

ODD BOB



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



Bell Centenary tiles of St Mary's Twyford, see page 9

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From your Editor...

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

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

Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of April 2014.

Rob Needham

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Master's Mutterings

The birth of HRH Prince George Alexander Louis of Cambridge caused a flurry of ringing activity at the end of July and even into August. ODG peals were rung for his safe arrival, at Cumnor, Denham and Maidenhead (on handbells) and over 25 quarters and other pieces of ringing within our area were reported in the *Ringing World*. Ten of these were rung within 24 hours of the announcement, before the prince's name had been revealed. At High Wycombe we benefited from practising on a Monday: able to start for a quarter peal of Cambridge Royal on hearing the news soon after 8:30 and having a slightly extended 'practice' as a result! However did we manage before mobile communications? I particularly enjoyed seeing the report from that village in the Newbury Branch, where they have a special reason for celebration: 'Bucklebury's Little Delight Major'. Thank you, everyone, for your contribution to our collective effort, both within our diocese and nationally.

My congratulations and thanks to the eight young ringers who represented the Guild in the third RWNYS in York. As reported on page 6, they again achieved second place in the method ringing section with a 'B' grade and look forward to doing even better next July in Worcester. If there are any more youngsters out there who can strike well on eight who have not already attended our practices, please let me know.

I was greatly encouraged that there were 13 branches represented at the Guild Six Bell striking competition at the beginning of October, which meant that heats were required for the first time in several years.

At the time of writing this, there has just been some interesting correspondence in the *Ringing World* concerning the role of our 'Victorian' territorial ringing societies and, specifically, about their perceived failure to adapt to the needs of ringers in the 21st century. If the attendance at our AGM (only just quorate this year) and at the towers leading to it is anything to go by, the critics may well have a point. I am aware that many of our members, whilst

devoted to keeping the bells ringing in their own churches, are difficult to lure out of their 'safe' territory to join with others, and that some branch events do struggle for support.

Ringing always has been, and I imagine always will be, based around strong centres of activity. Our branch structure enables this strength to be shared in local areas of the Guild for the general enhancement of skills and abilities. Your branch officers organise a range of practices and social events. Please support them. If you have ideas for other activities that would receive your support, the usual, but by no means the only, place to suggest these is at a meeting.

But the Guild is about so much more than formal meetings. When I think of the outstanding work of the Education and Towers & Belfries sub-committees and the lengths to which their members go on your behalf, I am confident that the structures that are in place are robust and effective. Having said that, if there is anything more that you feel the Guild should be doing, I appeal to you to make your views known, either through your branch representatives, or to myself, or to my fellow officers. Please help us to do even better.

Robert Newton, Guild Master

Young Ringers Award visit to Whites

A visit to the workshops of bell-hangers Whites of Appleton was arranged for the morning of 13th July for this year's YRA participants. Five young ringers were able to attend and were given a thoroughly interesting and fascinating talk by Brian White which brought together the technologies of timber, bell and clapper metal, casting, bell frames and how they all have evolved since the 13th century. The application of computer technology to acoustic analysis for bell tuning was also demonstrated and explained.

A trip to this establishment would not be complete without every one having a go on the mini-ring which for some was a new experience, however, all the young ringers were most adept at handling the light bells. With the older ringers filling in, rounds were rung, together with Plain Hunt on 6, touches of Plain Bob Doubles and Mexican Wave on 8 bells.

On behalf of all the visitors I would also like to express grateful thanks to Brian and Diana White 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. Thanks also to parents and mentor for bringing the young ringers along.

Alan Bentley

My growing addiction

My daughter took up bell ringing as a teenager, many years ago. Then, eighteen months ago, as a New Year's resolution, I took my first "fix". Why? What made me do it? I guess, like all addictions, there was a mixture of, "That looks fun" and, "All my friends do it".

At first, my progress was painfully slow, especially as I kept getting my hand caught in the moving loop of the rope. Painful also, for those watching, as I did my 5 minutes of trying to ring evenly, catch the sally, not lose the tail, pull the tail just enough, feel the balance point.... So much to learn and all invisible, which, as a visual learner, I found very difficult!

Then I tried rounds – just ringing the sally, my ever-patient instructor correcting the bell at back stroke. And that was when I was hooked – feeling part of a team was the most amazing reward. Progress, however slight, thrilled me. As with all addictions, I had to move on to harder stuff – dodging, called changes, and now, very nearly, Plain Hunt.

I ring, usually, three times a week and I now feel like a ringer. I say, “I do bellringing” not, “I am learning to ring”!

I must thank my teachers, principally Colin Walter, Ruth Groves and Brian Robson, and the teams at Weston Turville and Stoke Mandeville for their patient encouragement.

Ann Webbley, Weston Turville

Educational matters

Much of what the Guild Education Committee does is cyclic – running annual courses. In recent years the basic courses (Radley in spring and Steeple Aston in autumn) have on several occasions been over subscribed while the more advanced Michaelmas course has been less well subscribed. This year, for the second time, a Surprise Minor group was not viable on the Michaelmas course. Demand for the ten bell course in late autumn has been fairly stable, with some students progressing very well.

A significant part of the demand on the basic courses is plain hunting – something that might perhaps better be run at a local level (by a branch or maybe several branches) possibly with our support. That might be more convenient for those learning as well as freeing up spaces on the main courses.

The training meeting is unlike the courses in that it is intended as a two way exchange. Participants (who are responsible for some aspect of training in their own branches) come together to share ideas and concerns, with each other and with the Guild Education Committee. It has now run for five years as a Saturday event combining discussion and practical elements (prior to that it was just an evening meeting). We also have lunch at a local inn, which makes it a more social event. Last year we extended into the early afternoon, which seemed to be well received so we are doing the same for the next training meeting, which will be on 1st February. If you have an interest in training in your branch, put the date in your diary. If you would like to make an input, please get in touch.

By the time you read this we will have made a decision on the first application for a Guild educational grant. If you think that such a grant could help you to improve the way you do training in your tower, look at the information on the Guild website at: odg.org.uk/education/#GRANTS .

Another recent initiative was to set up an e-mail support network for those of you who teach ringing, so you can share ideas and problems. Only half a dozen people signed up to it, which is surprising given the number of people there must be in the Guild who teach. If you teach ringers and you haven't already done so, please look at the details on the Guild website at: odg.org.uk/education/teaching .

We are over halfway through the latest Young Ringers Award Scheme which started in April and runs to the end of March, with awards presented at the May AGM. Nine young ringers registered to take part and we look forward to receiving their submissions next spring telling us about what they have done and what they have achieved during the year. Please continue to encourage all young ringers that you know, whether in the scheme or not.

John Harrison, edchairman@odg.org.uk 0118 978 5520

Young Ringers Go North

The Ringing World National Youth Contest was held this year in York at St Lawrence. Unfortunately this did mean a very early start (waking up at 5:15) to allow the minibus to go around collecting everyone before starting the long journey up to York.

Once we arrived, at around midday, we wandered over to St Helen's Stonegate, the centre for the day, which had a mini-ring, a hand-bell workshop, and a long table running across one whole side with refreshments! However, soon after we had to make a move because the competition church was fifteen minutes walk away, but we did get there in time to eye up the opposition teams' ringing, especially the Gloucester and Bristol team which had won the previous year in Birmingham.

When it came to our practice ringing and the competition ringing itself (after our slightly worrying starting signal, which the judges gave us an F for) I felt our striking overall was good, especially as two or three of the bells were odd-struck, but it was the method mistakes really that cost us.

