



Rutland Bell-Ringers Newsletter

January 2021

Wishing a Happy, Healthy, Safe New Year to Everyone

Now we are in another national lockdown there isn't any ringing taking place, but we do still have an AGM.

RUTLAND BRANCH AGM

**Saturday 16th January 2021
6.00pm**

This will take place as a ZOOM meeting

**Meeting ID 828 3994 4041
Password 971271**

The relevant notes & reports -

Agenda - 2020 AGM minutes - Branch report - Accounts - 2021 Programme - Voting form have been sent out to branch members by email, and posted to those without email.

If you have not received the papers for the meeting please contact the Branch Secretary Helen Pollard email helen@pollardweb.me.uk or 01780 721005

**Items for the next newsletter to Sue Webster
by Sunday 31st January
suevw@sky.com**

**www.rutlandbellringing.org
Webmaster: Peter Furness
webmaster@rutlandbellringing.org**

Sue Webster has asked me to write about my experience as a late entrant to the world of ringing. I have enjoyed it so much, so here goes.

RETIREMENT RINGING

Monica Spence



The ringing chamber looked like a hangman's gibbet – 8 ropes each with a noose on the end. My eyes followed them up to their holes in the ceiling, which was an awful long way up. It was my first training session in St John's Church, Peterborough, and the tower and bells were much like those at Oakham Church.

We had recently moved to Peterborough and I had always wanted to ring, but none of the churches we had attended before had bells. The Branch Ringing Master gave me Saturday morning sessions until I joined in the team practice. Most of the ringers had years of experience, and some rang at the cathedral as well. It was inspiring, but daunting too. They were so patient and helpful, even when I let go of the rope (no one had warned me never to do that).

One particular member always kept an eye on learners and put us right with a nod or wink when we got lost.

Learners were encouraged to visit other tower practices, and we made up a carload every Monday to go to Castor, which was by default becoming a training tower. The ringing chamber and anti-room were always jammed with ringers, as was the local pub afterwards. The atmosphere was jolly enthusiasm, and it was there that I struggled through my first quarter.

To get to grips with PBD I had gone on a weekend course where, in small groups, we had 6 sessions in various towers and theory sessions in between. Not only did I 'get it' at last, but I realised that, as a ringer, you belong to a nationwide fraternity, and you will be welcome at any tower you visit. Our group leader belonged to the St Mary-le-Bow team and he invited us to join in the ringing for the Lord Mayor's Show that year. Visitors rang rounds in between the Surprise methods rung by the tower team and we had a perfect view of the show as it passed along Cheapside.

As Philip and I lived in the cathedral precinct, I was able to attend cathedral practices too. 150+ steps up and 13 bells in a spacious chamber. Just to listen to the cascade of sound as the bells were rung up was exciting, and to ring one in rounds a thrill. Eventually I managed to ring Plain Hunt on the 12 bells, more by luck rather than ropesight or listening. I wasn't the only novice, and we were always encouraged to try the next step. With a guardian angel behind me, I trebled to Little Bob Maximus and Grandsire Cinques.

When we moved to Preston 5 years later, I joined the very welcoming and enthusiastic Wing team. In ages, they ranged from 11+ to 80+, and that is another thing I love about the ringing fraternity – everyone is included and everyone counts. It was good to ring on 5 bells. Ropesight and listening became possible! Moreover, we experimented with one doubles method after another, which gave us more variety than we would have had with more bells, as most of us were fairly new to ringing. For 3 summers running, we went on ringing holidays based in Hartington twice and then Norfolk, spending the mornings visiting 2 or 3 towers, and then walking in the afternoons. Every tower has its quirks, and it was a great way to widen our experience. The most memorable was at St Oswald's, Ashbourne, where the bells are rung from the crossing with nothing to interrupt your view of the 75ft ropes till they disappear into the belfry.

