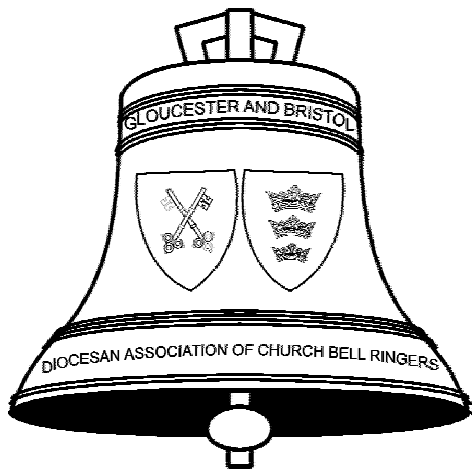


NORTH COTSWOLD BRANCH The GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION of CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Founded 8th January 1878
(Affiliated to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers)

Registered Charity Number 281431



NEWSLETTER

JULY
2012

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LOOK TO! DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

12th August: Gloucester Cathedral Branch Ringing. **Meet in the South Transept at 1.20pm, otherwise you will be locked out.**

14th August: Bourton on the Water, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

11th September: Mickleton, **Branch Committee meeting at 7.00pm,** followed by Branch practice at 7.30pm.

9th October: Bourton on the Water, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

13th October: Autumn Training Day.

20th – 28th October: Quarter Peal and Peal Festival.

27th October: Branch Striking Competitions and AGM. At Ebrington (Glos).

13th November: Mickleton, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

11th December: Bourton on the Water, **Branch Committee meeting at 7.00pm,** followed by Branch practice at 7.30pm.

8th January 2013: Mickleton, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

12th February : Bourton on the Water, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

12th March: Mickleton, **Branch Committee meeting at 7.00pm,** followed by Branch practice at 7.30pm.

9th April: Bourton on the Water, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

13th April: Association AGM (Tewkesbury Branch) with the Striking Competitions locations (Penn and Croome) to be announced. See website TBC.

? **May: Branch Tour**, area tbc. ---- ---- organising – .

14th May: Mickleton, Branch practice at 7.30pm.

11th June: Bourton on the Water, **Branch Committee meeting at 7.00pm,** followed by Branch practice at 7.30pm.

PLEASE BE AWARE.

The Committee is currently considering changing an occasional practice between the Committee Meetings, so please watch the above for changes in venue later in the autumn or next year.

Reminder from the Treasurer. **Subscriptions are due for the new financial year that started on the 1st November 2011.** Subscriptions are £10.00 Senior, £5.00 Retired and Juniors £2.50. Associates, the same as Retired. Gift Aid is possible ask your Treasurer.

WANTED. The Committee has two vacancies. Our Chairman is seeking interested members, who wish to contribute to the running of the Branch. Please consider giving up a little time to help the Branch. It's only four short Committee Meetings a year.

This Newsletter is now being sent out by email as previously advised. If you would like to receive your own copy direct in addition to your Tower contact, please forward your email to the Editor (awqrf-at-hotmail.com), with 'G & B Newsletter' in the subject box, plus home Tower and your name. By sending your details you consent to the Branch/Association using your email address in this way.

The G&B Diocesan Association has a web site at www.bellsgandb.org.uk, on which the North Cotswolds Branch can be accessed via: www.bellsgandb.org.uk/branches.html.

The 2011 Central Council Meeting at Chester



"Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice; "but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!"

The 115th Central Council meeting was held in Chester in the county famous for its disappearing grinning cat. Chester Diocesan Guild even came up with the smiling animal on a special logo to mark the occasion. Attending the conference with well known local G&B representatives Bill Nash and John Nicholls, I've volunteered this update on the Council Meeting for the newsletter. Readers of a similar publication on behalf of another guild of local bellringers may recognise some similarities!

Smiles were in evidence as bellringers assembled, but I do have to say there was quite a bit of pressure on delegates as we were attending over the busy Jubilee bank holiday weekend. As luck would have it, the only really good sunny day (Monday 4th June) was the day we spent in discussions in the Queen Hotel, Chester. Attendance I believe was a little down probably due to ringing events celebrating the Jubilee.

This is the second Council I've attended but this was put in perspective when we learnt of the passing earlier in 2012 of Harold Walter Rogers who had 64 meetings to his credit. A truly remarkable achievement and is by some distance the record for the longest service by a Council member.

