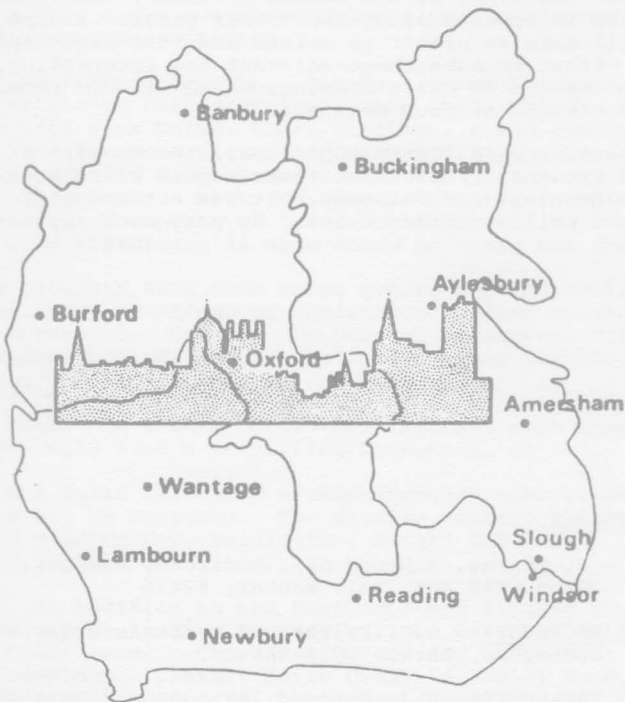


Issue 12

ODD BOB
Newsletter
of the
OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD



October 1986

ODD BOB – Oxford Diocese; Berks, Oxon, Bucks.

In a Guild of our size, communication will always be difficult and we will need to work hard to keep news and information moving. I am constantly aware of how many things happen without the majority of members knowing. For this reason I strongly believe that we need a flourishing magazine or news letter such as 'Odd Bob'. To achieve this we need all the news you have about people, achievements and events. We also need an Editor. If anyone feels that they could undertake this vital task, then please contact me. But above all keep the news moving.

When visiting Branch meetings, I have been heartened by the improved reporting of Guild activities. Thank you to all those who take the effort to prepare and present these reports. I would now like to see this become a two-way communication with Branches sending their views and requests back to Guild meetings through their representatives.

We are now in the midst of the Autumn Meetings. Practices are also resuming in earnest after the summer break. I hope that everyone will make an effort to attend and that organisers will make every effort to make these relevant and interesting. I hope to see changes in Guild meetings which will be reported here in Odd Bob and at your meetings.

Finally a very sincere 'THANK YOU' to all the members of Newbury and Reading Branches for their superb efforts in staging the Festival and Barbecue. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and well organised event. We very much appreciate the hard work and planning which made it possible.

Best wishes.

Ron Thorne
Master

USEFUL ADDRESSES

THE MASTER - R. Thorne, 3 Broad Gap, Bodicote, Banbury,
Oxon OX15 4DE. Tel. Banbury 62476

HON.GENERAL SECRETARY - A.G. Pullen, 23 Cumberland Way,
Wokingham, Berks. RG11 9AY

HON.GENERAL TREASURER - B.J. Gatward, Grange Wood, Mill Lane,
Calcot, Reading RG3 5RS. Tel. Reading 413097

STEWARDS - The names and addresses of these will be found in
'Odd Bob' June 1986.

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

The OBJECTS of the Guild as set out in the Rules are as follows:

- a. the encouragement of the attendance of its members both at service ringing and at public workshop;
- b. the recruitment and training of new ringers, so that there may be regular service ringing in all the towers within the Diocese where the bells are ringable;
- c. the promotion of interest in the care of all the bells within the Diocese;
- d. the promotion of the art of Change Ringing and
- e. the recognition of the true position of ringers as Church workers.

In order to help carry out these Objects the Guild provides a variety of services as follows:

TOWERS AND BELFRIES COMMITTEE. The Towers and Belfries Committee exists to help your tower with any problems which you might have with your bells, their fittings, sound control or the tower itself. We can, in cooperation with the Education Committee, arrange a maintenance course for your area, or on a smaller scale, show you what you should be doing to maintain your own tower. The names of this committee will be found in 'Odd Bob' June 1986.

THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BELL FUND makes grants towards bell restoration. 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.

BOOKS FOR SALE. At General Guild Meetings and some Branch Meetings you will find a travelling bookstall.

LIBRARY. The Guild maintains a comprehensive Library from which books may be borrowed. For details contact Philip Walker, 152 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford CX3 7SZ. Tel: Oxford (0865) 65140.

EDUCATION. In addition to the Easthampstead Ringing Course held in September, ringing courses will be arranged both at Branch or tower level. These can be one day courses or a series of evenings. Contact Marie Cross, 6 Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 3PO. Tel: Abingdon (0235) 20868.

BOOKLETS. A list of booklets produced by this committee will be found in 'Odd Bob' June 1986. Copies - price 10p. each may be obtained either from your Branch Secretary or Anne Carpenter, 41 Napier Road, Crowthorne, Berks RG11 7EJ.

FILM. 'Birth of a Bell'. This may be hired (£5.00) from The General Secretary, Tony Pullen, 23 Cumberland Way, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 9AY.

GUILD FESTIVAL, 1986

The venue of the Guild Festival in July was altered this year for the first time in living memory. St. Nicolas, Newbury, was having its 900th anniversary celebrations and it seemed a good alternative to Oxford. There will always be members who feel the celebrations should be in the Cathedral at Oxford, but during the last few years I have been at Guild meetings where poor attendance at the festival was lamented, and where when the possibility of having it alternate years was mooted.

