

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD  
OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



*Newsletter*  
*March 2017*

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*It's nice 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 : 31st August 2017  
Please make a note of this date in your diary*

Please send your contribution either through your  
Branch Press Correspondent or direct to :  
e-mail : [christophpearson@btinternet.com](mailto:christophpearson@btinternet.com) or Tel : 01536 420822

## The President's Preamble

Last time I wrote about Insurance and Safeguarding: “We need to ensure that the things going on around us, logical in concept but difficult in operation, do not overwhelm our welcome and encouragement [of new ringers] ”

Within days the York Minster affair erupted in the national press. It was the sort of thing that I feared could happen with the large volume of complex new procedures introduced to deal with a basically simple personal safety challenge. Let us pray that all those involved can come to common sense compromises and that we can keep our diocese safe on a sensible footing.

Keep ringing, recruiting, training, enthusing and retaining!

*Geoff Pullin*

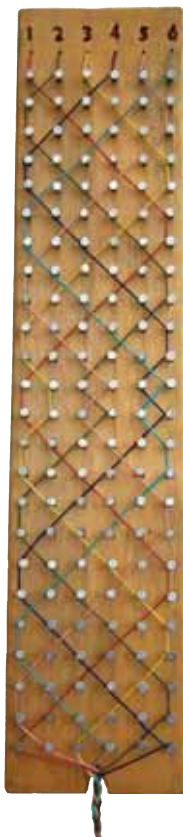
## News from the Branches

### Culworth Branch

The articles I receive for the Guild newsletter from our Towers always seem to be very varied, and this half yearly report is no exception. I am sure that in amongst all these other tasks we are all slowly improving our ringing!

**BRANCH NEWS** - In September we hosted the Guild Summer Festival and 8 bell striking competition at Brackley. With Julie Blencowe as our excellent forewoman, a group of willing volunteers arrived mid-morning to start a production line of sandwiches, with fillings at the ready we buttered, filled, arranged, wrapped until we would be happy to not see another sandwich again, ever! Tables set, tea urn filled, mouth-watering cakes...now all we have to do was wait. Slowly people began to arrive, not particularly interested in our tea at the moment – all focused on the ringing to be done. We actually entered a team this year and here is how it went from Sara Chapple one of the ringers.

“We’ll enter next year’s 8 bell striking competition. It’s home ground. We’ll practice every week for a year”. Famous last words!



One of our more experienced ringers had to give up due to ill health, but we still had a treble ringer, 2 for the tenor and seven other possibles for the team. But with family, work and holiday commitments, maybe not a practice every week. Then two people had to stop ringing for health reasons, and another stopped because of looming GCSE's. He had too many outside activities. One ringer had two shoulder ops. Another had a hip replacement. Luckily both were fit again by September and our original ill-health drop out returned to the fold. So we took part, got through the piece without firing out, and collected fewer faults than some of us had feared. OK, we came last, but four branches didn't even enter. Next year? Not if I have any say in it!"

Congratulation to Daventry branch for winning the competition.

Our Annual Branch Dinner took place in November at The Three Conies, Thorpe Mandeville where 45 people enjoyed one another's company and were served very well.

In December, James McDonald, the curate of Brackley and also a ringer, took our annual carol service. Phil Curtis played the organ and we enjoyed listening to a quartet, consisting of three of our ringers and a friend. Seasonal refreshments followed with ringing on Brackley 8.

About 30 attended the Branch AGM in January at Woodford Halse, ringing commenced at 3 followed by the service led by Rev Stevie Cross, with Phil Curtis on the organ. An excellent tea was served in the hall next door followed by the business meeting. 9 new members were elected to the branch. The Presidents cup was presented to Evenley tower this year.

TOWER NEWS – AYNHO – Peter Phillips reports – the Aynho bells have been serviced by our Branch Steward who has also repaired a number of the pulleys. The bells are used regularly thanks to the Tuesday Group which comprises ringers from Aynho, Croughton, Evenley, Kings Sutton and Lois Weedon. The schedule for weddings at the tower this year at the moment stands at 5, considerably less than last year.

EYDON – Geoff Stretton reports – it always amazes me the tasks that church bell ringers seem to get involved in within Eydon. Last October, while electricians were fitting a new consumer unit in the vestry at St Nicholas Church, it was discovered that the insulation resistance of the buried external



lighting cable was very low. A lot lower than the RCD's in the new-fangled box would accept. It would appear that the old box was quite happy to accept any type of cable faults except a full earth. It had shunned the use of such complicated gadgets for 60 years! The consequence of this discovery meant the laying of a new armoured cable to the floodlights. These are at the top of a telegraph pole at the churchyard gate entrance, some 70 meters away down the path. After reading the quote for the repair work, I, as a member of the PCC, asked if the cost could be reduced by using an in-house trench digging and cable laying party. This was accepted by the electrical company. So in early December, the trench was duly dug, cable laid, warning tape laid and trench back filled, in just over a week with the help of 2 bell ringers, another member of the PCC and one other villager plus lots of advice from numerous people walking their dogs each day. It became an attraction. We left the old cable buried and undisturbed. Well, it deserved a peaceful retirement as it had been there for at least 90 years or more. I believe we gave ringing practice a miss that week!

**LOIS WEEDON** – Dave Kirkham reports – We have been training up some new recruits on a Monday evening and we are delighted that 3 have just become members of the Branch. Louise and Trevor King for Lois Weedon and Ruth Peters for Evenley. Wednesday practice nights are well supported and everyone is making progress and working toward their own personal targets. We now have 11 ringers from the local area and are joined by visitors each week. Thanks go to Ian Chapple for helping us progress week by week. In November we hosted a social evening for our ringers and their partners, we enjoyed a meal and entertained ourselves with some hand bell ringing. David Abbott and Gill Baird hosted our Christmas party which involved more food and carols on hand bells. We ring for most Sunday services and the parish is very supportive.

**EVENLEY** – Paul Bennett reports – 2016 was a difficult year for Evenley; it started with the loss of two ringers, Janet Cropley (Jan 2016) and Susan Hampshire (Mar 2016). Our thoughts have remained with them and their families throughout the year. At the 2017 AGM two quilts made by Sue were raffled for branch funds and were won by Sara (Whitfield) and Sybil (Aynho). Thanks to all who helped raise the magnificent sum of £200. Ruth Peters joined the team recently and has already



experienced ringers hospitality at 7/8 towers. She was introduced at the AGM, where 9 new ringers were announced by the branch secretary. Ruth also met the Guild President Geoff! In one form or another the Evenley team managed to ring for all services and ceremonies, making up numbers by looking to neighbouring towers and welcoming Oxford City Guild ringers to mark the losses we suffered. Thanks to the Culworth trainers coming together we were able to introduce the Brackley Round Table (22men) and later the Brackley Ladies Circle (15 ladies) to ringing. Each group made donations so the Guild Bell Fund and Culworth branch funds benefitted financially but more importantly Evenley team was strengthened by Ruth (mentioned above) from the Ladies Circle. It was a shock and an honour for the team to be presented with the Presidents Cup on Saturday 21st January 2017. We shall try to publicise our success in the hope of finding more recruits.

