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# ODD BOB



**Newsletter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers**  
<http://www.odg.org.uk/>



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## **From your Editor...**

In the previous Odd Bob I set a little competition for members to send me photographs suitable for the front cover – no prize but lots of kudos! I have received no photos so my own photo of St. Andrew's, Sonning must suffice.

Don't forget to check regularly the Guild website at [www.odg.org.uk/](http://www.odg.org.uk/) and the many branch websites.

In particular the EBSB Fund Raising website address is: [www.bellfund.org.uk](http://www.bellfund.org.uk). Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of October 2009.

Rob Needham

## **Data Protection Act 1998**

*As members should expect, a record of their membership is maintained on a combination of paper and computer systems. These records are used solely for the administration of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers and for notification of future events to members. They are not made available to anyone for commercial purposes. If any member wishes to inspect the records held, please contact the Guild Secretary.*

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## **Master's Mutterings**

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There can be very few towers in the Guild that do not welcome new recruits. Some actively seek to enrol new ringers, with varying degrees of success; others seem to have that happy ability to attract them with apparent ease. For many towers, however, it is a case of struggling to ring just some of the bells for services and to cancel in the event of sickness or holidays. So how is recruitment going for you?

From personal experience I know how frustrating it can be continually to appeal for new recruits and to have virtually no response for many years. Suddenly, like those proverbial London buses, several come along at once and practice nights present very different, and hopefully rewarding, challenges.

Then there is the issue of retention. How annoying it can be to see a learner master bell handling, move on to be competent in call changes and plain hunt, and then give up just when you know that they are about to 'take off' and become a really useful member of the band.

I sympathise with those who avoid teaching youngsters, anticipating that they will give up when other interests and demands take over. Then there are the complications posed by Child Protection legislation and the requirements for CRB clearance.

I would be interested to hear how many of you have taken on Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates, only to lose them a few months later when that stage is finished and the appropriate boxes ticked and signed. Surely, the Award is about more committed participation than that.

So, why bother? What incentive is there to train recruits, particularly those in younger age groups? I feel it is vital that we do.

A good proportion of us came into ringing at a tender age, and we have maintained our interest over many years. Others have come back to ringing after a break. The skills and understanding acquired by young people (and I include here older teenagers and twenty-somethings) will last for the rest of their lives. Even if your own tower feels a sense of loss when they move on, it may be that they will come back to ringing later in life and benefit another band, possibly taking on the responsibility of an office.

One of my happiest memories over the past fifteen months was to attend the Annual Dinner of one of our leading University change ringing societies and to enjoy the Master's speech, delivered by one of my own recruits. A highlight indeed, and ample compensation for those who have fallen by the wayside.

Please keep recruiting, persevering through those lean times, so that the ringing exercise in general may continue to benefit from your efforts.

Robert Newton

## **23-Spliced Milestone Achieved**

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In 2007 Hilarie Rogers began organising peal attempts of 'all the work' spliced Surprise Major with the ultimate objective of reaching the 23 method goal. Through 2007 and the first half of 2008 the band progressed from peals in 8 methods through to 21. However in May, just as the first attempts at 23 methods were scheduled, Hilarie broke her wrist badly, necessitating two operations and an absence from peal ringing until mid December.

In the meantime Hilarie insisted that the band carry on without her and they rang the 23 methods in August with Hilarie listening outside. Once Hilarie was back to peal ringing the 23 was put back on the agenda, and after one failure Hilarie achieved the goal with a peal on Friday 13th March at Childrey. Fittingly the band comprised all the original members who had worked their way through the series from the start. *Ed. – a photograph of the band is on the back cover.*

Robert Partridge

## **Obituary – George W Hall (1913 – 2008)**

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Last November, the Guild lost one of its oldest (if not THE oldest) active ringing member when George Hall passed away just short of his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I first met George when I was watching the Weston Turville band ringing for their Christmas Carol Service – that would be about 1989. I was just learning to ring (at another tower) and so declined his invitation to join them. However, he did persuade me to come to one of their practice nights in the new year, which I did, and have been a member of that tower ever since. I didn't realise at first just how old George was even then – at least 75!

I thought George had only become interested in bell ringing when he retired to Weston Turville (he was a physics master in a South London grammar school), but that wasn't really the case. His interest was first aroused when the school where he taught at the start of WW2 was evacuated to Devon and he became friends with the local vicar. It isn't clear how far his interest developed then, as George soon found himself commissioned into the RAF as a meteorologist and

served in the Middle East and elsewhere working with the American Air Force. After he moved to Weston Turville, he saw an “advertisement” in the parish magazine calling for recruits, and decided to take up the exercise again – he was well close to 65 then!

George knew his limitations as a ringer and accepted that, in spite of attending several Easthampstead courses (as John & June Wells will recall), he would never become particularly proficient nor have a wide repertoire. But he was quite content to be a “bread & butter ringer” – always available for Sunday services, weddings and other occasions when the bells were wanted, albeit ringing only Grandsire and Plain Bob. His enthusiasm certainly belied his years, and he was as active as any other member of the band (and more active than some) in both his attendance at practices and services, and in his willingness to help in the many associated tasks. In fact it was only a couple of weeks before he died that he was keen to help in fitting muffles for the Remembrance Day service. Admittedly, he did not come up the tower on that occasion, but played a very valuable role helping to lower and raise the bells and acting as “safety man” on the ground floor. Having said that, the last time he did accompany me to the top (not that long previously), I think I was more out of breath than him – undoubtedly a reflection on his hill walking interests!

He was a highly respected rock climber and fell walker, especially in the Lake District, but also in Scotland and North Wales, and for many years was President of his Climbing Club. He was well known as their “Training officer” and was always willing to share his experience and expertise. And that was also true of his bell ringing – he was always supportive and encouraging to new ringers. George introduced two of his climbing friends (Maurice & Katherine George) who live in North Oxfordshire to bell ringing and would often drive up, stay with them, and ring with the local band. The last time he visited them they went to the 2008 Ringing Road Show at Stoneleigh, but he had to leave early on the Saturday, to get back home in time to ring for a wedding at Weston Turville. At the age of 95, that was typical of his loyalty and commitment to ringing!

I had the pleasure of proposing in 2007 that George be elected to Honorary Membership of the ODG. In the citation I said, “That the Guild does not often recognise the contribution made by those members who are not accomplished ringers in either skill or repertoire, but who turn out regularly when the bells in their church are being rung. And those who also are first in line to volunteer for other bell-related work – maintenance, fitting muffles, looking after visitors, etc. – but whose interests rarely extend beyond their own tower. One of the criteria for Honorary Ringing Membership of the Guild is *to be over 65*. I am asking for the Branch to consider endorsing the award of Honorary Membership to someone who did not start ringing **until** he was 65. I am, of course, referring to George Hall, who was 94 last birthday but who is still one of Weston Turville’s most loyal and conscientious members.”

Weston Turville is only a small band and the loss of any one member of our team (even for a short time) is quite significant; a permanent loss is very noticeable. We miss George and I’m sure that others in the Guild who met him will also feel the loss of his passing.

Brian Robson

# **Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund**

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## **Policy Statement on Future Investment and Grants**

As the consequence of the current national and international uncertainties in the financial markets and the economy in general, the Trustees have reviewed the situation of the Fund and consider it will be helpful to set out their policy on future investment and grants.

### **The Trustees have made the following basic assumptions:**

- The investment income is likely to reduce by at least 30% from the 2008 level as the direct result of the interest rate reductions implemented by the Bank of England and the associated impacts on the value of stocks and shares as the recession continues. If this assumption is accurate then the yearly investment income for 2009 will be around £14,000.
- The value of the Fund's investments is likely to reduce during 2009 from the valuation at 31 December 2008. A further reduction in value may be expected in 2010. This will limit options to reinvest in different holdings and by so doing benefit from capital appreciation from specific investments. During 2008 the overall value of investments fell by 8.5% to £293,379.
- In line with past policy the Trustees will maintain an investment portfolio, balancing income with growth potential wherever possible and seeking to minimise risks to the capital value. They will continue to take advantage of the professional service offered by the investment advisor to the Diocese. However it must be noted that all financial commentators regularly remind us all that the current economic situation is really 'uncharted waters' and in these circumstances the best financial advice may well be to 'do nothing'.
- The Trustees are aware that the foundries and bell hangers have generally full order books up to a year ahead and consider it unlikely that there will be a large number of new projects coming forward during 2009 and 2010.
- The Trustees expect that new money raised during 2009 and 2010 may not achieve the same levels as recent years (2008 - £11,473; 2007 - £9,020; 2006 - £8,514) as the result of the economic downturn and the forecast increases in unemployment.

