

# PETERBOROUGH DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS



Newsletter  
Jan 2025

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## Newsletter News

This edition reflects on the completion of the Guild's Centenary Year, the many and varied events celebrating PDG100, multiple cakes, and my eventual success in acquiring an official tee shirt and polo.

I am writing this in Melbourne, Australia, after service ringing at the cathedrals of St Paul and St Patrick. Tomorrow, on to Auckland, New Zealand, for more family visits (and towers). I am always encouraged by the enthusiastic welcome given to visiting ringers to the ANZAB territories. If I could find a Guild excuse, I might do an article ...

Special thanks, as always, to all the branch correspondents and Guild officers who make these newsletters possible. In particular, Secretary Helen for spotting the typos and errors that I missed. Please keep sending in your stories and photos.

If you'd like to share copies of the Newsletter with any non-ringing members, direct them to the relevant part of the Guild website ([pdg.org.uk/latest-news/newsletters](http://pdg.org.uk/latest-news/newsletters)) or download a copy and email it to them. A hard copy can be delivered in person (or posted), on request to me or the Secretary.

If you want any additional copies for members in your branch, please let me know, so that I can ensure enough copies are printed.

Please send any comments, complaints or contributions for future editions to me at [newsletter@pdg.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@pdg.org.uk). All copy for the next edition, for distribution at the Spring Meeting, to arrive by **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March latest**, please. Thank you.

*Jonathan Stuart*

## Contents

Guild Officers' Contact Details .....	2
Newsletter News .....	2
President's Postscript .....	4
The Secretary Sits Down .....	5
Treasurer's Tally .....	5
From the Bellboard Footnotes .....	7
PDG100 Events Reports .....	10
Obituaries .....	20
News from the Branches .....	22
100 Club Report .....	39
Guild Future Events Calendar .....	40

## President's Postscript

What a year this Centenary Year of the Guild has been!

I write this after coming home from the very last Centenary Celebration Event, the Carol Service in St Lawrence Church Towcester, with its lovely 12 bells ringing out as I walked up to the Church. I was pleased to see that the service was well attended with 63 members signing the register, and it was good to hear readers from around the branches taking part.

This great closing gathering prompts me to give thanks for the amazing efforts of Helen Allton (Guild Secretary) and Cathy Dixon (Guild Public Relations Officer for most of the year) for setting all this up, with assistance of teams from each of the Branches. I think most members will have attended and enjoyed at least one event.

Our grateful thanks are due to Cathy for steering the Barn Dance, Nene Valley Ringing Challenge, Towers Open Day, Ringing Picnic round Rutland Water, and Guild Quiz - ably supported on many of these by the Master Simon Dixon.

Thanks also to Helen, who arranged the opening Service of Evensong at Peterborough Cathedral, the closing service of Carols at Towcester and, with Cathy, the Family Ringing Day at Stanwick Lakes and the Guild Dinner at the Kettering Park Hotel. Helen also kept her hand in with the "day job" of steering the Spring and Summer Meetings, and delivering the Guild AGM in June.

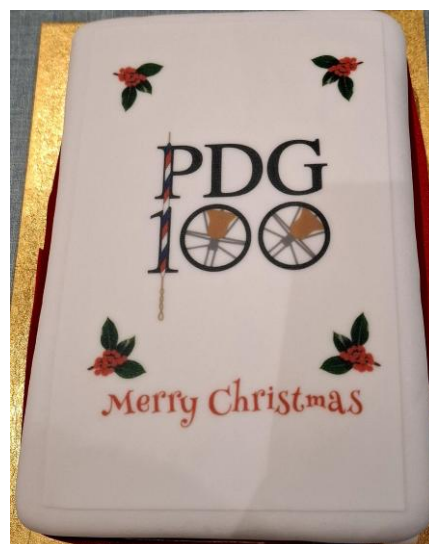
Somehow, they also found time to produce a special logo to go on souvenir mugs, jigsaws, calendars, t-shirts, fleeces and other clothing, bunting, and a succession of Centenary Cakes for each event.

Altogether I think you will agree that a lot of work has been done by so many to turn each idea into reality. I cannot possibly try to list all of you here without risking missing someone out!

So I will just lead a big round of applause on your behalf to Helen and Cathy, our Event Leaders, who have lived and breathed this Centenary Year for nearly 5 years now since it was first mooted.

WELL DONE!

*Alistair Donaldson*



*Photo: Celia Stanworth*

## The Secretary Sits Down

I would quite like to sit down and relax for a bit, but the year rolls around again and January is branch AGMs. February sees the F&GP committee meeting, and the GMC is in March, both of which I have agendas & minutes and “stuff” to deal with. Then 12th April sees the Spring Meeting. I’m sure Pattishall will be battling hard, as the inaugural winners, to retain their very lovely (if I do say so myself) Centenary trophy.

I’ll not say much about the 100th anniversary year, as most of the rest of this issue does that for me. I would like to thank all those that have helped in any way across the year; without you, this would have been much less successful. I’ve been asked what I’m planning for the 150th. After no thinking time at all, I can state that will be someone else’s job!

Looking forward, there are some Guild posts vacant or coming vacant in June. We haven’t had a PRO for this year and the post of Youth Ringing Officer has never been filled. In both roles there’s an opportunity for the person taking it on to develop the scope. January sees the Report Editors gearing up for their last annual report. Jim & Gwynneth White are standing down after a decade in post, and a new Report Editor is required. Also standing down is Master, Simon Dixon. If you are interested in taking on a role, you can find the job descriptions on the website. You can talk to the current role holder or drop me a line and we can talk further.

<https://pdg.org.uk/homepage/officers>.

*Helen Allton*

## Treasurer’s Tally

### Gift Aid Claims

I have been attempting to pull in Gift Aid refunds from the HMRC over the last year. I find that many members are not signed up to give Gift Aid, and I would like to rectify that situation before another year is lost.

In 2024, we introduced a renewal of membership form, to ensure that we had up to date information on all members. Included on the form is a Gift Aid declaration, to encourage many more members to sign up for this benefit, which provides at least £2 per member per year going forward. Please obtain the form from your branch secretary and complete it if you are a taxpayer, so that I can make this happen.

### Historical Bell Grant claims – no matter how old

I am seeking write-ups about any successful Bell Grant claims, so that we can provide case studies in the Diocesan monthly papers, to encourage continuing giving by parishes.

Ideally the stories would include:

- Background to the problem which needed to be resolved.
- The financials

- (Lots of) pictures
- The process – good and (not so much) bad
- The outcome
- Any positive impacts on parishes and/or bellringers.

### **Online shoppers call to arms – are you aware?**

Are you aware that there are schemes that enable online shoppers to give donations to charities whilst they shop? Does that sound too good to be true?

We are involved with two such schemes:

#### **Give as you live**

[www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com)

#### **Easy Fundraising**

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

They have signed up around 4,500 & 8,000 online retailers respectively, to donate to charities (either a fixed sum or a % ranging from 0.5% to as much as 15%!!) for **online purchases** completed through their links. This includes all the supermarket chains, retailers such as John Lewis, insurers, including the comparison websites, and all the big companies that you know well. In return, the platforms undertake to encourage members of large organisations like us, with almost 1,000 members, to consider joining.

In the last year, with only 3 members signed up, we have generated £120 of donations for PDG, and I would encourage more members to sign up. In total, these two schemes have raised around £80m in donations to good causes. Does it sound too good to be true? Your information will probably be used for marketing, but I have not noticed any more issues than buying direct from retailers, and this way charities receive donations.

Further there are incentives of £5 per member that signs up via the links above and goes on to generate £5 worth of donations.

If you sign up and nominate the Guild (charity number 258271) we can start to benefit immediately. Give as You Live permits splitting your donations so if you want to share them to up to 5 charities, they will do that.

#### **Give as you Earn Scheme**

Many of you will be aware of Gift Aiding which enables an additional 25% to be reclaimed from the HMRC on charitable donations. There is an even better scheme for higher rate tax-payers that you may not be aware of. You can ask your employer about the Give as You Earn (GAYE) scheme. Under it you can sacrifice an element of your salary and have it diverted to a payment account which can ONLY be spent on donations to recognised charities. In effect, you can donate £100 by sacrificing only £40. In my company, we sacrifice from £20 to £700 per month and contribute large amounts to charity. There is an admin fee of 4% that can be covered by charity aware

companies, or they can choose to charge it to the donors. In either event, this is a huge improvement for charitable giving available to higher rate tax payers.

If you have any queries on any of the above opportunities for supporting our charity, call me on 07761 180369 or email me on treasurer@pdg.org.uk.

