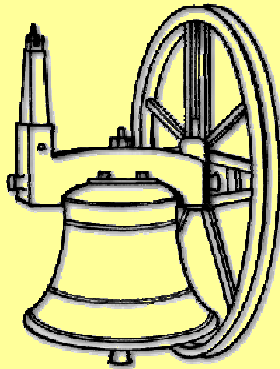


April 2006

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 2006

| | Name | Tower | Telephone |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Chairman | Mike Matthews | Eaton Socon | 01480 212838 |
| Vice-Chairman | <i>currently vacant</i> | | |
| Secretary | Elizabeth Overfield | Arlesey | 01462 815672 |
| Treasurer | Peter Overfield | Arlesey | 01462 815672 |
| Ringing Master | Anthony Smith | Biggleswade | 01462 700676 |
| District BRF Treasurer | Sue Spencer | Eaton Socon | 01480 476068 |
| Catering Adviser | Carol Werrett | Stotfold | 01462 629073 |
| 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

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

Editorial

What do you think about the **monthly District meetings**? Do you love them, hate them, have ideas for changes that you've never dared mention? Go to our online survey and tell us what you think, you don't need to leave your name unless you want to. You can find the survey on the Clanger page on www.amphillringers.org.uk where you can also find PDF versions of published issues of the Clanger and extra news and information.

Speaking of things online, the **Association website** is under new management and has had a bit of a facelift. Please have a look round at www.bacr.co.uk and if you have any ideas for additional content you would like to see, send an email to webmaster@bacr.co.uk.

As you know, every active tower in the District gets a free copy of the Clanger each quarter. We are happy to send out additional copies and have fixed the cover price at £4 a year (£1 per issue) starting from the next issue. Please pass the message on to anyone who might be interested – orders to the Editor!

Dates for your Diary

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 8 th Apr | Campton (tea, meeting) - Southill |
| 21 st April | Queen's 80 th birthday |
| 1 st May | Walk and Ring: Woburn, Aspley Guise and Husborne Crawley |
| 13 th May | District Outing: the Grand Union Tour |
| 20 th May | Association AGM: Milton Bryan, Husborne Crawley, Woburn |
| 10 th June | District Striking Contest: Maulden |
| 8 th July | Arlesey (tea, meeting) - Stotfold |

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 ringling.

Queen's 80th Birthday - 21st April

The Archdeacon of Bedford has circulated an email as follows: "Dear Colleagues, I have been asked by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire to advise you that Her Majesty The Queen is celebrating her 80th birthday on 21st April 2006. The Queen's private secretary has advised the Lord Lieutenant that as far as County celebrations are concerned, the 'tone should not become one of a mini jubilee'. However, it is suggested that churches with bells should be encouraged to ring them on 21st April and I would be obliged if you could encourage those churches in your deanery that are able to, to do just that."

Walk and Ring - 1st May

John Hele from Ampthill has planned a "Walk and Ring" starting at Woburn, going on to Husborne Crawley, then on to Aspley Guise and back to Woburn (all towers in the Luton District). The 7 mile route will take around 4 hours with stops for ringling and refreshments at local hostelries, after which a meal could be arranged in Woburn. If the whole walk or the length of time is too much, why not join in for part of the Walk and Ring. Estimated timings will be posted on the website.

Can all those who are interested in joining in please either phone 01525 840278 or send an email to contact@amphillringers.org.uk for more details and so that we have an idea of numbers. Details will also be posted in the "Clanger" section of the Ampthill Ringers website www.amphillringers.org.uk

District Outing - 13th May

Philip Rogers has once again kindly agreed to arrange the District Outing. This year it is entitled the Grand Union Tour and will include Stoke Bruerne, Blisworth and Newport Pagnell. There will also be the option of going for a curry in Bedford afterwards.

Full details will be available after the April meeting, and will be posted on the website. Posters are also being circulated among the towers in the District.

Association AGM - 20th May

This year's AGM is being held in the Luton District. There will be ringing at Milton Bryan (3) from 2:30-3:15pm, then at Husborne Crawley (8) from 3:35-4:45pm. At Woburn (8) there will be a service at 5:00pm, tea at 5:30pm and the meeting at 6:00pm, followed by ringing until 9:00pm.

