

ODD BOB



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



Young Ringers' Outing, see page 5

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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 October 2014.

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

As I write this, my final 'offering' to Guild members before I hand over the reins at the AGM, I reflect on some of the highs and lows of these six years for which I have had the honour of serving as Master. I am pleased to say that there have been very few lows and that the experience has, generally, been very positive.

The response to opportunities for 'extra' ringing such as the F E Robinson centenary, Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, The Royal Wedding, the birth of Prince George, the Olympic Torch, the Stedman tercentenary and St George's Day (although this last one has become a regular feature and is no longer an 'extra') has been tremendous and shows real commitment by the membership at large. Thank you all.

Two years ago (see issue 88) it became possible to apply for grants from the Guild for educational purposes: to date, I understand that only one application has been received. In the same issue the support network for Guild teachers was launched. Take up of this has been decidedly limited, also. It seems to me that these educational initiatives are fundamental to the work of the Guild. Perhaps members could reflect on how such opportunities could benefit them, their towers and the activities of their branches, and act accordingly.

I trust that the above observations do not detract from a generally upbeat message, or from the fact that much good work is being done in many parts of the Guild, in recruitment and training and, particularly, with young ringers.

Finally, I would like to remind you of two forthcoming events of national ringing significance, which are soon to take place locally. The first is the Final of the National 12 bell Striking Contest at Oxford Cathedral on 28th June. It is one of the great social occasions of the ringing calendar and provides the rare opportunity to witness some really top class ringing.

The second is the Ringing Roadshow at Newbury Racecourse on 6th September. Many will remember the success of the previous event there. I look forward to seeing some of you in Oxford and Newbury.

Robert Newton, Guild Master

Young Ringers' Half Term Outing

In half term, on the 19th February, Tony Crabtree organised a superb walking tour in the Cotswolds for his own four young ringers from the Shrivenham area (Vale of the White Horse Branch). He kindly also invited the young ringers of the Old North Berks Branch.

The tour incorporated three towers and meant we should walk a little less than five miles. We parked at Bourton on the Water and walked from there two miles up the Slaughter valley.

In the first tower (Upper Slaughter, 5) we rang some excellent bob doubles and call changes, but some of the walkers were rather late arriving and to our consternation, some didn't turn up at all.

It turned out that some of the young ringers, arriving at Bourton late, had decided not to walk the further mile to Upper Slaughter, but waited at Lower Slaughter. They were allowed into the church to wait in the warm where two elderly volunteers were busy vacuuming and polishing. Our young people soon found the church grand piano and made good use of it. The two volunteers stopped their cleaning in amazement at the beautiful classical music played by Isaac who is studying for grade 7 on the piano. But when Andrew took a turn and played some Scott Joplin, they decided this was not suitable music for the church and asked him to stop!

Soon the rest of the party arrived and everyone enjoyed a ring on the light six (6 cwt). Tony had brought a very small set of twelve handbells, so some of us rang plain bob minor and some attempted plain hunt on 12 by means of lapping.

We took over a large part of *The Slaughters Inn* where a special deal had been negotiated for an excellent plate of sausages and mash and a soft drink. Before we left we took a few photos (see front cover) of the party, which consisted of about two dozen ringers, half of whom were school age, plus a dog!

The formal part of the proceedings finished with a ring on the eight at Bourton on the Water, but many of the participants went on to enjoy the many local attractions in Bourton afterwards.

Tony is to be thanked for organising such an excellent day out, which had to be rearranged at short notice when the original route was found to be flooded.

It is a shame that Tony ended up visiting the area again to recover a pair of walking boots left behind at the last church, and is still looking for the unknown owner of a hat found after everyone else had departed from the lunch venue!

Susan Read, Old North Berks Branch

St Mary, Longworth – restoration and new bell

The bells of St Mary, Longworth have been derelict for nearly 100 years, with the last Guild members being recorded in the *ODG Annual Report* of 1922. The PCC has resisted all suggestions of a restoration for very, very many years. However, I am delighted to say that permission has finally been granted, in writing, to restore and augment the bells for full-circle ringing. The PCC has agreed that the restoration is to be dedicated jointly to Dennis Leslie of Hinton Waldrist, former VOWH ringing master and tower captain at Hinton, and to his greatest friend Frank White, bell-hanger of Appleton, for their huge contributions to bell ringing and bell hanging. The new treble will carry an inscription to them both.

Longworth lies between the villages of Hinton Waldrist and Appleton so a restoration here is the perfect place to honour the memory of Frank and Dennis, not least as Frank's grandfather, Frederick White, was the last bell-hanger to undertake any work in the belfry, probably prior to 1900. The anticlockwise ring of five includes three maiden-cast bells by Richard Keene of Woodstock, founded in 1662, including the 10cwt tenor mounted on an ancient oak frame that is totally rotten in places.

Once restored the PCC has agreed to a partnership with Hinton Waldrist which will provide ringers for services and other occasions until such time as Longworth is able to sustain its own band. A recruitment and teaching programme is being set up to train new ringers at Hinton in the meantime.

However, a bell restoration in Longworth was never going to be straightforward. The PCC must first address priority repairs to the church building and roof. The good news is that the PCC has granted permission to continue with the fundraising plans for the bells provided this is all done outside Longworth until the church repairs are completed. The current projected cost of the restoration is in the region of £100 000, with most funds raised being routed through the ODG Restoration Fund which will manage any GiftAid. If you would like to help honour the memory of two great protagonists of church bell ringing of the ODG please contact me, Valia, for a donation form. Your support will be vital to the success of this project. Frank and Dennis would have been delighted to get these bells ringing again after so long, and for our part it will be an honour to dedicate this restoration, and the new bell, to them both. Thank you for your support.

Valia Battat, Tower Captain, Hinton Waldrist
4 Rose Cottages, Hinton Waldrist, Faringdon, SN7 8SG
catering.by.valia@hotmail.com

The Ringing Roadshow

Newbury Racecourse, 6 September 2014

Everything for the ringer you are and the ringer you want to be

Unbelievably planning for the Roadshow has now been in progress for just over twelve months! A great deal has happened in the last year, albeit mainly on paper, so it's an appropriate time to review progress and tell readers about some of the key stages the planning has reached.

The exhibition spaces will feature a wide range of products and services associated with ringing including bell founders and bell hangers.

There is still an extraordinary range of things to be sorted out with the Racecourse including catering, access and parking arrangements, and, most importantly, beer. We will report on final arrangements when we have completed our negotiations. Keep an eye on the web site (see below).

We are making arrangements for ordering and paying for tickets through the web site. We have decided to keep it simple and there is one price of £10 for all tickets (except for those aged six and under who get free entry). By comparison with previous Roadshows and other all day events we think this is a bargain.

The Seminar and Handbell Performance programme, compiled by Steve Coleman, is well into its final planning stage. The programme will run throughout the day with a number of handbell performances fitted in between seminars on the ground floor of the Berkshire Stand that will seat 250, and wall-to-wall seminars in a smaller room upstairs. There'll be something for everyone in the programme, the outline of which will be published on the web site as it is confirmed.

The Handbell Ringers of Great Britain (HRGB) have agreed to provide have-a-go sessions and demonstrations. A number of mini-rings have accepted our invitation to be present, and there will be ample opportunity to have a go on a variety of little bell installations.

We will be arranging a number of open towers available for those coming to and leaving the Roadshow.

Finally, dust off your teddy bears. We have decided to demonstrate this fun fund-raising activity by launching teddies off the second floor balcony of the Grandstand. The best teddy and parachute combo will win a prize!

We will be writing a series of updates between now and the Roadshow date, 6th September; see the web site at www.ringingroadshow.co.uk – and see you at Newbury Racecourse!