### **The Trustees will:**

- Maintain the level of all outstanding provisional grant offers
- Allocate the available income in any year between the applications
- Seek to maintain each new provisional grant offer at 10% of the cost of eligible work
- Limit the maximum provisional grant to £9,000 (the amount of the previous largest grant paid)
- Continue the present policy of not considering projects where the cost is less than £2,000
- Continue to allocate provisional grants from the predicted income of future years to match as far as possible with the timescale of the project. This is particularly important for projects, which seek support at an early stage in the fund raising process. This policy has been well received over the years.

- In view of the volatility of the financial situation, review this policy annually and report to the Annual General Meeting.

### **In conclusion**

- The Trustees will continue to review the level of grant to strike a balance between the income available and the number of calls for financial support. Both these variables are outside the control of the Trustees. Investment income must be assumed to be more difficult to forecast than ever before.
- If it becomes necessary for the Trustees to have to reduce the percentage from the level of 10% then this change will be publicised as soon as possible.
- If it does become necessary to limit grants in any way then priority will be given to projects that maintain bells in operational ringing condition rather than re-hanging bells merely for the sake of improvement.
- Given the national and international financial uncertainties, it is not appropriate at present to speculate about the level of any reduction or its likely timing.
- The Trustees wish to thank all those who support the Bell Fund and take this opportunity to restate the benefits of gift aiding donations whenever possible in order to increase the value by reclaiming the income tax.

### **Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Report**

The amount of new money raised this year is £1,488.66 which is a very steady start for the year. This amount is composed of:

- Donations from branches totalling £1,148.66
- Donations from five towers totalling £270
- Donations from two PCCs totalling £45
- Individual donations totalling £25 (plus gift aid tax to be recovered).

The grant to Hanwell (£4310) has been paid. One inspection has been arranged and I am aware that several projects are nearing completion.

The Trustees were pleased to learn that the fund raising at Little Missenden had been so successful that the application for a grant was withdrawn. Consequently this amount (£1,670) becomes available to support other projects in the future.

At their last meeting in February, the Trustees approved a provisional grant allocation to Shiplake (£7,600). No other grant applications were received for consideration at this meeting but one application form has since been issued.

The Trustees are working closely with the Diocesan professional advisor to maximise the investment income that is available to pay grants as well as to maintain the overall value of the investment portfolio during these challenging times. The investment income received for the quarter ended 31 March 2009 was £4695.39.

At the annual meeting of the Bell Fund in March, the Trustees circulated a policy statement on future investment and grants. This was adopted and is printed separately in this edition of Odd Bob.

The Trustees remain most grateful to everyone for their financial support of the Bell Fund in so many ways.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

## **Restoration Fund Report**

The amount of new money raised this year is £525. This is very encouraging and is composed of:

- Donations from three branches totalling £400
- Donations from Windsor tower of £100
- Covenanted donation of £25 (plus gift aid tax to be recovered).

A grant application form has been issued and is expected to be considered by the Trustees shortly.

### ***Financial support for Bell Fund and Restoration Fund***

Application forms for regular donations by bank standing order (or for single donations) with an associated Gift Aid declaration to allow the income tax to be recovered are available from me or by downloading from the Guild website.

The Trustees for both Funds commend this tax efficient form of financial support and thank those who already donate in this manner.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

## **Education Committee Report**

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### **November 2008 – April 2009**

This committee discusses recruitment and retention and dissemination of training information, but the most visible results of our efforts are the courses. Over the winter we have put on a Surprise Royal course and the ever popular Radley Course which, while full, was not so heavily oversubscribed as last year.

A Cambridge Royal course tutored by Ian Judd was held at Aston Clinton in December. Four students enjoyed good teaching and practice and are now competent. They should be an asset to the Guild in the future. There were five more potential students who were put on to the reserve list.

Three students completed the Young Ringers' Award Scheme in December and John & June Wells are now adjudicating. We look forward to hearing the adjudicators' comments at the Guild AGM.

The training day for Branches to discuss their challenges and successes was unfortunately cancelled due to snow and at the time of writing has not yet been rescheduled.

The long established Guild Educational Leaflets are being placed on the Guild web site and some are already downloadable.

Recruitment, retention and training must be of interest to all lovers of English Change Ringing. We hope that this year there will be new volunteers for this sub-committee. There have been two during the year: Lucy Walpole and Sarah Andrews. If you think you have good ideas please don't wait for someone to propose you.



Please look out for details of the forthcoming courses and recommend them where appropriate:

*Michaelmas* (the next step in change ringing) 26<sup>th</sup> September,

*Laying the Right Foundations* (for instructors) 10<sup>th</sup> October,

*Steeple Aston (basic change ringing)* 31<sup>st</sup> October,

*10 Bell Training Day Aston Clinton* 5 December.

The committee would like to record its thanks to Pat and Robert Newton who have hosted sub-committee meetings over a number of years.

Jon Chamberlain

## **Bell Recordings**

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Have you listened to the recordings on the ODG website yet? Chris Johnson is hoping, in the long term, to establish on the website a collection of the sounds of all rings of bells within the Diocese. About fifty are available so far. If you have a suitable recording of your bells, he would be delighted to hear from you.

The following points should be noted:

- The date of the recording and method being rung should be notified
- Any format is acceptable – Chris can convert as necessary
- Recordings can be sent either electronically via email or by post on a CD/DVD (address in *Odd Bob*, *Annual Report* and on the ODG website)
- Any recording must have the approval of the featured tower
- It is desirable that permission be sought from the ringers taking part
- The recordings should do justice to the bells, be a credit to the Guild, and be equivalent in standard to a good service touch. Rounds and/or call changes are acceptable.

I am sure that we are all extremely grateful to Chris for the tremendous amount of work he has put in to the ODG website during his first year as Webmaster. Please support him in this exciting project. Thank you.

Robert Newton

## **Churches Conservation Trust – 40th anniversary**

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As part of the Churches Conservation Trust's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary ringing celebrations on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February, a small group of ringers assembled at Lower Basildon, a four-bell tower in Berkshire. We were greeted by Colin Shearer, Director of Regions for the CCT, who was very pleased to see us because the BBC had turned up unexpectedly.

The ringing provided a backdrop to various segments on the news that day including a live broadcast on the BBC News Channel and a short piece on Radio 4's PM program. We later appeared on the evening bulletins on BBC1. Colin Shearer was interviewed at length but I managed to avoid a grilling by being on the end of a bell rope at the appropriate time. Below is an edited version of the Picture Caption Release issued by the CCT.

Michael A. Williams, Oxford

## ***Berkshire Locals Pull Together for the Start of the 40th Birthday Celebrations of the Churches Conservation Trust***

Local people at a church in Berkshire took part in the Birthday Bells Appeal, a mass bell ringing celebrating the start of the nation wide year long 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations of the Churches Conservation Trust. The national charity cares for England's finest historic churches that are no longer required for regular worship.

St Bartholomew's Church in Lower Basildon was among 70 historic churches across the country that chimed together on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February. The bells rang to celebrate the place of these historic churches in the heart of communities across England and to encourage people to seek them out and discover how they can be used again.



*The names of the ringers from left to right are: Bernard Stone, Simon Bond, Bobbie May, Len Palfrey, Ann Gardiner, John Harland, Luke Camden, Michael Williams.*

The 140 year old bells at St. John The Baptist Church, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire rang for the first time in 30 years as part of the Birthday Bells Appeal. These historic bells were able to ring thanks to the restored bell tower, completed via a £700,000 restoration project from the Churches Conservation Trust.

