

Issue 13

# ODD BOB

## Newsletter of the

### OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD



December 1986

## ODD BOB – Oxford Diocese; Berks, Oxon, Bucks.

Having neglected this time to ask someone else to write the introduction to ODD BOB December 1986, it behoves me to do it myself.

First, may I thank all the Branch Secretaries and Branch News Letter Editors for sending contributions for the last three editions. I fully realise that it has been extra work for the former. Also 'Thank you' to everyone else who has sent in contributions; be it officers of the Guild or members who were 'pressed' into doing so. Also, we must thank The Master who, on top of a very heavy workload, Guild and Church schedule, and a family wedding, saw the copies through the printers and proof read them. During 1987 it is likely that the Guild (not only those who attend General and Committee Meetings) will be asked to really look at itself; what is its real purpose? How is it fulfilling that purpose? What else do we need to do? Is it really more finance or more commitment? Do we really agree with our aims as set out in the Rules or - like so many in the Church - do we agree with mental reservations?

Historically, throughout the world, bells and loud percussion instruments have been used as part of the worship of many faiths. Jock Fletcher-Campbell stresses that aspect in his article. They have been and still are used as a witness to a faith in whatever community they may be used. The Spanish Armies which conquered Mexico and the South West U.S.A. were accompanied by Franciscan Monk priests. The Franciscans always took a bell with them (as did the early Celtic Missionaries to these Islands). That bell not only told the time of Mass and the Daily Offices but it also reminded a non-Christian population of the presence of that faith, wherever they camped. I for one believe that our Church bells are one of the best means of publicity the Church has today. Their sound is difficult to shut out! Radio and T.V. can be shut off; a priest can be ignored; printed papers can be thrown away unread among a welter of advertising material. Not so with Church Bells!

May I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year, leaving you with the message given to Joshua as he faced difficult problems: "Be strong and of good courage".

*Marie R. Cross*

### ODD BOB, MARCH 1987

As I shall be in the U.S.A. during January and February please will you send material for ODD BOB to Daphne Pollard, 49 Foxborough Road, Radley, Abingdon, Berks.

#### Useful Addresses

**The Master** - R. Thorne, 3 Broad Gap, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon. OX15 4DE.  
Tel. Banbury 62476.

**Hon. General Secretary** - A.G. Pullen, 23 Cumberland Way, Wokingham, Berks.  
RG11 9AY. Tel. (0734) 793488

**Hon. General Treasurer** - B.J. Gatward, Grange Wood, Mill Lane, Calcot,  
Reading, RG3 5RS. Tel. Reading 413097.

**Stewards** - The names and addresses of these will be found in 'Odd Bob' June 1986.

**Peal Secretary** - Mrs. K.J. Firman, 8 Crescent Drive, Maidenhead, Berks.  
SL6 6AQ. Tel. Maidenhead 36484.

Useful addresses concerned with Education, Towers and Belfries Committee and Stewards' addresses will be found in ODDBOB July, 1986

### **EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Easthampstead Ringing Course 1987** - This will be held from Friday 25 September to Sunday 27 September 1987. Application forms from Mrs B. May, 4 Halfacre Close, Spencers Wood, Reading RG7 1DZ. No applications will be dealt with before 1 March. Would Branch Secretaries, whose AGMs occur after that date, please notify Mrs May if their Branch intends to nominate or send students to Easthampstead. The Committee hopes that in 1987, as in 1986, all places will be taken by Guild members and that every Branch will be represented at Easthampstead.

### **COURSES**

**Stedman:** Would those members who would be interested in a Day Course on Stedman (either learning or conducting) please write to N.J. Diserens, 10 Queens Avenue, Wallingford, Oxon. OX10 0NB. Please give requirements and experience.

**Handbells:** There will be a follow-up Course for those who took this as an option at Easthampstead. It will be held at Maidenhead on Saturday, 14 February 1987. It will be a combination of quarter peals and general ringing - Plain Bob Major 'upwards'. Please notify Mrs K. Firman, 8 Crescent Drive, Maidenhead, SL6 6AQ (Tel. Maidenhead 36484) if you wish to come.

**Ringing Up and Down and Call Changes:** If you would be interested in a Day Course on this, would you please notify David Struckett, 103 Prince Andrew Way, Ascot, Berks. SL5 8NH(Tel. Winkfield Row 884653), stating standard of ringing.

**Basic Conducting:** This is intended for those who, for lack of a capable conductor in the band, are forced to undertake the 'Bob Calling' for their home tower. Please notify Mrs A.M. Carpenter, 41 Napier Road, Crowthorne, Berks. RG11 7EJ (Tel. Crowthorne 775036).

### **BOOKLETS**

The following Booklets will be printed in the new year:-

**Ringing Handbells** for those who are beginning.

**Bob Calling for the Beginner.**

**Bibliography:** a list of books about bells. Reprint and up-dating of an earlier booklet.

These will all be 20p each.

As Miss M.R. Cross will be in the U.S.A. during January and February, any requests for courses or matters concerning the Education Committee should be sent to Mrs A. Carpenter (address above).

## EASTHAMPSTEAD RINGING COURSE 1986

The following accounts of the Course have been written by:-

**Bob Gerhardi** - Wendover - Returning for the seventh time to Easthampstead. Was first in Group 1 (1975), now Group 8.

**Stella Mills** - Maids Moreton - who first attended Easthampstead in Group 1, now Group 6. Health Visitor and Housewife.

**Tom Otley** - Stanton Harcourt - A 'first-timer' - Group 1 - Company Director.

**Robin Fenton** and **Adrian Avery-Cholsey** - both 'first-timers' - Group 3 - both still at school and among the youngest on the Course.