After this we had the best part of three hours before the results. Luckily there were towers open around York for people to go and ring in whilst they weren't competing; interestingly this year each tower focused on a different method. We took the time to walk around the medieval city walls, gathering clues for a treasure hunt we'd been given, before walking over the bridge to All Saints for some Bristol Major. The next tower we went to, St Martin le Grand, focused on Grandsire Triples. Ringing here was very challenging as there were hordes of people all chatting around the ringing (it was a ground floor ring) and it was impossible to hear the bells at all. At least it was a good practice for ropesight! Then, some of my favourite ringing of the day was at St Wilfrid's, the major Roman Catholic church in York, where I rang Yorkshire Royal for the first time.

The results were to be held at St Michael-le-Belfrey, the Minster's parish church, which is right next to the Minster itself. As I had ten minutes to spare I popped in for a quick look around the Minster (being under 16, I got in for free) before heading across for the results. Once we got inside, we found the rest of our team. When the results were announced and we came second in the method

category with a B, I felt quite pleased, and even more so when I thought that next year almost everyone in our team will still be eligible to compete. [*Photo of band on back page*] However, a call change team, Bedfordshire, won the Whitechapel trophy.

Luckily we arrived back at the car park just in time for the ice-cream van and then got going, stopping off for a quick motorway service break before getting back to Berinsfield at around midnight.

All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable day, despite being so exhausting, and I'm sure we can do even better next year in Worcester! Many thanks to Robert Newton for organising the practices beforehand and also for sorting out the transport and the arrangements on the day.

James Anderson-Besant

Safeguarding Matters

The Children's Officer can only pass on a small portion of the information available on the excellent Diocesan website:

<http://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/safeguarding/forms-policies-and-practice-guides/>

Stephen Barber is the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and can be contacted on weekday mornings at 01865 208290 or by email at any time:

stephen.barber@oxford.anglican.org

Summary of DBS eligibility checklist

In summary many church roles that work closely with vulnerable groups (including children) will continue to require a Criminal Records check of some sort. Bell ringers who teach or train children, plus the Tower Captains who manage those adults, will qualify for an Enhanced Criminal Record check (with barring information) if they satisfy the frequency test for *Regulated Activity (Children)*. You are in a regulated activity if, unsupervised, you teach, train, or instruct frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period.

Safeguarding – Points to be aware of

- Most abusers are family members or someone known to the victim
- Sex offenders are not only men
- Cyber bullying/abuse is on the increase and therefore may become issues for the ODG
- There are phone apps that can be used once and then disappear from the phone without trace
- Ringers need to be aware that those who wish to abuse young people often start with electronic communications and then attempt to lure young people into an unprotected face to face meeting
- Another ringer may trace/track/bully a child via a social website
- Images can become cyber bullying. If inappropriate images are suspected to be on a phone or computer the equipment can be confiscated but the adult CANNOT search for images, this has to be done only by the investigating officer – any concerns, contact Stephen Barber

- Ringers may become aware of a safeguarding issue and should always contact Stephen Barber

There are clear procedures to follow which are available from the Diocesan website mentioned above. In brief:

- Listen
- Stay calm
- Ask no leading questions
- Make no judgements
- Explain that you cannot keep any information a secret but you are obliged to inform the right people (Stephen Barber)
- Keep brief notes, use the child's words
- Support the child, give them time and a safe place

Ringers working with children should be aware that:

- They want adults to notice when things are troubling them
- They want to be heard
- They want to trust adults and develop stable relationships
- They want to be informed
- They want to be treated with the expectation that they are competent.

Code of Conduct, Ringers should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language
- Ensure all communications with and about children are appropriate in their tone
- Do not use physical punishment to discipline children – this is illegal
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet.
Toilet breaks should be organised for young children
- If known in advance, seek a parent's permission if a child or young person is to be seen on their own. Another adult must be nearby and the child or young person must know this
- Ensure that each group includes a female helper if possible
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone. Display the Childline telephone number in a prominent place where children & young people can see it
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around
- Administer any necessary first aid with others around
- Respond to accidents and make a note in the accident book
- Record any concerning incidents. Sign and date the record, and also print your name in capital letters.

I will always try to provide guidance and information. Any concerns should be addressed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Katie Lane, Children's Officer

Bell Centenary tiles of St Mary's, Twyford

[In Odd Bob a year ago was an article about St. Mary's, Twyford centenary of their bells. This piece is a follow-up to that article. Ed.]

As part of the bells centenary celebrations at St. Mary's Twyford, 750 youngsters in local primary schools and youth groups each had the opportunity to paint a 4" x 4" tile that were fired and returned to the proud owners by HaaHoos, a Twyford ceramic painting business. The project was funded by the Twyford Polehampton Charity with HaaHoos kindly providing materials at cost price.

Children were introduced to the centenary via school assemblies, which gave some pupils the chance to ring handbells in rounds, queens and tittums in order to appreciate different patterns. Photographs of the tiles (*see front cover*) will be included in the centenary time capsule and a framed montage hung at St. Mary's to record the project.

The project has raised awareness of the bells and bell ringing locally and we hope this will help recruitment. With luck, some of the tiles will still be around in 2113 and owned by the present cohort's great-grandchildren, all of whom will be accomplished ringers...

Richard Hamilton, Twyford ringer

Young Ringers Award Scheme

Four of this year's YRA participants, Isaac, Fiona, Callum and David, were given a very hands-on appreciation of belfry maintenance by John Davidge, the Guild's Towers and Belfries sub-committee Chairman. Once again the venue was Chelsey, because of its good access around the bells and an installation of sufficient age to give the participants opportunities to find some (minor) faults. Isaac also brought along the model bell he is constructing for the rest of us to see.



The session started in the ringing chamber with John giving important practical advice on matters of safety, for example: never work in the belfry when the bells are up; never work alone; take a mobile phone and torch every time; always have one hand holding something stable when walking across a bell frame.

The aim of the practical exercises was to find and report on faults that could be caused from normal usage. Before going up into the belfry, and using the model bell, John indicated where to look for some of the tell-tale signs of wear.

Working in pairs and using the Guild's Tower Maintenance Award inspection checklist, the participants proceeded to inspect the ringing chamber before going up to the belfry to inspect the bells; all this was done with a great deal of enthusiasm, making notes and recording faults. The checks typically included checking for cracks in stays, movement of sliders, alignment of the clapper at rest and in the strike position using callipers, evidence of slack nut, and the like. Once inspections were complete and the results added up, we returned to the ringing chamber to ring the bells back up followed by some rounds and call changes on the eight bells. If they haven't done so already, the participants should now follow up this experience by asking their own tower captains to take them up to see their bell installation and gain further practical knowledge and experience.

Proceedings concluded with refreshments in the well appointed church. Our grateful thanks to John for making the session very enjoyable, useful and interesting, to Jenny Jeskins for taking the time to organise our visit, and to the authorities for allowing us the use of the church.

Alan Bentley

6-Bell Striking Competition, October 2013

There has been an annual Guild six bell striking competition since 1966 when the first competition was held on 22nd October, at Radley. The Cup awarded to the winners was presented by Ted Peett at the AGM in 1969, and he went on to donate the cups for the Guild 8- and 10-bell contests.

This year the 47th annual 6-bell competition attracted entries from 13 towers, each representing their Branch. This is the largest number of entries for many years, and so there were heats at Little Missenden and Ellesborough. The top 3 teams from each heat would then go on to ring in the final at Monks Risborough.

The Heat at Ellesborough was judged by Alan Shephard from Dunstable, and Hilary Reading from Loughton, Milton Keynes.

