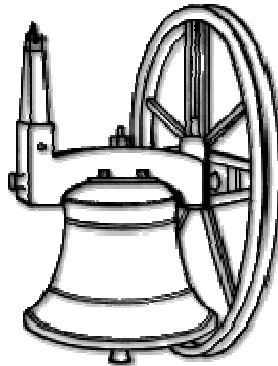


July 2007

The Bedfordshire Clanger



Biggleswade District Newsletter

The Biggleswade district usually meets for ringing on the second Saturday in each month at 3.30pm. Details of upcoming events are listed on the following pages.

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District Committee for 2007

	Name	Tower	Telephone
Chairman	Sue Silver	unattached	07850 793847
Vice-Chairman	Mike Matthews	Eaton Socon	01480 212838
Secretary	Elizabeth Overfield	Arlesey	01462 815672
Treasurer	Peter Overfield	Arlesey	01462 815672
Ringing Master	Anthony Smith	Biggleswade	01462 700676
District BRF Treasurer	Sue Melvin	Northill	01767 627654
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Editor "The Clanger"	Jackie O'Regan	Amphill	01525 630242
Committee Members	Bob Werrett	Stotfold	01462 629073
	John Loveless	Campton	01462 819074
	John Parsons	Meppershall	01462 813333
	Alan Smith	Biggleswade	01767 313521

Other Officers

BRF Independent Examiner	Mrs M Mann	Maulden	
Ronald J Sharp Bell Fund Rep	Mr J Parsons	Meppershall	
Tower Secretary (ex officio)	Terry Brown	Clifton	01462 631057

Dates for your Diary

14th July	Southill	-	tea : Northill
11th August	Tempsford – evening ringing only from 6pm		
8th September	Greensand Ridge Open Day		
15th September	Association Striking Contest		
13th October	Training Day		

Ringling for the standard two tower District Meeting is from 3:30pm. Tea is generally around 5:00-5:30pm and is followed by evening ringing.

Greensand Ridge Open Day - Saturday 8th September

The Open Day is fast approaching. More helpers for all or part of the day are needed, any offers gratefully received! Please contact Linda Garton by `phoning 01462 819074 or by emailing linda.garton@btconnect.com.

£15 day tickets will be available at the first five towers, or you can pay £1 per tower. Proceeds go to local bell restoration funds.

Start	Finish	Tower	Bells	Toilets/Refreshments
09:30	10:15	Eaton Socon	8	T/R
10:00	10:45	Roxton	5	T
10:00	10:45	Great Barford	5	T
10:30	11:15	Tempsford	6	R
10:30	11:15	Blunham	6	
11:00	11:45	Sandy	6	
11:00	11:45	Biggleswade	8	T/R
11:30	12:15	Northill	6	T
11:30	12:15	Old Warden	6	
12:00	12:45	Southill	6	
12:00	12:45	Haynes	6	T
12:30	13:15	Campton	8	T/R
13:00	13:45	Meppershall	6	
13:30	14:15	Upper Gravenhurst	5	
14:00	14:45	Shillington	5	
14:30	15:15	Barton-le-Clay	8	
14:30	15:15	Flitton	6	
15:00	15:45	Maulden	8	
15:00	15:45	Westoning (TBC)	6	
15:30	16:15	Flitwick	6	T/R
16:00	16:45	Eversholt	6	
16:00	16:45	Husborne Crawley	8	
16:30	17:15	Aspley Guise	6	
16:30	17:15	Woburn	8	T
17:00	17:45	Milton Bryan	3	
17:30	18:15	Eaton Bray	6	
17:30	18:15	Totternhoe	8	
18:00	18:45	Linslade	8	
18:30	19:15	Leighton Buzzard	12	T

Association Striking Contest - Saturday 15th September

The Association Striking Contest is at Kensworth this year, starting at 5:30pm. Henlow and Arlesey will be representing the District, competing against Goldington and Kempston from the Bedford District, and Cranfield and Dunstable from the Luton District.

Health and Safety - Special Report

As newly appointed (and self appointed) I.C. Health and Safety at Maulden Tower and being ever mindful of the potential dangers of bell ringing, I require all new ringers to wear full P.P.E (Personal Protective Equipment), see photo.

