travel such a huge patch in great numbers.

My benefice is called Astwick and has six churches. Our local team keeps the four nearest sets of bells ringing, and they are in good order. We support all local church bell teams when required and we welcome all visitors and look forward to their peals and quarter-peals. But ringing to this level is beyond our group presently. On a recent evening we had 15 regulars turn up for a Tuesday night practice in Aynho (an 8-bell tower where there is no local team). Trainers are from ART and their encouragement keeps our level of attendance high, but our progress is slow. There are now three recent visitors showing an interest in joining our group. With a couple of youngsters already making good progress the average age of this group is falling. (These two are crossing county borders to join us!) We have a new band of handbell ringers recently formed in Evenley. They are now renovating the Brackley bells they have borrowed. We know we have a long road ahead with many silent church bells in Culworth branch and churches that need ringing teams to be formed from scratch, but signs are good. *(Paul Bennett, Evenley)*

Astwell Benefice

The Guild branch boundaries do not always coincide with church benefice groups. Astwell benefice consists of Lois Weedon, Helmdon, Syresham, Whitfield and Wappenham, the latter being part of the Towcester branch. As the bells at Helmdon and Wappenham were not being rung on a regular basis, we decided to move our Lois Weedon practice around on a three-weekly cycle. We had two ringers visiting us weekly from Wappenham and wanted to encourage Helmdon ringers to return after Covid (they now have 3 regulars from the village). We are very fortunate to have 9 ringers from the village of Lois Weedon so are usually able to cover all our Sunday services. We don't ring anything special, but we try to have a good standard of ringing for services and special occasions. Practice nights are sociable and fun, and we get through a fair amount of chocolates and jellies. The main thing is that the ringers keep turning up and the bells continue to be heard across the villages. It has been a good experience to move around these three churches, as all the bells feel so different to ring. Some still don't enjoy Wappenham with its longer ropes. Syresham has a monthly practice and ring for special services. Whitfield has a weekly practice, with ringers joining from Evenley, Syresham, Brackley, Eydon, Lois Weedon and sometimes Greens Norton. They also ring for their Sunday services with ringers from the village. It's a good job bellringers are prepared to travel to practices and for service ringing, otherwise the whole exercise would fall apart. I wonder how many other churches across the guild experience this? *(Joy Kirkham, Lois Weedon)*

Culworth and Daventry Branches get Spliced

On the morning of July 27th, members of Culworth and Daventry came together at Eydon Village Hall to learn the art of rope splicing under the expert instruction of Ian Chapple and Geoff Pullen. Ian supplied the fourteen of us, who were there to learn this useful skill, with the necessary tools: small sharp nosed pliers, knife, masking

tape, and needle and thread, and of course lengths of rope on which to practice. After a quick demonstration of how to make a short splice that would not part under strain, we all had a go. What looked deceptively easy when Ian and Geoff showed us how, proved a little more difficult when the rest of us tried it, some more successfully than others. Dividing the end of each rope into three strands, the tape was used to prevent the strands from unravelling, and to identify each one. Then weaving them back together using the pliers and keeping the job neat, and not resembling a rat's nest (this is why it is good to be able to identify each strand so it goes where it should). I'm pleased to say we all managed to get reasonable results by the end of the two-hour session, with one or two making a splice almost as good as our instructors. Some said that rolling the finished work on the floor with one's foot to make it even was the most rewarding part of the day. Those of us who got that far then used the needle and thread to bind the splice together, so there was no chance of it unravelling. Quite important, if you are pulling on a bell rope and the splice is out of sight. We all had a thoroughly enjoyable and instructive morning, helped along by tea, coffee, and lemon drizzle cake courtesy of Sue Tresham.

(Tom Tresham, Eydon)

Joy Kirkham, Branch Correspondent

Daventry Branch

Spring Festival

The weather was amazingly just right for striking competitions. Four branch teams gathered at Guilsborough and performed in the call change competition. Ten of the members hadn't rung in a Guild competition before. Another team from Whilton performed in the method section at Cold Ashby. I was delighted to hear that a grant of £8,400 for Badby's new headstocks was awarded at the meeting, before the judges gave us the results. For the 12 call change teams: 4th Daventry, 5th Daventry Young Ringers, 8th Badby and 10th Whilton; the Whilton methods team came 6th of nine.

Preston Capes in April

It did not rain for our joint visit with the Culworth Branch. Thanks went to Brian Foley and Graham White for several visits to the belfry over the previous week or so, to oil and put the installation into better order. 27 rang under my persistent encouragement compared to 15 at our last branch visit here in 2018. Justin Baker had delegated Ian Willgress to run the ringing in his absence, but Ian had to go away so later delegated it to me!

Of the 27, two were from the Culworth Branch, three were visitors and Greg Taylor appeared from Australia in this, his former haunt, having returned at the end of February to live in Naseby until returning down-under on 10th September. Tim, who lives next to the church, also rang backstrokes. Nine didn't ring due to being unfit, providing teas or carefully avoiding the challenge.

It needed three on the tenor to get it up the right way. The first umpteen touches were rounds, as people variously struggled to get the bells off, keep them up and ring them to the accompanying sound of rattling rope guides and the faint sound of bells above. Outside, the four 1631 Hugh Watts bells and 1829 Taylor treble sounded out their fine tones across the village and fields. Not a dodge was attempted, by keeping to plain hunt, Reverse Canterbury and Winchendon Place Doubles before lowering for service.

Graham led our service in under 30 minutes with Penelope Rapson (Musical Director of Fiori Musicali) at the organ.