They placed the teams as follows

First	All Saints, High Wycombe	4 faults
Second	Wokingham, All Saints	18.5 faults
Third	Thatcham	30 faults
Fourth	Wantage	33.5 faults
Fifth	Woodstock	56 faults
Sixth	Longcott	78 faults

Special recognition is due to the Longcott band, which had the lowest average age by a considerable margin and included three teenagers. They rang pretty well despite some nerves and we are looking forward to their future appearances.

At Little Missenden, Ken and Sue Davenport from St Paul, Wokingham, judged the ringing of 7 teams. They placed the teams as follows:

First	Drayton St Leonard	24 faults
Second	Aston Clinton	28 faults
Third	St. Aldate, Oxford	36 faults
Fourth	Steeple Aston	39 faults
Fifth	Tilehurst	42 faults
Sixth	Woughton on the Green	44 faults
Seventh	Bicester	Did not finish

At Monks Risborough an excellent tea of sandwiches and cakes was waiting to provide the necessary refreshment and energy before the final challenge.

The judges for the final were John and Penny Pardoe, from Greens Norton near Towcester. They were settled in a house just outside the churchyard with clear sight of the tower and could hear all the bells well (too well, some might say!).

The six teams rang their test pieces, finding the bells more or less challenging, with some odd-struckness and very marked muffling effect of sallies going through ceilings adding to the complex mix of emotions.

In making the judges remarks, John recognised that all the ringing was of a very high standard, but that some teams found and maintained their pace and rhythm despite all the challenges. A couple of teams suffered minor method mistakes but these were corrected almost immediately. They placed the teams as follows.

First	High Wycombe	14 faults
Second	Thatcham	18 faults
Third	St Aldate, Oxford	26 faults
Fourth	Drayton St Leonard	27 faults
Fifth	Aston Clinton	31 faults
Sixth	Wokingham, All Saints	33 faults

Congratulations to High Wycombe, worthy holders of the Trophy for a further year. [*Photo of band on back page.*]

Thanks to everyone who made the day a success, especially the six judges, the incumbents who allowed us to use their bells, and the Kimble and Ellesborough W.I. who provided the tea.

Alan Marchbank

Towers and Belfries Committee Report

Since the last report in October, the committee has met twice with an average attendance of nine. Fourteen inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below.

- Chesham (three visits – boring out wooden rope guides)
- Freeland (TMA)
- Fulmer (TMA)
- Horley (visit to address concerns over frame repair)
- Hungerford (TMA)
- Kirtlington (general inspection)
- Shottesbrooke (general inspection & TMA)
- Sonning (TMA)
- Tetsworth (general inspection & TMA)
- Wargrave (TMA)
- Weston-on-the Green (grant inspection)
- Winslow (TMA)

A bell maintenance course took place on 11th May attended by eleven people. Feedback was positive but it is felt that in future the courses should be less frequent as more of the potential candidates will have attended one. A mini-maintenance course will be run for those participating in the *Young Ringers Award Scheme*.

The paper to help people construct a rope drier to reduce the problem of stiff ropes in damp weather has been added to the Guild web site.

A paper has been prepared on aligning clappers to reduce wear which has been added to the Guild web-site as a technical paper and will also be used to update the Guild's maintenance booklet.

The committee has contacted all towers in the Guild where there is a known correspondent to make them aware of the existence of the Towers & Belfries committee and the advice and assistance that it can offer. Several requests for inspections have resulted. One area that could not be addressed was that of unringable towers with no contact shown in the Guild report. Anyone reading this who knows of a contact for any such tower is asked to pass the details to the Chairman of the T & B committee (01494 873325 or tbchairman@odg.org.uk).

A Health and Safety issue which has recently been highlighted is the position of the lighting switch in the ringing room. In some towers this is an unprotected tumbler switch set at or about shoulder level and where someone leaning against it can plunge the ringing room into darkness – causing an “interesting” situation if ringing is in full flow! The other possibly dangerous situation is for the lighting in an upstairs ringing room to be controlled from a switch somewhere in the church below. If this is the case in your church it should be brought to the attention of the PCC, pointing out, if necessary, that they will now have the liability if nothing is done and an accident occurs due to the lights being switched off.

John Davidge, Chairman T&B Committee

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

In the period since the last report the scheme has steadied, with the number of current awards still at 23. The number of expired awards has risen slightly and is now 16, and members of the Towers & Belfries committee continue to try and persuade towers with “long-expired” awards to renew them. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is 80, which is about 18% of the towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been one 106 inspections (of which 21 were preliminaries), resulting in 81 awards (46 Gold, 22 Silver, and 13 Bronze).

Freeland and Winslow renewed Gold awards, while Hungerford and Sonning converted Silver Awards to Gold. Wargrave (Bronze) gained a first-time award. Congratulations to the bands and steeple-keepers at all of these towers.

The number of Branches having a tower in the “current awards” list is now nine out of the fifteen Guild Branches, with EBSB still maintaining its predominant position, as follows:

EBSB	6	(5 Gold, Silver)
Banbury	4	(4 Gold)
Newbury	4	(4 Gold)
Sonning Deanery	3	(Gold, Silver, Bronze)
South Oxon	2	(2 Gold)
Old North Berks	1	(Gold)
Reading	1	(Gold)
Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)

If your tower is in one of the remaining seven, 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 near the back of *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

Bray (St Michael)	EBSB	Expires 31.10.13
Clewer (St Andrew)	EBSB	Expires 31.05.14
Thatcham (St Mary)	Newbury	Expires 31.05.14
Thame (St Mary)	South Oxon	Expires 31.08.14
Chalfont St Giles	EBSB	Expires 30.09.14
Kintbury (SMV)	Newbury	Expires 30.09.14
Harwell (St Matthew)	Old North Bucks	Expires 30.09.14
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB	Expires 31.12.14
High Wycombe (All Saints)	EBSB	Expires 31.12.14
Cropledy (S M V)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.14
Adderbury (St Mary)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.14
Deddington (SS Peter & Paul)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.14
Reading (St Giles)	Reading	Expires 31.01.15
Chalgrove (SMV)	South Oxon	Expires 31.01.15
Peasmore (St Barnabas)	Newbury	Expires 28.02.15
Ellesborough (SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern	Expires 31.03.15
Freeland (S.M.V)	Witney & Woodstock	Expires 31.06.15
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	Newbury	Expires 30.09.15
Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 30.09.15
Winslow (St Laurence)	Central Bucks	Expires 30.09.15

Silver Award

White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.08.14
Fulmer (St James)	EBSB	Expires 30.04.15

Bronze Grade

Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury	Expires 30.09.14
Wargrave (St Mary)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.07.15

Expired Awards

Dorchester (SS Peter & Paul)	South Oxon	Expired 30.09.05
Finchampstead (St James)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.07.07
Stoke Mandeville (St Mary V.)	Chiltern	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	Expired 31.05.09
Purley (St Mary V.)	Reading	Expired 31.01.10
Benson (St Helen)	South Oxon	Expired 31.10.11
South Stoke (St Andrew)	Reading	Expired 31.03.12
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB	Expired 31.05.12
Mapledurham (St Margaret)	Reading	Expired 30.11.12
Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 28.02.13
Henley (S.M.V.)	Reading	Expired 31.08.13
Wantage (SS Peter & Paul)	Old North Berks	Expired 31.08.13
Denham (St Mary)	EBSB	Expired 31.08.13
Letcombe Regis (St Andrew)	Old North Berks	Expired 30.09.13

John Davidge

Librarian's Report

There have been 8 library enquiries since OddBob issue 88. These have been about:

- Handbell peal rung in 1989
- Whether there are any spare copies of Guild Annual Reports in the library
- Details about bells at Thame from Sharpe's *Bells of Oxfordshire*
- Membership details for member of Witney and Woodstock branch
- Copy of Odd Bob issue 23 requested
- Information about a peal book for William Birmingham from Slough
- Documentation relating to rehanging of Great Brickhill bells
- Guild 6-, 8- and 10-bell competitions and trophies

I have made a summary list of all the material in the library that is not catalogued. It is currently in various receptacles, and I would like to assemble it into some kind of order so that it can be stored in a more convenient way. The library is, however, really taking up a lot of space now. Before committing to further, fairly expensive bookcases of the kind that house much of the existing material, I think a review should take place to confirm whether the library arrangements should, or should not, continue as they are.

