

Ringing Round Leicestershire

Newsletter of the Leicester Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

April 2023 : Issue 57

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Welcome to the April 2023 issue of the Guild Newsletter

Welcome to the latest issue of the Leicester Guild Newsletter.

The first quarter of the year is always a bit quieter ringing wise. The colder, damp weather seems to keep people away from what can be rather chilly towers, and outings are frequently left until the warmer weather of spring and summer.

But, there has still been plenty going on to fill our newsletter - and there seems to be in particular a theme of education to the activities that have been going on in the last three months.

In the next issue (out in July) I am hoping to include your news of ringing for the coronation - don't forget to take pictures, or video, and pass them on to me. If you have any questions about sending me files, just email and we will sort something out.

Rebecca Banner
LeicesterGuildNews@gmail.com

President's Message

It's been quite strange at Loughborough Parish Church since New Year's Eve, when ringing was suddenly halted after the Diocesan Bells Advisor (Andrew Higson) noticed some unusual tower movement. Whilst our bells have been out of action, "Loughborough on Tour" has been welcomed at a variety of venues including Prestwold, Barrow on Soar (where we relocated our drinks and nibbles and rang the New Year in), Loughborough Bell Foundry and Leicester Cathedral. After a visit from a well-respected structural engineer and bell ringer, Adrian Dempster, we have now been given the go ahead to start ringing again. The church were so pleased to hear us ringing for Sunday Service again. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us whilst we've been homeless.



Test ringing at Loughborough

The annual Guild Dinner was once again held at the Leicestershire County Cricket Club. It was nice to see Lesley Belcher, Chairman of the Association of Ringing Teachers, return to her home county and for her to share some great local memories. The evening had many highlights, but for me it was when, following our handbell performance, we managed to get all of the young waiters to have a go at ringing handbells. They managed to successfully ring plain hunt on 12 and their performance featured in a Leicestershire County Cricket Club newsletter. Some of the youngsters have contacted us to say that they would like to learn to ring. What a result!

Learn the Ropes

In this issue, congratulations go to ambitious apprentice Arthur Catherall who was presented with his Level 1 certificate at Whetstone on 29th March. At the same practice he also called changes to tittums and back whilst ringing!

Ring for the King! Several of us were recently involved in an interview on BBC Radio Leicester that had been organised by our Guild Public Relations Officer, Mick Angrave. The reporter, Ben Jackson, did an excellent interview at Birstall which was broadcast on March 20th. This was superb timing as we held a recruitment event for Birstall on Sunday, March 26th. After a lot of local publicity and the radio programme, I'm pleased to report that the event at Birstall was a huge success. Lots of interested potential recruits came along. I gave an introductory talk, after which the attendees all had their first bell ringing lesson. This was an excellent opportunity for several of our ART trained teachers to teach some pupils. By the end of the session, we had a lot of promising recruits including a few returning ringers. We even managed to get Amanda, the vicar, to have a lesson. A huge thank you to all the ringers who turned up to help, and to Rev Amanda Digman and her helpers of the fabulous welcome and the refreshments and cakes. I am really looking forward to starting training sessions so that Birstall and Wanlip will once again have a band of their own.

Following the success of selling badges to commemorate ringing for the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II, I have now embarked upon a campaign to sell badges to mark ringing for the Coronation. The badges have once again been expertly designed by Rebecca Banner and I'm being overwhelmed by the number of badges that have already been ordered. If you'd like to order badges, please email me at bellbadges@gmail.com for details. The badges are £5 each and profits will be donated to the LDG Bell Repair Fund and other local bellringing projects.

It would be lovely all of our church bells ringing over the Coronation weekend. Many local teams will be joining forces to ensure that bells in their area ring out. Please get in touch if you know of churches that may need assistance.

I am now in my 4th year as Leicester Guild President. I am enjoying the role immensely, but don't want to outstay my welcome! Please start thinking about who should take on this role next. I'd be very happy to talk to anyone who's interested about what the role involves.

Sally Brown



Firsts From Bellboard

A round-up of people's bellringing firsts, as published on Bellboard.

The firsts on bellboard for this issue are all for Quarter Peals. Its lovely to see the progress people are making - people who were mentioned in this column in previous issues as ringing their first quarter are now moving on to first inside, and first in other methods. Well done to everyone!

First Quarter

Jackie Greaves ringing the treble to Little Bob Major at Sapcote on 17th January

First away from cover

Robert Cosnett ringing the treble to Southrepps Doubles at Packington on 9th January

First inside

Harry Thompson ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Packington on 2nd January

Lynda Jaycocks ringing Plain Bob Doubles at Lubbenham on 14th February

First of Minor inside

Harry Thompson ringing Plain Bob Minor at Packington on 23rd January

First of Surprise inside

George Ellis (age 9) ringing Cambridge Minor at Packington on 27th March

First in method

Thomas Saunders ringing Grandsire Doubles at Kibworth Beauchamp on 20th January

H Mary Lorimer ringing Grandsire Doubles at Hugglescote on 21st January

In a quarter of Grandsire Triples at Thurcaston we have two firsts in the method: Harry Longman and Tim Holland, on 28th January

