

Issue 47

ODD BOB

Newsletter of the



July 1996

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Information for contributors: The editor welcomes any contributions for consideration for publication in Odd Bob. Send your contributions to the editor at the following address : Mr John R Martin, 90 Fairway Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG30 4QB. Whilst hand-written copy is perfectly acceptable, electronic copies would be welcomed. Line drawings and photographs to illustrate your articles would also be welcome. I can accept a number of word processor formats (MS Word, WordPerfect, etc.) on either 3.5" or 5.25" diskettes. I will return the disks and other submitted material. Alternatively if you have access to a modem and a computer, you might like to send your contributions via the Ringers BBS on 01794 514754 (addressed to john martin) or via internet to john.martin@ukonline.co.uk

The next issue of Odd Bob is scheduled to be distributed at the Guild committee meeting in November. All contributions to me by **25th October 1996** please.

Odd Bob is YOUR newsletter - send your contribution NOW !

Master's Mutterings

My first 'mutterings' as Master must be about the retiring Master. Pat Newton's Mastership has been a very distinguished one in which she has worked single mindedly for the good of the Guild, made many friends for the Guild as well as for herself and ensured that the Guild is in good heart and ready to face the challenges ahead. Past Masters of the Guild have all contributed enormously to the Guild's work by guiding and representing the Guild in many different ways. Pat has been no exception and her election as a Vice President was just one way in which we could recognise the contribution she has made. Fortunately we will not be losing her talents as she will continue to be very active in the area of education as well as being one of the Guild's representatives on the Central Council. We all owe Pat a great deal and I thank her again for all she has done.

I am very mindful of the traditions established by the past Masters of the Guild and will do my best to continue those traditions without necessarily copying what others have done. It is a great honour to be asked to perform this role and I feel rather humble at the prospect. However, after five years as General Secretary, I know how well the Guild is served by its officers and, particularly, its branch officers and am confident that, together, we can ensure the continued prosperity of the Oxford Diocesan Guild.

The next few years will present a challenge to all of us. I was delighted that the Annual General Meeting unanimously endorsed the mounting of the Millennium Project. Some of you may say that the project is what we should be doing all the time and indeed in some cases it is being done. Others may consider its aims too vague or over ambitious. My own feeling is that this is an opportunity to re-examine our role as church bell ringers. We all have differing views of what is important, but the Guild was founded to ensure the good stewardship of our bells and part of this stewardship is to ensure that the bells sound out to the glory of God throughout the year. It is a fact that many of our bells do not ring out to proclaim their message because of a lack of ringers. We have all tried to encourage recruitment and those involved in the training of new ringers will usually agree that there is very little in ringing to surpass the feeling of satisfaction as we see one of our learners making good progress in the art. However, attracting new ringers is becoming more and more difficult for a variety of reasons. Firstly, modern life has many other calls on our time not least because of differing work patterns, there are many alternative activities which attract people, in some cases people are put off by the commitment expected and, unfortunately, many question the relevance of the Church in the modern world.

This project will allow us to rethink how we can attract people into our towers, the image we project, how best to train our new ringers and how to go about ensuring that we retain them. None of us who have been involved in training can be completely satisfied with our record of success in keeping ringers. Let us use the opportunity now presented to rethink our approaches.

The purpose of the Guild's Millennium Working Group and the Branch Liaison Teams is to enable the Guild's considerable resources to be used to maximum efficiency.

We will be running a number of seminars and training courses so as to help people rethink their training and recruitment strategies. This does not mean that it is intended to tell you how to train etc. but to rather to pool ideas so that fresh ideas can be considered and taken up if they seem to be suitable.

We will also be producing materials which will help in the publicity we need to bring ringing to the public's attention in a way we may have been reluctant to do in the past. Increased publicity is one way in which we can add our witness to that of other Christian workers.

These may be the first comments on the project but they will certainly not be the last. What I hope is that all members will think about how they can help and then set about doing something about it.

Finally, I am sure all members will wish to join me in congratulating Marie Cross on the award of an M.B.E. for services to bellringing and the community. With this award her considerable work within ringing and education have been rightly recognised. Unlike many ringers, my first real 'encounter' with Marie was not in a belfry but on a working party discussing the future of primary school mathematics in Berkshire. She brought to those discussions the same dedication and breadth of vision that I have since seen in action many times within ringing. Congratulations Marie on a well deserved honour.