'I have just returned from my seventh weekend bellringing course at Easthampstead, an event which I enjoy immensely and which provides a ladder of progress which I find very stimulating.

My first attendance was in 1975 and, although I was unable to attend from 1976 to 1982, when I resumed attendance in 1982 I found that the course had lost none of its friendly atmosphere and was as enjoyable as I had remembered it from before.

Since 1982, I have progressed from Cambridge Minor and Stedman Triples to Cambridge Major and Yorkshire Major. The organisation of the courses is very commendable, with plenty of helpers at all the towers, and the facilities at Easthampstead Park are excellent.

It is my hope that I will be able to maintain sufficient progress to enable me to qualify for a place at the Easthampstead Ringing Course for many years to come.'

*Bob Gerhardi*

'Easthampstead once again was the venue for a first class ringing weekend. Accommodation was good, also the food, though I heard complaints that the coffee was too weak!

The difficult task of placing people in groups correct for their abilities once again produced a few hiccoughs, but changing the misfits into other groups was done smoothly. Some of the misfits preferred to stay in the groups allocated to them, so that they could continue to be instructed by a particular tutor.

The decisions about grouping may be helped by not having to fill in the questionnaire on their abilities so far ahead. Ringers often improve in six months. It is essential that all applications and information must be with the organisers by the end of March each year.

The description of the abilities required for the group I finally joined (6) bore no relation to what was actually taught. Even the students originally placed in this group did not have those abilities. The tutor obviously adjusted his teaching to what was appropriate, and I understand that this also happened in other groups.

The standard of teaching was excellent, from tutors and helpers alike. They all had vast background information, which they willingly passed on to the students.

Before leaving Easthampstead, I asked some of the students for their comments. These included:-

"I learned a lot" - from several people.

"This course was slower than I expected. We did a lot of standing around."

“I didn’t ring what I came for.”

“The expert helpers in the towers - so many of them - who gave their time so freely, were much appreciated.”

“I was leaping several steps forward to new achievements.”

“I set my sights too high.”

“It is a shame that a whole year has to pass, before doing it again.”

“A one-day course, like a prolonged practice, would be useful.”

“I doubt if I will be able to practise what I have learned in my own tower.” ’

*Stella Mills*

‘It was obvious from the notes accompanying the application form some six months earlier that the course would be excellently organised – I could think of no unanswered question. As a novice ringer and a first timer on the course, I had some misgivings that my incompetence in my own tower would be magnified many times in the company of so many advanced ringers, but I need not have worried. My tutor, Marie Cross, the doyenne of the guild, who could well have rung a quarter peal for George VI’s coronation, has a formidable reputation and a no-nonsense attitude that at first conceal the true gifts of the good teacher: a complete understanding of the learner’s problems and abundant patience.

After a 10 o’clock start at Warfield Church Room on the first day, we were introduced to our groups of six students to one tutor and then it was straight into what seemed like non-stop ringing for the next 36 hours. The emphasis was very much on the practical side, the other sessions (e.g. the theory of method ringing) passing quickly as a welcome rest for aching muscles and blistered palms.

At the end of the first day we checked into Easthampstead Park, once a grand stately home, now a large residential college for the Berkshire education department. There was just time to find our rooms and grab a drink before supper (canteen service and unexpectedly good food supplied in quantities which defied even ravenous ringers to leave a clean plate). After supper all gathered together for the course introduction; this seemed somewhat out of place since by then all felt thoroughly introduced.

It was clear to the first timers that, with minor changes, the same pattern had been followed for many years; no doubt this accounts for the highly tuned organisation which, incidentally, involves rather more tutors, helpers and general staff, than it does students – where else can one find such a staff/pupil ratio? A variation from the established theme this year was the special security measures in force at Easthampstead just in case the band of travelling people who were squatting in the grounds, and who had the day before been served with an eviction order, decided to cause any trouble; they did not. The other break with precedent was a sad one: the St John’s Ambulance training group who were sharing Easthampstead Park with us for the weekend suffered the loss of one of their members, Mr Jack Winter, who collapsed and died whilst giving a lecture; we prayed for him and his family at the joint Sunday service.

For those who were not already exhausted by hours of concentration on practical ringing, there was more of the same on handbells in the evening – the first

impression was that it should be simple without having to worry about handling a few hundred-weight of bell and a few hundred feet (or so it seemed) of rope, but the snag is that you have to follow a different course with each of two handbells, not easy if you have difficulty in doing it on only one in a tower. The less expert musicians rang tunes on handbells in a party atmosphere on the Saturday evening and the more advanced practitioners of the art made it look easy, giving a recital before Sunday service.

Bellringing clearly brings together people from all walks of life and all ages; there were veterans of 25 and novices of 55.

Everyone was impressed by the thought and care that had been put into the running of the weekend and by the dedication of the tutors; a few felt they should have been put in a more advanced group but, like the others, they would definitely be applying again next year.

The only general complaint voiced by those who were not sufficiently advanced to be let loose on a local tower for Sunday service ringing was that the Sunday, with no ringing, was a let-down after the intensive practical work of the two previous days. The organisers are aware of this problem but there seems no easy solution – perhaps the beginners should depart after morning service on the Sunday rather than attend lectures until 4 pm.

The course is, I believe, essential for anyone who has recently started to ring and is intent on making progress; I spent the first day trying to unlearn many bad habits picked up inadvertently during the previous year trying to get by. It also shows those who are either too lazy or too shy to attend branch practices or visit strange towers on practice nights that the guild is a very friendly and encouraging organisation; the other strong impression which I took home was that I had only started to scratch the surface of bellringing and that the amount still to be learnt would stretch for years ahead – so I will be back.'