Peter Lankester, Regional Manager, South-West, The Churches Conservation Trust, said: *“The Birthday Bells event proved a great success with a huge number of local people visiting our historic churches to discover how these incredible buildings can be used by the community again. We are working to bring churches back into the heart of the community, to protect their historical significance and open them up to local communities for wider use – from arts and music groups to circus schools! There will be many more birthday events taking place this year – all are listed on the CCT website.”*

Local people interested in learning more about how they can use their local historic churches should contact Peter Lankester, Regional Manager for the South West, the Churches Conservation Trust, on 07831 873515.

## Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

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Since the last Odd Bob report in November, two awards have been made under the Tower Maintenance Award Scheme. Winslow are to be congratulated on gaining their first “Gold” and Ellesborough their second. This means that there are twelve towers with current awards – maintaining the previous high level – although Easthampstead are currently unable to renew their award because of work on the tower. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is now at fifty-seven and there have now been forty-six inspections (of which fifteen were preliminaries), resulting in twenty-eight awards (twelve Gold, eight Silver, and eight Bronze).

Ten awards have expired (at the end of their two year period) and the towers concerned are listed at the end of this report.

Two more branches (South Oxon and Central Bucks) have towers in the “current awards” list, so seven out of the fifteen branches are now represented, as follows:

Banbury	1	(Bronze)
Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
EBSB	4	(2 Gold, 2 Silver)
Reading	2	(Gold, Silver)
Sonning Deanery	2	(Gold, Bronze)
South Oxon	1	(Gold)

But still only seven out of the fifteen branches are represented – how about trying to get your branch included?

The main features of the award scheme are as follows:

- There are three award grades (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) based on the results of an inspection using a marking sheet that is made available, in advance, to participating towers to enable them to prepare for the inspection.
- The grades will be based on the percentage of the "perfect" mark (currently 235), as follows:

Gold	85% +
Silver	70 – 84%
Bronze	55 – 69%
- The award takes the form of a certificate that is current for two years from the date of inspection (rather like an MOT) and can be displayed in the tower
- Towers holding current awards are listed in *Odd Bob* and the *Guild Report*
- Each inspection is carried out by judges from the Towers & Belfries committee and the detailed results of the inspection are made available to the tower
- Inspections can be requested at any time, via the Secretary or the Chairman of the Towers & Belfries committee (addresses elsewhere in *Odd Bob*), irrespective of whether the request is for an initial inspection or to try and improve an existing grade.

If you haven't already started, why not consider taking part? We will provide you with all the details of how you will be marked so that you can plan what has to be done to get an award; if asked, we will even do a preliminary inspection before you start, to help the process. If you do gain an award you can be confident that your tower and bells are in a good, safe condition and, whether or not an award is gained, you will be given useful information on how they can be improved.

### ***Current Tower Maintenance Scheme Awards***

#### **Gold Award**

Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 30.04.09
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB Branch	Expires 30.11.09
Chalfont St Giles	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.01.10
Purley (St Mary V.)	Reading Branch	Expires 31.01.10
Thame (St Mary V.)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 31.01.10
Winslow (St Laurence)	Central Bucks Branch	Expires 31.10.10
Ellesborough(SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern Branch	Expires 28.02.11

#### **Silver Award**

Winkfield (St Mary)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.09
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB Branch	Expires 30.09.09
Reading St. Giles	Reading	Expires 31.10.10

#### **Bronze Grade**

Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury Branch	Expires 31.01.10
White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.03.10

#### **Expired Awards**

Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 30.11.04
Dorchester (SS Peter & Paul)	South Oxon Branch	Expired 30.09.05
Deddington (SS Peter & Paul)	Banbury Branch	Expired 30.04.06
Bray (St Michael)	EBSB Branch	Expired 31.07.06
Finchhampstead (St James)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.07.07
Stoke Mandeville (St Mary V.)	Chiltern Branch	Expired 31.12.07
Warborough (St Laurence)	South Oxon	Expired 31.12.07
South Stoke(St Andrew)	Reading Branch	Expired 30.06.08
Easthampstead (St Michael)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.12.08

### ***Towers and Belfries Committee Report***

Since my last report eight inspections have been carried out, details of which are shown below. The TMA inspection resulted in a Gold Award for Winslow. Details of the inspections (locations and reasons) are as follows:

- Aldermaston (general inspection)
- Bray (internal sound control)
- Clewer (advice as part of rehanging project group)
- Denham (local band maintenance advice and training)
- Hanwell (grant inspection)

- Hitcham (maintenance advice)
- Leaffield (restarting ringing after long silence)
- Winslow (TMA award)

Advice has been given about the protection of valuable bells located on the floor of a church and in a case where the church wished to dispose of a bell. We also advised in the case where a tower captain was having problems with a church appointed project manager who had no knowledge of ringers and ringing.

The committee is concerned that there is confusion over whether recent Health & Safety legislation is applicable to bell projects, members having received conflicting advice from different Health & Safety Executive Offices. The committee is also concerned that many PCCs are unaware of these regulations and their responsibilities under them. We are working to resolve the “conflicting advice” situation before raising this at Guild level.

Following an incident where an incorrectly tied muffle came loose and “removed” a slider, the committee considered, (and recommends) fitting retaining strips to the runner boards wherever possible. This advice will be incorporated into the committee’s Health & Safety technical paper and also as a short item in *Odd Bob*.

As the result of representations from the committee via the Guild Master, the Diocese has recently included in its latest circular, advice to the effect that ringers should be notified when contractors are working in the tower. The purpose is that on completion the installation can be checked by an experienced ringer to ensure that all is safe. Also included in the circular was advice warning about individuals who attempt to ring unsafe bells and asking them to consult the T & B committee if in any doubt.

Other topics considered have been a material for the repair of worn tower steps (details available on request) and gaining insurance cover for tower open days.

John Davidge

## **Librarian’s Report**

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There have been three library enquiries since the last edition of *Odd Bob*.

These concerned:

- Quarter peals rung at All Saints Wokingham
- Guild 50 years membership certificates
- Peal in 1792 at All Saints High Wycombe

In addition to these specific enquiries, I regularly have conversations with different people about the library, the kind of questions being: where is it kept, how many and what sort of books are in it, and do many people use it?

The usual end of year work took place for 2008: labelling and cataloguing the books acquired during the year, sorting out the Ringing Worlds to ready them to be taken to the binders, and writing up a summary for the Guild Annual report.

Work on sorting the miscellaneous material has been halted by various other preoccupations, but should restart soon. The main thing to do at the moment is

to acquire some folders to store the different categories of material in. Then I will be able to go ahead and divide everything up, and in a later phase, make a note of all the items in each folder for the catalogue.

The usual reminder, if you would like some information, or would like to visit the library, or borrow a book, you are very welcome to, just let me know.

Doug Beaumont

## **ODG Group Personal Accident Insurance**

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Guild members are covered whilst ringing or attending to routine maintenance work to the bells in any church or bell tower, or whilst travelling to or from a church or bell tower to practice or take part in bell ringing anywhere in the United Kingdom. ("Routine maintenance" means any works for which approval in accordance with the Care of Churches Measure is not required – separate cover can be arranged where needed in connection with these more major items of work).

Insurance is extended to include members teaching bell ringing and persons under instruction by a Guild member at a church or bell tower within the Diocese of Oxford.

The members of the Towers and Belfries Committee are specifically covered for carrying out their duties on behalf of the Guild and the level of temporary total disablement is increased to £300 per week.

### ***Benefits payable***

<b>Age Range (years)</b>	<b>Temporary Total Disablement</b>	<b>Permanent Disablement or Permanent Partial Disablement</b>	<b>Death</b>
16 – 70	£200 per week for up to 104 weeks	£25,000	£25,000
7 – 15	Nil	£2,500	£2,500
71 – 75	Nil	£2,500	£2,500
76 – 85	Nil	Nil	£2,500

Medical expenses up to £1,250 are payable for those aged 16 – 70 years and up to £125 for the other age groups.

