

## CHESTER DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELLRINGERS (Chester Branch)

### NEWSLETTER NO. 2

Yes, you're quite right another Newsletter is long overdue. You'd have thought I'd have more time on my hands now I'm retired, but things just don't seem to work out that way.

Still enough of the excuses. Let's get on with it. By the time you read this you will be aware that the ringing activities in the Chester Branch for 2009 are now well under way. As usual we began with a highly successful Quiz Evening at the *Nag's Head*, Lavister on 16<sup>th</sup> January. My sincere thanks once more to Arthur Wycherley of Tarporley for putting together a challenging and interesting quiz for us. Congratulations yet again to Waverton, who won. They were a good four points clear of their nearest rivals. For the record these are the complete results:

1st	Waverton Stays	87
2 <sup>nd</sup> =	Six of the Best	83
2 <sup>nd</sup> =	Cathedral Colonials	83
4 <sup>th</sup> =	Oh Help!	79
4 <sup>th</sup> =	Dodlebridge	79
6th	Handley Novices	75
7th	Pulford	67
8th	The Splintered Stays	62
9th	I've Forgotten	59

As we all know, it's not the winning but the taking part that matters. So well done everybody for having a go. It was particularly heartening to see a team from Handley there. Undoubtedly the great success story of recent years has been the revival of ringing there. It was particularly gratifying to be able to elect four new members to the Guild on the night.

Those of you who took part will know who you are, but already my memory is becoming distinctly hazy as to who actually attended. I know that Tarporley were out in force and had two teams; then there was a Tattenhall team; Handbridge and Dodleston combined forces; but that's as far as my memory goes. A future question could well be to name some of those teams. We trust that *Oh Help!* got their name for reasons quizzological rather than campanological; and - heavens forbid! - not because of some undisclosed existential angst.

Please try to come along to some of the meetings. Not all are suitable for all ringers, but most are. There is definitely something for everybody in the programme as a whole. You should have all got your little pocket- and handbag-sized cards, and the whole programme is on the website. (You do go to that occasionally, of course. Lyn keeps it up to date, and despite our

still not having entirely got rid of the old material you should find it relevant. Go to <http://www.cdg-chester-branch.org.uk> and you will find the correct page.)

We have tried to maintain a balance of ringing and social activities; of the latter most are combined with ringing.

### Quarterly Meetings

The Branch Committee has already met and has had a fresh look at the pattern of business meetings. We are conscious that essentially the only opportunity for members to challenge the Committee on their decisions and to discuss matters in detail, has been the AGM. This has made for a peculiar AGM. From November 2009 onwards we shall restrict the AGM to election of officers and reports (all printed and distributed in advance). Then there will be a fourth quarterly meeting at which we shall present our proposals for the coming year and give you a chance to discuss whatever you want to. However, I do remember a time when the winter event went on for ages; and we did not do too much ringing. It is always a matter of compromise, of course. We must accept that there are times to talk; but there should be much more time devoted to ringing. That is why we are here, after all.

The quarterlies do, of course, have a slot where we stop ringing and have a short business meeting. There is an opportunity to make any announcements and elect new members; and, if you have something pressing to say, you can raise any matter you wish. Don't forget the next one will be on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, at Backford.**

Essentially much of the planning of Branch events is done at Committee level. We also review everything that has already happened. In the near future our Secretary should be making the minutes of the meetings available on the website and via e-mail. Everything should always be transparent!

But if you really feel unhappy about what we do then please consider standing for office or joining the Branch Committee. After all we do need constantly to renew ourselves: we shall need a new Ringing Master in November, and I do not intend to carry on as Chairman for too many more years. It is never healthy for the same people to stay in office way after their shelf-lives have expired.

