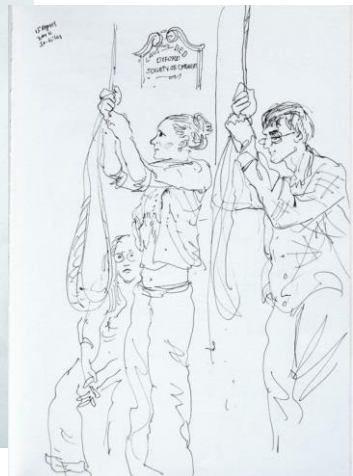


ODD BOB



Newsletter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
website: odg.org.uk/



© Sketches by Dr. Weimin He, artist-in-residence to
the Oxford University Estates Directorate

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From your Editor...

The cover of this Odd Bob shows some of the sketches made by Dr. Weimin He (pronounced 'Her'), artist-in-residence to the Oxford University Estates Directorate, when he visited St Giles tower in April 2010. The aim of his current residency is to produce a body of graphic works recording the historic redevelopment of the Radcliffe Infirmary site within the University of Oxford. There is more information about the artist in the article titled '*Inspired by Bells*' art exhibition on page 5.

Don't forget to check regularly the Guild website at odg.org.uk/ and the many branch websites.

In particular the EBSB Fund Raising website address is: bellfund.org.uk.

Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of October 2011.

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

Congratulations to the band of young ringers that represented the Guild in the inaugural National Youth Striking Contest at the Ringing World Centenary celebrations in March. For me, this was a highlight of a truly memorable day.

Practices began in January, at Downs Barn, Milton Keynes, followed by two further practices at Cuddington, in Central Bucks. Owing to other commitments, the eight who represented us on 26th March had not actually rung together as a complete band until the big day. They rang their touch of Grandsire Triples at Pimlico very well indeed, were awarded 71% and 'gold' medallions, and were adjudged to be the winning method-ringing band.

Not surprisingly, two bands of youngsters ringing call changes were placed above ours overall, but our ODG band can rightfully be proud of its achievements. They met again on 2nd May to ring a different touch of Grandsire as 'guests' in the Guild Eight Bell contest at Childrey and again performed very creditably, although not finishing quite as high in the results table this time!

My thanks to these and all the other youngsters who were put forward for the 'selection' process and came along to practices; also to all the parents who gave up their time to transport and support them. The band [*photo on the back cover*] comprised Alex, Mhairi, Jack, Tim, Ryan, Will, Simon (C) and John. Dan was our travelling reserve.

My thanks, also, to those who have taught, encouraged and inspired them. We hear so many complaints nowadays about the restrictions caused by child protection legislation and guidance. It is encouraging that youngsters are being involved and enthused in spite of these ‘problems’. My hope is that, in time, they will help to carry forward the skills and values of the ‘Exercise’ for the benefit of future generations.

Robert Newton

ODG 10-Bell Striking Competition

The 10-bell striking competition was hosted by the East Berks and South Bucks Branch and they chose the back 10 at St Mary’s Amersham as the venue. Saturday November 27th 2010 dawned cold and with flurries of snow but not sufficient to deter the 7 teams who had entered the competition to be tested by a tricky split-tensors touch of 288 Little Bob Royal.

Amersham’s tower is home to a ring of 13 bells, weighing 19-0-6 in the key of E. The bells, augmented to an 8 in 1983 and then a 12 in 1993, became 13 in 1996 with the addition of a sharp second.

The judges were Ian Wilgress, current Master of the Peterborough DG and Jim White, also from Peterborough. They were soon established just below the tower in the warmth and comfort of a camper van which had been loaned to us for the morning.

Having listened to all the bands ring the judges joined the ringers in church to announce the results. They first congratulated the Guild on being able to produce so many bands capable of producing what was a very high standard of 10-bell ringing.

They then commented on each band in turn in the order of ringing and gave the score they had allocated – the number of faults that had been awarded.

Band	Comments	Faults	Place
Old North Berks	A good piece of ringing with a few gaps and clips to begin with but steady improvement throughout. Very few faults at the end	64	4 th
Reading	This ringing started less confidently and the team took a little time to get used to the bells. Good improvement throughout the ringing with a strong finish	51	3 rd
Vale of White Horse	Started rather unevenly. Seemed to be looking for the right speed. Improved as the ringing proceeded but there was a poor patch in the middle	72	5 th
North Bucks	Started well – slightly slower than other bands. A little uneven. Came to grief between the 2 nd and 3 rd singles and they failed to finish	Did not finish	7 th
Newbury	Good start with a strong rhythm. A few poor patches and occasional uneven leading	86	6 th
EBSB	Strong confident start with long patches of good ringing and few faults. Seemed to mean business from the start. A local band who knew the bells?	27	1 st

Central Bucks	Rounds started slower but gained pace. Unsettled patch just before halfway but then confidence picked up and ringing was very good. Another local band or at least familiar with the bells?	30	2 nd
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Congratulation therefore to the East Berks and South Bucks Branch as winners of the 10-bell Trophy. Ian presented the trophy to John Davidge who had arranged the band but did not ring. [*The winning team from EBSB is shown on the back cover.*]

Alan Marchbank, Deputy Master, proposed the vote of thanks to all those who had made the event a success, especially the judges Ian and Jim, John Davidge the Steward, and the ladies who had ensured a plentiful supply of tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits.

Alan Marchbank

‘Inspired by Bells’ art exhibition

A picture produced in Oxford appeared on the front cover of the Ringing World on 18 March to publicise the *Inspired by Bells* art exhibition, which formed part of the Ringing World Centenary celebrations in London on Sat 26 March. It was painted by Weimin He, a Chinese artist living in Oxford, who was appointed as ‘artist-in-residence’ at the Ashmolean Museum during its recently completed extension scheme, and is now attached in a similar way to the demolition and rebuilding project on the former Radcliffe Infirmary site. I contacted the artist and invited him to watch ringing, first at Merton College and later at St Giles, Oxford. He then produced a few black-and-white sketches, which were published in the RW about a year ago. The next time I contacted him, I found that he had produced a more polished and imaginative picture, in colour. This was to appear in the exhibition in London, under the title *The Sound of Bells*, and is the one that appeared in the Ringing World.

On Sunday 6 March, we had a special service at St Giles to announce that we would be having our bells re-hung and re-tuned, and to appeal for funds. We took the opportunity to have a reproduction of the first of Weimin He's coloured pictures displayed in the church for a few days over that weekend. Stella Boswell, a professional sculptor who had fairly recently joined our congregation, also gave us the chance to display three relief plaques in resin and fibre-glass. The plaques showed bells and ringing, which she had made several years before after a visit to the tower at Somerby, Leics, where she used to live. I was very much struck by the fact that both she and Weimin He had arrived at the same kind of non-naturalistic multiple-perspective design as a way to show both bells and ringers in the same design. Even so, it only occurred to me a week before the exhibition in London that Stella Boswell's plaques would fit in there too. The exhibition curators were very welcoming, and I found myself acting as courier to take one of Stella's plaques up to London on Monday morning 14 March, just in time for the opening of the exhibition at midday.

What else did I get out of the centenary day? The queues to ring were enormous, and all the ringing I managed was a couple of minutes of rounds at St

Magnus the Martyr, and a Bob course of Grandsire Caters at St Clement Danes. But the packed service in Westminster Abbey was something to remember. The Dean got a laugh by saying that many his colleagues would envy the sight of so many ringers in the pews. He got a second laugh by apologising for the shortage of service sheets – and saying that he hoped that the same thing wouldn't happen in a month's time, when Prince William and his fiancée are to be married in the very same place. For me, the other highlight of the day was the 100-change composition on 24 handbells, which (although we were told that it hadn't been rehearsed until that same morning) was performed with great precision at the reception in Methodist Central Hall, following closely after the service in the Abbey.