Claims and queries should be directed in the first instance to:

The Honorary General Treasurer  
Mr.B.J.Gatward  
Grangemead  
Bath Road  
Devizes, SN10 1PH (01380 721009)

Claims must be confirmed in writing.

Please remember that it is a condition of all policies that claims must be reported to the Insurers as soon as practicable. A claim that is not notified within a reasonable time may be rejected.

## News from the Branches

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### Banbury



At the Half Yearly Meeting in October, Diana Reeves of Mollington was presented with her Long Service Certificate for 50 years membership of the Guild. The picture shows Sue Burchell, Branch Chairman, making the presentation to Diana.

Deddington hosted the Advent Carol Service on 6<sup>th</sup> December which was attended by ringers and their families. Two days later the bells at Hanwell, which were augmented from five to six, rang out for the first time as a six after being an unringable five for over ten years.

The dedication and re-dedication of Hanwell's six bells took place on 5<sup>th</sup> April. A quarter of Cambridge Surprise Minor to celebrate the occasion was rung prior to pre-service ringing. The service was conducted by the Right Revd John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford. Immediately following the dedication a few rounds were rung by Hanwell ringers. During the service, the presentation of a DVD was made to Revd Jeffery and Mrs Chard. Revd Chard recently retired from the Ironstone Benefice and had been our Branch Chairman some years previously. The service was followed by refreshments and further ringing.

The end of January and beginning for February saw many members being involved with "Firsts" week, either by ringing in support of other ringers attaining a "first" or doing so themselves. The "Firsts" event culminated in a social evening at Bodicote church rooms which included a delicious jacket potato supper organised by the Social Committee. Certificates were presented to members who had achieved a first, the range varying from ringing call changes for 10 minutes without assistance to quarter peals and, for one group of ringers, their first visit and ring at a 10-bell tower.

The Annual Dinner was held at The Red Lion, Cropredy and was attended by about 50 members and partners. The after dinner speaker was Bill Butler, ringer and author of repute within the bell ringing community. As always a raffle was held and the proceeds of this were donated to Katharine House Hospice. (*Ed. a photo taken at the Annual Dinner is on the back cover.*)

The branch will be hosting the Guild 8-bell Striking Competition and Ringing Day on Bank Holiday Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> May. I am pleased to say that the majority of the towers in our branch should be open or involved in some way to make this a successful fundraising event for the ODG Bell Fund. Heats for the Striking Competition (if required) will be at Banbury and Adderbury and the final will be at Great Tew.

Heather Hughes

## **Bicester**

The main event since the last edition of *Odd Bob* has been our branch AGM which was held on Saturday 21 February in the morning, followed by a pub lunch in Bletchington. Two new members were elected. Keith Thomas replaced Rosemary Henson, who had been an invaluable Guild representative over the last few years, and all other officers remained as before.

Although our Branch outing was arranged by Sally Wale and Teresa Carter for 25 April and towers booked at Aston Clinton, Wendover, Bledlow, Chinnor and Aston Rowant, we were unable to encourage enough ringers to come and had to cancel the outing a week before the date. This was obviously discouraging to the organisers particularly, and also to the few who would have wished to ring that day – sadly we're suffering from a lull in enthusiasm from our membership!

Kathryn Grant

## **Central Bucks**

We have continued with successes in the Branch at all levels since the last November edition of *Odd Bob*. First, Central Bucks branch won the Guild 10-bell striking competition, which was held at Wallingford, being represented by a team composed mainly of ringers from Long Crendon. A fantastic achievement – well done, and thank you to them all. On to the Tewkesbury Shield!

Also in November Winslow tower obtained a Gold Award for tower maintenance, so well done to them too!

We have had a number of 'firsts' in quarter peals for both mature and younger Branch learners, and regular opportunities have continued for members to ring in quarter peals.

The monthly *Improvers* practice has continued, having moved to Stewkley over the winter, and has been well attended. It has been good to enable members to benefit from some intensive practice on the basic methods. The Thursday *Advanced* practice has continued to grow in strength too, with a greater range of methods now being attempted. We have also held a practice especially for younger members, and are hoping to extend this idea further.

After the January Branch Practice we had a late Christmas meal at The Swan in Great Horwood, where large platefuls of home cooked food were enjoyed by around 30 members.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April Winslow, with other Branch helpers, manned the Charmborough mini-ring for the day at a Youth Opportunities Event. This proved very popular with a steady stream of visitors arriving and 'having a go'. We are optimistic of gaining some new recruits as a result. A tired but happy crew went home at the end of a long day!

Heather Dobson

## **Chiltern**

It seems to have been a period of quiet reflection and consolidation for the ringers of the Chiltern Branch, judging from the scarcity of contributions that I



have received from Tower Correspondents for inclusion in our entry for this edition of Odd Bob.

The Branch AGM was held at Cheddington on 18<sup>th</sup> April, when all the Branch officers (except the Branch Rep, who is still to be appointed) were re-elected for a further year.

Ellesborough is to be congratulated on a second successive “Gold Award” under the Tower Maintenance assessment scheme. Len Newman is the Steeple Keeper and is mainly responsible for this achievement. Les Floyd has achieved a notable milestone in having reached (survived?) 40 years as Tower Captain there.

Little Missenden was very fortunate in its fundraising efforts and with great local support was able to cover the cost of re-hanging the bells in their existing frame with all new fittings. The work was duly carried out with willing help from local ringers under the expert guidance and supervision of Whites of Appleton. The outcome has been very successful and it is good to think that these ancient bells now have a new lease of life. The improvement is reported to be “very marked”.

Wendover’s augmentation is also complete, with the new bells (cast at Whitechapel and fitted by Whites of Appleton) re-dedicated on 18<sup>th</sup> October; the first peal was rung on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Everyone who has rung there since has been complimentary about the new installation – “beautifully balanced, sound wonderful, and are easy to ring; the tuning was never bad, but is now superb”.

Readers may be interested in two particular weddings which took place at Weston Turville. When Sarah Leleux got married, there was a “family ring” with the bride’s father, two aunts and two uncles ringing together for the first time ever. Only the bride’s father and one of his sisters still rang regularly – the others were well and truly lapsed, but they all were remarkably keen to give it a go and they rang together (very successfully) while the official photographs were being taken.

When Jeanette Lord married John (both very experienced and competent ringers), so many of their ringing friends from Coventry came to support them that Coventry Cathedral had to import a band from outside the diocese to ring for the enthronement of the new Bishop on the same day. Jeanette and John both found time to join in the ringing after the service (but don’t ask Jeanette what kept her dress in place!). They had both rung a quarter peal the previous evening and John rang a full peal on the morning of the wedding.

2008 ended on a sad note, with the passing of Mike Davis of Great Missenden, (a former Branch Secretary), and George Hall of Weston Turville and an Honorary Member. *George’s obituary appears elsewhere in this edition.*

Brian Robson

## **Chipping Norton**

Our AGM was held at Burford on Sat. March 7<sup>th</sup>. We were lucky to have a professional musician to play the main organ for the Annual Evensong, conducted in the choir by our Chairman, the Revd. Jan Fielden. Twenty two

ringers rose to the occasion with hearty singing, and many enjoyed good ringing before and after the meeting.

All the current officers were re-elected, but Anne Hoyle gave notice of her intended retirement as secretary at the 2010 AGM. All Chippy members are encouraged to plan for a successor! New blood needed – volunteers welcome to stand!

Two new ringers, Catherine and Matthew Kimmins, from Hook Norton were elected to the Guild. Sally and Mick Austin seem to have the knack of attracting young recruits and Burford has 3 or 4 youngsters learning at present, as well as two young adults who want to establish a band at Leafield. A quick count of Chipping Norton Branch figures revealed by the Ringing Trends Survey shows that we have approximately equal numbers of male and female ringers and 50% of us are over 60 years of age. This did not come as a complete surprise!

Monthly branch practices were somewhat disrupted by the wintry weather. At Churchill the bells at last were accessible following repairs to the church, but ringers were a bit thin on the ground. The snowfall in February prevented all but three ringers getting to the practice at Spelsbury and Ken Wakefield, who was to represent the Branch at the 10-bell Training Day, was snowed in! We are considering daytime practices, at least in the early part of the year, to avoid these problems. It would be nice to see more ringers supporting the practices and we would welcome suggestions from other Branches about how we can attract those who never come! Who has the magic formula?