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

The Guild has Group Personal Accident Insurance cover for Guild members and those under instruction by a Guild member. Full details are at website: odg.org.uk/reports/odg_insurance_definition.php

News from the Branches

Banbury

June 2013 marked the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation and two towers celebrated by ringing a peal. On the morning of Saturday June 1st a peal of Plain Bob Major was rung at Steeple Aston with local young ringer Daniel Austin from Hook Norton ringing his first peal at the first attempt. On Sunday afternoon June 2nd a peal of Cambridge Surprise Major was rung at Adderbury with band members Jonathan White and Trevor Trivett, for whom this was also a first.

At the beginning of July our Branch Striking competition and customary barbecue took place at Steeple Aston. The beautiful warm sunny weather added to everyone's enjoyment, allowing them to sit near the church and socialise during the ringing. Following the introduction last year of having two groups (one for call change ringing and one for method ringing) there were ten teams participating, with the host team from Steeple Aston taking first place in the method ringing group and Adderbury B team coming first in the call change group. A tasty barbecue meal was enjoyed by everyone afterwards. During the evening, Barry Davis, Branch Vice Chairman presented with grateful thanks from the Branch a floral bouquet to Heather Hughes who recently stepped down as Branch Secretary after six years.

Also in July, the annual Branch outing took place in the Dunstable/Tring area, which was arranged by Brenda Day. The glorious sunshine was an added bonus to the day. We started at the Priory Church of St Peter in Dunstable, moving on to the much lighter bells of St Mary Magdalene at Whipsnade before a pub lunch. Ringing followed at Great Gaddesden, Northchurch, Aldbury and finally at Tring. We had a warm welcome at all the towers and an enjoyable day was rounded off with an evening meal in Adderbury.

Heather Bletchly

Bicester

We're lucky to have Anthony Cole not only as our very competent joint Branch Ringing Master (ably supported by Jeremy Adams) but also his skills as our Website Manager and instant author of our bell ringing activities. Our Branch website (<http://www.bicesterbranch.org.uk/>) is a great resource for the secretary to draw upon for *Odd Bob!* Anthony's reports of our Branch Practices give details of our progress and some of the high – and low – lights.

Sadly, in June, our former President, Cliff East, died after a long and happy life. He held most positions in the Branch over the years: as secretary, branch representative, ringing master, Vice President and President, as well as Tower Captain in Ludgershall. We will all miss him for his encouragement to all ringers and his sense of humour. His funeral, held only six months after his wife's, was full of family, ringers and friends.

After weeks of dry, hot weather, in September we had our now almost traditional barbecue and striking competition that coincided with a downpour. But it was much enjoyed by the approximately 30 ringers and friends who came

– and we had three teams competing for the Cliff East shield – won narrowly by the home team, Islip. Unfortunately our subsequent appearance as a Branch team at Little Missenden for the Guild striking competition was less than glorious. We can't do any worse next year!

In October we had our postponed Branch outing to the Newbury area – ringing by only a handful of members at Brightwalton, Chieveley, Speen and Thatcham – but enjoyed very much by those who came. Our thanks go to those who opened up for us and to Anthony who re-organised the trip (but unluckily suffered a puncture at Chieveley). At least he was able to give Samuel and Grace an early lesson in changing a wheel as well as a little ringing practice. The rest of us are taking bets on how long it'll be before they're both better ringers than the existing members!

Peter Nicholas has sent this news from Brill, 'We have now come to the end of a hectic wedding ringing season. We usually have 1 or 2 weddings, but this year it has been far more popular and we have been asked to ring for 6, which may not be a lot to some towers, but to us it's been busy!

'Despite an inability to recruit more people from the village to come and learn to ring with us, we have been fortunate to be joined regularly by our ringing friends from Long Crendon and also Ludgershall. We have also played host to a visit from the local group of Rainbows who found the bells most interesting and enjoyed a talk on the history of them and the chance to try ringing (under supervision of course). We have also begun Sunday Service ringing again, on the first Sunday of the month, thanks to help from our ringing friends. This is after a gap of over 2 years, so it's nice for the villagers to hear the bells on a Sunday once more. In addition 3 peals have been rung, including one for the Golden wedding anniversary of the tower captain's parents in September. Also a number of quarters have been completed, usually instead of a Monday practice.'

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

Sadly, this year's ringing has been rather mediocre. Branch practices have been supported by our usual stalwarts but numbers are dwindling; our 6-Bell Progressing practice started really well, but trying to get 20+ people through was extremely difficult. The amount of time each individual had to wait around was disheartening, and this in turn led to everyone deciding it was not worth it and not turning up at all. The 8-Bell Progressing practice continues to give us just about enough ringers to use all 8 bells but progression is slow. Our Advanced Major practice has been cancelled for a few months due to lack of numbers, and when a September practice was arranged just one person attended.

On a better note though, both our 6-bell striking competitions (the Branch one and the Orchard Cup competition with the Chiltern Branch), although having only 4 teams entered, were extremely good social events and both won by Aylesbury.

The outing in September saw 20 people off on a coach to the Loughborough area. The Great Central Railway was also included in the itinerary of several of our number and the ringing at the four towers visited was good.

The midweek ringing is now in its third year and still going quite well, although numbers coming on this monthly daytime outing are also dropping off – hopefully this is just a summer holiday blip and it will pick up again. We are certainly going to have to come up with some new ideas soon. Watch this space.

On a brighter note, CBB has rejoined the Tower Maintenance Award list. Winslow has again been granted a Gold award, having been strangely omitted from the list in the ODG *2012 Annual Report* despite the previous award being valid into 2013.

Diana Slevin

Chiltern

The Branch was pleased to host the Guild 6-bell striking competition, the final of which was held at Monks Risborough and won by All Saints Wycombe. In recent years entries have been insufficient to require the running of heats, but this year it was particularly pleasing that thirteen branches entered the competition, and we therefore arranged heats at Ellesborough and Little Missenden. Our thanks are due to David Argue for arranging the event at Monks Risborough and to the ladies who provided tea for the finalists and others who wished to stay to listen. Thanks also to Ruth Groves for arranging the towers and stewards for the heats. Altogether a successful day.

Elsewhere in the Branch the bells at Cheddington have been rehung, after a good deal of work was done to cope with rotted woodwork between the ringing chamber and the bells. Local ringers played a considerable part in the achievement of the final excellent result and it is good to have the bells back in action.

The Orchard Cup is an annual, social striking competition between the Chiltern and Central Bucks branches. Sadly, this year the event had to be cancelled because no towers in the Chiltern Branch felt able or sufficiently confident to enter, and the Cup was therefore retained by Aylesbury, winners in 2012. We certainly hope that next year's competition will be able to take place, thus reinstating what has always been an enjoyable occasion.

Christopher Green

Chipping Norton

The Branch hosted the Guild AGM at Ascott-u-Wychwood in May, preceded by ringing at Charlbury and Shipton-u-Wychwood.