*Tom Otley*

'The Hall was not at all what I was expecting - and I'm not just saying that! When we were shown to our rooms I was bowled over - being used to Youth Hostels and camping. On the bed was a neat pile of goodies, a towel, a leaflet and, believe it or not, a shower mat and shoe-shiner. However, any thoughts that I might have had of a restful weekend soon evaporated. As soon as we had settled in it was time for dinner which again was nothing like Youth Hostel fare. Dinner over, we assembled in the hall for a course introduction which made me feel exhausted just at the thought of all we were to cram in! Then we joined the option groups we had chosen - mine was handbells. For Saturday and Sunday it was down to work. For most of the day we would be out ringing in various towers getting back for dinner then off again to our groups. Handbell ringing certainly helped with my method. I have already reserved a place on next year's course (I hope!) It was well worth it. No more Youth Hostelling for me!'

*Robin Fenton*

'On 26 - 28 September, I attended Easthampstead Ringing Course. I feel that I have benefitted 100%, especially in my bell handling. I was in the Grandsire Doubles Group along with five others. Our Tutor was Helen Diserens who made the Course very interesting. On Friday we rang at Warfield and Waltham St. Lawrence and at Beenham, Yattendon and Bradfield on Saturday. I can now ring a touch of Grandsire Doubles and I am looking forward to attending next year's course.'

*Andrew Avery*

## GUILD SIX BELL STRIKING COMPETITION

Eleven of the Oxford D.G.s 15 branches were represented in this year's competition hosted by the Vale of White Horse Branch. Two heats were held on the back six of two Branch towers with three bands from each going on to the final at Hinton Waldrist in the late afternoon.

**Buckland Heat** 1st Wokingham All Saints and Hughenden (7 faults); 3rd Shrivenham (15½); 4th Aston Clinton (19); 5th Witney (32).

**Faringdon Heat** 1st Thatcham (4½); 2nd Kidlington (7½); 3rd Bradwell (14½); 4th Appleton (15); 5th Pangbourne (45).

After a splendid tea in the village hall at Hinton Waldrist, the draw for the final took place. All the finalists adapted to the change in weight of the bells from a heavy to a light six. Once ringing had finished, the judges Cyril Wratten and Robert Grange took what seemed ages in reaching a decision. Their verdict was:- 1st Wokingham All Saints (Cambridge S. Minor - 16 faults); 2nd Thatcham (Grandsire Doubles - 33); 3rd Kidlington (Grandsire Doubles - 36); 4th Hughenden (Grandsire Doubles - 55½); 5th Bradwell (Grandsire Doubles - 84); 6th Shrivenham (Plain Bob Doubles - 108).

So the Wokingham band, representing the Sonning Deanery Branch, have completed the "Grand Slam" in 1986 having won also the Guild Eight-Bell and their Branch Six- and Eight-Bell Competitions. The winning band was: Sheila Williams 1, Terry Scott 2, John Harrison 3, John Wells 4, Tony Pullan (C) 5, Stephen Smith II 6.

It was pleasing to see new towers qualifying for the heats and subsequently the final, but it would be a truly realistic competition if all of the Branches had entered teams. Next year's competition will be in the Witney and Woodstock Branch.

*A.G.P.*



### "STRANGERS"

The scene is set in the large village of Teston-on-Weal. A pleasant village, with its main attraction the ancient church of St. Agony's. Part Norman and part Perpendicular, it has a fine tower, which contains a grand ring of bells. There has never been a shortage of men and women - and children in latter days - to form more than one team of ringers. Every Sunday morning and evening the bells ring out over Manor and cottage, field and orchard calling the faithful - and the unfaithful, for that matter - to prayer and praise.

One day two men met in the village pub. They sat next to each other at the bar, and after a time got into conversation, as men are wont to do in similar circumstances. "Nice weather we're having", quoth one. "Reminds me of the summer of '54", said

the other. And from such small beginnings grew quite a conversation. After they had exchanged their names, one enquired what the other did. "Oh, I work over at Borchester", was the reply. "And what are your interests here?" said the first. "I've got my garden, and two evenings a week I'm in this or some other tower bellringing." The second man then stated who he was. "I've recently come here - about three months ago, as Rector." He added "Strange we've never met yet."

Two strangers in a pub! How come? Surely they must have met? But no, it turned out that the Rector had never visited the tower during practice nor before Morning or Evening prayer. Nor had the ringer thought it necessary to answer the call of the bells which he had so loyally sent out over the village twice a Sunday for the past 45 years! Far fetched? I think we might find the odd St. Agony's tucked away not so far away. For all too often the Incumbent sees the ringers as part of the furniture as it were - like the postman and the milkman. They perform a necessary job, it all seems to happen so he doesn't worry about it, or bother himself unduly, until there is perhaps a crisis. Likewise the ringer too often sees his task as over once he has made sure others have heard the summons to church to which his own ear is deaf.

The work of ringers is as much part of the worship of the church as the organ voluntary, the singing, the prayers and the praise. It is something which is as much the concern of the Incumbent as, say, a server, a confirmant or a Reader. Ideally, surely, a short prayer should be said before ringing - just as a prayer is said in the vestry before a service. Ideally yes - but it is a good thing to have an ideal in mind at which to aim, even if circumstances from time to time prevent its attainment. Perhaps sometimes there should be an item on the Agenda of the PCC giving an opportunity of discussion about the bells. The ringers themselves should see to it that one of their number should at least be put forward for election to that august body.

"Out of sight, out of mind" must never be the attitude of Incumbent or Churhwardens. Thanksgiving to God for those who respond to the call to this demanding task in the life of the church. Yes, that ringer in the pub could rightly feel sad that his Rector did not know him, for over those months he had many opportunities of coming to meet him and his fellows in the ringing chamber.