**SYRESHAM** - 3 new recruits for Syresham have been taught to ring by Ian Chapple and they were elected to the branch at the January AGM. They can all ring call changes, are just starting on plain hunt, and one can ring up and down in peal. Another potential learner is about to start and if successful will give Syresham a full home band, a rarity these days.

**WHITFIELD** - practice nights are challenging for all, for those of us who are learning and those who have to listen to us! However, we always go home a little happier after Friday evening practice, the question is, 'is it the ringing or the kind hospitality afforded to us by Ian and Sara after the ringing?'

*Joy Kirkham – Culworth Correspondent*

## Daventry Branch

### SEPTEMBER

The 10th was a busy day. Daventry tower was open to the public for Heritage Open Days and attracted people into the bell chamber and to have a go in the ringing chamber. In the afternoon at Kislingbury, 26 gathered for our meeting and service. It was wryly noted that with Carole and me returning on that day from Russia, the first hymn was sung to the tune 'Moscow'. After tea, nine migrated to enjoy the bells at Holy Sepulchre, supplemented by a further five visitors.



After trouble with the simulator sensors at Braunston, its Monday Club visited Willoughby on the 12th. It was nice to see five of the new Willoughby ringers ringing together supported by ten others.

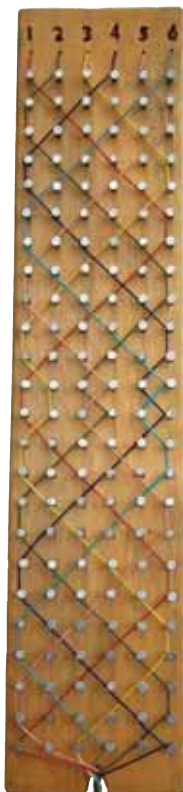
Our preparation for the Guild 8-bell inter-branch competition worked again, but only just! Before the quarter peal at Whilton in the morning, conductor Ian Willgress, decreed that we were to aim for accurate fast ringing, so it duly came round in 44 minutes! In the afternoon our team rang fast at Brackley, as instructed, and this was remarked upon by the judges later when awarding us first place with 95%, but followed extremely closely by Wellingborough 94% and Towcester 93%!

The bane of ringers' lives – late brides: one bride was 80 minutes late at Dodford this month!

## OCTOBER

The month began with the branch dinner again at Barby Sporting Club. The nineteen diners thoroughly enjoyed it and Alison Buck was thanked for making the arrangements. At the end of the month, Alison was again on duty for the Guild Quiz Night at Weedon. Besides organising the event, she acted as question master, working from the instructions and questions that Hilary had prepared before going on holiday! There were eleven tables, and the competition was won by Jennie and Nick Paul's team with the Everdon Experts as runners up. About £270 was raised for the Bell Fund.

In between, Alison went to Australia! So Janet Bowers acted as secretary for the branch meeting at Litchborough, which attracted 24 to ring and 6 who didn't. After lots of ringing, our service was led by Michael Houghton with Barbara at the organ and Jan Collins preaching with the aid of a pomegranate, which was soon discarded when the "don't mention bells" advice kicked in! We made the short walk along to the village hall for a splendid tea complete with floral table decorations. We elected Roger Fountain, Jane Bloomfield, Andrew Brighty, Michael Sawle, Hannah Brighty and Stephanie Glazebrook as new members from Harpole. We also elected as a student member for Byfield, Toby Smith, whose parents came along to enjoy the occasion. We had 18, including two visitors for evening ringing at Weedon. Mixed within many call changes, plain hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire Triples were Cambridge, Yorkshire



and Bristol S Major to various degrees of success! Eight made it to the Plume of Feathers.

Congratulations to Canon Peter Woodward who marked his 80th birthday by ringing his first quarter peal on an inside bell to Plain Bob Doubles on the 25th at Harpole, conducted by Colin Sampson.

## NOVEMBER

A quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles, conducted by Graham Paul, at Harpole was rung by members of the local band on All Saints Day for the Feast of Title. It was the first quarter peal inside for Hannah Brighty.

Ted Garrett died on Sunday the 6th, aged 89. He suffered a long spell of ill health and had been bedridden since June. Ted was elected a member in 1946 and the photo was taken when he was presented with his 50-year membership certificate. Ted was the Guild's first Peal Secretary from 1963 to 2013.

He was Chairman of the Daventry Branch from 1963 for 26 years and was elected as a Life Honorary Member in 2004. There was a thanksgiving service on the 25th in brilliant sunshine at Nether Heyford.

20 took part in open ringing before the service, including Richard Danby from Welshpool and Robert Hancock from Lincoln. Ted had served his National Service in the Navy as a radio operator on battleships HMS King George V and HMS The Prince of Wales and had retained an interest in radio all his life. The service was followed by cremation at Rainsbrook.

Ringling at Heyford was only possible because, for their own reasons, Taylors had postponed work planned for the 24th and 25th. The work was later started on January 19th and the bells will remain unringable for a few weeks while the pulleys and clappers are refurbished at Loughborough. Kislingbury are also having their clappers refurbished by Taylors.

An email request by Bob Sinclair was successful in attracting support for new improvers at Newnham practices.

Before the meeting at Barby and Kilsby, 27 rang including Ed of our water-borne membership, who had driven up from his





winter Plymouth mooring for the weekend. It was also nice to see Peter Box (86 this month) ringing. The new Vicar, Rev Nigel Fry, restructured our Guild service and we remembered Ted Garrett. At the village hall Margaret Dean had organised tea to a high standard, which was served by four ladies of the Church Social Club. Margaret was able walk a bit after over two months recovering from cellulitis. Evening ringing was held at Crick and we thank Anthea and Nick for turning out after a busy day of quarter peals and joining the 14 of us! The branch Sunday afternoon quarter peal was half-muffled Grandsire Caters rung at Daventry to mark Remembrance Sunday. It was conducted by Ian Willgress and also remembered Ted. His two successors as branch chairman topped and tailed the band.



