

ODD BOB



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



Witney and Woodstock branch outing to Stroud Valley

Oxford Diocesan Guild

Are you 18 or under on 1st April 2017 and like a challenge?

Young Ringers' Award



Meet other young ringers

Learn more about
bells and ringing



Watch your progress
through the year

Get messy doing bell maintenance

Tell others about ringing

The Young Ringers Award Scheme will be running during
2017



Details about the award are available on the Guild web site:
<http://odg.org.uk/education/YRA/>

More information about the programme and the award will be available in the
New Year from your Branch secretaries

Jo - email: youngaward@odg.org.uk
(entries due by 31st march 2017)

Contents

Master's Mutterings	4
Education Matters	5
ODG 6-Bell competition final at Penn	5
The Central Council in Portsmouth	7
The Role of a Guild Steward	8
New Safeguarding Policy	8
Tower Maintenance Award Scheme	9
Towers & Belfries Committee	12
Librarian's Report	13
News from the Branches	14
Banbury.....	14
Bicester.....	15
Central Bucks.....	16
Chiltern.....	17
Chipping Norton.....	17
East Berks and South Bucks.....	18
Newbury.....	20
North Bucks.....	20
Old North Berks.....	21
Oxford City.....	21
Reading.....	22
Sonning Deanery.....	23
South Oxon.....	24
Vale of the White Horse.....	25
Witney and Woodstock.....	25
Points from Peals	26
Paying Peal Fees electronically.....	28
Guild Officers for 2016/17	29
Branch Secretaries.....	30
Diary of Events for 2016	31

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 2017.

Rob Needham

Data Protection Act 1998

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Master's Mutterings

The Guild Festival has come and gone, and we have a new Bishop of Oxford who has accepted the invitation to be our Patron. I know that many of you took the opportunity to ring to welcome him.

The Festival, on the other hand, was an opportunity that not many took. The service was attended by around 60 people, and at some of the towers open for ringing people were waiting for there to be enough to ring, or not all of the bells were rung. Stedman Triples on the glorious ring of 12 at the cathedral, although lovely, did not realise the full potential of the bells.

Over the winter, we will be gathering views as to whether the Festival in its current form is still of interest to our members, so please make your views known through your branches when asked.

There have been various ringing-related items in the news of late. In September, many local radio stations across the country had interviews with ringers as the result of a survey carried out at the Central Council Meeting this year, which suggested that it is becoming harder to recruit ringers. Although on the face of it this appeared a pessimistic view, it gave many ringers the opportunity to broadcast positive views on the radio. BBC Radio Berkshire and BBC Radio Oxford both had two or three slots during their Sunday morning programme and you may have heard interviews with some of us. I am just coming to the end of a project in my own tower, and took the opportunity to invite the local press and the local TV station to come and watch as the new bells were unloaded, with the accompanying interview and photo-shoot.

Let us not only take every opportunity that comes our way, but also make opportunities. In my experience, the press loves a good local story, so don't be afraid to contact them – something that may seem mundane to you (a special quarter peal, the birthday of one of your ringers, or a group of new recruits) is newsworthy! In your parish, too, get into the habit of publicising any ringing that is not the usual Sunday or Practice Night. News about a forthcoming band

of visitors, or a branch practice, can be of interest and may result in people coming to watch and listen. In small communities, use your local email list, or put a notice outside the church, so people know what is going on.

As we approach Christmas, may our bells ring out in gladness.

Hilarie Rogers, Guild Master

Education Matters

At its most recent meeting the Education Sub-Committee received with interest a brief report about the development of a 'Hub' in the Sonning Deanery Branch. Five towers have agreed to pool their teaching resources for the benefit of those learning bell handling and early indications are that the initiative is bearing fruit.

Sadly, not all bands have an experienced and capable teacher within their own tower, so the option of calling on someone in the area or of sending recruits to a nearby tower to deal with the initial stages is an attractive one. A blend of those teachers who have and have not attended ART courses can achieve much by working in co-operation for the benefit of all.

The first ART recognised Teaching Hub is in Wellington (New Zealand) and involves three towers, but could such a scheme benefit your area? It could be within your branch or across branch, or even association, boundaries.

Those who attended the AGM will know that another *Young Ringers' Award Scheme* concluded at the end of March, resulting in six submissions. All of the youngsters had made good progress over the previous 12 months and, in a few cases, that progress was outstanding. Two Bronze, two Silver and two Gold awards were made. We are delighted that Jo Druce has again agreed to run the next cycle of the scheme. If you are U18 on 1st April 2017, please consider taking part. I'm sure you won't regret it.

Robert Newton, Education Sub-Committee Secretary

ODG 6-Bell competition final at Penn

Since only nine teams applied there was no need for heats for this event. In the end a further two teams withdrew, leaving us with a short afternoon, extra teas and a drive home in the daylight. All good stuff!

The judges were David Phillipson from Olney and Doug Hird from Newport Pagnell. They commented on the very high standard of ringing of all the teams but, unfortunately, Aylesbury team was disqualified for ringing only 120 changes instead of the required 240.

The whole afternoon was run most efficiently by Penn ringers and other members of the EBSB Branch, which included the ushering, time-keeping and, of course, a very moreish tea. The results were given in the hall opposite the church which you accessed by risking life and limb crossing the road.

The results are tabled below with the judges' comments.

Team	Branch	Judges' comments	Faults	Place
Hungerford	Newbury	Slowest ringing of the teams. Faults from the tenor at handstroke and backstroke. Occasional open backstroke leads. No clashes or direct hits. 2 nd half was better than the first. Ringing time 9:31	41	4
High Wycombe	EBSB	A few direct hits during the practice rounds of test piece. A bit rushed. 1 direct hit during the test piece. Some open backstroke leads. Very good ringing. Ringing time 8:50	22	2
Bloxham	Banbury	Practice too fast for the tenor. Problem with syncopation throughout. Not much clashing or direct hits. Clashes were well recovered. Good ringing. Ringing time 8:55	98	6
Wokingham All Saints	Sonning Deanery	Practice rounds became settled. Test piece rounds were very good. Some rushed leads. Tenor more in touch with other bells. Some syncopation. 2 nd half better than 1 st half. Ringing time 8:54	85	5
Tilehurst	Reading	Quickest ringing of the day. Very good rounds First 60 changes a bit choppy but settled. Good speed. Occasional slow handstroke lead. Ringing time 8:43	35	3
Drayton St Leonard	South Oxon	2 nd slowest ringing of the day. A few problems in the practice. Good slow, deliberate rounds at start of the test piece. Good tenor. Nice piece of ringing. Very good and enjoyable. Ringing time 9:25	17	1
Aylesbury	Central Bucks	Failed to complete the test piece as they stopped after 120 changes instead of 240		



Winners, anticlockwise from front left:
1. Charlotte Boshier 2. Daniel Rogers
3. Christopher Rogers 4. Hilarie Rogers (c) 5.
John S White 6. Amy Herlihy

Alan Marchbank, Deputy Master and chief organizer of the day, thanked everyone for coming and gave a small token of thanks to the judges. He added that the tenor ringer in the Bloxham team had been ringing for only 7 months and this gave rise to a round of applause from the competitors.

Thank you, Alan, for organizing a very enjoyable and well-oiled day [*what was in the tea?* – Ed.]

Bobbie May (with judges' comments from Alan Marchbank)

The Central Council in Portsmouth

The 2016 Central Council meeting was hosted by the Winchester & Portsmouth Guild in Portsmouth. As well as the annual meeting the weekend included an open Question Time where a panel of ringers with diverse backgrounds answered topical and often controversial questions. Many Council committees took the opportunity to meet and there was a lot of 'networking', a dinner, a social and curry, songs of praise and lots of ringing.

