

Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers
Central Branch Newsletter (number 59) November 2007

St Wilfrid's, Metheringham

St Wilfrid's Church stands on a piece of high ground set back off the High Street in the old part of the village, and there has been a church on this site for over 900 years. On 9 July 1599 disaster struck when a Great Fire swept through Metheringham destroying half the village and leaving St Wilfrid's in ruins with only the Norman tower surviving. Straight away the village set about completely rebuilding the Church and restoring the original tower. Within just three years the church was complete and on 18 August 1602 the new St Wilfrid's Church was rededicated. Over the next 250 years it was little changed and it was not until the Victorian restorations between 1870 and 1896 that the Chancel and North Aisle were rebuilt.

There are two interesting stained glass windows in St Wilfrid's. The first, in the south aisle by the font, dates from 1947. It depicts Lincoln Cathedral and St Wilfrid's Church as well as Cistercian Monks of circa 1200 pulling on bell ropes with bells above pealing out. It was dedicated to John William Skins who was the local blacksmith and bell ringer at this church. The second, also in the south aisle, dates from 1969 and depicts the Old Church on fire in 1599 and then the rebuilding of the new Church in 1601.

The Norman tower is unbuttressed and is crowned with four pinnacles and a flagpole. It houses a clock and a peal of eight bells. In 1620 four new bells were cast by Paul Hutton of Nottinghamshire (the present 5, 6, 7 and Tenor) and these have been noted as worthy of preservation by the Council for the Care of Churches. In 1830 William Dobson of Downham Market cast a new treble (the present 4th) to augment them to a peal of five. This bell was raised by subscription, as recorded on its inscription. In 1912 the bells were augmented to the present peal of eight, making them the lightest peal of eight Church bells in Lincolnshire. The three new bells were cast by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough with the new treble being raised by the ringers, again recorded on the inscription on the bell. At the same time the bells were rehung in a new eight bell cast iron H frame on new fittings consisting of metal headstocks, plain bearings and hastings stays. Originally they were rung from upstairs in the clock chamber but when the new clock was installed in 1891 the ringing chamber was brought down to the ground floor, and has remained there ever since.

Then in 1999 disaster struck while pulling up the bells for practice night. They were half up when there was a great bang and the tenor rope stopped dead. The other bells were rung down as quickly as possible and the ringers went up to see what had happened. Some boarding had blown down from one of the louvres on to the frame of the tenor. The stay had come down onto it and had lifted the bell out of its bearings, smashing the wheel and leaving the bell precariously wedged in the corner of the tower. A local firm came and lowered the tenor back safely into its bearings and thankfully, after examination, it was found not to be cracked. The wheel was repaired locally and refitted, but sadly the local band never re-formed.

As many of you will know, Metheringham bells have a reputation of being difficult to ring due to the light weight of the front bells and the long unguided draught of rope making them flighty (leading to frequent broken stays!), and their odd-struckness. All this has made it difficult to maintain a local band. Recently a band has been formed to ring the bells regularly at Branston, Potterhanworth, Nocton, Dunston, Metheringham & Blankney and they have set up a practice rota ringing at each of the six churches once a month on Tuesdays and Wednesday nights, as well as ringing for special services, occasions and events

With the establishment of a local band, the bells being rung on a regular basis leading to renewed interest in the bells, and the fact that no major work has been done on them since 1912, it was decided by the PCC and ringers to have an inspection by bell hangers for a report on the condition of the bells, fittings and installation and make recommendations of what work needs to be done to keep the bells in good ringing condition.

It soon became clear that urgent work needs to be done. (Details of this can be seen in News from the Towers.) It was decided to limit the amount of ringing by not allowing the 5th and 7th to be rung except for very special occasions, keeping an eye on the pulley of the 6th. The local band has continued to practice on the six bells (treble, 2, 3, 4, 6 and tenor) which actually doesn't sound too bad (it could have sounded a lot worse!) although it is

difficult to turn in the tenor taking into account the weight difference between it and the other five bells.

The PCC has agreed to the restoration and re-hanging of the eight bells on condition that the ringers undertake the fund raising as the church are already raising funds for other things at present. The cost will be around £13,000. Various fund raising events are being planned for next year and we hope the branch and its ringers will come and support us and help us reach our target!!!