Anne Hoyle

## **East Berks and South Bucks**

*I must apologise to EBSB and their secretary Mandy Salter for omitting the EBSB report from the previous issue of Odd Bob. The report was subsequently added to the online version of Odd Bob on the Guild website – Ed.*

We finished 2008 on a high note with our traditional Branch Post Christmas Outing, this year visiting West Clandon, Womersley, Witley and Chiddingfold.

Amersham also finished the year well with a most unusual peal of Plain Bob Major on 20 December dedicated to the memory of a church benefactor. Although peals are frequently rung at Amersham this peal was remarkable in that it was the first peal rung entirely by Amersham ringers for 75 years.

Setbacks at Clewer have meant that the work on their bells has still not been completed although work is now proceeding on the steel frame with completion scheduled for early August. Work is still continuing to repair the fire damage caused to Old Windsor church last Easter but it is hoped that the bells will be ringing again in May. Maidenhead have recently been granted access to their bells, following work on the spire, and were able to ring again for Easter Day. Hitcham are pleased to be ringing again in their new raised ringing chamber, the shorter draught making the bells very much more manageable. Denham has also recently had rope guides fitted, which again has made the bells very much easier to ring.

Branch practices continue to be held twice monthly and have been generally well attended. We ran a very successful Advanced Surprise practice (5+ spliced) in February and are aiming to focus on a surprise method and plain method for each Branch practice. The 10-/12-bell monthly practices are proving popular and have become a regular feature of our programme.

Sadly I have to report that Ron Moore of Chalfont St Giles died in February. Ron had been a ringer and steeple-keeper at St Giles for many years and was a regular and popular supporter of Branch events. Also Andy Collins, a loyal member and ringer at Amersham, has died this month after a long illness. They will both be greatly missed.

Mandy Salter

## **Newbury**

The Branch AGM took place on March 7<sup>th</sup> at Kintbury. Marcus Allum had decided to hand over the chair and Mike Till was elected to take his place. Apart from the position of newsletter editor, which Tessa Allum volunteered to take on, the remaining officers remained in post.

A couple of weeks before the AGM we had a very successful quarter peal week in the branch. Mark Robins cajoled as many people as possible to ring in as many towers as possible within the branch, and of a total of 27 attempts there were 25 successes. Included in these were a number of firsts, first quarter peal, first inside and so on, and we managed to ring in all but two of the ringable towers in the branch.

Attendance at the monthly branch practices continues to be good, although we did have to cancel the February practice due to the large amount of snow we had in this part of the Thames Valley.

Training events have also been successful and continue to be offered on a monthly basis.

At the last officers meeting we decided to attempt to enter bands for both the 6- and 8-bell striking contests this year and our ringing master is gathering his band for the 8-bell competition. We are holding another branch social event this year, on July 11<sup>th</sup> at Speen. It will be on this occasion that we will have our branch 6-bell striking competition and hopefully find a band to represent us at the guild competition later in the year.

We were saddened in November by the death of David Livingston from Aldermaston. David had been a stalwart member of Aldermaston church, holding the post of Tower Captain for nearly 40 years and for several years was also a churchwarden. He was well known to ringers from around the country and he will be missed.

David Wilcox

## **North Bucks**

Our Christmas celebration was held at Whaddon with carols, fish and chip supper, and a general knowledge quiz. This has become a regular event now and continues to be well attended, and was a most enjoyable evening.

Towards the end of the year the officers undertook a review of the state of the Branch as they saw it and what it might look like in ten years time if we carry on as we are. We are facing problems of poor attendance at branch events, declining membership, and a lack of new recruits at towers within the branch. Undoubtedly these are problems being faced by guilds, branches, towers, and ringing in general everywhere. We saw the situation as a 'wake-up call' and an opportunity to examine alternative ways of doing things.

We looked at the Guild objectives and how the Branch performs against these objectives. A discussion document was prepared which formed the basis of our discussions. This collected together some information on towers and membership, and identified areas where we are failing against the objectives. The report looked at membership numbers at each tower over the last eight years and predicted the state of ringing at the towers in five and ten years time if the current trends continue.

The discussion document and proposals arising from the document were published in our branch newsletter and an explanatory letter setting out the proposals was sent all branch members, inviting them to the AGM to discuss the proposals.

It was felt that that a closer association between the branch and the church authorities in the churches, parishes and deaneries where we operate would only benefit our aspirations. The Church is going through similar issues to ourselves with diminishing attendance numbers, scarce resources, expensive infrastructure maintenance, etc., and so we need to open channels for effective communication at all levels.

We looked at how our branch boundary aligned with benefice and deanery boundaries. Excluding rings of less than five bells, we found that we covered the whole of the Newport and Milton Keynes deaneries, and most of the Buckingham deanery, with two towers in the Mursley deanery. Changes to the branch boundary were discussed at the AGM and, whilst towers cannot be forced to move, a preferred option was agreed; that the North Bucks Branch consist of all towers in the Buckingham, Milton Keynes and Newport deaneries. We will enable towers in the Buckingham deanery which are currently in Central Bucks to transfer to the North Bucks branch, should it be their wish. Should the towers in the Mursley deanery, which are currently in North Bucks wish to transfer to Central Bucks, we will also be supportive of that. The ringers of Padbury had written to the secretaries of both the Central Bucks and North Bucks branches, asking to transfer to the North Bucks branch as they are part of the Buckingham deanery and have always looked to Buckingham for support. We were pleased to agree to their request and await agreement from Central Bucks.

The second area of discussion was the Branch management arrangements. We need to foster the relationship of the branch with the members, towers, and churches in each deanery. To this end it was agreed that three new posts be created of Ringing Development Leader for each of the three Deaneries within the branch. A detailed role specification has been drawn up these new posts.

The Ringing Development Leaders elected were David Phillipson (Newport), Alan Marchbank (Milton Keynes), and Richard Stanworth (Buckingham).

The final area of discussion was the timing of branch activities. Friday nights no longer seem to be popular. Saturday events are quite well supported. It was agreed that we try holding future events on Saturdays and monitor how well they are supported.

These are undoubtedly only the first stages in moving forward to address the Guild objectives and arrest the decline in the number of ringers in the branch.

The Olney Bells project is moving towards a conclusion. The bells are due to be installed in the tower during June and the rededication by Bishop Alan is scheduled to take place at 5.00 p.m. on Saturday 11th July.

Helen Stanworth

## **Old North Berks**

The New Year started well with the West Hanney ringers hosting our New Year's Day ringing and refreshments, and we extend our thanks to them. However attendance at monthly branch practices continues to be variable, with some months being inexplicably far better than others. The 'special' methods for each practice are still proving beneficial, and range from Plain Hunt and Plain Bob Doubles/Minor through to attempts of Bristol Surprise Major.

Our thanks go to Kate Crennell for her continuing efforts in arranging venues, tutors and helpers for the popular monthly mid-week afternoon training sessions for improving bell handling and striking. Likewise our thanks go to Richard Loyd for organising the surprise major practices held in alternate months. These practices are appreciated, and methods rung usually range from Cambridge Surprise Major up to 8-spliced and occasionally beyond.

At our AGM in March we had a cabinet reshuffle, with a few new faces joining the team of branch officers. The posts of Ringing Master and deputy have been amalgamated for the year, with Lee Pinnington (Cholsey) and Richard Loyd (Blewbury) taking on a joint role. Susan Read (Abingdon) is our new Vice-chairman, with Mandy Winters (Cholsey) joining our branch representatives to the Guild. We would like to thank our outgoing Ringing Master and his deputy, Chris Tuckett and Alan Foster, and also Martin Crick, for all their hard work over recent years.

Our 6-bell striking competition was well supported this year, with six teams entering (the most that I can remember in the past fifteen years). It was a close competition and drew many favourable comments from our judge (Ian Judd). All teams acquitted themselves creditably, however Blewbury prevailed and will go forward to represent the Branch at the Guild competition in October.