*Chris FitzGerald*  
*Guild Treasurer*

## **From the Bellboard Footnotes**

*(1<sup>st</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)*

### **First Quarter**

Ted Phillips (Belton in Rutland)  
Steph Matthews (Castor)  
Roger Carter (Cold Ashby)  
Tracey Lawson (Edith Weston)  
Nicky Vickers (Edith Weston)  
Charlotte Peacock (Great Casterton)  
Sian Ryan (Lyddington)  
Jonathan Gibbs (Lyddington)  
Hannah Conlon (Rothwell)  
Philip Barker (Staverton)  
Yolanda Wilcock (Staverton)  
Anne Prestwick (Weedon Bec)



*Hannah Conlon's 1st Quarter band*

### **First Quarter inside**

Fiona Barclay (Guilsborough)  
Julie Pocock (Nassington)

### **First Minor**

Jack Brown (Brixworth)  
Holly Pedersen (Peterborough St Mary)

### **First Minor inside**

Jack Brown (Cold Ashby)  
Clara Pedersen (Peterborough St Mary)



*1st Quarters (x2) at Edith Weston*

### **First Treble Dodging**

Val Bridges (Harpole)

### **First Treble Place**

Helen Camps, Liz Reading, Richard Holyland, Steve Millington & Andrew Gunstone (Guilsborough). Ringing Santa Treble Place Minor & wishing everyone a happy Christmas.

### **First Triples**

Sarah Johnson (Crick)

### **First on 10**

Helen Camps (Daventry)  
Joseph Booker (Cathedral)

### **First as Conductor**

Joseph Booker (Peterborough St Mary)  
Jane Robinson (Peterborough St Mary)

### **First Minor as conductor**

Nick Hiams (Crick)

### **First peal**

Elizabeth Wilby (Towcester)  
Hannah Baker (Whilton)

### **First peal of Major**

Josh Horne (Irthlingborough)

### **First peal of Spliced Royal**

Toby Bence, Julie Tarling, Helena Thorpe,  
James Thorpe, (Edinburgh St Cuthbert)

### **First peal on 12**

Julie Tarling & Helena Thorpe (Cathedral)

### **First peal of Cyclic spliced Maximus**

Richard Allton & Charlotte Linford (Towcester)

### **Birthdays**

Birth of Anya, daughter of Dave & Georgia, born on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, with a quarter at Warmington.

Birth of Owen John, son of Rebecca & Richard Howells & first grandchild of Alex Dyer with a quarter at Peterborough St Mary.

Roux, grandson of Andrew & Rosmarie Gunstone was welcomed with a quarter at Thornby on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct.

Jane Robinson called her first quarter (Peterborough St Mary) for the birth of her great nephew, Franciszek Parkoła.

Birthdays of Jake (3) & Bramble (4), grandson & friend to Liz Reading were marked with a quarter at Barton Seagrave.

Emma Camps was 8 on 8<sup>th</sup> Nov and a quarter was run at Weldon the day before.

Rosie Thorpe was wished a happy 19<sup>th</sup> birthday with a method named after her, Rosie Alliance Major, after her parents managed to be away for her birthday.



*Hannah Baker (top left) First Peal*



*Jake, 3yrs, grandson to Liz Reading*



*Jim Bence's impressive 60<sup>th</sup> birthday cake*

50<sup>th</sup>: Rachel Oldfield with a quarter at Peterborough St Mary on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov and Alison Aquilina-Evans had a belated birthday quarter on 1<sup>st</sup> Sep at the same tower.

60<sup>th</sup>: Jim Bence with a quarter at Rothwell on 14<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Giles Willson celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth with a quarter at Mears Ashby on 19<sup>th</sup> Sep and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his baptism with another quarter at Rowington on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec.

70<sup>th</sup>: Chris Bullied with a family (plus friends) touch at

Pattishall on 21<sup>st</sup> Dec & Paul Bailey with a quarter at Rushden on 29<sup>th</sup> Dec.

90<sup>th</sup>: Dennis Powney, who taught Nick Smith over 50 years ago, with a quarter at Peterborough St John.

Ray Vickers' 90<sup>th</sup> was celebrated with a peal at Wicken on 26<sup>th</sup> October.



*Chris Bulleid's 70th birthday touch (5th from left)*

Joan Parker's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday was marked by a quarter of 90 leads of Grandsire triples at Peterborough St Mary with 60 calls for her 60 years' association with the church.

100<sup>th</sup>: Harold Killingbeck was churchwarden when the bells at Brooke were restored, a quarter was rung for his birthday on these bells in November.

Years not given:

Lucy Sanger on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov with a quarter at Braddon

Mike Price's birthday was "significant" for the quarter at Crick on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.

The delightful Mrs Wilson's undisclosed birthday was marked with a peal of a new method, Mrs Wilson Delight Major.



*Joan Parker celebrates 90 with her granddaughters*

### **Weddings & Anniversaries**

Sally Hunt and Andrew Stewart were complimented on their marriage at Market Overton earlier in the day with a quarter at Langham on 7<sup>th</sup> Sep.

Deborah & Steve Bray's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with a quarter at Castor on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Tim & Sam Hadaway were complimented on their Silver wedding on 25<sup>th</sup> Sep with a quarter at Haselbech.

Ginny & Ian Sheldon's Golden wedding anniversary was celebrated with a quarter at Castor of Golden Wedding Doubles.

### **Clergy**

Revd Tom Grant was welcomed to the Naseby Benefice with a peal at Clipston for the Patronal festival.

Morna Simpson was welcomed to Finedon with a peal there, and it also marked 50 years since the ordination of Fr Stan Haworth.

### **People**

Liz Reading has been ringing quite a lot and scored her 100<sup>th</sup> quarter in the Guild's centenary year at Rushden in early December. She's rung a few more since then.

Alistair Donaldson rang his 2000<sup>th</sup> quarter peal.

Richard Allton conducted his 1200<sup>th</sup> peal on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his first peal, with Julie & John scoring their first of Double Norwich.

Richard Stanworth celebrated 50 years membership of the College Youths with a quarter and peal, both at Towcester.

Steve Millington rang a quarter at Cold Ashby of Whitley Surprise Minor, which completes quarters of each of the regular 41 Surprise Minor methods.

The peal on the Front six at Higham Ferrars was the first on these bells. The peal was an acrostic as a compliment to the vicar, Louise Bishop, who is much appreciated by the ringers.

Thomas Saunders is moving to Nottingham, and goes with the best wishes of the ringers, and a quarter of Bristol Major at the Cathedral.



*Richard Stanworth (2nd left), ASCY 50yrs*

Best wishes to Alison & Ian Wilgress on their move to Wales were sent with a quarter at Weedon Bec.

Best wishes for good health were rung for: Alan Chantler (Yelvertoft), Odette Dawkins (Pattishall), Sue Marsden (Haselbech & Weldon) & Nick Parsons (Higham Ferrars).

## Events

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priestly ministry of women was celebrated by quarter peals at both the Cathedral and Peterborough St Mary.

Corby rang on Remembrance Day, the last ringing before restoration work began on the Monday morning.

The tercentenary of the bells at Yardley Hastings was marked with a quarter in September.

Peterborough St Mary rang a quarter in October for Lupus Awareness Month.

A band rang a peal at Rothwell on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, each member of the band had rung a peal to celebrate the Guild's Golden Jubilee in 1974.



In Orlingbury, quarter peals were ring for both Conkers on the Green and Brass on the Green.

The Guild's dinner was marked with a dinner day peal at Kettering.

*Helen Allton*

## PDG100 Events Reports

Lack of space in the September newsletter meant May and June event reports were not included. Here's a catch-up on what's been happening in our centenary year.

Page 440 of the Ringing World contained a report of the April Spring Festival, which is one of our annual events but took place on a much larger scale than usual, due to the addition of a call change trophy to the six-bell striking competition. In May, we hosted a Tower Open Day for the first time in many, many years, and June saw the second of our annual events, the AGM.

### PDG100 Open Day – an organiser's view

Back at the start of 2020, when the small committee first gathered to plan the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the Guild, one of the events high on the agenda was a tower open day. Some general discussion was held about which towers to include and so on.

Simon and I then got down to the nitty-gritty, selecting many of the recently augmented or refurbished sets of bells, planning routes around those that included mainly ground floor rings so that bands could easily swap over, enough



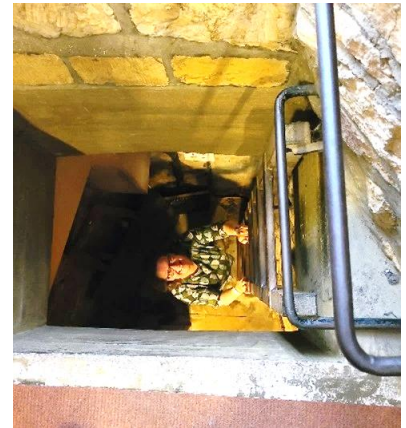
*Smart Welcome Desk at Aynho (Cathy Dixon)*

churches with toilet facilities and then a few where simple refreshments could be laid on. We decided on 30 towers, basically three from each of the ten branches, going from one end of the Guild to the other.

Once we had our route, we went out on a couple of occasions to check the timings for getting from one tower to another, and sensible places to park. Armed with this information, setting a start time of 9am and allowing one hour at each tower, we could plan the whole schedule.

I think we were very lucky that we obtained permission to ring at our chosen time at all the towers. Thanks to all the local contacts and church incumbents for granting permission.

We published the tower list with navigational information and parking advice and offered booking of day tickets in advance. Only ten people took us up on that offer but as we were not aiming to make a profit from the day, we only needed thirty attendees to break even and cover the cost of the tower donations.



*Scary access at Harpole  
(Laura Parker)*

Other preparations included the production of badges for the stewards at each tower who were sent detailed guidance about what to expect on the day, and the recruitment of six pairs of “super stewards” who leap-frogged each other to cover all the towers on the route, delivering the badges and tower donations and collecting any cash taken as fees at the tower.