John Pusey

Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Report

The amount of new money raised this year is £1,795.19, which is less than 2010 at this point in the year. This amount is composed of:

- Donations from branches totalling £1,025.09
- Donations from 5 towers totalling £443.10
- Donations from 2 PCCs totalling £170
- Individual donations totalling £157 (plus gift aid tax to be recovered).

No grants have been paid as yet but I am aware that several projects are nearing completion.

At their last meeting in February two new grant applications were received for consideration and provisional grant offers have been made to Aldworth (£1,275) and St Giles, Oxford (£3,100). The Trustees agreed to accrue £7,000 from 2011 income, in addition to a similar amount from 2010 income, towards the major project at High Wycombe, where the costs remain to be finalised but it is already clear that they will be substantial. Since this meeting one new application form has been issued.

The Trustees continue to work 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. Interest received and available for payment of grants for the first quarter of 2011 is £5,186.31.

At the annual meeting of the Bell Fund in March, the Trustees circulated an updated 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

Policy Statement on Future Investment and Grants 2011

At the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Trustees submitted a policy statement to clarify the position with future investments and grants. This action was a direct consequence of the national and international uncertainties in the financial markets and the economy in general at that time. The Trustees undertook to provide an annual update on the policy and this is the second such annual update. For ease of comparison, the 2009 and 2010 assumptions are shown in italic script.

The Trustees have made the following basic assumptions:

- a) 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. *Investment income received for 2010 was £18,684.31 (2009 - £18,155.78) and for 2011 is forecast to be £20,000.*
- b) 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. *Value of investments at 31 December 2010 was £403,694.89 (2009 - £348,652.88) and included accrued capital appreciation of £80,953.22.*
- c) 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'. *During the year £40,000 was transferred from the deposit account with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England (where the average interest rate reduced to 0.521% for the 3 months ended 30 November 2010) and reinvested in Investment Funds. These funds are designed to provide both high income and capital appreciation.*
- d) 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 2011 and 2012. It is possible that the Queen's Jubilee may provide the impetus for some new projects. *6 provisional grants were offered during 2010, of which 2 were completed during the year in order to avoid the increased VAT rate from January 2011.*

- e) 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. *New money raised in 2010 totalled £8257.11 (2009 - £9,806).*

For 2011 the Trustees will:

- a) Maintain the level of all outstanding provisional grant offers
- b) Allocate the available income in any year between the applications
- c) Seek to maintain each new provisional grant offer at 10% of the cost of eligible work
- d) Limit the maximum provisional grant in any one year to £9,000 (the amount of the previous largest grant paid)
- e) Continue the present policy of not considering projects of modest cost (less than £3,000)
- f) 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 that seek support at an early stage in the fund raising process. This policy has been well received over the years
- g) In view of the ongoing uncertainty of the financial situation review this policy annually and report to the Annual Meeting.

In conclusion for 2011 and the immediate future:

- 1. 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.
- 2. If it becomes necessary for the Trustees to have to reduce the percentage from the present level of 10% then this change will be publicised as soon as possible.
- 3. Should it 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.
- 4. Given the ongoing national and international financial uncertainties, it is not appropriate to speculate about the level of any reduction or its likely timing. However given the experience of 2010, there are grounds for optimism for the future and the expectation that a reduction is less likely than previously envisaged.
- 5. 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 their value to the Bell Fund by reclaiming the income tax.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

Restoration Fund Report

The amount of money received this year to date is £375.36 which is down on last year. The analysis of income is:

- Donations from three branches totalling £250
- Tower donation of £80
- Individual donation (plus gift aid) of £25
- Interest received from investments amounting to £20.36.

The grant offered to North Marston (£470) last year has been paid. In March, the Trustees offered provisional grants to Arborfield (£195) and Shinfield (£350 for two projects). The work at Arborfield has been finished and is about to be inspected. I understand that the Shinfield projects will be completed in the near future. The Trustees are grateful to the members of the Towers and Belfries Committee for their prompt inspections.

There are currently no outstanding grant applications.

The Trustees wish to thank everyone for their financial support to the Restoration Fund. They also wish to remind individual donors who are tax payers, of the additional benefit to the Fund where donations are also gift aided.

Financial support for the Bell Fund and the 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, Honorary Treasurer

Education matters

Recent Guild courses included successful basic courses at Steeple Aston in October and Radley in April, both of which were over-subscribed, and a successful Surprise Royal course at Aston Clinton in December.

Around 20 participants, representing most of the Guild's branches, took part in the Guild Training Meeting in February, where we shared and discussed ideas, problems and practical techniques (some of which were quickly applied by participants back in their home territory).

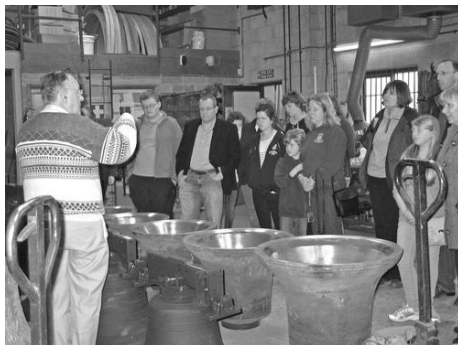
Take up for the Young Ringers Award scheme was the highest ever, with 12 young ringers from around the Guild registering to take part during 2011. Whites of Appleton hosted a half day visit (described below) for the participants to see their works, which included an opportunity to ring on the mini-ring. We will organise other events during the year, but the main aim of the scheme is to stimulate young ringers to take the initiative to develop their knowledge and skills. If you know any of the participants (or any other young ringers) please show interest in what they are doing and give them your encouragement.

We are currently discussing with the North Bucks Branch a programme of courses and mentored training practice to be run over coming months, to enable the Branch to boost its training capability ahead of a major recruitment initiative.

John Harrison, Chairman

Whites of Appleton visit

A visit to the workshops of bell-hangers Whites of Appleton was arranged for the morning of 2nd April for this year's YRA participants; seven of the ten were able to attend together with some parents, grandparents, siblings and mentors. We were given a thoroughly interesting and fascinating talk by Brian White which brought together the technologies (spanning hundreds of years) of timber, bell metal, casting, bell frames and the importance of harmonics in the tuning process. The application of computer technology to the preparation of working drawings, as well as acoustic analysis for bell tuning, was also explained.



A trip to this establishment would not be complete without everyone having a go on the mini-ring which for many was a new experience, most if not all of the non-ringers having a go. A couple of the youngsters even managed to 'circle the tower'.

I am grateful to one of the YRA youngsters, Oliver Rhodes, who has provided the following article. On behalf of all the visitors I would also like to express grateful thanks to Brian and Diana White and Graham Clifton for taking time out to host this event and to look after us so well. As a Guild we are extremely fortunate to have a place such as this within visiting distance.

Alan Bentley, Secretary, Education Sub-Committee

Whites of Appleton visit

The second of April, first thing, I got up out of bed, looking forward to going to one of the most famous (and the oldest) bell hangers in the country, Whites of Appleton. My dad and I drove from Winslow, through Bicester, past Oxford and arrived at Appleton. When we got to Whites we couldn't get in, so we had to wait outside for a few minutes. There was a lot to marvel at outside, wheels and clappers that gave an impression to me that it would have taken a bit of work to make these wonderful objects. Then Alan Bentley met us inside and we had a tour around the works. The company is headed by Brian White who, together with Graham Clifton, told us about the history of the firm, about how bells are made, and the particular bells that have come into Whites for repair and

rehaning. I had a go at striking a clapper against a bell to see what it sounded like and it sounded exactly like a clock striking the hour.

The firm has a forge, an overhead electric crane and engineering and woodworking machinery. It was constructed on a site purchased by Richard White in 1921.

