

Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
Central Branch Newsletter (number 83) November 2013

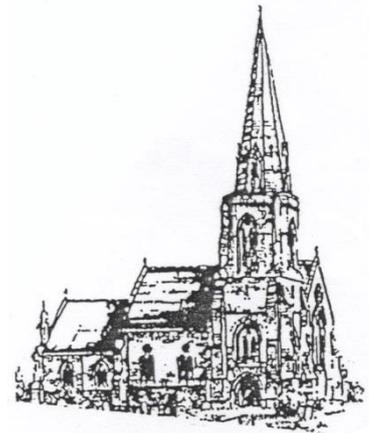
Central Branch Half Yearly Meeting and Ringing

Central Branch members met for the half yearly meeting at the agreed park-up venue, Nocton Village Hall on Saturday 10th August. Arriving on time members were met with sunshine and a warm welcome from Chris Woodcock, clutching walking directions to Potterhanworth church, and for enthusiasts an observation quiz to be completed on route, requiring sharp eyes and quick wits.

Completing the gentle stroll the walkers arrived at Potterhanworth church to meet up with those less energetic members who had chosen to drive straight to the first venue and who, under direction from Richard Spenser, had the bells rung up and ready to go.

Those who had not had the chance to ring at Potterhanworth before were pleasantly surprised to find the bells a light and easy going ring. With 25 ringers now assembled Richard took firm control and there followed some brisk ringing ranging from rounds & call changes to Cambridge Surprise so that everyone, whatever level their ringing skill, had a chance to take part.

The Rev'd Les Whitfield had kindly agreed to conduct the service with his wife, Jill, assisting as organist. The service started at 4.20pm (a little before schedule) and the following half an hour proved that ringers can raise their voices with as much enthusiasm as they ring the bells. Then a good humoured group set off in sunshine for the walk (or drive) back to Nocton Cricket Club where the picnic tea and meeting had been arranged. Under continued sunshine everyone settled down at the picnic tables to enjoy an excellent home baked tea provided by Yvonne Woodcock. Fully replete on tea and cake there was plenty of time to mellow out and catch up on news with friends not seen for a while. Then everyone was entertained by a group of energetic members who decided to have an egg & spoon race. Yvonne contrived to supply golf balls and the race was on. After a hilarious but dysfunctional practice run the race proper was called and Sandra Underwood showed all comers how it should be done winning with a clear 3 metre lead.



After this light hearted interlude order was called and the more serious business of raffle, quiz and the meeting began. Betty Stracey kindly stepped forward to sell raffle tickets, catching everyone before escape was possible and her efforts were suitably rewarded when husband Mick won. The quiz answers were read out by Chris with a respectable number of people getting all the answers correct. Fortunately as the quiz was just for fun there were no grumbles over the number of winners from even the most competitive members.

Finally Richard called for quiet and (with the sun gone and a chill wind picking up) the meeting commenced: quite the quickest meeting I have ever attended, no matters arising and nothing to report. The details of the Carol Service and AGM were given and can be seen at the end of this report.

Happy to make a move, the majority made their way to Nocton church for the last ringing of the day. Richard took charge again and the ringing was varied, with encouragement for those who attended the course earlier in the year on how to call methods to practice their calling skills. A very warm welcome was given to Amanda Crombie who came to join everyone for her first ring since the birth of her son, Freddie. Freddie, also in attendance, was clearly unfazed by all the commotion, undoubtedly the Central Branch's youngest budding ringer. Members dispersed at 8pm with cheery goodbyes and 'see you next time'. A very enjoyable day all round.

Special thanks go to:

Chris Woodcock for arranging the use of Potterhanworth and Nocton, for arranging for the Rev'd Whitfield to conduct the service, and for the walk directions and quiz (and the entertaining egg & spoon race!)

Richard Spenser – for his excellent Ringing Master & Secretary duties. **Yvonne Woodcock** – for volunteering to provide the delicious picnic tea (& all the work setting up and clearing away entailed)

Rev'd Les and Jill Whitfield – for conducting the service and organ duties and **last, but not least** - to everyone who attended and made the day so very successful.