District Striking Contest - 10th June

This year the Striking Contest will be held at Maulden – on the back 6. Bands who can only ring rounds are welcome as well as those capable of method ringing.

The two top method-ringing teams from the District Contest are eligible to take part in the Bedfordshire Association Striking Contest in September. There is also a Rounds cup for the best band who only ring rounds.

The bells will be available between 4:00pm and 5:00pm for open ringing. The draw will take place at 5:00pm. After the Contest there will be a fish and chip supper in the hall.

Entries must be in by Friday 26th May 2006 to Mrs E J Overfield, 10 Peartree Close, Shefford, Beds SG17 5JG or 01462 815672 (there is an answerphone) or Beth@Overfield.connectfree.co.uk

Even if your tower is not able to raise a band, you will be welcome to come and ring between 4 and 5 and stay and listen to the striking contest. We will need to know numbers of people requiring fish and chips.

Campton Update

by John Loveless

Since the start of the year it's been a hive of activity here. The PCC resolution (a bit like 'I will' in wedding terms) was agreed just before Christmas. Formal notice went on display on January 18. Notice of intention to apply for a faculty has to be on display, and details of the scheme available to the public, for a month before we can apply for the faculty itself.

We have been working hard on sorting out the finer detail of the bells/frame specification. Our project team is comprised of three engineers (one each of mechanical, electrical and civil) and me, so we needed to visit White's so they could see what goes on and hear from Brian White first hand (the best bit!), and I could try to understand it all a bit better! A daunting prospect, an engineer at a time is normally plenty for me.

Back at Campton, we'd been working on identifying and costing the various building works associated with the project - things like trap door improvements, lifting beams, pigeon protection and sound control. The ladder to the clockroom needs restoration as it does not meet current statutory requirements and English Heritage need to be satisfied with proposed

improvements to it, of course. Lighting needs to be improved as there is no lighting in the bell chamber and precious little in the ringing chamber!

We had a memorable planning meeting in early February, when 'June' was suggested by one of our team (not a joke!) as a date for completion of the faculty. Things speeded up and it was with a sense of achievement that I delivered the faculty application documentation to St Albans on March 16. Two months worth of pretty intense activity, a team effort, good stuff.

So what about the new bells then? Subject to a positive outcome to our faculty application, the new bells will be cast at Taylor's of Loughborough at the end of May 06. White's will strip out the current frame and bells in September/October 06 and the installation of the new frame and bells will be completed in February/March 07.

On the local band front, we ring regularly on Sunday mornings and have a purposeful practice on Tuesday nights where our people achieve progress - the regular visitors to our practice are invaluable from that perspective - you are plucky souls, thank you! We have a new group of youngsters learning and hope that visits to Loughborough and Appleton in the coming months will encourage others to join up.

Fundraising continues, we are applying for more grants and we are still gratefully accepting all donations! Don't miss the District Meeting here on April 8, probably the last meeting where Biggleswade District members will be able to enjoy the old five!

Once again can I thank the District for its support for this project and I hope members will come along and enjoy the new ring.

Recent Events

Second Stedman Special - Tempsford, 14th January

by Sandra Cloughton

Our first Stedman Special afternoon in November went well but two of us had missed out and the rest felt that, while it had helped hugely, even more well-supported practice was still needed. A poll I did about Christmas proved that January was the favourite month, so I made some rather speedy, but well-received, phone calls and in due course got organised.

Sadly we were short of one trainee who was somewhat taken aback to find he was due to go to a surprise party instead of to Tempsford. Bad luck? We thought so, but he could not possibly comment [especially if his wife reads the Clanger!].

In the event, we had 6 Stedman trainees, one "drummer" trainee, 7 stalwarts in the support team and me as whipper-in and stand-in. I found phrases like "bond with your buddy" and "friendly, relaxed learning environment" slipping

from my lips and sitting uneasily beside "a quarts-worth of practice into a pints-worth of time", but we managed!

Essentially, the "teaching" was a quick re-cap of November's, we made the mentor/mentee pairings stick and a lot of information was given and received. It is clear that some of it stuck as we've turned the corner in the tunnel. Light is now visible and at the following practice we made a huge collective step forward. We all agree that it was a most valuable use of the early afternoon and a thousand thanks* are due to the support team.