The business of the day was dominated by discussion on change ringing for the future. This sprung from the Wellesbourne Conference in November last year and the actions being taken to reverse the declining trend in the numbers of ringers. Initiatives that surfaced in the discussion included the ITTS (Integrated Teacher Training Scheme) and the importance of good quality teaching to a consistent standard, the New York City Schools Project (see Ringing World No.5276), the pros and cons of focusing on young ringers, the importance of reaching out to lapsed ringers and the importance of links with the church that give us the "where" and "why" we ring.

There were some business matters settled. The adoption of a motion to include a statistical analysis of peals using simulated sound created the most discussion but was comprehensively adopted by the conference. Other matters less controversial were the elimination of a potential problem with voting at the meeting of The Ringing World and the Ringing Foundation, and the tidying up of the terms of reference of the Public Relations Committee.

So the message from the conference was to use the Central Council as a support for your own initiatives to build ringing numbers, improve technique and standards. Use its materials,

its resources and its committees to share ideas, thoughts, successes and indeed failures. Ask ourselves the question what are we doing to secure the future? We all enjoy our ringing but if we can all do a little something to bring someone new to that enjoyment, we won't disappear like the Cheshire cat and we'll all be smiling that curious smile.

Keith Murphy - G&B Management Committee Representative



Wyck Rissington's bells are being rehung.

St Laurence's Church, Wyck Rissington, contains the Branch's only ring of 4. The bells became unringable about 6 years ago, when the headstocks on some of the bells were seen to be noticeably spongy. The PCC was determined to rehang the bells and received quotes for the work. At the time it was too much to include in the Council's expenditure, as the nave roof was in urgent need of substantial and therefore expensive work. This work, at a cost of about £300,000, has recently been completed. Undaunted after such a massive fundraising effort, this small village then undertook to rehang the bells.

The Association's Belfry Advisory Panel was contacted for advice on various aspects of this work. An interesting one was whether the bells should be tuned or not. Two of the bells are wildly sharp. There was some opposition to having them tuned, but this turned to support when it was mentioned that the bells are unlikely to be out of the Church again for perhaps a century, and future generations of listeners could well ask the obvious question, "Why didn't they take the opportunity to make the bells properly in tune when they had the chance?"

The bells are therefore being tuned as part of the work. However, this is delaying completion, as it is being undertaken at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. WBF has extra work arising from the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee and Wyck Rissington's bells have to get in the queue. Not only that, traffic movements around London's East End are currently being disrupted by the Olympics. Brian White said the bells will return 'sometime before Christmas'!

The Church originally expected to buy four new bell ropes, but I inspected the old ones and found they were repairable at a saving of £500.

The rehang also includes work to stabilise the wooden bell frame. Tie-rods are being inserted to tighten the joints, and two steel beams are being placed underneath to transfer the weight from the single wooden beam that is gradually giving up this function. I believe a belfry floor is to be provided. I say 'a belfry floor' rather than 'a new belfry floor', as there has been nothing but a 12ft drop beneath the bells in the past. Caution in belfries is necessary at the best of times, but 12ft drops are unacceptably nasty!

Some thought was given to augmenting to 5, but sadly there is insufficient room in the belfry to do this.

The Association is giving a grant towards this work. Thankfully it is, as Wyck Rissington might just be unable to manage to pay for the work after the huge cost of the roof repairs. Members may sometimes forget part of their subscription goes directly to the Belfry Repair Fund, from which such grants are made. On this basis, members may take pride in knowing that they have contributed directly to this and to other similar work.

Chris Povey, Member of the Association's Belfry Adviser team

OLYMPIC RINGING. – Is your Tower joining in at the start of the Games by ringing at 0812 -15 hrs (Note the time alteration) on the 27th July?

The Branch has some funds available, to make small grants towards replacement of ropes or repairs. In the first instant, please contact the Treasurer.

Association AGM Report, 21st April 2012.

This year the Branch didn't manage to enter a Band for either the Croome or Penn comps.

A fine touch of Stedman Doubles was rung prior to the Service, which was attended by 120 Members. It was taken by Robert Merchant, with the new Dean of Gloucester Stephen Lake.

The winner of the Croome Trophy was St Mary Redcliffe, second Tewkesbury Abbey, third Christchurch, Swindon. The winner of the Penn Trophy was the Swindon Branch, second Bristol, third Gloucester.

The report and Accounts were approved as published. The previous Officers were returned and the subscription fees remain the same.

Steve Coleman reminded that the new Tower of the Year Competition had been agreed at the 2011 AGM to replace the previous Best Kept Tower. The proposed rules had been circulated. Steve proposed that they were adopted. This was unanimous, and the competition could now be started.

