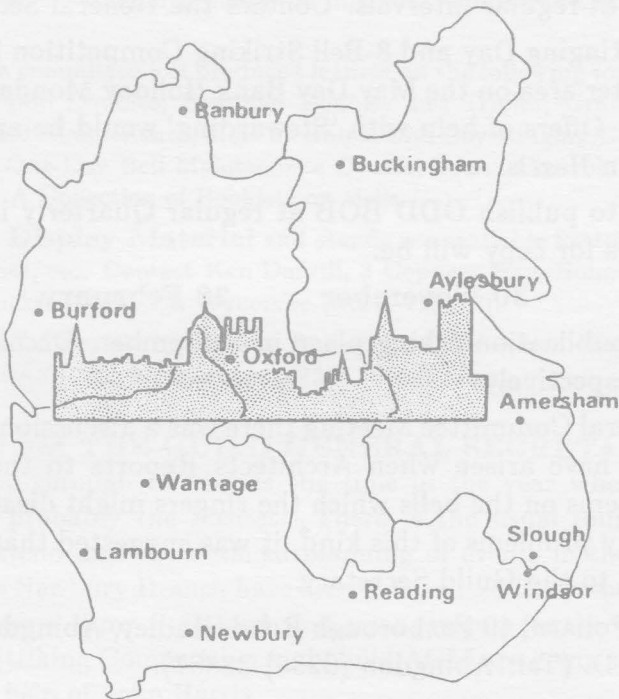


ODD BOB

Newsletter of the

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD



March 1986

EDITORIAL

ODD BOB — OxforD Diocese; Berks, Oxon, Bucks

Please encourage all of your ringers to take this home with them to read, afterwards returning it to the tower for someone else to read. A good plan is to write the names of your ringers on the cover of each issue of Odd Bob (why not do that now!) and to circulate it to them all, asking them to tick against their name when they have read it.

As I shall not be seeking re-election to the post of Publicity Secretary at the AGM in May, is there anyone who has the time and is willing to accept the post? The main part of the job is the production of ODD BOB at regular intervals. Contact the General Secretary.

The Open Ringing Day and 8-Bell Striking Competition is being held in the Bicester area on the May Day Bank Holiday Monday (see notice further on). Offers of help with 'Stewarding' would be appreciated—contact John Harris.

It is hoped to publish ODD BOB at regular Quarterly intervals and closing dates for copy will be:

31 August 30 November 28 February 31 May
each year, publication taking place in September, December, March and June respectively.

At the General Committee Meeting there was a discussion about problems which have arisen when Architects Reports to the PCC have contained items on the bells which the ringers might disagree with. If you have any problems of this kind, it was suggested that you should send details to the Guild Secretary.

Daphne Pollard, 49 Foxborough Road, Radley, Abingdon, Oxon.
OX14 3AD. (Tel: Abingdon (0235) 32887).

GUILD FACILITIES

The Guild promotes and encourages ringing in the Diocese. It does this by providing a variety of services which foster ringing and related interests.

Tower Inspections. For those bands of ringers who are worried about the condition of their tower, bells or fittings or need advice on sound-proofing, the Guild will undertake a tower inspection. Contact the General Secretary for details.

The Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund makes grants towards restoring bells. Any donations or assistance in fund raising will help this objective. Contact the General Treasurer (Brian Gatward, Grangewood, Mill Lane, Calcot, Reading, RG3 5RS Tel: Reading (0734) 413097) or your Branch Secretary.

Books. At General Guild meetings and some Branch Meetings, you will find a travelling Bookstall. The Guild also maintains a comprehensive **Library** from which books may be borrowed. For details contact Phil Walker (152 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. Tel: Oxford (0865) 65140).

Education. If you are interested in attending a one-day course on any aspect of ringing, contact Marie Cross (6 Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxon. Tel: Abingdon (0235) 20868). Generally a practical session is included. We are pleased to run a course specially for a tower band, or for a Branch.

The 8 mm film *Birth of a Bell* has been purchased by the Education Committee and is available for hire (charge around £5). This 25 minute film covers the casting and tuning of bells. There is also a VHS video copy of this film available for hire and a Betamax copy could probably be made if required: contact the General Secretary.