This year's choice seemed to breathe new life into the whole proceedings, and these were masterminded by Howard Egglestone, Ringing Master at Newbury. The Service was Communion, in a very simple setting with well-known hymns and the simple, but effective Walford-Davies setting of 'God Be in My Head' as an anthem by the choir, made up, as usual, of ringers. St. Nicolas is a splendid church and the service has beauty and dignity, with an apt address from rev. John Baldwin, himself an excellent ringer and member of the Guild, though not now living within its boundaries. Four leads of Bristol Maximus were run on handbells by Pat and Bob Newton, Kath and Graham Firman, Jean Darmon and Bernard Groves. Despite the solemnity of the occasion, this brought forth a spontaneous outburst of applause from the congregation.

The weather brightened later on to permit the barbecue and barn-dance at Stanford Dingley to proceed unhindered. A truly family occasion! and the barn was packed to capacity by enthusiastic revellers.

Towers during the day were in the main, the 'pick' of Newbury Branch's resources and enabled even novices to have a very successful day, and I'm sure this provided the vital spark needed for the Festival's renaissance.

27 Aug.1986

35 Epsom Crescent,
Greenham,
Newbury.

Dear Editor,

I enclose our latest news letter; the next is not due till Oct. 11th. There is little to report as we have done very little since the Festival. Perhaps I could use this to record our thanks to all those who helped; Janet Easterling organised the lunch, the Hungerford and Kintbury ladies picked strawberries on the Friday and the Thatcham ladies helped on the Saturday. An enormous amount of work was done by the Branch members; I must admit that I had grossly under-estimated the size of the task. Anyway I am most grateful to all the members who helped; the tower captains who turned out to open their towers, all the ladies who helped with food, and those who helped get the hall ready. It was a long day for all of us on the Saturday but I think it went off reasonably. Our thanks also to the Reading Branch for organising the evening; I hate to think how we would have coped had we had to do that as well. We aimed to cover our costs; as it turned out we ended up with a profit of £40 which we gave to the Bell Fund.

Next events are the Branch coach outing on Sept. 6th (some seats available) and the AGM at Thatcham on Oct. 11th.

Yours

A.C. Woodville

NATIONAL 12 BELL COMPETITION

Many congratulations to High Wycombe on an excellent result in this competition - coming fourth in the final, ahead of such distinguished contestors as St. Martin's Guild and St. Paul's Cathedral.

The High Wycombe band was drawn from the monthly Friday night 12 bell practices and was captained by the organiser of these practices, Patricia Newton. Here she describes ...

THE WAY WE DID IT! In November when the advertisement for the 1986 Twelve-ball Contest appeared in the Ringing World, there were enough people attending the monthly 12-bell practice at High Wycombe to make it worth entering a band that would not disgrace itself in the eliminator contest. Peals of Bristol S. Max and Cambridge S. Max were rung at High Wycombe in February and March in preparation for the eliminating contest at Painswick. By this time the progress of the band had been

so marked, that we anticipated doing reasonably well, and hoped that we might be 3rd or 4th, in view of the fact that we were drawn against the strongly favoured Cambridge and Manchester teams. We were overjoyed to be placed 2nd - above both these bands, and therefore to have qualified for the final contest at Leicester Cathedral.

The task ahead was a little daunting! Having qualified (to the surprise of many ringers) we did not want to disgrace ourselves in the final. Our main aim was not to be last. April and May were left fairly quiet, with only the monthly 12-bell practice, and most of the band attending Monday night practices at High Wycombe. In June all the stops were pulled out! Our training schedule was as follows:

11th June: Peal of Yorkshire S. Max at Shoreditch
13th June: 12-bell practice at High Wycombe
21st June: Peal of Yorkshire S. Max at High Wycombe
22nd June: 1/4 peal of Cambridge S. Max at Luton
22nd June: Evensong ringing at Bedford
27th June: Final practice at High Wycombe

The band ringing in the contest on 28th June was as follows:

1. Frederick R. Scott	7. J. Michael Cole
2. Nigel C. Smith	8. Andrew P. Deamer
3. Patricia M. Newton	9. Stephen S. Russ
4. Christopher Parkinson	10. Norman M. Brock
5. Philip J. Agg	11. Robert H. Newton
6. George Whiteside	12. J. Alan Ainsworth

Well done, everyone; and many thanks for your support and perseverance.

PMN

TWELVE BELL STRIKING COMPETITION

The congratulations of the Guild must go to High Wycombe on their fourth position in the final of the Twelve Bell Competition against very strong opposition. Unfortunately Reading went out in the preliminary round. With two peals of Cambridge Maximus behind them this year shall we see the Cathedral Band at Oxford taking part next year?

FACTS AND FIGURES

ROYAL WEDDING. Five peals were rung for the Guild and forty six quarter peals. Of the later the Witney Na Woodstock Branch scored 19 out of 22 attempts. Nearly all the Quarter peals were by local bands and the methods ranged from Cambridge S. Royal to Grandsire and Bob Doubles.

The Oxford Society rang five peals including a peal of Steadman Triples at Merton College and the Appleton Society scored a peal of Stedman Caters.

100th Peal. Bernard J. Stone rang his 100th peal for the Royal Wedding.

300th Peal for the Guild. Percy Newton (Hughenden) has rung 300 peals for the O.D.G.

1000th Tower Bell Peal. Peter Bridle rang his 1000th tower bell peal at Thatcham in June. It was Pudsey Major conducted by M.K. Till.

No longer a Rabbit! Congratulations to Jennifer Butler. Does that mean we shall have no more cartoons?

St. Helen's Abingdon. A peal of Stedman Caters was rung on May 5, 1986 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Church. The same method and composition was rung as in 1886.

St. Mary's Witney. On January 8, 1986 the 200th peal was rung on the bells exactly thirty years after the 100th.

