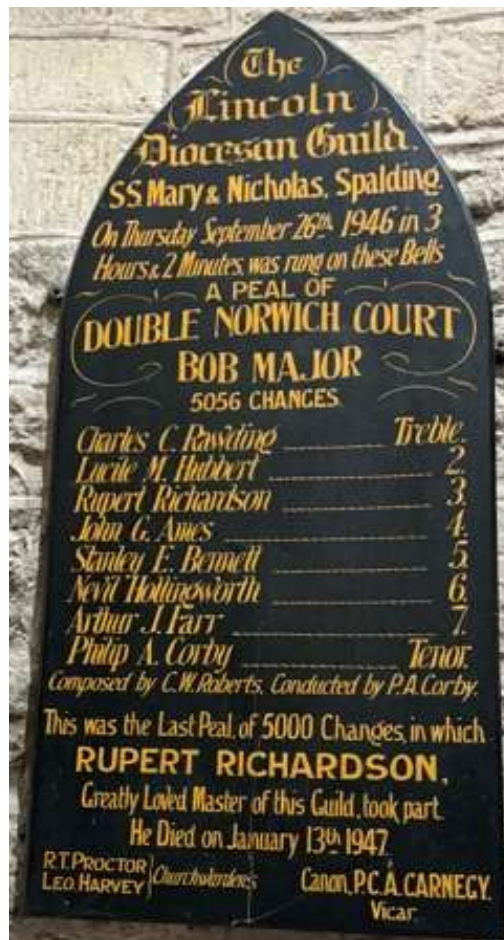




## LINCOLN DIOCESAN GUILD 125<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL DAY

The weather forecast improved daily in the week up to 29<sup>th</sup> June and Festival Day started and continued in proper English sunshine. The day didn't get off to the planned start - the ladies peal attempt at Bicker being cancelled at short notice, due to illness (in a spouse!!) and the "gentlemen's" peal of Lincolnshire with a Henry Law James composition at Spalding was lost after two and a half hours of near faultless ringing. It was at Spalding that Rupert Richardson rang his last peal



There was only one place to base the day on –

## **SURFLEET**



(Val Wild)

Surfleet – 12 bells - 12-0-9 in F sharp

Why Surfleet? – that little village in the Lincolnshire Fens with a difficult light 12 – once the lightest 12 in the country – with a leaning spire?

To the uninitiated – The LDGCB owes its birth, childhood and adolescence to Surfleet. Prior to 1899 there were four ringing associations covering Lincolnshire and beyond the southeast of the county.

- North Lincolnshire Association
- South Lincolnshire Association
- East Lincolnshire Association
- Eastern Counties Association

All in their infancy and a by-product of Belfry Reform.

Henry Law James – born in to a clerical family, educated at Malvern and Cambridge University, came to Lincolnshire to teach at Stamford School, was ordained in 1892 as the curate at St. Martin's church in Stamford. In 1898 he was appointed as the incumbent at Surfleet. Already an accomplished ringer, composer and conductor he inherited a near derelict five-bell tower – one of which was cracked. His science background failed to extend to repairing the cracked bell by means of a prolonged chemical reaction and the bell was eventually recast. Slightly more successful was his returning the church clock to working order – although it did strike 120 on one occasion! At his own expense the church was largely refurbished and the bells augmented to 10 – with the

addition of 4 trebles in 1913. His enthusiasm encouraged the four territorial associations to combine to form the Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers at a meeting in the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1899. He was elected Guild Master – a position he held until his death in 1932. On the national stage he was regarded as a gifted composer and conductor. He was an active member of the Central Council for many years. His funeral was attended by over 600 people at Surfleet where he is buried. At the time of his death plans were already in place to augment Surfleet to 12 – which for a number of years was the lightest ring of 12 in the world.