But - yes, there is always a but - could not the Rector also feel sad that he had not met the ringer? For he had as many opportunities of meeting him in the nave!

But it is not the aim of this article to look at things from the tower angle but from the chancel angle; to all incumbents, without seeming arrogant, without casting aspersions, but merely putting forward a suggestion which might lead to a deepening of the relationship which they have with their ringers, may I just say "Look West, young man, look West". (I presuppose that the tower is at the West end of the church.) For there is where the worship starts each Sunday - from bell to organ to priest to prayer and praise. Each separate part of equal importance, each separate part needing to be seen as something important in its own right, each requiring preparation of prayer.

Strangers - no. Strangers no more - for they meet now in tower and nave - and pub, too!

*W.J. Fletcher-Campbell*

The Rev W.J. Fletcher-Campbell is Rural Dean of Abingdon, Chairman of the Old North Berks Branch and himself a ringer.



## FACTS AND FIGURES

**400th Peal** Robert H. Newton conducted his 400th tower bell peal, Yorkshire Royal at Daventry, on 4th October.

**100th S. Major in Hand** Robert H. Newton conducted his 100th peal of Surprise Major on Handbells. He thus completed 'centuries' of Surprise Maximus, Royal and Major in hand. Our congratulations!

**New Methods** Misbourne Delight Major was rung to a peal for the first time at Amersham (4.10.86) and Wallingford S. Major at Wallingford (25.10.86).

**125th Anniversary** A peal of Yorkshire Royal was rung at Appleton by the Appleton Society on the 125th Anniversary of the first peal on the ten bells, Grandsire Caters conducted by Henry White.

**425th Peal on the Bells** This was rung at Appleton on Saturday 8 November.

**Handbells** The band based on Maidenhead rang the first peal of Strathclyde S. Maximus with a 4ths place bob.

### Quarter Peals

**Pangbourne** - a sponsored Quarter Peal for the Church Roof Fund.

**North Leigh** - the Witney and Woodstock band rang eleven Doubles methods during the summer.

**Golden Weddings** - A Quarter Peal was rung at Hughenden for the Golden Wedding of Mr and Mrs William Birmingham of Slough. We wish them many more years together.

**Birthday** - A Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Minor was rung for the 80th Birthday of E. Eldridge. Also for 61 years membership of the O.D.G. of E. Eldridge, 51 years membership of T. Tocock and 50 years membership by Mrs E. Eldridge.

**Invalid** We are glad to see the Librarian once more taking an active part in Guild affairs. He has been housebound for some time due to a chest infection.

### DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE

A Diocesan Pilgrimage is to be held at the beginning of September 1987. At present no firm plans have been made but it is hoped that ringers in the Diocese will take an active part in the proceedings.



### STOP PRESS

The Guild Treasurer is looking at the possibility of insurance cover for all paid up members of the Guild. He will report back at the March Committee Meeting. Cover will depend on the age of the member. These will fall into three groups: 11 - 16 years; 17 - 70 years; over 70 years.

Typists error - October Odd Bob - The bells of St. Michaels, at Northgate, Oxford, are "hung" dead, not "found" dead!



## TWIGS FROM THE BRANCHES

### **Banbury Branch:**

Ringling has been fairly quiet for the last three months. About 12 ringers very much enjoyed the Grand Ringers Day in London, especially the chance to ring on 12 bells.

Deddington bells were removed from the tower in September by Whites. The bells will be returned and rehung with new fittings in the old frame. The dedication is planned for 21 December.

The Steeple Aston ringers enjoyed a visit to Whites' workshop to see their new frame assembled on the floor, and then ring on Appleton bells. The bells were returned to Steeple Aston on 11 October and rehung the following week. The ringers and the villagers were delighted with the tuning of the bells.

*Graham Clifton*

### **Bicester Branch:**

It's good to hear from Richard Dirkson, Ringing Master, N. American Guild, that Islip's protege ANTONIA FAFANELLI is happily ringing twice on Sundays and once a week for practice at Washington's Cathedral.

Middleton Stoney's practice night is now Wednesday, please note.

It seems within living memory that Bicester has never won the coveted annual 'Aunt Sally' match against Banbury. However, this record was finally broken on 3 September with a score of Banbury 3.6.6./Bicester 5.6.6. The match was held at the Pilton Arms, Stoke Lyne who serve real ale and produced a lovely supper. Stoke Lyne's three bells were rung by some players prior to the match.

### **QUARTER DETAILS: 1260 GRANDSIRE DOUBLES**

Treble - ELAINE JEACOCK (first quarter), 2nd - MIKE MacARTHUR, 3rd - LES BURNELL, 4th - SUE HARRIS, 5th - JOHN HARRIS - Conductor, Tenor - PHIL CLARKE

for Flower Festival Evensong.

Only 17 Branch members out of a total of 75 attended the Half Yearly Meeting at Launton on 20 September 1986 and the Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition, due to take place at 2 o'clock, had to be cancelled owing to the lack of teams coming forward. The following is a brief report of the main items discussed:-

Bank interest is paid gross @ 9% as at February 1986.

A letter from Rev. Donald Westcott was read out which contained warm messages to many Branch members.

The position of Vice President was postponed until the A.G.M. as was the Branch Dinner.

Four new members were proposed and seconded: Fritwell tower - Mrs. Rene White, Mike and Rosemary Dockery. Bicester tower - Kate Brice.

The Branch Representative was thanked for his hard work towards the success of the Open May Day in the Bicester area which raised £325 for the Guild.

The Ringing Master expressed his disappointment at the lack of ringers attending Branch practices. Joint practices with other branches was suggested but it was felt this would not encourage any more ringers other than the regulars. Another suggestion was help for any Branch member having difficulty with their ringing who could be helped by the Branch.