Handbells. Two new surprise Royal Royal Methods (Clyde and Lockingham) by the band based on Maidenhead. These were both 'A First by all'.

Wokingham - All Saints. On May 31 1986 - 5152 Lincolnshire S. Major. First in method by the local band.

BIRTHDAY PEALS

Maidenhead All Saints, Boyne Hill. 5040 Stedman Triples on July 26, 1986. A compliment to Ernest Gosling on his 80th birthday. (Ernest letters all the Guild Striking Competition Certificates and has done so for a number of years.

Reading St. Laurence. July 6, 1986 5086 Bristol S. Maximus. A Birthday compliment to Mrs. Freda E. Diserens on her 87th birthday. The peal was conducted by her son Noel J. Diserens and another son Ronald, her daughter-in-law, Helen and grandson, Brian were all in the band.

We wish both Ernest and Freda many more years of ringing, and thank them for all they have done for the Guild in the past.

Young Ringers Congratulations to:

Kerry May (age 13) on calling her first Quarter Peal at Shinfield.

Jonathan Carpenter (11) on calling his first quarter (Bob Doubles) and ringing his first peal of Grandsire Caters.

Richard Clarkson-Webb on collecting £350 for the sponsored Oxfordshire Historic Churches cycle ride. Half that sum will go to the Cumnor Bell Restoration Fund.

NOTE IF YOUR TOWER HAS ANYTHING SPECIAL IT WOULD LIKE MENTIONING IN ODD BOB PLEASE SEND IT TO YOUR BRANCH SECRETARY TO BE PASSED ON. M.R.C.

OBITUARIES

Leslie John Gregory (Jack) Died 26th February 1986 Aged 74 years

Jack was a most jovial, friendly character with his own peculiar brand of humour; always going blackberrying or mushrooming - or so he maintained - whatever the weather.

He was a true son of the soil with a deep knowledge of country life. He had been a keen gardener, cricketer and soccer player in his younger days. Right to the end he maintained his interest in whilst, singing tenor and, of course, his beloved ringing.

Jack was born, went to school and spent nearly all his life in Dinton. He became a long-standing and much loved member of the Central Bucks Band and was a Vice-President at the time of his death.

Although our old friend moved to Haddenham on his retirement he still remained very much in control at his home tower, near which he was buried on a sunny afternoon in early March. He was an honest, God-fearing man, and the large attendance at his funeral showed the deep respect in which he was held. It has been a pleasure to know him. D.G.W.

George Henbest Died 22nd June 1986

The Tower of St. Peter and St. Paul, Shiplake lost a valued ringer and friend when George Henbest dies on June 22nd, 1986. He had come to Shiplake as a very small boy and served the village and the Church in many different capacities. He had attended the village school as had his twin sons after him. He came to bell ringing in the early 1960's when his sons began to ring and it was a fitting tribute that six members of his family were able to ring a 60 on thirds and Bob Doubles immediately after his ashes had been laid in our church-yard. With help from Mr. and Mrs. H. Smith from Wargrave and Mr. and Mrs. K. Vernon from St. Giles, Reading, the Shiplake Ringers were able to ring a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples on that same evening.

George had shepherded many, old and young, through the trials of learning to ring - mainly by his encouragement and sense of humour when frustration and anger made ringing seem impossibly difficult. And he was always there for Sunday ringing.

There were ringers from several other towers at his funeral and a collection amongst them raised £27 in his memory for the Marie Curie Foundation for Cancer Research. He will be greatly missed.
Margaret Pugh.

Arthur Williams Davis Born 2nd January 1892 - Died 2nd July 1986

By the death of Arthur William Davis the Oxford Diocesan Guild lost one who had been a member longer than anyone else for he was a probationer member in 1908 and became a full member (i.e. could ring 120 Grandsire) in 1909. Until shortly before his death he had been an active ringer.

During his lifetime he had made a positive contribution to ringing first at Bucklebury, Berks, then in London, next in the Hereford Diocese and finally in his last years once more at Bucklebury.

Arthur Davis was brought up in a ringing family in the cottage next to St. Mary's Church, Bucklebury. His father, George Davis was the local foreman and his sister Stella Davis was also a ringer. Both were well known in the diocese.

On leaving school in 1908 he worked in a local foundry and joined the Territorial Army for four years. At the same time he worked at home on a London Correspondence Course to qualify in Mechanical Engineering. In 1912 he joined a London firm as a design engineer. He was soon in London ringing circles becoming a member of the Ancient Society of College Youths. He rang many quarter peals at Acton and Fulham and later was asked to join St. Paul's Cathedral Band. He also rang at Westminster Abbey as indicated by an admission ticket which he retained. This was dated 28 February 1922.

His first peal, Stedman Triples was conducted by Thomas Taffender at St. George the Martyr, Southwark on 17th December 1917. It was rung to celebrate the occupation of Jerusalem by the Allied Forces. By co-incidence his elder brother, Frank, was engaged in the campaign.

In 1918 and up to March 1919 he rang at least a further nine peals of which seven were for the A.S.C.Y. and ranged from Grandsire Triples to Stedman Cinques at Southwark Cathedral and St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside.

In 1924 Arthur Davis moved to Hereford where he set up his own business. There he became involved in local and Guild ringing activities. He did much to promote ringing in the area of the Hereford Diocesan Guild; in 1926 ringing in the first peal of Grandsire Caters for that Guild. He joined the Hereford Cathedral Band when it was reorganised in the late 1930s and was Master of the Hereford Diocesan Guild 1947-1949. In all he rang forty two peals for that Guild, conducting one - Stedman Triples - Eardisland.

His son George is also a ringer and together they rang twelve peals; ten for the Hereford Diocesan Guild. Of the other two one is noteworthy. It was rung at Bucklebury for the Oxford Diocesan Guild to mark the 100th Birthday of Mrs. G. Davis, Arthur's mother. It was conducted by his son George and Stella Davis also rang. The method was Stedman Triples.