Rupert Richardson had moved with his family to Surfleet at the age of 9 and was taught to ring by Law James, he subsequently became a churchwarden at Surfleet and at the time of Law James's death was already likewise established as a highly respected peal ringer, both tower and in hand. He too served on the Central Council – representing the Lincoln Guild for 44 years, and it was he the Guild turned to, to follow in Law James's footsteps as Guild Master, a role he performed with enthusiasm for 15 years, until his death in 1947. The flat 6<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln Cathedral added in 1947 is known as "The Richardson Bell". He will also be remembered for the house parties at his home – Glyn Garth- with many handbell peals being rung there. Then there was the Great Adventure – to Australia in 1934, with handbell peals rung on the outbound and inbound sailings on the high seas and tower bell peals in Australia. His peal books are a work of art in themselves and one can chart the Great Adventure through his peals so eloquently recorded. He is buried in the family grave in Surfleet graveyard.

Other ringers remembered in the graveyard are Annie Richardson (his wife), Frank Richardson, Enid Wayman (his daughter), Charles Rawding, Tom Ward , Edward Bankes James and Ron and Joy Noon

Surfleet hosted the 2003 National 12 – bell competition – the trophy being presented to the winning team by Enid Wayman - (Rupert Richardson's daughter). In 2013 Surfleet hosted the Ridgman Trophy where the hosts were runners up to this year's winners Bedfordshire

## THE STRIKING COMPETITIONS

The two guild – tower/tower group 6 bell striking competitions normally held in September were brought forward to coincide with Festival Day.

### METHOD SECTION – FOR THE JOHN FREEMAN CUP

This was held at Gosberton



(Michael Maughan)

Gosberton -6 bells- 17-3-7 in E flat

Test piece – 240 changes of doubles or minor of the band's choosing

Steward - Caitlin Meyer

Judges - Becca Ridley and Daniel Meyer

6 bands – representing four of the branches entered the method section, the two southern branch entrants opting to ring minor methods, the others doubles. Although the winning band meant an easy time for the judges – the other five were more difficult to separate.

1. Market Deeping (Southern)
2. Messingham/Scotter (West Lindsey)
3. Belton (Southern)
4. Bourne (Southern)
5. Boston Group (Eastern)
6. Grimsby/Tealby (Northern)



Caitlin Meyer

Sunny day at Gosberton – ideal for a striking competition



(Keith Brown)

The victorious Market Deeping band

And so for the third year in succession the John Freeman Cup continues its residence in the southern branch.

## CALL CHANGE SECTION – FOR THE TED COLLEY PLATE

This was held at Quadring



(Michael Maughan)

Quadring – 6 bells – 9-3-0 in F sharp

Steward - Luke Tobin

Judges - Sylvia and Alan Bird

The call change competition saw use of the recent change in the competition rules with an entry by the youth team – in preparation for their trip to London for the National Youth Competition. 5 bands entered this section – with four of the branches being represented.

Last year's close runners up repeated the feat once again narrowly losing to Bolingbroke Group. The full competition result being

1. Bolingbroke Group (Eastern)
2. Stow (West Lindsey)
3. Barrowby (Southern)
4. Youth Team
5. Ruskington (Central)

General ringing continued at Surfleet – giving a number of ringers chance to do battle with and conquer this interesting 12. Of the order of 100 ringers and friends attended the day, which included general ringing, an exhibition, an outdoor service, and something that Surfleet is famous for – excellent catering under the guidance of Annette Rhodes.



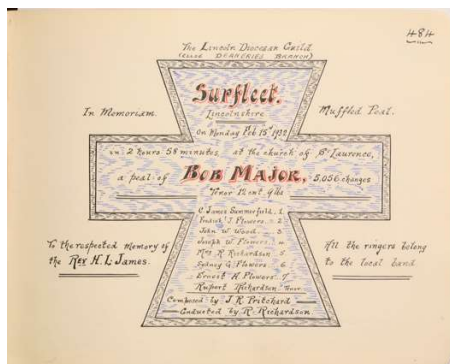
## THE EXHIBITION

This was laid out in the church. The Ringing World provided a number of items as publicity.