Jackie Roberts, Roadshow Organiser

Young Ringers visit the Elizabeth Tower

On the 16 April a group of six *Young Ringers Award* participants together with some siblings, parents, a grand-parent and mentors, assembled in Portcullis House reception for the mid-day tour of The Elizabeth Tower (formerly The Clock Tower) including Big Ben, the quarter bells and the Great Westminster Clock. Before starting our tour with the guide at the bottom of the tower we had to negotiate the airport style security system and had been warned to allow 20 minutes for this process. Each tour has two guides, one who leads and talks and the other who follows on at the back.

Fortunately we weren't expected to do all 334 steps up to the belfry in one go but had an easier climb of about 130 steps up to the first display room. Here our guide gave us a brief history of the Palace of Westminster in its modern form and the casting of the bells. It's quite amazing that our guide could muster so much enthusiasm for their subject given they do three tours a day, 5 days a week, obviously very fit mentally as well as physically, it most likely helped that she knew most of us were bell ringers.

The second phase up to the clock room involved about 170 steps, and because of the sunny weather and clear skies we were able to pause and enjoy marvellous views across all of London. In the Clock Room we had the history and construction of the clock mechanism explained to us including many of its special features, unique at the time it was built, that make it still the most accurate public, striking clock in the world.

The final phase to the belfry was timed so that we would see and hear the noon striking of the Westminster Quarters and Big Ben striking the hour (the quarters were originally known as The Cambridge Chimes from Great St Mary, Cambridge). We were provided with ear plugs for this experience. The trip down involved walking behind all four clock faces and being told about the history of their illumination, from gas lamps through to modern, low energy fittings.



On completion of the tour the guide took everyone who didn't have to get away to Westminster Hall where we were then left to our own devices as tourists (very good cafe). We were also able to take photos of the tower from this part of the Palace without too many other distractions. The photo attached shows most of our group outside Westminster Hall.

Everyone appeared to enjoy themselves and I would recommend the tour to all bell ringers, see: www.parliament.uk/visiting/visiting-and-tours/tours-of-parliament/bigben/ Arrangements are made through your local MP's office and 6 months notice is normally required as the tours are extremely popular.

Alan Bentley, Education Sub-Committee

Educational matters

By the time you read this we will be into this year's cycle of Guild courses, starting with the basic course based at Radley held at the end of March. That will be followed by the more advanced course at Michaelmas (27 September). Historically this has been based in the south of the Guild but this year we are exploring venues further north to improve accessibility and to spread the load on helpers (more details to follow). The year's courses will conclude with the basic Steeple Aston course in October (25th) and the 10 bell course at the end of November (29th). Look out for advertisements for all of these courses if you or someone you know could benefit from attending.

February saw the latest gathering of people across the Guild who are interested in training. 23 people represented 10 of the Guild's 15 branches and the Education Committee, for a morning of discussion, lunch together and an afternoon session looking at practical exercises in the tower.

By the time you read this we will have received the submissions from the nine participants in this year's Young Ringers Award Scheme and presented their awards at the AGM. We expect to run the scheme again next year – more details in due course. Please encourage any young ringers that you know to develop their talent and to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. Young ringers are in a minority now, with so many of us remaining fit and active into old age, so it is all the more important to encourage them. Ringing is after all the supreme example of an 'all ages' activity where ability counts regardless of age.

Interest in the Integrated Teacher Training Scheme (ITTS) continues to grow, as does demand for ITTS courses. Several people were not able to attend Susan Read's over-subscribed ITTS Module 1 course at Abingdon in January and we hope to organise another one in due course. Please get in touch if you are interested, either because you would like to teach, or, if you already teach, because you would like to learn more about developments in the practice of teaching ringers. Please note that the course is intended to be the start of a period of practical teaching with the guidance of an experienced mentor who has also attended the course (or a previous one).

To end with a couple of reminders. If you need help or advice, please let us know. We are keen to encourage more local courses and other forms of training support to supplement the Guild-wide courses that we run. If your branch doesn't currently run courses but you would like to do so, please feel free to discuss it with us.

If you think that a grant could help you to improve the way you do training in your tower, for example by investing in training equipment, the Guild offers grants, see: odg.org.uk/education/#GRANTS. We also have an e-mail support network for ringing teachers in the Guild to share ideas and problems, see: odg.org.uk/education/teaching.

John Harrison, Education Sub-Committee Chairman

RTFM

RTFM (read the flipping manual) is well known advice when something won't work. Often we never read manuals, and assume we will be able to work things out as we go along. Usually we get by, maybe taking more time or effort than we should, but since we don't know any better we just accept that's the way it is. Only when we get completely stuck do we resort to the manual.

What does that have to do with ringing? After all, a bell isn't a complicated electronic gizmo, and it's obvious how to ring isn't it? Well it certainly isn't obvious when you start, and it can't be all that obvious later or none of us would have difficulty learning methods, or putting ourselves right when we make a trip. And we would all know how to strike accurately, and have the technique to control very small, or large, or 'difficult' bells.

Ringing may not be like an electronic gizmo but it is a complex process. Controlling the timing of half a ton of metal on the end of a rope to within a few hundredths of a second takes quite a bit of skill, and requires techniques that have to be learned. Likewise, translating lines on a page reliably from memory into what you do on the end of a rope, and making sense of how you fit in with the sea of ropes around you requires technique, all of which has to be learned.

Where does a new ringer (or a not so new ringer) acquire all the knowledge and techniques?

Practice makes perfect? Well not always. Practising doing things the wrong way just makes you better at doing the wrong things. Very rarely will it help you to do the right things.

A wise, all-knowing instructor at your side would be ideal, but not everyone is so lucky, and in any case he/she may not be on hand whenever needed.

The third way is through books. Over the years a lot of experience about ringing has been captured in books, but you don't see them in use as often as one might expect. Like equipment manuals we tend to ignore them. Price isn't a barrier because ringing books are cheap – it's just habit.

With ringing it's more important to learn the right way to do things early, because, unlike operating a gizmo, after you've muddled along for a while your physical and mental habits become engrained, which makes it much hard to change even if given good advice later.

Helping new ringers to learn more effectively was the motivation behind *The New Ringer's Book*. It explains how to ring effectively, both the physical aspects of bell control and the mental aspects of learning methods. It doesn't pre-suppose a particular way of teaching and it supplements whatever information is (or isn't) provided by the ringer's tutor. It includes lots of pictures, not just words, and it is physically robust with a heavy spiral binding so it can be repeatedly folded back without damaging the spine. It is intended to be used heavily as the new ringer's constant companion – from the start and well into his or her ringing career. Every new (and maybe not so new) ringer should have their own copy. The book is available from Central Council Publications, see: cccbr.org.uk/bibliography/#newRingersBook.

Another book written for ringers who want to understand and develop their core ringing ability is *Ringling Skills*. It focuses on the difficult skills of rhythm, listening and ropesight and how to integrate them for optimum performance. It was originally published as a book in 1993 but has recently been revised and made available for free download.

The PDF version can be downloaded from the author's website, see: jaharrison.me.uk/book

There are two books to help ringers develop their method learning skills, i.e. to be able to learn new methods more easily and then to be able to ring them more reliably. They are: *How to Learn Methods* and *Learning Methods*.

How to Learn Methods is available from the Whiting Society, see: cccbr.org.uk/bibliography/#howToLearnMethods, and *Learning Methods* can be downloaded from the CC website, see: cccbr.org.uk/bibliography/#learningMethods

The Guild bookstall and many branch bookstalls have a range of other useful books on ringing. Take a look when you next attend a Guild or branch event.