*Nassington (Laura Parker)*

The weather on the day was brilliant, bright and warm so no need to worry about coats being left behind (although one pair of sunglasses had to be passed on). Some intrepid souls arrived an hour early for the first tower, Aynho, so we were able to get the first band registered and ready to ring for 9am. Although some groups decided to miss out the odd tower during the day to keep up with the timings, most seemed very happy with the arrangements (especially the cake?) and were wearing (weary) smiles at the last tower, Thrapston.

Because of the high turnout (probably about 100 people touring round with another 100 involved in stewarding) and a profit of over £1000, I think we can record that this, our fifth centenary event, was a success.

Comments from a happy participant:

*I have been ringing just over two years and this was my first open day. I travelled from North Norfolk with my bellringing teachers. We rang at 20 of the*

towers. I was quite nervous, but I shouldn't have worried. The whole event was executed to perfection for me.

I have actually tried to find a negative comment and I can't find one. Everyone was welcoming, friendly and helpful. I didn't feel we were rushing between towers, and we were moved through quickly and efficiently.

A good mix of towers and having ground floor meant we didn't need to wait too long. Everyone was very supportive of me, being a relatively new ringer.

Plenty of good tea and cake. I can only thank you all collectively for the day. I would absolutely do another in your part of the world.



Refreshments at Thrapston, with ringing from the gallery (Alison Merryweather-Clarke)

Cathy Dixon

## Guild Centenary AGM

The original plan for the Centenary AGM was for it to be held in Northampton but the extent and route of the Northampton Carnival on that day caused a need to start another plan.

So, we rang on the heavy six at Harlestone under Richard Allton's direction but we could only begin after the wholesale removal of extraneous materials from the ringing chamber. Then the six bells at Pitsford were kept busy with Master Simon Dixon in charge until 3.45pm when everyone concentrated on arriving at Moulton for the 4.30pm Guild Service which was preceded by suitable ringing.

The Guild service was led by Peter Storey, a lay reader at Moulton who having sought Barry Care's advice ("not to talk about bellringing") promptly ignored it but did incorporate the celebration of anniversaries.

Next door in the impressive modern church hall an equally impressive buffet tea was provided by Debbie Sampson and Jenny Ball and their helpers and included another Centenary Cake. In the entrance lobby was a shout-out board of first achievements taken from BellBoard performances – the aim is to get at least 100 by the end of the centenary year.

By 6.15pm President Alistair Donaldson was able to wield his gavel and start the meeting with Liz Reading proposing the vote of thanks.

Membership matters began with reference to members who had died since the last AGM who had also been mentioned during prayers at the service beforehand.

Ten certificates for 50 year's membership were announced and some presented to those who were present. Ian Willgress was elected as a Life Honorary Member.

It was decided to raise the membership fee to £10 and £5 for full-time students and that a copy of the annual report would be available for free for every member who notified the Guild before February each year.

Various other bits of business were concluded and under AOB we were advised that the Ridgman East Anglian 10-bell striking competition has been scheduled for June 21, 2025 at Boston Stump, thus avoiding our AGM date, with which it clashed this year.

The meeting ended at 7.27pm followed by a swift stacking of chairs and tables in the hall while the 12 light bells next door were put to good use under the direction of Master Simon Dixon followed by paying of some parking fees in the Artichoke down the road.

*Geoff Pullin*

## Guild Summer Festival

Naming an event "The Summer Festival" especially when it is in September, seems to be daring the weather to be not at all summery. But on 14<sup>th</sup> September the day dawned bright and clear, and the weather remained mostly summery all day.

In the afternoon, ringing took place at the big 5 at Everdon and the 6 at Badby before moving on to the main event at Byfield. The Summer Festival is an 8-bell striking contest, arranged between branches of the Guild for the Harry Wooding Memorial Trophy. Bands are free to choose the method, Triples or Major, with a minimum of 160 changes to be rung. There were five branch bands and a youth team. Most bands elected to ring Grandsire Triples. As the judges commented, there are worse ways to spend an afternoon.



*The Harry Wooding Trophy*

For the first time there was a youth band entered. In the spirit of encouraging youth, judge Andrew Alldrick was accompanied by his grandson, Zach Poulson, who rings with the Coventry Spires youth team.

The tea was held in the village hall, a nice stroll across the park from the church. There was a stall of anniversary merchandise, and colouring and crafts for the young at heart. Introduced this year was a display of work in recently completed projects. This aims to give the wider Guild a view of what grant money has been spent on. It might spark an idea, or provide some thoughts on potential local projects.

The judges presented the results in an impressive display of teamwork, with Andrew Alldrick giving the general comments on each team's performance before Mike Chester gave the scores in reverse order and Zach gave out the certificates to each

team. The Judges presented Chris Bulleid from Towcester branch with the trophy, for having given the judges' pencils the least to do.

There was a short business meeting, the main part of which was a review of activity at the CCCBR meeting which took place the previous weekend. The day finished with evening ringing at Byfield.

Congratulations to all the bands that took part. They all finished higher than the branches which did not enter at all! Thanks are due to the towers for allowing ringing, Daventry branch for putting on the abundant tea in Byfield's lovely village hall, and to the judges for giving up their afternoon to judge for us.



*Winning Towcester band*

*Helen Allton*

## PDG100 Centenary Dinner

Throughout the centenary year, each branch hosts an event. On 12th October the Kettering Branch hosted the Guild's Centenary Dinner. The Guild does not hold an annual dinner, so this was definitely a "special event".

The day started with a successful peal of Cambridge S Maximus at SS. Peter & Paul, Kettering. The band comprised mainly Guild residents but with some "ex-pats" and friends making up the numbers. This followed on from a peal of Grandsire Cinques rung the previous weekend by a resident band at Peterborough Cathedral. These were the first 12-bell peals rung for the Guild for several years.



*Photo: Susan Marsden*

The dinner venue was the Kettering Spa Hotel, and this proved to be a very successful choice. As people started to arrive dressed in their finery, instead of their usual T-shirts, there was an excited buzz in the bar area. We were particularly pleased to be joined by our patron bishops, Rt. Rev. Debbie Sellin, Bishop of Peterborough and Rt. Rev. John Holbrook, Bishop of Brixworth.

A well-crafted poetic grace was said by Rev. Janet Donaldson, wife of the President. An excellent three course dinner was then enjoyed with the MC, Richard Allton, interrupting from time to time, to encourage the President, Alistair Donaldson, to take wine with various groups. By the end, everyone had had to stand up at least once!



*Photo: Sarah Bence*

Following the Loyal Toast, proposed by the President, the first speaker was Jane Marsh, Chair of the Kettering Branch, who welcomed everyone to Kettering and, in proposing a toast to the Church, described the church as our landlord. She went on to highlight our role in being the public voice of the Church, reminding people that the Church is there and open for business. She also touched on the common challenges, particularly of ageing populations.

In her response, Bishop Debbie described ringing as a key part of church life and thanked the Guild for its contribution. She particularly highlighted and gave thanks for teaching, especially the teaching of younger people. She finished by proposing a toast to the Guests and Visitors.



*Speaker line-up, Bishop Debbie, Helen, Linda, Jane (photo Linda Garton)*

The response was given by Linda Garton, President of the Bedfordshire Association. Linda, although now a resident of Bedfordshire, is a native of Northamptonshire and described herself as “a funny little shoe town girl” as she described her local connections and happy memories. Using the well-known quotation from JFK, she encouraged us to ask ourselves not what the Guild has done for us, but what we can do for the Guild. She also flagged up the need for guilds to review their structures to meet changing needs and circumstances. Linda finished by proposing a toast to the Guild.

The evening’s final speaker was the Guild Secretary, Dr Helen Allton. She thanked Linda and the other speakers before making some interesting comparisons between the Guild in 1924 and 2024. These included reference to there being only 26 lady members in 1924 and that the annual subscription then was one shilling and sixpence. In 2024 we have rather more than 26 lady members and one shilling and sixpence in 1924 was approximately the cost of 5 pints of beer!

With the bar remaining open until midnight, socialising continued for some time after the speeches with all in agreement that it had been a very enjoyable evening.

**Peterborough Diocesan Guild**

**Kettering**, Northamptonshire

St Peter and St Paul

Saturday, 12 October 2024 in 3h 26 (21-1-2 in Eb)

**5042 Cambridge Surprise Maximus**

Composed by Richard I Allton (No 1563)

- 1 Murray A Coleman
- 2 Linda M Garton
- 3 Shirley E McGill
- 4 Paul M Mason
- 5 John P Loveless
- 6 Robert M Wood
- 7 Christopher E Bulleid
- 8 Nicholas R Wilson
- 9 Keith W Brown
- 10 Christopher N McCarthy
- 11 James F Thorpe
- 12 Richard I Allton (C)

Rung on the day of the Guild Centenary Dinner.