Arthur Davis retired in 1960 at the age of 68 and moved back to the cottage at Bucklebury with his wife who pre-deceased him. Until his recent illness he continued to live at the cottage spending a lot of time caring for the parish church and churchyard and the bells. He used his skills in this task. He had three children of whom Frances and George survive him.

The funeral at Bucklebury was attended by representatives of both the Oxford Guild and the Hereford Diocesan Guild as well as local ringers and friends. G.D.

Herbert James Pratley

Formerly foreman of ringers at Charlbury, Bert Pratley came to work at St. Hugh's College where he lived at the lodge. Whenever his duties allowed he rang at St. Giles' Oxford where he was a member of the Band for many years. Never a change ringer he was happy to ring 'the Tenor behind'. He was the last of the Oxford City ringers who had seen military service during the 1914-1918 war. He was an interesting person to talk to as he had had experience of different jobs.

Bert died on 9th August 1986 at Hartlepool where he had recently gone to live with his daughter. He was 89 years old. The memorial service at Chadlington on 18th August was attended by Neil Allnutt and Philip Walker. R.G.

UNRINGABLE RINGS

Recently, in the Ringing World, the Central Council Bell Restoration Funds Committee published their 1986 Survey of Unringable Rings. The figures they gave for the Oxford Diocese (Berks, Bucks and Oxon) are as follows:

Rings	12s	10s	8s	6s	5s	4s
Berks	-	-	1	2	2	1
Bucks	-	-	1	4	4	3
Oxon	-	-	-	8	7	4
Total	-	-	2	14	13	8

TOTAL: 37

These figures are interesting when compared with the figures in the Guild Reports of 1955, 1965, 1975 and 1985 which are as follows:

Rings	8s	6s	5s	Total
1955	2	8	13	23
1965	2	9	14	25
1975	1	10	13	25
1985	2	15	13	30

Several interesting facts emerge from these figures. First that there has been a steady increase in the number of six and five bell rings which have become unringable during the past 30 years. We do not have the figures for the four and three bell rings, but it is likely that they follow the same pattern. Throughout the period a certain number of augmentations have taken place i.e. a ring of five has become a ring of six etc. So it is probable that a higher percentage of fives are now unringable than in 1955. During that period no twelves or tens were unringable except for a short period of time for tower maintenance or bell restoration work. The two eights which were unringable in 1955 were Aylesbury and St. Peter-in-the-East, Oxford both of which had not been rung since the early part of the century. The latter were moved to Stanford in the Vale by 1975 and Aylesbury were rehung between 1975 and 1985. The two 8s out of action at present were Stoke Mandeville and Farnham Royal, Burford being allowed to ring the front bells for service.

Of the twenty-one five and sixes which were unringable in 1955 two (St. Michael at the North Gate, Oxford and Waterstock) were found dead and still are. Of the remaining nineteen rings Black Bourton (5), Broadwell (5), Datchet (5), Marsworth (5), Mentmore (5), Purley (6), Salford (5), Soulbury (6), Welford (5) are still unringable. Thornborough (5) is undergoing repairs and there is talk of doing work at Mentmore. Of the 1965 new 'unringables' Chastleton (6), Great Shefford (6), Hornton (5), Longcot (6) and Longworth (5) are still unringable.

Of the 1975 entry Bletchington (5), Chilton (6), Culham (6) and Great Rollright (6) are still on the list. Some of these towers were originally on the list due to tower problems but now have problems with the bells and their gear due to neglect.

If one checks the period when the bells became unringable it occurs - in many cases - after the older ringers died or they became incapable of doing the necessary maintenance and the band ceased to exist. Is there therefore a case for every Brand to keep an eye on all the towers in its area and endeavouring to see that the bells in such towers are rung at regular intervals? For example holding an afternoon Branch practice meeting when two or three towers are used rather than a late evening practice at one tower. Regular Quarter Peal attempts or for special occasions would necessitate the checking of ropes etc. beforehand and could reveal leaking roofs due to blocked drains, broken louvres and damage by birds. The Quinquennial architects visits only take place once every five years. A blocked drain or broken wire across the louvres can occur not long after such a visit and can go unnoticed for up to four years. During that time much damage can be done both to the bells and their gear. This without the local clergy or the PCC being aware of what is happening. Further a check can be made that notices are prominently displayed where clock hammers etc. have to be removed before ringing. Ropes and wires as well as notices can all disappear in neglected towers as one touring party discovered recently. No mention was made of them in the letter giving permission to ring in spite of a request in the application for such information. Obviously the incumbent was unaware of such things although he had gone to the trouble of checking that the group was a responsible one. Most incumbents are unaware of the cost of replacing bells or their gear. Today in many parishes the churchwardens change every three to six years and knowledge concerning such costs does not get passed on - nor the realisation of their responsibility and that of the PCC for such matters. Also some architects have been known not to climb the tower when they do their inspections!.

MRC.

TWIGS FROM THE BRANCHES

BANBURY BRANCH

Since the last edition of Odd Bob the Banbury Branch has played its annual cricket match with Bicester. On a sunny afternoon at Bloxham, Banbury batted first and scored 132 from 20 overs. Bicester made 100 from their 20 overs. Unfortunately the pace bowling of the Guild Master proved too much for Cliff East who had to retire hurt. Later, after visiting his doctor it was necessary to have his leg in plaster for a few weeks. . At the return Aunt Sally match at Stoke Lyne in September, Bicester took their revenge.

Work on the restoration of the bells at Steeple Aston is progressing well. During the summer months the local have filled in the holes left by the old frame and made new ones for the new frame. The bells are expected back in early October and the Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Sunday 23rd November at 6 p.m. Any ringers wishing to come will be most welcome.