Treasurer Helen Camps told us that the old Santander branch bank accounts had successfully been closed at last. She is now operating with a single Lloyds bank account.

In the evening, Moreton Pinkney bells were a different kettle of fish. Twelve Culworth Branch members, ten from Daventry Branch and four visitors rang and readily kept going to a variety of methods till 8pm under Andrew North's direction. It felt like a successful day all round!

Badby in June

There was a good turn-out, despite the un-summery weather. This had caused the village school Rose Day to finish early, so parking wasn't as bad as anticipated. The six bells were raised in peal with all clappers the right way - the first time for several months. Justin kept the ringing going with 23 branch ringers, two Culworth ringers, and two visitors, until the lower before the service.

Graham took the service again but not before Gillie, our very recent returnee who knows her way around the vestry, had located a bible. Martin Heath played the organ for three hymns.

The tea seemed to go down well.

In the evening, I recall there were 26 ringers at Eydon with Nick Chatt in charge on behalf of Culworth.

Whilton in July

I reckon that 30 rang at Whilton, and five didn't, under Justin's direction to a variety of touches from rounds and call changes to Superlative S Major (the current 'progress' method for Daventry tower practices, since followed by Rutland).

Our under 30-minute service was led by the Revd Canon Andrea Watkins, Rector, with her curate, deacon of seven days, the Revd Rachel Cooley leading prayers, and Martin Heath again at the organ. Whilst the reading included pomegranates and bells, the talk was a different take on training, teaching and leadership.

The local ringers provided a splendid tea in the village hall with a young tea-pourer very keen to oblige.

In the quarterly business meeting Justin highlighted the young ringers' exploits since our last meeting. We congratulated Freya Bartlett (Byfield), Niamh Montgomery (Long Buckby), Flynn Spires, Zack Pope (both Daventry), Grace and Matthew Allcott (both Norton) on their latest trip to London on July 8th to take part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest. They rang call changes conducted by Matt from the tenor and came in 4th of 14! They were ringing the back 6 bells of the famous Diamond Jubilee Bells which started their life ringing a peal in a frame on a barge heading the jubilee flotilla down the Thames in 2012. (See photos inside back cover.)

Jim White had already proposed the usual vote of thanks and now added thanks to those who had made the young ringers' trips, including Leicestershire, Guilsborough and London, possible – parents, Justin and Theresa, Cathy and Simon.

Later, that warm evening 23 rang a range of things on the majestic and loud bells at Great Brington with Miles Baker in charge. Apparently, we were lucky – a rope broke two days after!

Staverton in August

This was the first time we have had tea at Staverton since October 2006. The recent provision of a toilet in the churchyard outhouse made it viable. Some 30 people rang, including a resident of Staverton for the first time in several years – new recruit Tess. Justin had to cope with a constant change of people in the crowded ringing chamber with ringing ranging from call changes to Primrose Surprise minor with the bells lowered in time for the service led by Graham White again. Hymns were accompanied by an unfaltering magic box. The regulars at Staverton practices provided a good tea under Christine's leadership.

In the evening 19 rang at Hellidon, including two from Bedfordshire and several supported the Red Lion afterwards.

Outings

Badby Ringing Rally, on May 6th, was the first since 2019. A group of 14 rang on the Beds/Bucks border starting at Tyringham, on to Lavendon and Cranfield followed by a very swiftly served pre-ordered lunch at the Cross Keys, Steppingley. Flitwick and Milton Keynes Village filled the afternoon. A profit of £80 went to the rehangings of Badby bells!

For the branch outing on May 18, Alison Buck warned us at the Preston Capes meeting that the list of towers and menu would arrive



L to r: Theresa Baker, Alison Willgress, Gwynneth and Jim White, Jenny Lunn, Anne Prestwick, Bobby Lunn, Geoff and Carole Pullin, Graham White, Ian Willgress & Justin Baker

close to the date, because last minute changes were very likely. Then, with the final list, came the message that she was having to work on that Saturday so couldn't be with us. Having organised everything, she gave Graham White the envelopes of tower donations and the list of choices that we had made from the lunch menu to bring in his well crumpled Waitrose Essentials 'brief case'!

We got to the first tower at 11am, Wolvey. The party, which had whittled down to 12 people, made good use of this handy 6 before arriving at the lighter, recently augmented, 6 at Burton Hastings. The Lime Kiln Inn, beside the canal on the A5 at Burbage, produced good lunches swiftly, allowing us to arrive 20 minutes early at the 8 in Nuneaton. The group photograph was taken by a couple from the congregation sitting in the sunny churchyard, who then came up the tower to witness ringing in their church for the first time.

Chris Bulleid joined us there in the depressingly dark and dismal ringing room, but the nice eight were going pleasantly until...! In the last lead of a touch of Grandsire a bell hunted down then down until the ringer proclaimed it had slipped wheel – the rope would not move. After a quick check above, the other bells were lowered and a full inspection established that a gudgeon had snapped, half the wheel was destroyed, and the bell was down and held askew by the other gudgeon (stub axle). That was a 'first' for me to witness in 66 years of ringing! We explained to the visitors that this was not a typical ringing session! Taylors were scheduled to start on 29th June to remove the 5th headstock to fit new gudgeons and lift bells 1, 4 & 8 for their bearings to be cleaned or replaced as necessary.