The reasons for this are twofold:-

- Firstly it affords some protection from the vagaries of the bell rope in the novice's hands and
- Secondly it immediately identifies the novice ringer to other more competent ringers in the tower.

I have abandoned the use of ear defenders, as I have found that it impairs hearing too much and detracts from good striking - and as listening is an important part

of ringing I consider this to be the best course of action. However, for you all to test your own knowledge on all things "Health and Safety", I have made one glaring omission for you to identify (answer at the end of the Clanger).

My thanks to Liz Edwards for taking the photograph, to our new ringer Angela Davies for modelling the P.P.E so photogenically and for her permission for it to be published.

P.S. I think that on occasions it might be advisable for all instructors to wear full P.P.E but at the moment I am willing to leave this to the discretion of the competent instructor (before it is made compulsory!)

Colin Gunns



Recent Events

District Outing - Route 1040 - 12th May

I've been going on this outing for years now, and our invariable methodology has been to drive our car, and offer the spare seats to various fellow-ringers to come along as well. This year, however, our intended victims turned the tables on us and insisted on taking us in the hire-car they had for the weekend. So come Saturday morning there we were, waiting expectantly. They did turn up, albeit not quite as early as originally intended.

To the travel, then. Novel experience, this, travelling in the back seat, but that doesn't make navigating impossible so we concentrated on that activity. First stop Crowland (a.k.a. Croyland ~ wish they'd make their mind up), but NOT via the 1040. The A1, A1139, and A1073 offered a faster route (at least, according to my PC). All was going swimmingly until the outskirts of Crow/yland, where the local directional signing took us off the direct route I'd got plotted, and took us into the suburbs. I hadn't realised that this is the site of that weird three-way bridge over no water whatsoever that I've seen illustrated in so many travel books, but heck, no time to stop and photograph. Drat!

The Abbey appeared very soon afterwards, and the immediate car park had obligingly kept a solitary space clear for us, so J backed the wagon into it.

This is where things got decidedly draughty. No, not the wind, we who were visiting had mostly learned about the 90' gap between the floor and the ceiling, and greatly appreciated the complex guides (with four ferrules per rope on the way up) that provided some limit to the hempen excursions. As a result the ropes were quite well steadied, but still somewhat elastic. Anthony Smith controlled this steady six, with sessions of Grandsire, Rounds and Cambridge (and probably others, I didn't note them all).

The church itself had some intriguing decorations. There's a magnificent choir screen to start with, and a Rood Arch with a female figure either side of the central crucifix, all beautifully painted. In the side-chapel was a scaled-down copy of da Vinci's "Last Supper", executed in cross-stitch. Around the nave were prints of the Twelve Stations of the Cross, in a style reminiscent of Art Nouveau, which I was told dated from 1936. Unfortunately one had been severely damaged by



silverfish. And the church's dedication, St Bartholomew and St Guthlac, is partially shared by one of the smaller churches in the Biggleswade District, at Astwick.

Whittlesey next, starting with the heavy eight at St Mary's. We'd been warned that this church would be found afflicted with a fête worse than death, so their car park was as crowded as would be expected. We managed to find municipal parking within walking distance. I wandered around outside whilst allowing other, fitter, souls to do the hard work of ringing up. It was whilst wandering around looking for decent viewpoints that I heard over the tannoy some comments about the new noise, expressing the hope that it wasn't going to be another quarter-peal. A brief search pinpointed the site of the equipment, and I was able to put the announcer at some ease, but had to admit that the overall duration wouldn't be much different. Turned out to be a local former ringer, who'd had to cease and desist for medical reasons.



Around the walls of the ringing chamber were lots of photos, bands of handbell ringers (one, where there weren't enough bells for all the band, had the two unequipped members lounging languorously one the floor), a newspaper article about the Tsar Kolokov, and even a few peal boards. At least two of these listed two ringers for the tenor. John Loveless masterminded this session (decidedly less

flighty than his normal responsibilities), including Grandsire, call changes and Stedman.

Lunch break. We walked the streets, and encountered the Falcon. Classic pub-with-catering, and it even contained recognisable faces that encouraged us to join them. After a bit of searching around for an alternative, we succumbed to their entreaties, and went to study the menu out in the restaurant area. It was while we perused that document that some chap came up behind us: we asked if they were serving meals, to which he admitted that he wasn't himself staff, but was looking for someone to come and look after us. That sounded like incipient poor service, so we quickly scarpered and looked further afield.