A few days previously, members were saddened to hear of the death of John MacVicker, the former tower captain at Shipton-u-Wychwood, who had been closely connected with the rural community and who had served the church in many ways. A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung in July in thanksgiving for his life.

Hook Norton tower marked the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation, as well as significant events for some of its members, with a quarter peal.

Congratulations go to Daniel Austin who rang his first peal at the first attempt at Steeple Aston for that same Royal occasion.

Charlbury ringers rang for the birth of Prince George.

Branch practices are usually held on weekdays with variable numbers attending. The October practice at Charlbury was followed by a short business meeting at which the Revd. Kate Stacey was elected Branch Chairman. It was also decided that the Branch Practices in January and February next year would be held on Saturday mornings.

In addition to the usual monthly practices there have been some extra Grandsire Doubles practices, and also some Surprise Minor practices on Saturday mornings with help from ringers from outside the Branch.

Leafield Church has now re-opened following roof repairs but work is required on the bells so fund-raising will commence in due course.

Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

This year it was the turn of our Branch to host the Guild Ringing Day and 8-bell striking competition, which took place on 6 May. Ringers from far and wide converged on the 24 towers that were open at various times of the day, often with queues forming before the towers were due to open. Over £1000 was raised for the Bell Fund from donations by visitors. The striking competition was held at Bray with Kate and Paul Flavell as judges. Six teams entered and rang the test piece of St Simon's Bob Triples. St Mary's, Reading were judged the winners, with High Wycombe second and the EBSB Branch band third. Only four percentage points separated the top three teams.

A walking outing, arranged by Chris Nunn on 11 May, was not blessed with good weather but those braving the elements had an enjoyable day walking around the Chilterns.

The Branch 6-bell competition was held at Dorney on 8 June. High Wycombe were the clear winners and will go on to represent the Branch at the Guild 6-bell competition later this year.

Novices' practices continue to be one of the most popular events in our calendar and are always over-subscribed. The practice at Shiplake on 22 June attracted a good level of support. This year on 31 August we introduced a bell handling workshop led by John Davidge at Chalfont St Giles. This was greatly appreciated by the beginners who attended.

The birth of Prince George of Cambridge on 22 July naturally led to a great deal of celebratory ringing. Like the ringers of Westminster Abbey, the band at the Curfew Tower were on high alert to mark the birth as soon as possible after its announcement, and rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples on 23 July. They were however pipped to the post by the High Wycombe ringers who scored a quarter of Cambridge Royal the previous evening. A peal was rung at Hughenden on 25 July of a new method, devised and conducted by Roger Baldwin, and appropriately named Prince George Delight. This was coincidentally the 4504th peal for both David Brown and Ian Campbell. David obviously appreciated the method's merits as he called it again (to the same composition) at Hucknall on 29 August. Among other peals to mark the Royal birth was one at Denham on 28 August, only the second on the bells since 1953.

Congratulations to Alan and Marion Ainsworth, who celebrated their Emerald (55th) wedding anniversary last month. The event was marked by a peal of a new method, Emerald Alliance Major, at Hughenden on 26 September. This was Alan's 100th peal on the bells. The less said about the behaviour of his trousers during the peal the better ...

Peter H Mackie

Newbury

Branch members were saddened to hear of the untimely death of Ange Harbour in July. Ange learned to ring at Hungerford about 10 years ago and had become a familiar face at Newbury and other towers. She leaves two daughters and five grandchildren. Memorial quarter peals were rung at Newbury, Hungerford and Thattham.

I am also saddened to report the deaths of George M K Donkin and Arthur J Stacey. At the age of 93 years, Arthur was the most senior member at Thattham and had been a member of the ODG since 1934. George learned to ring at Thattham in the 1970s in spite of being profoundly deaf, and was an enthusiastic ringer until the last couple of years of his life. Memorial quarter peals were rung for both.

Another successful *Quarter Peal Week* was held back in February, with some 14 quarters, including the first of Royal by a Newbury Branch ladies band. Although no branch outing was organised this year, some individual towers, including Speen and Thattham, have organised their own outings.

In August, a party was held to celebrate the 90th birthday of Hungerford's senior (and still active) ringer, Brenda Abrahams – including a cake depicting an Enigma machine in recognition of her wartime code-breaking service. A quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung within earshot of the party.

Newbury tower was opened to visitors for the Heritage Open Days in September – in addition, the visiting choir from Newbury's twin town of Braunfels in Germany were introduced to change ringing and the splendid view from the top of the tower.

The Branch 6-bell striking competition was held at Brightwalton in July, and was won by Thattham, who went on to represent the Branch at Guild level and were delighted to be placed second in the Guild striking competition in October, for the third year in succession.

Bucklebury, of course, had more Royal activity with the arrival of Prince George – tower captain John Durham came up with "Bucklebury's Little Delight Major", a quarter peal of which was rung to coincide with the baby arriving in the village. The event was covered by NBC News as well as featuring in the local and national press – hopefully a peal of the method will be rung in due course.

Mark Brock

North Bucks

June in the North Bucks Branch means the annual summer social and striking competition. Eleven teams representing individual local towers, the branch youths and the Big Ring Pull Girls attended this year at Bradwell Village in Milton Keynes.

Although there was a chilly wind outside the church, inside there was hot tea and sumptuous cake to satisfy the competitors' needs. The winners were Great Linford tower but due to an irregularity, having appeared to have had two starts, Woughton who came second by one point went on to represent the branch at the Guild finals.

Tea and cake made another appearance at our other annual striking competition, the inter-branch competition against the local Towcester branch of the Peterborough Guild. This year it was hosted by North Bucks at Newport Pagnell. The relationship between the two branches goes back a long way with this year being the 75th anniversary of the first joint branch meeting. To mark the occasion a new striking competition trophy was commissioned and on this occasion was won by the Towcester branch.

Another anniversary was celebrated in September. It is 20 years since the dedication of the new ring of bells at Downs Barn in Milton Keynes. The original project to raise the money and install a ring of 8 bells into the new Milton Keynes church took much energy and support from both the Branch and the Guild. To celebrate the occasion a peal was rung on the bells by representatives of the bodies associated with the original project. This was followed by a well attended celebratory service, including a number of people involved in the original project, a branch barbecue and a quiz.

As well as all this cake eating and celebrations, monthly change ringing and plain hunt practices continue. It is good to see a number of the *Big Ring Pull* recruits getting more proficient and expanding their repertoires.

Jonathan Griggs

Old North Berks

Our branch outing on 29th June was organised once more for us by Philip Roberts of Harwell. He does this so well each year that he seems to have gained a job for life. This year we ventured into Buckinghamshire, and around twenty-five branch members and friends visited Great Missenden, Wendover, Tring, Wingrave and Bierton. Ringing was to a good standard and all enjoyed the day. A pub lunch in Tring and afternoon tea in the church at Wingrave were both very welcome.

A barbecue, with over thirty members and friends in attendance, followed at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. As ever the food was superb and there was fun to be had on the croquet lawn. A brand new and illuminated gala tent added atmosphere and a great sense of togetherness to the occasion. One new attendee was heard to say that she wished she had realised years ago what she had been missing. Thanks go to Philip, Janette, Stuart and Naomi for arranging yet another excellent day for the Branch. As previously agreed, the proceeds of

the barbecue and raffle (over £170) were donated to the North Moreton Bell Restoration Fund. Our next social event is a quiz evening and supper on 9th November in St. Helen's, Abingdon, Church Centre.