Ken and Eleanor Ramsbotham moved after 22 years from Badby to Witheridge, Devon in early December. There was a gathering of about 70, parishioners and ringers, in Badby church on the 16th, followed by 'usual' practice. 'Usual', but unusually busy and included rounds with

the two churchwardens ringing: Eleanor (for only the second time this year) and Susan Rose (a rare performer). On the Saturday, a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles was rung as a further farewell and we discovered afterwards that it also marked Ken and Eleanor's 34th wedding anniversary! Odette Dawkins rang a quarter peal of Reverse Canterbury and Plain Bob Doubles on the treble at Staverton on the 23rd, conducted by Phil Saunders for whom it was a 60th birthday compliment.

Daventry tower captain Richard Waddy and Margaret held a gathering to mark their golden wedding anniversary on the 26th. A celebratory quarter peal of Plain Bob Caters conducted by Jim White, was rung before the Christingle service on Sunday, December 4.

## DECEMBER

The 30 Christmas trees in Weedon church were a spectacle worth seeing. The ringing chamber became Santa's Grotto and was hidden



behind trees. In these unusual conditions the branch Sunday quarter peal of Yorkshire suddenly collapsed after bowling along at good speed!

Our December meeting at Bugbrooke was attended by 52, of whom 28 rang, on a damp day and hence very short ropes but nicely warm church. After a hot soup tea in the hall, we elected Jenny Lund as a new member for Heyford. Jenny originally joined in 1989 when a young Rands!

The evening was occupied by ten carols accompanied by Michael Haighton at the organ, Alison Buck on the tuba, Shirley Waterhouse on the clarinet and Gwyneth White on the recorder. There were eight performances and finally two videos from the rector. The final choral item was 'When a Child is Born' by the Byfield team which featured Barry Thompson singing solo for the first time after recent lessons. We were all staggered to hear that Barry had had a stroke at home the following evening and subsequently died on the 20th at Northampton General Hospital, aged 76.

Barry learned to ring when he and Pauline moved to Byfield into the late Fred Hutt's house. Intrigued by everyone referring to it as "Fred's house", he decided to investigate and took up ringing in 2003. His ringing progressed to a peak of ringing a quarter peal inside of Plain Bob Doubles in 2011. He was very successful in recruiting others to ring and an ardent branch supporter. Byfield Church was full on January 4 for his funeral. The bells were rung open after the service and during the interment in the nearby cemetery.



### **JANUARY**

Despite two months' notice that the Chairman and Ringing Master were not intending to stand for re-election, there were no proposals to fill the posts at the branch AGM. The President thanked all officers for their work during the last year, before other officers were re-elected and a new committee voted in. The committee was tasked to resolve the vacancies. It duly met and at the time of writing, proposals exist to fill the posts and to share aspects of the jobs between more members. Ken Robinson died in January. Ken lived in Badby and rang over several decades at Badby, Charwelton and Preston Capes.

## THROUGH THE MONTHS

Midweek practices at Staverton (Monday am), Braunston (Monday pm) and Hellidon (Tuesday am) continue to serve their specific purposes. The monthly branch 10 bell practices on the second Tuesday of each month have attracted between 10 and 17. They have provided some help in developing ten bell rhythm but little in methods. The fortunes of the monthly branch-assisted eight bell practices have varied considerably with the best attendance at Whilton, when Bugbrooke and Flore cancel their own practice nights to come along. Future development will be interesting to follow!

*Geoff Pullin*

## Guildenburgh Branch

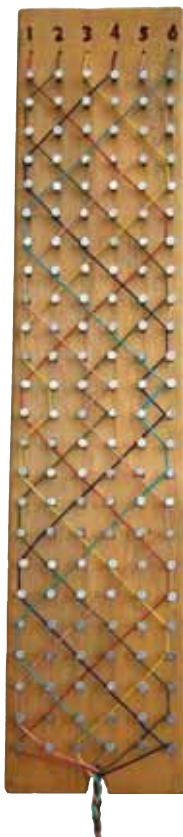
### Marston Trussell.

*“Geoff Armitage, a courageous man of character.”*

St. Nicholas' Church was overflowing with people paying their last respects at the funeral of our bell ringing colleague, Geoff Armitage in January. Geoff, despite his illness, courageously soldiered on, right to the very end of his days, in his own words, “it was business as usual”.

Virtually, a non-stop queue of fellow ringers, including Janet Armitage, his wife, converged to ring for Geoff, from many distant locations around the Country, in fact, bell ringing merged into the Service in a very much typical & respectful way to which Geoff would have been quite used to, so therefore this was an excellent & be-fitting tribute to a man full of characteristic tendencies as we all know. I am certain he would have approved. A fascinating eulogy emerged describing the life & times of Geoff right from his childhood, bringing many funny stories en route. After burial in the Churchyard, bell ringing once again resumed.

A lasting legacy for which Geoff can be remembered for, was his dogged determination to keep the Church bells ringing no matter the problems. Amongst these Churches are notably Stanford on Avon & North Kilworth, not forgetting the addition of treble bells at Husbands Bosworth & his pride & joy – Marston Trussell.



Perhaps also, we will wish to remember with affection, his dodgy collection of Eastern European cars complete with trailing smoke screens.

Rob Palmer, February 2017.

### **Welford.**

A simulator is now in operation. Please contact Alistair Donaldson for further details. Tel : 01858-571101

### **Cold Ashby.**

Recent television & media reports inform us that a bell from circa 1250 AD has been taken down from its tower for refurbishment suggesting that it is one of the oldest bells still ringing. This may well be true but not accurately reported, (sorry DT but errors do occur in our Country as well as yours). In viewing the TV report, it was quickly noticed that the bell was hung for chiming.

The 1317AD William De Flint bell at Cold Ashby tower still remains the oldest recorded & positively dated bell hung for ringing in a full circle arrangement.

Incidentally, there is another bell circa 1310 which, if the rest of the ring was refurbished would subjectively topple the accolade of Cold Ashby, however, no firm date evidence can be attributed to this bell, so C.A. remains top.

### **Lilbourne.**

In the furthest reaches of North-west Northamptonshire, the historic All Saints' Church contains five Thomas II Eayre bells, which are a regular twice monthly haunt for very enjoyable & enthusiastic ringing activities, no doubt enhanced by the reality of retiring up the hill to Lilbourne's new "Head of Steam" pub.

As some people may know, the above mentioned scenario could not have taken place without essential refurbishment in 2012 led by the determined intervention of the late John Alexander & his family. It is quite pleasing to announce & record that John's eldest son, Ian, is now the ringing tutor & joint tower captain for Lilbourne. This move allows Rob Palmer, the other joint TC to concentrate mainly on steeple-keeping & Church maintenance duties.

Many or some readers may consider this as "eccentric, over the top amateur dramatics" especially if you know Rob, but we at Lilbourne suggest otherwise, being the best of all worlds & you "can have your cake & eat it as well". Rob has always freely admitted his knowledge is a lot better at the top end of the rope.



