



HEADSTOCK

The Newsletter of the
Bedford District of the
Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers

July 2016

Web Version

This version of Headstock has photographs with reduced quality.

It also has contact details of people removed.
Personal contact details can be found in your Tower's copy of
Headstock, or in the latest Annual Report.

This Web Version also differs from the distributed paper version in that
the Tailenders' August meeting is now included in the programme.

From the Chairman

The hosting of the Association Annual General Meeting rotates around the three Association Districts. This year it was our turn to play host in Bedford District and many thanks must go to St Paul's Bedford for hosting the service, tea and meeting and of course the ringing afterwards. It is always worth emphasising that ringing is not confined to 'fancy stuff' and that every effort is made to provide opportunities for all who wish to have a ring.

Regrettably I was unable to make the District Outing because of other commitments. I understand that it was a good day out and hope that there is a report herein that might help entice any that are able to attend next year's outing.

We held the District Striking Contest at the start of June at Oakley. Seven bands took part, including the innovation of a District young ringers' band. As it turned out all of that band were also ringing for their home towers in the contest, but this needn't have been the case. In case you're concerned they were not eligible to win what is a contest between Sunday service bands. Whilst it was pleasing that we have maintained a reasonable number of entrants for the contest I have to say I am not convinced the quality of the striking was as high this year as some previous years. Hopefully this is a blip rather than symptomatic of declining striking standards. I would be optimistic that several of the participating bands will ring better next year given that they contained ringers who are still improving their ringing skills. Also there are other towers who couldn't make this year's contest perfectly capable of matching the average level of striking if not the best.

Alex Nash
District Chairman

Bedford District Programme of Meetings and Events 2016

This is a provisional programme, for confirmation see The Ringing World or phone the Secretary, Bob Jones.

2 July 2016:	Harrold Quarterly District Meeting Afternoon Ringing, Picnic Tea, 6.00 pm Business Meeting	4.30 – 6.30 pm
	Odell Evening Ringing	7.00 – 8.30 pm
6 Aug 2016:	Melchbourne Stanwick	10.00 – 11 am 11.15 am – 12.15 pm
August 2016:	Various Young Ringers' Practices	
3 Sept 2016:	Thurleigh and Bolnhurst Evening Ringing	7.00 – 9.00 pm
10 Sept 2016:	Beds&Herts Bike 'n' Hike t.b.a	
17 Sept 2016:	Eaton Bray, Luton District Association Striking Contests	3.30 / 5.00 pm
1 Oct 2016:	Bedford, St Andrew Quarterly District Meeting Afternoon Ringing, Service, Tea, 6.00 pm Business Meeting	3.30 – 6.30 pm
	Bedford St Peter de Merton Evening Ringing	7.00 – 8.30 pm

Young Ringers' Events

2 July 2016: Ringing World National Youth Contest, London

For details of eligibility and practices being held in the run-up to the 2017 event, see the Association website www.bacbr.org.uk or contact Sue Silver.

Report of Bedford Quarterly District Meeting on 2 April 2016

District Chairman Alex Nash was in the Chair at Kempston and thanked Revd Stephen Smith for conducting the service, Howard Brooks for playing the organ, and the Kempston band for providing the tea.

The meeting stood to remember two deceased past members: Phil Harlow of Renhold and Jim Yates, originally of Ampthill.

The minutes of the 17 October 2015 quarterly meeting at Bromham were read, accepted and signed.

The BRF has £17,685.28 with no outstanding grants or applications.

There were no new members. Recent events were reported on. Alex mentioned the General Committee meeting, and Richard Hillson raised a question about the RJ Sharp Biggleswade grant. Several quarter peals were rung for QP Week, with firsts at Oakley for Tom Abbott and David Sellars, at St Paul's for Chris Wagstaff, and first on eight for Jonathan Nash at Bromham. Future events were discussed. Anna Townsend is developing a District Facebook presence.

Philip Harlow

Phil, a Renhold ringer for many years, died on 12 March 2016 and his funeral took place there on 15 April 2016. He learned to ring at Renhold as a young teenager over 60 years ago, and was tower captain from the late 1990s until a couple of years ago when his health deteriorated.