Eliza Lewis-Skeath ringing Lincolnshire S. Major at Hathern on 24th February

First in method on handbells

Cambridge S Major: Robert Watson, Alison Godfrey, and Judith Godfrey on 22nd January

Rutland S Major: Robert Watson, Alison Godfrey, and Judith Godfrey on 25th January

First as conductor

Helen Gamble at Knighton on 20th February

First Surprise Major as conductor

Mark Banner at Hathern on 24th February

Judith Godfrey at the Bellfoundry on 22nd March

Special mention

First post-COVID Surprise Major quarter by an all Market Harborough District Band, ringing Cambridge at Church Langton on 22nd February



George Ellis' first quarter of Cambridge at Packington

News Bites

Bell Badges

As mentioned in the President's Message, badges commemorating the coronation of the King are now available to buy. They are £5 each, which includes postage, and are available from Sally. Email bellbadges@gmail.com for more information.



Update from Harby

Not much to report on this quarter at Harby. Our learners are progressing onto ringing rounds, and some have started some kaleidoscope exercises. We have welcomed two new learners - Paul and Karen, as a result of the Ring for the King campaign, who are making good progress using skills learned at the ART level 1 Course.

Our practice nights are now 'open' for visitors on a Thursday from 7:30pm - access via the vestry door. We have also started to ring for services - starting with the monthly Family Service at 10:30 on the 4th Sunday. Our efforts are being appreciated by the parishioners.

The PCC have now approved a scheme to get our bells rehung, and augmented to 6, using a bell donated by the Kelttek Trust. We hope to finalise the scheme shortly before applying for a faculty for the work, and starting fundraising. The church is in the early stages of planning a kitchen/toilet development, so the ringing floor may also be raised, giving the ringers their own space. We welcomed the Framland Society for their monthly practice in March, and by putting on refreshments on a cold evening raised a nice sum to kick start the fundraising.

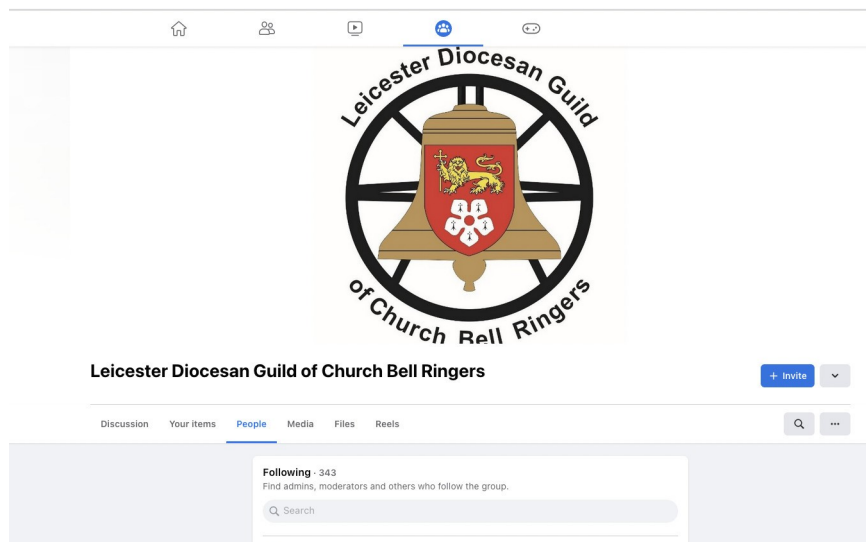
Jonathan Dickenson

Facebook Group

A reminder that the guild has a facebook group. This is an active group, with a few posts each week (depending on what is going on!). It is a forum for passing along information, such as changes in practice nights or locations; requests

for information, or for ringers for particular events; news that may be relevant to ringers in Leicestershire; and also news of guild events.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/leicesterddg>



Upcoming Events

Guild Half Yearly Meeting

Saturday 29th April

St Margaret's, Leicester

2:30pm Ringing

4:30pm Half Yearly Meeting

5:30pm Service led by the Rev Nigel Rooms,
Associate priest at St Margaret's

6:15pm Tea

Names for tea to Carol Franklin by preceding
Wednesday, 26th April please.

St Mary de Castro, Leicester

8:00pm - 9:00pm ringing

Progressing Ringers

@ St Mary de Castro

10am to 12 noon.

8th April: Rounds to Plain Bob. Provisional depending on whether the sensors for the bells for use with the simulator have been fitted!

22nd April: Plain Bob to Surprise.

13th May: Rounds to Plain Bob

27th May: Plain Bob to Surprise

10th June: Rounds to Plain Bob

24th June: Plain Bob to Surprise

District Practices

Leicester District

Saturday 1st April at Kirby Muxloe 10am

Wednesday 3rd May at Evington 7pm

Saturday 3rd June at Willoughby Waterlees and
Arnesby 10am

Market Harborough District

Saturday 15th April at Hallaton 10.30am

Melton District

Saturday 15th April at Sproxton 7pm

Saturday 20th May at Wymondham 7pm

Saturday 17th June at Long Clawson 7pm

Ten Bell Practices

@ St Mary de Castro

Held on the first and third Saturdays of the month,
7pm start.