Suggested Ringing Programme for 2013 -2014

Nov 9	Brant Broughton	Quiz night and faith supper	6 – 30
Dec 14	Ruskington	Carol Service followed by mince pies 2.30 ringing for 3pm Carol Service	
Jan 11	Navenby	AGM. Ringing 3pm; Service 4.30 Tea and meeting Navenby Further ringing in that area.	
Feb 8	Rauceby and Fulbeck		2.00 – 3.00 3.15 0 4.15
Mar 8	Wragby		2.00 – 3.00

Put all these dates in your diary.

Sue's Surprise Major practices at Washingborough on 4th Saturday of the month: Nov 23rd and Dec 21st.

Fabian Stedman, 'father of change-ringing', the publisher of the first books on change ringing, died in November 1713. The Central Council suggest ringing a quarter of Stedman (or at least a touch) on November 16th to celebrate this occasion, and use it as a vehicle for publicity for ringing. Conveniently, 300 changes of Stedman Doubles is produced by 5 courses, so if you want to ring a date touch for the 300th anniversary, it is not difficult to find a composition!

Guild Christmas Cards and 2014 Calendars

Look out for the cards - ringing robins this year - £2 for a pack of 5.

The Guild Calendar, featuring 12 Churches from within the Guild, will grace any ringing room wall or home. There is space beneath each picture for your ringing engagements. They are £5 each.

Proceeds to the Guild Belfry Repair Fund.

Do come to the **Branch Quiz Night** at Brant Broughton on Saturday November 9th. Hall open at 6-30pm, and quiz starts promptly at 7. Bring a few refreshments, and enjoy a social evening. There is no licensed bar this year - bring your own bottle if you wish; cups of tea and coffee will be provided. Raffle prizes will be welcome.

The **Branch Carol Service** will be at Ruskington on Saturday 14th December. Ringing at 2.30 for a 3pm service. Mince pies afterwards. Tell Mick if you are willing to do a reading. Another enjoyable social event (after you have sung your carols!)

Branch Outing to Mablethorpe, fish and chips and a paddle in the sea! 13th July

We arrived at West Keal (6 bells at 10cwt) at about 11 30 and didn't hear any ringing to begin with, but as we were travelling up the drive the bells started. Fortunately they were already up, so when I got there I began with ringing some Plain Bob Doubles. From first glance they looked quite nice, with a ground floor ring and guides. The third felt a bit bouncy, but I'm used to this from the tower where I learnt to ring, so didn't find it too bad. A few more methods were rung, along with Plain Bob Minor and St Clements. When it came to the ringing down, I was landed with the tenor. All went well until about half way down some of the bells decided they weren't playing with us, and went 'funny' but fortunately the big bell was good to me.

By now the day was beginning to get quite hot with temperatures around 26C, which isn't ideal for bell ringing, but we carried on. Alford (6 bells at 12 cwt) is a nice tower with an upstairs belfry. The bells also were up when we arrived here, but as soon as I entered the tower I was asked to conduct a touch of Plain Bob. I'm not too confident a conductor, but I gave it a go. More methods were rung including some Cambridge and Stedman.

Mablethorpe was the last tower of the day (6 bells at 9cwt) where we nearly had a lock out, but made it into the church after about 20 minutes. I made a dash for the tea pot, and a sit down in the children's area, unfortunately Sandra was there with the camera though, and I didn't get away with it. It was another lovely ring to end the day, with some more touches of Plain Bob, plus a few other methods.

We then made our way to the beach. Some of us went into Mablethorpe itself, while another group went to Huttoft Bank. A delicious fish and chip supper was served, and we went for a little paddle and a game of boules on the sand: meanwhile knobbly knees competition and a water fight were had at Huttoft beach, along with another game of boules which Gill won. This was followed by a very exciting cricket match, umpired by John from behind his newspaper, and won by Sylvia by a spectacular 8 runs!