The education committee has produced leaflets on the following topics: Pl. Hunting and Pl. Bob Doubles; Stedman Doubles and Triples; Grandsire Doubles; Belfry Care and Maintenance; How to Run a One-Day Ringing Course and How to Arrange a One-Day Bell Maintenance Course; Sound Control; Rope Splicing, Bibliography; A Collection of Booklets on Bells.

Exhibition Display Material and stands are available for tower open days, Public Libraries, etc. Contact Ken Darvill, 3 Copners Way, Holmer Green, High Wycombe, Bucks. (Tel: High Wycombe (0494) 713217).

The General Secretary is Tony Pullan, 23 Cumberland Way, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 9AY. Tel: Wokingham (0734) 793488.

FROM THE GUILD GENERAL SECRETARY

February through to May is the time in the year when your Guild Secretary is probably the busiest. There is the usual round of Branch AGM's to attend and the detailed planning of events in the year ahead. This year the Newbury Branch have kindly organised the Annual Festival in July, easing some of my work load, and arrangements for the Open Ringing Day, 8-Bell Striking Competition and Guild AGM are going smoothly with the valuable help of John Harris.

It is therefore somewhat of a relaxed attitude that I like to portray when attending Branch AGM's. It is the opportunity for Guild Officers to meet members and then receive praise or criticism as the members see fit. I have learnt to expect the unexpected! At a recent Branch AGM I was asked why the Branch had received no information about forthcoming events. Whilst I knew details had not been made available to the Guild as

such, the date and venue has been printed in the Members Diary Cards. On making enquiries it transpired they were never distributed to towers and members, neither were previous issues of ODDBOB!

This wasn't the first time that transfer of information had failed and I am sure it won't be the last. But it is up to YOU, the Branch Members, to find out what has gone wrong, and then help to sort it out.

Thank you for the warm welcomes received so far on visits to the Branches this year. I look forward to your support at Guild events later in 1986.

Tony Pullan

CHANGE OF BRANCH SECRETARIES/ADDRESSES:

Bicester Branch:

Mrs Jill Ward, Three Gables, High Street, Ludgershall, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP18 9PD
Tel: Brill (0844) 237263

Reading Branch:

Mrs Joyce Vernon, 121 Mayfield Drive, Caversham, Reading, RG4 0JR
Tel: Reading (0734) 474281

Sonning Deanery Branch:

Mrs Lynn G. Deering, 32 Grampian Road, Little Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey
GU17 8NH Tel: Crowthorne (0344) 777837

Guild Treasurer:

Mr Brian J. Gatward, Grangewood, Mill Lane, Calcot, Reading RG3 5RS
Tel: Reading (0734) 413097

TOWERS AND BELFRIES CONTACTS

If you would like to have some information about the services the Towers and Belfries sub-committee can provide, please get in touch with your local contact:

Banbury / Chipping Norton Branches:

G. Clifton, Stedman Cottage, Middle Aston, Oxford. Tel: Steeple Aston 47273

Bicester / Witney and Woodstock Branches:

Richard Stevens, 19 Thames Avenue, Bicester, Oxon. Tel: Bicester 243920

Central Bucks Branch / North Bucks Branch / North EB&SB:

M.E. Dobson, 6 Cautley Close, Quainton, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 4BN.
Tel: Quainton 216

Chiltern Branch:

T. Wagstaff, 6 Firs Close, Whitchurch, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 4LH.
Tel: Aylesbury 641755

Newbury Branch / West of Reading Branch:

R. Grange, c/o 8 St Mary's Hill, Cheap Street, Newbury, Berks.
Tel: (Daytime) Newbury 42961

O.N.B. Branch / V.of W.H. Branch / City Branch:

EITHER B.Stone, 3 Bell Close, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

OR Colin M.Turner, 27 Long Furlong Road, Sunningwell, Abingdon, Oxon.

Sonning Branch / East of Reading Branch / South of EB&SB:

A.G.Pullan, 23 Cumberland Way, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 9AY.

Tel: Wokingham 793488

South Oxon Branch:

N.C.Bartlett, Wychelm, Chinnor Road, Aston Rowant, Oxon.

Tel: Kingston Blount 51197

OBITUARY

ARTHUR D. BARKER

To most younger members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, Arthur Barker (or A.D.B.) is a name they hear from older members or read on the front page of the Guild Report. To older members he was a familiar figure not only at General Guild meetings but also at Branch A.G.M.s, for he regularly attended these and explained Guild Finance to the Branch members.