This year there were more motions for debate than usual, covering several aspects of the Council's work. All were passed – so the proposers had done their homework. In future there will be no limit on the number of places on Council committees and nominations will be made in advance, supported by a candidate's statement. That will avoid excluding someone willing to contribute to a committee's work on the few occasions when there are more candidates than places, and it will save time in meetings that could be used for debate. The Committee for Redundant Bells extended its terms of reference to include buildings with bells other than active churches, which will become more important as churches close and the buildings are used for other purposes.

Five non-controversial anomalies were removed from the *Decisions on Methods & Peals* and the Methods Committee will consult with interested parties on other more controversial aspects and develop suitable proposals for next year.

The Council endorsed a statement (Decision K) to affirm its primary responsibility to ringers and clarify its relationship with other bodies, notably the church(s), and it authorised a Council Review Action Group (CRAG) to review its Rules and Activities, consult widely, and to make recommendations in 2017.

Over the next few years the Council intends to transform the format of its annual meeting to become more of a weekend conference open to all – with workshops, debates and seminars – with the formal AGM being a much smaller part.

You may have seen the display about the Council's work during the Guild AGM at Farringdon but in any case there is a lot more on the Council website. We, your representatives on the Council, are always happy to talk to you about the Council's work – to answer your questions and to listen to your suggestions. Our contact details are on the website and in the Guild report.

The Council website is: cccbr.org.uk Video recordings of the meeting and other events are at: cccbr.org.uk/events

Decision K is at: methods.org.uk/ccdecs.htm#decK

Information on CRAG is at: cccbr.org.uk/review/

Decisions on methods & peals (D, E & J) are at: methods.org.uk/ccdecs.htm

John Harrison

The Role of a Guild Steward

The Guild Stewards perform an important role in the ODG. It is the biggest Guild in the country both in membership and number of towers. Geographically, it is big. In the days before emails and web sites, communicating across such a large organisation was a challenge. The five Guild Stewards provided a useful link between the Guild Officers & meetings and the membership at tower level and fifteen Branches. The Stewards can cover more Branch functions than the Guild Officers could manage and provide a two way briefing opportunity. Electronic communication can break down distances and numbers, but it still can't provide the personal touch where the Stewards can help. In 2015 Katie Lane and Lorna Curtis stood down after several years as Stewards. I took over one of the roles and three of their Branches (Oxford City, Witney & Woodstock and Vale of the White Horse) as listed at the back of this Odd Bob.

It has been an interesting first year. One of the Stewards' tasks is "... in co-operation with the local Branch Secretary, help with the arrangements for Guild Striking competitions, meetings, Festival and Ringing Day..." This year's Guild AGM was in the Vale of the White Horse. The preparation was hard work but rewarding, and the AGM was successful and enjoyed by all. The question is, what else can I do to assist the Branches? I have used the role to communicate opportunities within and between the three Branches. They are geographically related and already had some productive ties. Members are now taking more advantage of training and practice opportunities in adjacent Branches that they perhaps didn't previously know about or were reticent to enquire about.

I am lucky to be the owner of a portable mini ring, which has attended about eight Branch functions in the last year adding interest and variety to the activity and attracting greater numbers of people. This perhaps led to ideas for other activities thus helping in the longer term. It has been interesting to spread good ideas in one Branch around the others and see them taken up. As a member of the Towers & Belfries Committee, there is an opportunity to observe the bells when I visit and possibly make suggestions for improvements. This has already benefitted several towers who have discovered that sometimes very minor work can have a major impact on the enjoyment of ringing their bells and resulting quality and quantity of ringing. I don't think all these are in the "job description" but that is part of the fun of being a Guild Steward!

Tony Crabtree

New Safeguarding Policy

A new Safeguarding policy has been drafted and agreed. It will be circulated soon throughout the Guild. It contains a policy statement and procedures to be followed.

By now all towers should be keeping an attendance register. It is best practice for the register to be signed, although not everyone agrees with this. A signature cannot be altered, a ticked box can. If there were ever to be an allegation concerning a safeguarding matter a signature is more reliable evidence of a ringer being present, or not, on a specified date.

I have been approached about the use of email correspondence to contact young ringers. The *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook* does not give direct advice for bell ringers but does provide a section for general use. Care should be taken when emailing children and groups; use the ‘blind copy’ to conceal individuals’ addresses; if using email to make arrangements for outings or special practices consider copying in your tower or branch secretary as well so that the message is in the public domain.

Diocese of Oxford Safeguarding Handbook for the protection of children and vulnerable adults – a few Do’s and Don’ts:

- If young people want you to hold their mobile phone numbers, email addresses or similar, make sure that their parents know and have agreed
- Only give personal contact details that are within the public domain of the church, including your mobile phone number
- Keep communications short. If you need a discussion, fix a time to do so face to face during or following the group, and follow the guidelines on counselling
- Use an appropriate tone, friendly, but not over-familiar or personal
- While communications should be warm and friendly, they should not suggest or offer a special relationship
- Respect the young person’s confidentiality unless abuse including self-harm, actual or threatened, is suspected or disclosed. If in doubt consult Group Leader, Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Make sure that your communication is such that, in principle, it would not embarrass you for it to be seen by the young person’s parents or church officials.

Catherine Lane, ODG Safeguarding Officer

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

Since the last report the number of current awards in the Scheme has risen by one to twenty-one. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is now eighty-six, which is about nineteen per cent of the four hundred and forty-two towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been one hundred and thirty-nine inspections (of which twenty-seven were preliminaries), resulting in one hundred and ten awards (seventy Gold, twenty-five Silver, and fifteen Bronze). For the first time for some time the number of towers participating has increased, with Waddesdon requesting a preliminary inspection to highlight the areas that could be improved, and Stratfield Mortimer (St John) achieving a Gold at the first attempt – congratulations to them.

The number of expired awards has also remained static at twenty- two. T & B committee members continue to contact the expired towers with the aim of persuading them to renew their awards. Congratulations to Chalfont St Peter,

Thame, Thatcham and White Waltham who all renewed Gold Awards. The number of Branches having a tower in the “current awards” list remains at nine out of the fifteen Guild Branches, with EBSB not having regained its predominant position, having been overtaken by both the South Oxon and Reading Branches. Details as follows:

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

If your tower is in one of the remaining six, 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. **And it's all free!**

Current Tower Maintenance Scheme Awards

Gold Award

Stratfield Mortimer	Reading	Expires 31.10.18
White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.10.18
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB	Expires 31.10.18
Thame (St Mary)	South Oxon	Expires 30.09.18
Thatcham (St Mary)	Newbury	Expires 31.05.18
High Wycombe (All Saints)	EBSB	Expires 28.02.18
Berrick Salome	South Oxon	Expires 31.01.18
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB	Expires 31.12.17
Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 30.11.17
Dorchester (SS Peter & Paul)	South Oxon	Expires 31.10.17
Freeland (S.M.V)	Witney & Woodstock	Expires 31.07.17
Harwell (St Matthew)	Old North Berks	Expires 30.04.17
Ellesborough (SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern	Expires 31.03.17
Reading (St Giles)	Reading	Expires 31.03.17
Chalgrove (SMV)	South Oxon	Expires 31.01.17
Adderbury (St Mary)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.16
Cropredy (S M V)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.16
Henley-on-Thames	Reading	Expires 30.11.16
Mapledurham (St Margaret)	Reading	Expires 30.11.16