## **Maidwell.**

It is satisfying to note that he ringers' abilities are progressing.

## **Walgrave & Scaldwell.**

As at Maidwell tower, it is satisfying to note that he ringers' abilities are also progressing, although the five bells at Walgrave still prove to be slightly more difficult to ring owing to the greater weights involved, nevertheless, in more experienced hands, the bells are a delight to ring & equally harmonious.

The sensible thing would have been to run a mile, but I didn't! So I have ended up teaching a band that can now ring call-changes at Walgrave as well as Scaldwell. Along the way I have got involved with the Association of Ringing Teachers. This has enabled me to give out certificates at level 1 and level 2 to the majority of my ringers, which surprisingly has motivated even the most hardened adult sceptics in the band.

As I had never taught handling before, I got some training, and now I find myself involved with A.R.T. As their Safeguarding Administrator, so now Safeguarding is becoming a hot topic in the media, I thought you might be interested in some facts, figures and advice.

Anyone involved in any Church activity that comes into direct contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults should have a certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Services. The Church should be able to arrange this free of charge. While this only proves what you have done in the past, it's a start to a difficult problem to solve.

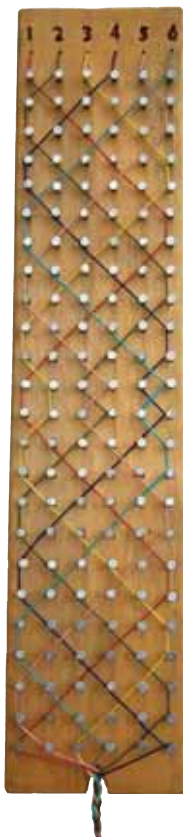
There are currently 60,000 people bared from working with children, a larger percentage than the estimated 40,000 bellringers in the country.

1 in 20 Children suffers abuse, while 1/3rd of abuse is committed by other children. The abuse is committed by someone they know, not strangers.

When running activities you should check areas of the building that are unsupervised. Ensure you keep a record of your concerns and write it down and date it, so you can remember later if needed.

All concerns about activities in Church should be discussed with your Churches' safeguarding officer and reported to Church officials. The NSPPC web-site has links to a range of information and guidance. You can also get help from the local social services.

***Elaine Greatrex.***



## **Crick.**

The Parochial Church Council has appointed Rob Palmer as Steeple-keeper to St. Margaret of Antioch Church. Rob already assists with the mechanical aspects of the tower in unison with tower captain Nick Hiams. The retiring steeple-keeper, Geoff Brown, will remain in charge of the clock & its mechanism. It is at this point, we must remember & thank Geoff Brown who was one of the original team members who orchestrated the refurbishment of Crick's original four bells & eventual augmentation to the present eight bells back in the mid - 1990's.

## **GUILSBOROUGH.**

GUILSBOROUGH tower is awaiting a date for the refurbishment programme of the six bells & their fittings. Practice evenings are still current.

## **Rugby – spare clapper or spare tower ?**

I have submitted this photograph purely as a technical observation & of associated interest. Rugby, as we all know, is not in our Guild, but the photograph clearly demonstrates a catastrophic failure of the clapper which could, of course, occur almost anywhere. In Rugby's case, with no spare clapper being immediately available & not to be beaten into mechanical surrender, the ringers simply moved from the north-east eight-bell tower to the other "spare" west five-bell tower. As some readers may know, St. Andrew's Church, Rugby is recorded as the only Church in the world to have two separate bell towers.



*(Photograph, courtesy of Theresa Le Flem)*

***Rob Palmer, Guilsborough Branch Steward,  
e-mail : towersandbells@gmail.com***

## **Kettering Branch**

Well, as usual the Kettering Branch has been very busy since the last newsletter.

In September we met for our annual outing. We began with a trip to the Carillon in Loughborough. The carillon is a set of 47



bells designed to be played as a musical instrument by using a keyboard. It is housed in a tower which is a war memorial and contains a museum of artifacts from local troops. The carillon is from a set of levers operated by both hands and feet and the current carillonneur, Caroline Sharpe, treated told us its history and how it worked and played some pieces for us, including a piece written by Edward Elgar especially for the grand opening in 1923. Afterwards we climbed higher in the tower to see the bells and the view from the balcony. After a pub lunch we then had a most enjoyable ring at Barrow Upon Soar and Quorn as we made our way home. Thanks are due to Shane for organising this event for us. Also in September we were thrilled by the performance of our Branch team at the Guild eight bell striking competition. One of the youngest ringers in the branch, 12 year old Alice Parkin, was joined by teenager Toby Bence calling call changes and together with Sarah Bence, Jane Marsh, Murray Coleman, Helen Churchman, Jim Bence and Nick Churchman they produced a performance worthy of joint second place, very close behind the winning Daventry team.

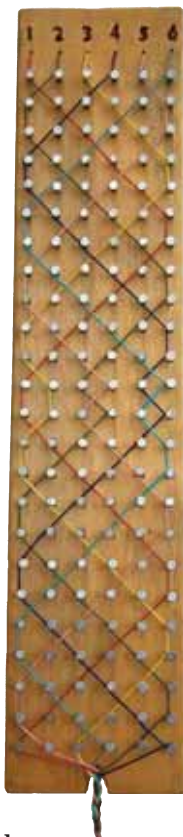
In October we met for a Branch practice at Rothwell.

Unusually, we did not use the simulator as we wanted to practice on the full ten bells, for those not used to such large numbers. 18 people met and spent a most enjoyable afternoon, with everyone having a go at call changes and plain hunt on the ten. The practice really paid off as the following week about twenty of us made our way to Peterborough to ring for Sunday service. We were really pleased with our performance on the twelve and would like to thank ringing masters Helen and Sarah for their guidance and encouragement.

The Beetle Drive In November was the usual most enjoyable and fun packed night with over forty members and friends sitting down to a splendid hot supper and some fast and furious dice throwing. Thanks are due to the Desborough ringers for the organisation and to Bill and his whistle.

In December 23 ringers visited Burton Latimer and enjoyed not just a good afternoon of ringing but also some seasonal refreshments.