Dates to note are:

1st April: This practice will be at St Margaret's due to a
concert at St Mary's

6th May: (coronation day) Practice cancelled.

Guild committee meeting

Wednesday 5th April via Zoom

From the Districts

Melton District

The Melton District meetings have been in the south of the district at Ashby Folville, Gaddesby and Great Dalby, all were well attended and we've welcomed plenty of visitors to these meetings.

The Melton District is alive with new recruits at the moment, a few of them have been inspired by the Ring for the King campaign but the majority are from people who are interested in ringing .

Since mid-January Martin Paling has been teaching 11 new recruits in the Upper Wreake, using ART's 'Learning the Ropes' programme. He has used the bells at Kirby Bellars, Hoby, Saxelbye and Ab Kettleby, so the learners gain experience on different bells at different towers, it also shares around the area the monotonous sound of one bell ringing, so that no one village 'suffers' all of the time. This is important, particularly as Martin meets with most trainees at least once a week and often more regularly, to keep the momentum going. That regular practice is paying dividends, with some good progress being made.

We have 18 new recruits at Gaddesby and Saltby and another 3 towers in the District that might start to want to get bands together in the near future to start ringing in their villages again.

The challenge now is to find enough teachers to train the new recruits (in the past it has been the other way around) .

There have been several quarters rung at Twyford and we managed to get a team together to ring for the World Day of Prayer mid week at Somerby.

The Handbells Team at Kirby Bellars has continued to meet regularly. One new recruit has joined the Team this year; three more have attended and are showing interest in continuing to learn.

Congratulations to the Pickwell ringers who have progressed really well and now have a local team that is independent - they also have access to Somerby if there are more ringers than ropes at Pickwell.



Ringling for the World Day of Prayer at Somerby

Ringling Course Returns

The very popular annual Leicester Guild ringing course returns this year. Held over the weekend of the 15th - 17th September the aim of the Ringing Course is to provide ringers with concentrated practice, focussed on their level of skill.

This year's course will be at the Copt Oak Memorial Hall again, this is just off junction 22 of the M1 and offers the chance to caravan or camp behind the hall. Please note that facilities are limited to toilet blocks. Practical sessions will take place in towers around this area and it is envisaged that there will be four practical sessions plus the possibility of ringing for Services on the Sunday.

Course instructors will organise a pub lunch on Saturday with a Guild Social being arranged for the evening which will include a buffet at £10 per person. We hope to block book a Sunday lunch at a local pub for those who would like to join us. It is anticipated that the course will cost £25-£30.

We hope that you will take advantage of the Saturday night buffet and social and Sunday lunch to continue the social aspects of this course.

There is a minimum expectation that you can handle a bell entirely by yourself, and that you have rung rounds competently, safely and entirely unaided on different bells. All students should be able to ring a bell up and down although not necessarily in peal.

We plan to adapt the groups to meet the needs of our students. Please discuss the course with your tutor and present the goals that you have set in your expression of interest.

Please tell us a little about your ringing. Eg - How long have you been ringing? Where did you learn? What do you find difficult? Notable successes etc and what you hope to achieve from attending the LDG Ringing Course: (eg More experience with touches of bob doubles)

Expressions of interest (initially restricted to those in the Guild area) are requested by 7th May to secretary@leicesterdg.org.uk. After this date the groups will be decided and full applications and deposits requested by 31st July.

If you need any further information, please contact us via secretary@leicesterdg.org.uk.

Note: In order to comply with GDPR requirements, all information provided will be held in the strictest confidence and will be destroyed on completion of the course. Contact information will only be used for the purposes for which it has been collected and will not be shared with any third parties.

Carol Franklin
Student Administrator.

St Mary's School of Bellringing

Two new opportunities for ringing have started this year, based at St Mary de Castro in Leicester.

Ten Bell Practice

Since the beginning of this year Lewis Benfield has been running a ten bell practice at St Mary de Castro in Leicester every first and third Saturday, 7pm start. This practice is aimed at ringers looking to improve their Caters and Royal ringing – so ideally you need to be able to already ring Grandsire Caters (or learning it). Please get in touch with Lewis or Robert Watson (robertpwatson99@outlook.com) if you are interested – we have an email list to advise if the practice is cancelled as there are sometimes events in the Church.

Progressing Ringers

Open to all guild members, these sessions are aimed at ringers who would like to improve their ringing. There will be two sessions each month, concentrating on different levels of ringing.

The second Saturday of the month will concentrate on Rounds, Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire.

The fourth Saturday of the month will be Plain Bob through to Surprise.

This is in effect using the successful formula of the previous progressing ringers practice but split into two separate sessions so that everyone gets a fair and good opportunity to learn and improve.

The sessions will be from 10.00am to midday. Tea, coffee and toilet facilities are all available.

We shall of course be grateful for support from those wishing to learn and more experienced ringers.

