

Peterborough Diocesan Guild of
Church Bell Ringers



Newsletter
August 2008

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

The deadline for the next Newsletter is:

5th January 2009

(a long time ahead, so please put it in your 2009 diary)

This will give an opportunity for reporting end of year activities!

Please send your contribution either through your Branch Press Correspondent or direct to:

jillvharvey@yahoo.co.uk or ring 01327 340666

Each item is acknowledged, so if you receive no reply please ring me!

THE PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Summer, what there was of it, is nearly over. Weddings and outings are becoming less and ringing settles down to mainly practice and Service ringing - our prime responsibility.

As I have been to meetings and outings, it has been good to see some young people learning to ring and many are progressing well. How they continue is up to us, as more mature ringers, spending time ringing with them and keeping them interested. We need them all for the future.

I have noticed that bells have been in the news again as a possible source of noise pollution. Fortunately this was thrown out, but this issue keeps cropping up and we need to make sure we do everything we can to inform local people when there is to be ringing at an unusual time, especially if our bells are particularly loud. Maybe it is time to think of some sound control. I fear that at some point, ringing will be stopped somewhere because it is deemed to be a nuisance to someone.

During the winter our ringing would improve if we all concentrated on one thing we know we don't do as well as we should. It could be leading more consistently, making sure we pull our backstrokes in, or not ringing methods we don't know very well except when the ringing is specifically for practice.

I think mine needs to be concentrating fully when ringing a method I know very well, as I'm prone to think of other things and forget what I'm doing!

Happy ringing.

Brenda Dixon

News from the Branches

CULWORTH

The 2008 half yearly meeting of the Culworth Branch was held on Saturday 20th July at Evenley. There was a fairly good turn out this year with a varied selection of 5 bell methods, Plain Hunt and Call Changes being rung on Evenley's easy going bells. Following the ringing, the Church Service was led by Evenley's Vicar, The Rev Gill Barker who spoke about a member of one of her Churches who had become housebound and was also having eyesight problems. The Rev. Barker concluded by saying the one contact other than house visits this lady had with her local Church in these days was the sound of the bells which is helping to keep her faith very much alive.

Following the Service a delicious tea was enjoyed in the Village Hall, which was served and prepared by the local ringers. Following the tea the meeting was chaired by Mr M Rowling, and among the points raised were that Chacombe Bells have now been lowered (on 19th July) and were being re-hung by Whites of Appleton.

The order for Charwelton Bells will be placed with Taylor Eayre and Smith by the end of July to rehang the present 4 bells in the re-used and developed cast

iron frame originally at Steeple Langford in Wiltshire, for the provision for 5 bells.

Charwelton has also applied for a Faculty for the inclusion of the present Treble Bell at Kineton in Warwickshire, which will (subject to the Dioceses of Coventry and Peterborough DACs) become the new treble of 5 bells at Charwelton.

Phil Curtis reported that a Stedman Doubles training afternoon was held at Eydon on 5th July and he was hoping to involve other helpers in more training sessions in the future. Martin Rowling is also planning to organise an outing to the Taylor Eayre & Smith Bell Foundry in Loughborough, and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in coming along.

The day concluded with a short evening ring at Evenley for the benefit of the local ringers who had been busy during the afternoon with the preparation of the Tea.

The Branch is pleased to welcome the Rev Vivienne Baldwin from Woodford Halse as a new member of the Guild.

CHANGE IN THE GREATWORTH TOWER CONTACT email address:

Alan and Diane Garrett have asked for any email contact to be made to them on the following address.
diane@garrett14.wanadoo.co.uk.

Finally. Congratulations to our Assistant Ringing Master Nick Chatt who recently passed his driving Test.

The 8 bell Practice at Kings Sutton on May 31st was a great success with a good attendance not only from our Branch but with the attendance of Geoff and Carole Pullin from Badby as well as several visitors from the Oxford Guild and Bedfordshire.

The Branch Practice held at Eydon brought visitors from far and wide as well as a good turnout from the Branch, this meant that a variety of ringing was achieved ranging from Grandsire and Plain Bob up to Surprise Minor. All in All it has been very heartening to see a healthy increase in the attendance at Branch Practices in the first part of the year.

DAVENTRY

In an unguarded moment, I suggested that the Daventry Team Ministry's sponsored 13 mile walk on Rogation Sunday could now, for the first time, have bells to guide the walkers to every tower along the way. With a bit of last minute *ad hoc* arranging, the task was done to the satisfaction of the walkers! Well done to Sally Thompson and Chris Woods, who not only rang at all six towers but also chimed the one bell in Catesby turret (cast by Richard de Wymbis around 1310 AD and hung on rather newer fittings which now squeak)! Altogether 20 ringers took part in the ringing but not the walking, which began at Holy Cross, Daventry via Welton, Ashby St Ledgers, Braunston, Staverton and Catesby to Hellidon. It was rumoured that a torrential downpour was a sign that the "short" service had gone on too long!

