



Central Bucks Branch

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Newsletter NOVEMBER 2009

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Hi All,

As the evenings draw in it sometimes becomes very difficult to tear yourself away from the comfort of home, especially when you have the remains of a nasty cold and all you want to do is sit wrapped in a blanket and stare at the telly. Let's face it when you feel like that anything that only takes half a brain to concentrate on is a good diversion. That was how I felt one Tuesday evening a couple of weeks ago. However, I had an errand to run over in Whitchurch.

After a rather gruelling, dark country drive – part of which was negotiated with 'white van man' trying to get into my boot – I arrived at the same time as another ringer. My idea was to complete the errand and then hurry home to bed. As we walked into the Church we were met by four cheerful souls happy to have two extra ringers to enable them to ring something 'decent'. Of course I had to stay, how could I walk out?

What actually happened was not much ringing, rather a lot of wondering where we were going wrong, lots of plum eating and one hell of a laugh! Blow the blanket, so what if I missed a rather mediocre programme and the hot water bottle had gone cold, I have not had such a good evening in a very long time.

Moral of the story....ringing should be pleasurable, pleasurable pastimes make us happy, happiness makes us laugh, laughter is the best medicine, medicine helps us to get rid of colds!! Thank you ringers of Whitchurch, you made me feel so much better.

Editor: Jan Robinson

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Chairman's Clatter

Well, I had to find something to write for the editorial and now I have to find something to write here as well.

Some of you may have heard that Andrzej has resigned from his post as Chairman due to ill health, and for my sins, and due to the fact I am Vice Chairman, I have been told I have to take his place!

We wish Andrzej all the best and hope he improves really soon, and must thank him for his time as Chairman.

Although I am still a member of the Central Bucks Branch, my home tower of Linslade is now in the Luton Branch of the Bedfordshire Association and so I am also a member there. It is interesting to compare the workings of both. Branch practices for example are sometimes very well attended and sometimes hardly attended at all. Competitions have slightly different rules but follow the same format. AGMs and meetings have the same problem, getting people to come along for fear of being steamrollered into positions they really don't want. There are some who take the high ground when it comes to how you ring and whether it is a serious business or something you do for pleasure. Mistakes are either treated with utter contempt or as part of the learning process and laughed off – I know which I prefer when I make the enormous amount of mistakes I do. Some people put you off the ringing experience completely and you wish you had never bothered; others make allowances and make you feel at home.

I have also learned as life has gone by that towers are small microcosms of the wider world. There are friendships, petty bickering, gossiping, comedy, help in times of trouble, personality clashes, power struggles, family bonds, jealousies and judgements being cast. 'Oh what a tangled web we weave'. I suppose my point is – if we want to encourage new ringers to carry on this great tradition, maybe we should take all the best bits of tower life and share them, and leave the worse bits where they belong, in the nearest rubbish bin!

Jan

Ringling in Seattle

On our recent visit to Seattle for a holiday I took the opportunity to ring at The University of Washington Seattle campus, the only set of change ringing bells on the West Coast of America. The Bells were only installed in the early summer of 2008 and were cast by Royal Eijsbouts Bell Foundry in the Netherlands, with the Tenor only weighing 6 cwt. They are hung in the tower of Gerberding Hall on the University Red Square; no Church attached. They were a gift from the Gordon Stuart Peek Foundation and interestingly, Bill Gates' (of Microsoft fame) father was involved in the dedication.

The team there is lead by Rebecca Woodgate from Reading who became a bell ringer while at Oxford University, ringing at St Giles Church. The rest of the team are an interesting mix including a lady and her son from Honolulu who were taught by a ringer from South Africa, and a young lady from California who had been in London for 3 years where she had taken up ringing. They were a fairly intense mix, however, they allowed me to join in with the normal bell tower camaraderie and a very enjoyable practise took place.

It appears there are only 40 change ringing towers in the United States and 8 in Canada with nearest towers in Victoria and Vancouver in Canada, and Chicago and Abilene, Texas, in the US. At the end of the evening I extended a welcome to anybody coming to the UK to join us in a practise night on any day of the week & maybe in the future I will be able to bring along a visiting bell ringer from Seattle.

Paul Bagni

Bucks County Show

Bucks County Show – 27th August 2009. CBB members manned the Charmborough mini ring as part of the Claydon Deanery stand at the Bucks County Show. It proved a great draw for young and old alike and a good example of working with the church to good effect. Many thanks to all who helped out and/or visited on the day. It took at least six volunteers, some strength, the expertise of the two Charmborough Ring team, and 2 hours to erect the tower, and same again (but a slightly shorter time) to dismantle at the end of a long day. Pictures at www.charmborough.org nder past bookings.

More info from Dana Slevin.

Branch Outing 2009

Saturday 12th September was a very long day. For those picking up the coach in Aylesbury it was the longest of all. The weather men promised a reasonable day with more cloud in the East. Where were we going? East! But, twenty three of us set off, and as long as the calculations were right, twenty three also returned.