James W Yates

Jim died on 29 March 2016, the funeral was held at South Lopham, Norfolk, on 12 April 2016. Jim was originally an Ampthill ringer, he rang his first peal there on 5 December 1970, his 122nd and last was on 30 May 2005 at Advent, Cornwall, for Truro DG. He was Bedfordshire Association Secretary 1975-1980. In 1977 he gave the Association a large pottery jug as the trophy for a 'Raising and Lowering in Peal' challenge, more commonly known as 'Jim's Jug'.

The Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers
Report on AGM held on 21 May 2016 at Bedford St Paul

The President, Sue Silver, welcomed over 40 members to the meeting including one of our Patrons, the Right Reverend Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford. Bob Churchill was presented with a peal board to commemorate the peal rung on 3 April 2016 at Husborne Crawley for his 90th birthday on 26 March.

Those present stood to remember the following who had died since the last AGM: David Pegg of Northill, Francis Spavins of Woburn, Maureen Oakley of Houghton Regis, Doris Thacker of Luton and Jim Yates, formerly of Ampthill.

After corrections the Minutes of the 2015 AGM at Leighton Buzzard, the 2015 Accounts and the 2015 Annual Report were accepted.

All Officers were re-elected and they remain as follows:

President:	Sue Silver
Vice-President:	Pat Albon
Honorary Secretary:	Terry Brown
Honorary Treasurer:	Barbara Fraser
Honorary Peal Secretary:	Anthony Smith
Honorary Librarian:	Pat Albon
Honorary Independent Examiner of Accounts:	Richard Hillson.

Three Central Council representatives were elected: Pat Albon and Richard Horne were re-elected, and Linda Garton was elected in the place of Sue Silver, who was not seeking re-election.

Rosemary Drewery is Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Roger Kendrick is Technical Advisor. Tony Sharp has replaced Christine Williams as Web Master after she served six years in the post.

There will be no change to subscriptions next year. A proposal was passed to Association Rule 6 to delete "*at least four other members, with*" leaving it reading "*Each District shall elect a District Committee, consisting of a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer and other officers as they may find necessary*".

Three new members were elected: Jessica Richards of Potton, David Carter of Felmersham and Christopher Wagstaff of Bedford St Paul.

The new Association website, administered by Tony Sharp, is now at **www.bacbr.org.uk**.

In 2017 the Association AGM will be held on 20 May at 6.00 pm in the Biggleswade District, and the Association Striking Competitions will be on 16 September in the Luton District.

Other items were raised under Any Other Business:

St Andrew's Biggleswade:

James Egglestone gave an update on their project, see Page 18.

A new initiative for the '19 to 30s' age group:

Lyndsey Brett would like to set up a group specifically for 'young adults', especially those who are no longer eligible to take part in the 'young ringers' events. Lindsey hopes to set this up in the early autumn so contact her if you are interested.

Young ringers:

The Bedfordshire Association team won the National Youth Striking Competition again in 2015, this was for the third year running.

RJ Sharp Fund:

It was agreed that the RJ Sharp Committee would consider recent comments made by a member about the validity of recent grants awarded from the RJ Sharp Fund.

RJ Sharp Fund and Association Bell Fund:

Stephen Stanford raised a question about the governance of the RJ Sharp Fund and the Association Bell Fund which is to be taken to the General Committee.

Paying subscriptions by standing order:

You are encouraged to pay your subscription by means of an annual payment by standing order, which is convenient for the treasurers.

Sue gave thanks for the service, organ, church and the provision of tea.

Ridgman Trophy, 4 June 2016 at Daventry

Seven teams entered this year's competition which was won by Ely Diocesan Guild, unfortunately Bedfordshire finished seventh.

Bedford District Outing 2016

On a beautiful sunny day in early May, Adrienne Sharp took a group of 20+ ringers on an outing to Suffolk. We visited six towers in the Bury St Edmunds area, beginning at Great Barton, a pleasant ring of six in a flint church typical of the area. The next tower, Barwell (8), began with a lock out; when we had managed to get hold of the contact and gain access there was not long left for ringing, but everyone managed to ring before we had to move on.

Lunch was in the nearby village of Ixworth at the Pykerell Inn. Service was slow but the food was excellent, and the sun scorching for those sat outside.

The first tower of the afternoon, Ixworth (8), was a short walk from the pub. Ringing here, like much of the day, included things to suit a variety of abilities. Throughout the day our ringing included rounds and call changes, Little Bob, Grandsire, Stedman, and Cambridge.

Following that we went to Woolpit (6) where the local ringers were just finishing ringing for a wedding. With us following on straight after the wedding couple certainly got value for money.