Also on Rogation Sunday, Mike Harvey rang his first quarter peal of Little Bob Royal at Daventry, conducted by Colin Lee, which was

dedicated to the Northamptonshire Festival of Wellbeing. On Ascension Day a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung at Dodford, conducted by John Thurman, with the best wishes of the band, family and friends, to Jennie Paul and Andrew Higson for their marriage at Harpole two days later.

This was also a way of polishing the bearings ready for our nationally advertised "Open Middle-Day" on May 3 when Ashby St Ledgers were available for the first time in 80 years. Farthingstone were polished by the first quarter on the bells the previous week, which was Hilary Aslett's 700th quarter and included Gwynneth White, our chief fund raiser for the branch bell fund, and conducted by the Guild Master. At Ashby St Ledgers a quarter attempt failed and the Rogation ringing didn't free up the tenor much. On the open day 38 rang at Ashby bringing in £400 for the PCC with the gift aid going to the Guild.

Numbers at the other towers were far less, as most of the active grabbers came last year.

Badby May Day outing was organised by Alison Buck with prompting from Sally Thompson! Eleven ringers rang at Husbourne Crawley, Aspley Guise, Woburn, lunch plus a struggle to ring at Eversholt, then Wavendon and Fenny Stratford on the hottest day of the year so far.

On a similarly hot May 10, a full coach with 41 who rang and 11 who didn't, plus one puppy, departed with Brenda at the wheel again. This year there were no long reverses along narrow lanes, but she made a rural three point turn in a 12m long coach look easy.

After a gallop along the M42, we parked close to the tower at Kidderminster. The middle eight sounded fine but only gave us a hint of what the twelve would have sounded like had the broken tenor clapper been replaced. Then we headed west on the narrow roads of verdant, hilly Shropshire, to arrive in good time for lunch at Ledbury.

The Assembly Rooms sound very dated, but the small modern restaurants spread over three floors coped admirably with the horde. Two central towers, Stanton Lacy and Wiststanstow, followed lunch.

Much Wenlock was next and turned out to be the heaviest ring of the day. After a pause for tea, we set off for home with a ring and refreshment at Chaddesley Corbett on the way. All four afternoon towers had eight bells, five or six of which were cast by various members of the Rudhall family between 1593 and 1783. Thanks to Janet for organising again and to Gwynneth for running the raffle, won by the branch ringing master!

Tom Anderson arranged a young ringers outing on May 24. There were only four young ringers, two over 80 years young and six other supporters on the trip which took in Lois Weedon, Sulgrave, Middleton Cheney, Kings Sutton, Adderbury and Bodicote. Rather heavier metal than last year, but Middleton tenor was happily rung by two of the youngsters. Tom has clearly been noting Janet's arrangements and the pre-booked lunch was served in record time at The Red Lion, Adderbury, had it not been that some succumbed to the tantalising puddings' menu. Tom and Abigail were abandoned outside a Banbury cinema afterwards and were fetched home later by Alison. Perhaps more youngsters could be encouraged if it were a Guild event on appropriate lines, on the way to the AGM?

Mike Harvey organised Jill to arrange a quarter peal day for us on June 21. Volunteers were a bit scarce and other things were on. Two out of three attempts were successful, Plain Bob Minor conducted by me at Flore to start their 46th annual Flower Festival, the first of which was to raise money for the bells (and was then only the second such event in the UK, the first being at Walpole St Peter), and Plain Bob Major at Weedon, conducted by Colin Lee, which enabled Harry Curtis from Irchester to ring his first of major. At Harpole the

conductor could not believe that 360 had been rung already and let it run round. A swift replacement called a successful 720 of Plain Bob Minor for Rhona.

On Friday June 27 afternoon, a quarter peal conducted by Ian Calvert was rung at Great Brington, by a branch band, especially during a garden party at Althorp to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Spencer family. Janet received an appreciative letter from Earl Spencer.

The May first-Sunday-afternoon quarter attempt came to grief – it was to mark Ian and Alison's tenth wedding anniversary – but they were not there to keep us on line! In June it was very loud Lincolnshire Surprise Major at King's Norton, Leics, conducted by Ian Willgress in 47 minutes. In July we returned to conquer Oundle bells. After some delay in ensuring that the clock hammer was clear of the tenor and treble, we rang a quarter of Yorkshire Surprise Major in 53 minutes. The bells are somewhat odd-struck, to say the least, and there is the added excitement of the ringer of the 3rd being four steps up from the floor and separated from the 2nd by yards of chains that drive the clock and its chimes.