As ever our general branch practices don't seem to be quite as attractive as our social events. We continue to hold monthly practices, however the trend of previous years continues and attendance is very variable. It is almost impossible to predict which practices (day of the week/month of the year) will be well attended and which not. Surprise major practices are held in alternate months and are open to all who can treble bob and are interested in learning and ringing the standard eight (with an occasional course of Glasgow thrown into the mix if the right people are there!). Our monthly midweek improvers' practices are very popular and everyone is invited to attend, either as learners or experienced helpers.

We are very fortunate to have an enthusiastic and energetic group of young ringers from several towers within the branch. Susan Read has been organising events for them during school holidays. Activities held this summer were ringing at Brightwell followed by games, tea and handbells; and ringing at Sutton Courtenay followed by a bat walk by the Thames and a *Bats in the Belfry* talk given by one of our members, David Endacott, who is a recognised bat expert. The next planned event is a 'Cook Out' and ringing on a mini ring in Abingdon at the end of October. Experienced ringers are very welcome to come along to help and join in the fun.

The project to rehang and augment to six the five bells of North Moreton, and to construct a new ringing gallery, has gathered momentum. Fund raising is going well and many events have been held over the summer, including an Air Pageant, a duck race, a book sale and a safari supper. Whites of Appleton have been awarded the contract for rehangng the bells, and the new treble and Sanctus bells will be cast at the Whitechapel bell foundry. DAC and English Heritage approvals are needed before the Faculties can be applied for. It is still hoped that the work will be carried out in 2014.

Thanks go to Colin and Nicola Turner for organising a sponsored peal at North Moreton in October, which should be the last peal on the five bells before augmentation. The bells are currently very hard to ring and so the peal of 42 Doubles methods took 3 hours 15 minutes and a great deal of physical effort to ring (not to mention the huge amount of effort required to maintain concentration). A large number of villagers and some branch members assembled in the church to hear the second half of the peal, to enjoy the cakes and tea provided by the local ringers, and to congratulate the peal ringers on their sterling effort. Sponsorship money is still being collected and is expected to be well in excess of £500.

Future fund raising activities will be a *My Secret Kitchen* evening in the village hall on 28th November, and the sale of Christmas cards. If anyone is interested in purchasing some christmas cards, making a donation, or would just like more information, please contact Richard Loyd on 01235 850459.

Gillian Loyd

Oxford City

The City branch has been very active over the last few months with branch practices, quarter peals and other ringing, enabling progression across the branch. It is always encouraging to see learners progress to ringing first quarters and even peals, and practices have included more advanced ringing at some of the branch's 8-bell towers and even practices on the city centre 10s.

The City branch had the opportunity to undertake service ringing at St Mary the Virgin, the University Church in the city centre, the bells having recently been rehung and being one of the heaviest rings of 6 in the country. It was a great first time experience for many branch members.

The rehanging project of the bells of Garsington has been completed and we visited for a branch practice in July, the bells being much improved and pleasurable to ring. There was also an enjoyable and well organised tour to Hampshire in the summer months. Ringing occurred at several branch towers to herald the birth of Prince George of Cambridge.

Katherine Stonham

Reading

[No news received, Ed.]

Sonning Deanery

The Sonning bell ringers organised a fund-raising Bric-a-Brac sale in the Woodley shopping centre on Wednesday 8th May, and in spite of it being a weekday with quite cold weather, it was reasonably well attended. As there was negligible support from the rest of the Branch, we decided to split the proceeds three ways between the ODG Bell Fund, St. Andrew's bell fund, and the Sonning Deanery Branch account.

In May the bells of Wokingham St. Paul's and of All Saints became an official part of a music festival over Pentecost weekend. A quarter of Grandsire Triples was rung at All Saints followed by a quarter of Plain Bob Major at St Paul's. Notes about the ringing (in layman terms) were included in the festival programme and can be viewed at:

allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/notices/ProgrammeNotes2013.pdf

To mark the centenary of Twyford's bells, Richard Hamilton, a ringer at Twyford, gave a short talk about bells and ringing at the assemblies of three primary schools in the area (see the article on page 9). He also demonstrated simple ringing patterns by getting some of the children to ring handbells while other children, ranged behind the ringers, held up the appropriate bell number on a card above the child who was striking.

All Saints Wokingham went on an outing in June to the West Sussex area, and on 2nd June they rang a quarter peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major for the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation Day.

David Sullivan stood down as captain at Wargrave in the spring and the bell-ringing band is now being run jointly by Lavinia Sullivan and John Coombes. Lavinia does the teaching and running the Wednesday practice nights, and John does the management, administration and secretarial work.

Warfield church has been undergoing extensive restoration and improvement work since April and the tower was closed all summer. Binfield kindly accepted the Warfield ringers as visitors during this time. The Warfield tower opened again for ringing in early November.

It is with sadness that I have to record that John Harper died of cancer in July. On July 15th Binfield ringers were joined by many others from the area to ring the bells at the service of thanksgiving for John's life. In the following week two quarter peals were rung to commemorate and celebrate his time with us as a bell ringer. John was elected Tower Captain of Binfield in 2007 and he spent many hours training new ringers, several of whom are now valuable members of a revitalised band.

Towards the end of July various towers rang quarter peals to celebrate the birth of HRH Prince George: All Saints Wokingham, Sonning, and White Waltham are ones I have been told about.

There have been family events to celebrate and mark with ringing this summer. In August a quarter peal of *Wells Surprise Minor* was rung at Easthampstead to celebrate the birth of Eloise Sophie Curtis Wells on Aug 8th, granddaughter of Barbara and Steve Wells. On Saturday 21st September bells rang out at St. Paul's, Wokingham to celebrate the marriage of Elizabeth Davenport, a St. Paul's ringer. A peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung on the Saturday morning, conducted by Ken Davenport (proud father), which left just enough time for him to get changed and escort her up the aisle. The following Thursday a quarter peal was rung at Binfield to celebrate her marriage, in which her mother, father and brother took part.

On the last day of August Twyford & Hurst combined bands had a grand ringing day in the City of London. They began with the ground floor ring of 6 bells at St Katherine Cree, then to the 8 bells of St Olave Hart Street, next the magnificent tower of 12 bells at St Magnus the Martyr, and finally the bells of St James Garlickhythe where the Royal Jubilee bells now hang.

Two towers in the branch have achieved Tower Maintenance Awards this year: Sonning and Wargrave, congratulations to them both (see page 14). Also at Wargrave, two new ringers, Roz and Val, have started their training and are enjoying it; we wish them well with their progress and development of a new interest.

The branch's 8-bell striking competition in October was barely viable because of the low number of bands, and was then scuppered by a strike in Italy which prevented some members of one of the bands from getting back in time. Next year the 8-bell striking competition should be a lot more interesting because we are going to combine with Reading branch for a joint competition.

Rob Needham

South Oxon

These past few months have simply been ticking along for the South Oxon branch. Our training sessions are continuing with a range of doubles practices (Grandsire and Plain Bob), 8 bell practices, and occasional Surprise Minor and Surprise Major too. We had a “higher numbers” practices at High Wycombe over the summer, where we had the opportunity to ring on 10 and 12 bells. The Branch’s *Tower Twinning* events are continuing and are still considered a good night out! I think a few towers are forming closer ties and helping each other with practices beyond the twinning activities!

Our branch striking competition was held in April at Chalgrove. Four teams contested the branch striking competition, held on the challenging but glorious 16 1/2 cwt ring of 6 at Chalgrove. The judges were Keith Anderson and Mary Friskney from Wallingford, who commented that each team had got to grips with the challenge in different ways. In the end Drayton St Leonard won the event and represented the branch at the Guild 6-bell competition on 5th October. This year there were enough teams to have heats – which kept the Drayton St Leonard team busy for the whole day as they won their heat! The final was held at Monks Risborough, where the Drayton St Leonard team came in 4th after St Aldate’s, Thatcham and High Wycombe (not too shabby!).