All names and any enquiries to Lewis Benfield 07427202060 or lewis.benfield.2004@gmail.com

ART Courses at Hathern

The uptake for ART courses being run at Hathern is still going strong. There have been two courses held since January - a second M1 course (teaching bell handling), and an M2F course (teaching from rounds to change ringing)

There are more courses planned. The M1 course in April is already fully booked, but there are still spaces on the M2F course on 15th July. For more details and booking see <https://events.bellringing.org/events/courses/teaching-course-module-2f-hathern-leicestershire-2>

M1 course: January



I recently attended the ART Module 1 course at Hathern, under the expert guidance of Moira Johnson. I attended primarily to brush up skills when teaching learners to ring from scratch, and also have had years of believing that ART was just another fad idea.

I have taught ringers for years, and went on a Central Council course in the late 1990s, but having recently taught a band to ring, I realised that if I got stuck with something, or I couldn't answer a question, I didn't really have anywhere to go for help.

The course was very useful, and the practical elements were good too, and it turned on its head the way to teach learners safely. I hadn't realised it was possible to break down each stroke into smaller parts. I have applied some of the theory to our learners, which seems to have been well received. I think the ART way of teaching is invaluable, and now feel like I have people to ask questions to, even if they are not local, as we are all singing from the same hymn sheet!

Jonathan Dickenson

The M1 bell handling teaching course led by Moira was very well structured with the majority of the time being spent on putting the teaching skills into practice.

I particularly liked the fact that in addition to Moira, there were enough mentors around the tower to encourage and guide us and answer any questions during practical sessions. I have found the supporting course material informative and easy to follow once back at home. Thank you for an excellent introduction

to the bellringing teaching course.

Cheryl Murphy

Just wanted to say a huge thank you for the M1 teaching course yesterday, I was a little apprehensive about attending, expecting to be out of my depth with my limited experience, expecting to be with people with so much more knowledge than me, but it was a lovely course.

I found that everyone of us shared the same vision, and everyone was so supportive of each other, having attended the course I now feel that I can take the next step with confidence.

Brian Vardy

Thanks for the course today. I found it not only thoroughly enjoyable, but has provided me with the confidence and skill set to start teaching students the art of ringing.

A really worthwhile day which gives a great base to start teaching from.

Laura Floyd

M2F course: February

Twelve ringers met at Hathern, in Leicestershire, from as far as Suffolk and North Yorkshire, such is our desire to teach new ringers, and we all got full value.



The ART method means instead of hit and miss prodding, slow progress and frustration, we have a structure, exercises to plan and a set of building blocks on sound foundations. We're all different, we have from one to twenty learners aged 9 to 79, and we learn from each other too. I can't wait to try kaleidoscope with mine who are stuck on call changes. I've discovered how to stop a third broken stay this year, with a guiding hand. Best of all, the enthusiasm is infectious.

Thank you Gill, Moira and all of us learners.

Harry Longman

ART M1 as my Gateway to Teaching

Like many towers over the last few years Whetstone was running short on band members. We were extremely grateful to our regular visitors for support at practice nights and for service ringing, but as health concerns, house moves, and other personal challenges happened we lost numbers, both local and visitors. John Kinchin and I had been hatching a plan back in 2019 to train some new locals, I'd teach the handling, then hand them over to him at practice night for learning the rest. John was onboard with me learning the "ART Way" of teaching as he knew it would help having connections with other local teachers - how right he was!

I couldn't find an ART M1 during late 2019 that I could attend, and then the strangeness of 2020 threw all courses out of the window for a while. Early 2022 John began teaching young "A" the grandson of one of our ringers who was full of enthusiasm but had to be home early for bed, however it was clearly quite tiring for John. We were both excited for me to be able to get booked on to the October 2022 course.

Sadly John's health failed last year and while he got to see me attend and we had a good chat about it after during a hospital visit, he didn't get to help me put the plan into action and is much missed since his passing. So, never one to do anything by halves, I began my mission to replenish our numbers! "I'll get myself two learners and hope one sticks", I thought.

Back in early November I put out some local Facebook information about ringing in the village, the Ring For The King details, and invited people to get in touch. Several did, out of whom 2 came forward to learn, Pat and Gina, both ladies from a slightly older demographic. We started lessons in the 3rd week of November teaching them as a pair. This has worked really well for them as they've had the mutual support of each other through their personal tricky patches.

The ART course helped me have a clear structure and steps to break down what can be a complex movement into manageable chunks. Having the support of my ART mentor filled a void, and visiting towers where others from the same course were teaching gave us all some mutual support. Not forgetting the wonderful WhatsApp group as we all compare notes.

Word spread and learner-Gina found a lapsed ringer, David, who also came to join us and has

been happy to fine tune his rusty skills with us, adding in that my children asked to learn, and two other younger siblings of another ringer, so now I've got 4 learners on the cusp of their Level 1 certificates, and 3 new 9 year olds I just started a couple weeks ago! Busy busy.

While 5 years ago our practice nights would have been full of Stedman Triples and Surprise 8 with an average band age of over 60, in 2022 it became that we were lucky to have 5 ringers for a method, and it has been a rarity to get all 8 going. The future looks brighter though, we may not be ringing anything fancy for the King in May, but we WILL be ringing!

Thank you to Moira, my ART M1 tutor, as well as Becki, my mentor, and all the other M1 attendees for the support on this journey. I did my M2F last month and enjoyed the ART conference in Birmingham 11-12th March, so onwards and upwards we go!