At Rougham (6) there were welcome (and bottomless) refreshments waiting. A minor mishandling of the rope left the locals with the job of having to rehang their spider, but fortunately no real damage was done.

Our final tower was the Norman Tower in Bury St. Edmunds (12). The tower contact was there early and found the tower at 4°C so opened some windows to let the heat in (it had reached 8°C by the time we went up). Several of the party had their first attempt at ringing on twelve which they enjoyed, and we closed ringing for the day with a touch of Grandsire Caters on the back ten.

We finished the day in the Bunbury Arms just outside of Bury St Edmunds. Again the service was slow; Derek tried to speed things along by chatting with the waitress, but his charms were of little effect.

Credit to Adrienne for putting together a very enjoyable and well organised day out!



Clockwise from top right: Great Barton, Barwell, Ixworth, Woolpit.

Ian and Anna Townsend

Tailenders' Report 2016

There was a slight problem with our planned April meeting in the form of a funeral taking place at Barton-le-Clay that morning. Resourcefully, Dorothy contacted everybody and arranged for the ringing to take place after the meal.



We therefore met for lunch at The Cross Keys in **Pulloxhill** at 12 o'clock. The food was good and enjoyed by all. Then most of our members went off to ring at the church of St Nicholas in Barton-le-Clay.

We last rang at Barton-le-Clay exactly ten years ago so it was definitely time for a return visit. There were not enough ringers to ring much on the eight bells but we managed call changes and a plain course of Grandsire triples. We then rang some Grandsire doubles on the front and then the back six. The

bells are not the easiest to ring but the striking improved as we got used to them.

Very many thanks to Dorothy who had a much harder job than she expected once she found out about the funeral. She managed to make the necessary changes and everything went very well in the end.

It was a very grey, wet day for our May meeting, disappointing after a sunny hot weekend but this is England. The bells are rung from the ground floor at **Tempsford** so we were able to look round the very interesting church in between ringing. There was a lot of information about the airfield which was used to send agents into France during

WWII. We were also amused to see that on the board of vicars at this church, beside one name it said that he was executed.

We rang the usual Grandsire doubles, Plain Bob doubles and minor, Cambridge minor and Stedman doubles. The bells go well enough but several of them are very odd struck, making perfect striking difficult. Despite this there was some quite reasonable ringing.



Lunch was just over the road at The Wheatsheaf and it was excellent. We ordered as we arrived and everything was cooked freshly for us. The portions were generally larger than expected and even a simple baguette came with chips and a delightful little salad. There was a certain amount of scratching of heads to think of another nearby tower so that we could eat there again.

Many thanks go to Humphrey for organising the meeting and taking us to such a good pub.



The August meeting was held in better weather at **Old Warden** church in its lovely country setting and with its interesting interior. Unfortunately for various reasons there were only eleven ringers, and only eight were able to stay for lunch. The bells are rung from the ground floor and

went very well. Methods rung were Grandsire (twice), Plain Bob doubles and Cambridge.

Lunch was at The Crown in Northill where everyone was satisfied with the service, the size of the portions, and the quality of the food.

Thanks to Felicity Evans for making the arrangements.

Tailenders' Programme for 3rd Quarter of 2016

Tuesday 12 July

Southill

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of All Saints
6 bells, 11-3-3 cwt in F#

Lunch at The Green Man, Stanford

Arranged by Derek Hammond
Ringing Master: Martin Barratt

Tuesday 9 August

Haynes

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of St Mary
6 bells, 6-3-5 cwt in B (ground floor)

Tuesday 13 September

Great Barford

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of All Saints
5 bells, 14-2-17 in F (ground floor)

Lunch at The Toby Carvery, Goldington Road

Arranged by Barbara Woplin
Ringing Master: Barbara Woplin

If you have previously indicated that you will attend a monthly meeting and find that you are unable to do so, please let the organiser know.

Extract from Melchbourne – A History

The four bells in the tower were rehung in 1891 and again in 1975, most recently on a cast iron frame supported by steel joists. On this last occasion the bells were also renovated thanks to the generous bequest of Edward Sturgess, in memory of Jack Woodhams, churchwarden and bellringer, and other members of his family.

The Treble was cast by Islip Edmunds of London in 1764 and the Second by Thomas Russell in 1712. The Third is dated 1626 and is inscribed 'Non verbo sed voce resonabo domini laudes' which when translated reads, 'Not by word but by voice will I ring out praises to the Lord', while the Tenor is inscribed: 'Feare God and obey the Prince 1601' the prince being referred to was presumably Elizabeth I some two years before her death in 1603. It also bears a shield with three bells.