A 'Call Changes Upwards' practice was agreed for the 22 November 1986 at Wootton Underwood with a special effort to encourage the maximum number of Branch members to attend.

Branch Newsletter 'THAT'S ALL' to be sold by tower captains to their ringers to help meet the production costs.

Annual General Meeting to be held on 21 February 1987, venue to be confirmed.

A quarter peal after the inauguration service of new team vicar Rev. John Nixon, who joined the Bicester Team Ministry in mid-September, was rung at Caversfield on 28 September 1986. The Bicester Branch is very pleased to welcome Rev. Nixon who is a ringer himself (taking control of the tenor for the quarter peal) as is one of his two daughters and we look forward to him joining us for practice whenever he is able to spare the time!

**QUARTER PEAL DETAILS:** 3 methods - Grandsire Doubles, Plain Bob Doubles and April Day Doubles.

Treble: KATE BRICE (first quarter), 2nd - SALLY STEVENS, 3rd - RICHARD STEVENS - Conductor, 4th - JOHN HARRIS, Tenor - REV. JOHN NIXON.

Timothy Beaven from Kirtlington writes about the Easthampstead '86 Course: "I thought the bell ringing course was excellent. I went only being able to ring a plain course of Grandsire Doubles on the third and I came back being able to ring a touch of Grandsire Doubles and a touch of Plain Bob Minor. I enjoyed the maintenance side course and when I got back I carried out a tower inspection in my home tower. Overall, I thought it was excellent and I'd like to thank anyone who was involved in organising the course".

Timothy's costs for the course were partially funded by the Branch and I'm told by reliable sources that the benefits of the course can be seen in his improved ringing which is gratifying.

### **Central Bucks Branch:**

I suppose that a definition of a pessimist could be one who is pleasantly surprised when all turns out well. When I prepared the copy for the October edition of Odd Bob membership was down and there had been no new members elected in 1986. However, at the end of the year, the membership is the highest for 10 years and a record number of new members were elected at the Half Yearly Meeting in November. Especially welcome were the new and re-elected members from Hardwick.

Once again St Mary's Aylesbury was the venue of the Half Yearly Meeting. The meeting was well attended and all were pleased that the Guild Master, General

Secretary, and Guild Steward were able to be present. Since the restoration of the bells, Aylesbury has become the permanent home of the business meeting. The tower provides a ringing focal point within the Branch, it is a good source of Branch Officers and always cooks an excellent tea. I should like to extend my thanks to all the Towers who have provided hospitality for Branch activities over the last twelve months - for without their support the Branch has no future.

The Branch practices throughout the year were fairly well supported. The annual Orchard Cup competition between Chiltern and Central Bucks was a close run thing. At this rate the cup could be ours next time! (In a recent Branch newsletter I referred to it as the Chiltern Cup - let there be no further Freudian slips.) Quainton are to be congratulated on coming a close second to Aston Clinton.

Two members were sponsored to the 1986 Easthampstead. They both returned full of enthusiasm and praise for the organisers. It is hoped to sponsor a further two members in 1987.

*Terry Wagstaff*

#### **Chiltern Branch:**

**THE ORCHARD CUP STRIKING CONTEST** A few months before his 85th birthday back in 1975, a cup was donated by the late Fred Orchard of Nether Winchendon and inscribed "Central Bucks and Chiltern Branch Annual Competition". This soon became known as the "ORCHARD CUP" and has been competed for ever since, with the competition being held alternately on Central Bucks or Chiltern territory. It was the wish of Fred that the cup would keep the two branches together, and this has proved to be so.

The venue this year was Wendover where seven teams took part, and ringing was all of a good standard. The judges for the contest were Richard and Sally Stevens of Bicester and after a good tea the results were announced as follows:- Aston Clinton 5½ faults; Quainton 9 faults; Wendover 16 faults; Bledlow 18 faults; Aylesbury 30 faults; Long Crendon 40 faults; Little Missenden 91 faults.

Thanks to all teams for making an enjoyable afternoon and special thanks to 12 year old Helen Benn of Little Missenden who rang at very short notice having never rung outside her own tower. Thanks to the Judges, to the ladies for an excellent tea and to Wendover tower for the use of the bells.

On the evening of Friday 10 October, a coach left Aston Clinton for the Isle of Wight. It contained ringers and parishioners from Aston Clinton and ringing friends from several towers. Some good ringing was enjoyed at seven towers on the Saturday and at two towers on the Sunday morning. The last tower, Niton, allowed our old friend Percy Newton to "clear up" the island. Our thanks are due to John White and Diana Evans for the arrangements and to everyone for making it such an enjoyable weekend.

*Roy Woodruffe*

#### **Chipping Norton Branch:**

Congratulations to Keith and Rhonda Mitchell on their wedding at Chadlington on 13 September. A Quarter Peal of Doubles was rung after the service.

A Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Minor was rung on 25 October as a compliment to Claire Datson and Cliff Tarrant, married at Radley that day.

The Branch held its Autumn Meeting at Enstone on 11 October, the service being taken by the Rev P.G. Smith. Afterwards ringers 'tucked into' tables full of tea and left a lot. A short business meeting followed tea and then back to the ringing chamber for more ringing.

*Ken Wakefield*

### **East Berks and South Bucks Branch**

The Branch has had a very busy couple of months!

The major event was the Branch Coach Outing in September, which went to the magnificent 12 at Winchester Cathedral and to four towers in and around Southampton. This was a new venture for the Branch, and it was with some anxiety that we embarked on it - for on top of the normal fears of not getting enough people to fill a coach, it later turned out that the chosen date clashed with the Ringing World's Grand Day in London. In the event, however, the outing was extremely well supported by over 40 ringers. This definitely made it a case of just a quick ring at each tower, but on such a lovely day and at such nice places who could complain!