A very good day was had by all, two ringers went home soaking wet, four were last seen heading north along the sands, and four others just managed to escape the incoming tide and sea mist!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me through my first year in Lincoln, and I'm really looking forward to what is ahead!

Michael Lawton

Quote of the match:

Eric : I thought Margaret was very brave the way she dived for that ball!

Sylvia : She didn't dive. She fell over!

Branch Visit to Loughborough Oct 12

It seemed a good idea for us to do something different for our Branch meetings, so for the October meeting the Ringing Master arranged a tour of the Bell Foundry at Loughborough, ring on their light ring of 12, then a couple of towers on the way home after lunch. Good Plan! – but in practice rather a disappointment. For a start the weather was cold and wet (a nasty shock after the hot days we had been enjoying.) Then the numbers. After 4 people had had to drop out at the last minute, we only managed to muster 14 people for the tour, including some non-ringers, making ringing the twelve a problem. Thankfully Dot and Phil joined us when we at last realised that the banging we could hear downstairs was NOT the employee we had left working downstairs 'giving it the big hammer', but Dot and Phil trying to attract our attention to let them into the locked building! They were a big help. We acquitted ourselves well on these extremely light bells, with few of the band ever having rung on twelve before. The tour was very interesting - you should go some time if you are interested to know what is involved in the making of a bell (at £5,000 each!) and its fittings (a further £5,000 per bell!) We learned that Taylors make everything including bearings, clappers, wheels etc. down to even making stays! We were made to realise that although so very expensive, they are good value when you consider the work involved, and the fact that each bell will last for at least 1,000 years! In the workshop we saw the peal of bells that had survived the collapse of the tower of Christchurch (New Zealand) in the earthquake, unbroken by even that catastrophe.

Sadly most people had had enough by then and only 5 of us reached Willoughby on the Wold (6 bells), the first tower of the afternoon, and only 6 made it to Cotgrave (a lovely 17cwt 8). Rather embarrassing for our Master. We did manage some interesting ringing at both towers, (mainly on the front six at Cotgrave), and we returned home tired but satisfied - and it was still raining!

Thank you Richard for your hard work organising this (on paper) lovely day. The Committee keep asking what you want as a Branch. Please tell us. Don't leave us to guess!

Margaret Parker

A ringer's wife asked, 'How do you tell the difference between good ringing and bad ringing?' On being told that good ringing is rung with a perfect rhythm, and that the ringing they had just heard was good, but the previous one had been very uneven, she said, 'I can't tell the difference.' I suppose that unless there is a lot of clashing, the public is not aware of the whether the ringing is good or not?

WELGOB's 5th Annual Tour – 5th October

When I got out of bed that morning I knew it was going to be a different sort of day. I wasn't to be disappointed. I had been afforded the undoubted privilege of joining 'Welgob's Fifth Annual Tour.' Now for those who don't know, WELGOB stands for Wellingore Guild of Bellringers, the most eccentric group of characters who ever held a rope. They, of course, have their own coat of arms, tee shirts, and rituals which make the Masons look like a vicar's tea party. We met at Welgob's headquarters – appropriately enough the Red Lion, Wellingore – at 8.15 am for coffee and a delicious bacon roll (I understand that it one of the principal rules of the Order to look after the 'inner man'). Most of the 18 or so of us travelled by the expertly navigated Welgob mini-bus and set course for five towers identified by Mick and Betty in that area where 'Huntingdonshire', 'Bedfordshire' and 'Northamptonshire' all come together and where the river is still properly called 'the Nen' rather than the 'Neen'. The first tower was St Mary's Buckden (6) where predictably coffee and cakes awaited. This is surely one of the most beautiful ringing rooms, set on a spacious mezzanine floor overlooking the nave. This was followed by the first of two visits to St Mary Magdalene, Brampton. The first before lunch was on a normal (anti-clockwise) ring of 6 which on the second visit after lunch metamorphosed into a quite separate light simulator ring, all of the same weight! Our very professionally printed tour guide described the latter as 'the future'. Well, if that is the future I don't want to go there very often! As was expected, the very well organised lunch at the Black Bull