Our AGM was held at Kettering. 30 people met to ring and then enjoyed a hot supper provided by the Kettering ringers. In the absence of our chairperson due to ill health, Sarah Bence ran the meeting. The high spot was definitely an emotional presentation to





Toby Bence of a certificate for not only ringing, but also conducting, his first peal. Derek Sibson noted what a significant achievement this is and members of the branch who have known Toby all his life are delighted to celebrate with him and look forward to many more years of ringing together. Certificates were also presented to Evan Thomas and Kieran Nunley for their

first quarters. The ringing masters also made special awards to Alice Parkin for her aforementioned contribution to the striking competition and Peter Chilton for his return to ringing and ringing his first quarter for over 50 years. Officers and committee were re-elected with the addition of Toby Bence to the committee and look forward to planning next year's programme. The meeting

particularly noted how pleased they have been with Sarah Bence and Helen Churchman who were co-opted into the post of the Ringing Master after the last AGM. They have visited every tower in the Branch to get to know ringers and this has helped us to have some well-run Branch practices. They were enthusiastically elected to continue in the role.

In February a smaller group of 13 met for a Branch Practice at Rothwell but those present were able to take advantage of using the simulator to have some really beneficial practice.

Finally in March, 20 members and 2 visitors from Hampshire enjoyed ringing at two of the less-visited towers in our Branch – Grafton Underwood and Cranford St John. The range of people attending gave us the opportunity to try a good selection of methods.

We would like to thank all churches for the use of their bells and the various members of the committee for their roles in organising our programme. We look forward to seeing everyone at the interesting activities we have planned for the forthcoming months.

During the past months the ringers of Wilbarston have been actively engaged in fundraising, aiming to raise £32,000 to replace their fittings and add an extra bell. Events have included a fabulous night of rock music which raised over £1000. You can follow their activities at





<http://www.wilbarston-bells.org.uk/>

If you want to be kept fully up to date with our activities you can ask to receive our monthly newsletter – just email [thewallisfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:thewallisfamily@hotmail.com)

We also have an all new and fully updated website – please take a look at [www.pdgketteringbranch.btck.co.uk](http://www.pdgketteringbranch.btck.co.uk)

Finally, why not access our online noticeboard where you can post images, post-it notes, files and videos to share with each other. If you would like to use it you will need to create an account at [www.linoit.com](http://www.linoit.com) and then email [nick@firedout.co.uk](mailto:nick@firedout.co.uk) for an invitation to view the Kettering Branch Board

*Deb Wallis*

## Northampton Branch

It's all change in the Northampton branch for 2017; change of personnel; change of practice schedule; change of what happens at a practice.

Our branch AGM was held at Duston with good representation from branch towers, it was also very positive to have some young people there. Ringing ranged from call changes to surprise minor, we then had a service and tea followed by the meeting.

**Our Branch Officers are now:**

***Chairman*** – Mark Rogers

***Secretary*** – Di Rogers

***Treasurer*** – Karen Dunn

***Ringing Master*** – Giles Willson

***Deputy RM*** – Robin Hickmott

***Steward*** – Nick Chatt

***PRO*** – Jennie Paul

***100 Club*** – Norman Pope

***Committee Members*** – Cecil Swann, Geoff Brown

Chris Lea stepped down as Treasurer after many years service and we would like to thank her for her years of work and dedication to the branch. We were saddened by the death of Trevor Jarvis who had been a stalwart of the branch for many years



holding various posts within the branch and was the regular winner of the skittles trophy. Trevor's funeral was attended by many people including ringers from across the Guild, we will miss him. A quarter peal was rung prior to our branch AGM in memory of Trevor.

On our practice nights we will either be joining a branch tower for their practice night or having a dedicated practice on a Saturday. See our website [www.northamptonbellringers.org.uk](http://www.northamptonbellringers.org.uk) for details of these practices. Our practice format is also different as the majority of practices will last for 2 hours to give time for a tea break in the middle. Come and join us for some ringing, some chatting, some tea and some biscuits, usually followed by a visit to the pub, just to be sociable!

We are going to have a special method at each practice to give people something to aim for. Our practices will cater for all levels of ringing from rounds upwards. We are building up an email list of branch members in order to spread the word about our practices and other items of interest. This is open to all ringers not just branch members. If you would like to join the list please let me know

**Jennie Paul** [jenniehigson@ymail.com](mailto:jenniehigson@ymail.com)

I was interested to read in the last Newsletter, about the peal board which was taken, with the bells, from St. Edmund's, Northampton, to Wellington, New Zealand, and is now displayed in the Cathedral, as I have an amusing story behind how it came into being.

We have in our ringing room at St. Laurence's in Brafield on the Green, a couple of peal boards which were made by David Morgan, and on which I painted the lettering. Selwyn Griffiths had rung the treble to a peal at St. Edmund's and asked if we could produce a similar peal board on which to record it, but it would need to be black with gold lettering to match the existing ones at St. Edmund's.

David duly produced the board, with a black gloss finish, and I set about trying to mark out the lettering. It proved extremely difficult - I couldn't see my pencil marks on the gloss, so David came up with the idea of repainting with matte black and when I had completed my task, he would spray the whole thing with varnish to get the required shine. All went well, and I took the board back to him for its final glossy coat. Sometime later a crestfallen David appeared to report disaster! The spray



varnish had caused my beautiful gold letters to run down the board and off the bottom!

There was nothing for it but to revert to plan "A", so I had to start over again, struggling to see my guidelines on the glossy black surface, but at last the board was complete, and I think Selwyn was pleased with it!

We often wondered what happened to the board when the Church was demolished, so it was a great delight to David, who now lives in New Zealand, to discover it whilst on a ringing visit to Wellington Cathedral, and I was thrilled to receive the photo he emailed to me, some years ago. It's good to know our handiwork is still being appreciated.

*Anne Henman - Brafield on the Green*

**Peterborough Branch** - No news this time

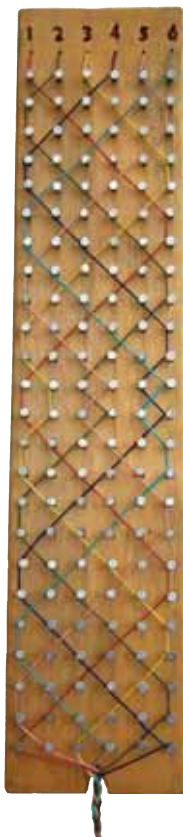
**Rutland Branch** - No news this time

**Thrapston Branch**

2017 has proved to be an enjoyable and eventful year so far. Our year started a very successful A.G.M at Titchmarsh when a busy and varied ringing programme was organised including being able to add St.Mary's at Ringstead to our Branch Meeting List following their re-furbishment. The majority of our Officers and Committee were all elected to their posts. Special thanks go to Chris Jenkins, for all her hard work and dedication. She has stepped down as Ringing Master and Ted Buckby has happily stepped into this role. We were also able to have representatives from nearly all the Towers within the branch.

The Branch also decided to continue our very successful 8-bell advanced practices at Woodford to which Guild Members are very welcome to attend and to develop our monthly 6-bell practice at Islip to which all are very welcome.