Broken gudgeon on the 5th at Nuneaton

Justin left Nuneaton last and ignored his sat-nav. In so doing he arrived at the next tower long before the rest of us, who got snarled in huge traffic jams due to a road being completely resurfaced (really!). After negotiating the pedestrianisation in central Bedworth ("Bed-uth") we appreciated the wide modern spiral access to the huge gallery containing a meeting room, quiet rooms, other facilities and a wide corridor open to the ringing chamber. A half-course of Yorkshire tapped around nicely. The final tower was Bulkington where the installation had been substantially changed early this year to use the former 7th as the new tenor with recasting some of the others and lowering the frame in the tower. So ended a nice day out in sunny weather.

Other ringing

A quarter peal rung in the morning of the Spring Festival at Rothwell with the two competition judges from Kent, enabled Gwynneth to ring her first of Cambridge S Royal.

Hannah Baker and Helen Camps have both made leaps and bounds with quarter peals. Hannah has now rung Cambridge S Major inside (a family quarter in County Durham to mark brother Miles' graduation) and Helen has been sCOOTed off to the realms of surprise minor and surprise major (Yorkshire and Turramurra recently).

Everdon, Kislingbury, Newnham and Willoughby rang on June 6th to mark D-Day+80.

Daventry's rector asked us to ring a quarter peal during the Motorcycle Festival in the town on June 8th, while the church was open for refreshments. The successful Quedgeley Surprise Major was conducted by Ian Willgress. After we finished, there was a large throng of leather clad people from all over the country climbing the tower and 315 visited the church.

Young Daventry ringer Kaiden McCreath was very keen to ring a quarter peal to mark the end of his GCSE exams. The Plain Bob Triples on June 23rd at Daventry failed, but a replacement, organised for the next week at Weedon was successful with Justin conducting and Kaiden grabbing only his second tower!



Clockwise from front right: Gwynneth White, Alison Willgress, Ian Willgress, Helen Camps, Hannah Baker, Jim White, Justin Baker (C), Kaiden McCreath (Photo: Justin Baker)

People

It was nice to see Jim and Gwynneth back in action in April after a 25 week gap while Jim's hernia was diagnosed and sorted.

James Glover has moved again as his wife Rev Clare was instituted as Rector of the Five Ways Benefice (Aston le Walls, (chime of 3) Boddington (6), Byfield (8), Eydon (6) and Woodford Halse (6)) in early June.

At Weedon in July, a peal of 80th Birthday Delight Major was rung by his peal-ringing friends on Brian Foley's birthday, conducted by Michael Chester.

Ian and Alison Willgress have contributed a great deal to the branch's ringing over many years. Alison (then Collins) joined the Guild in 1973, married Ian in 1998, bringing him into our branch. He joined the Guild at Rushden in 1979 when his family moved there from Essex. He has been a great asset. Conducting and improving our ringing such that our branch won the Guild Harry Wooding trophy for the first time in 2002 and six more times to date. Ian was made a Life Honorary Member of the Guild

at its last AGM. Their long contemplated move to west Wales is now to come about early in September so they will be sorely missed. Chair Jane Rands took the opportunity at the Staverton meeting to present them with an engraved vase, gardening tokens and surplus cash from a swift collection across the branch with our thanks and best wishes.

Our narrow-boat unattached member, Sue Merrett, recently sent greetings. She is still very slowly 'continuous cruising' the canals north of here but is now third in a list for a permanent mooring in our area. She is still ringing, but finding bells really heavy now! Her dog Cassie has calmed down no end since last here and seems to be totally deaf but responds well to hand signs!

Geoff Pullin



Ian & Alison Wilgress with leaving present

Guilsborough Branch

The branch held a quarter peal day on Saturday 27th April. Six quarters were attempted, and we were successful in four of them. Within that, there were a number of 'firsts'. James Glover (Guilsborough) achieved his first QP at the first attempt, ringing inside to Reverse Canterbury. Fiona Barclay (Scaldwell) successfully covered to April Day and Grandsire, achieving her first QP on the tenor. Howard Murphy (Cold Ashby) rang his first QP on the treble to Plain Bob Doubles and finally a long-term ambition was achieved by Colin Ashcroft (Guilsborough) ringing his first QP of London Surprise Minor. Well done everyone! We are aiming to hold another on 30th November, if we can find some warm towers!

We ventured out on Saturday 29th June, visiting six towers around Leicestershire. Despite warnings that some of the bells might be a bit awkward, we found them all fairly straightforward. We did, however, have to empty the ringing chambers at two of the towers, where various items were being stored, including scaffolding at one church where renovations were in progress. Pickford's have nothing on us!

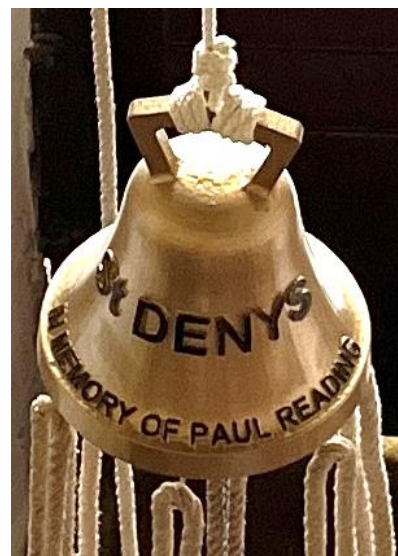
In line with the Guild ringing aims for the 100th anniversary, the Guilsborough branch has already achieved over 50 firsts and, out of the 28 ringable towers, 13 have achieved a dedicated piece of ringing. The aim is to get 100 firsts across the Guild but we have set our own target of 100 for Guilsborough branch alone. Let's see if we make it.

Anthea Hiams

At Cold Ashby we have a new lovely little 3D printed bell “spider”. It was kindly made by Howard Murphy.