Lastly, we had a go on the mini-ring. It was a very easy ring of 17 bells but we didn't ring anything too complicated. When I rang one of the bells I accidentally let go of the tail and the rope zoomed up into where the bells were and the bell just kept on ringing! Must have been a ghost! Anyway, the bells were lovely to ring and very easy to handle.

It was an enjoyable day out and you could do it too! My thanks go to Brian and Graham for showing us around and for letting us ring these excellent bells, and to Alan Bentley for organising the trip so brilliantly!

Oliver Rhodes

Guild Training Day

This year Thame played host to the annual Guild Training Day in February; an opportunity for those involved in training within each branch to get together to discuss ideas, share experiences, and pick up some new skills to take back to their branches.

The morning was split into two halves. The first consisted of discussions around areas of topical interest. Many areas were proposed and those with most interest were examined. Those that were covered in this session included:

- Teaching techniques – the need for clarity of instruction, not assuming the ringing jargon is known or understood, the merits of not using tied bells for teaching
- Ideas to improve listening skills
- Use of video to improve ringing style
- The use of simulators as part of the teaching process
- Integrated Teacher Training Scheme for improving the quality of teaching
- Improving retention – ensuring variety of experiences, 'lesson planning' a practice, providing equal opportunities for all to achieve, understanding why people leave.

The second part of the morning was practical based. In this session we were given the opportunity to have a go at some different exercises to improve the early stages of ringing. These exercise included:

- Improving listening skills by ringing call changes facing out of the ringing circle and ringing rounds whilst every other bell is ringing at opposite stroke
- Kaleidoscope ringing (based on the ideas in Gordon Lucas' CC booklet) as an alternative to call changes as the next step after rounds
- Alligator as a tool for practising dodging at both strokes
- Bayles and Super Forward as simple methods that allow ringers to repeat the same work so that they can learn it quicker.

The morning ended over a pub lunch where we could digest what we had learnt. Certainly the three of us that attended from the North Bucks Branch left quite inspired. I know that Kaleidoscope has been rung in 4 towers within 3 days of the meeting and that it is being publicised in our branch newsletter in preparation for our next branch practice so that it can be more widely disseminated.

Many thanks to John Harrison for organising and running the sessions.

Jonathan Griggs

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

In the period since the October report the scheme has gone from strength to strength with the number of current awards now at twenty one – the highest ever. The number of expired awards has also declined, from eleven to seven. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is now at seventy, about sixteen per cent of the towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been seventy-two inspections (of which eighteen were preliminaries), resulting in fifty two awards (twenty-four Gold, eighteen Silver, and ten Bronze).

Congratulations to the bands and steeple-keepers at Reading St Giles, who on renewal up-rated their previous Silver Award to a Gold, and at both Winslow and Wokingham All Saints, who renewed Gold Awards. Congratulations also to the bands and steeple-keepers at Mapledurham, Chalgrove, and Freeland which qualified for an award for the first time, gaining a Gold, and at Cropredy which gained a Silver.

Special mention should also be made of Ellesborough who, when renewing a previous Gold award, became the first tower after Chalfont St Giles to obtain a 100% score – congratulations to all concerned.

Ten out of the fifteen branches now have towers in the “current awards” list, with EBSB maintaining its pre-eminent position from Newbury, Reading and South Oxon (the gap is closing!). The details are as follows:

Banbury	1	(Silver)
Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
EBSB	5	(Gold x 3, Silver, Bronze)
Newbury	3	(Gold, Silver x 2)
Old North Berks	1	(Gold)
Reading	3	(Gold x 2, Silver)
Sonning Deanery	2	(Gold, Silver)
South Oxon	3	(Gold, Silver, Bronze)
Witney & Woodstock	1	(Gold)

If your tower is in one of the remaining five branches, how about trying to get your branch included by gaining an award?

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

Chalfont St Giles	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.03.12
Thatcham (St Mary)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.04.12
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.12
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB Branch	Expires 30.06.12
Harwell (St Matthew)	Old North Berks	Expires 30.09.12
Mapledurham (St Margaret)	Reading Branch	Expires 30.11.12
Reading St. Giles	Reading Branch	Expires 31.12.12
Winslow (St Laurence)	Central Bucks Branch	Expires 31.01.13
Chalgrove (SMV)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 31.01.13
Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 28.02.13
Ellesborough (SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern Branch	Expires 28.02.13

Silver Award

Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.10.11
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.11.11
South Stoke (St Andrew)	Reading Branch	Expires 31.03.12
Clewer (St Andrew)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.12
Peasmore (St Barnabas)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.06.12
Thame (St Mary V.)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 30.11.12
Cropredy (S M V)	Banbury Branch	Expires 31.12.12
Freeland (S.M.V)	Witney & Woodstock	Expires 28.02.13

Bronze Grade

Benson (St Helen)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 31.10.11
Fulmer (St James)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.12

Expired Awards

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
Easthampstead (St Michael)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.12.08
Winkfield (St Mary)	EBSB Branch	Expired 31.05.09
Purley (St Mary V.)	Reading Branch	Expired 31.01.10
Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury Branch	Expired 31.01.10
White Waltham (St Mary)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.03.10

John Davidge

Towers and Belfries Committee Report

Since the last report in October, Fifteen inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below.

- Chalgrove (Grant inspection; TMA inspection – Gold)
- Cookham (Clapper adjustment)
- Cropredy (Tower Maintenance Award inspection – Silver)
- Ellesborough (Tower Maintenance Award inspection – Gold)
- East Ilsley (Grant Inspection)
- Freeland (Grant inspection; TMA inspection – Silver)
- Mapledurham (TMA inspection – Gold)
- North Marston (Two inspections – Grant)
- Reading, St Giles (TMA inspection – Gold)
- Thame (TMA inspection – Silver)
- Winslow (TMA inspection – Gold)
- Wokingham, All Saints (TMA inspection – Gold)

The maintenance course planned for the Newbury Branch had to be abandoned due to lack of support. However, the committee has arranged for a course to be run in June, in the Long Crendon area. This has been advertised throughout the Guild and is currently oversubscribed. A maintenance training afternoon was arranged for a number of members of the Thame band.

The committee has been advised that, while the Listed Places of Worship Scheme (which allowed churches to reclaim VAT on a variety of repairs) has been cancelled, VAT exemption on new bells, frames and fittings still applies.

John Davidge

Librarian's Report

There have been 10 library enquiries since Odd Bob issue 83. These have been about:

- Peals rung by Rev R.F.R.Routh of Beaconsfield during period 1937-1946
- Arthur Norcott, Sonning Deanery branch ringer, 1910-1917
- Membership of Chipping Norton branch ringer
- Doug and Charles Exon, ringers in North Berks/South Oxon area
- Sharpe's Oxfordshire Bells was loaned
- Kathleen Higgins, ringer in Oxford during late 1940s
- William Wilder, ringer at Upton-cum-Chalvey (Slough)
late 19th/early 20th century
- Peal of Bob Minor at Goring, 3rd March 1902
- ODG members who were killed in action during World War II.

The binding of the Guild Annual Report, for 2004-2008 was completed and the copies have been distributed.

Following the Ringing World Centenary Day, it was decided to create a record of recollections of the day from ODG members who attended. I have been assembling contributions which have been sent in via Branch Secretaries. If you would like to add your account of the day, what you did, where you went, who you met, etc., please send it either directly to my email or via your branch secretary.

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

For a number of years, the Guild has arranged Group Personal Accident Insurance cover for Guild members and those under instruction by a Guild member. Full details of the cover and benefits payable are on the ODG website: odg.org.uk/reports/odg_insurance_definition.php

Brian Gatward

2011 ODG 8-bell Striking Competition

The Old North Berks Branch hosted this year's 8-bell striking competition. With no heats to ring we moved straight to a final, which was rung at the delightful 12 cwt ground floor 8 of St Mary's, Childrey. One of the 6 churches in the Ridgeway Benefice, St Mary's boasts many treasures, not least of which are stunning views to the north and west across the Oxfordshire countryside. Blue sky and constant sunshine combined to make this a brilliant day for standing around listening to good ringing.