Work is due to start at Deddington. The bells will be removed in September for retuning and rehangng.

A number of towers rang for the royal wedding. Many branch ringers will be going to London for the grand Ringing Day.

BICESTER BRANCH

Bicester Tower was featured in the local Bicester Advertiser, 14th May. Unfortunately there were a couple of errors. The death of Thomas Phillips occurred in fact, in 1885! Also Cliff and Phyllis East would not want to tempt providence too much as it was their Silver Wedding Anniversary that was celebrated by a peal, not their Ruby! ("They added fifteen years and tried to bump me off," jokes Cliff). However, the article makes interesting reading, highlighting some characters of past and present, young and old, and tries to explain to the non-initiated the obsession it holds for some (but,thankfully, not the confusion it has for others!).

Our Branch Ringing Master, Clifford East, was interviewed for Radio Oxford's 'People and Places' programme which featured Ludgershall and was broadcast on 21st June. Cliff speaks to Clare Christey, Radio Oxford's reporter about his farm and how bell ringing plays a large part in his life. "At one time it was said that bell ringing was my job and farming my hobby but this is now reversed". As Tower Captain of Ludgershall and Wotton Underwood he feels his main task in bell ringing is to teach, young and old alike, to keep the art going. Thankful that John Harris is a regular practice night ringer, helping to strengthen his band, Cliff recites, with some feeling, the first verse of a poem by John dedicated to Ludgershall Tower and its captain:

Old Clifford's merry band,
Are the best of ringers in the land,
They ring with pride, they ring with care,
Sometimes they ring beyond Compare.

"That's quite a compliment," says Clare. "yes, indeed," replies Cliff. But it's Cliff's final words that give us the biggest insight to his warm and gentle character which Phyllis East and his family will know only too well. "I like to think of a bell as a lady. Handle with respect, treat it with care and it will respond". Clearly a romantic at heart for which bell ringing, and this Branch, is much the richer.

Islip Tower was sorry to see their young American Ringer, Antonia Fafanelli (age 12) depart to her home, Washington, D.C. in July. It is hoped that Antonia will be able to continue her ringing at Washington's Cathedral.

Our best wishes also to to Bob, Wendy and David Corby who will move during August to Northern Ireland. The Corby family rang mostly at Ambrosden and Bicester. Timothy Bevan from Kirtlington will be attending the Easthampstead Course in late September. We wish him well.

Jill Ward

Note A letter from Rick Dirkson (Washington Cathedral) says that Antonia has already made contact with the band.

M.R.C.

CENTRAL BUCKS BRANCH

At the AGM the principle officers were re-elected. For the first time in several years we now have both a Ringing Master and a deputy (Mistress!). The Branch was glad to welcome Mr. J. Harris, Guild Steward, to its August Branch Practice. His acceptance of the post will restore the contact with the Guild which was lost last year.

The Branch's Six Bell Striking Competition could have been better supported. However, the standard of ringing was good. The judges, the father and son team of White and White, placed Quainton first. So for the second year running they will be representing the Branch in the Guild Competition.

This year's membership is currently around 10% down on last year's. It was also the first AGM anyone could remember where no new members were elected. One problem which occurs from time to time, at least in this Branch, is that non-paid up members ring peals. I find it disheartening to have to point out to the Peals Secretary. I wonder if other Branches experience the same problems, and if any, what solutions they have?

To end on a high note, this year the Branch is sponsoring two of its younger members at Easthampstead. It is hoped that another two members will be sponsored for 1987.

Terry Wagstaff

CHILTERN BRANCH

We maintain the even tenor our ways. Branch gatherings are well attended and the finances are in a healthy state.

The Chairman takes this opportunity to thank all members for their support and in particular to express appreciation of the yeoman service rendered by our capable, hard-working secretary, Roy Woodruff.

Meantime, we look forward to doing battle once again with Central Bucks at the Orchard Cup Competition on October 18th.
D.G.W.

CHIPPING NORTON BRANCH

The usual practices and meetings have taken place during the past months but at tower level things have been quiet due to holidays, harvest etc. Tower practices will be resumed with the Autumn.

Branch members are asked to note the following dates:

Oct. 4th	Hook Norton	Branch Practice 7.30-9.00 p.m.
Oct. 11th	Enstone	Autumn Meeting
Nov. 1st	Ascott-under-Wychwood	Branch Practice 7.30-9.00 p.m.
Dec. 6th	Churchill	Branch Practice 7.30-9.00 p.m. K.W.

EAST BERKS AND SOUTH BUCKS BRANCH

Slough Restoration. Work is now going ahead on getting the 10 at Slough ringing again, after a silence of nearly a year caused by worn gudgeons. As well as replacing gudgeons, the clappers, pulleys and bearings are being refurbished. The work is expected to be finished by the end of September. The total cost is going to be about £6,000 and nearly half of this still needs to be raised.

Six Bell Striking Contest held at Hambledon on 14 June.
Results: 1. Hughenden (112 faults), 2. Amersham (116)
3. Chalfont St. Giles A (123), followed by High Wycombe A, Beaconsfield, High Wycombe B, Chalfont St. Giles B, Winkfield and Chalfont St. Peter.

K.F.

NEWBURY BRANCH

On the occasion of the Guild Festival, the biggest event in the Branch for many years, it was decided to produce a special edition of the newsletter. The line drawings of churches in the Branch were by Philip Grover, an ex-member now living in Gloucestershire. The next big event is the Branch Outing to the Cotswolds on September 6th.

The Branch AGM this year will be at Thatcham on Saturday October 11th. It is the main event of the year and the main mechanism by which members can influence the running of the Branch (and through it the Guild). All officer posts will be up for re-election (including mine) so if you have any ambition in this direction now is your chance!