It is just over 20 years since the bells were augmented to 6 and the spider remembers Paul Reading who was instrumental in the fund raising and hard work involved in the augmentation. Paul sadly died in 2010, and it is nice to have a reminder of him in the belfry.

Liz Reading.



Guiltsborough Branch is gaining a reputation for their catering. So, we thought it would be fun to include a recipe:

Marzipan Loaf (a quick and easy moist loaf cake)

Prep Time: less than 30 mins, Cook Time: 45 mins to 1 hour, Servings: 8-10 slices

Ingredients:

- 150g/5½oz marzipan (white or yellow) or almond paste, at room temperature, torn into lumps
- 125g/4½oz soft unsalted butter
- 1 tsp vanilla paste (or extract)
- 50g/1¾oz caster sugar
- 75g/2½oz plain flour (or gluten-free plain flour)
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tsp baking powder (gluten-free if necessary)
- 1½ tsp ground cardamom
- 3 large free-range eggs, at room temperature

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 170C/150C Fan/Gas 3 and place a loaf-tin liner into a 1lb loaf tin, or line the bottom with parchment and butter the sides.

Put all the loaf cake ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides a couple of times. Pour and scrape into the prepared tin and bake for at least 45 minutes (cover with foil after 40 minutes to stop it browning any further if you need to), or until the cake is beginning to come away from the sides and a cake tester comes out clean.

Fiona Barclay

Kettering Branch

Practices

20th April 2024

Great Oakley, St. Michael (5)

There were 21 present, including visitors from Bourne, Lincolnshire and Farnborough, Hampshire.

Weldon, St. Mary (8)

There were 22 ringers at Weldon and refreshments were kindly laid on by the Weldon ringers.

18th May 2024

Rushton, All Saints (6)

The tower was visited by 20 ringers

Geddington, St. Mary Magdelene (6)

There were 18 present, with a variety of methods being rung.

15th July 2024

Medbourne, St. Giles (6)

For our first tower of the afternoon, we crossed over into the Leicester Guild area, where there were 18 ringers. To keep ringers occupied when not ringing, there is an exposed clock pendulum visible inside the church, and a window commemorating Rev. Dr. Watt, who founded Leicester Royal Infirmary.



Members of the Branch at Cottingham

Cottingham, St. Mary Magdelene (5)

Back to one of the Welland Valley Benefice towers, where we had 23 present. To keep everyone interested between ringing, a competition was organised by Christian Harford and Jane Marsh to find the 'Green Man', a Pagan symbol common in the Medieval Period.

20th July 2024

Once again, we held our Branch practice in the neighbouring Thrapston Branch, ringing at the following towers.

Wadenhoe, St. Michael & All Angels (6). 19 ringers attended the tower and a competition was held to identify all Church Spires visible for the churchyard. The trick element of the question was to include Wadenhoe where you were standing. The competition was won by Andrew Gunstone.

Stoke Doyle, St. Rumbald (5). Again there were 19 ringers and refreshments were served in the church.

Kettering Branch Newer Ringers

Kettering is lucky enough to have recruited a large number of new ringers over the last couple of years, all of whom are enthusiastic and eager to progress. We have been running monthly sessions specifically for them on a Wednesday morning at Rothwell and usually have a turnout of around 20. They are encouraged to see other ringers at a similar stage, as well as getting the chance to challenge themselves with the support of more experienced volunteers around them. It has been a joy to see them gaining confidence and skill.



'Newer' ringers and helpers at Rothwell

The August session was a particular highlight as, for the first time, ringing was on eight bells on the simulator. Everyone did well, and achieved at least one thing they hadn't tried before - including ringing the tenor. The session finished with the now traditional 'Shelli's favourite' or as it is also known, 'Diminishing rounds'. Usually, we ring solidly for two hours but as it was the summer we finished early to share a social half-hour with appropriate liquid refreshment and cake!

I'd like to say a very special thank you to Murray Coleman for preparing the bells for the sessions and to all the helpers who come along to support the ringing.

Jane Marsh

Rothwell, Holy Trinity – Patronal Feast

As is normal, various church groups take part in dressing the Church window openings on the Feast weekend, 25 - 26 May. This coincides with the start of the historic 'Rowell' Fair, which takes place on the Market Square and streets around the church. A group from the local Bellringers, comprising Helen Churchman, Sarah

Bence, Murray Coleman and Richard Sears, created a display including floral arrangements, information on Bells and Bellringing including a model of a bell installation.

I would like to thank all the Branch members who kindly shared photos for inclusion in this report

As is our routine now, we do not hold a Branch practice in August, as numbers are sparse due to holidays and so on, but we hope to start practices with renewed energy in September

David Dainty



Bellringer-decorated window, Rothwell

Peterborough Branch

We have held several social ringing sessions, which have been well attended. From our busy diary this year, we held a Minor methods social at Easton on the Hill. Unfortunately, the lights in the ringing chamber weren't working, so towards the end of the session we were practicing our listening skills too! We rang Plain Bob, Little Bob, St. Clements, Single and Double Oxford and some rounds and call changes for two members of the local band who came to listen (and stayed all evening).

We've also held two surprise minor socials, at Bulwick and Cotterstock, to ring Cambridge and Norwich, and Cambridge and Bourne respectively. There was lots of support and strong bands for those new to ringing surprise methods, as well as an opportunity to practice some treble bobbing. The surprise socials have been very popular, and given that, for a lot of towers, surprise methods are not something that can be rung often, we have decided to continue to hold the practice every other month. The next being 6th October at Nassington.