On the social side, over seventy branch members and friends attended the November barn dance and supper organised by the Blewbury ringers. Ticket sales were sluggish initially and appeared to be a cause for concern. However, thanks to the efforts of two branch members, the event turned into a huge success. With the help of a last minute raffle we raised £115 for branch funds.

We would like to thank the band *Green Willow*, which included one of our branch members from East Hagbourne, for making such a fun evening for us.

Our next branch outing is currently being organised by Philip Roberts of Harwell for 4<sup>th</sup> July. Focussing on the Newbury area, it will have the usual winning formula of a pub lunch and afternoon tea interspersed between the ringing, and will be followed by a barbecue and croquet at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. So it's time to get the mallets polished and some practice in before the big event!

Gillian Loyd

## **Oxford City**

Despite a harsher winter than for some years our ringing schedule has continued to increase year on year. The branch has had three 8-bell practice mornings, one 10-bell evening, three advanced minor evenings, one mixed doubles evening, and seven quarter peal mornings. There was also an outing to Gloucestershire between Christmas and Easter, and only the quarter peal day to Northants towers fell victim to weather. The contrast in weather could hardly have been greater by the time of the outing in March, which was enhanced by balmy conditions, memorable towers and an excellent pub at lunchtime.

Thanks are due to the ringers who have lent support to our training mornings and evenings, which helps the burgeoning group of members keen to feed through to the higher echelons. Great emphasis has been placed on allowing as many people as possible to step up to calling a method, which saw two-thirds of those on the outing calling during the day.

Judith Kirby of Marston tower rang her first quarter of Grandsire Triples at Islip with members of the Marston band in March, and although this overlapped with Marston's practice there were still four people on hand to call methods in our absence, amply demonstrating the benefits of this approach.

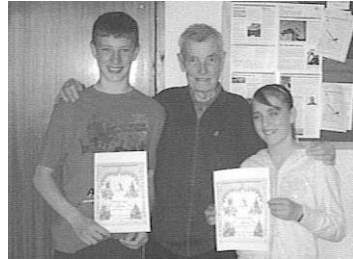
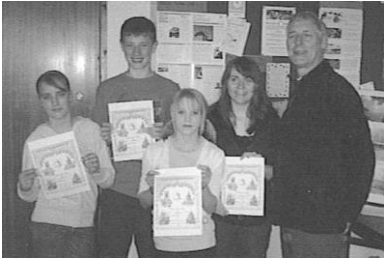
At the end of March, the Vicar received a request from Amy Merone, Volunteer Development Officer at Christian Aid's Oxford Office, asking for bells to be rung on Easter Tuesday (14 April). Other churches and institutions with bells, and other organisations of ringers in Oxford were approached as well.

None of the others were able to arrange for a band of ringers (at fairly short notice, in the middle of the day on a working day, and while many were at work or away on holiday – including our Tower Captain and Deputy Tower Captain). Bells were chimed at St Michael at the Northgate and St Barnabas, but it was only St Giles that managed to gather a band for full-circle ringing, though there were only five – four of our own band plus one from the Cathedral band.

The Christian Aid event took place at the Friends' Meeting House in St Giles, and we received the following message of thanks:

"I just wanted to say thank you for organising a group of ringers for today and thank you to the ringers too! Lots of our supporters at the lunch heard the bells and commented, which was great. Thank you so much for taking part and for supporting Christian Aid. It is much appreciated."

.... and the Vicar was cycling past and he heard us too!



These photos were taken at St Mary's, Kidlington, and show the presentation of Guild Certificates by the City Branch Chairman Rev Canon Anthony Ellis to Abigail Daley, Elliot Daley, Shaïd King and Jasmin Bastable. Shaïd is the great great granddaughter of William Bennett who rang in the record peal of 17,024 changes at Kidlington on 22 May, 1899, and great granddaughter of his son Edgar Bennett.

The second photo is of Elliot Daley and Abigail Daley with T. Peter Franklin, who has been a Kidlington ringer since March 1944 and a Guild member since 1946.

Hugh Deam & Katie Lane

## Reading

Attendance at the branch practices has remained varied throughout the year. The standard of ringing has been good, and those attending, I hope, gained experience at various levels.

The AGM was held in the centre of Reading this year with ringing at St Mary's, the service being held in St Mary's House due to a heating failure in St Mary's church. The tea and meeting were held in St Laurence's with ringing afterwards.

The only alteration to the Branch officers is that Robert Partridge was elected as a Ringing Master – his role being to run the Thursday advance practices.

Saturday practices generally take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month between 16.00 and 18.00 although this has already caused problems with weddings.

In October the branch was represented by St. Mary and St. Laurence in the Guild 6-bell striking competition. Ringing Grandsire Doubles the team was placed 1<sup>st</sup> out of nine entrants.

In November Wallingford hosted the Guild 10-bell striking competition; Reading finished a close 2nd for the second year running, this time to Central Bucks who were deserving winners.

The Branch continues to enter a band in the National 12-bell striking competition. The competition seems to get tougher each year! In 2008 we were drawn to ring at the Tewkesbury eliminator. We were placed 6<sup>th</sup> and therefore did not qualify for the final in Lincoln.

It is with regret that I have to report that Jim Reed a ringer at Whitchurch-on-Thames for over 30 years was tragically killed in a road accident.

Ken Baker

## **Sonning Deanery**

It has been a fairly busy time for the branch since the last issue of Odd Bob. The branch practices have generally been well attended with a variety of methods being rung.

In February the Branch AGM was held at Wokingham All Saints. The main changes to come from the meeting were the elections of both a new Ringing Master and a Deputy Ringing Master. Ken Davenport was elected to role of Ringing Master and John Manley to the position of Deputy. I would like to thank both Aidan Hopkins (Master) and Lesley Graves (Deputy Master), the outgoing officers, for all their efforts whilst in post.

The branch has also been quite busy on the social side as well. February saw the branch outing, which visited six towers between Kingsworthy and Overton. A good day was had by all on what is now becoming a well established event in the branch calendar.

March saw a quiz and supper evening organised by the Sonning Ringers, which was well supported with nine teams taking part. The quiz made a profit of £254 and the raffle raised £69, so a total of £323 was added to the Branch bell fund.

At the end of March a very enjoyable quarter peal day was organised by Pam Elliston (Sonning) and Alan Barsby (Eversley). Quarters were attempted at four towers during the day and three of them were achieved.

The branch 6-bell Striking Competition took place in April at Binfield with four teams entering. The judges were Tim Pett of Old North Berks branch and Bobbie May of Reading branch to whom we are grateful. The competition was won by Wokingham All Saints, with Sonning second, Easthampstead third and Warfield fourth.





This was followed by a branch social at the nearby Jack O’Newbury pub in the form of a skittles evening with supper. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and the photo shows the ‘Easthampstead’ team (plus some members from All Saints, Wokingham) winning an unusual trophy that had not been awarded for 16 years. The ‘sudden death’ individual knockout tournament was won by Julie Brookfield from Warfield.

Andrew Moss

## **South Oxon**

As I started the last report with news of Hilarie’s broken wrist, it is only right to report that she is mended and back to full ringing!

In February we held our AGM at Warborough. We had a very good turn out with ringing before the service, meeting and tea. It gave many of us a chance to ring on eight bells. We welcomed several new members at this meeting: Caroline Lewis, Hannah Pagan, Katherine Lusby, John Hearn, Michael Smetley, Michael Francis and James Anderson-Besant.

I would also like to extend congratulations to Brian and Glenys Gray of Chalgrove, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in March. A quarter peal was rung in celebration!

Andrew Davis has reported on our Holloway Shield competition as follows:

Congratulations to Drayton St. Leonard who with their consistent ringing only lost one round against Chinnor and therefore took 12 points. Chinnor were unbeaten at home and with an away win, finished with 9 points. At Chalgrove we started well, but never really worked out what speed to ring at, and were lucky to end with 7 points. Aston Rowant was very unlucky not to win any points after some very close scores.

The bells at Benson are being re-hung this spring. They even had a spot on BBC TV during the removal (it might still be posted on the Internet!). During this spring the Benson ringers are a roaming band and it is always nice to welcome them to practices.