Eventually, I joined the Uppingham team when we moved there - 8 lovely bells, another friendly team led now so ably by Sue Webster, and the innovation of a simulator installed by John Webster which opened up all sorts of possibilities for training. I kept up with the Wing team too, and it may seem obsessive, but I also went to the Brooke/Braunston/Langham practices which were and are usually crowded and there I was able to venture into ringing surprise methods.

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I can't come anywhere near Peggy's incredible tally of peals and quarter peals but, as well as a few plain methods, I'm quite chuffed to have rung quarter peals of one or two surprise minor methods, as well. This thanks to very supportive conductors and fellow ringers.

I have avoided naming names – so many experienced ringers have patiently encouraged me along. I say a big 'Thank you' to them and to everyone in the Branch for friendship and fun.

Monica Spence



Monica May 2019. Practice night at Braunston.



2009. Wing ringing holiday

Janice Atkinson saw this piece in Stamford Living and thought it might amuse our Rutland ringers.

Reverend Thomas Lovick Cooper (1802–92)

To his superiors and parishioners alike Lovick Cooper was a troublesome priest. Coming from an aristocratic background, he was Rector and Patron of Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire and also Vicar of Empingham for 60 years. He was litigious and enjoyed legal disputes for much of his life. He fought a long battle in Mablethorpe to recover tithes he considered due to him. Tithes were normally payable on a tenth of all produce from land in the parish. He finally lost this case after 10 years and had to pay over £14,000 in legal fees.

In 1842 Cooper had a dispute with his Empingham bell ringers, who refused to ring the bells for a church service. He retaliated and refused permission for the bells to be rung at the wedding of a family who were members of the church and had supported him in difficult times. The couple decided to get married at Langtoft. To ensure that the bells were not rung, Cooper removed the ropes and locked the church door. To his astonishment the bells did ring. When he went to the church, he discovered that the ringers had borrowed bell ropes and got through a window to ring them. They ran out of the church and locked the door behind them, and for an hour he was imprisoned. A large gathering assembled outside the church and let him out, pelting him with missiles, including excrement. He ran back to the vicarage and was followed by the crowd, who smashed windows and burnt an effigy of him in the street.

A month later Cooper refused to contribute to the Highway and Poor rates. The Magistrates ruled against him, but he got off on a technicality, so villagers made up the contribution. A lesser mortal would have moved as soon as possible, but he stayed in Empingham until his death in 1892 at the age of 90.

St Peter's Church, Empingham



And from Peter Furness...

Part of an email conversation

"Good to hear the bells again, even if only two of them. You rang all the possible changes of sequence on 2 bells, so does that count as a peal?"

"Yes - I think it does count as a peal, and in record time as well! Just under 30 seconds for a full peal on two bells!"

I'd like to suggest a new name for a peal on two bells - Covid Surprise (the surprise is I was expecting to hear more bells.....)



A message from the Rutland Branch Chairman

To catch potential bell-ringers attention

Attention creative bell-ringers

At a recent committee meeting the matter of post lockdown recruiting was raised. Bellringing is a hobby that combines social interaction; getting out and about; is mentally stimulating and suits all ages whether male or female. With (resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic) a number of new families coming to the countryside there will be a new cohort of potential bell-ringers.

To help towers advertise they are recruiting, or holding an "open tower day", the branch will commission a number of feather flags or banners to be placed outside a tower to draw attention to the recruitment drive.

To commission the House of Flags at Kimbolton we just need a design and who better to design an "eye-catching" message than a bell-ringer or bell-ringing family.

Can you make the message one that stops people in their tracks and encourages them into the tower?
What to do over Christmas.....design a flag.

All you have to do is sketch your idea and/or words and send to the Chairman
alan.wordie@enduranceproperty.com by Friday 8th January 2021.

The winner will be announced at the AGM on Saturday 16th January 2021 and then the flag will be commissioned.

The winning design will be printed on branch flags/banners and available for towers to advertise when recruiting new ringers.