In October and November, we are holding a Major Social and a ringing up and down in peal workshop for those who can ring up and down on their own but struggle to stay in peal.

Finally, we would like to thank all our experienced helpers who come along and support our sessions and the cake-makers extraordinaires for the socials. We couldn't run them without you.

A small group from the Branch joined the Guild event at Stanwick Lakes in July and enjoyed mastering the mini ring. Although we only managed rounds, we felt it was a good exercise of our handling skills.

Another Young Ringers Group was held at St Mary's, Peterborough in June. All of them are progressing in their ringing and we also encouraged two of them to call "go" and "that's all" for Plain Hunt.

St Mary's Peterborough

St Mary's Peterborough has continued to support the Guild Centenary initiative by associating any first for our local ringers with the Bellboard link. Over the past few months, we've had many firsts in quarters with Lewis Abbott trebling, Holly and Clara Pedersen ringing most methods inside, Joseph Booker and Deborah Bray ringing their first inside to spliced Triples. Hilary Hardie rang her first inside to Plain Bob Major.

In July several of us travelled to Aston in Birmingham to ring and celebrate Taliya and Anu's wedding. We very much appreciated the welcome from the local ringers and rang 10, with two bells being out of action. Taliya is a keen photographer and whenever we ring with her we have an accompanying picture - useful



if we ever need to validate an alibi! We look forward to seeing the wedding pics, and attach a photo of 'usual suspects' who scrubbed up well for the occasion.

Our new ringers are doing well, and we have three progressing with their plain hunting. In addition, we have four new starters this year, at various stages of ringing call changes. Three of these are Rob Peasnell's children, who have their father's ringing genes and at 9, 10 and 11 years old are progressing very quickly. In the past fortnight we also had a Bulgarian family (Yosif, Tanya and daughter Niya) join us at St Kyneburgha's, who are making remarkable progress. All this makes a welcome logistical challenge on practice night as we've been averaging 18 ringers since the start of this year.

A recent celebration we marked a Double 50th: Alison Aquilina-Evans' belated birthday, and Andrew Christie learnt to ring at All Saints Whitstable in 1974. Alison was invited to a Café Worship service by a friend and heard the bells ringing and asked if she could have a go. The rest is history, and we are very pleased she joined our band.

If anyone is in the area or would like to book St Mary's bells, we endeavour to make them readily available.

Andrew Christie, Ringing Master St Mary's
bells@peterborough-stmarys.org.uk

Nassington

We rang across the Benefice for the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, and it also gave the opportunity for some of our newer ringers to ring at Thornhaugh, Wansford and Yarwell for the first time.

Monday evening and Friday morning practices continue each week at Nassington, and we have also rung at Bulwick and Thornhaugh. Our methods of the month have extended to Bob Minor and Little Bob Minor, and we've also tried Treble Bobbing. Recently we have been ringing Stedman, when we have sufficient ringers who know the method. We have several new ringers, so have held some additional handling sessions at various times during the week.

We now ring for Sunday service at Thornhaugh once a month, as well as three Sundays at Nassington and two at Yarwell. There have been a number of weddings and funerals across the Benefice, where bells have been requested.

We have also rung several QPs across the area, including a QP of Bob Minor at Nassington to get Caroline to her LtR level 5, and another QP of Bob Minor at Barnack before their patronal service in June, which was a first in method for Geoff Bridges. We also rang two minor methods for Terry Wright's 100th QP in July.

Various groups of visitors have rung the bells, including over 100 visitors to Nassington and Yarwell as part of the Guild Centenary Open Day in May. Another visiting band rang QPs at both Yarwell and Nassington.

Nassington holds a very popular Open Gardens event every couple of years in June, raising money for the church, and this year we rang to open the event on both the Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Castor Ringing School

It has been a busy period with some of the new ringers recruited earlier in the year moving onto rounds and now onto Plain Hunt. The mix of ringing on a Saturday morning also includes a lot of Bob Minor, as well as Doubles. Two ringers graduated, having rung at least one QP inside, and are returning as helpers.

On two Saturdays, I held intensive sessions at Nassington for those still learning to handle a bell, and for those wanting to learn to ring up and down, which have been popular. In addition, Barnack tower hosted a Ringing Up and Down in Peal Workshop in July for five learners, and another one is planned for October.

Hilary Hardie, Head Tutor

Ufford

St Andrews Church, Ufford rang to celebrate 80 years since the D-day landings, on Thursday June 6th. We continue to hold a practice on the first Thursday of the month at 10:30. The bells are striking well - we oil them frequently as they are on plain bearings. The warm weather helps!

Sally Hudson

Branch Correspondent: Hilary Hardy

Rutland Branch

Quarter Peal Celebration Challenge

At the time of writing, our Rutland Challenge for a Quarter Peal in every Rutland tower by the end of this centenary year has achieved 12 QP's so far, with 22 more towers to go. Being already three quarters of the way through this year it is indeed a challenge ... but we're still hopeful of hitting the target. We are encouraging as many of our new ringers as possible to achieve their first QP in this year. Congratulations to Lauren Wade of Ketton, who rang her first quarter at Wing on August 3rd. In June, Helena-Katie Scoles rang her first Surprise QP.

What were you doing on 11th May, the day of the Guild Open Tower event?

One Rutland ringer was at the beautiful church of St John the Baptist in North Luffenham, one of a small team of people helping to open the tower to allcomers. She writes, "...by about 4.45 I was put in mind of the sight of my son, waiting for the first guest to arrive for his 6th birthday party. He stood at the end of the garden path looking eagerly up and down the road and singing *happy birthday to me*...

