



# HEADSTOCK

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

**October 2017**

## 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.

## **From the Chairman**

I was absent from the last (July) quarterly meeting as I was at the Ringing World National Youth Contest where Melissa and Jonathan were both in the Bedfordshire band. The Bedfordshire band made it through the qualifier at Yardley in the morning to join five others in the final at St Paul's, Birmingham in the afternoon. They were however unable to defend the Whitechapel Trophy, finishing joint second in the methods section and joint third overall. The method and overall winners were Yorkshire Tykes. The day is more than just the contest with chances for our ringers to ring at Solihull, Aston, St Chad's and the sixteen at St Martin's in the Bullring as well as on handbells and the Ambergate and Charmborough mini-rings. Also a chance to meet with other young ringers from all over the country.

Unfortunately we were unable to form a District team to enter in the Melville Cup, the young ringers' striking contest held annually between the three Association Districts. The young ringers from our District who were able to attend at Clifton for the contest and subsequent general young ringers' practice did form part of the scratch band that rang the second best test piece on the day. Luton District were the winners.

Our Annual District Meeting comes around in January. It is at this meeting that we elect the officers to serve the District for the year and other members for the District Committee. The elected positions are Ringing Master, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and BRF Treasurer (also currently serves as R J Sharp and Association BRF representative). Independent examiners for the District accounts and BRF accounts are also elected. Candidates are welcome.

*Alex Nash*  
*District Chairman*

## Bedford District Programme of Meetings and Events 2017

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

7 Oct 2017:	<b>Turvey</b> (8) Quarterly District Meeting Afternoon Ringing, Tea, 6.00 pm Business Meeting Evening Ringing	3.00 – 8.30 pm
4 Nov 2017:	<b>Pavenham</b> (5) Afternoon Ringing	2.30 – 4.00 pm
2 Dec 2017:	<b>Biddenham</b> (8) Morning Ringing	10.00 – 11.30 am
20 Jan 2018:	<b>Bromham</b> (8) Annual District Meeting Afternoon Ringing, Tea, 6.00 pm Business Meeting Evening Ringing	3.30 – 9.00 pm

### Future Events

19 May 2018	Association AGM, Luton District
16 June 2018	Ridgman Trophy, St Peter's in St Albans to ring Stedman Caters
15 Sept 2018	Association Striking Contest St Peter's Cup, Biggleswade District

### Young Ringers' Events

7 July 2018: Ringing World National Youth Contest, London

For details of eligibility and practices being held in the run-up to the 2018 event, see the Association website [www.bacbr.org.uk](http://www.bacbr.org.uk) or contact Sue Silver [president@bacbr.org.uk](mailto:president@bacbr.org.uk).

## **Report of Bedford Quarterly District Meeting on 1 July 2017**

Sarah Ward opened the meeting at St Mary's Felmersham by explaining that Chairman Alex Nash was with his family at the Ringing World National Youth Contest in Birmingham.

There were no deceased members reported. Stephen Stanford said that the ropes for Elstow had now been ordered with an expected delivery of six weeks. Sarah thanked Ian and Anna Townsend for organising the Little Bob Minor training session at Kempston on 6 May. The BRF was £18,229.76, an application had been received from Kempston for a grant of £5,000 towards their project (see article at the back of this Headstock). There were no new members. Recent and future events were discussed.

Tim Blunt had been elected Association Treasurer at the AGM, so Andrew Dennison was elected to replace him as Independent Examiner of the District accounts. The "3<sup>rd</sup> Monday" practices at St Paul's Bedford were discussed. Maureen Hall suggested that the District BRF Rules should be available on the Association website.

Sarah thanked the Vicar and Churchwardens of Sharnbrook and Felmersham for use of the bells and facilities.

### **Miriam Clark**

Miriam, a very longstanding ringer at Elstow, died on 21 August 2017 and her funeral took place at Elstow Abbey on 26 September.

An article appeared in the January 2016 Headstock about the party held on 21 June 2015 to celebrate her 89th birthday on 15 June of that year and to congratulate her on her 50 years as Tower Captain at Elstow. The article gave some details of her life and achievements and hopefully a further tribute to her will appear in the January 2018 Headstock.

## **Bedford District Outing June 2017**

I had pleasure in organising the Bedford District Outing again this year and this time decided to stay nearer to home with a trip just over the border to Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June, we started in the morning sun at the lovely Saxon church at Old Wolverton, an anticlockwise 14 cwt six which proved a small challenge to some but with Ian Townsend looking after the ringing calm was maintained. As the group arrived, our local host was very keen to share some points of interest including the picturesque circular altar window.

We moved on to the next six at Cosgrove weighing 11 cwt, a pretty church with a nearby derelict manor house being an attraction to some. Bob Jones took charge of the ringing here.

A leisurely lunch followed at the Shoulder of Mutton in Calverton, all the food arrived promptly as people sat down, so there was plenty of time to chat and catch up with friends.