**Peterborough Diocesan Guild**

**Peterborough**, Cambridgeshire

Cathedral Church of St Peter, St Paul, and St Andrew

Saturday, 5 October 2024 in 3h 21 (21-1-20 in E)

**5100 Grandsire Cinques**

Composed by Richard I Allton (No 2993)

- 1 James M Bence
- 2 Paul M Mason
- 3 Susan E Marsden
- 4 Robert M Wood
- 5 Helena M Thorpe
- 6 Julie A Tarling
- 7 Richard I Allton (C)
- 8 Nicholas R Wilson
- 9 A John Stanworth
- 10 James F Thorpe
- 11 Toby A Bence
- 12 Timothy F W Samson

First on 12: 5 & 6. 100th together: 2 & 10.

Rung to celebrate the Centenary of the Formation of the Guild by a band of Resident Members.

*Robert Wood*

## PDG100 Quiz Night

On the evening of Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, fifteen teams from across the Guild gathered at the superbly appointed Syresham Village Hall to celebrate the Guild’s 100th anniversary. The event was a highlight of the festivities, blending camaraderie with friendly competition.

The evening was impeccably organised. Quizzers were warmly welcomed with a thoughtful slip of paper to redeem their much-anticipated chippy. Cathy Dixon, our engaging compère, alongside Simon Dixon, had devised a challenging and cleverly themed set of questions commemorating the Guild’s centenary. Topics included the number 100, the year 1924, and fascinating facts about the Guild itself. The picture round, a devilish challenge featuring photographs of cathedrals to identify, added an extra layer of intrigue. Answer sheets were promptly collected and marked after each round, thanks to the diligent efforts of Naomi Dixon, and Ben and Lily Horne. A live scoreboard kept everyone motivated and aware of their standings.



*Quizmaster & Scorer – serious work*

At halftime, participants took a well-earned break to collect their delicious chippy teas from Howe and Co’s van, conveniently stationed outside the hall. Teams were sent in shifts, ensuring everyone received generous portions, which were enjoyed

with great enthusiasm. Meanwhile, teas and cakes were expertly served by the friendly team of Andrew North, Chris Lines, and Joan Lewis.

Competition was fierce, but one team emerged victorious. Team "HawHaw" secured the top spot with an impressive score of 61.5 out of 80, earning the coveted hamper and the Guild Quiz Trophy. A tie for second place, between "The Clappers" and "One Short", at 52.5 points led to a nail-biting tiebreaker, ultimately won by "One Short," who claimed the runner-up prize.



*Winning Quiz Team "HawHaw" and their hamper*

The evening was a resounding success, marked by good company, spirited competition, and meticulous planning. Special thanks go to Cathy and Simon Dixon for their cunningly crafted questions and to the Culworth branch members for

their outstanding organisational efforts.

*Fiona Barclay*

## PDG100 Carol Service



*Photo: Jim Bence*

Saturday 28th December, in that odd time between Christmas and New Year, saw the final Guild Centenary event. This was a Carol Service at Towcester, with ringing beforehand and refreshments after. This wasn't on the usual Second Saturday, as December suffers from what can best be described as fixture congestion, with many events and parties filling up the social schedule. Instead, we made use of the 5th Saturday in December to have a Carol Service in the appropriate liturgical season.

The ringing element saw a large number making their way up the stairs to ring on the excellent ring of twelve bells. It's a good thing that the ringing room is fairly spacious, but there aren't really any passing places on the stairs. For some it was their first time ringing on 12 and there was lots of rounds and call changes to give them the opportunity with a solid band around them. In between, the more experienced rang Little Bob, Grandsire and Cambridge, in some cases this was also a chance to blow away a few cobwebs and stretch themselves. A service touch of Stedman showed the bells off well.

The Service was taken by the Venerable David Painter. As a retired Archdeacon of Oakham and now resident in Towcester, he is familiar with the diocese and has had plenty of experience of ringers within it. He welcomed the congregation of 60 or so and gave the address, referencing the readings in his thoughtful words. These included a piece written especially for the occasion by George Potter, and a vigorous and most tuneable rendition, by David Banks, of the extract from Dorothy L Sayers' book, *The Nine Tailors*. There was a mixture of styles of reading, with Psalm 150 and poems by John Betjeman and Malcom Guite to balance the traditional and the contemporary.

Of the hymns selected, three had direct references to bells and, thinking about it, if the Angels were ringing rather than singing in *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, that would complete the set. After a rousing rendition of *Unchanging God*, Michael Tinsley gave the organ a thorough workout by playing *Carillon De Westminster* by Louis Vierne and using almost all the stops at his disposal. This was also the Organ Voluntary at the Cathedral Evensong in January, making a nice link back through the year.

The refreshments were served in the church, with a fine array of cakes and yummy goodies to accompany the tea and coffee. One final birthday cake was ready and was duly cut by David Painter. The retiring collection raised over £200 to be divided between the church and the Guild's BRF.

Thank you to all those who came, to the readers and organist for taking part, to the churchwarden and David for taking the service, to the cake bakers and tea makers for an excellent spread, and to all those involved in any way.

*Helen Allton*



*Ven David Painter and the final PDG100 cake*

## Obituaries

### Maureen Easton (1945 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024)

Maureen “Mo” Easton’s body was cremated on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. The humanist ceremony featured a reading from Philip Pullman’s “The Amber Spyglass”, a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson and the theme from “The Archers”. These contributions set out the interests held by this kind, resilient and intelligent lady with the beautiful smile.

At a very early age Mo was given up for adoption. Her adoptive parents René and Phil took her to Hong Kong for some years, then returned to the UK. Mo learned to ring at Gretton in 1958, joining the PDG in 1961. At eighteen she married, and she and Terry started a family. She trained as a teacher. In 1974, the family moved to Desborough, with Mo teaching at Rothwell Primary School. Fellow bellringers at Desborough, where she was Tower Captain for a while, enjoyed her positivity. Mo rang her first peal (seven minor methods) at Glaston in 1975.

She became Headteacher of Naseby Primary School. In her life, she rang 23 peals: including Surprise Major methods, Stedman Triples and Grandsire Caters. Mo and Tania, her daughter, both played in a handbell tune-ringing team with Delia and Roger Smith and Mary and Murray Coleman. After her second marriage ended, Mo moved away to Hertfordshire; finally retiring from teaching and moving back to Northamptonshire to care for her parents. Active in the PDG again, she was elected Kettering Branch Chairman in 2013.

Events took a wonderful turn. Mo met David in Market Harborough, they fell in love and started living together. In another remarkable twist, her son Alex discovered that her natural father and nine natural siblings were living in Australia. Mo was able to travel to meet them. She retired from being Kettering Branch Chairman in 2022. She leaves behind a devoted family.

*Nick Watts*

### Hugh Johnson (1<sup>st</sup> February 1938 – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024)

Hugh Maurice Johnson died in Northampton General Hospital on November 26<sup>th</sup>, aged 86. He was a larger-than-life character with a big heart, who had been dogged by ill health for some years. Born in Greenford to Maurice and Mary, the family evacuated to the Daventry area during WWII.



Hugh was directed to Holy Cross, Daventry choir from his school and remained a staunch supporter of the church through cubs, scouts, bellringing, serving, as scout leader, camping, on the PCC, tower captain, working with Churches Together and with the Rotary as Father Christmas where his characteristic beard came in handy.

Hugh was an engineering apprentice and became a draftsman. After some years, he decided to change course and trained as a teacher. By 1978 he was at Southbrook School in Daventry, where he taught maths until he retired in 2005. At his funeral on December 18<sup>th</sup>, teacher colleague, Bert Manton, gave a humorous tribute. Bert was famous for having a bell wheel and ropes in his Aladdin's cave of an environmental studies classroom and had looked out his PDG shirt for the occasion. He

described Hugh's assistance with an after school rural studies club, where they passed on and rediscovered rural crafts, such as wattle fence weaving and turning wood on a foot operated lathe, including many demonstrations at village fairs. Hugh also loved arranging camping trips.

Hugh joined the Peterborough Guild as a teenager in 1951, rang his first quarter peal on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1953, at Braunston, on the treble to doubles conducted by Malcolm Chown. His first peal was treble to Grandsire Doubles at Leamington Hastings, conducted by Vic Perry on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1955. In 1957 he rang in a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles conducted by Stan Webb at Daventry, which included his two sisters, Hilary and Frances. His first quarter of major was at Daventry in June 1959, conducted by Ernie Orland. He was not a prolific quarter or peal ringer. A few years after Daventry bells had been rehung and augmented to ten, he found himself as tower captain. Hugh last rang on Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup> 2013, but remained formally as captain until March 2014.

Hugh married Deena Stickland on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1980. Deena had been an active member of the church for many years, was one of the youngest readers in the Peterborough Diocese and has been a ringer since 1969.

In his latter ringing days, Hugh would ring the sixth at Daventry, where he could support himself against the wall while ringing. For the same reason, he rang the second during morning practices at Hellidon, where the cake was much to his liking.



*Hugh on a Branch Outing, 1989*

On Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2014, a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples was conducted by Jim White to mark Hugh's retirement. At a large gathering of ringers and representatives of the congregation at the Saracen's Head afterwards, Hugh was presented with mementoes including a small bell, suitably engraved.

Hugh was on the Daventry branch committee intermittently from 1962 until 2014 and Branch Ringing Master between 1964-7.

Our condolences to his wife Deena and sister Hilary, who both ring with us from time to time, and his younger sister Frances, who was branch secretary in 1981. And thanks for the bottles of wine awaiting those who rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Caters beginning as the hearse moved off to the crematorium!