### Notable Ringing Events

I am entirely reliant on you to send me details of any quarters or peals rung in your tower. Not by an entirely visiting band, of course; we don't really want to know about them. Yet I am sure there are important and interesting performances in your towers. I can trawl *Campanophile* and find out what's been happening. By the way, how many of you know of this site? It can be found at: <http://www.campanophile.co.uk>

I do know that interesting quarters are being rung at Backford: the saints are definitely marching in; and now I believe Ready Money is being practised. It will be about the only instance of that diminishing commodity available soon. The Hoole Plain Minor band, which found the road to Frodsham somewhat difficult to navigate, are now finding their sterling efforts sinking into the murky waters of Bala Lake. We do intend to stay afloat sometime this year, however.

So please send me whatever you want to. Anything - even if it is to tell us somebody has got through the first course of something; or that you are practising something new.

Talking of quarter peals I must mention at this point our **Quarter Peal Fortnight** in June. Remember what we essentially want is for each quarter to have a first in it: a ringer's first quarter, first away from cover, first inside, first in method, etc. It is not designed for a select group of ringers to ring as many quarters as they can within two weeks. Please think about it, and I appeal to all tower captains to consider what their ringers might want to ring. All you have to do is ask, and we can then see about arranging the bands. The standard methods should not be a problem; Bristol Maximus might extend our resources somewhat.

There is one performance I really must mention. It might have featured just two Branch members - that is increasingly a feature of ringing as bands are formed from a wide circle of ringers - yet it was a very special occasion. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1949 a 16 year-old Brian Harris rang his first peal at Hoole: Grandsire Doubles. Almost 60 years to the date and after ringing close on a couple of thousand peals, Brian was able to call a peal of Seven Surprise Minor, again at Hoole. So congratulations to Brian on that. It was a real privilege to be in the peal, and to add one to my modest peal total.

### Other events since the Branch AGM

I hope that all who attended the **St Nicholas Dinner** at the beginning of December enjoyed it. I thought it went well and we shall definitely want to repeat the experience this year. Any suggestions of venues would be most welcome.

We have had had just one meeting: the first of our themed ones, which was **Bob Minor** at Tarvin on 5<sup>th</sup> February. I hope that those who attended with the hope of practising their Bob Minor got something out of it. The attendance - especially in this rather inclement weather - was encouraging.

Please do not hesitate to contribute something to the Branch Newsletter. I do not really want to be the sole contributor every time.

## Mobile Phones

You, of course, will not be like me and want to keep your mobile - something I can just about use now - until it's completely useless. The more fashion-conscious among you will be changing them regularly: they are, after all, a fashion accessory as much as a useful little gizmo. However, whatever your usage of the accused small gadget is there is now a way you can make some money for the Guild. If you hand in your old phone - just the phone will be enough; the Sim card is not needed - then they will all be gathered up and sent off somewhere to make a not insignificant sum per phone (£3.00, I believe) - all profit for the CDG's use. Those who know about such things tell me that it is no scam, but a perfectly respectable charity. I'm sure our Secretary will be able to take them off you, and they can be handed in at any meeting.

## Training

At the last Guild Committee Meeting we discussed training. The Guild will pay £100.00 per year per Branch for supporting training purposes. We have a meeting scheduled in June at Hoole - on learning a new method - and that could attract some funding. We also hope to support the installation of a simulator at Waverton. Inevitably a sub-committee has been proposed and this Branch will need to choose a representative. I am very pleased to say that the Guild is taking a bottom-up approach, and is seeking, above all, views from the grass roots. Please let us know what training needs you have. Naturally we can do much within the Chester Branch - in the same way that other branches do - but there might well be scope for training events ranging across the whole of the Guild.

## Walk and Ring

As I type this, the weather has distinctly improved. The crocuses in my garden tell me spring will not be long. And the Spring Bank Holiday Monday will be upon us before we know it. My intention this year is to venture a little farther afield, and go some way along the Wirral Way. There are towers spread out conveniently along the walk. Once more, however, the walk is linear, rather than circular. I am thinking that the walkers could drive to, say, Neston, and then after walking to somewhere like West Kirby could get the train back. Just a thought. I'd welcome your views, please.

David Adams  
2 February 2009