We are also grateful for Roxton's hospitality as I was allowed to have a most welcome brew-up to refresh parts which needed refreshing and warm the parts which needed warming while the open ringing prior to the ADM was "happening" upstairs... and of that, Bernard has written more.

* To all those who made our ADM day so "special" but to avoid being a bore, I will say this only once: THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Biggleswade District ADM - 14th January

by Bernard Hooker

I go to a number of similar meetings for the various organisations to which I belong. Some have a very poor attendance as nobody wants to be shanghaid onto a committee, while others lure people to attend by having a speaker on an interesting subject, but even these meetings, including tea, last for no more than 2½ hours. So why would anyone want to attend an ADM that began at 1:30pm and ended at 9:00pm *and* included a church service?

Ringers are very special people! They are undaunted by the rigours of meetings so long as there are bells to be rung – and there were!

Some of us began at Tempsford with a very well-organised training session on Stedman Doubles. When the District's top ringers are gathering, it is an ideal opportunity to "raise the game" of those of us who are struggling to become method ringers. The one-to-one tuition was greatly appreciated.

At 3:30pm we moved to Roxton, to be joined by more ringers en route to the ADM and what a treat to hear Roxton's bells rung so well!... Then on to Eaton Socon where proceedings began at 5:30pm with the traditional annual church service. After the service we were fortified with a splendid tea provided by the good people of Eaton Socon.

Now to business, conducted with the usual good-humoured banter, but tinged with sadness at the news of the deaths of two well-loved ringers [Joan Ashton of Sandy and Eddie Jeffries of Bromham, but originally from Blunham – Ed]

With the formal business completed, those who had the stamina proceeded up the tower for the final ringing session of the day, which ended at 9:00pm. There were 15 of us at Tempsford, up to 30 at Roxton and getting on for 50 at Eaton Socon. Not bad for any ADM!

I'm sure that all of us who benefited from training, refreshments and ringing would like to thank all those who helped to make it such a splendid ADM.

Blunham and Biggleswade - 11th February

There were a good number of people at Blunham, including visitors from outside the district, and everything from rounds and call changes to surprise minor methods was rung. An excellent tea of baked potato, sausage and beans was provided at Biggleswade, followed by cakes, but there were only about twenty people there, as not everyone who attended at Blunham stayed on.

More people arrived later for the evening ringing at Biggleswade which again catered for all levels from rounds to surprise major.

Willington and Northill - 11th March

Attendance was also very good at Willington and Northill. With the tenor at Willington weighing in at 9-0-01 and that at Northill weighing 18-2-12, this was a good example of why District meetings can provide such good experience. There was a variety of ringing at both towers, and a good tea was provided at Northill to help us ring those heavy bells!

Annual District Dinner - 24th March

This year's Annual Dinner was at the Chequers in Stotfold. Apart from the fantastic three-course meal, good company and conversation, the main highlight of the evening was the celebration of Bob Churchill's 80th birthday.

For a change the first performance of the evening was not by Bob but for him – the reading of a poem dedicated to his exploits, prepared on a beautiful scroll which was then presented to Bob (see Bits and Bobs).

Of course, the evening would not have been complete without Bob Churchill reading out one of his poems as well.

Thank you to all who helped organise the Dinner, it was once again an unqualified success.





Wanted!

No new requests for help with people, information, methods or anything else have been received, so the entire District must be running like a well-oiled machine! Please don't be afraid to ask – the District is there to support you.

Haynes Update

After requesting some extra support in the last issue of the Clanger, Haynes are now having a regular weekly practice again on a Monday and the band is making good progress.

Brian Oertel was really pleased with all the offers of help from District members; hopefully this success story will encourage others to ask for anything they might need!

Bits and Bobs

Tribute to Joan Ashton 1928 - 2005

How often it is only at a funeral that long-standing friends discover the “all” – or nearly all – of the deceased person’s life. This was certainly the case when many of Joan’s circle of ringing friends, having heard of her sudden death at home on 19th December, attended her funeral on 30th December at St Swithun’s Church, Sandy.