Silver Award

South Leigh (St James)	Witney & Woodstock	Expires 31.08.17
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Bronze Award

Fulmer (St James)	EBSB	Expires 30.11.17
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Expired Awards

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
Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 28.02.13
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
Clewer (St Andrew)	EBSB	Expired 31.05.14
Chalfont St Giles	EBSB	Expired 30.09.14
Kintbury (S.M.V.)	Newbury	Expired 30.09.14
Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury	Expired 30.09.14
Deddington (SS Peter & Paul)	Banbury Branch	Expired 31.12.14
Peasmore (St Barnabas)	Witney & Woodstock	Expired 28.02.15
Wargrave (St Mary)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.07.15
Great Milton	South Oxon Branch	Expired 31.08.15
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	Newbury Branch	Expired 30.09.15
Denham (St Mary)	EBSB Branch	Expired 31.01.16

Towers & Belfries Committee

The committee has met twice since April, with an average attendance of six. Eleven inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below:

- Beaconsfield (Noise from 6th)
- Brightwell cum Sotwell (Grant)
- Chalfont St Peter (TMA)
- Cowley (Changes to rope circle)
- Drayton St Leonard (Grant)
- Great Coxwell (Inspection with structural engineer)
- Radley (Grant and TMA)
- Stratfield Mortimer (TMA)
- Taynton (Inspection with structural engineer)
- Thame (TMA)
- White Waltham (TMA)

A rope splicing course has been run in the North Bucks Branch in May and a maintenance course was held (again in the North Bucks branch) at the end of October.

The committee are investigating ways in which, if asked, we could advise/help towers to improve their bells – both from a “go” and an ease-of-ringing point of view.

The committee are also looking into the preparation of a display, to be used at Guild Meetings, to promote the help that we can give.

John Davidge, Chairman T&B Committee

Librarian's Report

There have been six library enquiries since Odd Bob issue 94. These have been about:

- disposing of a deceased Guild member's ringing books
- ringers at Old Windsor killed in the two World Wars
- Roll of Honour document for St Giles Oxford
- Arthur Bliss, whose name is on a 1914 peal board at High Wycombe
- query about current status of Cuddesdon bells
- VOWH Guild membership information.

The Blue Plaque ceremony at Drayton for Rev. F.E. Robinson, mentioned in Odd Bob 94, duly took place on 22 May. It was a memorable day, with about 100 people present, including six Robinson family members present including FER's granddaughter Liz. The ceremony started with the Communion service in St Peter's church, then moved outside to where the plaque is displayed on the wall of the church hall. The speeches took place, then the unveiling of the plaque by Colin Fletcher, the acting Bishop of Oxford, and then refreshments in the church followed. A peal of London S. Major was rung on the bells during the afternoon. An account of the event can be seen on the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques website at:

<http://www.oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk/plaques/robinson.html> .

Trial electronic archive of Guild material. Following the review of the library paper which went before the Guild committee meeting in March, a trial electronic archive has been set up in a section of the website. The trial archive consists of small samples of library material such as images of Guild minute books, annual reports, co-mmittee meetings, etc. The Guild committee is due to discuss the archive trial at the November 2016 meeting.

[Part of the trial archive shows the very first Odd Bob, and it explains what the name Odd Bob stands for – Oxford Diocese; Berks, Oxon, Bucks. – Ed.]

Two branches asked me as librarian to take boxes of their old material to sort through and jettison what is not needed for archival purposes, and retain what is needed. A lot of the material was post-1950 Guild annual reports, Odd Bobs, and duplicates of the same document. For future reference, any such material, if not needed by the branch, can be disposed of before it gets to the library.

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

News from the Branches

Banbury

The Branch 6-bell Striking Competition, hosted by Cropredy on Saturday 4th June, was a very happy occasion. Bands from eight towers competed for the two cups, five in the method ringing section and three in the call changes category. Blessed with fine, warm weather, many of the ringers settled themselves in the churchyard to listen to the test pieces and to support and encourage the teams, many of which contained comparatively inexperienced ringers. All the teams are to be congratulated for putting on a good performance.

Following the competition a barbeque was held in an idyllic orchard setting beside the Oxford Canal, and Ringing Master Lionel Smith then introduced the judge, Chris Roberts, who announced the results, presenting the cup for method ringing to the Bloxham team, and the call changes cup to Cropredy.

The 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was celebrated with a quarter peal of Anniversary Doubles rung at Bodicote, and of Plain Bob Minor at Hanwell. A peal of Grandsire Triples rung at Steeple Aston also celebrated the Ruby Wedding Anniversary of Graham & Dorothy Clifton.

Our branch outing took place around Kettering, visiting Desborough and Rothwell before a pub lunch. This was followed by Rushton, Barton Seagrove (which proved a challenge for some new ringers with the anti-clockwise ring of bells), Burton Latimer and finally, Isham. Our thanks go to all the host churches.

August was designated Quarter Peal Month for the Banbury branch to provide an opportunity for a request – perhaps a method not on the usual practice night repertoire, to ring at a different tower, or to get to grips with a blue line to help secure it to memory. A number of ringers came forward with suggestions, the vast majority of which were arranged. The prevailing attitude was a very positive one with most people agreeing to aim for something ambitious rather than simply going for the safe option, and many of the quarters were brought round successfully. By the end of the month we had scored 13 out of 20 quarters planned, at 11 different towers, conducted by 7 different ringers and with 28 branch members taking part. Stedman featured prominently on the failure list with 2 attempts at Doubles and 1 of Caters. St Clements Minor also failed despite several starts and St Simons Doubles failed at the final extent. Unfortunately the band met short for London Surprise Minor making it a non-starter.

Our thanks go to the incumbents at the churches for allowing us to ring, to all the branch members who took part, and to Lionel Smith, Ringing Master, for much of the organisation.

Also over the summer, the Adderbury ringers rang 6 quarter peals to mark the 100th Anniversary of the deaths of villagers who fought in the 1st WW.

Cropredy church commenced essential repair work to the roof and unexpectedly on 24th October, because of the parlous state of the roof of the church, the bells had to be silenced (except for the clock chimes) until further notice. Recently the roof had its lead removed for recasting and restoring. When

inspected the old timber structure was in such poor condition that it had to be supported by internal scaffolding. The movement caused by the ringing of the bells could, it is feared, cause further damage to the roof and hence the bells may not be rung until the roof is repaired. This is unlikely to be this year but, with a fair wind, early in the New Year. Arrangements have been made with Horley church to continue bell practices there with them.

Heather Bletchly

(With material from Elizabeth Smith and Stephen Day)

Bicester

A summary of our ringing highlights since May includes nine branch and special practices in eight towers involving an average of 12 ringers (mostly branch members and welcome visitors) at each. Many thanks to Anthony Cole who not only arranges them but also gives wonderfully informative summaries on the branch website page at <http://www.bicesterbranch.org.uk/> afterwards.

In addition he organised a rope splicing course for six at Stratton Audley in July; Sarah and he celebrated their 16th wedding anniversary in August at a BP in Ludgershall (we all enjoyed the Prosecco!); and the striking competition and barbecue in September in monsoon-like conditions in Bicester (but thanks to the wonderful hospitality of Helen and



Rob Parkinson we hardly noticed that!). And, as if all that wasn't enough, we've also had the entertainment of going on a mini-tour ring in October – Finmere (3 bells which have to be rung facing the wall) where we rang Shipping Forecast Singles; Fritwell (4 bells where our newest recruit, Grace Cole, rang call changes), Stoke Lyne (3 loud bells up an extremely narrow staircase), Chesterton (3 bells and a welcome lunch stop) followed by an afternoon on Mark Walker's mini-ring (our Facebook page shows a video of Samuel Cole ringing two bells – is there no limit to all the family Coles' ringing achievements?!)