Arthur Barker first joined the Oxford Diocesan Guild in 1915. After serving in World War I he served the Guild without a break until his death. First he became a member of Stoke Poges tower and remained a member throughout the rest of his life. From 1924 onwards he was always 'In Office' and his record is an impressive one.

Hon.Secretary and Treasurer EB&SB Branch	1924-1954
Hon.Treasurer EB&SB Branch	1954-1971
Central Council Representative (ODG)	1936-1966
Hon.General Treasurer Oxford Diocesan Guild	1936-1974
Vice-President Oxford Diocesan Guild	1961-1986
Tower Captain Stoke Poges	c1947-1986

Until recently, when age and failing sight prevented, he was present at all Guild General and Committee Meetings and was a familiar figure at the Annual Festival in Oxford. In his nineties he was to read the lesson at the Guild Centenary Service at Oxford. Arthur took an active part in discussions when the need arose. Always outspoken in debate he earned the respect of all who worked with him for his sincerity and loyalty to the Guild which he represented for so long on the Central Council and for the sound advice he gave. Younger members who worked on committee with him have said how much his advice was to the point and how they appreciated it. The Oxford Guild owes much to his guidance in business matters, his care of its finances and its standard of ringing.

A.D.B. (as he was so often called) was not a prolific ringer by modern standards but his ringing was of a high standard and he demanded it from others.

In 1922 he had married Gladys Bateman whose father was Tower Captain at Stoke Poges and whom he succeeded in that office. There they settled in their present home where ringers were always welcome. There they were able to fulfil not only their love of ringing and all that it meant to them but also their delight in gardening. Together they made a wonderful team who have worked together for the good of the Exercise, the Oxford Guild and the EB&SB Branch in particular. ADB was essentially an EB&SB man and frequently reminded the writer that the Branch was older than the Guild!

Others will write of Arthur's work for his Masonic Lodge, his daily work, his love of his Church and his garden and his family life. For the writer the following prayer of Sir Francis Drake sums up Arthur Barker's life and work—and his attitude to both.

'O Lord, when thou givest thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same unto the end, until it be thoroughly finished which yieldeth the true glory...'

M.R.C.

ARTHUR DAVID BARKER (1890–1986)

“ Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away. ”

Another veteran who had for a very long period served the Oxford Diocesan Guild with distinction has been removed from us in the person of Mr Arthur D. Barker of Stoke Poges, who died on 20th February 1986. He was the Guild's oldest member, and the oldest surviving Vice-President, having been elected a V-P in recognition of his sterling work for the Guild as long ago as 1961.

Always proud of being a Londoner, he was born the eldest of six children in Islington on 28th Oct. 1890, which made him 95 years of age. Venturing into a belfry to discover where his mates disappeared on the same night each week, he was invited to try his hand. This was at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Islington in 1905. The first ringing society he joined was the College Youths in 1908, for whom he rang his first peal, Grandsire Triples on a working bell on 12 June 1909 conducted by the redoubtable Richard F. Deal, who with the equally notable conductor, Thomas H. Taffender called most of Arthur's early peals. His first as Conductor was Stedman Triples, a “method” to which he was particularly ad-

dicted, at St. James's, Clerkenwell, on 30 Aug. 1913, no mean feat. Arthur loved the heavy end, and was always proud of having turned in Blackfriars tenor to Kent and Cambridge after the great William Pye had "packed the task in". He was also proud of a 7,777 Stedman Caters at Beddington conducted by that stalwart Francis E. Dawe. He conducted his own first peal of Surprise—Cambridge Major at Holloway—in March 1914. The 1914–18 War interrupted his ringing as he served in the R.A.M.C. in Palestine. Twice in recent years he revisited the Holy Land, with his wife, to rekindle old memories and sights.