We have continued to hold regular monthly Branch Meetings with an increasing number of new and returning Ringers joining us. We have also held a successful striking competition 'with a difference'



at Wadenhoe.

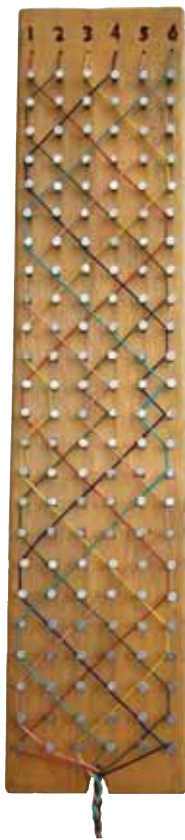
We have also been able to join in many Guild Events including the 10-bell practices.

It was with sadness that we learnt of the untimely passing of Dick Cowley. Dick was a stalwart member of both the branch and St.James' Tower for many years and his ' historical anecdotes' will be very much missed.

We are always very pleased to welcome new and old ringers and visitors to our meetings and look forward to another very successful Year of Ringing.

*Alison Byrnes*

## Towcester Branch



As a relatively new ringer and member of Towcester Bellringing Branch, my observation is that Towcester continues to work hard to offer a mixture of bellringing experiences for its members (and non-members) as well as social activities and outings. There seems to a mix of active towers with some new recruits and towers that have their regular bands and really welcome guests to support the ringing options.

The Branch actively collaborates with neighbouring branches, in joint practices and occasional competitions. This is a great way of making links with ringing communities in a different part of the county. September's joint practice was with Northampton, held at Pattishall, and enjoyed by 18 ringers at the start of Northampton's outing that took them as far as Lincolnshire.

October's event was the annual quiz and fish & chip supper, traditionally held at Whittlebury. Despite a last-minute change of mobile food provider, the event was a great success, with a record number of towers represented and great fun had by all. The winners were a team from Towcester. Many thanks Peter and Evelyn Nicholson for once gain hosting the event. Branch practices were held at Roade in October, and at Potterspurty in November. These events draw good numbers of visitors, and host towers welcome the support of a larger group than on an average practice night.

The spirit and collaboration of bellringing was highlighted in December when Chris Bullied took the initiative to offer Julie McDonnell an amazing opportunity to raise money for her very personal fundraising cause “Strike back Against Blood Cancer”.



As many of you may know Julie is a bellringer who originally learnt to ring in Pottersbury. Since she has had leukaemia herself she has been raising money by ringing 1/4 peals of a method

variation developed for her: “Julie McDonnell Bob Doubles”. Chris arranged for bands to ring 1/4s in all the 5 bell towers in the Branch (of which there are 9!). There was brilliant support throughout the Branch and quite a few practice nights to perfect the slightly tricky

method! Julie needed to ring at 5 of these 1/4 appeals in order to secure significant fundraising sponsorship. And what an amazing success the day was. The total raised on



Dec 3rd by the Towcester Branch was an incredible £286,426.

Although this method was beyond my novice skills, it was a testament to the power of ringing and the support offered by fellow ringers.

Dec 3rd was a great day and was finished off by our annual dinner, once again held at the Saracens head in Towcester. We had a fun night, with good company and excellent speakers. The star guest was of course Julie McDonnell who talked to us about her experience and journey through both illness and bellringing. She was able to show her



gratitude to both Doug Holloway who taught her to ring, and old friends with whom ringing has been a constant link and shared pleasure.

Our recent AGM at St Nicholas, Potterspury was also a jolly occasion. Thanks to Doug Holloway for arranging the day. The afternoon started with ringing on the 6, from rounds and call changes to Surprise Minor. The service was led by Rev Diane Whittaker, and our organist (thank you Mike Tinsley) ended the lovely service with the Doctor Who theme tune, and the fantastic tea (thanks to Mavis Benson and Claire Yates) helped everyone's spirits. Eight new members joined the Branch and ART certificates of achievement were awarded to three members present. We were able to successfully elect committee members for 2017/18 and look forward to more ringing and more fun this year.

Recruitment and training continue to be an important part of Branch activities. Chris Bulleid recently organized special practice days on the 8 at Easton Neston, for ringers looking to progress to higher numbers, Several towers in the branch have new ringers, of all ages from teenager to retiree, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the excellent course materials issued by the Association of Ringing Teachers.

***Details of all towers and practice days at <http://www.towcester-branch.org.uk/>.***

***Nic Boyd and Jonathan Stuart***

## Wellingborough Branch

Hello again,  
since the last newsletter branch practices have been held and well attended at Finedon, Wollaston, Wilby and Moulton with members ringing rounds to Yorkshire Surprise, so hopefully something for everyone. Surprise practices have also been held at Burton Latimer, Yardley Hastings, Rushden, Bozeat and Ecton.

The annual quiz, John and Brenda's last (so they say!!!) took place as usual in December at Earls Barton. It was an excellent evening with fabulous food (many thanks to Brenda and her catering team), answerable questions and a great way to start the Christmas festivities.

A quarter peal was rung at Rushden to celebrate Rector

Stephen Prior becoming an honorary cannon at Peterborough Cathedral.



Congratulations to Simon Dixon has now accumulated 300 quarter peals on the bells at Rushden in addition to the numerous quarter peals at other towers. Irchester rang in the New Year. Congratulations also to Odette Dawkins who rang her first quarter peal at Orlingbury to celebrate her 50th birthday. Quarter peals were also rung to celebrate some other milestone birthdays, Ivor and Jean Dickin both turned 80 and Pam Bailey who rang 60 quarter peals during her 60th year.

The branch AGM was held in January at Moulton. 32 members attended. Many thanks to the Moulton team for the excellent service and delicious tea. Eleven new members were welcomed into the branch and presented with certificates and welcome packs

Wellingborough branch welcomes all visitors to any of its events and details of towers and practice nights can be found at

***[www.wellingboroughbranch.org.uk](http://www.wellingboroughbranch.org.uk)***

Any snippets of news to ***[jude.coulter59@virgin.net](mailto:jude.coulter59@virgin.net)***

***Jude Coulter-Wellingborough  
Correspondent***

## Public Relations Officer's Piece

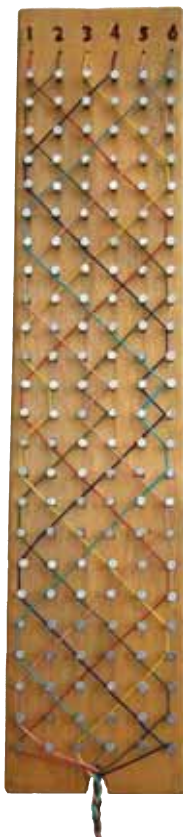
### WEBMASTER'S WANDERINGS

During 2016 there were 44,323 'hits' on the Guild website [www.pdg.btck.co.uk](http://www.pdg.btck.co.uk). This is about 1,500 higher than 2015. The most popular pages after the Welcome page, were Towers, Latest Guild News, Events, Branch Officers and Bell Maintenance.