At the striking competition, kindly judged by Richard White, Bicester won, narrowly beating Islip and Caversfield – it would be good to have even more ringers next year.

Two of our ringers, Anne Martin and Steve Vickars, were learning Plain Bob Doubles at the recent Steeple Aston course and ringing at Mollington, Horley and Hanwell, whilst one branch member helped at Tadmerton and Bodicote – thank you to all those who arrange these courses that are so valuable.

Another noteworthy event was the quarter peal in Bicester in May – first quarters for Anne Martin and Steve Vickars, and first quarter peal as conductor for Jeremy Adams.

Oxford Diocesan Guild	Bicester, Oxon, St Edburg	
Monday 30 May 2016 in 44 mins	1260 Grandsire Doubles	Rung on front 6
	1 Anthony Cole	
	2 Anne Martin	
	3 Ron Burgess	
	4 Richard Haseldine	
	5 Jeremy Adams (C)	
	6 Steve Vickars	

Steve Vickars, and the rest of the Kirtlington learners, are progressing steadily and have been preparing to ring half-muffled for Remembrance – it is lovely for the rest of us to see the interest and enthusiasm they show. Although Islip lost one of our most enthusiastic, new ringers to Cornwall earlier in the year, the Coles (that family again!) followed Rachel Holt there in the summer to ring at her new tower in St German’s and had an interesting experience ringing Devon style. Who knows what they’re planning for our next outing!

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

A group of triplets who have been learning to ring at Nether Winchendon for a number of years (two boys and one girl, the boys had previously rung a quarter) Rebecca, Daniel and Oliver Porteous accomplished their first quarter peal together in August. A creditable quarter of Plain Bob Doubles was duly rung, which was a great achievement. Are there any other triplets who have done this?

On Monday 5th September, Long Crendon, Chearsley and Nether Winchendon welcomed their new Reverend with Long Crendon ringing a Peal of Grandsire Caters, with Chearsley and Nether Winchendon also ringing during his pilgrimage around the three parishes.

In September Aylesbury rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples to mark the start of Heritage Weekend. Along with Long Crendon and Waddesdon we all had open tower days, resulting in a few new recruits wanting to learn the art of bell ringing.



Mixing two old traditions in one go, Wingrave ringers enjoyed a narrow boat trip up the Grand Union canal through Milton Keynes ringing at churches en-route.

On Saturday 15th October, the Orchard Cup striking competition took place. Eight teams took part in this friendly between the Chiltern and Central Bucks Branch which was held at Weston Turville. This was

followed by a fantastic spread for a well deserved afternoon tea. I’m pleased to report that Aylesbury retained the cup. Many thanks go to everyone involved.

One other achievement to report, on Friday 21st October Darren Washington, who started ringing in his first year at Secondary School in 1994, progressed to Tower Captain at Waddesdon, has been the Branch Representative, and has now accomplished conducting his first Quarter Peal, which was Grandsire Doubles. Well Done Darren!

Rachel Sheppard

Chiltern

Ellesborough ringers were asked by Julie Smith (Tower Captain at Great Kimble) if they would open the Flower Festival in Great Kimble church on 1st October by ringing a quarter peal. They were delighted to help and were very relieved to achieve a quarter of Plain Bob Doubles to mark the event.

Wendover tower had the usual busy summer with 14 weddings – always a happy occasion even for the ringers. Their “annual tour” of a few local towers reinforced their conviction that Wendover bells are better than anybody else’s – a conclusion confirmed by visiting ringers (four lots this summer) who made admiring remarks about them. (*Sec’s note: I hope this does not start a controversial chain of correspondence!*).

Several towers in the Branch rang for one or more of the many National events that occurred in recent months, including the several opportunities provided by HM The Queen’s 90th birthday and associated celebrations, and the Installation of the new Bishop of Oxford.

Weston Turville hosted the 2016 Orchard Cup striking competition, an annual inter-Branch event between Chiltern and Central Bucks Branches. Eight teams entered (the most for several years); Aylesbury (Central Bucks) were declared winners and so retained the trophy, with Weston Turville being the highest placed Chiltern Branch tower in fourth place. Congratulations to all those who entered and many thanks to the hosts.

Brian Robson, Interim Branch Secretary

Chipping Norton

The Branch was presented with the ODG Bell Fund Shield at the Guild AGM. Earlier in the day some members had taken part in the activities and ringing. Some members also found ringing at towers on the day of the Guild Festival a great experience.

Special ringing was arranged at a number of towers to mark the Queen’s official 90th Birthday.

Daniel Austin rang his first peal of Grandsire Triples at Steeple Aston on Sunday 12th June with both of his parents in the band.

There have been several weddings on some Saturdays during the summer, with ringers helping out across the Branch to enable the bells to be rung. Thank you to all involved.

Hook Norton ringers have continued the commemoration of ringers who died in WW1 by ringing half-muffled quarter peals.

Charlbury ringers have marked the 300th anniversary of Charlbury bells, ringing to open the Street Fair in September. About 60-80 visitors, including many children, were shown the ropes and given an explanation of how it all worked. Many saw the recently repaired clock, with the repairer explaining its workings and what had been done. In addition to the goodwill that it is hoped the occasion generated, perhaps some new ringers will come forward in the future.

Burford ringers went on an outing in October, visiting five 8-bell towers in Warwickshire, experiencing different challenges at each tower and enjoying a delicious lunch at Wellesbourne.

Shipton-under-Wychwood ringers rang for the Oxfordshire Farmers' Harvest Festival held at that church.

Nigel Harrison, together with his two assistants, has arranged special practices for bell-handling: Plain Bob Doubles, Grandsire Doubles & Surprise Minor. Two members attended the Michaelmas Course and four went as students on the Steeple Aston one-day course with three others helping.

Congratulations to Tracey Cooper who has recently rung her first quarter peal.

We were pleased to welcome Hilarie Rogers to our Branch practice at Ascott-u-Wychwood in October and the business meeting afterwards. Members were reminded about the need to consider who they might nominate for the Claire Tarrant Award which it is hoped will be presented at the 2017 Branch AGM at Charlbury in March. Two branch members who have died, Frank Faulkner of Hook Norton and Kathy George of Swerford, were remembered.

Some branch members have celebrated special wedding anniversaries over recent months. They are Tim and Helen Burchell of Hook Norton, their Silver Wedding; Anne & John Hoyle of Fulbrook, their Golden Wedding; and Tim and Vicky Woodgate of Great Rollright, their Ruby Wedding. Our best wishes go to all of them.

Five branch members became members of the Fellowship of St Birinus at Dorchester Abbey. They are Mike and Joy Brooks of Shipton-u-Wychwood, Mike and Denise Summers of Charlbury, and Ken Wakefield, of Spelsbury. All have been recognised for their dedication to their respective churches. Congratulations to all of them. Branch members attending were invited to help to ring for the service.

We send our best wishes to those members of the Branch who are receiving hospital treatment.

Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

Remembrance Day 2015, and the need to muffle the bells, caused the ringers at Hughenden to question their emergency procedures so they made contact with South Central Ambulance Service. Further enquiry of the teams responsible for carrying out rescues from difficult sites led to an appointment to survey the scene and carry out a simulated rescue. A procession of fire appliances and ambulance service vehicles arrived but unfortunately the "rescue" was not possible using the heavy appliances normally used because surveys showed that

substantial work would be required, including damage to stonework. However, both parties found this exercise useful and have initiated a number of procedures, those referring to the ringers having been circulated throughout the Guild.