Sarah Catherall, Whetstone

A Learner's View

Towards the end of last year, and despite many doubts about my abilities, I answered an appeal from Sarah Catherall for bell ringing trainees. Sarah gave much encouragement despite me pointing out that I was definitely no 'spring chicken' at 73. Three and a half months later I am able to ring a bell without too many hiccups. I can also stand a bell 10 times in a row at handstroke enabling another tick in my Ringers Progress Logbook. I am now attempting rounds and ways of learning call change sequences that are also being introduced by Sarah. Any achievements are all thanks to her patient training, support and 'can do' attitude together with the encouragement of other tower members who have been so friendly. Sarah has taken her learners to Guild meetings and practise at other towers where we've found absolute positivity, support and lovely people. My only regret is that I never had the opportunity to get involved when I was younger but on the bright side I would tell anyone who is interested that as long as you are fit you are never too old.

Gina Sampson

Open Afternoon at Birstall

Birstall and Wanlip do not currently have their own bands of ringers and the vicar, Rev Amanda Digman, asked if the Leicester Diocesan Guild might be able to help as she's really keen to have the bells ringing again.

I met with Amanda and the church warden from Wanlip recently and we decided that we'd host an Open Afternoon on Sunday, March 26th. Lots of information was put out on social media and in local newsletters, posters were put up around the area and the event was mentioned during a BBC Radio Leicester interview which had been arranged by Mick Angrave and recorded at Birstall the previous week.



I had no idea how many people would attend, but was pleasantly surprised to see that the church was packed with potential recruits and lots of Guild members who had come along to help with the event.



Following an introductory talk, a demonstration with the

church's model bell and some demonstration ringing on 8, the potential recruits were taken in groups of 3 or 4 and given an initial bell handling session by an ART trained tutor. After being taken through the necessary safety procedures, they chimed a bell and then swung it up to about half way. This gave them the opportunity to get used to the feel of a bell swinging, work out how to hold the rope and develop a nice rhythm and style without worrying too much about the rope flying around! Then they were moved onto a different bell and given their first goes at back strokes. Some also progressed to sampling hand strokes and a couple of teenagers were returning ringers getting used to ringing a bell again. The students ranged from age 6 (a VERY keen little boy with his father) to over 80. All students showed great potential and all of them said they'd like to return for lessons.



As an added bonus, the vicar put on a great spread of drinks, sandwiches and cakes. She confessed to me afterwards that the Bishop had been there the previous day and she'd asked the parishioners to bake extra cakes for our event!

A huge thank you to all the Guild members who came along to support the event. Now the hard work of teaching around a dozen new recruiters begins! All learners will Ring for the King - with the necessary assistance from experienced ringers to enable them to ring for such a special occasion.

Sally

Annual Dinner

Ingredients

Good food, served well

Friends, both old and new

Interesting after dinner speakers

A dash of fun and games

And, of course, some bellringing



Method

This year saw another fantastic Guild dinner, ably organised by Carol and held at the Leicestershire County Cricket Club. Mick Angrave once again took up his role as our major domo, introducing the speakers for the evening.

Revd Canon Emma Davies answered the toast to the church, speaking on the relationship between bells and the church; Lesley Belcher, outgoing Chair of ART, the guest speaker, told of her Leicestershire roots; and Sally Brown speaking on behalf of the Guild, described her badge selling journey.



Speakers: Emma Davies, Lesley Belcher, and Sally Brown

Entertainment was provided for the youngsters (and young at heart) in the form of giant jenga. There was also a raffle, with tickets being sold by Ayesha and Eliza.



*Jenga in progress:
Eliza and Terry (above);
Watching as Mick removes a piece,
playing versus Lewis (right)*



*Raffle ticket sellers extraordinaire:
Ayesha and Eliza*

And it wouldn't be a bellringers' dinner with some ringing of some kind. The guest speaker was joined by the president, and equally eminent ringers Lewis Benfield and Terry Astill in 3 leads of Kent Major on handbells.

The handbells were later used by a scratch band ringing some tunes. And whilst thanking the Cricket club staff for their attentive service at dinner, Sally managed to persuade the young wait staff to have a go at ringing the handbells, and they succeeded in ringing plain hunt 12 using the lapping technique.

I think its safe to say we all had a great time throughout the evening, we even had time for a last photo call as the last of us were leaving.