John Harrison, Education Sub-Committee Chairman

Towers and Belfries Committee Report

The committee has met twice since the last report, with an average attendance of eight. Twenty inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below:

- Amersham (Three visits – slipping wheel problem)
- Ashbury (Slipping wheel problem)
- Berrick Salome (General inspection and advice on quote)
- Cassington (Grant inspection)
- Cheddington (Grant inspection)
- Denham (TMA)
- Edlesborough (General inspection)
- Great Coxwell (General inspection)
- Lewknor (General inspection)
- Longworth (possible new frame)
- Loughton (General inspection)
- Radley (General inspection and advice on quote)
- Stoke Poges (General inspection and advice on clapper wear)
- Upton Nervet (Two visits – general inspection & subsequent work)
- Weston-on-the Green (Two visits to check work following a grant inspection)
- Winslow (TMA)

Because a maintenance course held in May 2013 was less well attended than previously, for this year it has been decided to run, if requested, Branch based courses, rather than Guild-wide ones.

The committee has circulated a letter to all towers in the Guild to remind them of the existence of the committee and the help that it can give. This continues to result in a number of requests for inspections and advice.

A potential problem has been identified in that some towers have light switches in the ringing room that can be turned off by someone leaning against them – which could give some people handling problems (and spoil the striking!).

The TMA marking sheets have been updated to reflect this, and it will feature in inspection recommendations. These will also highlight the risk if tower lighting switches are located in the church.

John Davidge, Chairman T&B Committee

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

In the period since the last report the number of current awards has increased to 25. The number of expired awards remains at 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 113 inspections (of which 21 were preliminaries), resulting in 82 awards (46 Gold, 23 Silver, and 13 Bronze).

Wokingham (AS), Henley, Wantage, Letcombe Regis and Bray were the towers whose awards expired since the last report and it is hoped that they will attempt to renew (or improve) their awards.

The number of Branches having a tower in the “current awards” list remains at nine out of the fifteen Guild Branches, with EBSB still maintaining its predominant position (but with Banbury & Newbury improving theirs) as follows:

EBSB	6	(6 Gold)
Banbury	4	(3 Gold, 1 Bronze)
Newbury	4	(4 Gold)
Sonning Deanery	3	(Gold, Silver, Bronze)
South Oxon	3	(2 Gold, 1 Silver)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
Old North Berks	1	(Gold)
Reading	1	(Gold)
Witney & Woodstock	1	(Gold)

If your tower is in one of the remaining six 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 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

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 (S.M.V.)	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
Croprey (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 (S.M.V.)	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
Denham (St Mary)	EBSB	Expires 31.01.16

Silver Award

White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.08.14
Fulmer (St James)	EBSB	Expires 30.04.15
Great Milton	South Oxon	Expires 31.08.15

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 (S.M.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 (S.M.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
Letcombe Regis (St Andrew)	Old North Berks	Expired 30.09.13
Bray (St Michael)	EBSB	Expired 31.10.13

John Davidge

Librarian's Report

There have been 11 library enquiries since Odd Bob issue 89. These have been about:

- Wartime ringing ban
- When Ros Knight (who moved to Lincolnshire some time ago and who died recently) was Secretary of the Reading Branch
- History of Faringdon bells
- Peal rung at Calverton in 1914
- Membership number of member elected in 1977
- Membership details of Chiltern Branch ringer in 1970s
- Bells at Hinton Waldrist and Longworth
- Members at Steeple Aston in early twentieth century
- Ringers at Shottesbrooke in past years
- 14 books were borrowed for research for a talk
- Membership details for former ringer at Benson

A batch of material from the Sonning Deanery Branch was kindly donated to the library. This included the record of members' subscriptions going back to 1880 (when the rate was 1 shilling per year, 5 shillings for the clergy and certain others). The minutes of meetings going back to this time were photocopied and placed in the library in 1977, and it was decided that rather than have both these and the originals in the Guild library, the originals should be offered to the Berkshire Records Office in Reading for safekeeping.

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

Guild Insurance Policies

There is a certain amount of misunderstanding and perhaps a lack of clarity on what the two Guild Insurance policies are for and what they cover. This article, I hope, will address these issues. The Guild subscribes to two insurance policies:

1. Personal Accident
2. Charity and Community

Personal Accident

This is exactly what it says, a personal accident insurance policy which covers all Guild members who have paid their subscriptions in the current year. It covers the following activities:

- Ringing in any church or bell tower in the UK
- Teaching ringing in any church or bell tower in the UK
- Attending to routine maintenance in any church or bell tower in UK
- Travelling to or from a church or bell tower to practice or participate in ringing anywhere in the UK.

The level of compensation varies depending on the category a ringer falls into and this is defined by age. The categories are:

- Members between the ages of 16 and 70
- Members under 16
- Members between the ages of 71 and 75
- Members over the age of 75

Compensation also varies according to the degree of disability sustained:

- Death
- Temporary Partial Disablement – Temporary partial disablement means disablement arising from injury which is medically determined to prevent an injured person from undertaking the majority of his occupation as carried out at the date of the accident
- Temporary Disablement – is as above but “the majority of” is removed.
- Permanent Disablement – means that the disablement is permanent and irrecoverable
- Permanent Total Disablement – means the above with it medically determined that the person will have no likelihood of sufficient improvement to participate in his occupation ever again.

Extensions to the policy

Projects

For clarity, routine maintenance means any works that do NOT require approval in accordance with the care of churches measure. However, by prior agreement, cover can be extended to allow members to engage in major items of work, e.g. a restoration project. In consideration for this an additional premium may be payable.

Teaching

The same level of cover is extended to those not eligible for membership whilst they are under instruction in the art of ringing by a member but this is restricted to a church or bell tower within the Diocese of Oxford.

Levels of compensation are published on the Guild Website.

Charities and Community

This policy is provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance, a company which provides insurance cover to many churches in the UK. The policy mainly provides the Guild with the following:

- Public Liability cover for Guild events
- Contents cover for Guild property

The Guild requires Public Liability insurance just in case a claim arises from an incident at a Guild event (e.g. a General meeting), where the Guild was deemed to be at fault. An example would be if the meeting required a projector, which the Guild provided and someone tripped over the power lead, then the Guild would most likely be liable. However, if someone tripped on a step in the hall which was being hired/used then the liability is likely to be with those responsible for the hall.

The contents insurance element is fairly obvious. The Guild has a number of items of property, including the contents of the library, the master's badge and the trophies, all of which are covered under the Property Damage section of the policy.

The PCC

The Personal Accident policy coverage is fairly comprehensive in terms of covering ringers and those being taught in your tower in the event of a ringing accident. The PCC should have an insurance policy similar to that of the Guild to cover Public Liability for activities in the church. It is advised that the tower captain checks with the PCC to make sure they hold such a policy and also keep them informed of ringing activities (regular or one off). This is only to make sure that tower members are completely covered in the unlikely event that an incident is not covered within the scope of the Personal Accident policy.

Summary

I hope the above goes some way to explaining what the Guild provides through its insurance policies and where the PCC insurance policy fits in. The Personal Accident policy is there to provide a certain amount of compensation to members (and learners under instruction) where a permanent, temporary or even fatal injury is sustained through a ringing incident. However, what is not covered by this policy is an incident related to a non-ringing event, e.g. a meeting or non-ringers visiting a tower. From a Guild perspective an incident of this type at a Guild event would be covered by the Guild's Charities and Community policy as it has Public Liability cover. From a tower perspective this would be covered by a similar type of policy held by the PCC.

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

Stuart Gibson

News from the Branches

Banbury

At the end of November, some of the young ringers from Cropredy visited Banbury to experience ringing on different bells. They rang plain hunting to doubles and also had the opportunity to ring rounds on 10 bells.

Our branch calendar has followed the usual pattern. The Carol Service in December was hosted at Adderbury with the customary mince pies and mulled wine provided afterwards. In Steeple Aston, the hand bell ringers raised £1050 from their Christmas collection which was donated to the Philippine disaster appeal. Helen, Ted and Fred Taylor accompanied the hand bell ringers and have joined the church bell ringers. They enjoyed a visit to see the tower bells and are making good progress in ringing with Fred ringing for Sunday service after only 6 weeks.