The annual Branch Walking Ringing Outing [*see photo on back cover – Ed.*] in May started at Little Gaddesden where there is a chapel for the Dukes of Bridgewater from nearby Ashridge, the 3rd of whom was much involved in the creation of the canal network. The first section of the walk took ringers through the Ashridge Estate via the Bridgewater Monument (deliberately built far away from Ashridge House because the 3rd Duke's mother wanted 'not to see or be reminded of my infernal son') to Aldbury. After ringing again and dining, the band then set off to walk to Tring, initially across field paths with extensive views of the Vale of Aylesbury, before descending through the woods of Tring Park, home in the 19th century to the Rothschild family. The 2nd Lord Rothschild released the edible dormouse there and used to ride into town in a carriage drawn by zebras!

EBSB Branch band won the Guild 8-bell contest at Chieveley in May. The final of the Branch Lorna Newton Trophy (a knock-out 6-bell striking competition of three rounds involving all Branch towers) was held at Lane End in October and was won by Amersham (who last won it in 1975).

After many years of service to the Branch and Guild, Derek Fowles stood down as organiser of the Branch 100 Club after celebrating his 90th birthday. EBSB Branch has since the 1980s given to the Bell Fund nearly £60,000, with nearly £15,000 of this coming from the 100 Club.

Peter Jasper, High Wycombe, has taken up the challenge of encouraging younger ringers by starting regular monthly practices for anybody under the age of 20ish to come and meet people their own age and have fun with ringing. Currently known as Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Young Ringers, young ringers from adjoining branches are invited to take part.

The Penn ringers held an open tower at Penn over the Heritage Weekend when approximately 35 visitors saw ringing demonstrated as well as viewing the bells up the tower. One young man who expressed an interest in learning to ring has already been taught to handle following the ART teaching method, using the video, stage by stage.

A number of people have been working hard to design and build a new Branch website in WordPress. The reason for this re-build is to ensure that, after this initial design, the website is easy to update and that all subsequent changes can be handled by someone without any specialist IT skills (this was not the case with our original website in Dreamweaver). Of course, we have also taken the opportunity to implement some new features. Launch of the new website will occur by year end.

Maryanne Roach

Newbury

After a hectic time in early summer hosting the Open Day and 8-bell Striking Competition we were able to settle into our usual routine of a monthly practice held on the first Friday of each month. We have visited a different tower each time and these have been well attended with methods ranging from Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles to Cambridge Major.

Our striking competition was held at Hungerford and the home team narrowly beat Thatcham. Hungerford then went on to represent the Branch at the Guild Striking Competition and came fourth – a really good effort for their first time.

Diana Bridle

North Bucks

In early May nine delegates attended a rope splicing course at Emberton. This was a very entertaining and enjoyable day, and many thanks to Len Palfrey who ran the course.

Towards the end of May Brian Baldwin was elected as a Distinguished Member at the Guild AGM. Congratulations to Brian, who has been the tower captain at Woughton-on-the-Green for forty years and has made many contributions to ringing in North Bucks during this time, most recently nurturing a new band at Wavendon after the *Big Ring Pull*.

In June the branch hosted a successful ART bell ringing teacher training course at Newport Pagnell; our thanks go to Lesley Belcher who organised the day and Frank Seabright who took members through the course.

The branch summer social and 6-bell striking competition was also held in June at Wavendon. There was ringing for all, with a fine ringers' tea followed by the striking competition. This year the striking competition was won by Great Linford.

In July we held a joint practice, barbecue and striking competition with Towcester Branch. It was a perfect day for a barbecue – over 40 people sat outside in the sunshine at *The Cross and Stable* in Downs Barn. Unfortunately, Towcester won all three categories in the striking competition – we must try harder next year!

The branch practice in August at Olney was followed by a short service to commemorate the seven North Bucks ringers who lost their lives in 1916, one of whom rang at Olney.

The branch practice and Autumn Meeting were held in September at Bletchley. The branch practice was followed by tea, and then the Autumn Meeting itself, which included an interesting discussion item on what makes a great tower practice.

The Branch Workshop (training day) was held in October. This year the course was on ringing plain methods focusing particularly on Single and Double Oxford, and Single and Double Court. This was a great opportunity for members to ring and call these methods. Thanks to Lesley Belcher and Ann Birch for organising the workshop this year.

As well as all of this we have been holding monthly branch practices, a monthly 8/10 bell practice, and a monthly bob doubles, call changes and plain hunt practice.

Gary Reading

Old North Berks

Our branch outing on 16th July was organised once more for us by Philip Roberts of Harwell. We always have to go through the motions of twisting his arm to get him to do this for us, but he does it so well and nothing is ever left to chance. This year we went south into Berkshire and Hampshire, ringing at Goodworth Clatford, Hurstbourne Priors, Whitchurch, Longparish and Highclere. Everyone enjoyed the day, not only because of the pub lunch in Whitchurch and afternoon tea in Longparish Village Hall, but also because the ringing was to a good standard.

As usual, we had our barbecue following on from the outing at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. This year, over fifty members and friends attended, the most we have had for several years. I think news of the quality of the food must be spreading! Thanks go to Philip, Janette, Stuart and Naomi for arranging yet another excellent day for the Branch. The day raised £260 for branch funds.

It is fair to say, though, that our various branch practices do not seem to have the same appeal as our social events. I don't know if it is symptomatic of the demography of the branch, but it is getting harder to get people to go to evening general practices and attendance is very unpredictable. Fortunately our evening surprise major practices are still quite well attended, as are our afternoon practices. Susan Read continues to organise very popular activities for young ringers in our own and neighbouring branches during each of the school holidays. If anyone has an interest in encouraging young ringers and planning events, I am sure that Susan will be pleased to hear from you.

The project to rehang and augment to six the five bells of North Moreton and to construct a new ringing gallery, kitchen, accessible toilet and a new vestry has now been completed in full (at last!), and the Bishop of Dorchester will be attending the service of rededication and celebration in November. The rehang of Radley bells has been fully completed, as has the rehang of Brightwell bells. The tenor of the ring of five at Little Wittenham has had a new headstock, and other maintenance work has been carried out. Blewbury clappers have all been replaced and striking has improved. An unexpected improvement has also been that the trebles are less shrill, thanks to Whites for putting smaller balls on their clappers.

All in all we have had a busy period for restoration and maintenance projects in ONB Branch. We are just waiting to see where the next project will be!

Gill Loyd

Oxford City

Our half yearly meeting in May was held at Marston. It was very well attended and we were able to muster seven teams for the striking competition,

including two scratch teams and a team from the Oxford University Society who won and showed us all how it should be done! It was a very enjoyable day and we were very grateful to Tony Crabtree for both judging the competition and bringing the Stallpits mini-ring along, which proved a huge success.

We have still got a vacancy for Ringing Master, and this has meant we have had no branch practices this year, which is a real loss to the branch, but some of us regularly attend practices in other branches, and special thanks must go to the Witney and Woodstock branch for being so welcoming to those of us who go along. Activity in the Branch has focused on tower practices and tower based events, and the outings organised by Hugh Deam, which have been enjoyed by many.

Tower news includes the tenor at Wheatley being featured on Radio 4 and other networks; the bell chiming the hour has provided the introduction to news items on Theresa May, former resident of Wheatley. Despite scouring the visitors' books, the Wheatley ringers have been unable to discover if she has ever visited the tower.