Our July meeting was advertised as a 5-bell striking competition at Norton. The branch has not held a striking competition since around 1974. The rules were set so that most towers could enter. We were not sure what would happen, but in the last three weeks activity soared and little-used Norton bells hosted practices swiftly transferred from other towers! We had eleven entries, so had to start an hour earlier than planned and arrange a running buffet in church, which worked well for the 49 there.

Our judges were Spike and Jenny Thorne from Southam who patiently perched in the organ loft to avoid downpours. Spencer

Benefice rector and ringer, Revd Chris Goble took our service, his last time with us before he, Revd Sharon and family move away in August. After the business meeting, Spike made encouraging comments about each team and Jenny presented the certificates. Bugbrooke came first and will hold the Ron Woodward Trophy for 2008. The "Benefice of Heyford with Stowe IX Churches and Flore with Brockhall" A (*inclusiveness is a feature of the branch nowadays!*), which included young Daniel Waterhouse, came second. In joint third place were Whilton A and Fawsley.

We were delighted to also have teams from Badby, Braunston (Monday afternoon), Everdon, Hellidon and Preston Capes. We elected Barbara Haighton (Braunston), Jane Wincott, Mave Taylor (Stowe IX Churches), Ann Maud (Flore) and Naomi Dove (Daventry) as new members. By the evening only nine survived to ring at Byfield!

Geoff Pullin

GUILSBOROUGH

The annual Branch Outing on 7th June was once again well organised by Jim Hedgcock. The first tower came as a challenge to most and a frightener to some, as Swineshead 5 was a very light start to the day. Keyston was not a new tower to some but it was agreed generally that the bells needed some attention. Leighton Bromswold was certainly a contrast to Swineshead, being the heaviest bells of the day. Everyone was certainly ready by then to have a pub lunch. The afternoon went well with visits to Hamerton, Spaldwick and Eaton Socon.

After a picnic tea by the river we went on to finish the day at Kimbolton. A good day out was made manageable with the support of our friends from far and wide.

Once again Alan and Anne Elliott opened their garden to us for the Branch Barbecue. We again relied on support from our loyal friends, but 38 of us did enjoy a well-presented selection of food. Anne cooked a lovely piece of pork with some wonderful crackling.

There was ringing at Welford in the later afternoon before the eating began. We were pleased to welcome Ray and Wendy Daw who were at Hollowell Steam Rally with the Lichfield mobile ring. We were also pleased to see Brenda Dixon arrive hotfoot from her holiday. Wine and beer flowed freely and branch members produced some tasty puds to finish this event, which is our main fundraiser.

Thank you to Anne, Alan and all who made this a success.

Dorothy Westerman

KETTERING (this should have appeared in the May issue - Ed)

On Saturday 12th January Kettering Branch held their AGM at SS Peter & Paul Kettering.

As a standing committee member I was elected to take over as press correspondent from Robert Wallis who has fled the belfry to study at Oxford. We send him and his brother Adrian, who is studying at Cambridge, our very good wishes.

Branch members were in short supply, however we enjoyed ringing on 12 bells before and after the meeting . Following a

Church service and a wonderful 2 course hot meal and pudding, the meeting took place.

Usually on the first Saturday of the month, unless replaced with another event, we have a Basic Training session at Rothwell on the simulator from 2-4pm. These are well organised and attended at present by 11 trainee's and approximately 10 experienced ringers to help out. It is a fun afternoon with tea and cakes at "half time". These sessions have proved most beneficial with a few moving forward to more advanced training, it is also good team and confidence building with no pressure.

Any learners are more than welcome to join us and they will have specialised training at their own level. This ringing is followed with evening ringing in towers in our area and all are welcome, trainees have the opportunity to practise what they have learnt in the afternoon if they wish to go along. The training on 12th April was based on striking, Michael Wallis put together some fun and interesting techniques based around learning how to listen to your bell and keeping a good rhythm throughout, the hand bells even came out for some fun. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this training, but according to my wife it was excellent and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

CONGRATULATIONS ARTHUR

On March 14th Arthur Idle, a ringer for more than 70 years, celebrated his 90th birthday. A local band including Arthur's son Chris, rang a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major at Barton Seagrave. Arthur celebrated in style in the belfry afterwards with tea and a cake in the shape of a bell, he was joined by family and other ringers. On Sunday 16th March six of Arthur's family rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor at Barton Seagrave before evensong. Arthur still regularly attends the

weekly practice and Sunday Service ringing at Barton Seagrave, well done.