Christopher Woodcock

Proposed Ringing Programme

8 Dec	Holy Cross, Lincoln	Carol Service	3.00	followed by DIY carols on handbells
12 Jan	Harmston	AGM (ringing, Service, Tea and Meeting.		Ringling
9 Feb	Claypole	Ringling	2.30 - 4.00	
8 Mar	Thorpe-on-the-Hill	Ringling	2.30 - 4.00	

These are subject to change during the year. It is wise to check.

Branch Surprise Major Practices at Washingborough will be on the 4th Saturday in the month from 10.30 - 12, (24 November, 22 December, 2007. 26 January, 23 February, 15 March, 19 April, 24 May, 28 June, 26 July, 23 August, 20 September, 18 October, 22 November and 20 December 2008.) Put these dates in your new diary!
Any queries to Sue Waterfall 07925 149104.

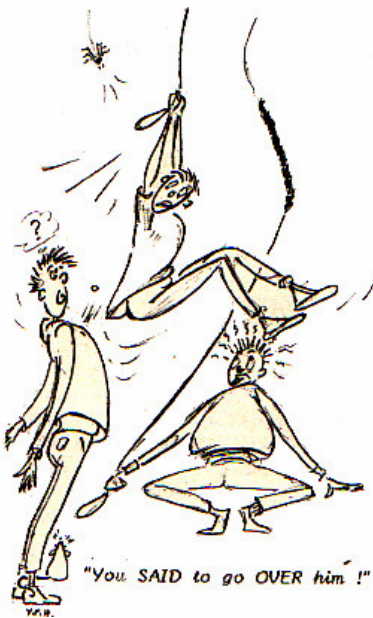
20 November sees the **60th Anniversary** of the wedding of the **Queen** and the **Duke of Edinburgh**. More quarters then?

Mick is wanting volunteers to **read at the Carol Service**. Come on, don't be shy!

Get your **Guild Christmas Cards** via Dot or Betty. They are £2-50 per pack of ten. Money to the Guild Belfry Repair Fund. You can see what they look like in the Guild Newsletter.

Once again! What **training sessions** would you find useful?

I must apologise for the quality of the duplicating of the last issue. I accepted the £10 reduction offered because of the line that appeared down the third page. Only when I had collated them into books did I realise how the size of the print varied so much. At first I thought my eyes were playing up - and I hope no-one found themselves visiting the optician because of it! The lines of large print were not intended to emphasise what had been written!



Notes from the Guild Committee Meeting

Guild Striking Contest Final to be held in our Branch next year.

The fund raising committee:

- * planning to produce sweatshirts/T-shirts/polo shirts etc with logo.
- * A Grand Draw instead of a raffle at the 2008 AGM.
- * Barn Dance next year.

Annual Report for 2007 will have a slightly different way of recording tower details. Be ready for Dot to ask for extras such as ringing times etc.

Simulator had a busy summer, raising awareness of ringing and gaining some new recruits. *If you want to use it contact the Guild Master.*

The new team producing the Guild Newsletter look forward to receiving short news items.

Guild to pay for **binding Ringing Worlds** for the Guild Library. (The various ringers who have done it voluntarily for many years are no longer available. Have you the skill?) Emma Southerington asked all branches to put this in their newsletters:

Everyclick.com

- * A search engine that benefits your chosen charity
- * Each search raises 1.2p -1.5p for your charity
- * searching for 'campanophile' or 'Lincoln Diocesan Guild' each time you visit, rather than clicking via your toolbar or favourites, over a month will typically raise between £1 and £3 per registered user - one office computer in one month raised over £8 - the more you search, the more you raise!
- * Totals are updated each month, around the 10th or 11th.

This really is money for nothing! If you need any help about this, contact Emma Southerington on emma@southerington.co.uk

2008 AGM to follow the same format as last year, using the Bailgate Methodist complex instead of St Giles. Details in the next Newsletter.

Overheard

'The Christmas Lady's Meeting is at Middle Rasen on Wednesday 5th December. Come at 12.30, and bring nibbles.'

'Do we bring men?'

'Yes, that's what I meant by 'bring nibbles'!'

