

Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers



Newsletter Number 2

August 2005

From the Guild Master

It was a tremendous honour to be elected Guild Ringing Master at the AGM in April this year. I have been very grateful for the many messages of congratulation and support from Guild members and for the welcome I have been given at various ringing events since then. I am very much looking forward to meeting many more Lincolnshire ringers over the months to come.

The news of the change of Master was placed on Campanophile (a bellringers newsletter on the internet) and as a result I have been contacted by a number of ringers I knew many years ago as a teenager. It has been lovely hearing from them and how life and ringing has treated them over the past few decades. It reminded me of the importance of the wider network of bellringers and the friendship this can lead to, and why this makes ringing such an attractive (and addictive) hobby.

I hope to be able to assist this process of widening the horizons of bellringers beyond their own towers. In this, the role of the local branches is crucial, particularly in a large, rural county like ours. Guild officers aim to support and encourage branch officers in their endeavours. It has been very exciting to see the way that some of our young ringers have started to organise their own ringing and social events over the last year or so. A number of peals and quarters have been scored which have included youngsters from across the Guild. Thanks must go to the people involved in their training, support and transport. With such youthful enthusiasm the Guild has strength for years to come.

I would like to thank Keith Buckingham for all his support and hard work as Master over the past three years and wish him and Sue all the best for the future.

Sue Faull

Thought for the week – Ringing World 1 July 2005

It was good that Bishop John was able to visit the Ringing Roadshow at Lincoln and I asked him earlier this year if he would like to contribute to Thought for the Week as an introduction to the next Roadshow. He agreed and for those of you who do not see the Ringing World this is what he wrote :

“The Ringing Roadshow in Lincoln two years ago was a revelation. Never have I met so many enthusiasts anxious to show and share their knowledge and skills.

Traditional methods rubbed shoulders with computerised technology as ringers of all ages celebrated their hobby.

Hobby? More a vocation, or even a way of life!

Of course, bells have a long history in the Church. There is evidence of bells being rung as part of Church life as long ago as the 4th century, and they were well established in England at the time of the Norman Conquest. Since that time new bells have been blessed by the Bishop using Holy Water -the "Baptism of the Bells" as it came to be called - and I have lost count of the number of times I have been called upon to dedicate new bells, re-hung bells, replacement bellframes and health and safety sensitive stairs to ringing chambers!

It is good that bells are "Baptised" because they are part of the Church family.

They have not only summoned people to worship, but they have signalled danger in time of war, and celebrated peace when hostilities are over. They have inaugurated many a marriage, marked the ending of the day ("the curfew bells") and the ending of a life ("the passing bell"). Bells are rung for fun -and in deadly earnest.

Bells are woven into the fabric of what it means to be part of a community in this country, and the sound of them signals something essential to our identity.

Whilst there is something ironic about the sight of bellringers who have summoned people to worship scuttling away before the Service begins, still there is a sense in which the ringing of the bells is an act of worship in itself, insofar as it lifts people's sights and spirits above the routines of daily life to hear something of the songs the Angels sang.

May this year's Roadshow be a great success -and may I thank all ringers for their dedication to the Church and community where they live and work and worship.”

+ JOHN LINCOLN

Foreign students at The Stump

Three foreign students have been taught to ring at St Botolph's (The Stump), Boston. They all attend Boston College, where they are studying for their 'A' levels.

They commenced ringing in October 2004 and within a very few weeks were ringing rounds and call-changes for services. Franzeska and Katrin were ringing the treble to Bob Doubles before Christmas and Franzeska has in fact now rung a quarter peal and we hoping that Katrin will soon follow. Andre is not quite so far forward, but is ringing 12 changes from any bell with no problems.

Unfortunately, Franzeska left for Germany on 11th June and, Andre and Katrin are also leaving soon.

However, we are hopeful that Andre will be returning to Boston College for another years study so should be joining us again before too long.

We will miss them all greatly, as they have all proved to be excellent students, not only in the art of bellringing, but socially as well.

All at Boston wish them well for the future.



Ed

Those of you who have rung at Boston will be aware of the problems. When the bells were recast and augmented to ten in 1932 a scheme was produced by which the ringers would stand above the bells! Both Taylor's and Whitechapel rejected this proposal but Gillett & Johnston developed what they believed to be a feasible system for which they took out a patent. So far as is known this was never installed and at Boston the authorities rejected it. Would such a scheme work?

Joint Surprise Major Practices

The dates and towers for the next few months are as follows : They will all be from 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm unless otherwise notified.

30th July Central Branch - Welbourn

24th September West Lindsey Branch – Stow

26th November Northern Branch – Caistor

Occasionally the tower or date may have to be changed so please contact Debbie Scarff on 01724 764526 or e-mail at m.scarf-at-tiscali.co.uk before attending.