Chris M Pearson

NORTHAMPTON

The first event after the Branch AGM was a Plain Bob Doubles training held at Duston, led by Alan Marks. Three hours is such a short time to absorb all the information and for seven ringers to try out a new method, however, it was so clearly explained that we now understand place bells, course bells, after bells and the way methods divide into blocks, as well as not to panic because it is all based on plain hunt. Each learner had one-to-one support as they tackled a plain course and then Alan tested the support ringers by calling for a touch which included singles - something none of us had ever done. A brilliant afternoon when everyone present learnt something new.

In the first half of the year Branch Practices have been held at Piddington, Rothersthorpe and Pitsford. Attendance has varied from very good to only enough to ring the five bells at Rothersthorpe. However, on all occasions we have managed to ring a wide variety of methods and this is mainly thanks to the visitors whose expertise gives us the opportunity to try something that we could not do without their help.

The Quarterly Meeting was held at Duston on 29th March. Once again we were few in number so we all sang heartily in the service taken by Rev Heather Wilson but could not do justice to the wonderful tea prepared by Duston ringers and their supporters. The evening ringing ranged over a wide spectrum and with the late addition of four ringers who had been busy ringing for weddings we managed to more or less cover our full repertoire.

Boughton bell ringers held a sponsored walk on 12th April at Pitsford Reservoir. Five ringers, three wives, the Branch Chairman, two dogs and various supportive villagers took part. They walked on a beautiful morning around Pitsford Reservoir. A total of £520 was raised and with a donation £270 is being sent to the Peterborough Diocesan Guild Bell Fund, the balance going to Boughton Church fund.

The first Branch Outing for many years was organised by Anne England for 17th May and eight of us met up at Wansford to start off a very enjoyable day exploring the north of the Diocese. Wansford bells made us feel that we should have 'got our hand in' at St Benedict's before starting out, however we soon adjusted and had a very good ring here. We moved on to Castor, firstly for lunch at the Royal Oak and then to ring on the eight. Our eight ringers were more used to ringing on fives and sixes, but we acquitted ourselves well on the eight, ringing up and down in peal and successfully ringing plain courses of Plain Bob Triples and Major.

From Castor we moved to Wittering where Mike met us, increasing our numbers to a band-and-a-half. We spent some time admiring the Service shields in the chapel. Another good ring here before facing the maze of roadworks en route to Easton on the Hill. What a beautiful Church and another good peal of bells. We were really enjoying our day's ringing by now and were sorry when we reached the last Church, Bulwick. Funny, I have always imagined this to be a small village Church and was surprised at its size and how impressive it is. This was a really enjoyable day and something we must repeat another year.

Twelve teams met at The Crown in Hardingstone at 7 o'clock on Saturday 7th June 2008 to contest the Cecil Swann Skittles Trophy.

The early rounds were tight affairs, Helen and Jim, Peter and Edward, Helen and Stephen, Roly and Matthew, Kathy and Mike and Dorothy and Colin all put up good performances and challenged for the semi-finals. The Crofts, John and Jill and Christine and John worked hard and will no doubt gain from the match experience!

Newcomers Simon and Jack were first to qualify for the semis, closely followed by Cecil and Liz. Holders Trevor and Nick crept in on the last throw! Peter and Edward won the play-off for the 4th semi-final spot.

Both semi-finals were closely contested with Peter and Edward, and Trevor and Nick emerging victorious by a single leg each.

The final was cheered on by all in attendance but Peter and Edward were unable to take advantage of an early lead and the holders, Trevor and Nick, eventually came good to retain their trophy. Cecil presented them with the trophy and reminded them to keep it clean for next year.

Thanks to Marcia for spending the evening poring over the score sheet and congratulations to her for succeeding in understanding how it works!!

Food and drink were consumed throughout the evening and enjoyable event finished just before closing time.

Another first in many years for Northampton Branch was the 6-bell Striking Competition held at Abington Church on 8th July. Five teams entered and Ivor Dickin very bravely agreed to judge our attempts. The draw took place at 7.30 and Abington B Band drew number one. Their entry drew appreciative applause from all the ringers waiting to compete and at the end of the evening it was nail-biting time waiting

for the results. Ivor was very kind with his remarks and presented a Ringing Book to each band. The results were:
Holy Sepulchre, Cogenhoe, Piddington, Abington A, Abington B.

This is something else we must do again and perhaps next time more towers will enter a team.

Dorothy Stopps

PETERBOROUGH

The Branch continues with its weekly Saturday morning training sessions at Castor under the leadership of Tony Evans and several of the branch officers and the 8 bell practice on the first Friday of each month, also at Castor. We held a successful mid year meeting at Barnack, and our thanks go to Ian & Beryl Burrows for their organisation. It was a shame that more members were not able to support this event.