John Wells

The Guild Millennium Project

At the Annual General Meeting on 18th May a decision was taken to mount a special project to mark the new Millennium. For those who were not at the meeting, here are a few details of what is proposed.

What is the project?

The aim of the project is to institute a programme of recruitment and training in an attempt to ensure that all (non-redundant) towers with ringable bells are adequately manned for ringing in the year 2000.

Why this project?

- a. The Millennium is being identified as a time of renewal and rededication. The project would enable the Guild to renew its attempts to achieve its objectives as stated in the Guild Rules. The activity involved should increase the clergy's, and other church workers', understanding of the Guild's work and, hopefully, the publicity involved will help to increase the general public's awareness of the Church through its bells and ringing.
- b. It now appears that there will be a national campaign along these lines (see R.W. 9/2/96) and the Guild should be involved. Also on a national level, it is being proposed that all bells shall ring out to mark the Millennium and at the moment we could not do this across the Diocese.
- c. It is a project which could involve almost every member of the Guild in some way with relatively low financial costs. It will also give us all the opportunity to review our own commitment to our role as church workers.
- d. It is something which needs doing! A brief analysis of the membership lists in the annual report shows that there are many towers without enough ringers to ensure regular service ringing. (Only 46% of towers with ringable bells have at least one member per bell and we should really be aiming at up to two ringers per bell to allow for absence for illness, work, holidays etc.)

These figures may be on the pessimistic side because :

- 1 they only involve Guild members and not other ringers
- 2 they do not take into account all the joint bands and

- 3 they do not take account of redundant churches and bells which have recently been declared unsafe.

However it gives an idea of what might be involved. A first priority will need to be the collection of reliable data. Clearly some areas of the diocese will need very little help and others will need a great deal but the Guild must be prepared to provide the necessary support to the branches both in terms of structure, materials and personnel.

Structure of the Project

As was stated at the autumn General Committee Meeting, this type of project will need to rely on work at branch or smaller grouping level. However it will need co-ordinating so that Guild's resources are used efficiently. This will be done by a Millennium Working Group (MWG) which will be responsible for providing the structure and general direction of the project, liaising with the Education Sub-committee and others over the provision of training courses on teaching, recruitment and retention of ringers, liaising with the Towers & Belfries sub-committee over matters related to bell maintenance and arranging, in consultation with the Public Relations Officer, for the necessary publicity materials to be available.

There will be a number of stages to the project :-

- 1 From now until early 1997 the MWG - consisting of the Guild Master, Guild General Secretary, Guild Public Relations Officer, two members of the Education sub-committee, 2 members of the Towers & Belfries sub-committee plus three members elected at the Guild AGM - will start working on the collection of accurate information of what is needed in each area and devising a detailed plan of action.
- 2 1996 to early 1997 :- Project Liaison Teams (PLT) of about three people will be established in each branch. These teams will :-
 - a. quantify the scale of the problem in their branch.
 - b. identify groupings of towers which could, and would, work together.
 - c. identify individuals from within the branch who would be able and willing to take on a training role or be involved in other aspects of the project such as publicity.
 - d. identify the scale of support required from the Guild in order for the project to succeed in their branch.

This information to be reported back to the MWG by the end of 1996.

Later on these groups will continue to liaise with the MWG and also :-

- e. continue to monitor the training needs of their branch.
 - f. help to identify local events which could be used for recruitment and publicity e.g. Church or Village Fetes/Shows.
 - g. be agents for disseminating information and materials.
 - h. be responsible for ensuring adequate publicity with regard to the project in general and recruitment in particular within their branch.
- 3 Early 1997 :- MWG will analyze reports from Branch PLT's, identify where specific help is required and produce an action plan for the project.
- 4 1996 to early 1997 :- MWG to arrange for production of necessary recruitment materials.
- 5 Early 1997 onwards :- Beginning of the programme of training courses and recruitment seminars together with any other provision identified in the action plan.
- 6 Easter 1997. Official launch of the project. This will involve as much publicity as possible.

- 7 2001. Evaluate the project - can all the bells be rung! Also to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programmes and what provision and support needs to be on-going.