Please do support these practices, but remember that they are **Surprise Major** practices, so do not turn up expecting to ring Bob Minor! We need to look after and challenge our more advanced ringers and these busy practices serve that need across a wide area.

Surprise Royal Practices

These are held on the second Saturday in each month from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. Methods to be practiced are Ewerby, Cambridge, Yorkshire Lincolnshire, London and Bristol. Spliced Cambridge, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

13 August Southwell 25 cwt (Meet under west tower 10.15 am.)

 No practice in September

8 October Boston 22 cwt.

For further information please telephone Phil Mason on 01522 796079.

Leslie Lunn

Leslie was born on January 21, 1913 and his family was long established in Lea. From the age of 16 farming was his occupation. He became a ringer at Lea and Gainsborough and he soon became well-known throughout Lincolnshire and North Nottinghamshire. For a short time he was Master of the local Branch of the Diocesan Guild; then, in 1939, in his words, he "very reluctantly agreed to be Secretary for one year", a position he held until 1989!

His busy life as a farmer and his loyal support in attending ringing meetings left little time for peal ringing and his total was 164. Most were of Minor in up to 40 methods and he also rang the treble to a peal in 105 methods. On eight bells, he rang several peals in 5 of the "standard eight", including London, as well as Stedman, Grandsire and a variety of Plain and Treble Bob. methods. He rang in 3 peals of Royal and a peal of Kent T B Maximus by Guild officers at Lincoln Cathedral.

In 1936 he was a member of the youngest band to ring a peal of major for the Guild, and 50 years later one of the oldest. In 1950 he rang in what was believed to be the first peal of major by a band of farmers. Much of his enthusiasm for ringing and his love of his village is expressed in the two books that he wrote, *The History of the Gainsborough District & West Lindsey Branch* and *I remember; Farming Memories of Lincolnshire*.

The full obituary of Leslie by Robin Heppenstall from which the above is abstracted was published in the *Ringing World* dated 13 May 2005.

Snippets and News from the World of Bellringing

The Lichfield Mobile Tower will be at the Epworth Festival of the Plough once again on Sunday September 18th. Please spread the word around.



John Nicholson tells me that Saxilby bells have been rung regularly from 1943 and most people like to hear them. However, at one time Fred Dobson who was well known for his stories and poems in Lincolnshire dialect lived in the Saxilby area and wrote the following :

“Ring out wild bells to the sky”
My next line would have been
“And wilder make the passer by”
Some ‘ow Ah’m not sooa keen
Lord Tennyson ‘ed well earned fame
But Ah’m not forced to think the same.

Knowing Fred I think this would have been written with tongue in cheek!



On Sunday 1st May 2005 the first quarter peal was rung on the new light eight at Grantham. The ringers were all members of St. Wulfram's band and Tim Wylie conducted the quarter of Plain Bob Major. The light eight is known as the *Pinchbeck Eight* in memory of Fred Pinchbeck who rang for many years at St Wulfram's and held Guild Office as Librarian and Peal Secretary. For many years he bound the *Ringing Worlds* and other publications for the Guild Library. He also compiled the first peal records for Lincolnshire towers. The smallest bell of the light eight is inscribed with his name.



After ringing the longest peal ever (50, 400) Phil Earis, Andrew Tibbetts and David Pipe have now rung 20,880 Treble Dodging Minor on handbells in 1053 methods. This is the greatest number of methods rung in a peal. The peal was rung after a days word commencing at 5.58 pm and finishing at 1.17 am. Phil, as most of you probably know, learned to ring at Market Deeping where his father was vicar. For a photograph of the band and the room in which the peal was rung taken after the 50400 see my news page :

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/john.ketteringham/news.htm>.



Ed - For several years now I have been arranging a peal at Lincoln Cathedral on a date as close as possible to my birthday. It is actually intended as a reunion with some of those with whom I used to ring and it has been very nice to see so many ringers from all over the country on these occasions. When I was trying to decide what method the band should ring at Lincoln Cathedral on 29 October I discovered to my surprise that the name Lincolnshire Delight hadn't been used yet so Richard Alton found a method which would extend through from major to maximus. It is a little unusual and will stretch the band a little I think! Actually the date is the day after my 76th birthday and is the closest I've yet come to having a peal actually rung on the day. I am grateful to Les Townsend and the Cathedral authorities for making the bells available.



I was pleased to be able to listen to some of the ringing at Grantham for the Ridgeman Trophy Contest on 4 June. The Lincolnshire band rang first and when the judge Andrew Mills gave his report I think the band were surprised and pleased to be told that the tenor ringing was the best of the day. Unfortunately a mix up at a call rather spoiled the overall standard of the ringing. Bedfordshire were the winners.