Congratulations for First Quarter Peals go to: Katrina Bromwich who rang treble to Grandsire Doubles on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, and to Jane Willis who rang the treble to Grandsire Doubles on Sunday 23 November 2008. I would also like to send congratulations for first quarters of Bob Doubles inside to: Ann Mayou, who rang on Easter Monday; and to Maureen Bosley, who rang on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April. Well done!

Our spring outing, which is on May 9<sup>th</sup>, is to Brownsea Island. Many thanks to Kay Bartholomew for organising this. We’ll have a report in the next edition of Odd Bob.

Amy Herlihy

## **Vale of the White Horse**

The heavy snowfalls at the beginning of February forced the last minute postponement of our Annual Dinner. However, even more ringers and friends were able to attend on the rescheduled date and we had a most enjoyable evening at the Rose & Crown at Ashbury.

We visited Longcot for our AGM in March, recording the best attendance for many years. We were pleased to elect eleven new Guild members from four different towers, taking Branch membership to 86, from a low of 57 in 2005. Most of the officers were happy to remain in post and were re-elected unopposed. Tracey Wright agreed to take on the editorship of the Newsletter and Sharon Berrisford is our new Bell Fund Raffle organiser. Retiring fundraisers Norman and Doreen Leslie have been running raffles at branch events since 1987, raising nearly £3500 for the Guild and Branch Bell Funds. Commenting that they would be a hard act to follow, the Chairman proposed a vote of thanks and presented them with flowers and a commemorative handbell.

Recent tower maintenance projects have included the installation of emergency lighting at Faringdon, correction of odd-struckness at Shellingford, and improvements to the tower steps at Shrevenham.

Training evenings and monthly branch practices continue to be well supported, and several ringers have attended Guild training days, both as helpers and students. Congratulations to Andrew Prince, Louise Terry and Mike Wright who rang their first quarter peals at Shellingford.

Lucy Laird

## **Witney and Woodstock**

Snowfall and treacherous road conditions meant that our AGM at Bampton had to be postponed and transferred to Witney at the beginning of March. New committee members are Jean Richards (treasurer), Liz Lawrence (one of two deputy ringing masters) and Ian Davey-Wilson (website editor). Twelve new members were elected, which brings membership to 181 for 2009. Thanks must go to Liz Gaertner for looking after our finances over the last few years and to Brian Curtis for managing the website.

Our Branch quiz at the beginning of the year is proving very popular with a record number of teams entered this year. Richard White again organised the quiz and made an excellent job of the questions and answers (although not quite so successful were his calculations at the end, when the scores went slightly awry). Stonesfield won on the night but for the record it was Wootton who scored the most points. The evening was a great success with each team providing delicious food and more than £140 being donated to Branch funds.

It is very sad to report the untimely loss of Victoria Davey-Wilson from Woodstock. Victoria and Ian are well known visitors to towers in the area. Her funeral was well attended by many from the Branch and there have been a number of quarter peals in her memory.

Freeland has set up a committee to raise money for the restoration of their bells and recently held a very successful fund-raising day. Nine new ringers are being trained at Combe and it's hoped that lapsed ringers at Freeland will return once restoration work has been completed.

We are delighted with our revamped website [www.witneyandwoodstock.org.uk](http://www.witneyandwoodstock.org.uk); many thanks to Ian for all his hard work.

Anthony Williamson

## Points from Peals

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At the point of writing, a total of 77 tower bell peals and 19 hand bell peals have been rung for the Guild this year. This is a small increase in the total number of peals rung during the same period last year. It is great to see that enthusiasm for peal ringing is still thriving and many peals have been specially arranged to commemorate noteworthy events and anniversaries.

The 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009 was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first peal of Bristol Surprise Royal, which was rung at Beddington and conducted by the late Charles H Kippin. This event was marked with a peal of Bristol Royal at Thatcham on the exact anniversary.

In January 2009, the 100<sup>th</sup> peal of Maximus was rung on the bells at St. Mary's Church Amersham, which were augmented to a ring of 12 in 1993. It should also be recorded that a local band peal of Plain Bob Major was rung at Amersham in December 2008. Although there have been over 320 peals rung in the tower, this was the first occasion for over 75 years that a peal had been rung with an entirely local band. This was also one of two peals dedicated to the life of benefactor Bryan Montgomery, who made a generous donation towards the restoration and augmentation of the bells.

Some 29 people have now rung 3000 or more peals, 6 being resident members of the Guild. Plans were therefore made to ring a peal of Maximus at St. Laurence's, Reading with a band of ringers all of whom had rung over three thousand peals. Unfortunately, due to a member of the band being incapacitated at the last minute, this was not to be. However a peal of Surprise Royal was successfully rung instead, which is believed to be the first of its kind. On the same note, 8 of the 9 people who have attained 4000 peals met at St. Blaise, Milton on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and rang a peal of Bristol Surprise Major.

Other points from peals include the first peal on the bells for nearly 40 years at St. Eadburgh, Broadway, Worcestershire, the 1000<sup>th</sup> hand bell peal at John and June Wells' house in Tilehurst, and the first peal of Isleworth Surprise Maximus in hand. Among the personal achievements were Geoff Dodd's and Helen Piper's 1,300<sup>th</sup> peal together, and Geoff Dodd's 950<sup>th</sup> different tower for a peal. Graham John completed the Surprise Maximus alphabet on hand bells, and Jim Diserens celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his first peal with a peal in the same methods and on the same bell at Dorchester Abbey.

Sadly, Ronald G Moore of Chalfont St. Giles passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009. He was steeple keeper and ringer at the church for a number of years, and friends and associates rang a peal to his memory.

Claire F. Roulstone

# Guild Officers for 2009

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<b>Master</b>	<b>Mr Robert Newton</b> <i>master@odg.org.uk</i> The White House, 11 Plowden Park, Aston Rowant, Watlington, Ox49 5SX (01844 352926)
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## Six General Committee members

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Mrs Wenda Fowles

Mr W (Willie) Haynes

Mr David Lane

Mrs June Wells

Miss Louise Marshall

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**Mr W (Bill) Butler**

**Mr Mike K Till**

**Mr John A Harrison**

**Dr Timothy G Pett**

**Mrs Bobbie May**

**Mr Ken R Davenport**

### **Towers and Belfries Sub-committee**

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# Diary of Events for 2009

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the [www.odg.org.uk](http://www.odg.org.uk) web site for diary updates on an ongoing basis.

* Subject to confirmation	AGM Annual General Meeting	AP Advanced Practice
BP Branch Practice	EP Elementary Practice	HY Half Yearly Meeting
QM Quarterly Meeting	RCP Ringing Centre Practice	SC Striking Competition
SM Surprise Major	SP Surprise Practice	CM Committee Meeting

## MAY 2009

Sat	16	Guild	AGM	Stewkley, Central Bucks Branch: Service in St Michael's Church, Tea and AGM in Stewkley Village Hall	3.30 5.15
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Ellesborough	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	18	Bicester	BP	Bicester (10) (Triples and Major)	7.30 – 9.00
Wed	20	VOWH	BP	Coleshill (6) (Little Bob Minor, Crayford Little Court Minor)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	23	EBSB	BP	Lane End (6) Special Methods: Carlisle Surprise Minor and Grandsire Doubles	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	23	Oxford City		TBA Branch Picnic	TBA
Thur	28	Banbury	BP	Adderbury – (TBC)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	30	Oxford City	SC	TBA	TBA
Sat	30	Non Branch Affiliated 8 & 10 Bell Practices	RCP	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	7.30 – 9.30