Barnack - With a native band of only four ringers Barnack struggle to keep our bells sounding out, so we were very pleased to be selected as a venue for a Branch Meeting. At first we thought that we had picked the worst Saturday (26th.) in June to hold a Branch Meeting with summer supper and quiz. We seemed to be competing with so many other events and to our dismay very few people supported the event. The outcome though was thoroughly enjoyable. It is true that we were a diminished bunch (14) but we got some good, and perhaps some not so good ringing to delight

(or dismay) the ears of the Parishioners of Barnack. At any rate we ended up with a rousing selection of spliced methods as selected and conducted by Andrew Parker from Bulwick.

We then adjourned to the Village hall for supper, managing to trough our way through several quiches and salads, rounded off by slightly boozy strawberries and washed down with a surprising number of bottles of wine.

The quiz was supplied by Kathy and Chris Burgess from Bulwick, with Paul Reed from St. Johns in Peterborough acting as our quiz master. With brows suitably furrowed the rest of us anxiously chewed the ends of our pencils whilst Paul delivered the questions. It surely couldn't have been the wine but the quiz seemed to occasion much hilarity, frequently bringing the whole proceedings to a halt by being punctuated with gales of unruly laughter.

Notwithstanding, our quizmaster kept sternly bringing us back to ponder the far reaches of amazing facts. So despite the hilarity the scores that were turned in were actually quite respectable. To round off the evening in time honoured fashion, a few of the participants wound their way up Millstone Lane to the Pub, having had a most enjoyable time. There is though a little message, if these events which allow us to meet fellow ringers from other towers and to enjoy the camaraderie of ringing in a social way, if not supported, will die.

Ian Burrows

Bulwick

Since the last Guild Newsletter the ringers have visited two car boot sales, one at Stamford and one at Wicksteed Park, Kettering with their unwanted household items to sell in aid of our bell fund. At the first one we raised £75, and, whilst counting the money at the pub in Bulwick afterwards, we were given a generous donation of £20 from one of the regulars. The second boot sale raised a further £50 for our funds. It was obviously hard and thirsty work for some of our band! Derek had downed his first pint before Andrew had hardly put his to his lips! The holiday season is now well and truly amongst us with Captain and Mrs Pugwash away for a month on their canal boat. They chugged off once Tesco's had delivered, and headed off in the Rivers Severn and Trent direction. We are looking forward to our annual trip to Doddington for a BBQ at Chris & Karen's. The wrinklies are busy dusting down their bus passes ready for the Beer Festival at Peterborough in August.

Sue Jones

Glinton

Glinton is a tower with a dedicated, if small, band of ringers regularly turning up for Sunday ringing. Nothing different in that then, however we are also a vibrant, thriving tower to which ringers are happy to come and ring

our beautiful bells on practice night (Thursday) swelling our numbers to a very respectable 14 - 17.

We attract several beginners as well as a happy, chatty crowd of ringers. Possibly because of its ground floor ring, Glinton does have a sociable, relaxed group. We enjoy our practice night; ringing with and meeting others, village chat almost as important as the bells. What we do, it appears, is attractive to others as practice night is rarely quiet.

This July, Tower Captain Mike Goodall arranged for two excellent guided tours of Peterborough Cathedral, through the upper storey and up onto the roof - a marvellous experience. We hope to be joining the Cathedral Practice evening again this autumn.

We are keen to learn more, ring more complicated methods or strike our bells more evenly, although have been fortunate in having some regular visitors who have helped us enormously.

We look forward to welcoming a new rector to the parish whom we hope will be as supportive of the bells as the lay preacher has been.

Jill Cowcill

Nassington

Regular practices are held on a Monday between 7.30 and 9.00. Visitors are always welcome.

Keith Underwood.

Peterborough St Johns

The bells of St Johns Peterborough are still in good working order, shortly to be improved by new bell ropes, we are always pleased to welcome visiting bands. Who could resist a trip (or ringing a peal) on these magnificent bells. I know the band that lost a peal last year when a rope broke still think so!! These bells are well worth considering for an autumn outing.

We are very saddened by the loss of Brian McNeill, our tower secretary. His commitment to ringing and the important tasks of organisation and communication are known well beyond this branch. He was one of those most important people whose very hard work enabled so many to ring without ever considering "how did this meeting or outing come about?" I certainly miss the friendship, kindness and dedication of this quietly efficient man. Let us hope that others will continue to perform these, often thankless, tasks within the Guild. Let us all try to support their hard work.