Ed

For me such occasions are a good way of renewing friendships made many years ago. On this occasion I was particularly pleased to be able to talk to Bill Ridgeman who rang the tenor to a peal at St Mary's Huntingdon in which Mike Crowder and I took part with Giles Galley who was then at Lincoln Theological College conducting. I was also pleased to meet Anthony Smith, one time President of the Bedfordshire Association, who, when an undergraduate in London, rang in a number of my peals as did Ian Holland when living in Derbyshire.



I receive a lot of emails in connection with my Bell Recordings website. Most are requests for assistance in finding recordings for weddings, plays etc. but on Thursday 26 May I was contacted by Alison McGregor who is a Script Supervisor for the BBC Radio 2 programme “QI”. The programme is hosted by Stephen Fry and in

the show on the following Tuesday they were hoping to talk about two specific methods – Carlisle Surprise Minor and Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Place Doubles. To illustrate the programme they wanted to play audio recordings! I had some difficulty in explaining how difficult it would be to obtain recordings of the quality they would want to use over a bank holiday period. Alison said she would discuss this with the Producer and it turned out that he is a bellringer and I'm not sure what the outcome was but I expect they had to abandon this project in the end.

I am not sure but I think each series of this programme features a particular letter of the alphabet.



Lovely Lincolnshire is of course famous for its rabbits and those who have learned to ring gathered at Potterhanworth on for a Fun 'Day'. The idea was to gather together as many 'Rabbits' (beginners) as possible and make up bands with more experienced ringers. Five teams rang in a light-hearted competition with Margaret Parker as judge. Those not ringing and the non-ringers were kept occupied with a quiz in and around the Church. After an excellent tea in the Village Hall Margaret gave her impressions of the ringing by each band in a most constructive manner with no winners or losers. The results of the quiz were announced and this was followed by a Beetle Drive. A most enjoyable event and grateful thanks to the organisers and to Yvonne and her helpers for the tea.

Ed. -I scored two firsts – I managed to ring Bob Minor and 7/8 to Plain Hunt on Jim's handbells. This was the first time I had touched hand bells since I rang 3/4 to a peal of Bob Major at Imperial Institute London in 1984. It was also the first time I had taken part in a Beetle Drive and I didn't get the lowest score!

The Saxilby Simulator

Lincolnshire now has another interesting bell installation. This is a set of six dumb bells connected to a computer in a garage at Saxilby. This has been designed, engineered and built by David Horrocks and Tom Blyth. Each dumb bell consists of a weighted solid wheel, a pendulum slider, stay and rope. Each 'bell' weighs about 35 kg and each wheel has a diameter of 3 feet. The 'bells' are not at all difficult to ring and handle just like a 12 cwt ring of six. The sallies are nearly full size so the handling is like normal tower bells.

This is an incredible piece of engineering which is very different from the usual "mini-ring".

They were officially opened on the afternoon of Saturday 14th May and the first quarter peal was rung on Friday 6th May.

This is an installation which is well worth a visit. For a diagram showing how the simulator works please see my News Page (address above).



Jim Sutherland tells me that when I said the Branston mini-ring was the first such ring in the county I wasn't quite correct. In the late 1990s Matthew Smith built two mini-rings at Fenton and I am grateful to him for the following details :

"I had two mini-rings at Fenton. The first "Fenton Campanile" was a ring of three flower-pots, 15 lbs in G. These were hung in November/December 1996 and a quarter peal was rung on 3rd January 1997. Another quarter of Plain Bob Singles was rung on 11th January 1997 and a "Peal" of Plain Bob Singles was rung on 12th Jan 1997 in 1 hour 42 minutes. It was published in the *Ringing World*.

The ring of three was taken down on 27th July 1997 and replaced by a ring of 12. These were completed on 8th December 1997. Extra pots were added to make 17 in total and all completed on 3rd Jan 1998.

This made a ring of 12 flower-pots, 17.5 lb in F with 3 extra trebles and sharp second and flat 6th. This made Fenton Campanile the first ring with the choice of three 12's and the most ringing bells at that time. These bells did not have any quarters or peals rung on them.

I knew I could make a better mini-ring after constructing The Jephtha Pacey Memorial Ring here in Sawley after experimenting with clappers and the hanging, so the 12 were removed on 15th June 2002 with the intention of replacing them with a new ten. This never happened as my parents moved to the South-West".



From the Acting Editor

I am very grateful to Branch Secretaries for sending me all the email tower addresses and to the tower correspondents for agreeing to receive and print out the Newsletter for tower notice boards. Especially as owing to a computer breakdown I lost many of these addresses. If you know of a tower which isn't receiving the Newsletter please try to find a contact. Space has caught up with me but a report on the two new bells at Irnham and of recent activities in the Elloe Deaneries Branch amongst other items can be found on my News Page <http://homepage.nflworld.com/john.ketteringham/news.htm>. The deadline for the next issue is 22 October which will be a good time to publicise events over Christmas and the New Year. Doesn't time fly!

