

GUILD EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITION
For
THE HENRY LAW JAMES SHIELD

BILLINGBOROUGH
28th October 2023

CENTRAL BRANCH retains HENRY LAW JAMES SHIELD
CENTRAL BRANCH placed FIRST and SECOND

The Guild Eight Bell striking competition, was hosted by Southern Branch AND took us to Billingborough for this year's event. In contrast to the Guild Six Bell tower based competition, the eight bell competition is an inter-branch competition – with each branch permitted to enter two bands.



Billingsborough (8) 7-3-11 in A flat

The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln and Lincoln by Thomas North (1882) – lists Billingborough as having 5 bells – cast in 1717 by Thomas Penn of Peterborough. Of his remaining 128 bells – 46 are hung within the Lincoln Diocese. A new treble was added by Taylors in 1914 with a steel frame to accommodate 8. At the guild AGM that year

“a sum of £2 2s was voted from the restoration fund to St Botolph’s Lincoln, and a like sum to Billingborough”

- some £300 in current money. The main discussion at the AGM was the funding of the restoration of the Ringers Chapel – at a cost of £350 (approximately £50,000 today).

In 1917 the 5th (present 7th) was recast by Taylors – and in 1952 two new trebles were added to make the present 8. The first peal on the bells was in 1909

FIRST PEAL ON THE BELLS - 1909

BILLINGBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE.

THE LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD.

On Sunday, November 7, 1909, in Two Hours and Fifty-seven Minutes,

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW,

A PEAL OF GRANDSIRE DOUBLES, 5040 CHANGES ;

Being forty-two 6-scores.

Tenor about 10 cwt.

WILLIAM CARPENTER*	..Treble.		JAMES OSBORN	3.
ARTHUR ANDREWS 2		JOHN T. HOLMES	4.
	CLEMENT GLENNTenor.		

Conducted by CLEMENT GLENN.

First peal on the bells. *First peal, and was elected a member previous to starting.

THE JUDGES

Lesley Boyle

Prolific ringer on all numbers – from Lincolnshire - on both tower and handbells – conducted her first peal at Brant Broughton. Dedicated teacher and prominent ART member and interested in bringing an ART Hub to Lincolnshire

Gareth Davies

Put up with ringing with me in London in ULSCR's heyday – prolific ringer on all numbers up to 16(in hand), conductor and composer, recent PhD regarding Cambridge ringing history.

Between them they have rung in and won many National 12 bell competitions (Lesley more than Gareth) but are proof that ASCY's and RSCY's can live in harmony.

DOWN TO THE COMPETITION

The judges – safely parked up “in the car park by the pond” - although Gareth did say perhaps the best place to judge from was the impressive stone built toilet in the car park but he and Lesley didn't want to monopolise it for three hours !! - we started – 6 bands from five branches – Central showing off by fielding two bands.

All went well even West Lindsey finding themselves with one of their band marooned in Doncaster but saved by the rules allowing up to two non-branch guild members in a band. It was encouraging how many non-participants came along to this

resulting in a selection process for the available rope!! All the bands had secretly practised before the competition (not to the degree of the winning Birmingham band for the national 12 bell competition who practiced their test piece on a weekly basis) !!!

The bands rang in the following order

NORTHERN

CENTRAL CLIPPERS

CENTRAL CLASHERS

WEST LINDSEY

SOUTHERN

EASTERN

In increasing darkness the judges stuck valiantly to their task with the help of head torches!!

The judges enjoyed the chance to ring the test method prior to the competition - giving them insight to the go of the bells. At least one band changed their band around following their practice period

THE RESULTS

The overall impression was that of the high standard of ringing – AND - when things did go wrong how quickly they were sorted out. The results are expressed as a percentage of GOOD ringing – a positive – rather than as faults. As such the results were as follows

1	-	CENTRAL (Crashers)	-	84%
2	-	CENTRAL (Clippers)	-	81%
3	-	WEST LINDSEY	-	77%
4	-	EASTERN	-	74%
5	-	SOUTHERN	-	61%
6	-	NORTHERN	-	59%

So Central retain the shield – unlike Southern retaining the John Freeman Cup with a round trip of 120 miles – a mere 60 miles !!!!

Does this result matter?

Probably not but will give Central Branch ringing master jovial bragging rights for the next twelve months!!

BUT what it did do was bring this vast geographical guild together for once. We need each other BUT have to be prepared to travel.

Next year – The Guild's 125th anniversary year sees Elloe branch hosting the 6 - bell striking competition, and Eastern branch the 8 – bell striking competition.

The evening concluded with Phil Grover proposing a vote of thanks to Billingborough tower for the catering led by Charlotte Beaver, to Southern branch for organising the day and to the judges for their time and constructive positive comments of the participating bands



Victorious Central Branch band from left to right

Heather Grover, Owen Peters, Sandra Underwood, Phil
Grover,
Graham Colborne (c), David Fox, Bob Hancock, Rose Hancock



Second placed Central Branch band from left to right

Claire Holbrook, Les Townsend, Jonathan Clark, Mia Bedford,
Heather Shaw, Mick Stracey (c), Keith Butter, Ed White



Graham Colborne(centre) with the judges
Lesley Boyle and Gareth Davies



The Henry Law James Shield back in Central Branch after its day trip to Billingborough

- **Written by Keith Butter**