*Geoff Pullin*

## News from the Branches

### Culworth Branch

#### **Bellringers Strike Lundy!**

In September, a group of 11 local bellringers (and 5 hangers-onners!) hit the high seas on the Landmark Trust's own vessel - MS Oldenburg - to where the Atlantic meets the Bristol Channel, to stay on UK's only Marine Nature Reserve, Lundy Island.

With nothing between the island and America, it has an average residential population of 28 people, (including a warden, island manager, shopkeeper, maintenance and housekeeping staff and very importantly, the bar and kitchen team at the Marisco Tavern!). Home to Soay sheep, goats, Lundy Ponies and 6 Highland cattle, it is 3 miles long and half a mile wide and the island's varied terrain derives from the prevailing winds, from the high western rugged cliffs being exposed to the Atlantic, to the opposing more gentle grassy slopes on the more sheltered eastern aspect. This contrast explains the rich diversity of the island's animal and plant life, attracting walkers, climbers and divers.

But what would attract a group of campanologists?? Well, it was the 10 bells of St Helen's Church on the island which drew us to book a short stay there, following a conversation at one of our Monday night ringing practices.



*Revd Canon Michael Webber, Rector of Daventry, looks on as Hugh reads the inscription on the presentation bell*

Trepidation amongst us all, not only for the choppy crossing, but that we were going to be ringing 10 bells (not our usual ring of 5 or 6!), but we were blessed with four days of beautiful clear blue skies, some amazing walks and some fantastic bellringing. From our improvers to those more experienced, we managed everything from call-changes, plain hunt and even a bit of Grandsire triples.

We were almost stranded on the island for a further two days, as the wind had changed direction for the homeward sailing, which led to The Oldenberg being unable to dock in the choppy waters around the jetty! We waited anxiously for its last attempt, which thankfully was successful, but then the thought of boarding a small boat to hit the rough seas was stomach-churning to say the least! Mercifully, the seas calmed as the journey progressed and the delight of spotting Verity standing proudly in Ilfracombe harbour was more than a relief to some.

We all returned with a special sense of achievement, not only for visiting one of the more remote but beautiful islands off the British coast, but also that we can say: “Lundy? I’ve rung the bells there. . .!”

*Jenny Griffiths - Greatworth Tower Captain*

### **Annual Dinner**

In October, we held our annual dinner at Lois Weedon. 40 ringers and their partners attended a meal prepared by a local caterer, Foodtastic Catering, from Helmdon. It was good to welcome some new faces along with our regular supporters, and everyone appeared to enjoy the evening. The raffle raised £150.00 which was sent to the Katherine House Hospice in Adderbury, Banbury.

### **New Ringer**

In November a new ringer, June Irani, ventured to a branch practice, this is her experience....

*New to bell ringing? Why you should attend a branch practise ring.*

*You maybe concerned at your ability, afraid you will make mistakes, not keen to take part, fear of holding up more experienced ringers, it’s out of your comfort zone , taking part with strangers.....*

*Well forget all that!*

*I’m a newbie and all the above was floating in my head when I attended a branch practice meeting at Moreton Pinkney. I found everyone very supportive and encouraging, and actually surprised myself with my “rounds & call changes”. So much so, I’m looking to join the guild.*

*Special thanks to my comfort blanket Ian and Sara (Whitfield) whose patience has been exceptional.*

*Went home with greater confidence.*

*June Irani (new ringer)*

## **Sad News**

It is with sadness that we report that Malcolm Taylor, ringer from Brackley, passed away over Christmas. Malcolm was a long time ringer at Brackley, always favoring the tenor. A true “gentle man”, always with a smile. R.I.P. Malc.

*Joy Kirkham, Branch Correspondent*

## **Daventry Branch**

### **Guild Events**

Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> was very much a Guild ringing day in the Branch! (See Guild report.) Justin organised a young ringers’ team, who had practised at All Saints, Northampton four days earlier. The judges placed the Youth Ringers 6<sup>th</sup> and Daventry Branch 4<sup>th</sup>.

November’s Guild 10-bell practice was also at Daventry, but this time half-muffled for Remembrance. Simon Dixon ran it, with 15 attending including Sue Sutherland of Welton, who rang rounds on ten bells for the first time. Bishop John was on a weekend mission to the town and, with Rector Dawn Stokes, came up to the ringing chamber for a chat as we finished.

### **Meetings**

In September, we were at Newnham where 19 rang including three visitors. Ringing ranged from call changes to London S Minor. With little notice, Alison Buck led our service and the singing of three hymns. A fine tea was provided by the local ringers in the village hall.

In the evening, 15 rang at Nether Heyford. The venue was scheduled to be Church Stowe but was moved due to the new tenor clapper still being at Loughborough awaiting modification, to encourage it to go up the right way.

Our October meeting was at Barby, where 24 rang, including visitors from Coventry Spires and Clifton upon Dunsmore. Justin coaxed rounds & call changes, Grandsire, Plain Bob and Barby Bob Doubles from the gathering. The service was taken by Graham White, with a talk on Barby church windows - many of which we learned were made by Charles Kempe and incorporate his wheat sheaf icon. Tea was provided by the local ringers at the back of the church. Ringing at Kilsby was almost a lockout. 17 met, with one going home before we got in. We rang rounds & call changes, plain hunt, Plain and Bristol Minimus, and Stedman slow work. The four-bell tower was surprisingly enjoyable with all having a crack at something out of their comfort zone.

During the afternoon at Willoughby, in November, 21 rang and two were not able to. There was no service and Jane Rands and helpers provided the tea in the church which is now resplendent after major restoration work, with a new electric central heating boiler and a toilet. 21 also rang a variety of methods at Braunston in the

evening but, try as hard as he could, Justin couldn't get the two Braunston ringers to join in!

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, there were 28 decorated Christmas trees remaining from the Christmas Tree Festival, when 25 rang at Weedon in the red glow of the heater, including six visitors. Another eight didn't ring. Under Justin's leadership, ringing ranged from rounds to Yorkshire S Major. Tea with soup was organised and provided in the warm Chapter House by Jane Rands and Alison Buck with several enlisted helpers. We were finished in time for the carol service to start at 6.10pm, led by Lay Minister Elizabeth Taylor, who also operated the electronic accompaniment. We followed the six carols and five readings in the service sheet produced by Gwynneth, complete with Matt cartoons. We were back in the chapter house, sampling warm mulled wine and mince pies, before 7pm and with unsuspecting folk finding themselves washing and drying up, all was cleared away in short order.



*Red warmth among Christmas trees at Weedon*

### **Outing**

Twelve rang on the morning outing around Banbury on Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup>. The weather was sunny, which added to the pleasure of touring three well-kept ironstone villages. We started on the five 1676 Bagley bells at Wroxton, which are rather loud inside because the intermediate floor doesn't provide any sound attenuation.

Next were the five 1678 Bagley bells at Shenington, where water was percolating through the lower walls of the tower, but the spiral stair door had to be opened to let the sound of the bells percolate. Spliced Plain, Grandsire and Reverse Canterbury were performed amongst other methods.



*Hanwell's Clock*

Last was Hanwell, a nice recently rehung six, where Flynn rang his first whole course of Cambridge S Minor on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. We were interested to see the organ mounted on a wheeled platform! We also liked being able to see the 17<sup>th</sup> century clock mechanism at floor level, although it wasn't going at the time. Lunch was taken just down the road at the Moon and Sixpence till early afternoon before we all dispersed. Thanks

to Alison for organising these three ground-floor easy-going light towers and the lunch venue.



*Lunch at the Moon & Sixpence*

It was reassuring to know that J Taylor & Co completed the repair of the Nuneaton #5 gudgeon, which failed during our branch outing in May. The bells were again ringable by mid-September.

### **People**

Anne Prestwick rang her first quarter peal at Weedon on September 18, treble to Plain Bob Doubles

conducted by Jim White. It was rung impromptu on practice night with best wishes to Alison and Ian Willgress on their move to Wales. Anne was presented with a certificate at Heyford during the branch meeting on the following Saturday.

**Hugh Johnson** sadly died in November (see obituary). After the service on December 18<sup>th</sup>, Deena, with Hugh's sisters Hilary and Frances (branch secretary, 1981) kindly left bottles of wine in the tower in anticipation of the successful quarter peal of Plain Bob Caters.

### **Making progress**

While we have not been so proactive in promoting 'firsts' as a neighbouring branch, two Whilton ringers have thrust onwards. Aided by COOTS, Helen Camps has rung 42 quarter peals since the last Newsletter with many firsts in methods and including first on ten. Hannah Baker has used her time at home and at Manchester University to ring 15 quarters including her first of Superlative S Major.



*Jim White (C), Anne Prestwick, Ringing Master*

At Daventry (and Badby, Everdon and Staverton!) young Flynn Spires has sprinted out of plain hunting through different methods including Kent, Cambridge and Stedman, thus putting his supporters under pressure to up their game! Liz Heath is trying hard to keep up with Flynn. Zack is becoming adept at calling changes on ten.

Welton has been without a local band for several years, but the Braunston ringers now undertake service ringing, and two new recruits from the village are training at Badby under Sally Thompson's guidance.