In February, held at Tadmarton, there was a social evening and quiz which Jean & Barry Davis imaginatively compiled. The quiz rounds were completed by the teams, at their leisure during the supper which allowed plenty of discussion and debate at the tables. Banbury team narrowly won the first prize of an egg cup each after a tie-breaker picture caption round with Steeple Aston.

In March, the Annual Branch Dinner took place at Adderbury in the *Red Lion* pub with fewer people able to go than in previous years but an enjoyable evening for everyone. Also in March, the new bells at Horley were made available for visiting ringers with an open day which helped to raise further funds. A new band of ringers is slowly establishing with the help of the Harry Windsor Ringing Centre and a service of dedication is planned in the summer.

Heather Bletchly

Bicester

Following the augmentation to six at Weston on the Green in 2013, we decided that it was **the** place for our AGM, on the evening of 22 February 2014. We were able to ring Weston on the Green Place Doubles, thanks to the help of some visiting ringers, before the meeting and service, conducted by Mrs Penny Wood, who is so supportive of the Bicester Branch. Five ringers (2 moving from other Guild towers, and 3 new to the Guild) were made members of the branch, which is good to see as our number has been dwindling in recent years. Sadly we have now lost Keith Thomas who has moved to Middle Aston – he has looked after the bells in Woodeaton for many years, been an invaluable member of the Islip band, as well as keeping the 2 bells in Noke in good condition! We will all miss him but he's promised to ring with us as often as he can. Following the meeting we relocated to The Chequers for a lovely pub meal and a chat.

The next noteworthy Branch Practice was on Pancake Day (4 March) when eight ringers from three branch towers rang mainly plain courses of Grandsire Doubles and call changes on the 8 at Islip before the main event of the evening – pancakes hosted by Sally and Richard Wale.

Our outing has had to be postponed again this year – a broken wrist suffered by the would-be organiser on Burns Night (given the emphasis on both above it wasn't drink or food related however).

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

Our AGM in February took us to Marsh Gibbon on the western edge of our branch. Our hosts prepared a splendid tea in best ringing-tea tradition, and Rev David Hiscock took the service that was well attended by local non-ringers, which made us feel very welcome and that our ringing is valued. Our very own, multi-talented Jeremy Pratt stepped in at the last minute to play the organ. We were pleased to welcome Robert Newton the Guild Master and Ruth Groves, Guild Steward, along with 25 branch members representing 13 of our 31 ringing towers. Although this number is low it was much better than last year. Our president Mary Lee was unable to attend due to ill health and the meeting sent their best wishes.

The meeting was pleased to elect 15 new members to the branch. Several new officers were elected: Jeremy Pratt was elected as Chairman with David Body as his vice chairman, Jane Vowles as secretary, Anne Pratt to the vacant training officer's post and webmaster. Darren Washington, recently returned to the branch, took on the vacant 2nd Guild Representative post as well as 3rd Branch Steward. All the outgoing officers, especially Diana Slevin who was secretary for 5 years, were thanked. After a number of years with a shortage of officers we are pleased that all vacant positions were filled.

Our monthly midweek outing has generally been well supported both from within the branch and further afield. This takes the form of 3 or 4 towers and a pub lunch on 2nd Thursday of the month, capably organised by our ringing master, Jan Robinson. Details are posted each month on the now up to date branch web site and it would be lovely to see new faces.

Due to falling numbers at the 4th Saturday advanced practices the decision has been taken to replace it with a targeted quarter peal aimed at consolidating the ringing of 1 or 2 ringers in a specific method. Anne Pratt will be organising these.

During the rest of 2014 we have the branch striking competition in May, the annual outing in September as well our regular monthly branch practices. It is also hoped that the augmentation at Chearsley will be completed by the end of the year so there is much to look forward to in Central Bucks.

Jane Vowles

Chiltern

Branch members were encouraged to ring to mark St. George's Day as part of a national effort. Unfortunately, at Little Missenden the fifth moved across the frame just enough to catch on one of the bolts holding the clock hammer in place and ringing had to stop. However, all is now back in order. Other branch towers also rang that evening.

There is a plan, now agreed, to recruit new ringers by taking a stand at the *Towersey Folk Festival* in August this year, which has quite an appeal and may well tempt potential ringers to take up the exercise. Since the Festival has a wide appeal, we hope that potential recruits can be directed to the nearest towers in their area in order to learn to ring.

The Branch has an annual "friendly" striking competition with the North Bucks Branch that takes place for the *Orchard Cup* each October and is hosted by each Branch in turn. In recent years it has not been all that well supported and we hope that this year we, as the hosts, will be able to attract a larger entry to Stoke Mandeville for the competition.

Barry Cowper, Branch Chairman

Chipping Norton

The Branch practices in both January and February took place on Saturday mornings and were followed by pub lunches for those who wished to stay. There had been some concerns in January as to whether Ascott-u-Wychwood would be accessible but these were not realised. At Hook Norton, in February, James Bennett of Charlbury was elected and Nigel Slade, of Hook Norton tower, was re-elected. It is good to see members returning as their circumstances permit.

In addition to the monthly Branch practices, special practices are being arranged on the third Tuesday of some months to cater for those who wish to progress further with Grandsire Doubles and Plain Bob Minor, and on some Saturday mornings for those interested in Surprise Minor methods.

The Branch AGM was held at Shipton-u-Wychwood in March, where the service of Evensong was led by our new Chairman, the Revd. Kate Stacey. Our thanks go to the Shipton ringers for their kind hospitality. All of the Branch officers remain as before.

The possibility of having a Branch Outing was discussed so, if enough members are interested, it is hoped that this will take place in June.

One member helped with the Radley course and two were students.

At the end of March branch members rang for the Chipping Norton Deanery Evensong at Shipton-u-Wychwood. They were pleased to be joined by a member from a neighbouring branch who had gone along to sing in the choir.

Congratulations go to Frank Faulkner, a Hook Norton ringer, and his wife, Ann, who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in February.

This occasion and the twentieth wedding anniversary of Sally and Mick Austin were marked with a quarter peal by Hook Norton ringers.

Congratulations also to Daniel Austin of Hook Norton who has achieved two

more firsts, a quarter peal of Stedman Triples and one of Cambridge Surprise Minor, rung as an engagement compliment to Mark Tarrant and Constance Young.

Some ringers who first learnt in 1943 met at Spelsbury in April for a service of dedication, ringing and a lunch, arranged by Jean Datson, an honorary Branch member.

Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

Christmas social at Old Windsor

Daniel Knight and his intrepid team at Old Windsor kindly hosted a Christmas social on 7th December last year. Some 40 members enjoyed a supper of pizza



and salad before a keenly fought skittles contest. A composite team from Amersham, Bray and Stoke Poges turned out to have the necessary combination of pace and direction and were adjudged the winners. The bottle-shaped objects displayed were unfortunately wooden skittles and did not contain drinkable Christmas cheer, but the team members were very pleased nevertheless!

L to R: Stuart Galloway, Peter Mackie, Jan Galloway, Kath Firman, Graham Firman

Amersham Outing

Stephen Newnham writes:

I'm a novice ringer, and when St Mary's, Amersham ringers organised an outing last autumn I took the chance to go along, as I had been unable to go in previous years.

The tour took in four towers in the local area; in the morning Haddenham SMV and Bledlow Holy Trinity, followed by a very nice lunch at *The Lions of Bledlow*. In the afternoon were Monks Risborough St Dunstan and Wendover St Mary. I had not previously visited any of these towers; the handling, and in some cases the feel of the various bells, was quite different from those I'm used to, which was instructive for learning bell control. The towers had both ringing chambers and ground floor ringing, giving a different aspect to the adventure of unfamiliar bells.