Paul Reed

St Mary's Peterborough

Due to work commitments I have stood down as RM. We are blessed with support for Thursday evening practices and we are pleased that the 'bearded wonder from over yonder fields' AKA Tony Evans, agreed to take on the leadership of RM for Thursday practices. It's always good to have a fresh approach to organising the ringing and Tony is a well accomplished leader with that added bit of sparkle. Andy Walker in addition to being our chairman has now taken over as tower keeper from Tony and put to use in fitting a broken slider. In 17 years of ringing we have had two sliders break but no stays! The only other change at our tower AGM was Lynell

McLuggage has taken over as treasurer after Simon Ellis. Simon still maintains our kitty for beer and as we have many CAMRA members in the band we reassured that we will never go thirsty.

Two of our members have celebrated special birthdays already this year. Marion Joseph turned 80 at the start of the year and we held a special drinks and nibbles to mark the occasion. The vicar, Sharon Walker, made one of her classic chocolate cakes and her amazing cutting capabilities makes sure no one goes without. Lynell recently celebrated her 60th and we always like the excuse to mark the occasion with another cake.

At the end of June we held our 4th annual fundraiser lunch. This year the bell ringers nominated charity is The Well, a Christian counselling service. We catered for 55 diners who sat down to a 3 course lunch with such delights as Mediterranean chicken and JD Pork. As the JD stands for Jack Daniels there was a warm glow on the faces on some of our older diners! This event alone raised £750 for The Well and we received a very touching letter thanking us for our support.

It's been a fairly quiet summer although we gathered together to enjoy two free open air concerts to see Acker Bilk and the Royal Philharmonic and Tony kindly arranged a return visit to see Wind in the Willows at Toilethorpe. We do look forward to the autumn events programme which includes a trip to the dogs and our 10th annual DIY dinner.

St Mary's welcomes any visiting ringers whether you just wish to call in, for a peal or just an outing and more info can be found at:

<http://www.peterborough-stmarys.org.uk/bells/>

Andrew Christie

RUTLAND

This summer has been quite active in the Rutland Branch. We began by ensuring that all the ringable towers in the Branch were rung for the Queen's birthday. It involved a great deal of organisation by a few enthusiastic souls, including some who laid on refreshments for the ringers. Ringing began at 11.00am and went on into the evening, so that a large number of people were able to take part at least briefly. Oakham, Gt Casterton and Ryhall rang quarters in her majesty's honour, and this was particularly special for the Ryhall band as it was their first quarter as a band, and 2 members were ringing their own first quarters.

May was our Quarter Peal month – instead of a day, we thought to involve more people if we spread the quarters over a month. Five were rung and one peal, some being to mark special events. Our enthusiasm carried on to the branch striking competition in Haringworth. We were all impressed when the home band, most of whom have learnt from scratch over the past 3 years, entered 2 teams. Uppingham won, closely followed by Braunston.

The main event in the summer was the Guild AGM, hosted at Uppingham. We were blessed with a beautiful day, and it all ran smoothly. We hope all who came enjoyed the day.

Since June, Rutland has acquired another ringable tower – the Exton bells have not been rung for a long time, but the money to repair them was raised, partly with a grant from the branch, and much of the work was done by the Branch Steward, David Clemence, and Ray Bailey. They were both in the band which rang for the dedication service.

Last year our joint meeting with Market Harborough was so enjoyable that we repeated it this summer. Again it was enjoyed – but only by 5 people from Rutland. Somehow

everyone seemed to be away on the day. The Wing band had more success on their first ringing holiday. Ringing was combined with walking in and around the Dove Valley. Eight ringers, 4 others, 10 church towers, the excellent Hartington 4-star Youth Hostel, pubs in every village, fine weather and wonderful scenery – what more could you want?

Monica Spence

THRAPSTON

We are pleased to report an increase in activity in the branch over the past few months. With a number of new ringers in several towers and the welcome addition of visitors at Branch meetings, the quality and quantity of ringing has improved and increased as has the variety of methods rung. We were pleased to host the AGM at Thrapston in June. Many thanks to all who helped in any way and to those who ensured that the ringing was suitably AGM like.

As ever there is no shortage of friendly banter to be found at meetings and we have enjoyed several social events. We are currently anticipating a celebratory BBQ at Ringstead following a ring with the newly installed ropes. The bells have been silent for the past three years so it will be interesting to see what happens. Watch this space.

In another exciting development for the branch, there are hopes that ringing will soon resume at Stanion after a break of at least 70 years. Thanks to a generous legacy from a parishioner the existing 4 bells have been refurbished and augmented to a ring of six by the addition of two brand new bells. The churchwarden and local ringers were excited to visit Whitechapel foundry earlier in the year to see the progress of the work. It is hoped that the bells will be hung

in the Autumn so, fingers crossed, the Christmas message will once again be rung out to the village.