Bell	Dia. Ins	Dia. Cms	Weight Cwt.Qtr.Lbs	Weight Kgs	Note	Date	Founder
Treble	33.75	85.23	7.2.15	387.8	B	1764	Islip Edmunds
2	34.50	87.12	7.2.6	383.7	A#	1712	Thomas Russell
3	39.00	98.48	9.3.2	496.1	G#	1626	William Haulsey
Tenor	41.50	104.80	12.1.2	623.1	F#	1601	Hugh I Watts

At Melchbourne funerals three tolls are given for males on the tenor, and the same number on the treble for females, both before and after the knell on the tenor, which is tolled forty minutes for adults and fifteen minutes for children.

The above was given to Bob Jones in connection with the District Meeting at Melchbourne on 6 August.

Eversholt

The first application has been made to the Association Bell Fund regarding a rehang at Eversholt and the General Committee has agreed to a sum of £5,000.

Bedford District Striking Contest 2016

This year's district striking contest took place at Oakley on Saturday 4th June. It was well attended with six teams representing towers and a district wide team of young ringers (defined for this event as aged 21 and under). Alan Shepherd and Cameron White-Spunner (a young ringer), both from the Luton district, judged the competition.

Oakley came first in the rounds category, retaining the trophy, followed closely by the young ringers in second place. The young ringers' team was very ably coordinated by Melissa Nash. It is the first year that a young ringers' team was entered; it is hoped that in future years there will also be entries from our young ringers in both the methods and rounds categories if possible.

For the methods category there were five teams. The results were:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 st place – | Kempston |
| 2 nd place – | Bromham “Enhanced Band” |
| 3 rd place – | St. Andrew's |
| 4 th place – | Goldington |
| 5 th place – | St. Paul's |

Unfortunately Bromham (who objected to the term “scratch band”) had to have a couple of last minute substitute ringers so, despite coming second in the district competition, they cannot progress to the association contest. Kempston and St. Andrew's will represent the district in the association striking contest.

Overall it was great to see such a great turnout, with many people supporting and enjoying the ringing (and endless tea/coffee with the food). Many thanks to Oakley for the use of the bells and the district committee for organising the tea, as well as those who helped out on the day in other ways.

Anna Townsend

Editor's Note:

Besides Kempston and Bedford St Andrew, the other teams competing at Eaton Bray on 17 September will be Biggleswade and Clifton (Biggleswade District) and Dunstable and Husborne Crawley (Luton District).



Representatives from the winning teams are pictured with the judges.

Above L-to-R: Bill Sellars representing Oakley with Cameron and Alan.
Below L-to-R: Andrew Keech representing Kempston with Cameron and Alan.



The Ringing Scene in Scotland

When I resigned as Bedford District Chairman in October 2001 and moved to 'The Black Isle' about 20 miles north of Inverness, I knew that there were 10 bells at the Cathedral Church of St Andrew in Inverness and I soon joined the band there. Scotland, a country nearly half as big as England, has 17 church towers, a university and a school chapel with rings. They range from 6 to 12 bells plus 3 secular rings, all are members of the Scottish Association of Change Ringers which has about 250 members.

Our nearest neighbouring tower is Dunkeld with Aberdeen a close second, however the secular rings are closest, 15 miles to Peter Shipton's 8 bell ring at Nairn originally hung in 1989 as a scaled down conventional ring near Aberdeen, and 70 miles to Tulloch ringing centre with 12 bells, tenor 7 cwt and a mini ring of 8 bells called 'The Last Tower'.

The jewel in the crown of Scottish bells are the 41 cwt 10 at Inveraray cast by Taylors in 1921. Every year over the last week end of July there is a ringing festival, Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and evening and Sunday afternoon. Quarter peals are sometimes fitted in as well. The bell tower dominates the small town and was largely paid for by the 10th Duke of Argyll in memory of 'Campbells' lost in the first world war and previous conflicts.

Dumfries St John's church has the most recent installation, five rescued bells from two redundant chimes plus three trebles cast at Whitechapel. Six more of the rescued bells make up the back 6 of Tulloch's twelve.