Some experienced ringers came from other towers in the area to add strength to the experienced ringers from Amersham. It was good to meet some friendly and enthusiastic fellow ringers from other towers. It was a day spent getting to know them better and improving my ringing technique. A lot of fun was had by all.

Flooding at Cookham

The early weeks of 2014 will be remembered as among the wettest on record, causing serious disruption to travel and risk of damage to property.

Marcia Dieppe writes:

We had two lots of non-ringing at Cookham due to flooding, one at the beginning of January and the other at the end of January.

Although the church itself wasn't flooded, all roads into Cookham village were closed. As I recall, we lost 3 Sunday and 2 Tuesday practices. The picture shows Cookham Moor and the edge of the old bridge.



London Major record

A notable milestone was reached on 27 February with a peal at Hughenden. This was Roger Baldwin's 309th peal of London Surprise Major, a total previously equalled only by the late Stephen Ivin. Roger has subsequently pushed his total up to 313, thereby setting a new record. 179 of these peals have been rung on tower bells and 134 in hand. Doubtless more will follow!

National 12-bell striking competition eliminator

The preliminary round of this year's national 12-bell competition was held on 22nd March. Twenty teams entered the contest so three towers were required, six or seven teams ringing at each. High Wycombe entered a band, and were rather charmingly described in the programme as, "another band with a long pedigree in the Contest and lots of Final appearances under their belts, they now have a brand new ring of 12 to play with. They are noted for meticulous preparation and have beaten the CY's in their back yard before. Can they do it again?"

As it turned out, we were drawn to ring against stiff opposition at St Giles Cripplegate. Some of the bells here are notoriously difficult and unpredictable to handle, and with teams from the College Youths, Bristol, Cambridge, Liverpool, Southwark Cathedral and the University of London as the other contenders it was never going to be an easy ride. However, we felt we acquitted ourselves well and the test piece of Stedman Cinques was completed with no mishaps. We were placed fourth with a score of 65% – a creditable effort, but as only the top three teams from each eliminator progress to the Final we will have to wait for another year to regain this exalted status. The photo on the back cover shows the band.

Peter H Mackie

Newbury

The branch does not have a submission for this edition of Odd Bob.

Mark Brock

North Bucks

A branch training day was held in November, concentrating on Plain Hunt and Plain Bob Doubles. There were twelve attendees from eight towers – half of the attendees were recruits from the Big Ring Pull recruitment drive in 2012. It consisted of a theory session, followed by ringing in three separate groups, then a pub lunch, and two further practical sessions. Thirty experienced ringers gave up their time to help.

A joint practice was held with the Towcester branch at Wicken in November where a course of LXXV Delight Major was successfully rung to further commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first joint meeting between the two branches.

The Christmas social and ringing was held at Hanslope in December. There was a good turn out from across the branch, with an hour's worth of ringing including something to suit all tastes and abilities. Following the ringing seasonal refreshments were provided in the church, where there was also a display on hand giving information on Hanslope's bell rehanging project.

This year the AGM was held at Lillingstone Lovell, with ringing at Leckhampstead and Lillingstone Lovell beforehand, followed by tea and then the AGM. Two officers stood down, two new officers were elected, and all the other officers were re-elected. Following the formal AGM there was presentation on the future of the branch, and what could be done to improve the levels of ringing, and also how branch practices could be improved. Following on from this, specific 8-bell and 10-bell practices are being organised for those people who expressed an interest in improving their 8-bell and 10-bell striking abilities.

In April a branch outing took place to towers in Hertfordshire and Middlesex. It was an early start to the day, with the coach leaving Olney at 7:15am, and Milton Keynes at 7:30am. There was ringing at three towers in the morning, followed by a fine lunch at a lovely pub in Rickmansworth, with ringing at three more towers in the afternoon. Over 30 people went on the outing, young and old, with both beginners and also more experienced ringers. An enjoyable time was had by all.

As well as all this, branch practices and change ringing and plain hunt practices continued on a monthly basis.

Gary Reading

Old North Berks

The New Year's Day ringing with refreshments was held at Brightwell. Thanks go to Roy Thorpe and the Brightwell ringers for all their efforts at short notice to make this a very pleasant and successful occasion for the Branch.

Attendance at our evening branch practices continues to vary but our afternoon practices are well attended by both learners and helpers. The alternate-month Surprise practices are also quite popular. Many practices have provided good learning opportunities, thanks to the attendance of experienced branch members. At a recent practice two local ringers were thrilled to have their first opportunity to ring Stedman for many years. Therefore we have decided that, on the whole, the current pattern of daytime, evening and Surprise Major practices does fulfil our members' needs and should not be altered, at least for the time being.

During the school holiday periods, our young ringers and their friends from adjoining branches have enjoyed several more events organised by Susan Read. These have included ringing, skittles and handbells at Radley, and a walking tour with ringing at Upper Slaughter, Lower Slaughter and Bourton on the Water in conjunction with the Vale of the White Horse Branch. Susan also organised a successful ITTS course in the Branch in January, with 24 attendees. She is now mentoring 6 new teachers and will hold the ITTS second module in June.

Although not directly branch activities, several teaching initiatives have recently been started within the branch, which are being organised and supported by branch members. We are very excited by an entirely new band of ringers being taught at Aston Tirrold. This is significant for the Branch because it has long been hoped for. We would like the new Aston Tirrold ringers to be able to 'stand alone' within the next six months, so a rota of towers in the nearby area are taking part to give them help and encouragement.

Five teams entered our 6-bell striking competition this year. Everyone was very pleased that Childrey, our hosts, entered for the first time that anyone could remember. It was a close competition and drew many favourable comments from our judges, Lorna and Brian Curtis. All teams acquitted themselves very creditably, however Abingdon prevailed and will go forward to represent the Branch at the Guild competition in October.

At our AGM we said a sad farewell to our outgoing Chairman, Mandy Winters, who had decided that pressures of work meant that she could no longer continue in the role. Philip Roberts has gallantly stepped into the breach and we are looking forward to his leadership during the coming years. Thanks go to Mandy for her dedication to branch affairs during her tenure.

In the past few months we have gained fourteen new Guild members from seven different towers. Sadly two of our members died in 2013, Ken Cotterell of Didcot and Eunice Davies of Wantage. Eunice, well-known throughout the Branch and Guild, was the widow of Peter (former Tower Captain of Wantage and Director of The Ringing World), and was involved in the production of our

branch newsletter for many years.

At the quiz evening and supper, held at St. Helen's Church Centre Abingdon in November, there was a select group of branch members and friends (on this occasion it was a case of quality rather than quantity), making up five teams. Thanks were given to our quiz master, Brian Read (assisted in the *Name the Cathedral* round by Tim Pett) and to Susan and her band of helpers for an excellent supper. It is surprising how many cathedrals look alike when you can only see small photographs of them!

The Branch continues to support the North Moreton rehung, augmentation and new ringing gallery project. It is hoped that the bells will be removed by Whites of Appleton at the end of April and the new treble and Sanctus bells cast in May. More on this in future editions as the project progresses.

Gill Loyd

Oxford City

The City branch has been active over the last few months with branch practices, quarter peals and other ringing that enables progression across the branch, mostly focussed within specific towers. Practices have included more advanced ringing at some of the branch's 8-bell towers and included a 10-bell practice in Oxford City Centre as well.

Late last year a group of City Branch members headed to Worcester for a day tour that involved ringing at the Teaching Centre in the Cathedral as well as some of the other towers in the city. This provided the opportunity for some focussed ringing development. This was closely followed by our AGM hosted by Headington, with a fabulous tea laid on alongside the usual meeting business.

The Spring outing this year was to Wiltshire and included ringing at Wootton Bassett, Purton and two of the Lydiard's. The clear blue skies added to an excellent day for all involved.