As usual, our knock-out striking competition (Lorna Newton Cup) took place throughout the summer months. Twenty towers took part which makes it by far the best supported of our activities. Unlike the ordinary striking contest where the same strong bands tend to monopolise the top positions, in the knock-out contest, because the winners and runner-up teams of the ordinary contest are eliminated and because there is some luck element arising from the draw, the results are often quite unpredictable. This year it was the turn of Old Windsor to surprise us by getting to the final four: well done to them! The final of the contest was held at Penn and was judged by David Struckett; the winners were Beaconsfield, with Chalfont St Giles in second place.

Our Ringing Master, Patricia Newton, arranged a very successful day's outing during the half term week, mainly for the benefit of schoolchildren. This went to Caversham, Mapledurham, Pangbourne, Goring and Checkendon - all suitably lightweight rings and easily managed by even the smallest of those taking part.

Lastly, a Beer and Skittles evening on 1 November provided an entertaining evening for the 30 or so who went. The south of the Branch scored a narrow victory over the north, thus making up nicely for the tendency for the results of ringing competitions to be the other way round! This event marked the end of Michael Cole's reign as Social Secretary. He was the first holder of this post created nearly three years ago and in that time he has introduced and arranged a number of very successful events - cycle outings, a formal dinner and many others. We hope to find someone else to replace him at the next Branch AGM, but in the meantime we will just have to confine ourselves to ringing!

*Katharine Firman*

### **Newbury Branch:**

The annual Branch outing on 6 September went round the Cotswolds with ringing at Fairford, Churchill, Stow-on-the-Wold, Bourton-on-the-Hill, Cheltenham and Charlton Kings. All went smoothly for once and the day was enjoyed by everyone.

On 20 September, Mike Till organised a coach trip to the Ringing World 75th anniversary celebrations with a few towers, and a visit to the Whitechapel foundry before finishing at Southwark for the service and tea. Again it was a most enjoyable day and one that will be long remembered. The Branch sent six students to Easthampstead this year, a most encouraging revival of interest after a lapse of some years. All found the experience valuable and would like to go again.

Interest in monthly Branch practices has fallen off again and the committee will be circulating a questionnaire to all towers with a view to getting some sort of consensus as to what is required. The offer by the committee to organise one-day courses has been taken up at last with a request from Hungerford for a Grandsire Doubles teach-in.

The Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer and Ringing Master were re-elected at the AGM at Thatcham on 11 October.

### **North Bucks Branch:**

**Handbells** Godfrey Foat is planning to hold a weekly handbell practice in the winter months. He says: "If anyone would like to begin or extend their handbell ringing abilities and knowledge, please contact me".

**Downs Barn** The Opening of the Church and Community centre on Downs Barn will be on 29 November 1986 and the name that has been chosen is **THE CROSS and THE STABLE**.

There will be a Barn Dance in the new building in aid of the Bell Fund on 13 December.

**Ringing World 75th Anniversary:** I, like a very good number of ringers from towers within the branch, and many hundreds of ringers from all parts of the country, descended on the London area on 20 September to take part in the biggest ringing festival ever organised to celebrate the 75th birthday of the Ringing World.

It was always going to be a day of queues, and crowded towers and for once all thoughts of quality ringing had to be forgotten (although certain noises coming from Southwark bells after the service did leave me wishing for a slight improvement in the striking). No, for me it was a day for the sharing with friends the joy of the fellowship of ringing; for meeting old friends, sharing old stories, and sharing the atmosphere of a crowded Cathedral.

On a lesser scale, but to me more important, was the success of the quarterly meeting at Maids Moreton and surrounding towers. To me it represented all that is desirable of a good quarterly meeting: good bells, a well attended service, an excellent tea, a "short" business meeting, and good fellowship throughout the day.

May I thank everyone for making the day such a successful and happy one.

**Quarter Peal Day:** I am currently in the process of organising a series of quarter peals in the branch during the week Sunday 23 - Saturday 29 November 1986. The aims are as follows:-

- 1) To attempt and hopefully score a quarter peal in each of the 38 branch towers with ringable peals of bells of 5 or more.
- 2) To encourage and develop both new and existing ringers. I want to involve as many ringers as possible and to offer the opportunity for scoring as many firsts as possible.
- 3) To raise money for branch funds. Following the donation of £100 to Leighton Buzzard and £300 to Thornborough the branch funds are in need of replenishment.

The problems of organising at least 38 quarters, in 38 different towers for 234 ringers in a seven day period are obvious, and I would appreciate any assistance you are able to offer. Whilst I am currently writing to tower captains, do not wait to be approached if there is a particular tower you wish to ring at, or a particular method you wish to ring, make your wishes known and either speak to your tower captain, or speak to me direct. The week is being organised for YOUR benefit so take advantage of the opportunity.

*David Phillipson*

### **Old North Berks Branch**

The Branch Half Year Meeting was held at Hanney in September. The preacher at the Guild Service was Bishop Bulley, formerly Bishop of Carlisle now residing at East Hagbourne.

Before the Service and the Meeting, our Branch Striking Contest Final was held. Abingdon and Appleton both rang well and in a close contest the judges announced Appleton as winners, they represented us at the Guild Finals with a much depleted team but still rang very well, but not finishing amongst the top teams.

The Branch Bell Fund Committee reported that since our AGM in May, £225.07 has been sent on to the Guild Bell Fund.

We elected six new members to the Guild.

Applications for grants for restoration work were received from both Cumnor and Marcham, we gave them a grant of £50 each and their applications were forwarded to the Guild.