Latest Guild News includes information from the Central Council of Church Bellringers which seems to be growing in volume as the Public Relations and Administrative Review Groups become more active! Do keep watching this page, I update very frequently!

During the year a new page 'Inventory' was added in which the contents of the inventory of the diocese's bells and bell frames produced by the Guild in 1989 is being updated by our Guild Steward, Nick Churchman, and published with information about bell inscriptions where it is available.

I would be pleased to receive further suggestions for improving



and adding to the content within my limited technical capabilities. I would be particularly pleased to have obituaries and photos of past characters of the Guild to extend that page.

***Geoff Pullin PRO***

## **Guild Summer Festival, Inter Branch 8 Bell Striking competition *Saturday September 17th 2016***

I found myself all of a sudden heading down the road to round off the summer months. I arrived at the lovely church of SS Peter and Paul; hidden away in the quiet village of Chacombe, part of the Culworth branch. After admiring the old sun dial above the church doorway early arrivals waited expectantly for the tower captain to arrive with the church keys to enable the Summer Festival Open Ringing to start.

Being directed to a door round the far side of the tower we entered to be greeted by 6 bells, 13-3-8, long drops, an old teachers desk in the centre and a rather large black board giving instructions of Plain Bob Minor – a hint maybe – who knows but certainly it gave a start to the open ringing and the method was rung. Fifteen ringers arrived to enjoy the bells including our judges for the striking competition, Colin Lee & Andy Wignell (I found this out later!) Methods ranged from Cambridge Surprise Minor, Plain Bob Doubles and then onto Kent Surprise Minor. Enjoying the bells so much we all left, a little behind schedule. Rushing over to Brackley we managed to lose both our judges on the way.

Arriving at St Peters Church, Brackley, host of the striking competition, many bands had gathered in readiness to make their branch members proud. Entering the church there was a true buzz in the air and large trestle tables full of sumptuous sandwiches, scones, sausage rolls and cakes - oh what wonderful cakes. There is definitely something special about old British traditions!!

The competition, now running behind schedule, judges hastening to their posts, Guilsborough Branch were set to ring, oh, but after they had rung the bells up!! Ringing Plain Bob Triples – always hard to open the ringing - they settled down and set the pace of the afternoon.





Photographs duly taken, the tower was now handed over to Towcester Branch. Grandsire Triples now rang out, but to hear, you had to stay outside however with no wind or rain, it was a pleasant sound.

Daventry Branch rang next, trepidation for them as the current title holders. Grandsire Triples were heard again after confusing the judges by starting twice on their practice piece. We then spotted the band from Kettering Branch, what a fantastic sight to see such a young and positive band, one ringer being only 11 years old and wow did they ring!! Rounds and call changes was their preferred method and in my humble opinion, beautifully rung. Big smiles as they came out of the tower and for once, a band making no attempt to avoid me with my camera for the team photograph.

Wellingborough treated us to a lovely sound of Grandsire Triples and by now more and more people had congregated outside armed with sandwiches and tea. Passer-bys out walking must have

wondered what was going on but they had smiles on their faces, you never know, they may want to come by again and give bell ringing a try!!

Finally and fittingly the home team ended the competition ringing Plain Bob Triples to a steady rhythm, loud, strong and offering a lovely finish to the competitive part of the day.

Back inside and onto the Guild business meeting whilst our judges judged, assessed and pondered on their scoring.

We were treated to the full Guild Executive and the meeting was opened by President – Geoff Pullin. A vote of thanks was given by Brenda Dixon, Wellingborough Branch, for the kind use of bells at Chacombe, Brackley and Whitfield, whom were to host the Evening Open Ringing. A special thank you given for Culworth Branch and especially to Julie Blencoe and her team for the absolutely glorious teas so beautifully laid out; certainly no-one should have gone hungry.

Nick Churchman, Guild Steward announced two grant applications, one for All Saints, Wilbarston, Kettering Branch, a grant of £3,200 was agreed by members. Second, St. Mary the Virgin, Roade, Towcester Branch, a grant of £375 was agreed. Geoff Pullin then spoke about the CCCBR report – please see his website report, it makes interesting reading and a thought for all.

Guild Master, Andy Timms then spoke about bell ringing as it is today, radio interviews and recruiting from non- church going people. He is to put together a recruitment pack for any tower to use and then displayed samples of Peal and Quarter Peal



certificates for everyone to see and comment.

Prize draw time now and with a record number of entries for the 100 club, prizes stood at 50%, 25% and 10% of the fund total so good news and thanks was given to Alan Marks for his efforts in increasing the membership whilst Derek Jones was away cruising the open seas in the early part of the year.

The Summer Festival Draw was also very well supported; Murray Coleman held a rather large bag of folded stubs from the many, many tickets sold across the Guild area. The total raised currently stood at over £800 so a magnificent effort by all.

Meeting closed with details of future events but then the anticipated results! Our Judges now arrived back into the church, pensive and with a serious look about them. Their summing up began with Derek Jones rather successfully holding up a flip chart as although our Guild

Master recorded the results, we had no easel to place the paper on – a plea here for anyone who may have a spare easel that can hold flip charts on would be good!!

The serious look on the judge's faces began to be explained – there was a tie for 2nd place and only a very tight margin between the top 4 bands, deliberation and more re-checking of the results I'm sure occurred during the business meeting but we finally heard and digested the results.

<b>1st place</b>	<b><i>95% Daventry Branch</i></b>
<b>2nd place</b>	<b><i>94% Kettering Branch</i></b>
<b>2nd Place</b>	<b><i>94% Wellingborough Branch</i></b>
<b>4th Place</b>	<b><i>93% Towcester Branch</i></b>
<b>5th Place</b>	<b><i>84% Guilsborough Branch</i></b>
<b>6th Place</b>	<b><i>72% Culworth Branch</i></b>

Here we had it – Daventry Branch had retained the title and trophy. This was probably a good thing as they forgot to collect the trophy until the very last minute, rushed to Daventry Tower, dusted it down and hurried on to Brackley with it, only to take it back again. It did however save dusting the shelf it sits on as there wasn't time to do that!! But don't rest on your laurels Daventry – the others are close behind and it will make a very good competition for next year.