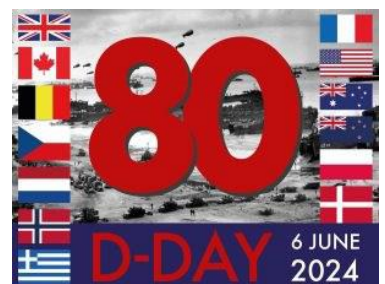
I might have been feeling a teeny bit nervous. Would we be flattened by hordes of tired and irritable ringers, all wrung out but desperate to tick off one more tower? Or would we rattle around feeling a bit awks, while all the ringers headed home, sated by other, earlier towers?

As it turned out, there was a steady stream of enthusiastic and appreciative ringers from far and wide - Hampshire, the Lake District and Exeter were all represented in the visitors' book, as well as those from our own guild. We even allowed people in from Leeds. There were almost 50 of them in all, and the village of North Luffenham was treated to an hour of joyful ringing. What a wonderful way to celebrate the centenary."

D-Day 80

June 6th marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when Allied forces mounted the largest amphibious invasion the world has ever witnessed.

In 1944, Operation Overlord saw over 5,000 ships and landing craft set down more than 130,000 troops on five Normandy beaches in an action that would bring about the liberation of north-west Europe.



Ten Rutland towers responded to the CCCBR request to 'Ring Out for Peace': Barrowden, Cottesmore, Edith Weston, Gt Casterton, Gretton, Ketton, Tinwell, Uppingham, Wing & Whissendine.

Guild Picnic at Rutland Water

Many of us were lucky enough to hear our beautiful bells at Edith Weston getting a good workout on the afternoon of Saturday 10th August!

The first touring band were made up of some 15 ringers from Essex who were celebrating a significant 60th birthday.

Hot on their heels was the second band which numbered approximately 35. They were all members of the Peterborough



St Mary the Virgin, Edith Weston



St Martin Of Tours, Lyndon

Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers, on their 100th anniversary outing and picnic at Rutland Water. Other Rutland churches included in their tour were Ashwell, Cottesmore, Hambleton and Lyndon. (Yes, the pew pictured in the ringing chamber was removed before ringing!)

The ringers ranged from beginners to those with a wealth of experience and expertise. The sun shone down whilst the music rang out. An amazing afternoon for all involved.

Sue Webster

Thrapston Branch

Our monthly afternoon practices at Wadenhoe and Thrapston are proving popular, and we have been able to welcome new, older and returning ringers to practise and progress on both six and eight bell methods. Thanks to Chris Jenkins for organising these practices and guiding the newer branch members through the exercise. We also have a regular evening practice at Islip on the first Friday of each month. Again, ringers old and new are making progress, once the 39 steps have been negotiated.

Amongst the Branch members, we have been able to celebrate significant Birthdays, Wedding Anniversaries and New Arrivals and to applaud those who have made a long journey back to good health. It's been a difficult few years, but normal practice has nearly resumed.

We have enjoyed contributing to the Centenary celebrations of the Guild, although we haven't all been able to attend all events.

Happy Ringing!

Alison Byrnes

Towcester Branch

A busy few months in the Towcester Branch area. Two outings, annual North Bucks vs Towcester Branch competition, training days and ringer development sessions.

May commenced with a wonderful outing to Cambridgeshire, starting at Swaffham Bulbeck, St Mary's (8).

18 ringers and three dogs joined the tour of towers ranging from rings of 6 to 10. At Swaffham, performances ranged from rounds and call changes to Surprise Major, and those who were not ringing viewed the fascinating carvings and embroidered kneelers.



Branch outing to Cambridgeshire (plus dogs)

Soham, St Andrew's was a first on 10 for three of the group: Ann Prestwick, Richard Findlay and Peter Nicholson. Again, a wide range of performances, from rounds to London Royal. On to Wilburton for a picnic lunch, followed by ringing at St Peter's (6), then at Bluntisham, St Mary's (8).



St Mary's unusual kneelers

Our final tower was Holywell, St John the Baptist (6), where the sun came out again and a ground floor ring enabled all members of the gang to participate. Richard Allton ensured there was something for everyone: rounds, call changes, Surprise Minor, Stedman, Bob Doubles and St Clements.

Thanks to Richard for organising an interesting and varied outing, which concluded with very welcome refreshments at the Pike & Eel, Needingworth.



The Winning Stedman Team

In June, a branch practice morning was held at Wappenham (6) which encouraged ringers to come out and try an unfamiliar tower and to ring with new people. Thanks go to the Ringing Master, Chris Bulleid, for arranging these regular training mornings.

Our annual Towcester Branch vs North Bucks ringing competition was held in

July. This year, Bucks hosted, taking the competition at the delightful church of St Mary's, Bletchley.

Twenty-two Branch ringers attended, with three sections to compete in: Call changes on 8, Bob Minor, and Stedman Triples for the George Holland Trophy.

This trophy being currently held by Towcester Branch was imperative to win and retain – since no-one in the branch knew where the trophy currently was. If we lost the competition, we would have to own up. A probably stressful ring of Stedman then ensued, with the win being awarded to Towcester. The two other sections were awarded to North Bucks.



Presenting the (missing) trophy

The photo clearly shows the presentation of the missing George Holland trophy to Branch Deputy Ringing Master Richard Allton.

On a traditionally wet Bank Holiday Saturday in August we held our annual mini tour to three very local towers of Paulerspury, Whittlebury and Potterspury.