in Brampton was more than satisfying (I forgot to mention that the Latin motto on the Welgob coat of arms, loosely translated means 'Feel the Weight'!) The afternoon towers comprised: All Saints, Hamerton (6), All Saints, Winwick (5) and St Peter's, Yaxley (6), followed by refreshments in the Three Horseshoes, Yaxley. The journey back to Wellingore passed very quickly thanks to the Welgob official Song Sheet, which served as a starter for many variations. During the journey there was the statutory perusal of the 'Welgob Book of Unwritten Rules', beautifully presented but, of course, full of blank pages!

I knew it was going to be a different sort of day. It was also extremely enjoyable despite my own dismal performance on 'foreign' bells'. Grateful thanks are due to Mick and Betty for arranging the towers and, of course, to Welgob members for delightful company and a very memorable outing. I hope I am still allowed to join your next year's tour.

Roy Chapman

Hackthorn Tower Outing

Ringers' outings give the ringers time to socialise as well as ring. This year Hackthorn ringers did more than their fair share of that without even touching a bell rope. With a tower captain who is a roof guide at the Cathedral, we often said we'd be fascinated to go and see what it was all about, so in August Brian arranged to take us up there to show us the amazing workmanship in that awe inspiring space. Then after a pub lunch in the Bail he took us on a guided tour of the ground floor. We realised there are lots of things we never notice when we look around for ourselves, and we now need to go back and take time to take it all in! Thank you to Cathy who not only organised lunch, but also arranged for tea and coffee to be served in the cloisters, where we had the chance to refresh ourselves and have a welcome sit down to rest our weary legs to round off the day, but most of all, thank you to Brian for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm with us.

Obituary

Gerald R Audis

- 2013

40 minutes of rounds and call changes were rung after the funeral of Gerald R Audis, Tower Captain of Holy Trinity church, Martin, who sadly passed away on 2nd August 2013. Martin bell ringers were formed in 1999 with the intention of ringing for the Millennium in 2000. Gerald was the only one of the team who could ring, so was the obvious choice to become Captain. Gerald was a true friend, colleague, and all round top bloke and will be sadly missed. Two teams rang in tribute to Gerald, half muffled immediately after the funeral and fully open later, as Gerald left the church for the last time, the Tenor (his favourite bell) being tolled in recognition of his service. Rounds and call changes into Queens (which was rung for the Millennium) were rung, with Judy our original teacher calling. The ringers were:

1. Janet Risdale
2. Jo Shaplin & Heather Watson
3. Janet Crafer & Karen Brooke
4. Sue Stirling & Ed Purkiss
5. Judy Williamson ©
6. Clive Brooke ©

He has the habit of thinking he cannot achieve the next step before he has even tried it. The TC said, 'Don't be negative!' He said, 'That's my blood group. B negative is part of my make up.'

News from the Towers

30 minutes rounds & Call Changes were rung by the 'After School Ringing Club' at **Potterhanworth** prior to the C E Primary School end of year assembly by the five pupils who have learnt to ring there. 'We are pleased that they all want to continue ringing now that they have left the school'.

Dan broke his wrist two weeks ago so was unable to ring but he joined in by chiming the Sanctus bell (which is tuned as the treble of an eight). We wish Daniel Copsley, Ella Marshal, Charlotte Sunman, Andrew Spence and Orissa Sansoa-twell well in their future and look forward to seeing them as members of the Guild.

Potterhanworth's example has inspired the **Nettleham** ringers to try to arrange an after school ringing club too. The use of the simulator at the Church Schools Festival in the Cathedral gave them the opening they needed to approach the school. They hope they manage to achieve the same sort of success in spreading the exercise!

Work is going on at **Caythorpe**. The first stage of restoration has been completed, and now they are working on the spire and hope to be back in action in the new year.