We’ve had two first quarters by Kirsty Rix and John Burdett as well as participants in the Radley course! Many towers had quarter peals to welcome new babies (their own as well as Prince George), and some had first quarters to say farewell to ringers moving away. It’s also been notable that quite a few of our towers have been ringing for more weddings than usual. Thame tower seemed to be the busiest with weddings over the summer.

It is encouraging to see that most towers are teaching new ringers both young and “mature”. There has been considerable co-operation between the towers, which ensures that there are helpers and facilities (including coffee and tea!) to encourage new ringers. Our newest tower, Marsh Baldon, is a tower of entirely new ringers. They are making excellent progress with tutelage by John White and Hilarie Rogers and a group of helpers from the branch.

Warborough Tower is running taster courses for the local primary school where, over the lunch break, they teach small groups of local primary school children to handle a bell. The course will continue in the autumn term.

Finally – big congratulations to Great Milton Tower for being awarded a Silver Award for the care and maintenance of the bells and tower. It’s a real achievement!

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

This year's Branch Centenary celebrations continued with a well-attended dinner on Friday 10th May, which commenced with a performance by the St



Denys Handbell Ringers from Stanford in the Vale. Faringdon Corn Exchange was suitably decorated with ropes and bells, and ringers had their first chance to try Tony Crabtree's newly acquired mini ring, which had been erected in one corner.

The following day there was an attempt to ring quarter peals at all fourteen towers in the Branch, including two on handbells at the unringable towers. By the evening, our tally was twelve tower bell quarters, one on handbells, one using the Abel handbell simulator, and the Devon call change sequence *60 on 3rds*. Many thanks to Joe Norton for coordinating towers, conductors and ringers (44 locals and eight visitors). Notable achievements included first quarters for Allister Godfrey, Susie Godfrey, and Becky Vardy, first of Minimus for Tim Pett, and first of Singles for Mark Boylan and Joe Norton.

Ten teams competed in the Branch 6-bell striking competition at Shellingford. Judges Katherine Young and Simon Ridley awarded the Greenley Shield to Longcot. The band, which included three teenagers, went on to represent the Branch at the Guild competition in October.

Jon Chamberlain organised an enjoyable Branch outing to Gloucestershire at the end of September. In between morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea, time was found to ring at Brimpsfield, Tewkesbury Abbey, Ashchurch, Great Rissington and Burford.

A peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung at Hinton Waldrist in memory of Tower Captain and former Branch Ringing Master Denis Leslie who died in January. Among the band, and ringing her first peal, was Valia Battat, the last person Den taught to ring. Tracey Wright rang her first peal at Shrivenham (treble to mixed doubles) as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Shrivenham Primary School. Congratulations to them both.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

Many towers rang to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II at the beginning of June. A peal was rung at Freeland on 2nd June, which was Neil Ephgrave's first peal.

The annual Branch striking competition was held at Ducklington on 22nd June with 6 bands entering the call changes competition and 4 bands contesting the method section. For many ringers it was their first experience of the newly renovated ringing chamber at Ducklington and everyone was very impressed with



the modifications. Woodstock repeated their successes of previous years by winning both competitions and went on to represent the Branch at the ODG's 6-bell competition in October. We were very thankful to Judith Kirby, Alan Coates and Hugh Deam for judging the competition and providing valuable feedback at the results ceremony. Post competition food and drinks were taken at The Bell to conclude a very enjoyable evening.

Two young Freeland ringers, Lucy Peck and Jessica Smith, who were both attending their first striking competition kindly wrote short articles of their experiences:

“At Ducklington Church on the 22nd June there was a fantastic striking competition. It is a very nice church. All together there were 6 amazing bands of bell ringers. There were five different churches involved, as Freeland had an A and B team with Jessica, who still attends primary school ringing the treble in team A.

It was a pleasure to listen to and it was great to watch. The bells were quite quiet, even though they were quite open to the rest of the church and you could see the bell ringers ring.

I am only 9 years and have been learning ringing for about 7 weeks. I am finally getting the hang of catching the sally. I went to this competition to watch my Dad (Graham Peck) and also to experience what striking competitions are like.

Even though not everyone could be winners, it was a lovely and happy atmosphere. There was lots of laughing and you could tell everyone was happy.

Well done and thank you to Mike for making the announcements, and to Ducklington church for letting us hold the competition in your church. Congratulations to those who rung for Woodstock and won. I hope you all enjoy ringing and another well done to all those who rung at the competition.

The only thing that would have made it a tiny bit better would be if there was a team of learners/novices that could have had a little turn ringing. I was also surprised at how few churches took part.”

Lucy Peck age 9

“Hello my name is Jessica Smith; I am 11 years old and have been ringing for just over a year at Freeland.

I recently took part in a striking competition against some really good people from other bell towers. Congratulations to everybody that took part in the competition. Also thank you to those of you who just came along to support the bands. Personally I enjoyed the night a lot and I thought everyone did exceedingly well. Well done to Woodstock who won both the call changes and method ringing competitions again, but especially a big well done to every single band that came along.

Overall I think everybody achieved a high standard and did extremely well. I think everyone enjoyed it and I can't wait to see you all again next year.”

On Saturday 6th July our summer social was held at Freeland. Thirty-seven members attended this event which commenced with ringing at St. Mary's, after which we adjourned to The Oxfordshire Yeoman for drinks and a barbecue. Presentations were then made of 25 *Firsts Fortnight* certificates, to recognise people's progress in taking up the challenge to ring something new, together with Guild membership and first quarter peal certificates. A very entertaining Aunt Sally brought the very enjoyable evening to a close.

Richard White kindly arranged the Branch Outing in October to the Worcester area. A splendid day was enjoyed by 28 ringers who were grateful to enjoy some good ringing and for the opportunity to ring at five superb towers. Our first tower of the day was at Badsey followed by Harvington, where it was fantastic to see many members of the community working hard on harvest festival preparations. Ringing recommenced after lunch in Droitwich followed by Salwarpe and Great Hampton.

Congratulations to Christine Putt of Ducklington for reaching 50 years as a Guild Member. Christine was elected to the Guild in her then home tower of Thame on 26th May 1962. A quarter peal was rung at Ducklington on 2nd July followed by the presentation of Christine's certificate and refreshments to mark this tremendous achievement.

Freeland has again been awarded a gold certificate under the Towers and Belfries Maintenance award scheme to recognise the high standard achieved in keeping their tower and bells in good and safe condition. Congratulations to Melanie McGregor as tower steeple-keeper and her band of helpers for gaining this award.

Our branch ITTS (Integrated Teacher Training Scheme) news is that two of our ringers, Melanie McGregor and Neil Ephgrave of Freeland, attended ITTS courses with their mentors to develop their teaching skills. We hope that more branch members will do likewise in the near future. Rob Walton achieved level 1 (bell handling) and Julie Minch level 4 (novice change ringer, doubles) in the *Learning the Ropes* scheme.

Cassington bells are back ringing again. An inaugural week-end was held at the end of October, and many congratulations to those involved in this major project.

And finally, congratulations to Toby Goss (Eynsham), Sue Hall and Andrew Smith (both Freeland) and Robert Walton (North Leigh) for ringing their first quarter peals.

Michael Probert

Points from Peals

Peal ringing continues at a similar pace to last year with a number of peals rung for the two notable royal occasions, the 60th anniversary of the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and the birth of HRH Prince George of Cambridge.