Many towers held social events to herald 2014, with Christmas meals (some in January) being enjoyed across the branch. The branch has seen births and deaths over the last few months, along with members leaving and new members joining us.

Katherine Stonham

Reading

The Branch AGM was held at Checkendon with the usual format: ringing, a service which was taken by the Rector, the tea and meeting. At the AGM all the Branch Officers were elected for a further year with the exception that, due to reduction in the number of Branch members, we now only require two Branch Representatives. Many thanks to the Checkendon ringers for the arrangements and excellent tea.

Although our practices are still at the same times, from the Saturday practice in May, the focus will be on both helping Towers with their needs and also general ringing, these being held on the 2nd Saturday in the month from 10.00 until 11.30. The Surprise practice is held at Shiplake on the third Thursday of the month.

In March the branch was host to the Guild General Committee meeting, which was held at Purley. In the weeks leading up to the meeting there were worries over flooding but in the end everything was fine. Thanks to the Purley ringers and members of the Branch for the excellent tea.

There has been a Young Persons' day held at Shiplake with various activities taking place.

In April the Branch trialled a further Surprise practice being held on the 1st Wednesday from 13.30 which was successful, and a further two are planned.

Ken Baker

Sonning Deanery

Over the weekend of 9th/10th November at St. Mary's Twyford, four firsts were achieved: Alistair Vorster's and John Rowe's first quarters, Josh Slade's first quarter inside, and Julian Pettifer's first quarter. Congratulations to them all.

We held the first Branch Business meeting (renamed from Branch Committee meeting) in November, and there was much discussion about recruitment, training, and what the branch can best do for the members. An analysis of attendance numbers versus time of day of Saturday branch practices was suggested at the meeting and this was done by Andrew Elliston. The results showed a clear favourite to be the morning practices although most of those were in the summer months which may have influenced the numbers.

Also in November several members of Twyford tower, with some help from Sonning ringers, completed the sound control system for St. Mary's bells so that the controls can now be opened or closed by ropes in the ringing room.

In January 2014 an ITTS module 1 course was held at St. Helen's, Abingdon. This excellent one-day course is to train ringing teachers in how best to teach a new ringer good bell-handling skills. There were seven attendees from our branch, and everyone enjoyed it and picked up valuable teaching techniques and teaching material.

At the Branch AGM on Sat. 15th Feb. there were the following changes to officers: Chairman now John Harrison, Ringing Master (was vacant) now Steve Wells, Training Officer now Jacquie Hazell, Second Branch Rep (was vacant) now Jacquie Hazell. All other posts/officers were unchanged. Seven new members were elected and there were two returning members.

Starting in January, Sonning and Wargrave combined their practice evenings; the members of both towers go to Wargrave on alternate Wednesdays and to Sonning on the Thursdays in between. This type of arrangement benefits a tower, or towers, that have few members or a higher than usual ratio of learners to experienced ringers. It enables learners to ring with a more solid band around them, and the increased number of ringers permits a helper to stand with each learner. At Sonning's AGM in March it was agreed to continue with a modified joint practice arrangement for the term after Easter.

Wokingham All Saints has had to suspend ringing for some services because the church has introduced loud music rehearsals before some services, which

makes ringing from the open gallery impractical. The installation of a glass screen between the gallery and nave (on the cards for many years but not yet approved) is hoped to solve the problem.

A Branch Officers meeting in April decided that the branch officers (shared between them) should visit all branch towers over the next few weeks. The purpose is to ascertain whether a tower would value some help from the branch at their practice evenings, and to establish what sort of help would be most useful to them. Also at the meeting, our Training Officer, Jacquie Hazell, offered to run Novice branch practices on a Wednesday evening once or twice a month, and towers in the branch are being asked whether they can host the occasional Novice BP on a Wednesday evening.

The Branch Secretary has traditionally been the guardian of all the branch archives; some of the records go back to the formation of the branch in 1880. In April the Secretary visited the Guild Librarian and a lot of the archive records have been transferred to the ODG Library. Other old records will be offered to the Berkshire Record Office, and the more recent records retained by the Secretary to assist in doing his tasks. The full catalogue of branch archive material has been posted on the branch website.

A quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles was rung at Waltham St Lawrence on St. George's Day and it included two first quarters, by Jennie (treble) and Ben (tenor) King. It was also a belated celebration of their first wedding anniversary; they were married in the same church. Our congratulations to them both.

Rob Needham

South Oxon

In November a band from Drayton St Leonard represented Oxfordshire in the Four Shires Ringing Competition. The team travelled to Harvington, Worcestershire, and rang against a team from each of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. This competition is notable in that each team is marked not only on ringing a method – but on their ringing up and ringing down. Drayton St Leonard was delighted to come a close second.

The branch is very pleased to congratulate former chairman Brian Gray on having reached 50 years of being a member of the Oxford Diocesan Guild! Brian joined the guild in March 1964 and has been ringing ever since. We are also very pleased to welcome Bill Simon back to ringing after a period of illness.

On a more sombre note Cyril Lawrence died in December. A quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles, Cyril's favourite method, was rung following the service of thanksgiving. The band was made up of a local team from those who had rung regularly with him. After the peal a toast to Cyril was shared by the team and local Brightwell Baldwin ringers.

What follows is a report from our branch chairman Andrew Davis. It is an event which we hope that other towers can learn from. It has a happy outcome – but as you will learn, was by no means a straightforward event.

“On the 23rd February a member of the Chalgrove team had a nasty turn whilst ringing; what followed has prompted me to share the experience. Missing a dodge the ringer said she didn't feel well before falling away from the rope; the tower captain, who was sitting out, quickly grabbed the tail and set the bell. After sitting the ringer down, lack of breakfast was to blame... Her daughter was contacted, to come and collect her. On arrival, being medically trained and a first responder, she realised that things were far from fine, further assistance would be needed. At this point a retired matron from the congregation expertly took control of matters.

This is where having a plan, should the worst happen, is needed. We have the postcode and location of the church clearly visible in the ringing chamber. One of us went to the bottom of the lane to guide the emergency services in. Within a short while the ringing chamber was full of people and kit. Keeping the bell ropes clear, I pulled ours into the clock room. It soon became clear that the ringer could not be carried down the stairs, she would have to come out on a stretcher. We have a trap door that can be lifted out. By now we had two fire crews on the scene and I was able to advise how to lift the trap out. Rescue ropes would be needed. Did we have an anchor point? It was decided to use the bell frame. I had to advise that the bells were up, I would need to ring them down. The ropes would need to be dropped back into the ringing chamber. The fire chief told all those in the ringing chamber not to touch the ropes as I passed them back down. It was quite surreal ringing whilst a team of medics moved the patient around the floor! Having cleared the ringing chamber the trap was lifted out, the ringer was lowered and finally transferred to hospital. The ringer was taken ill at 9.15 am, it was now 1.45 pm.

The rescue teams debriefed in the ringing chamber, in total there had been first responders, two ambulance teams, two fire and rescue teams and various other specialists.

Hindsight is always helpful, what would we do differently? **Let the Vicar know!** He could see that there were problems in the ringing chamber that the congregation were unaware of. **Pull the clock hammer off!** I pointed out to a fireman whilst we wrapped slings around the bell frame that the clock was about to strike. "Will it be loud?" he said just as it struck. "Fairly loud," was my answer as he picked himself up. Try and **ensure those helping have a snack**, we have a Fairtrade stand, the biscuits were ideal as many involved were getting light headed having not eaten for so long. We have now printed an **instruction guide** with pictures on how to lift out the trap door should the need arise again.

I am pleased to say that the ringer is making a good recovery, she is now out of hospital and thanks everyone for their kind wishes and prayers.” – Andrew Davis.

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

We invited the Old North Berks youngsters to join us for the Young Ringers February half-term outing to the Cotswolds – a full report appears on page 5.