Central Branch Training Morning and Onion Competition 8 September

The Central Branch Training Morning was held at Fulbeck. Conducting was the theme this year, with Mick Stracey concentrating on Kent TB, and Margaret Parker on Plain Bob Minor. Phil Mason explained the intricacies of Bob Doubles to one of our newer members.

After about 30 minutes theory was put into practice on the tower bells and the 25 or so ringers present agreed that it was a very successful morning.

It was then time to announce the results of the onion competition organised to raise funds for the Branch Bell Repair Fund (and for a bit of fun!). There were a surprising number of entries and when the winner was declared to be 'Number 11 Kett', a very bemused and speechless John Ketteringham, couldn't believe that he was the champion Onion grower in the Central Branch. The runners up were Margaret Parker and Jean Sims.

John Ketteringham

It was good to see a lot of people at Fulbeck. The subject for the Morning was what had been asked for. Let us know what you want next. Sadly the Tower Maintenance morning did not materialise due to lack of interest. The one or two who would have liked to come have discussed matters between themselves. Is there a need for a more formal and wide ranging day on this subject? *We need to know what you, the members, want!!*

She was for ever telling people what to do. During a complicated explanation of what was to be rung she said, 'Tell me exactly what you want me to do.'

They replied, 'Just do what you are told - that'll make a change!'

I think about where I'm going to be the next lead but then the other half of my brain tells me something different and I go wrong.

The RM turned and spoke to the Tenor ringer. After still ringing rounds for a while, the Tenor ringer said, 'Oh sorry. Did you tell me to call a touch? I thought you said 'Let in your clutch', telling me that I was getting left behind!

A Great Day

You know when you get up sometimes you are going to have a busy day ahead. Well, on the 13th October I knew I was going to be **very** busy, but I didn't know what a fantastic day it was going to be.

It started off having to be at the Cathedral for 10.30am, as a great friend of mine was being licensed as a lay-reader. Not early? But as someone who hates mornings, lots of things to do before that - chickens, cats and dogs to feed, and the dogs to walk etc, then put the finishing touches to food (more about that later.) Off to the Cathedral; what a lovely service and in such grandeur. I felt so proud of Sally, as I knew what the last three years of hard work she had had (3,000 word essays!!! and the rest.)

12 noon. Then off to Spridlington village hall for a bit of a do (that's where the food comes in). A great time was had by all, then looked at my watch and it was already 1.45. Crikey! Time to go!

2.30pm. Reported to Hackthorn Church, knees knocking - what you don't know is that I was going to ring my first quarter peal (for Sally). With the help of Margaret, David, Brian, John and Helen I achieved it, three years after I first started ringing. For some this might be a long time, but it doesn't matter because **I did it**. While we were there we arranged to go to the Central Branch get-together. I thought I was going to a meeting. (How wrong!)

7.00pm. On the way in the car David and Val were on about the Cathedral bells. Then it dawned on me. We were going to have a go (Help!!) We parked up and walked past the most beautiful building. I always feel great pride in seeing it on the hill looking fabulous. So up we went 124 steps (I was told) and then into the ringing chamber. Everyone was saying hello and being so kind. (I have found that with ringers. They are like gardeners.) Well, it comes to beginners doing rounds, so I had a go and after a few funny pulls got the feel of the bell and was away. Then I was informed I had won second prize in the 100 club. (I wish I had bought a lottery ticket!) Now when I look at the Cathedral I can think, 'I have rung one of the bells (if only in rounds) of that great building.'

Well, if that isn't a great day, no day is.

Cathy Andrews

[How good it is to see so many ringers at that meeting - especially all those who don't usually come. Let's hope that now you've realised that you don't have to be able to ring 'fancy stuff' that you'll all come to meetings in the future. They are for **you!** *Margaret*]



"I know you need a hobby now you're retired, but have you considered collecting stamps?"

Lincolnshire Mid Week Ringers' Away Day, 30 October

With Halloween fast approaching the Midweek ringers had a day out to where all the pumpkins are grown in the flat lands of Lincolnshire. So trying hard to avoid any witches or warlocks nineteen members of the older generation, a mere four youngsters having a day off work and five non-ringers started the day at Long Sutton St Mary, a 15cwt ground floor ring of eight. The sun shone and the ringing was good, ranging from rounds to cambridge major a good start to the day.