As it happens the weather was brilliant; cool wind but warm sunshine. First stop Clare. The driver took a rather circuitous route but I think we would have been rather too early if he hadn't. And so the real purpose of the day began. All the towers had quite heavy rings, ranging from 14cwt to 28cwt but when you consider the size of the Churches they were attached to it is not at all surprising. 'The Wool Trade you know' seemed to be the saying of the day. Meaning all the Churches around this area were built from the proceeds of a very lucrative Wool trade in the distant past. Sadly most had lost what must in their day have been incredibly beautiful stained glass windows; destroyed by good old Cromwell.



Holy Trinity – Long Melford

The Churches themselves were very grand, almost cathedral like affairs with the most intricate cut stone decoration, inset with faced flint. All the bells were in fantastic condition and for their sizes very easy to ring.

We arrived at East Bergholt for lunch, the idea being to have something to eat and then catch the ringing at 2:45ish for a wedding. I have to say the bride let us down – not only was she 10 minutes late, putting the ringing schedule back to 2:55, but she also had the full works by way of ceremony. By 3:00pm – the time we should have been leaving for our next destination, there was still no sign of said wedding party departing. To add insult to injury, just as I had managed to chivvy most people back to the coach the ringers turned up and opened the cage with the offer to tie a clapper and show us how it was done! I must here apologise to those who would have loved that, but I had to put my foot down with a firm hand and reject the offer. Like a mother hen I then had to flap around getting the remaining chicks to make their way back to the coach. Needless to say we were very late getting to the next tower, and the captain thought he'd got the wrong day....and the wrong church.

No matter, we just about got back on schedule and except for a rather tortuous journey home, finished the day on a high. But what the heck, I think we all enjoyed the day immensely.

Orchard Cup 2009

The Orchard Cup Striking Competition at Wooton Underwood came and went on 10th October. Victorious Aylesbury rang well and duly retained custody of the trophy for a further year, having made a suitably favourable impression on our judges Nick and Lyndsey Brett from Linslade. Among the competing teams who failed to wrest this year's title from the victors were, from Central Bucks; the Wing A and B teams and the North Marston Showstoppers Scratch Band, and from Chiltern; the Ellesborough A and B teams and The Chiltern Hundreds Scratch Band.

The general standard of ringing was good - no real problems and certainly no suggestion of fire ups - and at the end of the afternoon Aylesbury were declared clear winners. We will spare blushes and not go into details here of the scores of the runners up and the other hopefuls. Suffice it to say, however, that if only we had held the competition at Wing or, if only North Marston had been able to field a proper team, then we would have given them a good run for their money!!

So that's it till next time, when the Chiltern Branch will be hosting.

Where were the rest of you?

Ed Houghton

A Message From the Branch Treasurer.

Dear Ringers,

Firstly, let me apologise for not issuing requests for Subs earlier in the year. I was unaware this was the procedure, but fortunately many of the tower treasurers knew what was expected and sent their subs as usual.

Secondly, I should have put this message in a previous newsletter so you would know who the treasurer was and where to send your subs. So apologies yet again.

The details are: Dues - £6 per member.

Send to: John Lomas,
Central Bucks Branch Treasurer,
30 Church Street,
Wing,
Leighton Buzzard.
LU7 0NY

Tel: 01296 682915

e-mail: cbbtreasurer@woolly.demon.co.uk

For those towers who have not yet paid their subs there is still time to maintain your membership continuity and insurance cover. However, I need them before the end of November.

It would be helpful if you could include the names of members you are sending subs for along with those who are no longer members. I can then update the database so that next year I can get off to a better start.

Finally, once the subs for 2010 have been set at the Guild General Committee meeting in November I will endeavour to send out a letter to all towers giving details.

From next year you will need to pay guild subs promptly as the cut off date has been brought forward from December at present to 1st March by the Guild. After that date those who have not paid will become non-members.

Best regards,

John.

Branch Diary

Branch Practices are from 6.30pm - 8.30pm unless otherwise stated.

2009

November 14th Branch Practice Long Crendon

December 12th Branch Practice Dinton

2010

January 9th Branch Practice Mursley

February 13th A.G.M. Quainton

March 13th Branch Practice Soulbury

Special Practices

6-Bell Progress Practices on Tuesdays, 7.30pm, at Stewkley until further notice.

2009

November 10th Stewkley

December 8th Stewkley

2010

January 19th Stewkley

February 23rd Stewkley

March 23rd Stewkley

8-Bell Advanced Practice usually on the Third Thursday of the Month, from 7:30.

2009

November 19th Haddenham

December 17th Cuddington

2010

January 21st tower TBA

February 18th tower TBA

March 18th tower TBA

NB, the 2010 dates are proposed and subject to confirmation with regard to both date and Tower.

Any queries in connection with these practices, dates or towers, please contact Ed Houghton on 01296 688951.

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Guil d Diary 2009 - See Odd Bob for details.

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