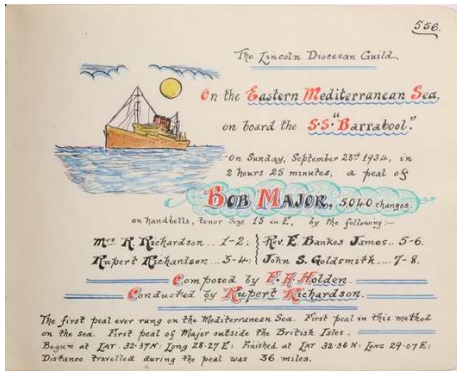
### Rupert Richardson's Peal Books

A work of art in themselves with ornately depicted peal records in illuminated script and bound in 9 volumes



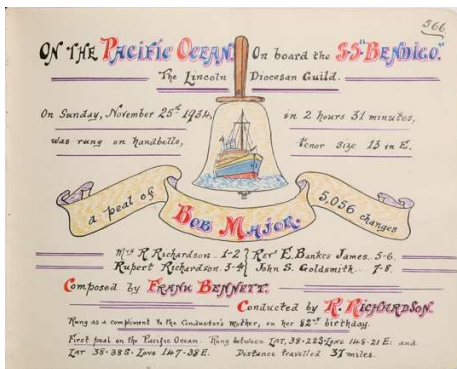
(Philip Green)

A local band peal following the death of Law James



(Philip Green)

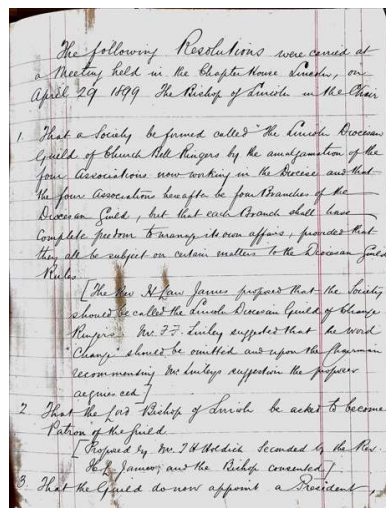
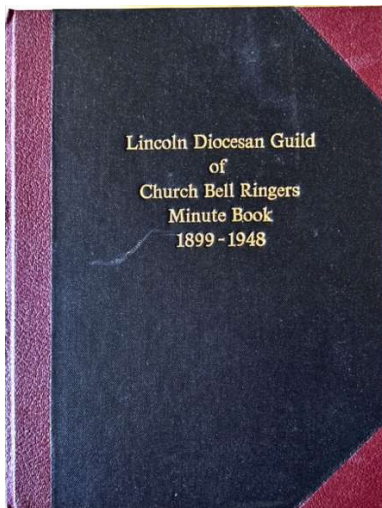
Outbound on – The Great Adventure -



(Philip Green)

Homeward after – The Great Adventure -

## Rebound Guild Minute book 1899-1949



For many years Les Townsend had been on a mission – searching for the original minute book from the inception of the guild, without success. A phone call in early 2023 led to the “finding” of this valuable text. Ray Smith ringer at Waddington and a member of the Cathedral band - was the guild’s first librarian.



Tragically Ray and his wife were killed in a road accident close to home on their return from holiday in 1973. The phone call to Les was from Ray's son who was clearing out the last of his father's belongings and there was a tatty old exercise book – the guild minute book from 1899-1948. Safely back in the county Philip Green went to work refurbishing and binding a part of guild history. Les presented the book to the guild at the 2024 AGM.



Keith Butter, Les Townsend, Philip Green

Also in this “package” was an even older book – the minute book of the of the East Lincolnshire Association – which suggests the association was in existence earlier than first thought – dating back to June 1884



First meeting of the East Lincolnshire Association

The quarterly meeting of October 1884 noted the peal below. which was the first peal for the association - rung at Skirbeck – now an unringable six having been augmented to 6 in 1905 – (the tenor noted to be 13cwt rather than 18cwt)

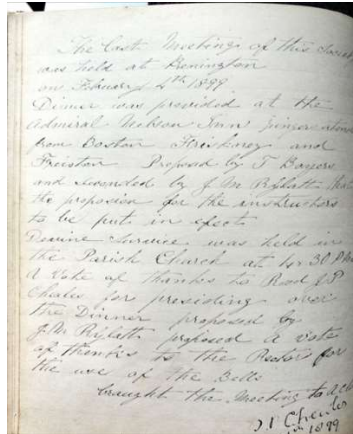
**THE EAST LINCOLNSHIRE ASSOCIATION.**  
**SKIRBECK, LINCOLNSHIRE.**

*On Saturday, October 4, 1884, in Two Hours and Fifty-two Minutes,*  
**AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS,**  
**5040 CHANGES : UPON FIVE BELLS ;**  
 Being 20 6-scores of Grandsire Doubles; 10 of Plain Bob; 10 of Hudibras,  
 and 2 of Lincolnshire Singles.  
 Tenor 18 cwt.

