

**Barnes' Ringers Annual Summer Tour 2011 to Market Harborough Area
Trip Report**

"All the right notes but not necessarily in the right order"

We've all been in that situation where we arrive at a strange tower, unmet, and have to work out which bell is which by tugging on ropes and comparing the feel. However, late arrivals to the start of the 21st Barnes Summer Tour were a little taken aback to hear Lutterworth bells going up in the order, err, 781234? Surely not! But the "treble" ringer (who shall remain nameless) stuck to his guns. Confirmation came, if any were needed, when they stood in that order and then 5 and 6 were raised. After that things could only get better and three quarters were scored that afternoon, including Stedman on a moderately heavy five.

Headquarters for the trip was the Three Swans in Market Harborough. We seem to make a habit of staying in Best Western hotels and indeed they have certain advantages as the base for a ringing tour: they tend to be old inns with character, unlike the ubiquitous concrete boxes of other hotel chains; they always have some decent ale in the bar; and they usually offer a self-service cooked breakfast, which considerably eases the task of getting to the first tower for a 9 o'clock start.

Maryanne had been to Great Glen once before, on the occasion of her goddaughter's baptism 27 years ago, and was determined that we had to dedicate a quarter to the young lady – no pressure of course. Thankfully Double Norwich was accomplished with some pretty roll-ups off the front. The largely Norman church at Wistow is a delight with its box pews and some splendid monuments in the north transept, including that to Sir Richard Halford. Among the copious inscriptions thereon are a Miltonesque verse which begins: *"Hence profane axes hammers all the dire Engines of cursed heathenish deformation. Noe superstitious (sic) Baalite did inspire Us to adore our Fathers generation: Twas humble duty to our aged sire."* and the sobering command, as apposite today as it was in 1658: *"Weep not to read so many Worthies dead But weep to see so few left in their stead"*.

When the PCC of St Peter's, Gaulby, decided to make provision for the comfort of churchgoers they were obviously determined to utilise whatever space was available. On entering the ground floor ringing chamber only five sallies are visible, but fling open the double doors on one side of the room and there is a fully-equipped modern lavatory – with the tenor rope dangling in front of the pan. A helpful notice warns that the toilet is not available while ringing is in progress "for health and safety reasons". Your correspondent, flushed with success, is now wondering what other exotic quarter peal locations he can find, having earlier this year rung one in a haunted canal tunnel.

Friday morning saw a move into Northamptonshire and a gender-based divide in the company. Sadly the ladies were unsuccessful with Bob Major at Desborough while the gentlemen scored Ipswich Minor at Rushton. The ten at Rothwell are glorious, fully justifying a recent comment on Facebook from a well-known RW columnist who wanted to take them home. The six at Weekley are clearly not rung as often as the name might suggest and are, to put it mildly, a bit of a handful; nevertheless they were persuaded to produce a quarter of doubles.

After a brief foray into Rutland (the county not the method) on Saturday we returned to the Three Swans for the customary Dinner. A "son of the clergy" was prevailed upon to say grace which he, being also a retired naval officer, did with admirable brevity. Sunday was relatively relaxed and the tour finished as it had begun on an unusual note - or to be precise eleven notes, the ninth at Leicester Cathedral being temporarily out of action.