Rebecca Banner



Handbell performance by Terry Astil, Lesley Belcher, Lewis Benfield and Sally Brown



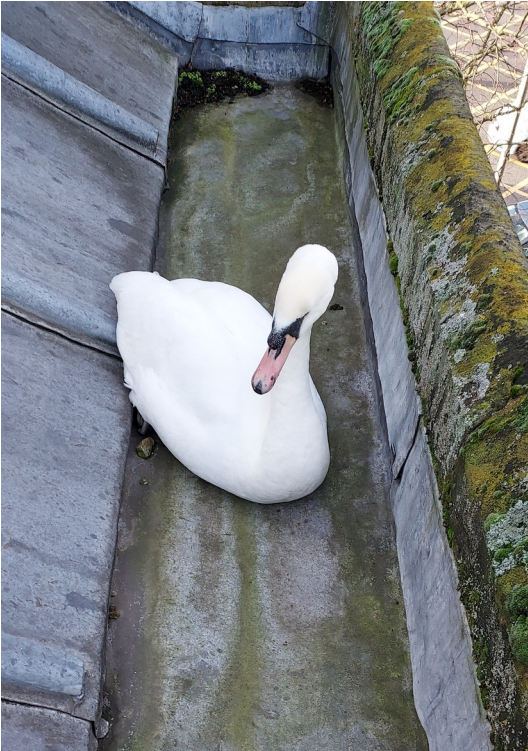
Cricket Club staff joined by Ayesha in some handbell ringing.



The stragglers at the end of the evening!

Swan Rescue at St Margaret's

About 1015 on the Wednesday morning there was a loud clatter at the west end of the north aisle roof, the roof alarm did not go off. I went into the ringing room and looked out of the window, to find a swan sitting on the roof. Having climbed out onto the south aisle roof and crossed over the chancel roof, I arrived near the swan. Despite shouting, hissing and waving of arms, there was no reaction from the swan. No hissing, flapping of wings or any attempt to move.



The crew chief accessed the roof and checked everything was safe and then called the other two up. They all placed the swan in the holding bag with no fuss whatsoever. The young lad carried the swan down, filmed and photographed for his NVQ qualification. A photo shoot was carried out with Alison, who then placed the swan in her van.

Alison took the swan back to the office and released it after a check-up. The RSPCA contacted me on the Friday about the press release they wished to issue. It was emailed to me and I replied it was OK to issue it to the media. It was issued to the media over the weekend and appeared in various newspapers, websites, national and local TV news and the local digital text pages on the BBC (1645) over the next few days.

Chris Newman

The BBC article can be found here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-64296655>

I then phoned the RSPCA and explained the situation, the officer asked me to keep an eye on the swan and if it flew off, to inform them. I was told an RSPCA officer would attend the incident sometime during the day.

Alison, the inspector arrived about 2pm and I took her up to look at the swan from the ringing room. By this time, the swan had started to walk eastward down the roof and in the meantime it had started raining, which meant accessing the roof was rather dangerous. Alison then contacted the fire service.

The fire tender arrived about 3pm, after a short discussion it was decided they would use their rescue ladder to access the roof. Two of the crew were 'Baby Fireman', yes they did look that young. One had just finished her training and the other lad was a probationer. When the ladder was erected the young lass took control and the young lad took control when it was taken down at the end of the task.



Dick Deadeye et al

Not the Gilbertian character but rather a ringer of St Margarets Church Leicester during the early 1950's. Real name Paul Davis, my son Stephen had heard his name mentioned while attending a function at Queniborough and did I know of him? Well yes, very much so as "Dick" was a member of St Margarets band during the time I rang there, 1952 to 1956. He never progressed from tenor behind and frequently had trouble with the 33 cwt bell, sometimes going completely wrong stroke, meanwhile muttering about the cause of his problems being "the atmospherics" I believe it was Gary Mason who told me "Dick" once sat through a complete peal counting the changes. I suspect he unfortunately suffered from autism.

I have a photograph given to me by Mary Thompson (nee Carpenter) who during the above period rang at Cossington. I believe this was given to her by the late John Jelley and it shows a group of ringers on the St Margarets outing to Beverley in 1954. I recall our ringing at Beverley St Mary but not unfortunately, the Minster. There are many old friends in this photo, centrally Ernest Morris, ringing master at St Margarets for many years and many faces I recognise of my own generation, John Bramley, Gordon Olliffe, Alan Cattell, Colin Walker, Mary Payne from Syston, while crouched on the front row, Tony Jesson who we first met while on holiday at Mablethorpe in the summer of 1948. Next to Tony is Ted Clements who unfortunately died young. Of the older generation, Tom Bent and just visible old Walter Tanser who told me all about ringing at St Marks.

Not on the photograph is Ted Whitehead, an experienced ringer, brother of Walter with whom I rang a number of peals during this time. The third Whitehead brother was Leonard, known at St Margarets as "Will - o- the Wisp". "Why," I enquired of Ernest, "is he known as that?". Well he replied, "just notice how he comes

up, has a ring, speaks to nobody and then disappears hardly noticed". They were happy days and I recall a number of St Margarets outings in those years, Cambridge in, I think, 1947 or 48, Canterbury, Hereford and if my memory is correct Pershore and Evesham.

I rang my first peal on eight bells at St Margarets, Grandsire Triples on March 1st 1947 conducted by Ernest Morris, Mavis Whitehead ringing No 3, with John Bramley on No 6 and Gordon Olliffe ringing tenor behind, though probably the most memorable was Cambridge Royal rung on November 14th 1953. Conducted by Peter Staniforth from No 2, I rang No 9 with Colin Walker on the tenor. With the fast time of 3 hours 22 minutes, Colin's hands were badly blistered, not that it seemed to bother him. Going to collect his bike from the yard behind the vergers lodge he encountered that formidable lady, Beatrice, Ernest's wife. "Any chance of a cup of tea Mrs Morris?" he cheerfully enquired. Her reply is nowhere recorded.