Hungerford. Attendance at practices and at Sunday Service ringing has been unpredictable, as usual, but there has been a recent explosion of learners, who are making progress commensurate with their effort and enthusiasm. This 'explosion of learners' has changed the practice; we are ringing advanced methods less and less. The needs of service ringers and prospective service ringers must come first.

There have been one or two changes in the tower, including a repaint of the frame and ringing chamber, and a new path; thanks to the stalwarts who put in time and effort getting the painting done quickly and, particularly Tony and Dave. The vicar himself put down a new path, making a very professional job of it. Barefoot walkers will find it very therapeutic.
K.A.

Kintbury. Thankfully, we now have a new roof over our heads and a decent floor at our feet, including carpet. So,, everyone is welcome here on Thursday.

Julia

Newbury. The Newbury festival this year attracted Royalty on two occasions. The Duchess of Kent opened the Festival and Her Majesty the Queen attended the final concert. Naturally the bells were well to the fore in welcoming them both to St. Nicholas.

We also featured on Church Bells on Sunday, and, once the tap had been successfully made, we were reasonably pleased with the outcome - Grandsire Caters by a Sunday Service Band.
H.W.E.

Thatcham. There have been quarter peals; success seems to come at the second attempt but finally we managed Cambridge Major for Angela and Stedman Caters to welcome Timothy, the latest addition to the Durham household. We are hoping to arrange more quarters to suite the ringing needs of the band.
J.B.

NORTH BUCKS BRANCH

At the Quarterly Meeting at Maids Moreton Douglas Hird resigned as Branch Secretary: Alan Marchbank, 31 St. Giles' Street, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK13 OBE is the new Branch Secretary. Douglas will take his place as Branch Representative on the General Guild Committee so his expertise and knowledge of the area will not be lost to that Committee.

Too late to report in the last Odd Bob was the fact that at Easter the Branch was able, with careful organisation, to man

all the towers in the area. As there are somewhere in the region of forty towers within the Branch boundaries this was no light task either for those organising the ringing arrangements or those taking an active part in the ringing.

After many years of silence, the six bell of Emberton are now rung regularly for Sunday Service. Among the ringers there are seven who have learned to handle within the last six months and who are all now able to manage rounds and call changes. Sunday Rings: 9.15-9.45 a.m., Practice: Tuesday 7.30-9.00 p.m. All are welcome.

Service ringing is also restarting at both Bletchley and Calverton, where thanks are due to Alan Payne for repainting the belfry.

Stowe is looking for bell metal which can be used for the new Treble they hope to install in the not too distant future. This will augment the five to six. Has anyone any spare metal? If so please contact Anthony Lloyd, Stowe School or Bill Yates.

SPONSORED PEAL ATTEMPT At Great Linford on November 29 a Sponsored Peal will be attempted in aid of the Society for MUCOPOLYSACCHARIDE DISEASES. One of the ringers has a son suffering from one of the MPS Diseases and the money raised will go to fund research into these diseases. Anyone wishing to sponsor please contact Ron Snack on MK (0908) 666819.

From OLD NORTH BERKS BRANCH.

We have not had much Branch Activities during the summer. The Branch Practice for July was cancelled because many of us visited Newbury for The Guild Festival, and a number of our towers have been having the Annual Ringing Outings also during the summer.

The Branch Striking Contest run on a knock our basis during the summer has now reached its final stage, and Abingdon and Appleton will ring off the final at West Hanney on Sept. 13th, this is also the date of our Half Year Meeting.

Sutton Courtenay members have almost reached their target of £10,000, the cost of the 2 extra bells that they are adding to the present 6 bells. Frank and Brian White of Appleton are doing this work, this money has been raised entirely by the local ringers by way of sponsored parachute jumps, walks, cycle rides, handbell concert, and raffles etc. We the Branch have given them our support.

It is now the turn of Cumnor and Marcham to start fund raising, both towers have got to have their bells rehung, Marching will be aiming for £16,000 for their work but Cumnor will have to raise about £30,000 for their work. Some of the bells have to be retuned and also the old wooden bellframe is considered unsafe and will have to be replaced. The new bellframe will be made to accommodate 2 extra bells, but the 2 new bells will

not come until the later date when more funds will be available.

The Branch has helped Sutton in their fund raising and I hope that we will all once again join in with Cumnor, and Marcham in whatever schemes they will use. Cumnor has already started their fund raising and to date have got about £10,000 towards the estimated costs. If any other Guild members would like to help in any way I am sure that your help would be very much appreciated.

Len Cox

OXFORD CITY AND DISTRICT BRANCH

In spite of a rather dreary summer, the weather has certainly not been allowed to dampen the enthusiasm and activities of the Oxford City Branch. On 6th June the annual Skittles Match between the University, the Society and the City ringers took place at 'The Red Lion', Abingdon. I am pleased to report that the City Branch won. A cricket match played against the police on 13th July also proved to be a successful event and here we lost by only nine runs. Result: Police 115 for 8; Branch 106 for 9. A return match has been promised.

Readers of "ODD BOB" might be forgiven for thinking that Oxford City has forsaken ringing for the Sporting Life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Summer practices at Garsington and Horspath have been reasonably well attended and a good variety of methods have been rung. We are particularly pleased with the progress of the local Horspath ringers who have made great strides forward thanks to the help and guidance of Anthony Hughes and his team of helpers from Marston.

Recently a number of ringers from Oxford visited Marsh Baldon and plans are now being made to hold the Half Yearly Meeting there in 1987. This will be the first time a meeting has been held at Marsh Baldon since 1963.

On 20th September the Annual Branch Outing will be to the North Oxon and Bucks area. The outing has already become known as 'The Augmentation Tour' since many of the towers to be visited have been augmented in recent years. Our Ringing Master, Len Porter, has organised a full programme of ringing and hopefully the ringers will feel suitably augmented by the end of the day.