## Up the Tower

During practice night on October 22<sup>nd</sup> Daventry's tenor clapper ball detached itself from the timber shaft, having sheared the last of the four bolts. It has been a routine problem to keep these bolts tight. This time the shaft split, so Taylor's recommend that we have a new shaft with the revised fixing of the ball, including gluing, at around £400. While we ponder the physically difficult task of changing the clapper at the top of a 10ft ladder, Leanne has bolted it back together again and all is well!

*Geoff Pullin*



*Flynn with Daventry's tenor clapper*

## Guilsborough Branch

### Centenary Ringing in All Towers

We were requested by the Guild to carry out a piece of dedicated commemorative ringing at every tower in our branch, sometime during the centenary year. We are very happy to report that we achieved this aim in all our 29 ringable towers. A big thank you to everyone who helped us achieve this, from individual tower bands to the various groups who visited towers without a permanent band, to undertake some general ringing or to complete quarter peals and peals. All this ringing is recorded for posterity on BellBoard.



*Winwick's 3 ropes and stained glass window*

Some of this ringing was particularly memorable. For example, on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, a determined group of ringers gathered at St Michael and All Angels in Winwick as part of the Centenary initiative, to ring at every ringable tower within the branch.

Winwick's three bells are known for their unique challenges: the ropes hang in a straight line and have a long draught, making them notoriously tricky to handle. Despite a slightly hesitant start, and some lengthening of the tail ends, the group successfully rang rounds, call changes, Plain Hunt, and Stedman Singles.

The church itself is steeped in history. It was once the parish church of Samuel Scattergood, a prominent figure in the early days of full-circle ringing and a contemporary of Fabian Stedman. Notably, the ringing chamber boasts a beautiful stained-glass window, as well as a lavatory.

## **100 Firsts for 100 Years**

To celebrate the Centenary, the Guild was looking for members to ring 100 firsts across the Guild. A “first” was deemed to be anything that a ringer hadn’t achieved before, appropriate to their level of ringing. For example, a first ring for Sunday service, a first quarter peal, or a first full peal. Somehow, at one of our monthly meetings, it was suggested that we might be able to achieve 100 for our branch alone, and so the pursuit began. We are happy to report that we managed to achieve the 100 - with a few to spare!

Amongst these firsts, a few deserve a special mention: Frank Kelly, Jessica Aldis, Carole Isaac, Marie Borrill, Lorraine Angus and Andy Backhouse all rang for Sunday service for the first time. James Glover, James O’Neill, Roger Carter, Yolanda Wilcock, and Phillip Barker all achieved their first-ever quarter peal. Fiona Barclay not only rang her first-ever quarter, but then went on to ring two more firsts, one on the treble and one on an inside bell. Sarah Johnson rang a quarter for the first time on eight bells, and Nick Hiams conducted a quarter peal of Plain Minor for the first time. Liz Reading was challenged by a member of another branch to ring 100 quarters in the year. Liz truly ran with this challenge, ringing over 100 quarters - 111 in fact - with 24 of those including a first in method. A magnificent achievement. Very well done, everyone, and again, each achievement is recorded for posterity on BellBoard.

## **St Andrew’s Day Quarter Peals – November 30<sup>th</sup>**

Anthea Hiams organized a memorable St Andrew’s Day, dedicated to ringing quarter peals across the branch. The group rang at six towers: Guilsborough, Creaton, Crick, Yelvertoft, Spratton, and East Haddon. Between the busy schedule of ringing, the teams enjoyed a convivial lunch at The Kings Head in Spratton.

To help us, we were joined by five ringers from other branches and adjacent Guilds, achieving an impressive six quarters out of nine attempts, with eleven firsts scored for our branch. Thank you and well done to everyone who took part. Collaborative ringing at its best.

## **In Memoriam**

A quarter peal was rung on Sunday, October 13th, by four members of the branch at Lubenham, to celebrate the life of Jo Williamson from Foxton, whose funeral had taken place there earlier in the week. Jo, along with her husband Keith, had been a member of the branch. May she rest in peace.

So, as well as being a busy year for the Guild, our branch has busied itself quite nicely too. We have achieved a great deal, particularly in the last few months of the year. What shall we achieve next year, we wonder?

*Anthea Hiams and Fiona Barclay*

## Kettering Branch

### **Branch Ringing Practice, September 21<sup>st</sup>**

The best laid plans often go astray. We had planned to hold the practice at the newly re-hung ring of 6 at Harrington, SS Peter & Paul. This had to be postponed due to outstanding works in connection with raising the ringing room floor.

Instead, we visited Cransley, St. Andrew and Scaldwell, SS Peter & Paul in the Guilsborough Branch. Ringers arrived at Cransley on what appeared to be a fine afternoon. The 16 ringers were led by Nick Watts, Branch Secretary, in ringing rounds & call changes, Grandsire and Plain Bob.

As ringers left, they were greeted by a thunderstorm, with the country roads awash. 17 ringers made it to Scaldwell, including 2 members of the Guilsborough Branch who rang rounds & call changes, Plain Bob, Grandsire and Stedman, led by Assistant Ringing Master Bill Adcock. Ringing was undertaken in the rare presence of a “Water Feature” - two small waterfalls were created by water penetrating around the small window and running down the tower wall. Nick Watts provided tea, coffee and light refreshments.

### **Branch Ringing Practice, September 19<sup>th</sup>**

Our practice this month was held at Desborough, St. Giles with a good turnout for the ringing led by Bill Adcock, Assistant Ringing Master. The ringing was well attended, with a continuous stream of ringers up and down the ladder into the ringing chamber.

Ringing was followed by a fish & chip supper, where ringers were joined by family members and friends, and afterwards engaging in a competitive Beetle Drive.

### **Speech for English**

Edward Barton, one of our young ringers from Isham, who was a member of the young person’s team in the 8 Bell Striking Competition at Byfield in the Summer Festival, prepared the following to present to his fellow students at Latimer School. A very detailed and persuasive piece.

“Have you heard it? Have you heard the wonderous sound of church bells? Have you heard the joyous tunes accompanied by a wedding or the mourning ones heard alongside funerals? I would hope so; the sound is divine! However, less and less people get the chance, as there are not enough young people learning to keep this ancient tradition alive. There are only 38,000 bell ringers left! If more people don’t learn, this could become one of the many things we’ve lost. We can’t let it.

“I remember the first time I rang bells in a church. I remember stepping into the tall tower and staring at stained glass window beside me. I remember taking a deep breath and feeling the exhilaration coursing through me. The joy flooding through my body. That’s why I think you should try it, to feel what I felt. To have the knowledge that you have created something beautiful and that’s what I want you to remember. I want you to remember the joy you felt.

“Now why choose bell ringing when you could try a different hobby that you find just as enjoyable? Why choose to be encased in a stone tower for an hour and a half? Because it’s unique, it’s a great way to exercise. Not only that, it requires determination and focus, as you have to concentrate for a long time. It also improves your memory, which is a crucial tool you will need for many things.

“Something to consider is, it’s not just learning to create music, it’s also about joining a wider community. To be part of something bigger. There are so many different events designed to get you to meet different people, to get you to try new things and to just give you a good laugh. It’s a journey. It’s an adventure. A wonderful adventure to visit new places, new churches. It’s an adventure where you take one step a time one destination to the next.

“This is a quote from Corrie Ten Boom. I like it, as it not only explains what it’s like to ring the bells, but also how you learn something. ‘To get the bell ringing you have to tug awhile. Once it has begun to ring, you merely maintain the momentum. As long as you keep pulling, the bell keeps ringing’. If you keep putting in effort, you will get better. But if you stop you will forget it.

“I don’t expect you all to have listened to this speech with great interest but, if you do, please, please. We need you to pull the rope to keep the bell ringing. We need you to spend an hour of your valuable time, to help us to keep the fire of this tradition burning. Please come to learn to ring, so that when you are old and sick, or young and sad, you can remember the wonder!”

### **Refurbishment of Bell fittings at St. John the Baptist, Corby**

Corby has engaged the services of O’Shea Engineering to carry out the refurbishment of the bell fittings in the tower. The work involves taking down and supporting the bells, before removing all fittings offsite, for refurbishment where possible, before being returned to site and the bells re-hung. The four Henry Penn bells have been examined in place for staple routes and cracks. The wheels were dismantled and taken to a specialist bell wheelwright in Masham, North Yorkshire. The clappers are to be re-worked with new adjustable staples. All other running gear, including sliders, pulleys, bosses and stays, will be replaced.



*Bells on timber bearers awaiting re-hanging*

The back four bells will have wooden pads replaced by resin pads.

The work to remove the fittings was carried out in the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> November. Isaac O’Shea attended the tower, and was assisted by Andrew Gunstone

of the Corby team, supported by Andy Bimson, Branch Steward, and his team of volunteers, resulting in a considerable saving in labour costs.

Local volunteers are to clean down and repaint the frame while the bells are out.

### **Visit to Peterborough Cathedral, ringing prior to Evensong, November 17<sup>th</sup>**



Our visit to the Cathedral was kindly organised by Jim Bence, with the aim of giving less-experienced ringers an opportunity to ring at the Cathedral, and on 12 bells.