After the excitement of last year's special Centenary Dinner, we returned to our usual pub-based informality with a well-attended and enjoyable meal at the *King & Queen* in Longcot at the end of February.

The Branch AGM was held at Shrivenham in March. Our local churches are experiencing a shortage of organists at present so we were pleased that young ringers Jonathan and Andrew were able to take time out from their GCSE revision to share organ playing duties for the service. There was a good turnout for the meeting, with all but one of our towers with members represented. All the officers were re-elected apart from Hugh Baxter who stood down as Treasurer. Wendy Tynan takes over. Three new members were elected to the Guild.

Hinton Waldrist bells are now back in action following the first major maintenance work since they were rehung in 1928. The gudgeon on the second was replaced and new bearings and pulleys were fitted to all the bells, so they should be on top form when we visit for the Branch striking competition in May.

The Shrivenham ringers spotted an opportunity for some favourable publicity when BBC Radio Oxford spent a week in the village as part of their Big Tour. Although the programme producer and accompanying reporter spent two hours up the tower, the visit was distilled into two four minute interviews that were broadcast on Monday 14th April.

We recently bade farewell to Darran Ricks, former Branch Deputy Ringing Master, who has moved to Worcestershire.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

On Saturday 30th November our Branch held a very successful and well attended ringing up and down in peal course at Ducklington, where Graham Nabb was the tutor. Following a superb presentation by Graham, ringers were able to practice and develop their skills at Ducklington and South Leigh. In the afternoon, following a tutorial, ringers had the opportunity to enhance their trebling up and down skills at Northmoor and Stanton Harcourt. Our thanks to Graham, Lorna Curtis, who tutored at South Leigh, and to Alison Merryweather-Clarke for organising this event.

Congratulations to Julie Minch (North Leigh); on 8th December, after ringing her first quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor inside, she became the first student to be awarded all 5 *Learning the Ropes* certificates following the training approach



under the ITTS (Integrated Teacher Training Scheme of the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART)). The photo shows Julie (centre) receiving her Level 5 certificate from Reverend Miri Keen (right) at the beginning of the Sunday service. Julie has made excellent progress since her first lesson in August 2011. Besides her own significant contribution to ringing at St Mary's North Leigh for most services, she has also introduced many local friends to ringing, one of

whom is now also working his way through the *Learning the Ropes* certificates and has introduced his wife into the bargain. So Julie began a cascade that more than doubled the number of local ringers and has recently brought along another couple of friends to the practice for their first ringing experience.

A very significant anniversary was celebrated at Bampton on 19th January. The following article appeared in the February issue of the Bampton Church Contact magazine:

“At the Bellringers’ AGM in January 1974, David Rose was elected Tower Captain and Terry Rouse was elected his Vice Captain. They have been fulfilling these roles ever since: 40 years of unflinching service as Captain and Vice-Captain, making sure the bells rang out for all service ringing, weddings, funerals, Remembrance Sundays, always ringing out the old year and ringing in the new, teaching and looking after generations of learners, organising ringing outings and competitions and overseeing the huge fund-raising of £40,000 to get our bells put in good order and tuned. Their loyal service for the church and community has been remarkable. At the end of the Sunday Service on January 19th David and Terry were each given a huge vote of thanks by the Canon, Roger Humphreys, on behalf of the church. Their wives, Liz Rose and Janet Rouse, both bellringers, each presented their husbands with a bottle of wine as a ‘thank you’ from the ringers”.

Between the husbands and wives, they’ve given well over 200 years of ringing to Bampton. Many congratulations.

The annual Quiz evening was held in the Winchester Room, St. Mary’s Church, Witney on Saturday 8th March. Congratulations go to the *Motley Crew*, combining the brains of ringers from a number of towers, who were the eventual winners. Many thanks go to Richard White for organising and quiz mastering, with the event raising £125 towards Branch funds. Thanks to the six teams for supporting this event and for providing such delicious foods. Thanks also to Witney for hosting the event.

Stonesfield hosted our AGM at St. James the Great Church on Saturday 29th March and we are grateful to the Stonesfield ringers for making the arrangements for the church service and providing refreshments. Roger Barnes thanked Rev’d Roy Turner for a very enjoyable service and welcomed the Guild Deputy Master Alan Marchbank and Branch members. Neil Ephgrave was elected to the role of Chairman, Anthony Williamson to the role of Ringing Master and Lorna Curtis to the role of Deputy Ringing Master.



L to R: Liz Rose, Dave Rose, Terry Rouse, Janet Rouse

Many thanks were given to Roger Barnes and Alison Merryweather-Clarke for their dedicated work and support to the committee over past years as Chairman and Ringing Master respectively. Fourteen new Guild members were elected and four re-elected bringing the total membership to 185.

Finally, congratulations to Mandy Colliss (Combe) for ringing her first quarter peal.

Michael Probert

Points from Peals

Peal ringing totals so far this year are less than at the same point last year but several ringers have progressed in terms of number of methods rung and individual totals. The most noticeable footnote not to show since my last *Points from Peals* is First Peal. Where are all the new peal ringers?

The Guild remembered Marion Stella Ainsworth (née Capey) with several peals, one of which included a new method Capey LS Major, and also Walter (Dick) Lee (1917-2008), tower captain at Quainton for over 30 years following the dedication of a glass screen to his memory. The only other peal marking a Church associated event was rung for the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. There must be other Church events to be marked!

A peal at Calverton was rung to mark the 100th anniversary of the first peal of Surprise Minor for the Guild, and the first peal on the bells since rehanging was rung at Garsington.

A number of First Peals have been recorded:

of Pudsey Surprise Major, Joanne P Druce (completing standard eight),

Jack E Page, Kelvin R Britton, Colin G Newman

of Bristol Surprise Major and on 10, Duncan Loweth

of Bristol Surprise Royal, Kelvin R Britton.

A large number of personal milestones were achieved; 100th peal Kelvin R Britton, 150th for the Guild Janet E Menhinick, 500th on handbells E John Wells, 1000th on handbells Graham A C John, 1000th for the Guild E John Wells & June D Wells, 2000th peal Beryl R Norris, 200th together Robert H Newton & E John Wells, 700th together on handbells, Bernard F L Groves & Graham A C John.

Most Spliced Surprise Major methods to a peal: D Giles Winter (8m), Joanna Knight (14m), Jack Page (17m), Kenneth R Davenport (18m), Darran Ricks (23m).

Most Spliced Surprise Royal methods to a peal: Stuart F Gibson (6).

First of S Maximus inside: John E Hearn.

A peal of Stedman Triples at Hughenden celebrated the 60th anniversary of David A Cornwall's first peal – same tower, same bell and same composer.

Special mention must be made of Roger Baldwin, who completed his 310th peal of London S Major thereby exceeding the previous record.

First peal in the method on handbells, Thames Valley Surprise Royal, was rung for the Guild.

Peals marking personal events included welcoming Henry John McGregor Wilson, wedding compliment to Swaz Apter and Alan Flood, Diamond Wedding Anniversary compliment to Molly and Joe Druce, and birthday compliments to Kelvin R Britton, Brian P Diserens, Maurice Edwards and Basil Townsend, former Tower Captain of Garsington.

Ken Davenport, Peal Secretary

Paying Peal Fees electronically

If you would like to pay peal fees electronically, instead of sending in cheques, then please contact the peal secretary (peals@odg.org.uk) to obtain the details. Thank you.