Publicity

We will need to ensure continuing good publicity by arranging for :-

- 1 suitable posters and display materials to be available.
- 2 articles in "The Door" and other publications giving the background of the project with regular updates and reports on particular activities.
- 3 regular contact with the media in order to publicise particular events as well as help in the recruitment drive.
- 4 a circular to all clergy in the Diocese offering the services of the Guild and encouraging their interest and involvement with ringing in general and the project in particular.

John Wells

Congratulations

... to Marie Cross on her award of the MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list for services to bellringing. Few people can have devoted as much time and energy to ringing as Miss Cross, and many of our members are indebted to her for teaching them to ring or for her guidance in the early stages of their ringing. The following list of offices held highlights the years of dedicated service she has given to our Guild and to ringing elsewhere :

1945 - 1950	Honorary secretary, Oxford City branch
1946 - 1956	Guild Honorary Librarian
<i>approx. 1946 - present</i>	Tower captain at Radley
1956 - 1970	Guild Honorary Secretary
1970 - 1971	Guild Steward
1971	Elected Vice-President of the Guild
1982 - 1988	Guild Steward
1991 - 1995	Guild Steward
1984 - 1995	Vice-chairman, Oxford City branch
1986 - 1994	Odd Bob editor

She has also been chairman of the Guild education sub-committee for a number of years, was a founder member of the Universities Association of Change Ringers in 1944 and has taken long trips to the States between 1975 and 1994 to teach ringers at Miami, Texarkana and Little Rock.

Patricia Newton

Guild AGM at Islip

The crowds gathered at Islip on 18th May to witness the end of an era. For once the AGM was not held on FA Cup Final day but it is hoped that the enhanced membership at the meeting was there to give the retiring Master, Pat Newton, a royal send off. A moving service in Islip church was followed by an equally emotional meeting after the business part of the process had been accomplished.

The focus was on Pat, her youth and energy and seven years on in the post, still the youngest to have held that office. Mention was made of her work with youth and the youth week-ends run by herself and Robert; the 450th celebrations in which, in the space of two years, a new ring of eight bells was installed at Downs Barn in Milton Keynes to mark the occasion. Above all emphasis was placed on Pat's abilities to exchange friendships with all the ringers and

branches in the Guild and she hoped they would continue to invite her to their meetings. To show our appreciation the Guild presented her with a cut glass whisky decanter and glasses which she and Robert could enjoy together. There was also a presentation of a bouquet of flowers.

Bobbie May

An introduction to your new Guild officers

John Wells

My successor needs little introduction to members as he has served the Guild as General Secretary for the last five years, and as Report Editor for two years prior to that. As such, John brings to the post many years of experience on the Guild committee. He is an excellent ringer, as can be seen from the success of his tower in branch and Guild striking competitions, and encourages high standards from all who ring with him. For many years he has shared his knowledge and experience with students at the Easthampstead course, particularly with the Triples group which many of the tutors prefer not to take. He has tutored at many other one-day and evening courses, and has several years' experience as tower captain and branch ringing master.

John is very enthusiastic about the Millennium project, which was formally accepted at the AGM, and is reported elsewhere in this Odd Bob. With John's efficiency, determination and drive behind this project, I am sure it will have a great impact on the health of ringing within our Diocese.

Having worked closely with John for the last five years, I am certain that he will be an excellent Master, and I hope you will offer him the support and encouragement that I received, and that he deserves. Thank you.

Patricia Newton

Barry Cowper

At the AGM at Islip in May we elected Barry Cowper as our new Guild General Secretary. I hope the following will serve to introduce Barry to those Guild members who have not yet met him, and provide a little more background for those who have.

Barry began his ringing career in Sussex at West Tarring and Heene, Worthing. He moved to Buckinghamshire in 1980 with his wife Brenda and children Philippa, Andrew and Tim, residing initially at Little Kingshill and latterly in Amersham. Joining Little Missenden tower at the same time, became assistant tower captain and then tower captain in 1982.

Formerly a stockbroker by profession, Barry retired in 1994 and having offered his services to the Guild, was elected secretary of the Chiltern branch in the same year. He has undertaken this role with supreme competence, his most notable successes being 2 well organised and supported training days and strong support for the recent leap year sponsored ringing week, which resulted in the branch winning the shield for the most raised per member.

Barry is well respected in the Chiltern branch for his work at Little Missenden and in the branch itself. He is a keen supporter of ringing in the area and is known by many for his hard work and kind manner.