Firsts. A number of firsts have been recorded, many associated with the royal occasions:

- first peal: Isaac J O'Shea, David L Thomas, Daniel Austin, Matthew S Malek, Rosalind J Garrett-Bowes, Neil R Ephgrave, Valia E Battat, Stephen M Everett, Tracey Wright
- on eight: Brian Newman
- of Major: Rosa Bardwell, Johnathon D White, Trevor E Trivett
- inside, Chris J Johnson
- of Surprise Major, Richard Loyd
- as conductor, D Giles Winter
- of Stedman as conductor, Stephen A Rossiter
- on 12, of Spliced Royal, Jack Page.

Personal Milestones. A large number of personal milestones were achieved: 300th peal Stephen A Rossiter, 600th peal Catherine M A Lane, 1,000th peal Kenneth R Davenport, 2,000th peal as conductor William Butler, 500th peal of Major as conductor, Donald B Carter, 100th together Catherine M A Lane & Kenneth R Davenport, 750th peal together Martin J Turner & W John Couperthwaite. Completion of the Surprise Royal alphabet John S Croft, peals on all 366 dates of the year to both tower and hand bells Robert H Newton. Most Spliced Surprise Major methods to a peal: Josie S Irving (17m), Stuart F Gibson (17m), Darran Ricks (23m). Congratulations to all, especially those ringing their first peal.

Methods. First peals in the methods: Bensington D Major, Aston Martin A Major, and on handbells Lindsey Surprise Maximus, were rung for the Guild.

Church events. Peals celebrating church-associated events were rung for: the Patronal Festival at Tilehurst, Berkshire, and 40 years of ordained ministry by the Revd Peter Balantine of Great Linford. Also to welcome Revd Lisa Holmes to the priesthood immediately following her first service at Charlton on Otmoor, and the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the bells at Downs Barn, Milton Keynes.

Personal events. Peals marking personal events included welcoming Stella Grant and Ferne Hughes, wedding compliments to Rebecca John and James Wheeler, wedding compliments to Elizabeth Davenport and Charlie O'Brien, and birthday compliments to David Philipson, Di Bridle, Sandra Hallett, Alan Griffin, Beryl Norris, Marjorie Firman, Joe Norton, and June Saint.

In memoriam. Peals were rung in memory of Dennis O'Shea, Ron Warford, Derek Brown, Dennis A (Den) Leslie and David Livingston, all of whom contributed immensely to ringing.

An error slipped into *Points from Peals* in the May 2013 edition of Odd Bob "750th together : Bernard Groves & E John Wells" should have been "750th together: June D Wells & E John Wells". I apologise to all concerned.

Ken Davenport, Peal Secretary

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Diary of Events for 2013/14

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the odg.org.uk web site for diary updates on an ongoing basis.

TBC	To Be Confirmed	AGM	Annual General Meeting	AP	Advanced Practice
BP	Branch Practice	EP	Elementary Practice	HY	Half Yearly Meeting
QM	Quarterly Meeting	RCP	Ringling Centre Practice	SC	Striking Competition
SM	Surprise Major	SP	Surprise Practice	CM	Committee Meeting

NOVEMBER 2013

Fri	1	Chipping Norton	BP	Burford (8)	7.30–9pm
Fri	1	EBSB	Weekday BP	Bray (8)	2.30–4.30pm
Sat	9	EBSB	10 Bell Practice	Cookham (10)	7.45–9.15pm
Wed	13	ONB	BP	Cumnor (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	16	Sonning	Meeting + BP	W. Waltham (6)	4–5.30pm, 5.30–7.30pm
Sat	23	Guild	SC (10)	Newbury Branch	
Sat	23	Guild	General Committee Meeting	Newbury Branch	
Sat	23	RCP	Doubles & Minor	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Fru	29	VOWH	BP	Longcot (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	30	Guild	10 Bell Course	Aston Clinton	

DECEMBER 2013

Wed	4	Chipping Norton	BP	Shipton-u- Wychwood (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	7	South Oxon	BP	Little Milton (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	7	North Bucks	Christmas Ringing	Hanslope (8)	4–6pm
Sat	7	EBSB	Social + BP	Old Windsor (8)	7.30pm
Fri	13	ONB	BP	Blewbury (8)	8–9.30pm
Sat	14	RCP	Doubles & Minor	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	Sonning (8)	10am–noon
Sat	21	North Bucks	10 Bell Practice	Olney (10)	4–5.30pm
Mon	30	EBSB	Post Christmas Outing	simulator TBA	TBA

JANUARY 2014

Sat	11	Chipping Norton	BP	Ascott-u- Wychwood (6)	11.00am– 12.30pm
Sat	18	North Bucks	BP	Shenley (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Finchampstead (6)	3–5pm
Wed	29	ONB	BP	Cholsey (8)	2–3pm

FEBRUARY 2014

Wed	5	ONB	Surprise Major & Royal	Appleton (10)	7.30–9pm
Sat	8	Chipping Norton	BP	Hook Norton (8)	11.00am– 12.30pm
Mon	10	ONB	BP	Marcham (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	15	North Bucks	BP	Emberton (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	15	Sonning	Ringling, Service, Tea, AGM, BP	Binfield (6)	3–4pm, 4pm, 4.45, 5.15– 7pm, 7–9pm
Wed	26	ONB	BP	Blewbury (8)	2–3.30pm

MARCH 2014

Sat	1	Chipping Norton	Ringing, Service, AGM Meeting, ringing after	Shipton- Wychwood (8)	5pm, 6pm, 6.30pm
Sat	1	North Bucks	BP	Lillingstone Lovell (6)	3.30pm
Sat	8	Guild	Spring General Committee Meeting	Purley	
Sat	15	North Bucks	10 Bell Practice	Olney (10) Simulator	4–5.30pm
Sat	15	Sonning	BP	Wargrave (8)	10.30am–noon
Sat	22	ONB	Striking Competition, Service, Tea, AGM	Childrey (8)	3pm, 5pm, 5.45, 6.30pm
Wed	26	ONB	BP	Harwell (8)	2–3.30pm
Sat	29	Guild	Radley Course		

APRIL 2014

Wed	2	ONB	Surprise Major	Cholsey (8)	8–9.30pm
Mon	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Spelsbury (6)	7.30–9pm
Tue	8	ONB	BP	E. Hagbourne (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	19	Sonning	6 Bell SC, BP	Arborfield (6)	4pm–6pm, 6pm onwards
Wed	23	Guild	St. George's Day; ringing requested at 6 p.m		
Wed	23	ONB	BP	Abingdon, St. Helen (10)	2–3.30pm

MAY 2014

Fri	2	Chipping Norton	BP	Asthall (6) TBC	7.30–9pm
Mon	5	Guild	8-bell Striking Competition and Annual Ringing Day	Witney & Woodstock	10.30am–noon
Thu	8	ONB	BP	Sunningwell (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	17	Guild	AGM; North Bucks branch		
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Warfield (10)	10.30am–noon
Wed	28	ONB	BP	Marcham (6)	2–3.30pm

JUNE 2014

Tue	3	Chipping Norton	BP	Churchill (8)	7.30–9pm
Wed	4	ONB	Surprise Major	Milton (8)	7.30–9pm
Mon	9	ONB	BP	Sutton Courtenay (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	Twyford (8)	7.30–9pm
Wed	25	ONB	BP	Brightwell (8)	2–3.30pm



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ODG Young Ringers National Striking Competition band (see page 6)



High Wycombe, winners of the Guild 6-bell striking competition (see page 10)