

*from Robert Walton, Chair, Witney and Woodstock Branch*

Dear All

I'm very saddened to pass on to you the sad news of the death of Derek West (please see extract below from the Witney Gazette). Funeral and a Special Ring in Memory of Derek will take place in the future, but a date has yet to be confirmed. When I know any funeral details and dates I will pass them on to you asap.

*from the Witney Gazette.....*

## **Fellow St Mary's Church bell ringer pays tribute to 'incredibly kind' Witney man Derek West**



Bell ringers Pauline Day, Meg Roberts, Jeannie Tognola, Jordan Wells, Derek West and tower captain Terry Hester

A BELL ringer who served the tower of a Witney church alongside Derek West has paid tribute to the 78-year-old after his body was found in a river on Saturday.

Jeannie Tognola, 65, of South Leigh, rang the bells in the tower of St Mary's Church with Mr West, who picked up the hobby three years ago.

She described him as someone who was always looking to help everyone else in the group. Mrs Tognola said: "He was incredibly kind and would do anything to help you.

“He would often bring gifts of bars of chocolate and biscuits for the other ringers, and if we ever went on any ringing trips he would be the first to offer a lift.  
“He was just a very friendly and genuine man.”

Mr West, who was also described as a loyal and helpful member of St Mary's Church, was last seen at his home in Meadow Lane on Monday, November 21.  
Following an extensive search and desperate pleas from his wife, Hilary, emergency services pulled his body from the River Windrush near the Crawley Mill Industrial Estate on Saturday after being alerted by a passer-by.

Since then, many have offered their condolences to Mr West's family.  
Mrs Tognola continued: “It was a dreadful shock. “It is a terribly sad loss and we're all truly devastated.”  
Mr West would also ring the bells at St Bartholomew's Church in Ducklington.  
A special ring in memory of Mr West will take place at some point in the future but a date is yet to be confirmed.

A formal inquest into his death will open next Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec at Oxford Coroner's Court.

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Many Thanks

Robert Walton  
Chair  
Witney and Woodstock Branch.