‘ELLEL FREETH WHILST BUT ALIVE GAVE HARBY THIS PEEL OF FIVE ELLEN FREETH DONAR 1877’

I know **Harby** is not in our Guild, but their neighbouring ringers from Thorpe ring with the local band, each giving the other a helping hand in true ringing tradition. They had a ‘somewhat inconvenient ring of five’ (Roy’s delicate way of saying they were really heavy going), and Will Turner, the Tower Captain worked hard to keep them manageable. They now have been re-hung and a Treble added, and on Sept 25th the Thorpe-on-the-Hill practice night band went to try them out and found them easy to ring, almost unrecognisable from the earlier ring of 5. Since then Roy has joined them in scoring the first quarter peal on six bells for the Harvest Festival.

If you are going out, you may get a big surprise. A Nettleham ringer went on a trip organised by the steam railway people to Carlisle, little realising that there were other ringers with the same idea, and he finished up ringing with them at Carlisle Cathedral. As a six bell ringer who had only ever rung on even 8 once before, this foray into 12 bell ringing – and at a Cathedral! – made his day! Another example of the fellowship of our art is shown in Michael’s note at the end of his account of the July meeting. Ringing makes the transition to another phase of life such as going to University that much easier.

Congratulations

- - - to the team who entered the National Youth Striking Contest who came 4th. **Hannah Watt** of Welton was among this team and she acquitted herself well, gaining a great deal from the experience.

- - - - to **Hannah Watt** (again!) on ringing her first quarter. She rang the Treble to Bob Doubles immaculately at Dunholme on 14th July.

- - - - to **Helen McGurk** on her first quarter as conductor, Bob Doubles at Hackthorn on 26th August.

- - - - to **Dot** and **Phil Mason** on their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The following was inscribed in a card sent to them by a fellow ringer :

After 50 years of double harmony,
 (no minor feat these days),
You deserve triple joy and major happiness.
When you have catered for your guests and
 given them a right royal do,
Don’t spend too long at the kitchen cinque
But withdraw the cork and drink to each other
 with maximus enjoyment.

- - - - to the Central Branch team that represented us at the 8 bell striking contest. They only failed to win the trophy on a technicality - they took too long on the practice piece and were penalised for it. Please note: rules are there to be obeyed!

Jim : I haven’t rung it for a long time.
I’m a bit rusty. I need some E45 - - -
No I mean WD40!.At the end of a
perfect course he said: The E45 and
WD40 between them polished the
rust off and made it really shiny!

I didn’t really know what I was doing.
I was just filling in the gaps. It’s when
there’s more than gap that the trouble starts!

Everyone has a photographic memory, it’s just that some of them don’t have the film!

Seen in the tower
Local ringers failing to set their bell put a penny in the belfry box. Visitors - when in Rome - - - -.

Plain Bob Doubles for the Learner

Ringing by the Treble and starting from thirds place bell

You ring in rounds behind the second,
Striking better than they reckoned.
At 'Go Plain Bob' hunt slow to the back,
Two blows there, hunt down to attack.

First you lead, and then the Treble,
2nds you make, that's twice you rebel.
Lead again with one whole pull,
Then hunt to the back to keep the rule.

Treble is the last bell you strike over,
Two at the back, hunt down you rover.
Dodge 3/4, that's down I mean,
So over at backstroke, strike it clean.

Lead once more, just like the last,
Then hunt back up, but not too fast;
Pass two bells, the treble, one more,
Now four behind, and keep the score.

Down to the front, no dodging needed,
Lead up proudly, with striking heeded,
Pass one bell, then treble to run
To 3/4 up, it's rounds, YOU'VE WON!

After the Practice

Ally slumped into her chair, looking glum. 'I'll never get it. It's time I gave up!'

'Don't talk daft.' said Joe as he went to fetch the drinks from the bar.

'What's got into Frank tonight?' Ally went on.

'How d'you mean?' Joe asked as he set down the tray.