The Annual Barn Dance held at Appleton made a profit of £49.25; we will keep £24.50 in our Branch Bell Fund and the other £24.75 has been sent on to the Guild Funds. A raffle held at the Dance made £32; this has also been sent on to Guild Funds.

At a recent Branch Committee Meeting it was agreed that future social events would include another Barn Dance at Appleton, and possibly a skittles and social evening at Abingdon next year, and also a car treasure hunt in the summer.

Because the Sutton Augmentation does not qualify for help from the Guild Bell Fund, we hope to make a further donation from our funds in the New Year. The two new bells have been cast at Whitechapel and are now back at Whites of Appleton awaiting the final phase in this work.

New Year Morning Ringing: we will again be having a ringing morning with Coffee and Fund Raising, this year it will be at Cumnor, 10 am till noon, and all profits will go to their Restoration Fund.

This Branch has a number of towers with 3, 4 and 5 bells in them and they are not rung very often because of lack of ringers and funds to keep them in good repair. We hope to visit them to see how they are and possibly get them ringing again.

The Annual Branch Meeting will be held at Brightwell on the second Saturday in May, and the Half Year Meeting will be at Radley on the second Saturday in September.

*L.F. Cox*

### **Oxford City Branch**

The second Branch Outing of the year took place on Saturday 13 September and proved to be just as popular as the first. The "Augmentation Tour" visited Steeple Aston, North Aston, Bodicote, Mollington, Quainton, Aylesbury and Aston Rowant. Street plans of Banbury and Aylesbury together with a short guide to each of the churches were available for those who wished to explore and refreshments were once again served on the coach. These outings, so successfully arranged by our Ringing Master, Len Porter, and Social Secretary, Hugh Deam, have become rather addictive and a third mini-outing is planned for December. Plans are also well advanced for an outing to the Eastbourne area next April!

The Summer Practices which alternated between Garsington and Horspath during August and September had very mixed attendances but proved of benefit for those who attended them. Regrettably, I did not go to the London Surprise practices at North Hinksey but I hear from Ray Rook that all went well despite the fact that repairs are being carried out to the tower roof.

We congratulate the Kidlington ringers for achieving third place in the Guild Six Bell Striking Competition and also for passing the £9,000 mark in their fund raising efforts towards the work on the bells.

In October, Iffley ringers held a mini-bus outing to the Hampshire area, organised by the former Iffley ringer and friend, Tom Bowles. Ringing included visits to Selbourne (of Rev. Gilbert White fame) and the Liss Campanile "flower pots" in the Vicar's garage.

On Sunday 2 November, Harry Badger organised and rang in a Quarter Peal of Grandsire and Bob Doubles to celebrate his 85th Birthday. The conductor was Tom Smith and the quarter peal was rung at St. Andrew's, Headington.

Earlier in the year, Lawrence Busby from Iffley took part in a quarter peal to celebrate his own Golden Wedding Anniversary and then immediately followed this with another quarter peal to celebrate the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr and Mrs Pipkin at Cowley. Also at Cowley on Sunday 26 October, a quarter peal of Grandsire and Bob Doubles was rung to celebrate the 80th Birthday of John (Jack) Sutton, a Cowley ringer for 37 years.

All in all a memorable Summer and Autumn.

*Roy Goodwin*

Roy has failed to note that he also took time off from all these to enjoy a holiday in China! We hope that he will once again give a talk on his travels for the benefit of his ringing friends.

*M.R.C.*



### **Reading Branch**

Congratulations to Mortimer St. Johns who rang a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Doubles without any outside help earlier this year.

On 7 June a very successful Branch outing to Northamptonshire took place. At Northampton, we rang at the Holy Sepulchre, one of the few remaining round churches. Unfortunately the Treble stay parted company with the headstock, the rope managing to twist itself round the frame. When it was successfully freed, ringing continued. At St. Peter's the ringers rang for a wedding. An all-ladies band rang Plain Bob Minor at Cold Higham. It will be some time before the Ringing Master recovers from this!

The Six Bell Striking Competition was this year held at Shiplake, with six teams taking part after an excellent tea provided by the Shiplake Band. Pangbourne deservedly came first but sadly were not placed in the Guild Competition.

18 October found over sixty ringers from Newbury and Reading Branches trying their hand at a new skill - Skittles. This function was extremely well attended making for very cramped conditions, but a thoroughly good time was had by all. Newbury won by a narrow margin - look out next year, Newbury!

*Joyce Vernon*

### **Sonning Deanery Branch**

Congratulations to All Saints Wokingham on winning the Guild Six Bell Striking Competition at Hinton Waldrist. Thus they completed the 'Grand Slam' having won both the Guild Eight Bell Competition and their own Branch Six and Eight Bell Competitions.

The Branch Newsletter contains an interesting account of a cycle outing written by one of the cycles which took part in it!

### **South Oxon Branch**

At our Autumn Meeting the subject of the Six Bell Striking Competition was discussed and the sad fact that apart from one tower (Aston Rowant), none of the others had entered a band for some time. However, Eric Harmsworth of Chinnor volunteered to visit a number of towers with a view to arousing some interest. He is either Salesman of the Year or very good at Karate. So far he has visited four towers and they have all agreed to compete!

**Aston Rowant** have at last been able to collect their new handbell from Whitechapel. It has taken them 3-4 years to collect the necessary money.

**Warborough** sent their third member to the Easthampstead Course this year.

**Watlington** can now ring Grandsire and Bob Doubles with outside help.

**Great Hasley** This band is now reduced to two regulars. Their Monday night practices are, however, well attended.

**Wheatley** The bells have been completely overhauled and the band is busy raising money to pay for the work. They have promised to repay the P.C.C. who paid the bill.