So in the second half of the year we have much to be optimistic about. What a pleasant change!

Jo Boyers

Towcester No news this time

WELLINGBOROUGH

By the time you read this article, the branch will have, I am sure, enjoyed some excellent ringing in Cambridgeshire around the Peterborough area as the Mini outing is due to take place on Saturday 19th July 2008. Once again, the day has been organised well in advance by John and Susan Beresford. That is the trouble when you do something well, you get the job again. I am sure in the next report I shall be reporting that all had an enjoyable day and the ringing was once again near perfect !!!

Near perfect is the term we can use for the winners of the tower striking competition which took place on Tuesday 17th June. Rushden were once again very convincing winners with 7 faults from their nearest rival Irchester who had 17 faults. The other four teams, from Orlingbury, Wollaston, Bozeat and Yardley Hastings and Grendon combined gave creditable performances although all of them contained a number of very inexperienced ringers. However, it is the taking part that counts, so thank you to those teams well done - and to those teams that did not bother - come on it is only a competition - let's see you there next year.

We were pleased to see John Stanworth the ringing master of Towcester branch act as judge. He did admit that this was the first time he had sat alone as a judge, usually he has his father with him. However, I am glad to report that he returned unharmed to his side of the County.

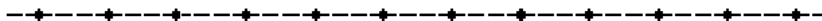
The quarter Peal Day which was held on March 15th when fewer quarters than previously were attempted. In all 7 were successful out of the 10 attempted of which one failure was down to a broken rope. A total number of 29 ringers took part of which 2 scored two 2 first quarters, one on the treble and one at cover and there was also a first in method. The evening concluded with a number joining together at a local hostelry.

Again we were indebted to our Ringing Master; Alan Marks for his excellent organisation to ensure the correct ringers were at the right place at the right time.

The next diary date is the Summer Festival and 8 bell striking competition which is to be organised by the Wellingborough Branch on September 20th this will take place at Rushden and the competition ringing will be at 4.00 pm. The evening ringing is due to take place at Wellingborough. This is followed on September 27th by the Surprise session at Moulton at 10.00 am and in the afternoon it is the meeting with ringing at Earls Barton.

For full details log on to www.wellingboroughbranch.org.uk

Tanya Clayton



WHEN WILL THOSE BELLS STOP RINGING?

Are you keeping your church's neighbours, parish magazine and local papers up to date with what is happening at your tower? If so, the neighbours will already know the answer to the question above! If not .. *please read the November(Autumn) 2007 Newsletter again! – It's still on the website!*

Does your church already have a website? Are there details about bellringing? Several of you have done a good job already, some accompanied by a recording of the bells. If you want ideas to add to your church website, here are four samples, which use a variety of approaches:

<http://www.oundledeanery.org.uk/parishes/oundlewithashton/bellringing>

<http://www.ectonvillage.co.uk/bellRinging.html>

<http://www.lambfold.org.uk/id4.html>

<http://www.theknightleyparishes.co.uk/>

The colour recruitment posters produced by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers are available in sizes A3 and A4 at the price of postage from Mrs B. M Wheeler, 2 Orchard Close, MORPETH NE61 1 XE. They can also be downloaded and printed from

<http://www.cccbr.org.uk/prc/poster/poster.doc>

Please use them for your local library, school and community noticeboards. They match the folded leaflets that you should already have sprinkled about by now!

Last December, the Northamptonshire NHS Trust asked us to take part in the Festival of Wellbeing during April. I thought it may be appropriate to ring an advertised quarter or peal and even to promote our exercise as bringing positive mental health and emotional wellbeing! So the Guild entry for their website included:

The physical action of ringing a bell is a gentle exercise requiring coordination of eyes, ears and hands. The different "methods" that we learn are useful in keeping minds alert and active. The social side of our gatherings are helpful, especially to people living alone. Our members range from 8 years old to 85 years plus.

I hope your wellbeing feels better for that! In Daventry, we took a stand at the Over-50s Forum in April, but despite Barry Thompson and Peter Wenham painting glowing pictures of our exercise, no recruits have yet been forthcoming!

There was some interest in the Spring Festival from newspapers and radio, mainly from the east of the diocese. They lost interest when there were no entries from those parts! Please don't forget to tell your local newspapers and radio of interesting events, occasions and celebrations and

they will come back to you at other times when they have a space to fill. e.g. the Northampton Herald & Post asked me for a small piece for their "Soapbox" item in June.