We all took a short journey to the next church on our itinerary, Calverton with Stephen Stanford in charge, the large ringing room accommodated everyone whether ringing, sitting in the much appreciated sun or after-lunch snoozing!

On to the lovely village of Wicken where the village fete was taking place. Wicken's tower captain, Andrew Spencer, was in charge and this was the only ring of eight for the day. (Unfortunately, other eights I had planned had not been available on the day). This gave everyone a chance to up the level by ringing some very good eight-bell methods.

Afternoon tea was taken at the ARTea Room at Wakefield Country Courtyard – a small collection of bespoke shops which everyone enjoyed looking round.

Alex Nash looked after Potterspury which was our penultimate tower, a nice ground floor ring then on to the final tower, Blisworth also ground floor where Chris Hartley took charge.

The outing finished up in the Royal Oak in Blisworth for a well-earned meal and drink.

Thanks to Andrew Spencer who advised on the towers and also to everyone who supports the District outing – you all make the day a success.



*Adrienne Sharp*



## Tailenders' Report 2017



Our July meeting was in **Eaton Socon**. The eight bells are rather lovely and there was some good ringing. We rang rounds and call changes as well as a touch of Grandsire triples and plain courses of Plain Bob major and triples, Stedman triples and Cambridge major. Even the ringing down was very good.

Lunch was just along the road at the Wagon and Horses. We had not ordered our meals in advance but the service was good and everyone thoroughly enjoyed their meals from the seniors' two course menu deal. Many thanks to Humphrey for arranging everything so well.

Our August meeting was meant to be a summery two tower meeting in Cambridgeshire but unfortunately the weather was against us.

Our first tower, in the delightful village of **Barrington**, was a ground floor ring of six and they went beautifully. We went straight from ringing up into a short touch of Grandsire doubles. This set the standard for the visit and we rang touches of Plain Bob doubles, more Grandsire doubles, a plain course of Cambridge minor and rounds and call changes. The final touch of Stedman doubles was followed by a good lower. We were grateful to be allowed to ring there as the church is closed while extensive renovations are carried out to the nave floor and north wall.



Lunch was at The Little Rose in Haslingfield. We were the only customers there and the food was very good with large portions. Unfortunately the small staff had difficulty in getting our meals to us all at the same time and the last meals arrived after some people had



completely finished. This wasn't the end of the world as we were not due at the next tower until 2 o'clock.



We arrived at **Barton** in good time and were let in and shown the steps to the tower. Because of insurance, there is a maximum of 12 people allowed in the ringing chamber at any one time but we organised ourselves to comply with this. The bells are not easy to ring well as there is terrific tower movement during ringing and a few bells were dropping quite

badly. Some people felt so nauseous they had to go down to the main body of the church to recover. Despite this we rang touches of Grandsire doubles and Plain Bob doubles and minor before ringing down.

As we came out of the church at 3 o'clock the sun made a brief appearance before we drove home in the steady rain. Many thanks to Lynn and Martin Goodwin for organising an interesting and different pair of churches and for arranging the lunch.

Our September meeting was in the pretty village of **Haynes**. The weather was lovely, crisp and autumnal. The bells are a light ground floor six which go well, but we didn't do them justice.



We rang Plain Bob doubles and minor, Cambridge minor, and rounds and call changes but some ringers found the light bells challenging.

Barbara organised tea or coffee for anyone who wanted them and this was much appreciated.

Derek led a minute's silence while we remembered Miriam Clark from Elstow, one of the original Tailenders, who died a few days earlier. She will be much missed.

Lunch was at The Greyhound, a few minutes away in the edges of Haynes. There was a wide selection of beers and the meals were excellent. We were served quickly and good food was presented imaginatively. Many thanks go to Barbara B. for organising everything so well.

### **Tailenders' Programme for 4th Quarter of 2017**

Tuesday 10 October

#### **Bozeat**

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of St Mary  
6 bells, 16-2-6 in E

Lunch at The Red Lion, Bozeat

Arranged by Derek Hammond  
Ringing Master: Richard Entwistle

Tuesday 14 November

#### **Sharnbrook**

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of St Peter  
8 bells, 9-3-5 in F#

Lunch at The Queen's Head, Milton Ernest

Arranged by Richard Hillson  
Ringing Master: Derek Hammond

Tuesday 12 December

#### **Amphill**

11.00 am – 12 noon, The Church of St Andrew  
8 bells, 13-3-6 in Ab

Christmas Lunch at The Jolly Coopers, Wardhedges

Arranged by Chris Catlin  
Ringing Master: Martin Barratt

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.

## St Peter's Cup - Association Six Bell Striking Competition

The Association six bell striking competition hosted by the Bedford District was held on 16 September at St Denys Colmworth. The church has a groundfloor 9 cwt ring and the bells go very well. Usually six teams take part, that is two from each District, but unfortunately this year Dunstable could not raise a team so they rang as a "scratch" band and therefore were not placed.