A straightforward touch of Grandsire Triples was chosen and 8 tower and branch teams did battle. They were joined this year by our Youth Team – the Band who represented the Guild in the Ringing World National Youth Competition in Pimlico and who were placed 1st in the change ringing section of that competition.

It was good to see many familiar faces and renew acquaintances. It was also encouraging to have a few new entries and to see new people getting involved with Guild events. It is especially encouraging to have had entries from Caversham and a Branch band from Witney and Woodstock.

Tea and refreshments were provided throughout the afternoon by the Childrey ringers. Expertly organised, a proper ringers' tea of sandwiches, cakes and freshly brewed tea was enjoyed and appreciated by all who partook. Well done.

Our Judge Hugh Evans, Chairman of the Gloucester and Bristol DA, was settled in the fine gardens of the Manor House just across from the church and listened to the teams ringing a test piece of 1 minute of rounds followed by 233 Grandsire Triples. The ringing concluded, we moved into the village hall for the results [*shown on the next page*].

Team	Comments	Faults	Place
Witney and Woodstock Branch	Settled ringing with minor trips throughout. Ringing improved in the 2 nd half	69	6 th
South Oxon Branch	Nice even rhythm with a few trips; 2 nd half better than the first	56	3 rd
High Wycombe Tower	Good rounds to start with, confident ringing. Six leads in the middle of the test piece without mistakes	18	2 nd
Sonning Deanery Branch	One bell often late at backstroke in the rounds. Steady pace throughout. Ringing improved in the last third of the test piece	63	4 th
Reading Branch	No faults in the rounds. Few faults in the changes; a slight trip quickly recovered. A very good piece of ringing	6	1 st
Newbury Branch	Steady rounds, minor method errors in the changes took time to recover; ringing improved towards the end.	73	7 th
North Bucks Branch	Very good rounds. Changes not quite so good. Method error at 3 rd leads very quickly corrected. Some nice ringing	66	5 th
Caversham Tower	Rounds were good but the changes never quite settled into a consistent rhythm. Good effort	77	8 th
ODG Youth Band	Good effort with slight trips throughout. A method mistake quickly corrected	79	9 th

So it is that the Trophy returns to the Reading Branch, well done to Stephen and his team. Congratulations also to High Wycombe and to South Oxon, placed second and third respectively.

Alan Marchbank proposed the vote of thanks to all those who had made the event a success by taking part, to the Hosts especially Gill and Richard Lloyd for making the arrangements for the day, to the incumbent Rev. Alan Wadge for the use of the bells, and to Hugh the judge. The company showed its appreciation in hearty applause.

Alan Marchbank

News from the Branches

Banbury

Unfortunately the Advent Carol Service at Bloxham in early December was not particularly well attended, but those who did go enjoyed singing a few carols, followed by warm mince pies and mulled wine afterwards.

The month of January 2011 was designated “Challenge Month”. The challenges varied from ringing touches/plain courses of methods as well as quarter peals and call changes. The conclusion of the event was a social held at the beginning of February in St Mary’s Centre, Banbury with a jacket potato supper and quiz, where certificates were also presented for those towers/individuals who had achieved a “first”. The evening was a very lively affair and everyone enjoyed the quiz which was varied and interesting.

Our annual dinner at the Joiners Arms, Bloxham, once again proved to be an enjoyable affair. On this occasion we did not have a speaker. This had the effect of encouraging everyone who wished to do so, to move about the tables for a chat, and helped create a really good atmosphere.

About 15 ringers from the branch travelled variously by train, car and bus, to London to the Ringing World’s Centenary Celebration on 26th March. It coincided with the huge TUC march, so this did cause delays and diversions for travelling into London. There was plenty for ringers to do and it was well organised.

An evensong service at Westminster Abbey attended by 2,000 ringers was followed by a reception at Central Hall just over the road. At the reception a 24-bell handbell touch specially composed for the Centenary was rung. This was an amazing piece of ringing to listen to and enjoy. One of our branch members was fortunate to have his name drawn to go up the Westminster Abbey tower, although not to ring. During the early evening, in addition to a handbell concert at St Margaret’s Church – which most of our branch group attended and which was absolutely wonderful – there was further evening ringing at various churches for those who still had the stamina! Without exception everyone from our branch who went had an excellent day out.

Heather Hughes

Bicester

We held our AGM on 19th February at Stratton Audley with Teresa Carter taking the chair for the first time because our President, Willie Haynes, had decided to take a less onerous role following a bout of ill health. Seventeen members were present which was encouraging (it was especially good to have the support of the Guild Secretary again) and five new members in total were elected from Middleton Stoney and Launton towers. The only change of officers was the election of Anthony Cole as joint Ringing Master (alongside Jeremy Adams who had made the arrangements for the AGM and an enjoyable lunch afterwards at the Red Lion).

The website is still Anthony's responsibility and he has introduced new features which make it more lively and interesting and will, we hope, increase communication amongst members whilst not neglecting those who rely on postal or telephone communication!

Anthony also organised the Branch Outing on 9th April when eleven ringers (and friends, both canine and human) rang in the Banbury area, starting at All Saints, Middleton Cheney and finishing at Mollington, with Chacombe and Cropredy in between. At Cropredy our audience included two well-known actors, Prunella Scales and Timothy West – more details on our website at www.bicesterbranch.org.uk!

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

The AGM in February resulted in the implementation of three new schemes in addition to the usual business.

Firstly we decided to follow the example of many other branches and set up a monthly mid week ringing group. So if you are near our boundaries you may be getting a call from us in the future.

Next we agreed to set up a register of ringers willing to be called on for weddings and funerals. It is anticipated that this will be particularly helpful for those mid week and sometimes short notice calls that can be difficult to meet.

Lastly it was decided to establish an expertise bank for addressing practical bell issues like broken stays while also encouraging more ringers to go on appropriate bell maintenance courses.

With the flow of information from ODG central and within the branch rising, and the price of postage increasing so dramatically, online communications are key. Thanks to our webmaster working with ODG, we now have proper email circulation lists established and working well.

Diana Slevin

Chiltern

The Chiltern Branch held its Annual General Meeting at the church of St Michael & All Angels, Aston Clinton on 16th April 2011, when all the officers were re-elected. The Branch had 119 members registered during the year. Attendance at monthly practices had often been disappointing, but there had been two very successful Saturday morning training sessions. The Branch's finances were in good order, and (when considered on a "per member" basis) the Branch ranked second in contributions to the Guild Bell Fund.

The meeting elected four new members from St Michael & All Angels, Halton, and the Branch welcomed the renewed interest of that tower in the activities of the Guild after an absence of many years. Fund raising is continuing for the churches of Holy Cross, Slapton and St Giles, Cheddington, and financial contributions and other demonstrations of support for both these activities would be appreciated (Slapton have raised about one third of the money required).

Congratulations must go to the church of SS Peter & Paul, Ellesborough, which has just been awarded another Gold in the Tower Award scheme, this time with a perfect 100% score. The tower has now achieved 3 back-to-back Gold Awards, for which credit must go to both the present (Rex) and the retired (Len) steeple keepers.

The bells of St Mary's, Wendover, were back in use on 17th April (Palm Sunday) and the church was open again for worship during Easter Week, following a protracted period of general restoration and refurbishment which began last July.

Brian Robson

Chipping Norton

The December branch practice was held in Chadlington and was followed by some mulled wine and mince pies, which was very welcome given the extremely cold weather at that time. In fact despite the heavy snow at the beginning and end of 2010, and the rural location of many towers, we did not have to cancel a single branch practice.