The Black Bull in the High Street wasn't catering at all. We'd just about given up and decided to patronise the Falcon after all, when we spotted the Bygones Bistro down a side street. The menu looked very much OK, prices reasonable, so we strolled in. The place was empty. But immediately someone came from behind the bar, and escorted us to a nice corner table. The food was delicious, and the service exclusive. We ordered, and the soup arrived. You could tell it

was soup, because someone had used the cream dribbled over the surface to write "Soup" on the green background of the starter itself.



Next another heavy eight at St Andrew's. An amazingly light and airy church, thanks to acres of windows. The organ came with a plastic awning, pulled up in the centre so that it sloped on all four sides: this presumably to keep out dust. The organ casing was also nicely painted. The lectern was a carved wooden angel, a change from the traditional brass eagle.

Colin Mann looked after this session, and treated us to Yorkshire and Call Changes. Once again I was too busy with non-ringing matters to note all the variations. Sorry folks!

A run down the A1040 brought us to Warboys, a clearly Norman church with a medium six. Whilst Sue Silver set about cajoling everyone else to ring things like Grandsire and Cambridge, I wandered off (as always) to note details like the totally unplastered walls. Naked, knobbly stone, no less! And a colourful window to commemorate the members of the PathFinder Force during the war, who had specialised in precision marking of targets to simplify the identification and aiming problems of the bomber stream. There was also a kneeler decorated with a very recognisable Lancaster bomber in the heavy-duty cross-stitch used for these articles.



The next drive took us through a village called Pilling, wherein were many signs proclaiming it to be the "Home of Mountain Rescue Team". We are assured that this is some form of humour. Even more obscure than mine, by the sound of it.

So finally to Hemingford Grey. A lovely church, right beside the River Great Ouse. So right beside, in fact, that there's only just enough room for a footbath between the tower base and the wall that optimistically hopes to keep you from falling in. As we strolled through the village towards the church we passed a local chap taking advantage of the fine weather to service his car. The bodyshell was hanging from the garage roof, the chassis was stacked up on trestles in one corner of the garden, and the engine from an RSJ laid across brick and timber pillars beside it. It looked like it might fit together to make a Triumph Stag some day, but I wouldn't recommend holding your breath.



Mike Matthews set to and produced Cambridge, Grandsire, Rounds and Double Norwich out of this final eight (upgraded from six in the thirty years since my copy of "Dove" was printed). I wandered around to see what I could record in this decidedly gloomy building. My notes are blank here, so clearly I didn't find much.

Then it was all over. A mild conflagration developed in the churchyard, during which Sue Silver managed to find a

quiet interval in which to voice a formal Vote of Thanks to Philip Rogers for his work in producing yet another delightful day out. I'm always impressed by the research he puts into this event, the clear and plentiful instructions, and generous timing between sessions. Well Done, Sir! I don't envy the chap who has the courage to take over when you pass on the baton.

by Peter Overfield

District Striking Competition - 9th June

Only four teams entered the striking competition this year – come on you lazy lot! (Says the Ampthill tower captain, with slight feelings of guilt that we didn't get a band together either...) The judges were Emma Etherington and Paul Andrews, and the results were as follows:

Place	Team	Method	Marks
	Scratch band	Doubles	56/240
1 st	Henlow	Single Oxford	71/240
2 nd	Arlesey	Rounds	74/240
3 rd	Campton	Rounds	111/240

Henlow won the competition and Arlesey won the Rounds Cup.

Ridgman Trophy Triumph - 16th June

A representative Association band once again entered the Ridgman Trophy 10 Bell Striking Competition, which this year was held on the excellent bells of Rothwell in Northamptonshire. A record entry of ten teams confirmed the enduring popularity of this event and ensured that there would be plenty of competition. The test piece was an interesting and musical two course touch of Stedman Caters which all but one team manage to navigate on the day.

We fielded virtually the same band as last year and had a practice session at Kempston a few days before the competition. This produced some very encouraging ringing, but it was even more pleasing that we saved our best performance for the competition itself. The churchyard pundits also felt that we had rung well, but we were followed by strong bands from Hertfordshire and Suffolk, so the outcome was always going to be in the balance. Fortunately the judges, Derek & Sue Jones from Peterborough, ruled in our favour and awarded us first place, continuing our enviable run of finishing amongst the top three for the last few years. It seemed particularly appropriate that we should triumph in the year of our 125th Anniversary celebrations.