At our Half Yearly Meeting at Kidlington in June it was decided to start production of a Quarterly News Letter. Hugh Dean (Marston) put forward the idea and was elected as News Letter Editor. In recent months Hugh has originated many new activities for the Branch and is already planning trips for 1987. This sort of initiative from members can only be welcomed. Let us have more of it.

R. Goodwin

READING BRANCH. On Saturday 24th May, as part of the Reading Festival, the ringers of St. Mary's Reading held an open day to enable the people of Reading to see their town from the top of the tower, to see the bells and hopefully learn something about the Art of Change Ringing. In the weeks before the event there was much activity making notices, cleaning the tower, checking that lights worked, arranging insurance and organising sufficient helpers for both morning and afternoon session.

Our fears of having no customers were removed before the opening time when one gentleman found his way up to the tower before the guides were posted. From then we never stopped. One problem we did have was getting people back down from the top of the tower. Each group was given a short touch of Grandsire Triples to show them what was happening inside the tower when they heard bells ringing from the outside. By lunchtime, we estimated 120 people had visited the tower and most of them had been to the top. At 4 o'clock the stream suddenly stopped, almost to everyone's relief as we were becoming quite tired. A final touch of Stedman ended a successful day which had introduced over 200 people to the mysteries of ringing and raised £30 for tower funds.

Phillippa Whittington

Burghfield. Be prepared to wipe your feet before you enter!. After reading in Shape's 'Church Bells of Berkshire' that St. Mary's Burghfield was one of the best kept ringing chambers in the county, the ringers have been inspired to reclaim the title. Long hours of D.I.Y. have certainly paid off (scraping the old paint off the walls was the worst part I'm told). New paint, new carpet and new ropes make for a very smart ringing chamber.

South Oxon Branch. Congratulations are in order for Hilarie and Chris Rogers who now have a daughter, Emma Louise, born on 24th July. The word is she is already a pretty good treble. Hilarie had been our secretary for 3 years until April this year.

The annual coach outing, arranged by Roy Fuller of Benson but as usual attended by ringers from several other towers together with family and friends, took place on 21st June and ventured into Surrey and Sussex, visiting seven towers.

The weather was extremely kind and the sun duly shone on the righteous. Roy always arranges a good outing, but this year was extra special as he had arranged with members of his family, who live in the area, to put on a magnificent tea for us when we arrived at Horsham, to which one and all did due justice.

Perhaps Roy is doing too good a job, as the outing was oversubscribed and a few people were disappointed at not being able to get a seat on the coach. Maybe we shall have a convoy next year!!

Please note Ewelme bells are out of action for the time being (gremlins in the 5th)

Cyril Lawrence

OMITTED FROM JUNE ODD BOB. SORRY G. M.R.C.

SOUTH OXON BRANCH

At the AGM at Drayton St. Leonard, Hilarie Rogers resigned as Branch Secretary and Cencil Lawrence was elected in her place. Hilarie had held office for three years but domestic commitments prevent her from continuing in office. The Branch Chairman, D.R. Fuller replaces J.E. Godman as Branch Representative.

Ringing has continued at Benson in spite of the work being carried out on the tower. The original estimate for this was £32,000 but a closer inspection proved the job to be larger than first anticipated. The final total was £51,000. Of this £8,000 still has to be raised.

Wheatley are back at teaching new members and would welcome help with Plain Hunting on a Friday evening at 7.30. All being well their bells will receive a complete overhaul this year, which should make striking a much easier task.

Dorchester were "a bit shattered when we were told we would need £15,000 for repairs but thanks to the village we have raised £1200 from donations already and also a very generous grant from the Guild for £2250. It is well worth while keeping money flowing into the Guild funds and bequests not to mention the sale of 100 lbs. of marmalade and the steady flogging of fluffy yellow dusters has brought us half way." The order for the work has now been given.

Warborough are now doing plain hunting and Bob Doubles as the result of Peter Burrige's and Roy Cook's attendance at Easthamstead last year. They hope to send two more members this year.

VALE OF WHITE HORSE BRANCH.

This has been a fairly busy time organisationwise. Branch Practices have been arranged until the A.G.M. in February. A Branch Striking Contest is being organised for August and an outing for the New Forest by coach is to be held on July 5th. Also our Branch is hosting the Guild Six Bell Striking Contest on October 8th so plans for this are also underway.

Anne Jones

We held our first Striking Contest for several years on Saturday, August 30th at West Hanney. Only two teams entered, Stanford in the Vale and Shrivenham, and judges Tim Pett and Mike Poole from the Old North Berks Branch declared Shrivenham the winners. Our thanks to Tim and Mike and congratulations to Shrivenham and Good Luck in the Guild Striking Contest.

On the subject of the Guild Striking Contest we are pleased to be hosting this event at Hinton Waldrist this year and look forward to seeing all branches represented on the day.

We had an almost full coach for our Branch Outing in July when we went to Southampton and the New Forest. All went well until the fourth tower when on arrival we found a christening had been arranged, unknown to the tower correspondent. It was a case of 'tower grabbing' then as we all dashed in for about three rounds and out to let the next band in. The last tower of the day was the one where no-one came to unlock and so we stood in the pouring rain while someone went up to the village to get a key. These hiccups didn't spoil a good day and everyone managed to down a quick pint or two on the last stop before home.

Anne Jones

WITNEY AND WOODSTOCK BRANCH.