TIMOTHY ROGERS .. .. Treble.	*EDWARD MASON† .. .. 3.
(aged 64 years.) .. .. 2.	*WILLIAM F. HARWOOD .. 4.
GEORGE CLARK .. .. 2.	*JAMES M. RYLATT .. .. 5.

Conducted by EDWARD MASON.

\*Members of the South Lincolnshire Association. †College Youth and York-shire Association.



Minutes of the last meeting of the association prior to formation in April 1899 of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers (the association becoming Eastern Branch of LDGCB)

In addition there were copies on display of a number of books written by guild members including

- Lincolnshire Bells and Bellfounders - John Ketteringham
- Lincoln Cathedral -A History of The Bells, Bellringers and Bellringing - John Ketteringham
- Ring In The True - Denis Frith

Beyond that the guild noted those ringers who had rung more than 100 peals for the guild AND the band who rang the enduring record of 28 quarter peals in 24hrs at Mablethorpe in 2000. The band consisting of Ian Ansell, Wayne Ansell, Keith Buckingham, Robert Lee, Tony Walker and Peter Wakefield. 8 years previously Tony Walker had rung with a Nottingham band 25 quarters in a day at Ossington

## THE SEGAR TAPPING SET



John Segar was born in Retford and attended Retford Grammar School – at an early age he became fascinated with numbers. Despite his mathematical abilities he left school at the age 14 and started work in a shop. A chance meeting with a customer brought an invite to learn to ring at Ordsall. It was there he became aware of Elijah Roberts – following on from a letter to the RW from a reader who had come across an entry in a scrapbook recording a **“peal of 19440 New Treble Bob Maximus (Kent TB Maximus) rung on handbells by Elijah Roberts”**. Subsequent articles tell us that Elijah was born in 1807 and also had a fascination for numbers from a young age and indeed was also an accomplished tower bell ringer. The peal was “tapped” in 1837 in Liverpool and took 13hrs and 13 minutes – he was regarded as “Tapper Number One” He committed suicide in 1865.

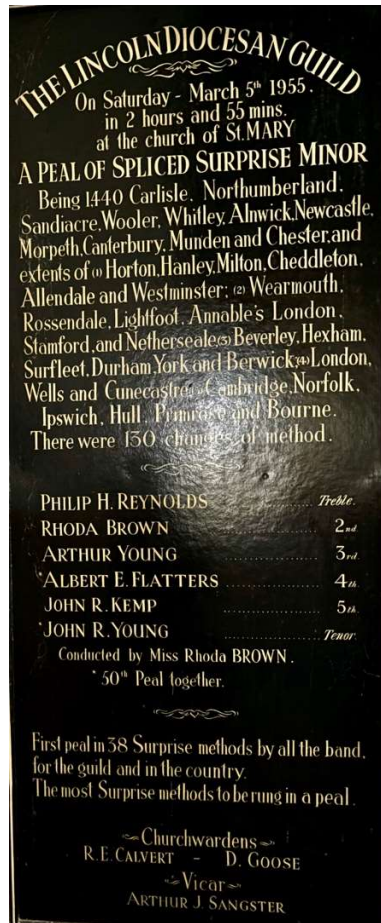
Spurred on by these articles John Segar decided to become “Tapper Number Two”. In 1912 he started tapping peals of minor in increasing numbers of methods . In 1913 he tapped 7200 in ten plain methods and 5040 in seven surprise methods, by which time he was able to tap an extent of each 35 methods.

He retired from work at the age of 54 and spent a number of years travelling the country in his van, before settling in Skegness.