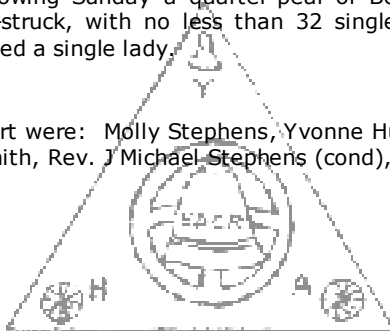
The service was conducted by the curate, the Revd. Sarah Hillman, and in her address we heard of the many other aspects of Joan’s life which surrounded her years of teaching at schools in Leighton Buzzard, Potton and Sandy: Scottish dancing, lace-making, embroidery, sailing, motorcycling, Outward Bound holidays for children, and of course the care of her cats. All this, and her deep concern for people, was clearly underwritten by her strong profession of faith in God, fed by her life as a regular communicant.

Joan did not keep detailed records of her ringing achievements, which followed tuition on Sandy bells by Charlie Ball, and her subsequent election to the Association in 1946. It should be remembered that in the early post-war years most ringers cycled to District meetings, and after Joan’s first quarter-peal at Sandy in June 1947 and first peal, also at Sandy (April 1949, in two Minor methods), she soon took part in ringing beyond the District and became a regular participant in the activities of the “Bedfordshire Young Ringers” whose annual week-long cycling tours in the 1950s took them as far as the Cotswolds, Devon and Yorkshire. Her seven peals included one of Doubles (on the difficult six at Houghton Conquest), Disley Delight Minor (at Tempsford) and Bob Major (St. Peter’s, Bedford). For many years Joan’s ringing was mainly at her local tower, but during the last twenty years she enjoyed something of an Indian Summer travelling to the “Young” Ringers’ reunions, showing evidence of “once a ringer, always a ringer” despite increasing health problems.

Appropriately, half-muffled ringing by local ringers and many of Joan’s “Young” friends for the funeral included the “whole pull and stand” as the coffin arrived at the church gate, stopping only when a kilted piper led the funeral party into church. On the following Sunday a quarter-peal of Bob Minor was rung at Biggleswade* - well-struck, with no less than 32 singles, a fitting tribute to Joan who had remained a single lady.

Michael Stephens

* ringers taking part were: Molly Stephens, Yvonne Humberstone, Charlotte Smith, Anthony Smith, Rev. J Michael Stephens (cond), Alan Smith



Bob Churchill's 80th Birthday Scroll



*When you hear the name of Churchill what springs into
your mind*

*A man of stature, intelligent, honest, good, and kind.
A man who leads the people and will always lend a hand
To mow a lawn, or build a wall, or fill a ringing band.
You'll guess of course to whom we all associate this name
No it is not Winston, for us all here, BOBS the name.
We know in his locality he does a lot of work
For other people, and the church, his duties he don't shirk.
In ringing circles he is always there to ring a bell
His methods he will always learn, and likes to strike it well.
A poet of some fame is he, and always find a rhyme
To fit in with most anything, and much better than mine.
His fount of knowledge of all things shines out in what he writes
Whether nature, history, or things that put the world to rights.
His ready wit and humour make him popular with all
And so together, all of us who gather in this hall
I ask you all to stand, and after me to say
To BOB, we all wish you a Happy Eightieth Birthday*

Unfortunately there isn't space in this issue for the poem Bob read at the District Dinner, "No Thank You", so that will be saved for a future Clanger – for now it can be found on the website.

Useful Websites



UPDATED! Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers
www.bacr.co.uk



The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers
www.cccbr.org.uk



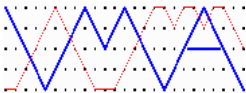
Doves Guide
www.cccbr.org.uk/dove/dove.php



Ringing World
www.ringingworld.co.uk

Change Ringing Resources - for links to just about everything related to ringing:

www.ringing.info



The Visual Method Archive – useful to get the blue line for any method, even those not in the “Red Book”!

www.ex.ac.uk/knotweed/vismeth.htm



And don't forget you can now find the Clanger at
www.amphillringers.org.uk

Please let us know of any other ringing-related websites you find useful – send the links to us at bedfordshire.clanger@ntlworld.com to be included in future issues.