Ringings ranged from call changes, Grandsire, Stedman to Cambridge (where possible). Sadly, these towers do not have regular bands, so it was a great to hear them being

rung. Conversations took place during the morning, with a hope to cover some service ringing with branch members who could mobilise as and when required to keep these towers and bells going. With practice and confidence, all bells are possible, and these three towers certainly had a wonderful tone to their bells.

Branch training continues to grow, with several new learners in 2024, and specific training sessions held at Pattishall, Blisworth and Roade/Ashton. We also hold training sessions at Bradden which include a number of young ringers. Cold Higham each Saturday morning is going strong, with many new ringers benefiting from the opportunity to ring in addition to their usual tower practice night, with both practical and theory sessions being held.



August Branch Outing

We could not be bellringers without training, encouragement and practice, practice, practice. A huge thanks go to all Tower Captains, Ringing Masters and helpers for

their enduring hard work with a special mention to Margaret and Chris Bulleid, Nigel Williams and the helpers at Blisworth and Roade/Ashton. Not to mention the tea and biscuits too!

It has been a great few months in the Towcester branch, busy, productive and enjoyable – certainly looking forward to the next quarter of the year.

Oh! And we have found the George Holland Trophy - on the shelf, in full sight, in the tower that begins with G, ends with N, has 6 bells, tall spire ...

Odette Dawkins

Towcester History and Tower Tour

Towcester held a history and tower tour event on Saturday 20th July. This is a successful combination of a trip to the church's lowest and higher regions, visiting the crypt and the tower. This church history element was presented by Brian Giggins and David Lapine.

Those who had signed up were divided into two groups, one group looking at church history, the other doing the tower tour, before swapping over. A short safety briefing by Sue Ferrie was held at the bottom of the tower, covering the stairs and not touching anything, and checking that everyone was able to manage the climb. We then set off, with the



visitors going up in twos and threes, sandwiched between ringers, who are more familiar with the 44 spiral stairs that lead to the ringing room.

Here they were seated, before they were given an introduction to the tower and the history of the bells by Ann White. A single bell was rung to illustrate the strokes and means of bell control, before the floor was opened for any questions.

From there, the group proceeded up to the bells. At Towcester we are very lucky that the walkway around the belfry allows people to stand and watch the bells ringing safely, as they are hung in the frame below the walkway. With ear defenders provided, the treble and tenor were turned over a couple of times.

Helping the visitors out of the belfry, we returned to the ringing chamber, where a short piece of ringing on the middle 6 gave them all a taste of what method ringing is about.

We then returned them all to the ground floor in one piece.

For the ringers, there is a commitment. It involves a lot of going up and down stairs, escorting the visitors on the stairs being important. There is also a need for sufficient ringers to ring, there is work to prepare suitable risk assessment and presentational materials. But it remains a good use of time and effort. It was a well-received morning. Those who were not sure what ringing was left with a greater understanding of what we do and how we all do it. The morning was rounded out by lunch in the Vicarage Garden.

Thanks to all those that gave their time: Ann, Sue, Helen, John, Richard, Graham, John & Robert.

Helen Allton



Wellingborough Branch

Since the last report, the Wellingborough Branch has held Surprise practices at Rushden, Mears Ashby, Irthlingborough and Wilby, General practices at Yardley Hastings and Ecton and a Branch Meeting at Stanwick. In August, a Branch Social was held at Bozeat. Four Quarter Peals were successful in the Branch Quarter Peal week. Congratulations to Zoe Turner on ringing her first Quarter Peal on the Tenor at Stanwick, Pete Dyer for first inside to Minor at Orthingbury and Jack Brown first inside to Bob Doubles at Wilby.

The Branch Striking Competition was held at Mears Ashby with eight teams taking part. Our own Guild President Alistair Donaldson with Liz Reading were our judges, and Rushden was the winning team. A big well done to all teams, particularly those who had never taken part before.

On 6th June, D-Day ringing took place at Bozeat, Easton Maudit, Finedon, Higham Ferrers, Irchester (with help from Earls Barton), Rushden and Wollaston, where Jack tolled the tenor bell 80 times.

Bozeat & Easton Maudit

We participated in, and rang for, the Patronal Festival at Easton Maudit. All our current newer ringers rang independently for the first time on these more difficult bells – soon to be easier with the addition of guides, we are pleased to say. We also have a new recruit from Easton Maudit for the first time in very many years.

As part of the village Open Gardens, we opened the tower to visitors, who enjoyed a tour and a ringing demonstration. On the same day, we rang a Quarter Peal of Grandsire Doubles to celebrate the safe arrival of two babies – children and/or grandchildren of team members. This was a successful first attempt for our new treble ringer Jackie Brandon. Well done, Jackie.

Bozeat was also the venue for the second year to the successful Wellingborough Branch annual barbeque on August 17th. This is held, by kind permission of the church, in Bozeat vicarage garden. The barbeque rounded off an eventful day in Bozeat as it was also the annual Bozeat produce show, which many local ringers are involved in organising.

Chris Downey

Irchester

On Easter Monday, 1st April, a local visiting band came to St. Katharine's and rang a full peal of All Fools Surprise Major in 3 hours 17 mins, as detailed on Bellboard.

Visitors also came from Bovey Tracey in May to ring a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Major and were ably assisted by Harry Curtis, as the visitors were one ringer short.

With the help of ringers from Earls Barton, the bells were also rung on June 6th for the D-Day celebrations.

St Katharine's rang for evensong on 13th April for a visit from the new Bishop Debbie.