'He seemed really ratty,' Ally replied. 'I've never seen him like that. He's usually so quiet and helpful.'

'Here he comes now,' said Joe, 'Ask him yourself!'

'Oh! I couldn't do that,' she squeaked.

Frank sat down and picked up a foaming glass. 'Is this mine? Thanks.' Then he turned to Ally. 'You did well tonight' Then seeing her face he added, 'Why the surprised look? You really are getting the hang of it.'

'I made a right mess of things. When you shouted at Lou for missing a dodge I went all to pieces. I thought it was going to be my turn next!'

Frank laughed. 'You'll find my bark's a lot worse than my bite - and come to think of it, I don't think I've ever bitten anyone yet!'

'But you're usually so gentle and patient' Ally murmured.

Frank laughed. 'It really gets my gall when people don't try! There's all the difference in the world when people are really trying - and no-one can ever accuse you of not doing that! - they need encouragement. We've all of us been there. But there's no excuse for sloppy ringing. Good ringing needs a good rhythm, and that's a team effort. How can anyone learn when the others are all over the shop? We all need to learn methods properly and then concentrate. The ringing is only as good as the weakest link. It's up to the experienced ringers to help the learners if ringing isn't going to die out. You stick to it, girl. You'll be better than any of them one day!'

Everyone brings joy to the belfry - some when they arrive - others when they leave!

Be kind to unkind people - they need it the most.

If I'm concentrating too hard I forget where I am!

Branch Quarter Peals

SLEAFORD 28 June
1260 Doubles (240 each St Simon, Rev Canterbury and
Grandsire, 540 Plain Bob)
1. Sylvia Taylor
2. Geoffrey Wilkins
3. Richard Rodgers
4. Alan Bird ©
5. Bryan Ward
Most methods – 2

DUNHOLME 14 July
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
1. Hannah Watt
2. Margaret Parker
3. Helen McGurk
4. John Bundy
5. Philip Dawson ©
6. Tom Burton
First quarter – 1
Rung for Confirmation Service

HACKTHORN 26 Aug.
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
1. Cathy Andrews
2. Margaret Parker
3. Helen McGurk ©
4. John Bundy
5. Brian Smith
First as Conductor

NETTLEHAM 15 Sept.
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
1. Fiona Dawson
2. Richard Thornton
3. Margaret Parker ©
4. John Bundy
5. Tom Burton
6. Trevor Hardcastle
First inside – 2
Rung as a farewell to Rev Jenny Rowley prior to her
final service before leaving the parishes. The band of
ringers were from four of her five parishes -
Dunholme, Nettleham, Scothern and Welton.

CATHEDRAL 22 Sept
1263 Stedman Caters
1. Sandra Underwood
2. Heather Blacklock
3. Ruth Curtis
4. Les Townsend
5. Graham Colborne
6. David Fox
7. John Underwood
8. Andrew Blacklock ©
9. Paul Curtis
10. Phil Mason
For Evensong

HACKTHORN 29 Sept
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
1. Cathy Andrews
2. Margaret Parker
3. Helen McGurk ©
4. Fiona Dawson
5. John Bundy
6. Brian Smith
Rung on the feast of St Michael and All Angels prior to
the Patronal Festival Eucharist presided over by the
Bishop of Lincoln.

CATHEDRAL 1 Oct
1282 Lincolnshire Surprise Major
1. John Underwood
2. Sylvia Taylor
3. Heather Blacklock
4. Les Townsend
5. Mick Stracey ©
6. Phil Mason
7. David Fox
8. Andrew Blacklock
Rung to celebrate Lincolnshire Day.

St GILES, LINCOLN 23 October
1250 Cambridge Surprise Major
1. Dot Mason
2. John Underwood
3. Michael Lawton
4. Betty Stracey
5. Mick Stracey
6. John Nicholson
7. Phil Mason
8. David Fox ©
Rung for the baptism of Prince George
of Cambridge at the time of the service.
Also best wishes to ringer of 3 on his last
day as a teenager.