Lapsed Membership was discussed, as well as the Vice Presidents rule concerning Suffragan Bishops. Both rule change proposals were defeated.

The 2013 AGM will be in the Tewkesbury Branch on 13th April.

Hugh Evans thanked Gloucester Branch for hosting this year's meeting.

Tower affiliation and Bell Restoration Fund Grants: it was explained that, dependent on the rule interpretation, these Grants could only be made to affiliated towers. Many towers have been affiliated for 50/90 plus years, but a situation has arisen where a tower is likely to seek assistance, for which an affiliation fee has never been paid. Steve stated that all Grants were already discretionary, but the wider good feeling throughout the Dioceses enhanced the common fellowship on belfry restoration. A minimum affiliation period of two years was approved overwhelmingly. The full Minutes are on the Association's website.

Jubilee Sunday Ringing.

On Sunday June 3rd, a group of the North Cotswold Branch Bell Ringers met at Stow-on-the-Wold at the start of a short tour of local villages, to ring the bells in each village "in celebration of the Jubilee".

Commencing at Stow at 2.00pm, the group moved on to Broadwell, Longborough, and Guiting Power. At Guiting, and before ringing the bells for a service, the ringers were greeted with a cup of tea and cake by Roland (Greenhill), before swiftly moving on to Temple Guiting and finally Cold Aston, finishing at approximately 7.30pm. Mission accomplished!

A total of ten ringers were involved at various towers. They were Mark Travers, Sara Woodgate, Tim Woodgate, Phil Street, Roger Woodley, Roger Jones, Jacqui Parsons, Liz White, Roland Greenhill and Denzil Spear. The ringing comprised Call Changes, and plain courses and touches of Grandsire and Bob Doubles

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The North Cotswold Branch annual Outing 19th May 2012

This year the branch went south to the neighbouring Cirencester area, where eight venues were planned for the day: seven churches for ringing and a village inn for a midday meal. Of the seven churches, four were dedicated to St Mary, but the difference in the bells could not have been greater: from a delightful ring of six at Barnsley the tenor weighing four cwt to the eight bells in Fairford with the tenor weighing 17 cwt, visited in the afternoon.

St Mary's church in Bibury was the second venue of the day. The church is very well maintained, and as there was a wedding planned for later that day it was also very warm. The bells soon sounded out Grandsire, St Clement's and April Day. St John's at Coln St Aldwyns was the first eight bell tower of the day, the ringing room being reached via some very steep stairs and a weighty trap door. The bells had a deep resonant tone and sounded very good on this fine, clear - and dry!!! - morning.

We are very fortunate in the North Cotswold Branch to have the Four Shires Guild close by and so we were able to welcome fellow ringers to join us for the day; and one ringer from Kent who was in the area that weekend and so was able to take part.

After a hearty lunch we went to St Nicholas at Hatherop. The bells were odd struck and rather difficult to master, but a credible effort was made. The church is in a scenic setting next to a sports field and the Castle School is close by. The imposing long-draft bells at Fairford Parish Church were not as difficult to ring as they look. The eight bells were rung to Stedman, Single Oxford, Plain Hunt and call changes. For those who were not ringing there was a chance to look at the wonderful stained glass windows, which depict the life of Christ. These were made even more impressive by the brief spell of glorious sunshine.

Reverse Canterbury Doubles was rung at St Mary's in Meysey Hampton, which was a first for some. This was followed by some call changes and Plain Bob.

We then had the second pit stop of the day, where we were treated to some home made cake provided by Isobel, followed by the last venue of the day at Ampney Crucis. Not surprisingly the numbers of ringers had dwindled by this time, but Bob Minor and Grandsire Doubles were rung very well.

So, a great day out was had by all, and thanks must go to Keith and Isobel Murphy, whose organisation of the whole trip could not be faulted. A final thank you to Imogen, who rang in all the six bell towers; and for her impromptu organ solo, which made for a fitting finale to the day.

R.B.



TOP TONE RECORD

A Quarter Peal of Bob Doubles was rung on the 22nd January 2012 at St Mary's Ilmington, Treble Nicola Amphlett, 2. Bill Sabin, 3. John W. Kinchin, 4. Jackie Hands, 5. Michael Dane (C), Tenor Michael F. Fairfax. First Quarter on the Treble.

A Quarter Peal of Francis Genius Delight Minor was rung at Great Rissington on the 4th June 2012, Treble Isobel Murphy 2. Steve Coleman (C), 3. Sue Coleman, 4. Jeremy Meyrick, 5. John Nicholls, 6. Bill Nash.