It was a very cold and wet day, which made it rather uncomfortable to go outside to listen to the ringing. The judges were Chris and Ruth Stokes who ring at Cosgrove in South Northamptonshire.

The results were as follows:

Place	Team	Score	Rang
1	Kempston	6	1
2	Biggleswade	7	6
3	Bromham	24	2
4	Clifton	25	3
5	Silsoe	28	5
-	Dunstable	18	4



Ian (and Emma) Townsend of Kempston receiving the St Peter's Cup from Chris Stokes (*Photo by Terry Brown*)

## Kempston Bells Appeal

There is a long tradition of maintaining and improving the bells at Kempston dating back to the 1400s. We have some excellent bells at All Saints but two of the bells, the tenor (~17½cwt) and the 7th bell (~9½cwt) are thin and now very old (1603 and 1633 respectively) and would probably not survive any attempt to tune them more accurately.

The ringers have been given a very rare offer of two excellent 1910 Taylors bells from the Keltek Trust, which originate from Prinknash Abbey in Gloucestershire; these will replace the existing 7th and tenor bells which will be hung dead above the remaining bells.

This project, along with supporting works and clapper refurbishment, will make the Kempston bells one of the best peals in the county and, at the same time preserve the two 17th century bells for use as service and funeral bells, thus retaining an important link with ringing at Kempston going back to the time of Elizabeth I.

The total cost of the project stands at £45,000 and completes the work started from the 1976 project, with a larger pit specifically left for a tenor bell of the correct size (and weight).

We are seeking and would be grateful for any donations: Our website: **kempstonbellringers.org.uk** will contain all details, with regards to electronic giving, during the appeal. Posters and leaflets will be distributed, but will also be available from our appeal treasurer, Richard Hillson, who can also receive donations via cheque.

Cheques should be made payable to “**All Saints Church Kempston Bells Appeal**” and we encourage all those who are able to gift-aid their donation.

At this point we would like to thank the district for the generous donation of £5000 that has helped us to launch the appeal.

We very much look forward to updating you as this project progresses and remind the district that our current 10 bells are available every Wednesday night 19:45-21:00!

*Ian Townsend, on behalf of the All Saints Kempston Bells Appeal*



# KEMPSTON BELLS APPEAL

Replacement and preservation of two seventeenth century bells

## Kempston Appeal and Ringing

For more information regarding our appeal, please see leaflets and visit our website below, or follow our QR Link >

**Practice:** Wednesdays from 19.45 – 21.00

**Email:** [kempston@bacbr.org.uk](mailto:kempston@bacbr.org.uk)

Find us on  [Kempston Bell Ringers](#)



[kempstonbellringers.org.uk](http://kempstonbellringers.org.uk)

## **History of the Prinknash Bells**

The Prinknash Bells were originally hung in the abbey on Caldey Island in Carmarthen Bay in Pembrokeshire. The current abbey was built in 1910 by Anglican Benedictine monks and a peal of eight bells, cast by Messrs Taylor and Co, Loughborough, were installed. The bells were used during festivals to help with the due observance of discipline and to punctuate the monastic routine. They were also rung for great occasions such as the end of World War II.

The community moved to Prinknash Abbey Gloucestershire in 1928. An agreement was reached whereby the Cistercian monks who took up residence at Caldey Island retained two of the bells and supplied replacements. These were also cast by Taylors of Loughborough and designed to match the exact tonal character of the originals. In 1931 when the eight bells reached Prinknash Park they were fixed in a frame in the East Court. In 1975 the bells were moved to a newly-built abbey. They were last rung in 2008, when the community moved to St Peter's Grange.

The Prinknash Abbey bells are of a very high quality and from a period when Taylors were casting some of their best bells; this (1896 through to the late 1950s) being considered something of a 'magic' era. Bedfordshire rings cast by Taylors during this period include the magnificently sounding octaves at Bromham (1907), Cardington (1900), and St Paul's Bedford (1896-1945).

Originally included in an auction run by Chorley's, Prinknash (May 2015), the eight Abbey bells failed to sell. The Keltek Trust then acquired the bells with the sole purpose of rehoming them for full-circle ringing. Currently all of the bells are to be rehomed (subject to faculties) between Lichfield St Chad, Laxfield (Suffolk) and All Saints Kempston. This is no surprise given the quality of these bells and the fact that they have never been rung for full circle ringing – so can be considered “as new”!

**<http://www.keltektrust.org.uk/prinknash.html>**

*Edited by Ian Townsend,  
words from the All Saints Kempston Bells Appeal website*



## **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 to the 'regular' contributors, to Ian Townsend for the report on the Kempston Project, and to Adrienne Sharp for the District Outing Report.

The next Headstock will be distributed at the Annual District Meeting taking place on 20 January 2018 at Bromham. Please send your articles, announcements etc by 12 January 2018. Your input is what makes Headstock what it is.

Maureen Hall  
Email: [maureensgpost@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.bacbr.org.uk) but the web version has all personal contact details removed. If your tower does not currently receive Headstock then please contact the Editor at the address above.