I am sure that Barry will serve our Guild well as General Secretary, and I trust that the membership will in turn support him, especially during the first few months whilst he is taking over from John and finding his feet.

John White

Terry Wagstaff

The AGM approved a new post of Assistant Treasurer and Terry Wagstaff kindly volunteered his services. We have discussed how his talents can be employed and have agreed that he will deal with the matters relating to the Guild General Fund. I will continue to deal with the Guild Restoration Fund and of course the Bell Fund. Please send money, invoices and requests for payment to Terry at the address in the Guild directory and he will take the necessary action. Please ensure that cheques are made payable to "Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers".

Please continue to send items relating to the Bell Fund and the Restoration Fund to me. Note that both my postcode and telephone numbers have changed. See the Guild directory for the correct listings. Thank you in advance for your co-operation and assistance.

Brian Gatward

Graham Firman

... takes over from Liz Struckett as Peal Secretary. (Thanks Liz for keeping our records straight for the past 6 years - not an easy task when we regularly score nearly 400 peals a year). Liz has produced some interesting analyses, and has carried out the work in her usual efficient and quiet way. Will Graham be able to keep up with the pressure of this job? Of that I have no doubt at all. Graham is a very capable and organised person who has advanced computer skills - all properties which he has demonstrated since he has been organising the Easthampstead course. His ringing experience is enviable, having rung (I guess) about 900 peals himself. In fact he is one of the few people who can claim to have "completed the alphabet" with middle initials in peal reports! Graham learnt to ring in Kent and joined the band at Bray when he moved to Maidenhead about 20 years ago, taking over as tower captain there in 1982. His experience extends to having been ringing master and now chairman of the EBSB branch and I suppose his year as Master of the Ancient Society of College Youths must count for something. When Graham offered to take on this post he had retired (at the age of 45!) but found another job only a month later. If he struggles to find time to keep the records up to date he might get a little help from his wife, Katharine, who was peal secretary herself for four years prior to Liz.

Patricia Newton

Radley 1996 - my first time, and I'm there as a Tutor !

Although I've done my time as an organiser, pupil and helper at a variety of ringing schools, this year was my first involvement with the Radley Ringing Course - I was asked to tutor Group 2 (Plain Bob Doubles). Other than remembering old articles from students in previous years and having the 1996 "advert" pinned up in our tower, I realised that I didn't know much about the event. After a brief chat with Peter Starling I found that there were to be four groups of six students plus a team of helpers to keep busy all day, with an evening meal and "extra options" in the evening. I was amazed to discover that the course was heavily oversubscribed and that the waiting list had started filling up around Christmas (they can't have known I was to be a tutor!).

As the months rolled by, Peter kept in touch with me - each student had answered a short questionnaire about their current ringing experience and indicated where they hoped to be by the date of the course. As the course date grew nearer, three of my group were gone (they'd found out that I was their tutor?). This made my life easier as two were edging towards Surprise Minor, which was some way from the needs of my other students, but there were three replacements lined up to take their place. At this stage I realised that I'd got the easy bit

- it was Peter who seemed to have the toughest job. Around this point I also found out from Len Cox that he had collected up enough helpers to give us at least six per group - how many phone calls that much fixing took, I can only guess.

Shortly before the course, I freshened up and augmented my method sheets and notes - it looked as if my pupils would need anything from a gentle start on Bob Doubles up to some Stedman. As I am a firm believer in learning by watching as well as by ringing, I wanted to keep to Bob Doubles for the first part of the day. It was time for some of my nasty collection of touches to be printed out ready for the more advanced students. I believe that until you know the method well enough to call a variety of touches, there is still room to learn.

On the evening before, the snow started falling - looked like a one hour drive might take longer, I hoped my students and helpers lived a bit closer. In the event I was there in time for the first cup of coffee and eventually found all of my students preparing for a long day. After a few introductions and domestics, we settled down for a short chat about the day and the methods, as well as what my intimidating pile of paperwork was about. The day then seemed to fly past - three sessions of 90 minutes is quite a workload for helpers who are ringing or "propping" with little respite, but it is still so little to share between six pupils who are all so keen to progress.