Marian Whittaker

Earls Barton

About half the band helped out with our tower Spring Clean, which was great fun. We've recently been donated some new garter sleeves so we will soon be fitting them to all the bells.

This year, we have rung all eight bells for all the weddings, which we know has been much appreciated, not only by the wedding parties but also our vicar and the church officials. We hope to be able to continue this trend into next year.

Sixteen ringers and guests rang at Cogenhoe for our Summer social (thanks to Marcia for opening up for us) which was followed by an excellent meal at the Nag's Head in Wollaston. We are now planning our next Open Belfry event on Saturday 14th September and hope to recruit some beginners and demonstrate our ringing to anyone who would just like to see what happens in the belfry.

Later in the year we hope to be able to get one of our band through their first quarter on the tenor to Bob Doubles, and our young 11 year old ringer has recently moved on to ringing the tenor, which at a guess is about fifteen times his body weight!!

Andy Smith

Stanwick

There have been two Quarter Peals at Stanwick since the last newsletter.

On Thursday 8th August, the Coots Group rang a Quarter Peal of Beverley Surprise Minor. On Friday 16th August, three of our Sunday morning ringers, with the help of three others including a regular Tuesday practice ringer, rang a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Doubles for the Branch Quarter Peal week. This was Zoe's first Quarter Peal at the first attempt, ringing the tenor behind.

We continue to have good practice sessions on Tuesday afternoons 4pm - 5-30pm. All welcome.

Sam Chambers

Rushden

Rushden entered a team in the Guild 6 Bell Striking Competition at Cold Ashby and came 5th in the change ringing category. We won our own Branch Striking Competition held at Mears Ashby.

We rang a Quarter Peal to celebrate St George's Day and in May Cat rang a Peal on her birthday to mark the 25th Anniversary of her 1st Peal. We rang for the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings and for the Funeral of Glyn Muncey, a regular Rushden ringer for many years until he was unable to do so. We rang an 8th peal to celebrate Cathy Dixon's 60th birthday and a Quarter Peal of Stedman Triples was rung during the Branch Quarter Peal week.

We also held the Annual Tower BBQ at Brenda's on a lovely sunny afternoon in August.

Pam Bailey

Moulton

We still hold our regular weekly practices each Monday (but not Bank Holiday Mondays) and these are well attended. Ringing from minor to royal at all levels with rounds on the 12.

We welcome visitors and have a few regulars from other towers. We end the evening with a visit to the Artichoke pub next door.

The band enjoyed a visit to Taylor's Bell Foundry at Loughborough on 14th August, which many of our band hadn't looked round before. It was a pleasant trip for us all.

Barry now dreams of replacing the great "Mote" bell which once hung in the tower a few hundred years ago! Donations welcome!

Barry Care

Wollaston

It has been a busy few months since we last gave a report. Following our ringing at Easter, the Wollaston Band rang for Bell Sunday in May and lodged our performance on BellBoard. We also rang at 6.30pm on Thursday 6th June in commemoration of 80 years since D Day. This was also lodged on BellBoard, and certificates were given to each ringer to commemorate the event.

We have also rung for Wollaston Open Gardens in early July. We take this opportunity to have an ‘Open Tower’ and see if we can attract any returning ringers or new learners. John was kept busy all afternoon (thank you John) with people wanting to have a try on the ropes, and quite a few were interested in pursuing ringing but so far only one has come regularly to practice, and we have welcomed Su into the family of Wollaston ringers.



Wollaston Open Gardens. Back row: Jack, John, Thomas, Mel & Ben; front row: Enya, Sharon & Jean

We are continuing to ring regularly every Sunday morning before the service at 11am and every practice night on a Wednesday at 7.30pm. We welcome any visitors who may like to join us and appreciate the help we get from members of other local towers in learning methods.

I am very grateful for the commitment of the band at Wollaston and thank them for their support.

Jean Rose

100 Club

Since the last newsletter was published, we have done 5 draws with 15 winners:

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
April	169	60No	£55.77	93Ke	£20.28	105Gu	£13.52
May	171	35We	£56.43	47Th	£20.52	188Cu	£13.68
June	168	135We	£55.44	79Pe	£20.16	129Ke	£13.44
July	183	119Gu	£60.39	39To	£21.96	38We	£14.64
August	179	123Gu	£59.07	183No	£21.48	133Da	£14.32

To mark the centenary of the Guild, I set a target to get 100 new members. To date 38 new subscriptions have been taken out.

Back in 2021, we increased the number of winners to three per month, to reflect the fact that membership numbers had increased. If we do continue to recruit new members to the 100 Club, I will propose that we again change the rules about each

draw to allow four winners each month, so that the chances of winning are about the same, but the winning amounts each cover at least one year's subscription.

So, if you are a member of the Guild and 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

Ringling World National Youth Competition



The Young Ringers from Daventry Branch came 4th out of 14, in a strong call change performance in London for the Ringing World National Youth Contest on 6th July.



GUILD EVENTS 2024 – 2025

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.

September 14th, 2024

Daventry – 10 Bell Practice 10:30

Everdon, Badby, Byfield – **PDG100** Summer Festival 14:00 (competition 16:00)

October 12th, 2024

Kettering Park Hotel – **PDG100** Guild Dinner

November 9th, 2024

Daventry – 10 Bell Practice

Syresham – **PDG100** Quiz and Fish & Chip Supper

December 28th, 2024

Towcester – **PDG100** Guild Carol Service

January 11th, 2025

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

March 8th, 2025

Venue tbc – 10 Bell Practice

April 12th, 2025

Thrapston Branch – Guild Spring Festival