The branch AGM was held in Leafield in March which also gave us a chance to ring there again, after a break of several years, following repairs to the bells last year. Most branch officials remain the same as for 2010 with the exception of the Honorary Secretary as Christine Harris was elected to replace Tony Merry who was standing down. The branch is very grateful to Christine for taking on this in addition to already being honorary branch treasurer. The Guild secretary Hilarie Rogers also attended the AGM and presented certificates for 50 years Guild membership for three members of the branch, Pat Stratford (nee Sole) elected 1954, Jean Datson (elected 1959) and Ken Wakefield (elected 1960).

In January five new members were elected to the Guild, two from Burford: Lindsey Worvill and Mary Hardie, and three from Leafield: Carole Long, Angus Child and Martin Child. In February another member was elected from Burford, Heather Wannell.

Also in February we repeated last year's introduction of a Saturday morning practice followed by a pub lunch, which gave everyone more time to chat than at the usual evening practices. This year's event was very popular and was held at Shipton-under-Wychwood, and was attended by 23 branch members. The pub lunch at the Lamb Inn was very well received and thanks are due to the Ringing Master Keith Mitchell for organising this special event.

The branch decided that it would like to take up the Guild's offer of hosting branch websites and the new web address for our site is www.chippy.odg.org.uk.

Tony Merry for Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

Our year finished well with the EBSB band winning the 10-bell competition at Amersham in November, and an excellent Christmas Social at Old Windsor where we were treated to a splendid meal and quiz. Our final event of 2010 was the post-Christmas outing to Olney, Newport Pagnall, Great Brickhill and North Marsden.

Ordinary Branch practices continue to be held roughly once a month, although some have been rather thinly attended, often for no apparent reason, making it harder work but enabling more individual progress to be made. This year we have started to include some Improvers' practices – targeted towards a particular method with people applying for a set number of places and supported with a designated group of helpers.

Higher numbers practices continue to be held at Amersham and occasionally at Cookham offering some first experiences on 10 or 12, as well as developing method repertoire. Surprise practices have continued to be well supported with up to Standard 8 rung at most of them.

We have also had one Novices' outing to Nettlebed, Chalgrove, Watlington and Little Milton. Two Branch quarter peals were rung in March: Grandsire Triples and Stedman Caters with several firsts in method.

Our AGM has been held at Hambleden, slightly earlier than usual as Easter weekend is late this year. Graham Firman stood down as our Treasurer after 7 years service and John Dieppe has taken on this role. All other officers were re-elected. We also welcomed twelve new members to the Branch.

Sadly I have to report the death of two of our members. Geoff Lister died in December aged 92 years. He had been a member of the ODG for over 70 years and a ringer at All Saints, Maidenhead, the church he attended all his life. David Robbins of Chalfont St Peter has also recently died. David took up ringing 6 years ago and has been a reliable and helpful member of the Chalfont band. Both these ringers are sadly missed by all who knew them.

Mandy Salter

Newbury

The Branch Quarter and Curry events have continued to be popular; in November the highlight being three concurrent performances, with the twenty participants retiring to the Rajasthan in Newbury for the meal and social part of the evening.

On November 27th the Branch took part in the Guild 10-bell Striking Competition at Amersham. It was the first time that a Newbury Branch band had taken part for a number of years, an achievement in itself, so the band were not disappointed with 6th place in the competition.

New Year's Day saw the marriage of our Chairman and Training Officer; quarter peals were duly rung at Thatcham and Newbury to congratulate Mike and Lucy Hopkins-Till on their happy occasion.

The Branch's annual quarter peal week was in February. For those of a statistical whim: 30 attempts were made with only two losses, all but two ringable towers with four or more bells took part, and 77 ringers were involved. Particular achievements included two 'first quarter' pealers, one first as conductor, and the quarter of Cambridge Surprise Major at Hungerford being the first Branch ladies band performance since 1987. Our Ringing Master, Mark Robins, deserves thanks for the organisation of the week. We are also very grateful to all of the participating ringers, and the towers, for allowing the use of their bells.

A Branch dinner was held at the end of the week at Frilsham, allowing those that attended to review and celebrate the week's achievements, including presentation of certificates by Mark to those achieving firsts. Marcus and Tessa Allum must be thanked for making the arrangements for the dinner.

The Branch AGM was held on Saturday 5th March at Aldermaston. Those present stood in silence as a mark of respect to remember Ester Brown (who was just a few weeks short of her 100th birthday) and Michael Goss, a member of the neighbouring Winchester & Portsmouth Guild with links to the Newbury Branch. Mike Hopkins Till stood down as Chairman, as did David Wilcox as Secretary; Marcus Allum and the author were elected to these positions respectively; all other posts remain unchanged. Thanks are due to Mike and David for their hard work in office.

Branch practice attendance is generally very good (with a cold and icy practice at Yattendon in December the exception!); the experimental inaugural Branch four-bell practice that was held at Chaddleworth in February being especially noteworthy. The success of this practice in particular is reflected in the inclusion of Stanford Dingley as a venue for a forthcoming Branch Practice, so it seems that four-bell practices are set to get established in the schedule.

Looking forward to July, we have the Branch striking competition and social at Peasemore; it is hoped that there will be enough teams this year to allow the competition to go ahead.

On a personal note I feel it worth mentioning that as a newcomer to the Branch I have been very impressed by the high level of activity, and I certainly look forward to it continuing.

Ben Waller

North Bucks

The Christmas celebration was a combined effort between the Shenley and Loughton ringers. The ringing and the service were held at Shenley, and the fish and chip supper and quiz were held in the Loughton Memorial Hall. Whilst numbers were slightly less than the previous year, the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came.

The AGM was held at Newport Pagnell. All officers were re-elected, as they are heavily involved with planning the recruitment project.

Although it started out as just a working title for the recruitment project, '*The Big Ring Pull*' has been adopted as the name for the project and is being referred to by this name not only by the ringers in the branch but also the local clergy. News of it is also getting around to the other branches and the ODG, as well as neighbouring guilds. The project is moving forward with great pace. Much hard work is going on behind the scenes and the whole project is continuing to gain momentum.

Helen Stanworth

Old North Berks

2011 got off to a good start with New Year's Day ringing and refreshments held at Cumnor. Our thanks go to the Cumnor ringers for making this a very convivial event that gave everyone a chance to catch up with each other at the start of the year.

Attendance at our monthly branch practices over the past few months has again been variable. However there are always enough attendees to make these useful and sociable occasions. This was particularly the case at Blewbury in December, where those present also celebrated the 70th birthday of the Tower Captain, Peter Corderoy, with fizzing wine and a wonderful bell-shaped cake made by Josie Irving. 'Special' methods are still being assigned to each practice, with Doubles through to Surprise Major being attempted.

Attendance at the mid-week afternoon training sessions continues to be good, as does that at the surprise major practices held in alternate months. Our joint Ringing Masters would like to thank all those who have attended as helpers for the time they have committed to improving ringing throughout the Branch. The surprise major practices are going particularly well with most of the standard eight being rung regularly. It is also pleasing to see several new attendees currently learning Cambridge and Yorkshire.

Wantage entered our branch 6-bell striking competition for the first time in 38 years and returned with a sparkling performance, taking first place. They will now represent the branch in the Guild competition later this year. Five teams entered the competition, which was most ably judged by Lorna and Brian. We hope that it will not be another 38 years before Wantage enters our competition again.

Our autumn social event in November was a quiz evening in Harwell Village Hall. Thanks go to Philip Roberts, together with Janette, Kathryn and the Harwell ringers for arranging a great evening and supper for branch members and friends, which raised £75 for branch funds.