Rothwell, Northants. Holy Trinity Saturday 16th June 2007 197 Stedman Caters

1. Charlotte M Smith
2. Margaret Whiteley
3. Rosalind J Keech
4. Anthony H Smith
5. Russell A Brown
6. Robert P Wood
7. Martin J Whiteley (C)
8. Richard A Horne
9. Andrew M Keech
10. Clifford W Izzard

Place	Team	Rang	Peal Speed	Faults
1st	Bedfordshire Association	6	3h 7	6
2nd	Hertford County	10	3h 5	9
3rd	Suffolk Guild	9	3h	11
4th	Essex Association	1	3h 5	16.5
5th	Lincoln Guild	8	3h 2	22
6th	Cambridge University	2	3h 5	32.5
7th	Peterborough Guild	4	3h 12	34
8th	Ely Guild	7	3h 12	41
9th	Norwich Association	5	2h 59	81
10th	Leicester Guild	3	Did not finish	

My thanks go to the ringers who gave up their time to represent the Association at this important regional event, and to the organisers and other participants who continue to make the Ridgman Trophy such an enjoyable fixture.

Martin J Whiteley, Organiser

Young Person's Ringing Event - 16th June

Some District ringers attended this event at Kempston. The full article by Michael Barnicott-White can be found on www.bacr.co.uk; here's one young ringer's impression of the day:

The day at Kempston church started off with name-tags and jokes (while some of us gawped at the cakes, but sadly we had to do some actual ringing to receive cake!) We were split up into two groups – one group to ring the bells (*ten bells! TEN bells!!!*) and one group to ring handbells.

In the tower (which had *ten bells*, if I haven't already mentioned that) we rang some changes and plain hunt; not all of us were striking in time to the others so we each had to take turns ringing changes facing the other way! A few of us found it quite simple – most found it difficult...

After the much too short "cake break" the two groups swapped over. The handbell ringing was definitely fun, moving places in plain hunt. We actually physically moved around and swapped places, which proved rather confusing. But extremely entertaining. (There weren't ten bells this time though, how disappointing.)

Overall, this was a really exciting day, and I hope another one is arranged soon.

Alice O'Regan, Ampthill



Eaton Socon Advanced Practice - 30th June

The second advanced practice was held on 30th June and we had 16 ringers attending. Due to holidays and other commitments, some of the more experienced ringers from the area were unable to attend. However, we still managed to attempt many Surprise Major methods with varying degrees of success.

The next practice will take place on Saturday 29th September from 10.00 to noon, with a further one on 29th December.

If you are trying to learn a Surprise Major method why not come along and have a go? If you are a competent 8 bell ringer please come along to help us out!

Sue Spencer

Campton's New Bells Dedicated on July 1

Witnessed by a packed church of over 200 people, Campton's new ring of eight bells was dedicated on Sunday, July 1 by The Bishop of Bedford during a memorable Evensong service.

Ringers attended from all over Bedfordshire and as far afield as Okehampton, Ellisfield, York and Norwich! Earlier in the day a number of gardens in the village were open and we were superbly entertained by Bedford Morris Men and Shefford Town Band (ringers featuring in both!), with Face Painting and Bouncy Castle for the younger visitors!

A big thank you to everybody who has contributed to the Appeal and supported our fundraising events, as we raised the £90,000 required. The bells were dedicated exactly three and a half years after the launch event, 'The BIG Ring' on January 1 2004.

We already have a keen band of ringers – the youngsters are starting to make rapid progress and we are teaching some adults who are doing well too. The new bells installation means we are equipped to develop the art of bellringing in a much-loved church, as a traditional part of village life. We practice on Tuesdays 7.15pm to 9.00pm, everyone welcome.

The first full peal on the new bells is on Sunday, July 15th. The ringers taking part have all made significant contributions to the Bells Appeal and we hope to produce some excellent ringing to celebrate the conclusion of the project. The peal will start at 2.00pm. The method? London Surprise Major, what else?! Come and join us for a glass of bubbly when we finish!

John Loveless

Health and Safety answer: no safety glasses or goggles