Pat Newton's Plain Bob Minor group & helpers at Iffley

At this stage in a learner's career even a slightly unfriendly bell or rope can add to the pressure and drain concentration away from the blue line, but it is still part of learning, so think positive! Towards the end of the day all of the students had made clear progress; they were more relaxed and confident, the leading much more consistent and the 3-4 dodges getting easier all the time. It had to be time for a little taster of ringing Bobs, so that at least all knew a bit of what it felt like to ring them when the homework continues over the next few weeks and

months. We even had time for a few very brisk courses of Stedman for one student before our time ran out.

Back at Radley, we met up with the other groups to exchange weary notes and anecdotes before tucking into an excellent hot meal. A fiery curry followed by double helping of sticky toffee pudding was all that I needed to settle down and listen to John Harrison and his computer prove how much of a skill it is to listen and correct slight striking errors. Eventually we all had to go home - I was pleased by the progress and effort from my students, grateful for the tireless efforts of my helpers and very impressed by all of the hard work that had gone on to prepare for and support the day.

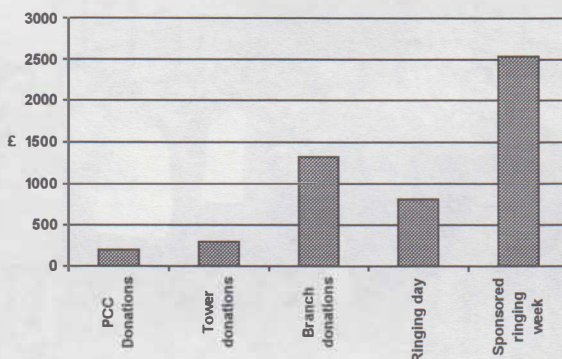
Next year, if you are asked for the use of your bells - please try to help out; if you are asked to be a helper - give part of a day if you can't manage more; if you want to be a student - get in quick as the places fill up so quickly.

If you know one of the students, please give them all of the help that you can to keep the momentum from this course going and please encourage them to give some feedback to the organisers - we need your comments to help to get it better each year.

David Joyce

Bell Fund update

I am pleased to report that the total new money raised up to 31st May is £5169.70 as follows :



The award of the sponsored ringing shield for 1996, which is based upon the amount raised per branch member, resulted in the new holder being the Chiltern branch, who raised £745 (£6.06 per member), followed in second place by Vale of the White Horse branch who raised £321.32 (£5.27 per member) with Reading branch who raised £470.75 (£2.40 per member) in third place. There are a number of projects coming forward for consideration for grants and the Bell Fund trustees hope that 1996 will be a bumper year for new money raised. Work has so far been completed and grants paid to :

Wargrave	£1800	Waddesdon	£1100
Alkerton	£150	Wheatley	£2800
Brian Gatward			

Eight bell striking competition

This year's eight-bell striking competition was held on Monday 6th May at Harwell, the venue of the first such contest in 1981. Eight bands took part and all completed the set touch of 240 Plain Bob Major.

The ringing was judged by Jeremy and Sheila Cheesman from Benhilton, Sutton, Surrey. Jeremy is a past Master of the Surrey Association and currently the northern district Master, and Sheila is the Surrey Association belfry repair fund secretary.

Those present enjoyed listening to some good ringing on a pleasantly sunny afternoon, with no band disgracing themselves. After tea in St Matthew's church hall, Jeremy and Sheila delivered constructive comments on each band's performance before announcing their verdict, which was :

Position	Team	Faults
1st	Reading, St Mary & St Laurence	65
2nd	Tilehurst	95
3rd	Chiltern branch	109
4th	Old North Bucks branch	120
5th	High Wycombe	122
6th	Reading branch	140
7th	Newbury branch	177
8th	North Bucks branch	213

The cup was therefore presented to Alex Byrne, captain of the Reading band, who won the competition for the second year in succession. Congratulations to them.

Our thanks are due to all those responsible for running a successful day, in particular Peter Starling, Old North Berks branch secretary; Doug Jordan, who acted as steward in the ringing chamber for all eight teams; the local ladies for preparing the tea and the Cheesmans for their hard work in judging the ringing.

John White

Summary of the 99th Meeting of the Central Council

...and the impressions of a new member

If you think Guild meetings are big, long and boring - try the Central Council. The meeting started at 9.30 a.m., and after breaking for lunch and tea, finally came to an end at 5.40 p.m. However, I found it far from boring. In fact, I found it quite a humbling experience. Having chaired Guild meetings where I know virtually all members, to be one of the representatives at a meeting of 218 ringers of whom I knew only about 50 felt quite strange. The meeting was formal, but interest was maintained by the frequent light-hearted comments from officers and Council members. I wish I had taken more notice when I sat in the gallery of meetings whilst Robert was on the Council - I might have been better equipped for chairing our meetings.