It has been a busy time for the branch in recent months. We are hosting the Guild Ringing Day and 8-bell striking competition at the beginning of May. By the time you read this report these events will have occurred and I hope that they were both successful. I would like to thank all ONB branch members who have given me their time and support whilst I have been arranging the various venues.

Gillian Loyd

Oxford City

At our AGM in November the branch elected Simon Edwards as the new Chairman and reluctantly allowed the Rev Anthony Ellis to return to concentrating on his official duties.

Apart from the numerous practices and outings, many of which were held outside the branch, it has been a quiet few months with many practices being well attended and several towers making good progress with their ringing.

It has also been a particularly sad time as three members of the branch have died since the publication of the last Odd Bob.

On Saturday 29 January a quarter-peal of 1260 Bob Doubles, Reverse Canterbury and Grandsire was rung at St Mary the Virgin, Iffley, in memory of Hilary Nex, who died on Christmas Day after a short illness. Hilary rang at Iffley Church from 2003 to 2006. She was an enthusiastic member of the band, attending Guild meetings, going on outings and ringing in quarter-peals – when she could be spared from choir practice. She leaves a husband Andrew and daughter Becky, aged two.

Paul Foote was a ringer at Headington from the early 1970s until 2008 when ill health forced him to give up. He has been in charge at St Andrew's during the 1980s and 90s. He originally learnt to ring in Swanage during the Second World War when church bells were rung silently. He taught many people to ring and was always interested in helping others; his dry sense of humour made practice night enjoyable for all.

David Lane died in March after a courageous battle with cancer. While a member of the City Branch he was Chairman, Secretary and Representative, and was a member of St Giles and later St Aldate's. David was an accomplished ringer on handbells and tower bells; he rung over a 1,000 peals. His funeral service on 29 March was attended by many, many ringing friends who took pleasure in listening to the CD of him ringing Little Bob 20 on handbells.

They will all be missed.

Katie Lane

Reading

The Branch still holds three practices a month. The Branch Practice which caters for all abilities is usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month, the Advanced Practice, which is at Shiplake, is usually the third Thursday, and the last Sunday in the month is a 'higher numbers' practice at Reading St. Laurence. Attendance at these practices is still very varied.

The Branch AGM was at Tilehurst where, after a shortened service of Evensong and an excellent tea, it was down to the business meeting. June Wells welcomed the Guild Master Robert Newton and Reading Branch Members to the meeting. The business went smoothly and all the Branch Officers were re-elected.

The Branch is hoping that as many towers as possible will have rung during Friday 29th April, the Royal Wedding Day.

On a sad note one member of the Branch has passed away this year, John Clarke-Maxwell. The Branch was well represented at the funeral.

The latest Branch Newsletter can be found on the Branch website: www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk

Ken Baker

Sonning Deanery

At our AGM: Ringing Master Ken Davenport was replaced by his deputy John Manley, with Graham Slade becoming Deputy RM; Sue Davenport replaced Eric Bowes as Treasurer; Alison Clayton was confirmed as Newsletter Editor (having replaced Sarah Boys in mid-term), and 11 new members were elected. During the service before the meeting, instead of a sermon the vicar entertained us by reading Chapter 3 of Akenfield, which concerns the bell ringers of the village.

Our 6-bell striking competition at Waltham St Lawrence was a great success, attracting six entries, the best for years, with three teams ringing rounds. Congratulations are due to Wokingham All Saints for fielding two teams, and to the eight new members who participated. Sonning were placed 1st with 38 faults, followed by Wokingham All Saints (43) and Arborfield (69).

Security has been enhanced at some of our towers owing to a series of burglaries and attempted burglaries; break-ins were attempted at the churches in Sonning, Wargrave, Wokingham and Woodley.

Rain was observed coming through the roof into the bell chamber at Sonning; investigations showed that the lead roof was flawed and that both ends of the central beam of the tower roof must have been rotting away for decades. Repairs were facilitated by scaffolding erected in the bell chamber, so the bells were unavailable for some six weeks. The learners continued to get some practice ringing by the kindness of the Shiplake ringers, who made available several Thursday evening sessions on their bells.

Several of us enjoyed a day in London on 26 March for the Ringing World Centenary celebrations, and on 29 April there were quarter-peals and general ringing at various towers to celebrate the royal wedding.

Pam & Andrew Elliston

South Oxon

The year began with Chalgrove bells being re-dedicated by the Bishop of Dorchester on 23rd January. The Chalgrove ringers are very pleased with the work!

We held our AGM on the 26th February at Little Milton. Ringing was followed by a lovely service. The meeting was held at the Pine Lodge in Little Milton with a fantastic tea. At our AGM Brian Gray stepped down as Chairman. The Branch would like to say thank you to Brian for all the years he has been our Chairman. Our new Chairman is Andrew Davis and Vice Chairman is Wendy Simon.

We held our Striking Competition on the 16th of April. Four bands entered: Shabbington, Little Milton, Benson and Drayton St Leonard. The winning team was Drayton St Leonard followed closely by Benson.

In April we also held a special 8-bell practice at Benson. This event had a fantastic turnout with standing room only in the ringing chamber. This event was notable in that a method composed by James Bessant-Anderson, of Benson, was first rung.

About 10 people from the branch attended the Ringing World Centenary celebrations on the 26th of March. The feedback was that it was an amazing day with lots of comments on how wonderful (and heavy) the bells at St Pauls are.

Amongst the numerous Royal Wedding festivities several branch towers rang on the 29th of April.

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

Branch practices are generally well attended and training evenings continue to be popular. Recent topics have included ringing and calling call changes, and basic conducting skills. The monthly Sunday afternoon surprise major practices at Longcot are also drawing a good crowd, including ringers from neighbouring branches and guilds. Ringing ranges from half a course of Cambridge to eight spliced. There is also a ten bell practice before 1st Sunday evensong at Shrivenham to which visitors are always welcome.

About fifteen ringers joined the Ringing World Centenary celebrations in London on 26th March and between them managed to visit most of the attractions of the day as well as grab a few towers.

We visited Buckland for our AGM in April. We were pleased to welcome the Guild Master and are grateful to him for chairing the meeting in the absence of our Chairman. All of the branch officers were re-elected unopposed.

Branch membership remains fairly steady, with the election of eleven members so far this year making up for the loss of those who have lapsed or moved away.

Congratulations to Ashbury ringer Colin Saunders who covered to his first quarter peal at Bishopstone on Valentine's Day.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

After Freeland's hard work to restore their bells last year, the high standard achieved has been rewarded with a gold certificate under the Towers and Belfries Maintenance award scheme. The scheme aims to support and provide guidelines to towers, using a marking sheet, on how to keep their tower and bells in good, safe condition (full details are in the ODG Annual Report).

Stanton Harcourt hosted our AGM at their village hall in February; we are grateful to Jane and Nigel Eagle for making the arrangements, particularly a most enjoyable service beforehand. Alison Merryweather-Clarke has taken on the role of Ringing Master and Louise Brown becomes deputy. Many thanks to Louise for her dedicated work as Ringing Master over the past three years and also to Liz Lawrence for her support as deputy. Guild membership has risen to 193.

Alison is retaining Saturday and some weekday branch practices, but is also introducing a new scheme under which towers receive short-term help from more experienced ringers, and is encouraging local ringers to work together.

Richard White kindly organised the branch quiz at Woodstock Tennis Club in February. Despite numbers being slightly down on previous years, the evening was a huge success with delicious food provided by each team and the usual entertaining banter during answers. Woodstock won for the second year running. This event provides valuable funds to support branch activities.

Congratulations to Melanie McGregor, Freeland's tower captain, and Ian Craig at Ducklington for ringing their first quarter peals. Melanie has subsequently trebled for a quarter of Bob Doubles and Grandsire at North Leigh in April.