After the War he resumed his ringing and met in the belfry a Miss Gladys Bateman (daughter of the Captain of Stoke Poges bellringers), who was at Whitelands Teachers' Training College. In August 1922 they were married at St. Clement Danes Church, London. They participated in the first peal of Maximus (Kent T.B.) in which a lady rang, at Waltham Abbey in April 1921. They shared in a number of notable firsts, *viz.*, the first peal on ten bells by five married couples (Cambridge Royal at Beddington, conducted by Arthur); first on twelve by six married couples (Stedman Cinques at Leicester Cathedral). Arthur rang in silent and non-conducted peals of P. Bob Major, Royal and Maximus, Grandsire Triples (Parker's One-part) and Stedman Triples. One peal of which he was particularly proud was that following the interment of Sir Winston Churchill at Bladon, rung by six Officers of our Guild and conducted by the then Master, Rev. C. Eliot Wigg. What he considered his best performance was conducting a peal of Erin Triples from a non-observation bell when in his seventies. His last peal was Cambridge S. Major at Stoke Poges on 27th December 1977 conducted by himself. In all he rang 234 peals, of which he conducted 85, for 17 different Associations (including the Irish Assn.).

One thing which gave him great satisfaction was having Stoke Poges bells augmented to eight, and he conducted the first peal on the octave, Superlative S. Major in April 1938. For the last year or so infirmity had prevented his doing any active ringing, but he went to the church to listen to the ringing when possible, the last occasion being the memorial service for the four young Stoke Poges boys swept to their death last year at Land's End.

OXFORD GUILD SERVICE

Arthur Barker came into our Diocese on his marriage in 1922, being already a District Officer in the London County Association. In 1924 he took on the Secretaryship and Treasurership of the EB&SB Branch when it was penniless and about to collapse, and he built it up into the largest and most flourishing Branch in the Guild. He held these Offices until 1954. At the same time he became General Guild Treasurer in 1936, a post he

held until 1974. From 1924 Arthur served on the Central Council, first for the London C.Assn.; then from 1936-66 for the Oxford D.G., and again for the L.C.A. from 1966-69; that is 42 years C.C. service. Few ringers can have given greater or more loyal service to their territorial association than Arthur Barker, and he retained the Captaincy of Stoke Poges belfry to the day of his death.

OTHER INTERESTS

During his working life he was for 41 years a Pay Roll clerk with London Transport Underground, retiring in 1955. He was a keen gardener and kept himself supplied with fruit and vegetables throughout the year.

Until his eyesight failed Arthur was an ardent stamp collector, specialising on British Empire issues. He was also a Freemason, rising to London Grand Rank, and the 31st Degree. He rang several peals for the Freemasons. He was elected first Master of the Clavis (bellringers') Lodge. If ever anyone deserved the accolade of "Well done thou good and faithful servant" it was Arthur Barker. He leaves a widow but no family. We deeply mourn his passing and extend to Gladys our sincere sympathy in her loss.

W.B.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OPEN RINGING DAY and EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITION

IN THE BICESTER AREA

Monday 5 May 1986

Ringling Day Tickets available at £2.50 each. (or 25p per Tower)

Tea Tickets available at £1.00 each.

2.30pm STRIKING COMPETITION at Bicester (8, 15cwt.)

3pm-6pm TEA in Church Hall, Bicester

NO TICKET — NO TEA

All tickets available from: *Mr J Harris, 95 Buckingham Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 7ES* (sae with remittance, please)

COME ALONG AND ENJOY YOURSELF — 24 TOWERS OPEN!!

(see separate Notice sent to Towers)

Offers of help with 'stewarding' would be appreciated.

GUILD AGM at CHARLBURY, OXON.

Saturday 17th May 1986

8 TOWERS OPEN FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

(see separate Notice sent to Towers)

3pm SERVICE at St Mary's, Charlbury

4pm TEA in Memorial Hall, Charlbury

5pm A.G.M.

Evening Ringing at 2 Towers from 7.00pm-9.00pm

Names for Tea by **Weds. 14th May 1986** to: *Mrs D. Summers, 10 Hill Close, Sturt Road, Charlbury, Oxon. Tel: Charlbury 810639*

GUILD FESTIVAL 1986

This year's festival promises to be unique, as for the first time in living memory the Festival is being held outside of Oxford. The occasion which has brought this about is the year-long celebrations being held at St.Nicolas, Newbury, to mark 900 years of active worship on the site. (The church of St.Nicolas was first mentioned in the Domesday Book 1086). The Rector and churchwardens were very keen that all aspects of church life should join in the celebrations and were very enthusiastic when it was suggested that the Oxford Guild's Festival of Ringing should be based on St.Nicolas on July 12th.