We then went to the Black Lion at Gedney for lunch. This had been pre-booked so making the service very good, and the food was excellent with very generous portions. A very leisurely two hour lunch break making plenty of time for friends to socialise.

After lunch we headed for Holbeach All Saints, a 13cwt eight. These were originally a ground floor ring but now have a new, very modern ringing chamber suspended on steel beams with glass panels round the edges sitting in front of a beautiful stained glass window. The bells were good but a little tricky to strike well. Here we rang from plain hunting to five spliced major. We finished the day by sampling the locally made ice cream - very tasty.

This was an excellent day out, especially as there were members from all six Branches of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild present.

We saw no witches!

Dot Mason

The Branch Quiz Night

Nearly fifty ringers and friends made their way to Hackthorn on 10th November for the Annual Quiz. After fifteen or so people had a ring for half an hour everyone assembled in the Village Hall, sorted themselves into nine groups and settled down to serious(?) exercise of the brain. As usual Mick and Betty organised eight rounds of challenging questions (but not **too** challenging, all of us could answer *some* of them!) They gave us no time to rest, with sheets to fill in between rounds. The first of these took us back to our childhood, testing what we could remember of our nursery rhymes - thank goodness for the babysitting grandmas in our midst! Identifying the people pictured in the second half proved a different sort of challenge - how did the Secretary of the Lincoln Guild find himself among all those celebrities (along with Rupert Bear!)? There was a break between the two halves of the quiz for refreshments and to top up our glasses, and while Betty was adding the final scores to the running totals the raffle (with lots of prizes) was drawn, Christmas cards were sold and the refreshments were visited again. Many thanks to Mick and Betty once again - Oh yes; Nettleham did win again.

*[NB Taking the cup back to its shelf in Nettleham, one ringer was heard to say, 'But why can't we win a trophy for our **ringing**? The way we started to ring next morning may have given us a clue! Thankfully it settled and the organist even expressed his pleasure at the sound we made ringing half muffled!]*

MAP

The Treble ringer was having trouble leading.

'Am I leaving too big a gap?'

'When the second pulls off in front of you, you know you are!'

'What went wrong there?'

Sally wouldn't dodge with me.'

'As we were ringing Plain Hunt, I'm not a bit surprised!'

'I thought my legs had gone trembly, but then realised this box is wobbly.'

We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. An old Chinese proverb.

Obituary

Canon Edward Cook

1928 - 2007

Edward learned to ring as a boy at Stapleford, a village just outside Cambridge, and became a regular member of the band there. After leaving for Oxford University, and then to Theological College, he did not ring for a number of years. Although after ordination he served as Priest at various Lincolnshire churches, all of which had fine peals of bells, he did not resume his ringing until he became Vicar of Saxilby, where he served for 27 years. Only when he retired in 1994 when he started joining regularly with the 'geriatric' afternoon group did he extend his repertoire to Surprise ringing. He faced the challenge earnestly, developing his own unique ways of memorising the details of such methods as Cambridge, Norwich and Beverley. He was a faithful member of the Dunholme/Scothern/Welton band, and among his quarter peals he was particularly pleased to ring in the first quarter peal of his grandson. He faced his final illness stoically and remained optimistic that he would return to his ringing and to his beloved singing. Fittingly the Orpheus Male Voice Choir will sing at his memorial service in the Cathedral, and his friends plan to go to Dunholme immediately afterwards to ring a quarter to his memory. R.I.P.

Congratulations

- - - - the Navenby ringers on their performance for the quarter peal week.
- - - - on ringing their first quarter peals to **Kathryn Blanchard** who trebled to Bob Doubles at Thorpe-on-the-Hill; to **Cathy Andrews** who trebled to Bob Doubles at Hackthorn; to **Anne Harris** who trebled to Bob Doubles at Wragby; to **Angela Holt** at Waddington.
- - - - to **Stephen Neate** on calling his first quarter : Bob Doubles at Scothern.
- - - - on ringing their **first quarter on an inside bell** to **Roy Chapman**, the third to Bob Doubles at Thorpe-on-the-Hill; to **Sally Turnbull**, the second to Bob Doubles at Hackthorn; to **Jean Sims**, the second to Bob Doubles at Dunholme.
- - - - to **Sleaford** on winning the Plate at the Guild Striking Contest.