There now appears to be greater interest in improving ringing skills within the branch. Members are attending courses at Radley and the Harry Windsor Ringing Centre at Kineton, and recently it was great to hear Bristol rung at a regular Woodstock practice. A band represented the branch at the ODG 8-bell striking competition and achieved a creditable 6th place.

Anthony Williamson

Points from Peals

A number of Guild peals have taken place over the past month to mark the centenary of *The Ringing World*, the weekly publication for bell-ringers, which was launched on 24th March 1911. Among the peals rung was a new method, which has aptly been named RW100 Surprise Major and Emerald Surprise Major.

Six-bell peal ringing continues to thrive within the Guild: a peal at Coleshill, Oxfordshire was rung to celebrate the centenary of the first peal of Spliced Minor, rung at Edenham on 15th February 1911. The same methods and compositions were used as in the original peal. Six-bell ringing has advanced since then, and it has now become possible to ring the standard 41 Surprise Minor methods in a normal length peal using common bobs only. This is the six-bell equivalent of bobs-only Stedman Triples, and was rung for the first time by Guild members at Childswickham on 26th March 2011.

In terms of handbell ringing, peals of Maximus have continued to flourish and a number of methods have been rung on handbells for the first time: Woodspring Surprise Maximus, Summer Lane Alliance Maximus and Temple Row Delight Maximus. It should also be noted that Bernard Groves recently rang his 500th peal of Maximus in hand.

Some other significant peals of note include a peal at Aldermaston to welcome the Revd Becky Bevan after her induction as Rector of the benefice of Aldermaston and Woolhampton. Congratulations to Maryanne Roach who celebrated her 60th birthday and to Janet and Stuart Galloway for their 30th wedding anniversary – these events were marked with a peal of Grandsire Triples at Amersham on 26th February.

The Guild lost one of its more prolific peal ringers when David Lane passed away on 15th March. David rang a total of 793 peals for the Guild, which included several notable handbell performances. Among these included a peal of Kent Treble Bob Sixteen in 1977, and the core of this band went on to ring Little Bob Twenty and Little Bob Twenty Two the following year (although these peals were rung non-association). A recording of the Little Bob Twenty was played at David's funeral. A handbell peal at Lytham End, Tilehurst on 21st March was rung in memory of David by a band that had rung 48 peals together with David.

A peal was rung at Caversham in thanksgiving for the life of John M. C. Clark-Maxwell. John, a noted ringer and teacher, moved to Reading in 1966 and rang at Swallowfield, Shinfield and Caversham. A full and very interesting obituary appears on page 324 of *The Ringing World*.

Claire F. Roulstone

Guild Officers for 2010

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Diary of Events for 2011

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the 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 2011

Sat	21	Banbury	BP	Tadmarton, Doubles and Minor Practice	10.30
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Great Missenden	7pm – 9pm
Sat	21	Guild	AGM	Bicester Branch	
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	Wargrave	10.30am – 12pm
Tue	24	VOWH	SC	Uffington, 6 Bell competition	
Sat	28	Central Bucks	AP	Cuddington, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sun	29	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence, Higher Numbers Practice	1–2.30

JUNE 2011

Wed	1	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stony (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	1	Chipping Norton	BP	Kingham (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	2	Banbury	BP	Rousham	7.30
Fri	3	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10) Weekday Practice	2.30 – 4.30
Fri	3	Newbury	BP	Shaw	7.30 – 9.00pm
Tue	7	Central Bucks		Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Wed	8	ONB	BP	East Hendred (6)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	11	Central Bucks	SC	North Marston	
Sat	11	EBSB	SC	6 Bell competition	5
Sat	11	EBSB	BP	Dorney (6)	7 – 9pm
Sat	11	Oxford City	BP	Watlington	am tbc
Sat	11	Reading		Outing	
Thu	16	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Thu	16	VOWH	BP	Bishopstone (8), Bob Triples	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	18	Banbury	SC	Tadmarton/Swalcliffe	5.45
Sat	18	Chiltern	SC + BP	Wendover	pm
Sat	18	North Bucks		Clifton Reynes, Summer Social and Striking Competition	5 onwards
Sat	18	Oxford City	SC	Shaftesbury Outing	
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Shottesbrooke	7.30pm – 9pm
Tue	21	Banbury	SP	Bloxham	7.30
Tue	21	Central Bucks		Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Sat	25	Banbury	BP	Hanwell, Doubles and Minor Practice	11 – 12.30
Sat	25	Central Bucks	AP	Quainton, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sat	25	EBSB	BP	Bisham (3)	6.30 – 7
Sat	25	EBSB	BP	Marlow (8)	7 – 9pm
Sat	25	South Oxon	BP	Aston Rowant (6)	7pm
Sat	25	VOWH		Branch Ringing Outing	
Sat	25		AP	Aston Clinton, 8 and 10 Bell Practice	7.30pm onwards
Sun	26	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence, Higher Numbers Practice	1–2.30

JULY 2011

Fri	1	Newbury	BP	Bucklebury	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	2	North Bucks		Hanslope, Inter Branch Competition	6 onwards
Sat	2	ONB		Outing + Barbecue	
Sat	2	Oxford City	BP	St Thomas, 10-Bell Practice	6.30 – 8.0
Sat	2	Reading	BP	Theale tbc	6–8
Tue	5	Central Bucks		Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Wed	6	Chipping Norton	BP	Fulbrook (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	7	Bicester	BP	Stratton Audley	7.30–9pm
Fri	8	Banbury	BP	Cropredy, Doubles and Minor Practice	7.30
Fri	8	VOWH		Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	9	Central Bucks	BP	Haddenham tbc	6.30–8.30pm
Sat	9	Chiltern		Weston Turville, Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	9	Guid		Oxford Festival	
Thu	14	Banbury	SP	Hanwell	7 – 8.30
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Cheddington	7pm – 9pm
Sat	16	Oxford City		Mapledurham, Picnic	late afternoon tbc
Sat	16	Sonning	BP	Hurst	7.30pm – 9pm
Tue	19	Central Bucks		Stewkley, 6-bell Progress practice	7.30–9.00pm
Wed	20	VOWH	BP	Shellingford (6), Reverse Canterbury	7.30 – 9.00pm
Thu	21	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Sat	23	Central Bucks	AP	Stewkley, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sat	23	EBSB	BP	Denham (8)	7 – 9pm
Sat	23	South Oxon	BP	Thame (8)	7 –8.30pm
Mon	25	Banbury	BP	Great Tew	7.30
Sat	30	Banbury		Outing, Market Harborough area	
Sat	30		AP	Aston Clinton, 8 and 10 Bell Practice	7.30pm onwards
Sun	31	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence, Higher Numbers Practice	1–2.30

AUGUST 2011

Mon	1	Chipping Norton	BP	Spelsbury (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Tue	2	Central Bucks	BP	Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Thu	4	Banbury	BP	Sandford St Martin, Doubles and Minor Practice	7.30
Fri	5	Bicester	BP	Kirtlington	7.30–9pm
Fri	5	Newbury	BP	Brightwalton	7.30 – 9.00pm
Wed	10	ONB	BP	West Hanney (6)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Fri	12	Banbury	SP	Adderbury	7.30
Sat	13	Central Bucks	BP	Nether Winchendon	6.30–8.30pm
Sat	13	EBSB	BP	Fulmer (6)	7pm – 9pm
Sat	13	Reading	BP	Bradfield (6) tbc	6–8
Tue	16	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Thu	18	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Fri	19	EBSB	BP	Stoke Poges (8) Weekday Practice	2.30 – 4.30
Fri	19	VOWH	BP	Buscot (4), Hannington (6) (Buscot, Belfast; Hannington, Little Bob)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Great Kimble	7pm – 9pm
Sat	20	North Bucks	BP	Bletchley tbc	5 onwards
Sat	20	Sonning	BP	Binfield	7.30pm – 9pm
Tue	23	Banbury	BP	Steeple Aston	7.30