With the evenings drawing in as summer time starts to disappear, many ringers made their way over to St. John the Evangelist Church, Whitfield for the final part of the day and the



Open Ringing in what was another beautiful village church. A set of 6 bells 7 -0-26, they rang fast but sounded lovely. 18 ringers arrived and methods ranged from Cambridge Surprise Minor, Wells Surprise Minor (hadn't heard this one before so a real treat), Double Court Bob Minor and finishing back in Kent (Little Bob Minor) with Grandsire Doubles and Plain Bob Doubles too, so something for everyone.

My summing up for the day – brilliant! Another example of what bell ringing is all about. What did I notice this time round – well, not enough ringers for the Open Towers that were not competition ringers, what does this matter I hear you all ask?

The Open Towers are for everyone, of all abilities, it is a chance to ring with others, try new bells, gain lots of experience and most importantly to get to ring with some very strong bands and solid ringing. An opportunity I certainly wouldn't want to miss and I reiterate again, give it a go, support the Guild Open Towers and come along, competitions are fun, rewarding, sociable and great, make the most of them, they are for you and it is your Guild !!

Next Guild competition for ringing is the Spring Festival so keep practicing, get your tower to enter and enjoy – it is great fun, tiring, a long day, but something that shouldn't be missed whatever your level of ringing is.

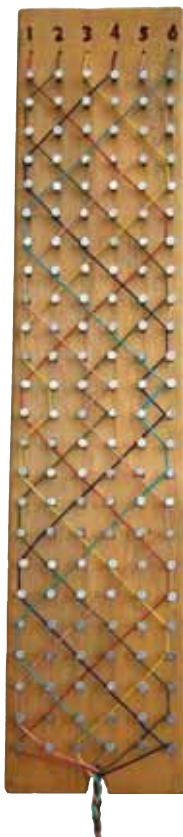


*Ian Willgress, Captain of Daventry Branch  
Receiving the Harry Wooding Memorial Trophy from judges  
Colin Lee & Andy Wignell*

***Report & Photograph by Odette Dawkins***

## **The Northants Nine-in-a-Day**

On Saturday 3rd December 2016 nine quarter peals of Julie McDonnell Bob Doubles were successfully rung on the nine 5-bell towers of the Towcester Branch of the Peterborough Guild. This was a very special day for Julie, a return to her childhood roots, having been taught to handle a bell by Doug Holloway at Potterspurty several decades



before.

Anyone who has rung Julie McDonnell Bob Doubles will acknowledge that it is a bit tricky to ring. So, a special practice was held at Pattishall 3 weeks earlier and around 15 ringers met for a chance to gain familiarity with the variation.

On the day, nine well-struck  $\frac{1}{4}$  peals were rung without drama. A total of 24 ringers took part, with 11 firsts in the variation, and Julie and her friends / supporters, Alan and Louise Pink (from the Hastings area) ringing in 5 of them. Each  $\frac{1}{4}$  peal was special in some way. The one at Ashton especially so, where a little girl with Leukaemia, and her parents, were there to greet Julie and the rest of the band. It was an emotional moment. In total the sum raised for Strike Back Against Blood Cancer attributable to the event was £286,426.

Amazing!

The day concluded with the Annual Towcester Branch Dinner, which on this occasion welcomed the inspirational Julie

McDonnell as guest speaker. Reminiscences from decades past mixed with recollections of more recent events to produce an atmosphere special to the ringing fraternity. And so ended a truly memorable day.

With thanks to all those who contributed to this very special day.

*Chris Bulleid.*

## 2016 Guild Quiz

There were 71 entries received this time, with twelve being all correct. All scored 90 plus.

The commonest wrong answers were:

- 11 Gleneagles (not on the coast) (California)
- 20 Newquay (Stiffkey)
- 26 Colchester (Whitstable)
- 43 (Various) (Seascale)
- 74 (Various) (Bacton or Paston)
- 75 Piel (Peel, as it would have been Piel Island)

For an incorrect spelling (not an incorrect place as in 75), a half was given as there were so many all correct scores. Almost all got Portmeirion correct, but several put Caistor on Sea and not Caister on Sea. (I started ring at Caistor Lincs.)

Thanks for all who bought sheets. The draw for the three prizes took place at Rothwell on Saturday 4th February.



The quiz for 2017 will be available from late September and will be of Districts in Greater London (there are about 300 to choose from!).

*Derek Jones.*

## Guild 100 Club

### 100 Club Winners

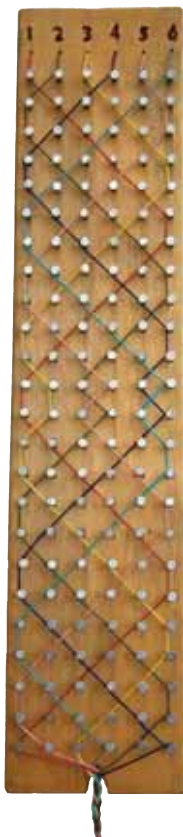
MONTH	No	1st	Prize	2nd	Prize	3rd	Prize
SEPT	118	91P	59.00	85D	29.50	12K	11.80
OCT	118	91P	47.20	04R	11.80		
NOV	113	77D	45.20	55N	11.30		
DEC	107	27R	42.80	40W	10.70		

In a year, the Club raises around £600 for the Bell Fund. A big thanks to all who subscribe to it.

Prizes are based on monthly membership, with half the subscriptions going to the bell fund. There are three prizes in September to bring the total prizes to below 50% (47.1%) as required by the gaming licence. The varying amounts show the changing monthly membership, September being a busy month for renewals.

Subscription is £12 per year, applications to go via the branch representatives

*Derek Jones.*



# The Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers Website



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**History**



Website Address <http://www.pdg.btck.co.uk/>.

# GUILD EVENTS 2017

## **April 8th**

**KETTERING** - ten-bell practice for Grandsire Caters, Yorkshire and Bristol S Royal 10.30am – 12.30pm

## **April 15th**

**SPONSORED WALK OR RIDE** for Guild Bell Fund 10am

## **April 29th**

**SPRING FESTIVAL: 6-bell striking competition** hosted by Towcester Branch (Please note date)

## **May 6th**

**HIGHAM FERRERS** - ten-bell practice for Grandsire Caters, Yorkshire and Bristol S Royal 10.30am – 12.30pm

## **June 10th**

**GUILD AGM: 3.30pm Ringing at Welford, service at 4.30pm, tea and meeting in Youth Centre, 6pm meeting and 7pm evening ringing** hosted by Guilsborough Branch.

## **June 17th**

**RIDGMAN TROPHY** Anglian inter-Guild 10-bell striking competition at St Mary the Great, Cambridge.

## **September 16th**

**SUMMER FESTIVAL: 8-bell inter-branch striking competition** hosted by Northampton Branch

*See Guild Website/Posters for more details*