Katy Routh, a ringer at Headington was married in September, and two quarter peals were rung to celebrate the event – Grandsire Triples at Headington and Cambridge and Beverley surprise minor at Cowley. St Giles put on an event to raise awareness of ringing, by setting up the Stallpits mini-ring in the churchyard. Although aimed at children, the majority of those who came and had a go were adults, and the mini-ring proved a very popular attraction. Finally congratulations to City branch ringer Rosanna Cretney who rang her first peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major in August, having only been ringing for two years.

Lindsay Powell

Reading

The Reading Branch has had a busy and very enjoyable summer this year. During August, our chairman organised a learners' *Handling to Plain Hunt* training day which was well attended by both learners and excellent helpers.

In addition to the monthly branch practices, in September we held a very well attended youth branch practice at Shiplake run by our youth representative Anna Sherwood with support from the Branch Ringing Masters.

Anna was rewarded in May for her dedication to ringing when she was presented with the Young Ringer of the Year award at the ODG AGM. Matthew Stone (also from Tilehurst) was presented with the silver award. Both deserve heartfelt congratulations for their consistent enthusiasm and support of the Tilehurst band.

The annual Branch six bell striking competition was held at Pangbourne in September with nine teams entering including two youth teams. This was a fantastic turn out that resulted in a win for Tilehurst and progression to the ODG six bell competition. The team performed admirably well and came third.

October saw the inter branch eight bell striking competition between Reading Branch and Sonning Deanery take place at Twyford. Thanks to the organisational skills of Colin Newman and Jo Druce, the branch was able to enter three teams and secured first, second and third place. Many thanks to

Steve Wells and the Sonning Deanery ringers for organising such an enjoyable afternoon.

The branch has also seen the celebration of two notable birthdays this summer. In May, Steve Rossiter celebrated his 50th birthday with two peals and multiple quarters, followed by an excellent party thrown by his wife, June. In August, John Wells followed Steve's example and celebrated his 80th birthday with peals, quarters and a lovely party. It has been a pleasure to celebrate with two longstanding members of the branch.

Joanna Knight

Sonning Deanery

I start this branch report with very sad news. In the small hours of Tuesday 24th May, Andrew Elliston passed away. It came as a great shock to all; he had been ringing at Twyford's practice only the previous evening and seemed in good health. Andrew was a very staunch supporter of Sonning, his home tower, other towers in Sonning Deanery Branch, and indeed towers in neighbouring branches. He did an enormous amount of ringing in the area, helped with training, and was also steeple keeper (maintenance) at Sonning. He will be much missed.

In June Sue Portsmouth of Sonning achieved her Level 3 of the ART *Learning the Ropes* scheme; her final element to gain the Level 3 award was covering to a quarter of Plain Bob Doubles on 12th June. Congratulations to Sue who is the first SDB member to gain Level 3.

Five towers in the Branch have formed an ART (*Association of Ringing Teachers*) grouping called the Loddon Hub – ringing teachers in the Hub help each other with training and promote the use of the ART *Learning the Ropes* training system. The towers are: Hurst, Sonning, Twyford, Waltham St Lawrence, and Wargrave. Vinni Sullivan is the Hub's local organiser.



On the final weekend of June the Branch ran a *Mini Ring Pull* recruitment exercise at the Hurst Show. We hired the Charmborough Ring for the whole weekend and were given a good site just inside the entrance to the show ground. Around 24 SDB ringers over the weekend helped with morning and afternoon sessions by demonstrating ringing, helping members of the public to have a go, and answering questions about bells and ringing. We recorded names and contact details of 30 people who wanted to attend a taster session and two lapsed ringers contacted towers direct. We held three, morning taster sessions at Twyford church and hall during the 10 weeks following the Show, nine 'students' attended, and one plus the two returning ringers are now ringing.

In August Kitty and Freddie Gingell, two young ringers at Wargrave, passed Level 3 of the *Learning the Ropes* system, and are well on the way to Level 4. Congratulations to them; they have made fast progress since starting to ring in October 2015.

October saw the joint 8-bell striking competition between Reading and Sonning Deanery branches, this year organised by SDB and held at Twyford.

We were well beaten – Reading teams came first, second and third, and fourth was the only SDB team, Wokingham All Saints. Our thanks go to Steve Wells (our BRM) for organising the competition, and to the judges Jackie Roberts and Ken Davenport.

Congratulations to White Waltham band, who in October renewed their Gold Award from the *Towers & Belfries Committee*.



Outside St Andrew, Sherborne St John

Also in October we enjoyed the Branch Outing, organised by Pam Elliston, to five towers in the north of Basingstoke area. All members of our branch and members of neighbouring ringing areas were invited. The photo was taken before six more ringers arrived for the afternoon's ringing. Thank you to Pam for organising an interesting day's ringing and surveying a good pub for lunch.

At one of our Branch Officers' meetings, Jacqui Hazell promoted the idea of a Young Ringers officer who would concentrate on the needs of younger ringers and their training. This proposal will be discussed further at our Business Meeting in November.

At the Steeple Aston course in October Sue Portsmouth was in the Grandsire Doubles group as a student and Rob Needham was in the same group as a helper.
Rob Needham

South Oxon

The South Oxon Branch is very pleased to congratulate Sue Dyke, Tower Captain of Warborough, on being awarded a Guild Distinguished Membership at the May 2016 Guild AGM.

The Drayton St Leonard bells were back from Whitechapel Foundry and rehung over the summer, ready to ring by 10th July. A Service of Dedication and Celebration was held on 28th of September. With the structural work that has been done on the tower, and the bells being a lighter weight, the bells (which were a bit of a chore to handle) are now much nicer to ring!

Congratulations go to Joan Sweby from Shabbington, who was elected to the Guild in October and to Dylan Warrell, also from Shabbington, who rang his first quarter peal on the 23rd of October.

Drayton St Leonard represented the South Oxon Branch in the Guild 6-bell competition on the 1st October in Penn. Even though two of the team got a little lost – in Penn(!) – the team managed to ring well and won!

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

The Branch striking competition was held at Uffington on Tuesday 17th June and was judged by Phil Ramsbottom from Lichfield. He commented that he was most impressed by the standard of ringing of all seven teams. Shrivenham A was presented with the Greenley Shield, but a shortage of available ringers meant they were unable to represent the Branch at the Guild six-bell striking competition in October. The Ringing Master's Trophy for the most improved tower was awarded to a joint band from Coleshill & Shellingford.

Bill Mitchell, one of VOWH's longest serving members, celebrated his 90th birthday on 31st August. Although no longer able to climb the tower steps to ring, he came along to listen as a band of past and present branch officers rang a quarter peal at Uffington to mark the occasion [*see photo on back cover – Ed.*]. Bill learnt to ring at Shellingford in 1948 and was Tower Captain at Uffington for many years. He also served as Branch Chairman.

Faringdon ringers hosted an entertaining quiz night and buffet supper in June. A good crowd puzzled over the questions set by Caroline and Ifor Phillips as they competed for a cash prize and the Golden Clapper.

We said farewell to three of our ringers as they moved to pastures new. Jonathan Wright is still close by, studying at Oxford University, and the Shrivenham ringers are looking forward to him rejoining them during the holidays. Rather further away are Jane McCutchan from Uffington who is now living in Cornwall and Kevin Musty (Shrivenham) who has relocated to Wales.