**Ewelme** It is hoped that the work on the bells will be completed in November.

**Chalgrove** practice once a month (1st Wednesday) when they receive help from Oxford.

**Thame** now have eleven ringers and do Plain Course of Grandsire and Plain Bob Triples.

**Drayton St. Leonard** ring once a month for service.

**Shabbington** "The one thing that can be said about our tower is the persistence of its ringers. They may not be able to ring much above a halting plain course of Bob Doubles, rounds and call changes; it is no discredit to our visiting helpers of Long Crendon or Chinnor, but rather their patience and encouragement of a changing body of learners that we make progress at all. The main thing is the enjoyment of service given to our parish church and this summer the pleasure it gave to our village in ringing for three weddings." (Extract from Branch News Letter.)

**Dorchester** "We are pleased to report that, to all intents and purposes, we have realised our target for the restoration of the bells . . . It is heart-warming to report that the local village (population ca.1,000) has contributed around £2,500 -much of which has come from pensioners who have given a handful of pound notes to the cause." (D. Stoneham.)

**Benson** paid their Annual May Day ring/camping visit to Somerset again this year. They also joined with many of their Branch friends in an outing to Sussex. They are also saving money for new bell ropes.

*Cyril Lawrence*

### **Witney and Woodstock Branch**

This Branch continues to maintain a wide range of activities; some purely social (a Barn Dance), others mainly concerned with ringing and progress within the Branch (its November Ringing Day); others again which combine both, as with its Branch Walk and Ring, a Treasure Hunt and a cycle outing on a very wet August Bank Holiday Monday. In addition the number of quarter peals rung by members in the Quarter June - September was too many for publication in its news letter so an additional sheet had to be printed. Judging by the recent copies of the Ringing World the Branch continues to be very active in this field.

In August, Eight Bell Practices were held at Witney.

"The combined Branch practices at Witney which took place each Tuesday evening during August could best be described as ambitious, and proved to be popular, as between 20 and 25 people gathered each week from various towers throughout the Branch. The methods were chosen to stretch the minds of ringers -whether that be plain hunt on 7 bells or, for others, Treble Bob, Cambridge Surprise and Double Norwich. There was a general feeling of achievement about each practice, and thanks must be given to Jim O'Beirne for organising the combined practices, and to the more advanced ringers for all their help and encouragement."

(Sue Worth from News Letter.)

### **Vale of White Horse Branch**

After three hectic weeks recently with a Half-Yearly Meeting, the Guild Six Bell Striking Contest and our own Branch Autumn Outing, there is time to sit back and reflect. The main thing that comes to mind is the 'comradeship' among those who helped with the Striking Contest and how quite a few remarked that it was nice to meet some of the Guild Officers and just chat to them, whereas the normal member only sees them at a meeting answering questions, etc. We had most of the food given to us on the day and so are able to send the profit to the Bell Fund. I hope you noticed we even organised the weather! My thanks to our members who helped and to all who gave or served the teas.

Our outing around Bicester on 11 October was quite successful although we could have done with a few more ringers.

John Browne, tower captain of Great Coxwell, has retired and so the tower has been taken under the wing of Coleshill with Robin Blake in charge of both. Robin has no telephone but contact can be made through the vicar, the Rev. R. Swanborough (Faringdon 20665). Practice nights will be at Gt. Coxwell on the first Tuesday in the month and all other Tuesdays at Coleshill.

*Anne Jones*

### **OBITUARIES**

#### **R. JARVIS 1927 – 1986**

Learned to ring at Chipping Norton where he was a member for many years. He later joined the Banbury Band and was still a member at the time of his death.

#### **S. NICHOLLS 1933 – 1986**

Learned to ring at Swalcliffe. He remained a member of the band until his death. For many years he was also its captain.

#### **JOHN SAYER**

Learned to ring in the Banbury Branch and recently had devoted much time to rebuilding the Warborough Band. He had suffered a severe stroke and died in the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1987

### JANUARY

1	Cumnor	Ring and Bring & Buy	
10	Central Bucks	Branch Practice	Steeple Claydon 6.30 pm
13	Newbury	Branch Practice	Speen 7.30 pm
17	Chiltern	Branch Practice	Gt. Missenden 6.30 - 8.30 pm

### FEBRUARY

11	Newbury	Branch Practice	Hungerford 7.30 pm
14	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	Waddesdon 6.30 pm
	Reading	A.G.M.	
21	Sonning	A.G.M.	

### MARCH

7	N. Bucks	A.G.M.	
14	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	Winslow 6.30 pm
	Newbury	Car Outing	
GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING			
21	Chiltern	Branch Practice	Gt. Kimble 6.30 - 8.30 pm

### APRIL

11	Newbury	Striking Comp. & 6 monthly meeting	Hungerford
25	Banbury	A.G.M.	Steeple Aston
	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	Nether Winchenden 6.30 pm

### MAY

4	Reading	Open Day	Guild 8 bell comp.
16		GUILD AGM	Bucklebury

### JUNE

13	C. Bucks	6 Bell Striking Comp.	Bierton 2.30 pm
----	----------	-----------------------	--------------------

### JULY

4	H. Wycombe	GUILD FESTIVAL	
11	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	to be arranged

### AUGUST

8	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	Whitchurch 6.30 pm
---	----------	-----------------	-----------------------

### SEPTEMBER

5	Newbury	Branch Coach Outing	
12	C. Bucks	Branch Practice	Quanton 6.30 pm
25/27		Easthampstead Course	

### OCTOBER

10	C. Bucks/Chiltern	Orchard Cup	Padbury 2.30 pm
	Newbury	AGM	Newbury
17	Banbury	Half Yearly meeting	Deddington

### NOVEMBER

14	C. Bucks	Half Yearly Meeting	Aylesbury 2.30 pm
28	GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING		Aston Abbots 1.45 pm

---