Seventeen members, including the three young ringers who had taken part in the 8 Bell Striking Competition in September, assembled at the book shop to be signed in and led up to the ringing chamber. We were very

grateful for the support of several of the Cathedral team. All were able to ring rounds and call changes on a number of bells, with Nick Elks of the Peterborough team calling the changes. The more experienced ringers took part in a service touch of Grandsire Caters called by James Thorpe.

### **Branch Ringing Practice, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

For our pre-Christmas practice we visited Rothwell, Holy Trinity. Due to other activities taking place on the day, we rang the front 8 on the simulator. Sixteen ringers took part in ringing, from rounds and call changes through Grandsire & Stedman Triples to Plain Bob Major. The ringing was followed by Festive Treats served with Mulled Wine.



*Cottingham Christmas,  
L-R Hannah, Jo, Mary, Jean, Jane*

### **St. Mary Magdalene, Cottingham**

The new Band of Cottingham ringers rang completely on their own with no outside help or supervision for the first time on Christmas morning. This is the first time the village will have heard the bells at Christmas for many, many years.

*David Dainty*

## **Peterborough Branch**

It's been a busy few months for the Branch, with lots of events organised. In September, Diana once again organised the ever-popular Ring for your Cream Tea,

which visited a number of towers in Huntingdonshire, before visiting a garden centre for afternoon teas.

The “socials” continue to be very popular, and we held a Surprise Minor social on 6th October at Nassington, where the main methods were Cambridge, London and Norwich. A Major social was held at Castor in November, with ringing from plain hunt 8 to Bristol Surprise Major. In November, a Ringing Up & Down in Peal workshop was held at St Mary’s Peterborough, for those who can ring up and down on their own, but struggle to stay in peal.

Over twenty branch ringers rang at the Cathedral for Evensong in October. The final Young Ringers Group of the year was held at Glinton in October. It’s nice to see all of them enjoying ringing together. We have five sessions planned in 2025.

A big thank you to Elaine and Jane for organising all the socials; to all the various churches for hosting the events this year; and to our experienced helpers who support our sessions. We couldn't run them without you.

In December, members from the branch rang several QPs for the Guild Centenary, in towers where the resident band needed some support.

### **St Mary’s, Peterborough**

It has been a busy year for St Mary's tower, and the past four months have shown individual efforts pay off.

- Alison Aquilina-Evans and Phoebe Peasnell achieved their ART Level 1.
- Caleb and Amelia Peasnell achieved their ART Level 2 accreditation.
- Both Deborah Bray and Jane Robinson rang their first inside to Cambridge Minor.
- Joan Parker celebrated her 90th birthday in October and many of us joined her at a surprise party at the Butcher's Arms in Werrington. Two quarters of Joan's Pleasure Place Doubles were rung in honour of this milestone.
- Many regular ringers have scaled up from Doubles a year ago to the equivalent Triples, and similarly from Minor to Major. We now ring more Stedman Triples than Doubles and a quarter will follow, to help cement our learning.
- 50 quarter peals were rung on the bells in 2024. A late one was rung on 30<sup>th</sup> December, when it was spotted that we couldn't leave our tally on just 49.
- St Mary's took up the challenge to attribute many 'firsts' to the Guild Centenary on Bellboard.

Many of our ringers are indebted to Gavin Simpson, who comes to each Thursday practice 30 minutes early for bell handling and ART certified tuition.

Practices are 2hrs in duration and necessary as the turn out is commonly around 20. There is a lot to fit and ringers are good sports to be "bossed" and cajoled in order

maximise the numerous touches that can be fitted in ahead of post ringing liquid sustenance session at 9pm.

Our grateful thanks to everyone who has brought about the successes that we have reflected and reported on. Our work is never completed when practising our art, as we are blessed to have a hobby that has continuous learning and to keep us challenged. We envisage that as 2025 unfolds it will be much of the same with more firsts as ringers progress to accomplish new challenges.

*Andrew Christie (RM) and Diana Street (Asst RM)*

### **Nassington**

It's been another busy few months. Our Monday practices are well supported, with up to 20 ringers, some coming just for the handling session at 7pm, with many joining for the open ringing at 7.30pm. Methods of the month continue to be varied and give the more experienced ringers something to think about. Friday morning sessions often concentrate on handling as well as ringers learning new methods.

Most of the new recruits are ringing rounds and have achieved their level 1 LtR. They have joined the Sunday morning service ringing, either at Nassington or in their own towers.

We continue to ring for services and rang for several weddings and funerals over the last few months. It was a busy Christmas period, ringing for all the additional services across the benefice.

We've had various visitors ring at towers across the benefice, including QPs at Thornhaugh and at Yarwell, and the local band has rung a number of QPs.

### **Castor Ringing School**

We had a break in sessions at the end of August and then restarted in September. Having learnt to handle, several ringers returned to their towers to learn methods. It has been a busy period with some of the new ringers recruited earlier in the year moving onto rounds, plain hunt and now onto trebling to a method. It always surprises me that as one group progresses, another group of new learners arrives!

The mix of ringing on a Saturday morning also includes a lot of Bob Minor, as well as Doubles. In December, a further pupil graduated, having rung a QP inside, and will return as a helper in January.

In addition, Barnack tower hosted another Ringing Up and Down in Peal Workshop in October.

*Hilary Hardie, Head Tutor*

*Branch Correspondent: Hilary Hardie*

## Rutland Branch

### Quarter Peal Centenary Challenge

At the start of 2024, we set a challenge to have a quarter peal rung in every Rutland tower in this Peterborough Guild centenary year. Of our thirty-four towers, a QP has been achieved in 22 of them. Some have been missed because of refurbishment work and repair work in progress making it not possible, but a notable achievement, nonetheless. Several ringers have achieved their first QP, whilst others gained experience with 'Centenary 100 call changes'.

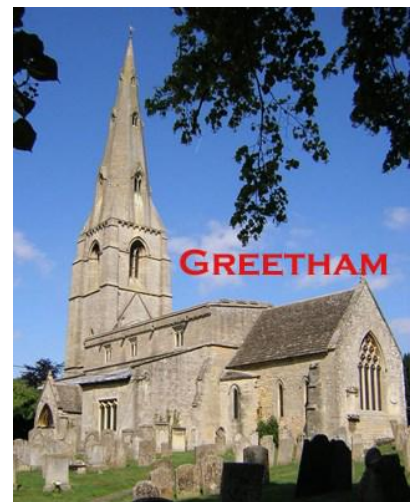
### Foundry Visit

A visit to the Loughborough Bell foundry Trust is planned for mid-February 2025, which should prove very interesting. Many have already signed up to attend, but places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If we find we are oversubscribed, we may have to plan for a return trip.

### Greetham Bells

Tailors are due to commence work on the Greetham bells in mid-January. Some preparatory work has been undertaken but the bell frame is in a particularly poor state and needing complete refurbishment. The last serious work was carried out in the early 1920s, when a frame was installed with five bells (all dated 1923, as a memorial to the war dead of the village). The treble was added in 1949.

Then, the cost was met by public subscription. In 2024 the estimates for the work came in at around £60k, requiring serious fund raising.



One of the fund-raising ventures is at Tesco in Oakham, where the project is one of the three charitable enterprises which can receive support via the 'blue token scheme'.

After a period of three months, the charity which has achieved the most tokens receives £1500, the other two receive less. Rutland bellringers have been encouraged to vote for the Greetham bells when using the store for their shopping. In conjunction with other fundraising activities and grants, the target sum has been achieved, enabling work to progress.

### Caldecott, St John the Evangelist, Operation Pigeon

Over a prolonged period, mesh coverings on the tower windows and louvres had deteriorated, allowing pigeons to access the spire, bell chamber and clock chamber of Caldecott tower. Consequently, their visits resulted in a build-up of guano and debris.

The mess and health hazard were considerable, and finding someone to deal with it proved very difficult. Eventually 'pest control' commenced the job of clearance. The

next stage was for the construction of new wooden frames with mesh to cover the apertures and to pigeon-proof the parapet door.

Rows of confused and grumpy-looking pigeons adorned the parapet for a few weeks, until everyone was satisfied that they would not be able to get in again. The operation has taken several months, but the final clean up should commence soon and ringing, hopefully, will recommence in a couple of months' time.

That sounds like an opportunity for a celebratory QP!

### **Thomas Saunders**

Many in the Peterborough Guild have rung with Thomas and will already know that he and his family moved away from Uppingham and Rutland just before Christmas. The next chapter of his bell-ringing journey promises to be an exciting one, as his home tower will be St. Mary the Virgin, Nottingham. (St. Mary's in the Lace Market). This is a 12-bell tower with the tenor at around 35 cwt. The University of Nottingham band also practices at St. Mary's, so Thomas is likely to get lots of practice, and will be able to expand his ringing and conducting considerably.



*Thomas Saunders*

We in Rutland are going to miss him very much, but he goes with our very best wishes for the future. Good luck and happy ringing!

*Sue Webster*

## **Thrapston Branch**

Our monthly afternoon practices at Wadenhoe and Thrapston are still continuing to prove very popular, and we have been able to welcome new, older and returning ringers to practice and progress on both six and eight bell methods. Thanks to Chris Jenkins for organising these practices and guiding the newer branch members through the Exercise.