We were saddened to learn of the death at the end of October of Laurie Lintern. A former ringer Stanford in the Vale, he also undertook steeple-keeping duties and ensured the church clock kept good time.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

We've had an interesting summer in the branch, with a number of ringers enthusiastically advancing to new achievements, some within 'firsts' fortnight, when 19 certificates were awarded, and many at other times. Congratulations to Fiona Methley on her Silver Young Ringers Award, collected in person at the all-singing, all-dancing, new-look Guild AGM in Faringdon on 12th May. Fiona is also to be congratulated on ringing her first QP inside in July, earning her *Learning the Ropes* (LTR) level 4 award, closely followed by Hazel Howarth of Ducklington who achieved the same in October.

Further congratulations are due to six more ringers, Emma Somerfield (Clanfield), Mark Probert (Freeland), Jordan Wells and Andrew Goldthorpe (both Witney), who all scored their first quarter peals during ringing in the branch to celebrate the Queen's official 90th birthday, and Hannah Taylor and Peter Norman, who rang their first quarter peal celebrating the Golden Wedding anniversary of fellow Ducklington ringer Ian Craig and his wife Sally. Other achievements during the summer included a first quarter peal on 10 bells for Anthony Williamson and a first Stedman quarter peal for Julie Minch, who also attended the first ART Masterclass in Birmingham in September, having had the

distinction three years ago of being the first graduate of the LTR scheme to earn all five certificates following the doubles approach.

On 23rd July, call changes at St Mary's Witney (Whittington and Queens) honoured the centenary of the sacrifice of a former Witney ringer, Lance Corporal Herbert Long, OBLI, on the Somme battlefield. He was only 30 and is recorded at Thiepval along with his brother Howard who also fell in the Great War.

Our branch striking competition was livened up when our Steward and judge, Tony Crabtree, kindly brought along the Stallpits mini-ring to entertain us as we waited our turn at Standlake. Woodstock were not distracted from the task in hand, however, and won both call changes and method sections.

Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace hosted the Lichfield DG mini-ring which branch members enjoyed having a go on: one past branch RM managed a bit of Cambridge while novices were content with “the odd bong”.

The highlight of our ringing summer was, indisputably, our branch outing, excellently organised by Julie Minch and Anthony Williamson, with the branch enjoying the Cotswold majesty of the Stroud Valley (*photo by Paul Lucas of City branch on front cover*). We had a record turnout of 30 or so ringers from 8 towers, plus three from the City branch and our ever-supportive steward Tony. This was a first outing for a significant number, and what better start could they have than the distinctively crenellated coronet of Minchinhampton’s tower, the biddable, tuneful bells rung from Leonard Stanley’s chancel crossing and the breathtakingly beautiful Painswick, where many had their first experience, skilfully guided and called by Roger, ringing on twelve bells.

With so many of our ringers availing themselves of different ringing opportunities, and neighbouring towers collaborating for practices and on Sundays, we are hopeful that the quality of service ringing in towers across the branch is being sustained and improved.

Alison Merryweather-Clarke & Robert Walton

Points from Peals

The total number of peals recorded to date this year is 218 compared with 213 in the same period last year.

Firsts: A number of firsts have been recorded. Congratulations to all concerned.

- First peal: Benji C Coles, Rosanna Cretney, Oliver J Hyde, Matthew Napper, Gary Reading, Edward A S Walker, Daniel Austin.
- First peal as conductor: Hugh Deam, Anna E Sherwood (age 16).
- First on 8: James Williams.
- First Major and inside: Susan H Rhodes.
- First Surprise on handbells: Colin G Newman.
- First Royal on handbells: Colin G Newman.
- First Bristol Surprise Royal: Janet E John.
- First Spliced Surprise Royal: Janet E John.
- First on 12: Anna E Sherwood.

- First on 12 as conductor: Jack E Page.
- First TB in hand: Christopher M Tuckett, D Giles Winter.
- First peal in the method on handbells: London No.5 Surprise Royal, Lundy Island Surprise Royal, Usselby Surprise Royal, Whistler Delight Royal, Xenolith Surprise Royal.

Personal Milestones: Significant milestones recorded since the last report include:

Mark Vincent, D Giles Winter (50), Marcia L Dieppe (50 on handbells), Kenneth R Davenport (200 as conductor for the Guild), Colin G Newman (300), Graham N Scott (300 for the Guild), David Sullivan (500), Jeffrey Knipe (1,000 for the Guild), Graham A C John (1,000 for the Guild on handbells), E John Wells (1,600), Martin J Turner (2,000 on tower bells), Robert H Newton (2,800): and peals together, Beryl R Norris & John C Sheppard (500), E John Wells & June D Wells (1,100).

Most Surprise Minor (41): Kenneth R Davenport.

Completes the Surprise Major Alphabet (handbells): June D Wells & E John Wells

Events:

Further peals were rung to celebrate the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

A peal was rung at Drayton by a band of past and present officers of the Oxford Diocesan Guild after the unveiling of a Blue Plaque commemorating the life of the Revd F E Robinson, first Master of the Guild, and Vicar of Drayton for 30 years.

Other events marked were: 60th anniversary of the first ladies peal for the Guild, the first peal on the bells since re-hanging (Radley), first peal on the refurbished bells (Berrick Salome), the 50th anniversary of the recasting and augmentation of the bells (Easthampstead).

Peals were also rung prior to the licensing of Revd Keith Johnson as Vicar of Hughenden, Prior to the collation, installation, and induction of Revd Richard Phillips to the United Benefice of Long Crendon with Cheersley and Nether Winchendon, and in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Stanley Dakin's ordination as a Priest.

Personal events: Peals were rung: for the birth of, Abigail Anne Cross, to celebrate the birthdays of, Sheila Bruce, Valerie Groves, Robert H Newton, Brenda Sheppard, Keith Wright (80), John Wells (80), Derek Fowles (90); as a wedding compliment to Emma May Piercey and Joshua Michael Fisher, Sally Scott and Jamie Warwick, a silver wedding anniversary compliment to Sandra and Jon Evans and to Alison and Neil Merryweather-Clarke; a ruby wedding anniversary compliment to Graham & Dorothy Clifton; a golden wedding anniversary compliment to Shirley and Colin Armitage, Pat and John Brown, Valerie and Bernard Groves, and to Elizabeth and Douglas Mason; and a Diamond Wedding Anniversary to Joan and David Barnett.

In memoriam: Ringers and friends remembered were Andrew Elliston, Bill Simon.

A number of peals have been rung in memory of those who lost their lives during the first world war including; Arthur William Allison, William Ainger Howman, Alfred Hunt.