The local branch have just as enthusiastically started the organising of the day and the draft programme looks like this at the moment.

9.30-10.30 Towers adjacent to Newbury open for ringing.

9.30-11.00 St.Nicolas bells available for ringing.

11.00-12.00 Service at St.Nicolas.

The service, to take the form of the Eucharist, is to be celebrated by the Rev.Richard Capstick, Rector of Newbury. Guest preacher is the Rev.Dr.John Baldwin, vice President of the Central Council. Ringer/Choristers are invited to bring their robes and meet in the church at 10.15am for a run through of the music and it is hoped that a strong choir will be present to lead the singing.

12.00- 2.30 approx. Buffet lunch, prepared by the local branch, in the Old Council Chamber, Town Hall. This building is adjacent to the Church. Because of limited space it may be necessary to

hold two sittings. In that case the bells of St.Nicolas will be available for those not eating at the time!

Afternoon ringing

There will be four routes of open towers during the afternoon. All routes will gradually bring ringers towards the village of Stanford Dingley.

BARBECUE and BARN DANCE

By kind permission of Sir Richard Body, M.P. Stanford Dingley offers an idyllic setting for this type of occasion. The barn he has made available will be the scene of barn dancing led by a first class Folk Group—the Navvies. There will be a bar and the Reading Branch have willingly co-operated with the Newbury branch and are going to provide a barbeque.

Tickets will be on sale from early May, it is envisaged that an upper limit will have to be placed on the barn dance so it is recommended that early bookings are made. Car parking arrangements in Newbury are also somewhat restricted at the moment and car parking instructions will accompany tickets. It is planned that a large advertisement will be placed in the Ringing World in late April. Put the date in your diary, the Newbury branch extend a warm welcome to all Guild Members. If you have any queries phone Howard Egglestone (Newbury 45906) or Tony Woodville (Newbury 49684).

At the time of going to press the prices for tickets are as follows:

Lunch	Adults	— £5.00
	Under 16	— £2.50
Barbeque and Barn Dance	Adults	— £3.50
	Under 16	— £2.50

EASTHAMPSTEAD '86

September 26–28

The probable range of Courses for 1986 will be:

Lectures and Practicals on:

Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob Minor, Plain Bob Major/Kent T.B., Stedman, Surprise Minor, Surprise Major.

Also Handbell ringing, Maintenance, 'General Interest' lectures.

Don't be afraid, it's not hard work all of the time!

Further information from: *Mrs Bobbie May, 4 Halfacre Close, Spencers Wood, Reading RG7 1DZ Tel: (0734) 884172*

CENTRAL COUNCIL RINGING SCHOOL
at HADLOW AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, TONBRIDGE, KENT.
25-27 JULY 1986
COST £55.50p

Brochures and Application Forms available from:

R. Cater, 8 Salters Acres, Winchester, Hants. SO22 5JW

Guild Sponsorship available — Write to the General Secretary.

RINGING SCHOOL 1985 by Simon Tomlinson

Teaching and Leadership in Ringing: This course was aimed at showing the student the basic methods employed by the Tower Captain. It covered all aspects of the job, from teaching a learner to ring, up to running a practice.

The course was held at Reaseheath College of Agriculture, Nantwich from 26-28 July 1985 and was organised by Bob Cater of the Central Council Education Committee. It covered most aspects of the Tower Captains job giving guide lines for running a practice and ways of keeping ringers in the Tower happy while still maintaining high standards. It laid out the path a learner should follow from the point where he learns to handle a bell, to ringing complicated methods.

Conclusions:

Over the weekend the course covered most aspects of running a Tower. In practice the workload should be shared by other people in the Tower, but the Tower Captain must know about everything. He is ultimately responsible for the upkeep of the ringing and the Tower.

The course tried not to lay down rules for a Tower, only ideas as to how it might be done. No two Towers are the same, so no two Towers can be run in the same way. If a Tower is to prosper though, it should follow the guidelines taught on the course.

I felt that the course was very worth while and hope that I shall soon be able to put the ideas learnt into action. I would recommend the course to anyone who is either presently running a tower or who is likely to be involved in the future. No Tower Captain is perfect.

S.T.