Sat	27	Central Bucks	AP	Wingrave tbc, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sat	27	EBSB	BP	Old Windsor (8)	7pm – 9pm

SEPTEMBER 2011

Thu	1	Banbury	SP	Great Tew	7.30
Fri	2	Newbury	BP	Lambourn	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	3	Oxford City	AP	Mary Magdalen, 10-Bell Practice	6.30 – 8.0
Sat	3		AP	Aston Clinton, 8 and 10 Bell Practice	7.30pm onwards
Tue	6	Central Bucks		Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Tue	6	Chipping Norton	BP	Enstone (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	8	Oxford City	BP	Iffley	
Fri	9	VOWH		Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	10	Banbury	BP	Rousham, Doubles and Minor Practice	10.30
Sat	10	Central Bucks		Branch Outing tba	
Sat	10	EBSB	SP	Hughenden (8)	7 – 9
Sat	10	Reading		Purley tbc, 6-bell Striking Competition	
Mon	12	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Wed	14	Banbury	BP	Banbury	7.30
Thu	15	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Bledlow	7pm – 9pm
Sat	17	Guid		Shiplake Ringing Centre, Michaelmas Training Day	10.00 – 18.00
Sat	17	North Bucks		Old Wolverton, Autumn Meeting tbc	3.30 onwards
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Wokingham St Paul	7.30pm – 9pm
Tue	20	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Thu	22	Banbury		Bloxham, Tower Reps Meeting	7.30
Thu	22	Oxford City		Outing London	
Thu	22	VOWH	BP	Hinton Waldrist (6), Single Court	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	24	Central Bucks	AP	Long Crendon, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sat	24	EBSB		Out of Branch Practice	2 – 3pm 3.30 – 4.30
Sat	24	South Oxon	BP	Tetsworth (6)	7 – 8.30pm
Sun	25	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence, Higher Numbers Practice	1 – 2.30

OCTOBER 2011

Sat	1	GUILD EVENT	SC	6-bell Striking Competition, Reading Branch	
Tue	4	Central Bucks		Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Fri	7	Banbury	SP	Steeple Aston	7.30
Fri	7	Guid		Radley, Branch Secretaries' Meeting	7.45pm
Fri	7	Newbury	BP	Beenham	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	8	Central Bucks	SC	East Claydon, Orchard Cup + Tea	pm
Sat	8	Chiltern	SC	East Claydon, Orchard Cup + Tea	pm
Sat	8	Chipping Norton		Chipping Norton (8), Autumn Meeting	5.45 onwards
Sat	8	EBSB		Lorna Newton Final + HY	5
Sat	8	EBSB	BP	Chenies (8)	7 – 9pm
Sat	8	Reading	BP	Reading St Mary tbc	6 – 8pm
Sat	8	South Oxon		Mini Outing	
Mon	10	ONB	BP	Steventon (6)	7.30 – 9.00pm

Fri	14	Banbury	BP	Cropredy, Doubles and Minor Practice	7.30
Sat	15	Banbury	HY	Wroxton	pm
Sat	15	Chiltern		Great Missenden, Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	15	North Bucks	BP	Shalstone tbc	5 onwards
Sat	15	Sonning	SC	Twyford, 8-bell competition	10am – 12noon
Sat	15	Sonning	BP	Twyford	12 – 1pm
Tue	18	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Tue	18	VOWH	BP	Stanford in the Vale (8), Erin Triples	7.30 – 9.00pm
Thu	20	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Sat	22	South Oxon		Chinnor (6), Autumn Meeting	4 – 5.30pm
Sun	23	Central Bucks	AP	Winslow tbc, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Fri	28	Banbury	BP	Mollington	7.30
Fri	28	EBSB	BP	Burnham (8), Weekday Practice	2.30 – 4.30
Sat	29	Guild		Steeple Aston, Steeple Aston Course	
Sat	29		AP	Aston Clinton, 8 and 10 Bell Practice	7.30pm onwards
Sun	30	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence, Higher Numbers Practice	1–2.30

NOVEMBER 2011

Tue	1	Central Bucks	BP	Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Fri	4	Chipping Norton	BP	Burford (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	4	Newbury	BP	Hungerford	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	5	Banbury	SP	Banbury	7.30
Sat	5	Oxford City	BP	St Giles	
Sat	5	Sonning		First Day of Quarter Peal Week	
Tue	8	ONB	BP	Brightwell (8)	7.30 – 9.15pm
Fri	11	VOWH		Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	12	Central Bucks	BP	Long Crendon	6.30–8.30pm
Sat	12	EBSB	SP	Beaconsfield (8)	7 – 9pm
Sat	12	Reading	BP + CM	Mortimer St John, branch practice & Committee Meeting	6–8
Sun	13	Sonning		Last Day of Quarter Peal Week	
Tue	15	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Thu	17	Banbury	BP	Mollington, Doubles and Minor Practice	7.30
Thu	17	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Sat	19	Chiltern		Quarter Peal Day	
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Ivinghoe	7pm – 9pm
Sat	19	Oxford City	AGM	Wolvercote	
Sat	19	Sonning	BP	Arborfield	6pm – 7.30pm
Sat	19	Sonning	CM	Arborfield	7.30 – 9pm
Tue	22	Banbury	BP	Sandford St Martin	7.30
Fri	25	VOWH	BP	Longcot (8), Oxford Bob Triples	7.30 – 9.00pm

Sat	26	Central Bucks	AP	Cuddington, 8 Bell Advanced Practice	7–8.30pm
Sat	26	EBSB	EP	Winkfield (6), Improvers Practice	5 – 7pm
Sat	26	Guild	SC	Shrivenham, 10-bell competition	
Sat	26	Guild	CM	Clanfield, Autumn General Committee Meeting	
Sat	26			Aston Clinton, 8 and 10 Bell Practice	7.30pm onwards
Sun	27	Reading	AP	Reading St Laurence ,Higher Numbers Practice	1–2.30

DECEMBER 2011

Fri	2	Newbury	BP	Thatcham	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	3	Guild		Aston Clinton, Ten Bell Training Day	
Sat	3	South Oxon	BP	Warborough (8)	4 – 5.30pm
Tue	6	Central Bucks		Aylesbury, 8 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9pm
Wed	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Charlbury (6), Branch Practice + nibbles & mulled wine	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	8	Banbury	SP	Cropredy	7.30
Sat	10	Banbury		Steeple Aston, Carol Service	7
Sat	10	Central Bucks	BP	Steeple Claydon tbc	6.30–8.30pm
Sat	10	EBSB	BP	TBA Branch Practice + Social	
Sat	10	Reading	BP	Caversham (8), Branch Practice + mince pies, etc.	6–8
Mon	12	ONB	BP	Sutton Courtenay (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Thu	15	Reading	AP	Shiplake, Advanced Practice	8–9.30
Fri	16	Banbury	BP	Cropredy, Doubles and Minor Practice	7.30
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Monks Risborough, Branch Practice + 100 Club Christmas Draw	7pm – 9pm
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Warfield	10am – 12pm
Tue	20	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley, 6 Bell Progress Practice	7.30–9.00pm
Mon	26	Banbury		Deddington, Boxing Day	10.30 – 12 noon
Tue	27	EBSB		Post Christmas Ringing Outing	daytime



EBSB 10-bell striking competition winners, Nov. 2010

L-R: Angela Darvill, Charles Botting, Graham Firman, Alan Ainsworth, Patricia Newton, Ken Darvill, Martin Whittaker, Robert Newton (c), Katharine Firman, George Whiteside



ODG band in the inaugural National Youth Striking Contest