News from the Towers

The report on **Metheringham** bells states that the gudgeon of the 7th is loose, the bush in the clapper of the 5th has completely disintegrated, which could result in the bell being cracked; the pulley of the 6th is cracked right across and in danger of falling to bits. They are planning to undertake the following work:

- * The 1912 metal headstocks of the back six bells will be cleaned down, re-gudgeoned and repainted.
- * New metal headstocks for the front 2 bells.
- * Restoration of all 8 wheels.
- * Restoration and replacement of all 8 sets of pulleys.
- * Re-bushing and re-painting of all 8 clappers.
- * Rehanging of all 8 bells on ball bearings.

The local ringers intend to clean and repaint the frame while the bells are away, install new rope guides and sound control. If funds allow they may also look to having a new set of ropes and installation of a new ringing gallery 7 or 8 feet from the ground (as at Washingborough).

It is hoped that once the work is complete Metheringham will become a training tower for young people as the bells are light, so they can recruit new ringers for the six towers in the area that they ring at. They hope also that the branch and its ringers will make good use of Metheringham bells. Can we support them in the task of raising the necessary £13,000 for this?

Details of Metheringham bells:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|--|--|
| 1 | 2 1/2 cwt | RAISED BY THE RINGERS J.DAWSON J.FOSTER
A.R.FINCHHAM G.FINCHAM W.GREEN H.GREEN 1912 | Founder Taylors of Loughborough |
| 2. | 2 3/4 cwt | HY HICKS G.W.COOKE CHURCHWARDENS 1912 | Founder Taylors of Loughborough |
| 3. | 3 1/2 cwt | 1912 W.I.S.RAWSON VICAR INSTITUIT MAI Vi 1881 | Founder Taylors of Loughborough |
| 4 | 4 cwt | THIS BELL RAISED BY SUSSCRIPTION, REVD I.CASE VICAR 1830 | Founder
Wiliam Dobson |
| 5. | 3 3/4 cwt | GOD SAVE SIH CHVRCH 1620 | Founder Paul Hutton Nottingham Foundry |
| 6 | 4 3/4 cwt | GOD SAVE THE KI[N]G 1620 | Founder Paul Hutton Nottingham Foundry |
| 7 | 5 1/2 cwt | JESUS BEE OUR SPEED 1620 | |
| 8 | 6 3/4 cwt | Hec Campana Sacra Fiat Trinitate Beata 1620 | Founder Paul Hutton Nottingham |

[NB The names of the six ringers who paid for the treble all appear in the 1912 Guild Report as members of the Guild. This may be a way in which you can immortalise your name too?]

From an article in the daily Telegraph

‘Many readers attest to the therapeutic benefits of bellringing ... including a fireman who sustained severe injuries to his pelvis and lower spine in an accident at work. Despite many operations and much physiotherapy he remained incapacitated. Within a few months of taking up bellringing his spine has straightened and his pelvis was so improved he could return to work. But that is not all, for the rhythmical tugging on the rope strengthens the forearms, relieving the symptoms of Repetitive Strain Injury, and intense concentration keeps cognitive decline at bay. Together these benefits for bellringers explain why many can carry on into their eighties and nineties. You are also part of an amazing network that covers much of the English speaking world. Wherever you go you will be warmly welcomed into a group of friends. Those so inclined can apparently take it up at any age. The only drawback is that it can be addictive.’

(There we are. We have medical approval. No more ‘I can’t come ringing because I’ve got a bad back!’)

Challenge

Rearrange the letters in capitals to fit the clues.