## JUNE 2009

Tue	2	Chipping Norton	BP	Ascott_Under_Wychwood (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	4	Bicester	BP	Stratton Audley (5)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	5	Newbury	BP	Chieveley (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	5	EBSB	BP	Stoke Poges (8) Weekday Daytime Practice	2.30 – 4.30
Sat	6	North Bucks		Clifton Reynes Summer Social*	4.30 onwards
Sat	6	Reading		TBA Branch Outing	TBA
Sat	6	VOWH		TBA Branch Outing	TBA
Mon	8	ONB	BP	Steventon	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	11	Banbury	SP	Great Tew	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	13	Banbury	SC	Cropredy	5.45
Sat	13	EBSB	SC	Fulmer (6), followed by BP, Special Methods: London Surprise, Spliced Plain, Little and St Clements	5.00 – 9.00
Sat	13	Oxford City		TBA Branch Summer Outing	TBA
Thur	18	Reading Branch	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Fri	19	North Bucks	SC	Weston Underwood (6) *	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	20	Banbury	BP	Hanwell	11
Sat	20	Chiltern	SC+BP	Little Missenden (check for time of Striking Competition start)	7.00 – 9.00
Thur	25	VOWH	SC	Shellingford (6), (6-Bell comp.)	TBA
Sat	27	South Oxon	BP	Thame (TBC)	7.00 – 8.30
Sat	27	EBSB	BP	Beaconsfield (8) Special Methods: Lessness Surprise Major, Erin Triples	7.00 – 9.00

## JULY 2009

Fri	3	Newbury	BP	Beenham (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	4	Oxford City	BP	St Thomas (10)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	4	ONB		TBA Outing and Barbecue	TBA
Sat	4	Non Branch Affiliated 8 & 10 Bell Practices	RCP	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	7.30 – 9.30
Mon	6	Chipping Norton	BP	Chastleton (6)	7.30 – 9.00

Thu	9	Banbury	SP	Steeple Aston	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	9	VOWH		TBA Single Method Training (Method TBA)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	11	EBSB		TBA Novices Outing	TBA
Sat	11	Chiltern		Marsworth/Cheddington (TBC) Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	11	Reading Branch	BP	Shinfield (6)	4.00 – 6.00
Thur	16	Reading Branch	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	18	Chiltern	BP	Mentmore	7.00 – 9.00
Thu	23	Banbury	BP	Sommerton	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	25	South Oxon	BP	Lewknor (TBC)	7.00 – 8.30
Sat	25	EBSB	BP	WEst Wycombe	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	25	Banbury	Outing	TBA	TBA
Tue	28	VOWH	BP	Stanford in the Vale (8) (Double Court Bob Triples)	7.30 – 9.00

### AUGUST 2009

Tue	4	Chipping Norton	BP	Kingham (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	7	Newbury	BP	Hungerford (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	8	EBSB	SP	Burnham (8)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	8	Reading Branch	BP	Englefield (8)	4.00 – 6.00
Tue	11	ONB	BP	Brightwell	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	13	Banbury	SP	Mollington (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP	Stoke Mandeville	7.00 – 9.00
Tue	18	VOWH	BP	Buscot (4) + Picnic (Methods: Buscot and Belfast)	6.30 onwards
Thu	20	Banbury	BP	Rousham	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	20	Reading Branch	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Fri	21	North Bucks	BP	Calverton *	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	22	EBSB	BP	Chesham (6)	7.00 – 9.00

### SEPTEMBER 2009

Wed	2	Chipping Norton	BP	Charlbury (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	4	Newbury	BP	Shaw (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	5	Non Branch Affiliated 8 & 10 Bell Practices	RCP	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	7.30 – 9.30
Thu	7	Banbury	SP	Adderbury	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	10	ONB	BP	Chilton	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	10	VOWH		TBA Single Method Training evening (Method TBA)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	12	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	12	North Bucks		Autumn Meeting, Woughton *	3.30 start
Sat	12	Reading Branch	SC	Streatley (6) – (6-Bell)	4.00 – 6.00
Wed	16	Banbury	BP	Banbury	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	17	Reading Branch	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Wendover	7.00 – 9.00
Thu	24	Banbury	Reps	Elephant and Castle, Bloxham	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	24	VOWH	BP	Hinton Waldrist (6), (London Surprise Minor)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	26	EBSB	BP	Old Windsor (TBC)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Ewelme	7.00 – 8.30
<b>Sat</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Guild</b>		<b>Shinfield, Michaelmas Training Day</b>	<b>10 – 20.30</b>

## OCTOBER 2009

Fri	2	Newbury	BP	Newbury (10)	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Guild</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>VOWH Branch, ODG 6-bell striking competition</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Sat	3	Banbury	SP	Bodicote	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	10	South Oxon		TBA Autumn Outing	TBA
Sat	10	Chipping Norton		Little Compton (5) Ringing, followed by Autumn Meeting	5.45 6.30
Sat	10	Reading Branch	BP	St Mary's, Mortimer (8)	4.00 – 6.00
Sat	10	Oxford City		Bedfordshire area Branch Outing	TBA
Sat	10	EBSB		Chalfont St Peter (6), LN Final & Half Yearly Meeting followed by BP	5.00 – 9.00
Sat	10	Chiltern	BP	Central Bucks (TBA) + Half Yearly Meeting + Orchard Cup; check for start times	7.00 – 9.00 (and)
Mon	12	ONB	BP	Sutton Courtenay	7.30 – 9.00
Thur	15	Reading Branch	AP	Caversham (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	17	Banbury	HY	Mollington: Ringing, Service and Meeting	3p.m., 4 p.m. & 5.15 p.m.
Sat	17	Chiltern		Great Missenden (TBC) Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	24	South Oxon		Aston Rowant Autumn Meeting	4.00
Sat	24	EBSB	BP	High Wycombe (8)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	26	Banbury	BP	Deddington	7.30 – 9.00
Mon	26	VOWH	BP	Shrivenham (10) (Yorkshire Royal)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	31	Non Branch Affiliated 8 & 10 Bell Practices	RCP	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	7.30 – 9.30
<b>Sat</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Guild</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>VOWH Branch</b>	<b>TBA</b>

## NOVEMBER 2009

Tue	3	Chipping Norton	BP	Chipping Norton (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	6	Newbury	BP	Midgham (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Tue	12	VOWH		TBA Single Method Training evening (Method TBA)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	13	ONB	BP	Letcombe Regis	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	14	EBSB		TBA Quarter Peal day	TBA
Sat	14	Oxford City	AGM	Wheatley	TBA
Sat	14	Reading Branch	BP	Nettlebed (6)	4.00 – 6.00
Sat	14	ONB		Radley Village Hall, Skittles evening	TBA
Thur	19	Reading Branch	AP	Caversham (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Marsworth	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	21	Chiltern	Quarter Peal Day	All Towers	All Day
Tue	24	VOWH	BP	Buckland (8) (Erin Triples)	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Guild</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>Long Crendon, South Oxon Branch, 10-bell striking competition</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Guild</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>South Oxon Branch – Great Milton, Autumn General Committee Meeting</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Sat	28	EBSB	BP	Hambleden (8)	7.00 – 9.00



**Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers  
Education Sub-Committee**

# **Michaelmas Training Day**

**Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> 2009**

**10.00 – 20.30**

## **Shinfield Ringing Centre Cost £20**

The aim of the day is to provide the opportunity for students to learn more advanced methods than those offered on the Radley and Steeple Aston one-day courses.

The day will start with group tutorials, followed by four hours of practical ringing in nearby towers. The day will end with an evening meal followed by an activity and course round-up.

Groups will be formed to cover the following range of methods:

1. Kent and Oxford Treble Bob, and Little Bob Minor
2. Surprise Minor
3. Grandsire and Stedman Triples
4. Kent Treble Bob, Little Bob and Double Norwich Court Bob Major
5. Surprise Major (Cambridge, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Superlative)
6. More Advanced Surprise Major (Pudsey, Rutland, London, Bristol)

Further details and application forms can be obtained by sending an SAE to Lucy Walpole, Downton, 425 Worting Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG23 8PT, or by email to *mike.mktill@gmail.com* by 18th July 2009.



*The band after the 23-spliced peal – sitting l-r: Tim Pett 1; Hilarie Rogers 2; Kay Chamberlain 3; Jim Diserens 4; standing r-l: Robin Middleton 5; Robert Partridge 6; Chris Tuckett 7; Robert Newton 8 (conductor)*



*The Banbury branch Annual Dinner –  
Bob and Diana Reeves with Dorothy and Graham Clifton*