TWIGS FROM THE BRANCHES

Banbury Branch:

Apart from monthly practices—3rd Saturday of each month—Banbury Branch members are still enjoying a varied social life. Another skittles match

against the Bicester Branch at Hook Norton, preceded by ringing, resulted in a win by our branch.

On an exceedingly cold night in February the branch held its annual Dinner at Swalcliffe—cooked by local ringer Mavis James and her helpers. Outside entertainment was not thought necessary and good food and good company made the evening a great success.

As all readers of the local press will know, Steeple Aston ringers lowered their bells to the ground on Saturday 10th February and the bells are now with Whites of Appleton. Deddington hope work on their bells will start in the summer.

D. Clifton

Bicester Branch

The Bicester Branch held its A.G.M. at Islip on the 22nd February 1986. Unfortunately, due to ill health, our Vice President, Cyril Kinch, was unable to attend and Clifford East, Branch Ringing Master, was asked at short notice to be acting chairman.

The meeting was preceded by a service conducted by Deaconess Judith Mount who gave a most meaningful and enlightening sermon.

There was an encouraging attendance which included some young ringers. The Guild Secretary, Tony Pullan, was welcomed as was R. Goodwin, the Branch Secretary from Oxford City.

It was agreed to elect Cyril Kinch as President of the Branch as our previous President, the Revd. Donald Westcott, has moved to Norfolk, Jill Ward was newly appointed as Secretary/Treasurer, Clifford East was re-appointed as Branch Ringing Master and, after some lively discussion regarding the responsibilities of Branch Representative, John Harris was re-elected by a near unanimous vote.

The Branch Ringing Master wondered if there was any way of encouraging and sustaining more ringers into towers. He felt the younger ringers, although able to grasp the complexities of ringing more easily, did not have the same enthusiasm as older ringers who took longer to learn but were more loyal to their tower. Unfortunately, there were no suggestions as to a solution.

As it is necessary to keep funds coming in, Ludgershall agreed to hold another Whist Drive in May and was offered plenty of support from the meeting. Last year's Whist Drive had been successful in raising funds and it was hoped the same could be repeated.

Jane Singleton of Islip Tower asked for help with teaching children to ring bells at Stratton Audley during the Shelswell Holiday Week, 11-15th August. Any help would be appreciated and Jane can be reached on Stratton Audley 753.

Last, but not least, the ladies of Islip did a splendid job of providing a welcome tea despite adverse weather conditions and frozen pipes which necessitated transporting water from their homes.

Congratulations to Richard and Janet Haseldine (ringers from Hanslope) on becoming proud parents to Kevin Richard, born on 20th February. This means our Branch Ringing Master, Clifford East, now has a new role to play as grandfather since Janet is his daughter but Clifford has said it's a character he is happy to develop. What a lucky baby to be born from parents who are such experienced ringers into a large family of established ringers. Does this mean baby Kevin will be born with a hereditary gift of bell ringing?

By the way, anyone filled with trepidation, especially the ladies, at the thought of ascending the old stairs to Launton Tower, will be pleased to know that a new and safe set of stairs was installed last autumn by a small band of local ringing enthusiasts. So anyone wishing to visit the tower can be assured of *terra-firma*. It is hoped to hold the Branch Half Yearly Meeting at Launton in September.

Jill Ward

The Bicester Branch practices will be held on the first Thursday in the month at Kirtlington at 7.30pm, and on the third Tuesday in the month at Islip at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome.

Clifford East

Chipping Norton Branch:

The death occurred on January 13th of Bill Dixon of Burford at the age of 83. Bill began ringing at Burford in 1919 and was a good 'heavy bell man', and firmly believed in good striking. For most of his working life he was stockman at the Agricultural Department of Burford School, showing pigs at many local agricultural shows. Ill health curtailed his ringing about four year ago. Burial took place in the family grave at nearby Fulbrook.

Ken Wakefield

Old North Berks Branch:

We reported in the last edition of ODD BOB that the ringers of Sutton Courtenay had started raising money for the installation of 2 new bells. I am pleased to report that up to date they have raised about 3 to 4 thousand pounds towards their target of £10,000. The Sutton P.C.C. are unable to help them because they already have a large commitment and so the ringers are raising this sum of money themselves. In March they have a sponsored 10 mile walk; in April the Launton Handbell Ringers are giving a recital and in May many of the ringers and their friends are taking part in a sponsored parachute jump at Hinton-in-the-Hedges. When this is all finished they hope to have raised most of the money required and be in a position to place an order for the work to commence.