Stuart Gibson

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Diary of Events for 2014

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	Ringing Centre Practice	SC	Striking Competition
SM	Surprise Major	SP	Surprise Practice	CM	Committee Meeting

MAY 2014

Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Bledlow (8)	7–9pm
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Warfield (10)	10.30am–noon
Sat	17	Guild	AGM	Downs Barn	
Thu	22	VOWH	SC	Hinton Waldrist (6)	7pm
Sat	24	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton (10)	10am–noon
Sat	24	Chiltern	8/10 Bell Practice	Aston Clinton (10)	7–9pm
Wed	28	ONB	BP	Marcham (6)	2–3.30pm
Sat	31	EBSB	BP	Stoke Poges (8)	7–9pm
Sat	31	South Oxon	BP	Brightwell	7–8.30pm
				Baldwin (6)	

JUNE 2014

Tue	3	Chipping Norton	BP	Churchill (8)	7.30–9pm
Wed	4	Reading	Surprise Major		13.30
Wed	4	ONB	Surprise Major	Milton (8)	7.30–9pm
Wed	4	EBSB	BP	Hambleton (8)	2.30–4.30pm
Mon	9	ONB	BP	Sutton Courtenay (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	14	EBSB	SC	Chenies (6)	5pm
Sat	14	CBB	BP	Winslow (8)	7–8.30pm
Sat	14	Oxford City	Outing		
Sat	14	Reading	BP	Shinfield (6)	
Wed	18	EBSB	BP	Shellingford (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Cheddington (6)	7–9pm
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	St Paul's,	10.30 – noon
				Wokingham (8)	
Wed	25	ONB	BP	Brightwell (8)	2–3.30pm
Sat	28	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor Practice	Aston Clinton (10)	10am – noon
Sat	28	South Oxon	BP	Ewelme (6)	7–8.30pm

JULY 2014

Sat	5	Chiltern	8/10 bell practice	Aston Clinton	7–9pm
Mon	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Leafield (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	12	EBSB	SP	Burnham (8)	7–9pm
Sat	12	Oxford City	BP	Wolvercote (6)	6.30pm
Sat	12	CBB	BP	Little Horwood (5)	7–8.30pm
Sat	12	Chiltern	Elementary Practice	Great Missenden (8)	10.30am–12.30
Sat	12	Reading	BP	Shiplake (8)	
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Great Missenden (8)	7–9pm
Sat	19	Sonning	BP	Hurst (8)	10.30 – noon
Tue	22	VOWH	BP	Uffington (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	23	ONB	BP	Radley (6)	2–3.30pm
Sat	26	EBSB	BP	Penn (6)	7–9pm
Sat	26	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Gt Haseley (6)	7–8.30pm

AUGUST 2014

Wed	6	Chipping Norton	BP	Charlbury (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	6	ONB	Surprise Major	Goring (8)	7.45–9.15pm
Sat	9	CBB	BP	Bierton (6)	7–8.30pm
Sat	9	Reading	BP	TBA	
Tue	12	ONB	BP	Wantage (8)	7.30–9pm
Thu	14	VOWH	BP	Buscot (4) & Highworth (8)	7pm
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Ellesborough (6)	7–9pm
Sat	16	Sonning	BP	Barkham (4)	10.30 – noon
Sat	23	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Sat	23	Chiltern	8/10 bell practice	Aston Clinton	7–9pm
Wed	27	ONB	BP	Childrey (8)	2–3.30pm

SEPTEMBER 2014

Fri	5	Chipping Norton	BP	Burford (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	6	CCCB	Ringling Roadshow	Newbury	
Mon	8	ONB	BP	Steventon (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	13	Oxford City	BP	TBC	6.30pm
Sat	13	EBSB	SP	Stoke Poges (8)	7–9pm
Sat	13	CBB	Branch Outing		
Sat	13	Reading	SC	Mapledurham	
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Wendover (8)	7–9pm
Sat	20	Sonning	BP	Shottesbrooke (6)	10.30 – noon
Wed	24	VOWH	BP	Coleshill (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	24	ONB	BP	Milton (8)	2–3.30pm
Fri	26	EBSB	BP	Marlow (8)	2.30–4.30pm
Sat	27	Guild	Michaelmas Training Day		
Sat	27	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Sat	27	Chiltern	8/10 bell practice	Aston Clinton	7–9pm
Sat	27	South Oxon	Special Practice	TBA	

OCTOBER 2014

Wed	1	ONB	Surprise Major	Brightwell (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	4	Guild	Six Bell SC	ONB Branch	TBC
Mon	6	Chipping Norton	BP, followed by meeting	Chadlington (6)	7.00–8.30pm
Thu	9	ONB	BP	Harwell (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	11	Oxford City	BP	Cowley (6)	6.30pm
Sat	11	Chiltern	Elementary Practice	Weston Turville (6)	10.30am–12.30
Sat	11	CBB	BP	East Claydon (6)	7–8.30pm
Sat	11	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6)	
Sat	11	EBSB	SC (Lorna Newton final) and HY meeting	Clewer (6)	5pm
Sat	18	Chiltern	BP	Stoke Mandeville (8)	7–9pm
Sat	18	Sonning	SDB/Reading joint 8-bell SC & tea, Branch Practice	All Saints, Wokingham	4.00 – 6pm, BP 6pm on
Wed	22	VOWH	BP	Buckland (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	25	Guild	Steeple Aston Course		9.15 – 8pm
Sat	25	South Oxon	BP	Shabbington (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	25	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Wed	29	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	2–3.30pm

NOVEMBER 2014

Sat	1	Chiltern	8/10 bell practice	Aston Clinton	7–9pm
Tue	4	Chipping Norton	BP	Chipping Norton (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	8	EBSB	BP	Amersham (12)	6–8pm
Sat	8	CBB	BP	Long Crendon (10)	7–8.30pm
Mon	10	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	15	Oxford City	AGM	St. Aldates (6)	6.30pm
Sat	15	Sonning	Tea & Business Meeting followed by Branch Practice	Finchampstead (6)	4.30–6pm 6pm onwards
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP	Great Kimble (6)	7–9pm
Sat	22	Chiltern	Doubles/Minor practice	Aston Clinton	10am–noon
Sat	22	Guild	10 Bell SC	Bicester Branch	TBC
Sat	22	Guild	General Committee Meeting	Bicester Branch	TBC
Wed	26	ONB	BP	Chilton (6)	2–3.30pm
Fri	28	VOWH	BP	Longcot (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	29	South Oxon	BP	Drayton St. Leonard (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	29	Guild	10 Bell Training Day	Aston Clinton (10)	

DECEMBER 2014

Wed	3	ONB	Surprise Major	Harwell (8)	7.30–9pm
Tue	9	ONB	BP	Cholsey (8)	8–9.30pm
Fri	12	Chipping Norton	BP	Fulbrook (6)	7.30–9pm
Sat	13	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10)	4–6pm
Sat	13	CBB	BP	Great Horwood (6)	2.30–4pm (TBC)
Wed	17	ONB	BP	Sutton Courtenay (8)	2–3.30pm
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Little Missenden (6)	7–9pm
Sat	20	Sonning	BP	White Waltham (6)	2 – 3.30pm



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
Established 17th January 1881

STEEPLE ASTON ONE-DAY COURSE

Saturday 25th October 2014
9.15 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

This course will provide tuition & practice on basic methods from Plain Hunting to Plain Bob Major.

Applications are invited from Guild Members only.
Priority will be given to members who have not attended before.

Cost: £25

For further details and an application form please email
steepleastoncourse@odg.org.uk

or write, with SAE to

Richard Stanworth, 11 Valley Road, Buckingham
MK18 7BW

The Application Form will also be available on
the Guild Web Site www.odg.org.uk

Closing Date For applications is 31st August 2014



*Anticlockwise from left front: Pat Newton, Annie Davies, June Wells, Kath Firman, Graham Firman, Dave Sullivan, Ken Darvill, George Whiteside, Charles Botting (conductor), Peter Mackie, Robert Newton and David Cox
High Wycombe band at the National 12-bell striking competition*



N Bucks branch outing outside All Saints, Kings Langley