Being the first session of the triennium, the meeting had to elect officers, receive reports from each of the 15 sub-committees and elect sub-committee members. History was made this year when the Council elected its first female President, Jane Wilkinson. Chris Rogers (son of Harold and Olive) was re-elected as secretary, but the treasurer's aspect of his job has been taken over by Mike O'Callaghan. I managed to steer clear of being nominated for a sub-committee, but all our other Guild representatives were elected - Bill Butler to the Library committee, John Martin and Tim Pett

to Peals Analysis, John Harrison to Education and Ken Davenport to the Bell Restoration Funds committee. John Martin will be co-ordinating the computerisation of Canon Felstead's peal records (in his spare time, that is, when he's not producing Odd Bob for us!)

One item of particular interest to Guild members was the withdrawal of the application for affiliation to the Council of the Four Shires Guild. No explanation was given for this withdrawal - perhaps members in the North-West branches may be able to enlighten me.

The report of the Public Relations Advisory Group (PRAG) contained some interesting items. The Millennium project (as we approved at our Guild AGM) is becoming a national affair. The Open Churches Trust has requested that all churches should hold a service at midday on 1st January, 2000, and all bells should be rung for these services. This has the support of the Archbishops. We should be receiving correspondence from the PRAG in the near future. Hopefully this will help us to focus our own Millennium project. £3 million has been allocated to the Millennium Bells project, but since 136 applications have been received, not all applications will be successful. More information should be published in the Ringing World soon. In addition, 50 to 60 applications have been received for grants from the lottery fund. We were advised that good applications were more likely to be successful, and that applicants should read the check list and answer all questions before submitting their forms.

The Council rejected a "performance" of Stedman Cinques rung by the College Youths which had variable cover bells, since it did not comply with Council rules for peals of Cinques or Maximus. However, it was agreed that the Methods Committee should consider ways of amending the rules to accommodate such performances. The Peals Analysis report showed that once again the ODG was leading peal ringing society (378 in total, second being the Lancashire Association with 248), with several Guild towers appearing in the leading towers list, Thatcham being the highest. A peal of Doubles by a local band at Ducklington was recognized as one of the 9 peals of particular note.

Publications produced by Central Council committees are advertised regularly in the Ringing World, but I am sure John Harrison would like me to mention his new tape of "Listening to Ringing Live" which I understand involved a number of Guild members.

The committee for Redundant Bells brought to our attention a problem they had come across with redundant churches being listed buildings, and the local authorities refusing permission for the removal of the bells. This could become an increasing problem with the reduced finances of our churches. Hopefully you will have seen the article in the Ringing World regarding lightning conductors. The importance of bonding metal bell frames and clocks to the lightning conductor to eliminate "flash over" was emphasised.

At previous Guild meetings we have mentioned the maintenance of peal board records. This was raised at the meeting. Initially it was said that Guilds/Associations should keep their own records (software for a database is available from the Computer Co-ordination committee), but then it was suggested that the Library committee should maintain computerised records - we await further advice.

Since we have our own, very successful, Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund, members may be interested in a proposal from the Bell Restoration Funds committee to set up a Central Council bell restoration fund. However, the Council does not wish to conflict or compete with Guild funds, but to complement them. It is anticipated that the fund would initially receive donations and legacies from

ringers, but they would hope to tap non-ringers once the fund has been established. Please let your Guild representatives know your views on this matter.

Finally, and perhaps the most important item of the day, during the annual meeting of the Ringing World Limited, it was announced that the editor, David Thome, will be retiring from this position within the next 12 months, so a new editor is being sought. Although tributes to David were brief at this meeting, appreciation of his efforts was evident, and it is important to find the right man (or woman) to succeed him in this key post.

Patricia Newton

From the Report Editor

By now all towers should have their copy of the annual report which was distributed to branch secretaries and/or their representatives at the Guild committee meeting in March. Thanks to all contributors who sent in their copy material on or before time which enabled the report to be ready for distribution at the above meeting. Additional copies of the report are available from me for £2.50 plus an A5 pre-paid (57p) SAE.