The Branch has had an active summer. We had an outing to the seaside on the South coast in July, with ringing at several towers - and fine weather. We were privileged to join the Tewkesbury Abbey ringers on one of their practice nights, which gave many of us our first opportunity for 12-bell ringing. A treasure hunt (with ringing at both ends) was a new venture, and proved an enjoyable and brain-stretching exercise; everyone reached the finishing point, and everyone must know that particular piece of Oxfordshire better than they did before. Equally adventurous was the cycle outing which took place on August Bank Holiday Monday, on what must have been the wettest day of the year - even the people who went by car got wet, though we were able to warm up with the ringing at five towers en route. During August, 8-bell practices were held each week at Witney, in addition to the regular practices held monthly. The Royal Wedding on July 23rd was celebrated by the ringing of a total of 19 quarter-peals at towers throughout the Branch.

The Branch is holding a Barn Dance on Saturday 29th November at Bampton, at which all are welcome: tickets will be available from the Branch Secretary (Mrs. C. Ross, Duck End Cottage, Sutton, Stanton Harcourt, Oxford OX8 1RX. Tel. Oxford 881552). The price is not quite certain yet, but will probably be not more than £2.00.

Catherine Ross

SONNING DEANERY BRANCH

The Royal Wedding in July saw several Branch Towers arranging special ringing to celebrate the event. Peals were rung at All Saints' Wokingham and Waltham St. Lawrence, Plain Bob Minor was lost at Sandhurst in the fifth extent. Quarter peals were rung at Binfield and Easthampstead.

Another special quarter peal was arranged at St. Pauls, Wokingham to mark the retirement of Keith Begrie as Tower Foreman. After 20 years in the position Keith felt it was time to stand down.

Autumn is well underway and the Branch approaches an active part of the year. The Branch 8-Bell Striking Competition is to be held at All Saints Wokingham with 5 towers having been entered. Will the home team win their fifth Branch Competition in a row? A new venture is a skittles evening at Binfield in aid of Branch funds. All rickets tickets were sold two weeks before hand. The Branch plays hosts to the Guild for the Easthampstead Course at the end of September, and then in October the Branch outing takes members out of the Guild to the Swindon area.

Whilst on holiday in San Francisco, Branch Secretary Lynn Deering and husband Mike were attracted by a notice "Annual Bell Ringing Event". Reading the small print, the "Gripmen", the operators of the famous Cable Cars compete to see who has the best rythem! The competition was sponsored by KABL Radio, with cash prizes.

WOKINGHAM ST. PAULS

In the early 1960's Keith Begrie was asked to come to St. Pauls to teach a band of ringers and look at the bells; this was supposed to last for a month but he has been there ever since. After a few years he was made tower foreman and has filled that position very well until June 17th this year when he retired though, happily, is still a member of the tower. Had it not been for Keith the bells would have fallen silent years ago because of deterioration. But Keith, very often on his own, worked doggedly on to keep them going.

One of his major problems during his time of office was trying to fund raise in order to get the bells repaired professionally as there always seemed more important things to be done in the church. However all Keith's efforts have not been in vain as fund raising has started in earnest and we hope to rehand the bells next year.

Hugh Baxter

DIARY OF EVENTS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

October

3	Secretaries Meeting	Abingdon St. Helens	7.30 p.m.
4	GUILD SIX BELL STRIKING COMPETITION, Hinton Waldrist		
	Chipping Norton, Branch Practice,	Hook Norton,	7.30 p.m.
6	Reading Branch Practice,	Streatley	7.30 p.m.
11	Newbury A.G.M.	Thatcham	
	Chipping Norton Autumn Meeting	Enstone	
18	Sonning Branch Outing		
	EBSB Beer and Skittles		
	Banbury Heaf Yearly Meeting	Bodicote	
	Chilten and Central Bucks. Orchard Cup Competition		
	Reading Skittles Match	Woolhampton	
25	EBSB Branch Practice	Penn	6.30 p.m.
	S. Oxon Autumn Meeting	Berwick Salome and Chalgrove	
29	TOWERS AND BELPRIES SUB COMMITTEE. Radley 7.30 p.m.		

November

1	Chipping Norton, Branch Practice, Ascott-under-Wychwood.		
			7.30 p.m.
8	ONB, Branch Practice,	Brightwell,	6.30 p.m.
	Central Bucks, Half Yearly Meeting,	Aylesbury,	3.00 p.m.
	Reading, Branch Practice,	St. Marys, Reading	7.00 p.m.
12	F. AND G.P. SUB-COMMITTEE,	Radley,	7.30 p.m.
15	Sonning, Branch Practice,	Sandhurst	7.00 p.m.
	Chilten, Branch Practice,	Monks Risborough	6.30 p.m.
22	GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING, Bray, 2.30 p.m.		
28	V. of W.H. Branch Practice,	Uffington	
29	S. Oxon, Branch Practice,	Ewelme	

December

6	Chipping Norton, Branch Practice, Churchill, 7.30 p.m.		
13	Oxford City, A.G.M.,	Oxford, St. Giles	
	ONB, Branch Practice,	Wantage,	6.30 p.m.
	Central Bucks, Branch Practice,	Aston Abbots,	6.30 p.m.
	Reading, Branch Practice,	Tilehurst,	7.00 p.m.
20	Sonning, Branch Practice,	Wargrave,	7.00 p.m.
	EBSB, Branch Practice and Wine and Cheese Party,	Beaconsfield,	6.30 p.m.
	Chilten, Branch Practice,	Aston Clinton.	

DATES FOR YOUR 1987 DIARY

March 14	GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING, Banbury Branch		
May 4	OPEN DAY	Reading Branch	
	EIGHT BELL STRIKING COMPETITION, St. Mary's Reading		
May 16	GUILD A.G.M.	Newbury Branch	
July 4	GUILD FESTIVAL, High Wycombe		
Oct. 3	SIX BELL STRIKING COMPETITION, Witney and Woodstock Branch		
Nov. 28	GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING, Central Bucks Branch.		