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 2016/17

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 2016

Tue	1	CN	BP	Spelsbury (6)	7.30–9.00pm
Wed	2	Bicester	BP	Bletchinghamdon (6)	7.30–9pm
Fri	4	EBSB	SP	Wooburn (8)	2.30–4.30pm
Sun	6	EBSB	Young Peoples' Practice	Amersham (12)	3.00 – 4.30pm
Tue	8	ONB	BP	Wantage (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	12	CBB	BP	Long Crendon	7.00 – 8.30pm
Sat	12	EBSB	Training practice (pre-apply)	Stoke Poges (8)	3.30 – 6.00pm
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Marsworth (6)	9.30–11.30am
Sat	19	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10)	5.30–7.30pm
Sat	19	Oxford City	AGM: 2.30pm ringing, 3.30pm service, 4pm tea, 4.45pm meeting, 5.45pm ringing	Kidlington (8)	
Sat	19	Sonning	Tea, Business Meeting	Arborfield (6)	4.30 tea, 5pm meeting
Sat	19	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10)	5.30 – 7.30pm
Mon	21	Bicester	SP Simon's Doubles & PB Triples	Bicester (10)	7.30–9pm
Mon	21	VOWH	BP	Faringdon (8)	7.30–9pm
Wed	23	ONB	BP	Chilton (6)	2–3.30pm
Thu	24	Banbury	AP	Steeple Aston (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	26	Guild	SC 10	Chipping Norton Branch	
Sat	26	Guild	Autumn General Committee Meeting	Chipping Norton Branch	

DECEMBER 2016

Sat	3	Guild	Ten Bell Training	TBC	
Sat	3	South Oxon	BP	Little Milton (6)	4 – 5:30pm
Sun	4	EBSB	Young Peoples' Practice	TBC	3.00 – 4.30pm
Mon	5	Banbury	BP	Bodicote (8)	7.30–9pm
Mon	5	CN	BP	Chadlington (6)	7.00–8.30pm
Wed	7	Bicester	BP	Charlton-on-Otmoor (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	7	ONB	SP	Sutton Courtenay (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	10	EBSB	BP	Beaconsfield (8)	6.00 – 7.30pm onwards
Sat	10	Banbury	Social - quizzes plus participatory handbell ringing (tunes included). Buffet supper Carol Service	Hanwell (6)	5.30–6.30pm ringing
Sat	10	CBB	BP	Waddesdon (6)	2.30–4.00
Mon	12	ONB	BP	Marcham (6)	7.30–9pm
Wed	14	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	2–3.30pm
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Wokingham, St. Paul (8)	4.30 – 6pm
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Little Missenden (6)	9.30–11.30am
Mon	19	Bicester	SP Clements Minor & Cambridge S Minor	Bicester (10)	7.30–9pm
Mon	26	Banbury	BP	Deddington (8)	10.30–12noon
Thu	29	EBSB	Post-Christmas Outing	Welwyn area proposed	

JANUARY 2017

Sun	01	EBSB	Young Peoples' Practice TBC		
Mon	2	Banbury	BP	Banbury (10)	10.30 – 12noon
Tues	3	Bicester	BP	Islip (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	7	CN	BP & pub lunch	Spelsbury (6)	11.00 – 12.30pm
Sat	14	CBB	BP	Haddenham (8)	2.30 – 4.00pm
Mon	16	Bicester	SP PB Minor & Winchendon Place Doubles	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	Hurst (8)	10.30 – 12noon
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Stoke Mandeville (8)	9.30 – 11.30am
Wed	25	ONB	BP	North Moreton (6)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	28	South Oxon	BP	Great Milton (8)	4 – 5:30pm
Sat	28	EBSB	BP	Clewer (6)	4.00 – 6.00pm

FEBRUARY 2017

Wed	1	ONB	Surprise Major	Milton (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	4	CN	BP & pub lunch	Hook Norton (8)	11.00 – 12.30pm
Sat	4	ODG	10-bell training day	Aston Clinton	
Sun	5	EBSB	Young Peoples' Practice TBC		
Mon	6	Bicester	BP	Kirtlington (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	11	CBB	AGM	Winslow (8)	2.30 – onwards
Tues	14	ONB	BP	Brightwell (8)	7.45 – 9.15pm
Fri	17	EBSB	Training practice (pre-apply)	Chalfont St Giles (8)	2.00 – 4.30pm
Sat	18	Bicester	Service & Branch AGM	Kirtlington (8)	11am Service; 11.30am Meeting
Sat	18	Sonning	Ringing, Service, Tea, AGM, BP	St. Michael, Sandhurst (6)	3 – 4, 4pm, 4.45, 5.15, 7 – 8.30pm
Sat	18	Chiltern	BP	Monks Risborough (6)	9.30 – 11.30am
Wed	22	ONB	BP	East Hagbourne (8)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	25	South Oxon	AGM	Dorchester (8)	From 3pm
Sat	25	EBSB	Surprise Practice	Stoke Poges (8)	4.00 – 6.00pm

MARCH 2017

Sat	4	CN	Ringing, service, AGM, ringing	Charlbury (6)	3.00pm, 4.00pm, 4.45pm
Sun	5	EBSB	Young Peoples' Practice TBC		
Mon	6	Bicester	BP	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	11	CBB	BP	Mursley	Tbc
Sat	11	ODG	General Committee meeting and Bell Fund AGM	ONB branch	
Wed	15	Bicester	SP Grandsire Doubles & PB Doubles	Bletchinglydon (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	18	Chiltern	AGM	Great Missenden (8)	2.30pm ringing/tea, 5.15pm AGM
Sat	18	ONB	SC & AGM	Cumnor (8)	SC 3.00pm Service 5.00pm Tea 5.45pm AGM 6.30pm
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Easthampstead (8)	10.30 – noon
Sat	18	EBSB	BP (then meal together?)	Amersham (12)	5.30 – 7.30pm
Wed	22	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	25	South Oxon	BP	Benson (8)	4 – 5:30pm

APRIL 2017

Tues	4	CN	BP	Churchill (8) tbc	7.00 – 8.30pm
Wed	5	ONB	Surprise Major	Blewbury (8)	8.00 – 9.30pm
Sat	8	ODG	Radley course		
Sat	8	CBB	BP	East Claydon (6)	7.00–8.30pm
Thur	20	ONB	BP	Harwell (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	22	Sonning	SC and tea	Warfield (10)	4 – 6pm
Sat	22	South Oxon	SC	Shabbington (6)	7.30pm
Sat	22	Chiltern	BP	Marsworth (6)	9.30 – 11.30am

MAY 2017

Mon	1	ODG	Ringing Day and 8-bell SC	Bicester branch	
Tues	2	CN	BP	Chastleton (6) tbc	7.30 – 9.00pm
Wed	10	ONB	BP	Sunningwell (6)	7.00 – 9.00pm
Sat	13	CBB	6 bell Striking Competition	tbc	Tbc
Sat	20	ODG	Guild AGM	Reading branch	
Sat	20	Sonning	BP	Binfield (6)	10.30 – noon
Wed	24	ONB	BP	Marcham (6) TBC	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	27	South Oxon	BP	Drayton	7 – 8:30pm
				St Leonard (6)	

JUNE 2017

Mon	12	ONB	BP	Drayton (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	14	ONB	SP	Abingdon (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	White Waltham(6)	4.30 – 6pm
Sat	24	South Oxon	BP	Warborough (8)	7pm
Wed	28	ONB	BP	Childrey (8)	2 – 3.30pm



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Education Committee

RADLEY ONE-DAY COURSE

Based at Radley (near Abingdon)

SATURDAY 8th APRIL 2017

Cost £25.00 including evening meal

Methods offered:

Plain Hunt on 5, 6, 7, 8

Grandsire Doubles and Triples

Plain Bob Doubles, Minor and Major

All subject to demand

These courses have been running for a number of years and are designed for learners of all ages and levels of competence.

No need to feel nervous about coming as you will be with others at a similar level.

We aim to improve your confidence as well as your ringing with friendly support and tuition.

Details of ringing criteria and an application form will be available after 1st December 2016

from Ann Osborne,

Email: annosborne.1@BTInternet.com

or Tel: 0118 942 5876

Closing date for applications is 1st February 2017

Maximum of 25 students



Bill Mitchell's 90th birthday QP team: L to R Jon Chamberlain, Julian Watson, Joe Norton, Bill Mitchell, Jackie O'Hagan, Anne Jones (organiser), Tony Crabtree (C), Clare Knock.



The EBSB annual Branch Walking Ringing Outing