Both Cumnor and Marcham towers are in need of rehangng and so for sometime to come, the Branch will be giving these three towers all the help that it can.

The New Year's morning ringing at Sutton was well attended and £36 was raised towards the rehangng. 'Thank You' to the members of other branches who came along to help.

Our Branch Practices now start at 7pm instead of 6.30, which has been the time in the past.

It is hoped to arrange a Barbeque, possibly at Brightwell, after the Branch Practice in June—details later.

Once again we are running our Striking Contest on the same lines as last year—a knock-out competition. The draw has been made right through to the final, and the first round is now under way.

Len Cox

Sonning Deanery Branch:

This years AGM was held at Hurst, a week earlier than usual on 8 February, on a freezing cold day similar to last year. After the service and ample tea the

meeting was opened by the Chairman, Peter Saddleton. All of the Branch Officers Reports were accepted by members present. The Ringing Master, Lavinia Sullivan, proposed to continue practices along last years lines with the monthly Saturday practice staying at its current time of 7.00-9.00pm. The Branch Rep. on the Guild General Committee, John Harrison, gave a somewhat different report on Guild affairs which raised a few eyebrows from older members. His theme was the relationship of the Branch to the Guild.

All of the Officers were re-elected with the exception of Glenys Ellis as Secretary/Treasurer. Lynn Deering and John Harper have taken over the duties respectively.

There was much discussion on the future of a Branch Outing, last years not being that well supported. Members decided to give it one last chance. A vote was taken whether the Guild Bell Fund should be discussed at a future meeting. It was narrowly decided to do so and include in the discussion, fund raising in general. Other decisions made at the AGM were: not to support any social functions; to accept an invitation from All Saints, Wokingham to host the Branch 8-Bell Striking Competition in September; and regrettably the Branch would be unable to host the Guild 6-Bell Striking Competition in October 1987.

South Oxon Branch:

Monthly practices are continuing this year, at various towers around the branch, on the last Saturday of the month with a few exceptions! Last month we rang a range of methods, even managing a plain course of Cambridge Minor which we ring very rarely.

Our AGM will be held at the end of April, at Drayton St. Leonard—the first time for many years that we have been able to ring there, albeit for a short time (see Ringing World nearer the time, for details).

Hilarie Rogers

Vale of White Horse Branch:

Beware all other branches, V.of W.H. is holding a 6 bell Striking Contest this year, the first for a long time. The winners will go on to the Guild Contest in October.

At the A.G.M. on February 22nd all officers were re-elected.

The Annual Outing was discussed and the Southampton area was decided on. Date to be July 5th.

Two Branch Practices have been arranged so far—these being:

Wed. March 19th - Shellingford, 7.30-9.00pm.

Mon. April 28th - Buckland, 7.30-9.00pm.

Anne Jones

Witney & Woodstock Branch:

ALVESCOT'S SIXTH BELL — According to records, Alvescot Church originally possessed four bells, which were broken up and recast into five in 1727 at a cost of £30. Because of decay in the oak frame, these became unsafe in the 1930s, restricting ringing. They were last rung in 1954. In 1973 it was decided to launch an appeal to have them rehung: this was finally achieved and they rang out again in March 1980. Thanks to foresight, and in the hope that at a future date the ring could be augmented to six bells, provision was made for an extra bell pit in the new frame. In 1985 a new bell was donated to the memory of Raymond

Abbots by family and friends. It was cast at Whitechapel Bell Foundry on 19th September 1985, on which day the first grandson of Ray Abbots Senior was born. The bell was dedicated by the Revd. Philip John Randall on 20th October 1985. Its tuned weight is 3cwt 3qtrs 27lbs, and it bears the following inscription:

In memory of S/Sgt. Raymond Abbots, 22 S.A.S. Regt.

"Who Dares Wins"

- Vanda -

The work was carried out by Whites of Appleton. Its progress, from molten metal to the first ring has been monitored on video by Reg Messer (Tower Captain) and Ray Abbots (Senior), and is in the process of being edited. This should provide an interesting record for the future.