1. He may be a RICH SAINT.
2. IT HEARS the bells again.(4,3)
3. O, PARSON, she sings in the choir.
4. This may be a CARTHORSE, but it can accompany 3.
5. IT CHARMS MITES (9,4)
6. DONS MATTERED, they showed us how to do things.
7. THING in darkness.
8. He may be standing on a box when you GRIN OR ENTER (5,6).
9. SING A CAROL, and playthis too. (3,7).
- 10.FIR CONES grow on them.
- 11.EMIT GRUNTS while ringing.
- 12.These COST ME TIME.
- 13.He belongs to the PATIENT WAR CO, and is in charge of the belfry(5,7)
- 14.I HIRE PARSON.
- 15.CRIES, LET IT SNOW, and it often does on this occasion. (6,8).

(Taken from Angela Newing’s ‘A Peal of Puzzles’.)

Thought for the week

The band had just lost another peal, the fifth in succession. But no-one turned on the conductor who had miscalled it, just as nobody had thought of lynching the pair who crossed over in the previous attempt, or harboured lasting resentment against the ringer who forgot to turn up the time we met short. In fact we ringers seem to be a fairly forgiving lot, accepting the fact that in ringing - as in life in general - sometimes you win, sometimes you don’t. This is very good news in modern times when we seem to live in an age of blame culture. Whenever anything goes wrong a culprit must be sought out, and sued for vast sums of money, even when no amount of money can ever put things right. I’m not suggesting we all lie down and meekly let life wash over us, letting evil go unchecked and good

unappreciated. I just think we should try to remember all three parts of the well-known prayer, 'Give me courage to change the things which need to be changed, the serenity to accept the things which cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.'

This was written by Patrick Wooster, Master of the Clerical Guild, for the Ringing World.

What about your bells?

In writing his article about Metheringham bells, Christopher fell to musing about what they have seen. A lot of this will apply to yours too - or they may bring back different memories. He writes:

It is amazing to think of what history the bells have seen during the past 380 years. The back four have seen 17 monarchs ruling over England and pealed out for the coronations of 16 of them. They were cast in the same year that English Puritans set sail for North America in the Mayflower. They have survived two Civil Wars and seen the rule of Oliver Cromwell and the Restoration of the Monarchy. They have seen Isaac Newton establish his theory of gravity and James Cook exploring and discovering new lands. They have pealed to celebrate the victories of Nelson at Trafalgar and Wellington at Waterloo. They have seen many advances in technology such as Faraday's discoveries about electricity; the inventions of the motor car and aeroplanes as well as witnessing and surviving two World Wars. They pealed in 1946 to celebrate the end of World War II, and half muffled in 1965 to mark the death of Winston Churchill. Most recently they have welcomed the Millennium and they pealed out to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the rebuilding and dedication of St Wilfrid's.

Christopher Woodcock

I climb the steps - all 54
Full of youthful hope.
I'm going to learn to ring a bell
By pulling on a rope.

They're catching something called Sally
(She's the ringers' bit of fluff)
Then they talk of hand and backstroke
And loads of foreign stuff.

My turn to ring has come at last
The Captain stands quite near.
I tug on the rope, which snakes -
Just get me out of here.

Why was I given the slackest rope
When all the others are tight?
'Stand back! Let go!' The orders fly,
'You've bust a stay outright.

So what's this language ringers use?
Could it be Roman or Norse?
A directive from the EEC
Insists on BELLgian of course!

Dianna Foord

Seen in the tower at Swan Bells in Australia -

Do what you can
Where you can
With what you have
and you will make a difference.

“Where’s my box?”

“You’re already standing on it!”

The tower was in the habit of calling courses of Surprise round half way through on time considerations. One day the Master said, ‘Be prepared to pass on to the other half.’ A ringer said, ‘I’m pleased you finished the sentence. I’m not ready to pass on yet.’

‘I knew I’d gone wrong, but I knew exactly where I was’ *(or thought he was!)*

He missed a Bob.

She put it in for him.

‘Ooh! He went all falsetto!’

The five ages of ‘man’.

From 14 - 18 you know it all.

From 19 - 21 you think you know it all.

From 22 - 40 you’re learning about it all.

At 40 you realise you know very little of it all.

At 70 you’ve forgotten it all.

There was a muddle over books. He only turned his back for a moment but even then had cause to exclaim, ‘That’s the first time I’ve had my service book nicked in church!’

Her rope caught in her skirt, leading to a fellow ringer being told, ‘Never mind about looking at the petticoats. Keep your bell in its place.’