During the past few years I had occasion to go back to St Margarets, first time in the church for many years. I recall a dark and cloudy afternoon and standing at the head of the nave, the place seemed somehow smaller than it had been in my younger life. But then the scene alters and it was again a sunlit Sunday morning, the church filled with the rays of the morning sun. Who is this coming up the aisle, verge in hand and leading the choir? Why it's dear old Ernest Morris doing what he did for so many years. The vision disappears and with a nostalgic smile I leave the church, park and ride to Kirby Muxloe, and car home to Gedney. As for Dick Deadeye, the inspiration for this article, I imagine he must have passed on like many of the above. If so I can imagine him struggling to ring St Margaret's tenor of wherever he is still complaining about those appalling atmospherics.

John Bennett



Key to the photo on previous page



- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Jack Adams | 16) Mary Payne (now Mrs Poyner) | 29) Gordon Olliffe |
| 2) Ernest Jelley | 17) Ann Cattell | 30) Trevor Still |
| 3) Joan Adams | 18) - | 31) Walter Tanser |
| 4) Peter Johnson | 19) Barbara Endall (Became Mrs Bennett) | 32) - |
| 5) me | 20) Charles Cattell | 33) Margaret Morris |
| 6) Sid Harrison | 21) Charles Cattell's wife Winifred | 34) - |
| 7) Colin Walker | 22) Rev. Peter Etchells (Curate) | 35) Ernest Morris |
| 8) George Hebborn | 23) Tom Bent | 36) Beryl Ayris (now Mrs Hartley) |
| 9) Mary Carter/Walker | 24) Jean Olliffe | 37) Tom Bent's wife |
| 10) John Bramley | 25) - | 38) Walter Tansers's wife |
| 11) Ernest Payne | 26) Alan Cattell's mother Edith | 39) Ted Clements |
| 12) Edmund? | 27) Don Clarke | 40) Tony Jesson |
| 13) Alan Cattell | 28) Paul "Dick Deadeye" Davis | 41) Bill Thornley |
| 14) - | | |
| 15) John Bennett | | |

Up and Down at Sapcote

The education committee recently put on a ringing up and down day at Sapcote - specifically for teaching ringers how to ring a bell up and down on their own. Here are the comments of some of the attendees:

Many thanks for an enjoyable day yesterday at Sapcote. I found the ringing up and ringing down course really useful. With two experienced teachers, and a small group we all got plenty of practice, given the time frame. Having a good break halfway was also very sociable, having a chat and a warm in the church hall. Breaking down the process into separate elements was very helpful rather than trying to take in all the information in one go. It has given me more confidence now to volunteer to try ringing up and down. Well, after my shoulders have recovered. I would be interested in any information about future courses.

Thank you so much for organising today's Ringing up and Down Course. I have thoroughly enjoyed today and have come away with more confidence in ringing up and down. It has been done in a relaxing but informative and productive way. It has also been lovely to meet other accomplished Ringers and also other Ringers from other local areas who also need help in this subject.. I am looking forward to the opportunity to attend other suchlike courses. It would be a good idea if this course could run again soon as I know of two other people that were interested in attending the

course that unfortunately we're not able to.

Thank you very much for an excellent, confidence building session on ringing up and down yesterday. I really enjoyed the day and hope that I can remember all the information and put it into practice. Please thank Mick for his hospitality, especially the custard creams, and expertise with the bells. I will be watching for more teaching sessions and will recommend them to other ringers.

Many thanks for your time, expertise and enthusiasm on Saturday. I really enjoyed the course and breaking the components down was really beneficial and feel it's given my ringing 'journey' a boost.

I really enjoyed this course. Both Becki and Pete were excellent, giving guided tuition with the correct amount of constructive criticism and positivity. The process of ringing up and down was broken down into sections enabling the learner to practice each part before putting it all together. I found both Becki and Pete very approachable and willing to help demonstrating their passion for bell ringing and passing on their expertise/experience. A most enjoyable day from which I have gained confidence and skill.

Thurnby's Battle of the Bells - 1862

In 1862 Lord Stamford with the Quorn hounds paid a two-day visit to Thurnby in East Leicestershire, being entertained by Mr Thomas Miles at The Grange. This set in train an unforeseen chain of events.

At that time it was the custom in Thurnby, and possibly elsewhere, to ring the church bells to herald the start of a new hunting season. But the vicar, the Rev J R Redhead, gave note to churchwarden David Wait that he objected to ringing for such an occasion. He went further; he barred the door of St. Luke's Church by putting a piece of wood across it.



Old customs die hard, however, and Leicestershire folk can be independently minded. The bellringers - churchwarden David Wait, parish clerk Edward Draper (the man who had borne the vicar's letter of warning to Mr Wait), and parishioners Edward Seal, Robert Jarvis and William Seal overcame the difficulty of entry by asking the local constable to remove the wood.

In all innocence and acknowledging the supposed authority of the churchwardens, the officer prised off the fastening.