The Monday night tower practice at St. James' Thrapston is also proceeding well, and it has been good to watch the progress of one of our young recruits, with his first Sunday Service ringing for Christmas Sunday. Due to a difficult period of health, Ray Banner has stood down as the Tower Captain of St. James', and Frank Jenkins has very kindly agreed to take the helm. Our thanks go to Ray for his service to both Thrapston Tower and Branch with our very good wishes for his recovery.

It is also good to report that St. Mary's at Titchmarsh are now holding regular practices on Wednesday evenings. Steve Harrell, now happily semi-retired, is guiding a group of very enthusiastic local folk through the early stages of ringing and making very good progress. Regular practices are also occurring at both Stoke Doyle and Aldwinckle.

Amongst the branch members, we have been able to celebrate significant birthdays and anniversaries and to applaud those who are continuing to make a long journey back to good health. It's been a difficult few years, but normal practice has nearly resumed.

We have enjoyed contributing to the Centenary celebrations of the Guild, although we haven't all been able to attend all events.

Happy Ringing!

*Alison Byrnes*

## Wellingborough Branch

Since the last report, the Wellingborough Branch has held Surprise practices at Woodford and Irthlingborough, an evening practice at Rushden and an afternoon practice at Grendon. The Branch had a very enjoyable outing to Cambridgeshire, organised by Helen Manktelow, and to end the year a Branch Quiz was held at Earls Barton.

The Branch entered a team in the Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition/Summer Festival at Byfield and were placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. Members of the Branch also supported the Guild Anniversary Dinner and the Guild Quiz.

### **Bozeat**

Tied-bell practices have continued through to the end of the year to cater for the steady flow of learner ringers that appear on our doorstep. Just before Christmas we even had a ready-made ringer appear as well! We plan to continue tied-bell practices into the New Year as well in the hope that the flow of new people continues.

In addition to tied-bell practices, our normal healthy Thursday practices have continued, and we are grateful for the help of more experienced visitors from Sharnbrook and Wollaston to enable our learners to progress well. We are also grateful to surrounding towers for allowing our band to gain more experience by joining their regular practices and service ringing (Wollaston, Sharnbrook, Felmersham, Emberton, Yardley Hastings, Kempston and Olney in particular).

We rang for significant services over the Christmas period, including the Carol Service, Christingle and Midnight Mass.

We entered a team into the Branch quiz, and joined forces with Easton Maudit to enter a spliced second team. We finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

We now have architect drawings for a new floor beneath the bells. This will be at a lower level than the old floor and will help the elderly Tower Captain when fitting muffles, etc! Next, we need some quotes for the work, and then the PCC can apply for the necessary faculty.

### **Easton Maudit**

We rang for significant services over the Christmas period including the Carol Service and Holy Communion on Christmas Day morning.

We entered a team into the Branch quiz and joined forces with Bozeat to enter a spliced second team. We finished 4th and 5th respectively.

We are still awaiting DAC approval for the new rope guides, having submitted our faculty application.

*Tony Manktelow*

### **Earls Barton**

Earls Barton bells continue to ring out across our village. On many occasions during the year, we have managed to ring all eight bells, which included for the first time, to my knowledge, all the weddings in a year (we usually only ring 6) and included the Christmas Day morning service. Considering that, on Christmas Day morning, we had two ringers away, two not ringing because of lingering injuries, one starting to prepare a family feast and two beginners not yet ready for service ringing, I was very pleased indeed. I have also been pleased with the band's ringing progression which notably included our young 12-year-old, ringing the tenor to Plain Bob Doubles and Grandsire Doubles for the first time. I think, though, that his first quarter may be some time yet. At our practices, even if only five or six ringers attend, there has rarely been an occasion when someone doesn't achieve something new on a Thursday night.

The photo is a Selfie taken when Jenny, our vicar, came for a visit just before Christmas. As can be seen she is nothing if not enthusiastic not only about her work in the church but also about all the ringing we do. She even brought a contribution to our chocolate supply by way of a Thank you.

As for 2025, well we are expecting quite a few weddings to ring for, so perhaps ringing all 8 for all of them may be a big ask, but we shall see.

*Andy Smith*

### **Ecton**

Not much news other than to say that there were nine Quarter Peals rung at Ecton during the year by various teams.

*David Dick*

### **Mears Ashby**

At Mears Ashby we (well, Tim) replaced the bearings in the 4th clapper.

*Pete Dyer*



## **Rushden**

Some of Rushden ringers were included in the Wellingborough Branch band for the Guild 8 Bell Striking Competition at Byfield, which came 2<sup>nd</sup>.

It is not often we get requests to climb the tower and view the bells. So, when a Mexican family contacted us, we were only too happy to oblige. The son of a family who came from Rushden had just married a Mexican lady, and her family wanted to see where he had grown up. Alan gave a talk and took them up the tower and Pam demonstrated ringing a bell. Gosh, they were so excited!

We have continued to ring on Friday evenings and for Sunday services, including half-muffled on Remembrance Sunday. We also rang for the Christmas Day morning service.

We are pleased that Paul is now back ringing, after his first knee replacement operation – now on the waiting list for the other knee. A Quarter Peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 29 December.

*Pam Bailey*

## **Wellingborough**

Following the much-publicised peal at Wellingborough in January for the Guild's 100th anniversary, there has been a resurgence in ringing. The sound of the peal attracted many townsfolk to the church, complete with smartphones, to listen and record the roar of this magnificent but challenging ring of eight.

Subsequently, a recruitment campaign attracted several volunteers who are making good progress with trainer Tim Samson. Quarter peals have been rung for civic services and for the first time in over 5 years a local band, with outside help, rang for a wedding.

A refurbishment of the tune barrel, clock and all 23 hammers will be undertaken by Smiths of Derby, and the opportunity taken to restore the cast iron and steel bell frame by meticulous de-rusting, treating and painting. In addition, the bells will receive a lift and clean of their bearings and all timberwork treated. Practice nights have resumed on a Wednesday (19:00 - 20:30) but please check before coming as handling lessons are sometimes held at Orlingbury.

## **Wollaston**

After ringing for Wollaston Open Gardens in July, we have continued to ring on most practice evenings, except when too many of us were away on holiday, and throughout the summer and autumn on Sunday mornings for the main service, with a bit of help from Steve, Harry and Paul.

We took the opportunity on Remembrance Sunday, not only to ring for the service at the local cemetery, where our war memorial is located, but also to ring after the event as a celebration for 100 years of Peterborough Diocesan Guild. Although ringing a variety of call changes, we rang for the length of an eighth of a peal, which was an achievement for all the band.



*Wollaston ringers on Remembrance Sunday*

*Back: Jack, Mel, Ben, Front: Jean, Enya, Kate*

Unfortunately, we were unable to ring for any of the Christmas services, as half the team were away on family Christmas duties around the country. However, we shall ring the New Year in as usual, and we eagerly wait to see if Harry will bring us a potato again this year!

We welcome any visitors who may like to join us on practice nights on a Wednesday from 7.30pm and appreciate the help we get from members of other local towers in learning methods.

*Jean Rose*

## 100 Club

Since the last newsletter was published, we have held 4 draws:

MONTH	No. of paid-up members	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize winner	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize value	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize winner	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize value	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize winner	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize value
<b>September</b>	185	29Ke	£61.05	148Gu	£22.20	157We	£14.80
<b>October</b>	183	111Ke	£60.39	38We	£21.96	55Th	£14.64
<b>November</b>	184	157We	£60.72	112Da	£22.08	112Da	£14.72
<b>December</b>	182	169Ke	£60.06	142Pe	£21.84	62We	£14.56

The eagle-eyed reader might note that a few 100 Club members have been particularly lucky in the latter months of this year, even managing two wins in the same draw! Also, please note that we are edging ever-closer to a 200-membership club, at which point I will push for the number of prizes to increase to four each month, to keep the chances of winning comparable with previous years.

Since this is such a good way to raise money for the Bell Fund, if you are a member of the Guild and are interested in contributing, or want an additional number for the draws, or know someone else who might be interested, please get in touch.

*Cathy Dixon* [100\\_club@pdg.org.uk](mailto:100_club@pdg.org.uk)

## **GUILD EVENTS 2025**

Please watch out for announcements about future Guild Events, broadcast through the usual channels, including the Guild website [www.pdg.org.uk](http://www.pdg.org.uk) and Facebook page [www.facebook.com/PDGCBR](http://www.facebook.com/PDGCBR).

### **January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Peterborough, Cath Ch of S Peter, S Paul, & S Andrew – 10 Bell Practice 10:30

### **February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Gt Oxendon - Ringing Up & Down in Peal 14:30 (booking required)

### **March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Kettering - 10 Bell Practice 10:30

Gt Oakley – Bell Maintenance 15:00 (booking required)

### **April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Grafton Underwood – Leading up and down in Peal 10:30 (booking required)

Gt Addington – Guild Spring Meeting 15:00

### **May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Moulton – 10 Bell Practice 10:30

Caldecott - Learning and Calling Touches 15:00 (booking required)

### **June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Weedon Bec – Stedman Practice 10:00

Barton Seagrave – Guild Service, Tea & AGM 15:00

### **July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Higham Ferrars – 10 Bell Practice 10:30

### **September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Castor – Guild Summer Festival 16:00