Geoff Pullin - Guild Public Relations Officer
01327 871806 pro@pdg.org.uk

WHAT'S NEW?

Communications. I keep a list of e-mail addresses of all ringers (not necessarily Guild members!) in the Daventry branch including regular visitors from across branch and guild borders. Compared to expecting people to look at a website on a regular basis or reading the tower noticeboard, it is a very useful way of getting current information to very many ringers very quickly, even if they rarely go or cannot go ringing. I manage to keep the list up to date with the occasional changes that occur and, of course, I greet every new recruit with "Do you have an e-mail address?" as a matter of policy, whenever I send out an "omnibus letter". By the way, I send it to myself and put all the other addresses in the "bcc" [blind carbon copy] box so the recipients cannot see the other addresses, this ensures that other senders do not misuse the addresses with what in effect would be parochial 'spam'. I find it easier to use than having a formal "groups" arrangement.

The intent is not to replace formal notices sent to and by branch secretaries or published in the *Ringling World*.

NB There are only 102 subscribers to the *Ringling World* in our area!

If other branches have such a list, could the holder let me know, so they can perhaps be used from time to time to send out urgent whole-Guild information.

Photographs. If you have any really good, clear, well posed digital photographs of ringers and bells in action, please let me know. I am approached, from time to time, by outside organisations that need them and they can be useful in our publicity displays. Full acknowledgement will be made when used.

Geoff Pullin

Have you looked up www.pdg.org.uk lately?

- 🔔 The all-branch calendar shows regular surprise major practices
- 🔔 The list of Guild Officers is up to date for 2008-9
- 🔔 Current and recent **Guild Newsletters** are there for all to read
- 🔔 There is a section to help with your **tower publicity**
- 🔔 There is a copy of the **Guild badge** for documents or posters
- 🔔 There are direct connections to **branch websites**

Ringling Roadshow 2008

A reminder that the 2008 Ringing Roadshow will be held on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th September 2008 at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

The Roadshow will be the largest ever gathering of ringers and all other bell enthusiasts and promises to be an excellent day out for all the family.

It encompasses a trade show, a range of learning opportunities, ringing-related entertainment, hands-on activities, shopping and the chance to meet hundreds of other people with the same passion for bells and bellringing.

Further details are shown on the website:

www.ringingroadshow2008.org.uk

Some branches have already organized a coach trip and have their tickets.

Tickets are £6 if booked in advance and are available until 22nd August, then it is £8 on the gate. Under 16s accompanied by an adult are admitted free - proof of age may be required.

Tickets are also on sale for the Friday night social evening, priced at £15 each.

CENTRAL COUNCIL 2008

The Central Council meeting this year was held in Newcastle. The weather, unlike further South, was very good and the arrangements were excellent. This was the first meeting of the triennium when elections are held for committees. This takes up a large part of the meeting, although as the work of the Council is through its committees, it can be seen as a worthwhile use of time.

Two of your four representatives attended, the total attendance being 196 with 24 absent, this being the lowest attendance over the past few years. There are over 36,000 members of affiliated societies, a drop of 4% since 2002: the Peterborough Guild membership has fallen by 12% over the same period. There were 42 new members of Council, so around 1/5th of the Council is new.

To help new members gain places on committees, and to speed up proceedings somewhat, a rule was passed so that 1/3rd of the membership of committees are to be elected annually to serve for three years. Even without this, there were several new members elected to committees this year. Derek Jones was re-elected to serve on the Publications Committee.

Committee reports were published in the Ringing World in June. Two committees merged, the Peals Analysis and Records Committees, now to be called the Peal Records Committee. Questions were asked about Doubles Variations. As these are existing methods with different calls, they are not listed in Council records.

The Dove database was reported on, and has had a very large number of hits. A hard copy may be produced next year. In the

meantime ringers are encouraged to check local details and amend where necessary.

The New Ringers Book is nearing completion, but may not be available until near Christmas.

The Ringing Roadshow was publicised, and every ringer should try to see it. Details of this and an enormous amount of useful information can be found on the web at www.cccbr.org.uk.

The annual meeting of the Ringing World was held after lunch. It is in good shape, although more subscribers are needed to ensure its future. Every ringer should at least see a copy – what about a tower copy?

At the end of the meeting, the retiring President, Derek Sibson, handed over to Tony Smith of the Winchester and Portsmouth Guild.

Derek Jones.

100 CLUB

New members always welcome – and needed – to ensure a boost to the bell fund. Nearly half of the £12 annual subscription goes to the bell fund, so an easy way to support the work of the guild and a chance to win cash prizes. Branch coordinators can take your money and will pass it on to me.

Derek Jones.