Soon afterwards the Rev R J Redhead arrived, to find that he in his turn was prevented from entering the Church, because the door was locked from within.

"Let me in or take the consequences", he shouted. The answer came: "We are willing to take the consequences".

The vicar hurried off to find the district superintendent of police, a search which took him two hours. In the meantime the bells rang merrily and the hunt gathered.

The Rev Redhead was not a man to brook opposition. He resorted to the law, and the case was tried at the County Court in the Castle.



Leicester Castle Great Hall in the 19th century

A delightful account of the proceedings appeared in the "Leicester Journal" of the day.

The Court was said to be crowded with intent listeners, including many of the principal gentry of the neighbourhood in which the incident took place.

While defence and prosecution counsels were having an eloquent set-to, the vicar suddenly stood up and told the Court that he had come not to seek punishment but to know for certain whether he had the right to ring the bells, whether the wardens had the right to ring the bells, or whether they both had the right to ring the bells.

The defending counsel was delighted, and emphasized that the matter was one of ascertaining a right and not of passing judgement on a wrong.

Eventually the case was dismissed as beyond the competence of the Court, and the affair ended temporarily as Mr Miles of The Grange stood up and shouted his objection to being arrested as an accessory when all he had done was to organise the meeting of the hounds.

Cont.

The vicar then took the matter to the Court of Arches, which is the highest ecclesiastical court for the Archbishopric of Canterbury. It dates from mediaeval times and is still in existence. The hearing was held in the Rolls Court in the City of Westminster, under Mr Justice Lushington, Doctor of Laws and Principal of the Arches Court.

The five accused were summoned "to answer to certain Articles, heads or positions touching and concerning their Soul's health and the reformation of their manners and excesses at the promotion of the said John Roberts Redhead and more especially for having in the month of February ... etc., etc."

The bellringers admitted the facts, but claimed the right to ring the bells. The learned judge did not agree and admonished them to refrain from like behaviour in the future.

They were instructed to pay the costs of the suit, £44 3s 10d. In the 1860's this represented a large sum of money, probably beyond what the five defendants were able or prepared to pay. They elected instead to go to prison for a month in the second division.

During this time the members of the Quorn hunt sent them game and so many other delicacies that, according to local report, never had they lived so well.

A pencilled note among the records states that at the Vestry (parish) meeting held on the 10th February 1863 in Thurnby, a weekly allowance was proposed for the families of the men concerned. Whether this was actually paid has not been ascertained, but it is easy to see where people's sympathies lay. Indeed the vicar himself, although by repute a man who did not like to be gainsaid, may well have had some regrets. He had said in the County Court that "It was

during a slight misunderstanding that I began to interfere with them (the churchwardens) as to bellringing".

A law journal of the time clarified the case by stating that the vicar could not sue for trespass, because the legal ownership of the bells and bell-ropes was vested in the churchwardens. On the other hand, the incumbent of a parish had absolute control over the ringing of the bells, and no one had the right to ring them against his wishes. Hence the judge's findings.

Because of manner in which the matter was resolved, details of the incident are still remembered by older families in Thurnby and district. These include three great-granddaughters of two of the bellringers concerned. Two of the descendants have carefully preserved the documents connected with this Battle of the Bells, which in its way is a vignette of village life just over a century ago.

Mrs E Ruddock - from "Leicestershire Historian" - Autumn 1970

Grateful acknowledgements to those who made the documents of the case available for reference and to the "Leicester Mercury" for the "Leicester Journal" report.

Article provided by Peter Soar

Ringling in the Media

There has been a lot of interest in the Ring for the King campaign in the last few months, even gaining the attention of mainstream media such as the BBC and ITV.

An early morning filming call was answered by ringers in Birmingham, with a couple of segments appearing on BBC Breakfast.



Unfortunately, the bells at Horsham in Sussex made an appearance in their local newspaper due to an incident whilst teaching new Ring for the King recruits. Thankfully no-one was hurt, but one of the bells was broken at the crown:
<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/freak-accident-hits-horsham-bellringers-coronation-plans-to-ring-for-the-king-4062273>



ITV also did a piece, this time from Guernsey:
<https://www.itv.com/news/channel/2023-03-16/bell-ringing-novices-learn-to-ring-for-the-king-ahead-of-coronation>



Closer to home, Charnwood Borough Council produced a video on the casting of the Hope bell at Taylors. This is a bell cast in response to the pandemic, as a memorial and reminder, and looking to hope for the future. <https://youtu.be/iOKIFIPXUCw>



BBC Radio Oxford presenter Anna Gray has taken up the challenge of learning to ring for the coronation, and a series charting her progress can be found here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0f715v4>



The Leicester City Police popped into St Margaret's as part of their patrols, and managed to catch Chris and had a tour of the tower:
<https://twitter.com/LPCityCentre/status/1641034682950189057>



The Ring for the King campaign also appeared in the Daily Mail. This is actually a really nice article, accurate and at the same time summing up the real atmosphere found in towers across the country:
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11824315/Campaign-seeks-Britains-38-000-church-bells-ringing-Kings-coronation.html>



The bells at the Cathedral featured on Bells on Sunday on 26th March:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001kgdr>