Ray Abbots

NEWS FROM EYNSHAM — December 21st 1985 was the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr and Mrs Cliff Bennett; and to celebrate the occasion a peal was rung at Woodstock in the morning, and a quarter-peal at Eynsham in the evening. Cliff has been a member of the Guild since 1927, ringing throughout at Eynsham, for most of the time as tower captain. It was through his guidance and expertise that Eynsham became so successful in Branch and Guild Striking Contests. For most of 1985 Eynsham bells were silent, as repair work to the tower was under way. Luckily the scaffolding was taken down in November, and Whites of Appleton speedily carried out a check and a maintenance to ensure that the bells were in ringing order—they were. Cliff himself removed considerable amounts of dust and dirt from the ringing chamber before the first ring on the bells—which happened to be December 21st!

E.R. Venn

TWO HUNDREDTH PEAL ON THE BELLS — On Thursday 9th January 1986 in 2 hours and 59 minutes, the two hundredth peal on the bells of St. Mary's, Witney, was rung, on the 30th anniversary of the one hundredth peal. It was John Coggins' 70th peal on the bells. The details are:

5056 changes of PLAIN BOB MAJOR, composed by C.W. Roberts.

J.N.O'Beirne 1; B.J.Coggins 2; W.F.A.Palmer 3; T.J.Hester 4;

D.P.Murduck 5; B.W.Hall 6; P.G.Holden 7; E.R.Venn (cond.) 8.

DIARY OF EVENTS for the Next 3 Months

April

3	Bicester	Branch Practice	Kirtlington	7.30pm
5	Chiltern	Pub Games Ev'ning	Wendover	7.00pm
	Ch. Norton	Branch Practice	Enstone	7.30-9.00pm
12	Newbury	Striking Comp. + 1/2 yearly	Kintbury	
	Old N.Berks	Branch Practice	East Hendred	7.00-9.00pm
	Central Bucks	Branch Practice	Linslade	6.30pm
15	Bicester	Branch Practice	Islip	7.30pm

19	Sonning Deanery	Striking Comp.	White Waltham	
	Sonning Deanery	Branch Practice	Waltham St. Lawrence	7.00-9.00pm
	EB & SB	Barn Dance		
	Banbury	AGM	Bloxham	
	Chiltern	AGM	Bledlow	3.00pm
26	EB & SB	AGM	Hughenden	
	South Oxon	AGM	Drayton St. Leonard	
28	V of WH	Branch Practice	Buckland	7.30-9.00pm

May

1	Bicester	Branch Practice	Kirtlington	7.30pm
3	Ch. Norton	Branch Practice	Ascott-u-Wychwood	7.30-9.00pm
5	GUILD OPEN DAY — Bicester Branch			
	GUILD 8-BELL STRIKING COMPETITION, Bicester			
9	Newbury	Branch Practice	Brightwalton	7.30-9.00pm
10	Oxford City	Striking Comp.		
	Old N.Berks	AGM	Appleton	
	Central Bucks	AGM	Wingrave	3.00pm
	Ch. Norton	AGM	Kingham	
17	GUILD AGM			
	Sonning Deanery	Branch Practice	All Saints, Wokingham	7.00-9.00pm
	Chiltern	Branch Practice	Great Missenden	6.30pm
20	Bicester	Branch Practice	Islip	7.30pm
24	EB & SB	Branch Practice	Burnham	6.30pm
31	South Oxon	Branch Practice	Little Milton	6.30-8.30pm

June

5	Bicester	Branch Practice	Kirtlington	7.30pm
7	Ch. Norton	Branch Practice	Chipping Norton	7.30-9.00pm
	EB & SB	Cycle Outing		
11	Newbury	Branch Practice	Chieveley	7.30-9.00pm
14	Oxford City	1/2 yearly mtg	Kidlington	
	Old N.Berks	Branch Practice	Long Wittenham	7.00-9.00pm
	EB & SB	Striking Comp.	Hambleden	
	Central Bucks	Branch Practice		
17	Bicester	Branch Practice	Islip	7.30pm
21	Sonning Deanery	Branch Practice	Binfield	7.00-9.00pm
	Chiltern	Branch Practice	Cheddington	6.30pm
28	EB & SB	Branch Practice	Boyne Hill	6.30pm

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