His 70<sup>th</sup> birthday was marked by the ringing of his composition of the then longest length of Yorkshire Surprise Major (15,520). He himself only rang 16 peals – (9 in hand and 7 on tower bells) – in addition he tapped 5 peals. It was however in the world of composition and ringing theory that he contributed most. Compositions included standard length peals, compositions of triples methods and spliced triples compositions. Long length compositions included 15,520 Yorkshire Surprise Major and 21,000 Bristol Surprise Major. He wrote a number of articles on composition and composition falseness. Indeed in the days before computer proving of compositions he was often the “go to” person by the leading composers at the time, Peter Border (who introduced half lead calls in Bristol Surprise Major), Steven Ivin and Roderick Pipe to confirm their compositions to be true.

## THE REYNOLDS HANDBELLS



This peal board at Frampton tells a story! It rightly recognises the peal as the most surprise minor methods yet rung to a peal, but fails to point out that the conductor only took on the role of conducting the peal at short notice. It didn't foresee that 8 months after this peal the ringers of 1 and 2 would become Mr and Mrs Reynolds



The Reynolds handbells – Handbells and Chris Sharp are rarely too far apart –



Described by Chris Sharp as a “remarkable set of handbells”, there is some debate as to how the Reynolds Handbells came to be purchased. It would seem that they were at least in part a present from John Segar. Whether as a complete set (a view favoured by Chris Sharp) or a smaller initial set which were added to over time is uncertain. They were used primarily for tune ringing but in 1981 and 1982 Michael Belcher and Michael Maughan along with Rhoda and Philip rang five handbell peals at the Reynolds household. Michael Belcher is pretty certain they used the Reynolds Handbells. In February this year a quarter peal was rung on the Reynolds Handbells in sombre circumstances – to mark the life of Michael Reynolds – who died suddenly at the beginning of December 2023

**Lincoln Diocesan Guild**  
Londonthorpe, Lincolnshire  
Woodcote House  
Monday, 19 February 2024 in 32m (11)  
**1260 Plain Bob Minor**  
1-2 Michael J Belcher  
3-4 Caitlin A Meyer  
5-6 Christopher J Sharp (C)  
In thanksgiving for the life of Michael Reynolds (07.02.94 – 01.12.23)  
Rung on his handbells gifted to him by his grandparents Philip and Rhoda Reynolds.  
(Followed by a course of Cambridge S Minor)

## GUILD MASTERS BADGE OF OFFICE



Engraved on the reverse

**“Donated by members and friends of the Guild  
In memory of  
JOHN ASHLEY FREEMAN  
1961”**

In addition there were video footage from

- National 12 bell competition held at Surfleet
- Mick Belcher’s 1000<sup>th</sup> peal at Boston
- Stedman Cinques on handbells
- Edited video of days at Glen Garth handbell meetings

## THE SERVICE

From the outset of putting together Festival Day – the plan was to have a short service preferably in the churchyard centred on the grave of Henry Law James. With time both graves had gradually become covered in moss but were soon cleaned on a sunny morning before Festival Day



The grave of Henry Law James on the right – that of his brother on the left.



The service was led by Annette Rhodes, Judith Rogers read the lesson and the Master spoke about Surfleet and its ringers' importance to the Lincoln Diocesan Guild. At the conclusion of the service Chris Sharp, Ian Till and Chris Turner rang three courses of Plain Bob Minor on the Reynolds Handbells.



You may not be guaranteed good weather at Surfleet – but a few things are a given. Firstly a warm welcome and secondly plentiful good food – produced with a smile by Annette and her small army of helpers. Festival Day was no exception and after feeding a hungry bunch – approaching 100 – one young ringer was heard to say to his grandfather as they were leaving

***“I swear there is more food now than when we arrived”.***



Throughout the day there was no need to work on the moto

***“The more we socialise the better we ring”***



The final part perhaps the most difficult part of the day was the group photograph!! Herded and encouraged by Val Wild – we got there !!





**A good day – yes!**

**An enjoyable day – yes!**

**What next ??**

**Guild 8 bell Striking Competition  
Ingoldmells  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

(can Central Branch defend their running streak of wins?)

**The 125 Dinner at The Petwood Hotel – Woodhall Spa  
—  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**Book via MemberMojo**

(Unlike Oasis tickets we guarantee NO adaptive pricing whilst queuing to buy tickets)

**Keith Butter**