The Scottish Association holds three meetings each year plus the Inveraray festival and a training day. The May meeting combines a 6 bell striking competition and the AGM. Additional monthly practices are held in the 'central belt' for surprise ringers on 8, 10 and 12 bells. Long distances mean that it is not always possible to attend many of the meetings.

18 months ago I succumbed to pressure and was elected as tower captain at Inverness Cathedral, despite being the oldest member, in years, of the band, the previous tower captain had served for 29 years. Although we have over 20 ringers as members of the tower two thirds of them live between 15 and 45 miles away from Inverness and are

reluctant to turn out for Sunday service ringing of under 30 minutes duration. Last year we organised a 'Bells Open Day' in March and managed to recruit three ringers, sadly a repeat this year has not had the same success. For three years we have held an 'all day practice' at Tulloch, of great benefit for our less experienced ringers and a chance to ring one or more quarter peals. Tulloch Bells are installed in a purpose built tower on a farm remote from other dwellings, so can be rung all day.

If any of you have rung on Peter Shipton's bells, formally at BATTERY Wells farm near Aberdeen and now at Nairn, another move is on the cards. Peter has health problems and has said he would like to find a new home for the bells. As they are our nearest ring, the Cathedral ringers are working hard to find a site in or close to Inverness where they can be positioned, thus giving us an alternative venue.

Anyone planning a trip to Scotland would be most welcome to visit us – the most Northerly Church Tower in the World with bells hung for change ringing – to check that there is ringing please send an email.

Enjoy your ringing!
Mike Neale

District Quarter Peal Week 5-13 March 2016

In addition to the QPs listed in the April edition of Headstock, the following two QPs were also rung but were not included due to a misunderstanding.

Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire

Sunday, 6 March 2016 in 43m

1272 Norwich Surprise Minor

1 Jenny S Thompson, 2 Barbara Beard, 3 T W Anderson,

4 Kath Stenton, 5 S H Sweeney, 6 P J S Albon (C)

80th birthday compliment to Maureen Stenton, Mother of the 4th, on Mothering Sunday.

Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire

Saturday, 12 March 2016

1260 Grandsire Triples

1 Jenny S Thompson, 2 Pam M Bailey, 3 M Potts, 4 Barbara J Woplin,

5 Anna Townsend, 6 R W Jones, 7 P J S Albon (C), 8 S H Sweeney

Rung to welcome the new Rector, Reuben Preston, to Sharnbrook, by ringers from the local area.

St Andrew's Biggleswade: Bell Restoration, Augmentation and Ringing Centre Project

Two new trebles have been cast to make the ring up to a ten. The old tenor bell was found to have a fault and was recast.



The tower will be fully kitted out to be Bedfordshire's first accredited ringing centre, it will be available to all as an Association resource and a lasting legacy to Ron Sharp. It is hoped to have it up and running in July.

The bells were on display in the church for a Hallowing Service on 29 May and are now back in the tower and the bell hangers are finishing the job.

There will be a Dedication Service at 5pm on Sunday 25 September to which all are invited.

For more information see www.biggleswadebells.org.uk.

Upper Gravenhurst

The redundant church at Upper Gravenhurst has been sold and the five bells have been bought by the Keltok Trust. The bells will be removed later this year after the bat breeding season but before this happens a final peal attempt has been arranged on Monday 27 June. The peal, if successful, will be rung for the Association.

From the Editor

If in any article the only contact details are a website or email address, and you do not have internet access, then in case of difficulty making contact please ask the Editor to make an initial contact on your behalf.

Views expressed in an article are those of its author. Articles may be edited.

Thanks go to the 'regular' contributors, as well as to Terry Brown and Sue Silver for the Association Update, to Anna and Ian Townsend for the District Outing and Striking Contest articles and to Mike Neale for his article on the Ringing Scene in Scotland.

The next Headstock will be distributed at the Quarterly District Meeting taking place on 1 October 2016 at Bedford St Andrew.

Please send your articles, announcements etc by 23 September 2016. Your input is what makes Headstock what it is.

Maureen Hall
Email: maureensgpost@gmail.com

Headstock

Headstock is issued quarterly and is available to all towers in the Bedford District at a cost of £1 per calendar year as a contribution towards printing costs, payable in January each year. The money is not being collected at present but contributions may be given to the District Bell Restoration Fund. Headstock is also available on the website of the Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers **www.bacbr.org.uk** but the web version has all personal contact details as well as surnames of young ringers removed. If your tower does not currently receive Headstock then please contact the Editor at the address above.