The up-to-date alphabetical list of tower correspondents is available for £1.00 plus A5 SAE (25p). So this can be kept up to date please keep your branch secretaries informed of any changes.

John Payne

Points from peals

by the Peal Secretary

Colin Turner topped the peal ringer's list for 1995 with an amazing 281 peals - that's over 5 a week!

In January this year the Guild rang its first tower bell peal of 16-in at the only 16 bell tower in the world, St Martins, Birmingham. The method was Yorkshire Surprise and was conducted by John Martin.

David Brown, who learnt to ring at Langley, rang his 3000th peal on 6th January. He now lives and rings in Cambridge.

Bill Butler circled the tower at Thatcham an incredible 40 times. (For the uninitiated this means he has rung 40 peals on each and every one of the 10 bells there.)

The very first peal with every ringer called 'Richard' was rung for the Guild at Wicken, Northamptonshire.

A peal of Zummerzset Surprise Royal was rung on handbells by a band of country bumpkins.

Donald Carter rang his 1,100th peal in February.

The Guild rang two peals to celebrate the centenary of the first peal by a lady. These were, of course, rung by bands of ladies, one at Burnham and the other at Lane End. Both were conducted by the Guild Master.

Walter Lee rang in a peal to mark the 60th anniversary of his first peal, rung at Wendover. He rang the same bell in both peals. Congratulations!

A peal of Zebedee Surprise Royal was rung at Thatcham in March. Zebedee, in its Major version was first rung in the 'Magic Roundabout' peals of spliced in the early 1970s.

Tim Pett has rung 100 peals of Surprise Maximus.

First peal congratulations are due to Janet Gillard, Robin Smith, Ian Rodick, Nigel Harrison, Jill Ward, Barry Canham and Matthew Summers.

Bill Butler has conducted 800 peals.

Two peals were rung at Hughenden in memory of Roland Biggs who was a ringer there for nearly 80 years.

A peal at Beaconsfield was rung to celebrate the wedding of Andrew Agg and Jackie Holt.

Andrew Tibbetts and his dad, Richard, both from Harpenden rang a peal for the Guild at Hughenden. It was their 100th peal together. Andrew is just 14 years old!

A peal was rung at Burford to celebrate Michael Collett's 50 years membership of the Guild.

Graham Firman

Help!

I am hoping to collect the full 'set' of Odd Bobs for use and ultimately to bind for posterity. This has been done with editions 15 to the present. However, completely missing from my list are numbers one - five and 13-14 and the tower copies of nos. eight & 10 have been graffitied with well-intentioned learning aids! I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who can spare these past copies.

Bobbie May

1996 "eweth" weekend

After the cold wintry conditions we had had in previous weeks, we were pleased to see some spring-like weather for the youth weekend. At 6.00 p.m. on Friday 29th March, the Eton Dorney Centre near Windsor was invaded by 10 students, four adults, six sheep, one mad cow and one or two more reserved teddies.

The walk to nearby Dorney church after dinner was rather eventful since the road had been dug up. Drivers were rather perplexed to have to follow a line of torches carried by the 14 ringers as they proceeded through the green traffic lights. Dorney bells are a good test for the tutors to assess the ability of the youngsters, enabling us to pitch the right level for the lectures the following morning. Methods studied included Plain Hunt, Plain Bob, Little Bob, Grandsire, Stedman, Cambridge (Minor to Royal), and London (Minor and Major).

For ringing on Saturday, the students (and animals) were split into two groups, so that with five in each group significant progress could be made during the five hours ringing time, each group visiting four different towers.

Not to be deterred by tired bodies and sore hands, the students thoroughly enjoyed the evening options of rope splicing or handbell ringing. The tutors are very grateful to Bernard Stone for bringing his wide range of handbells and music for the tune ringing, and to Helen McGregor, John White and Ann Jones for their help with method ringing in hand.



*The group outside the Eton Dorney centre (l to r) Barbara Payne (tutor), Mark Seagriff (High Wycombe), Peter Day (tutor), Gemma Jackson (Goring), Tim Beaudeau (Shiplake), Andrew Cairns (Tilehurst), Lianne Patterson (Arborfield), Eileen Shipton (Arborfield), Luke Daniel (Cookham), Daniel Sandham (Tilehurst), Guy Darvill (Beaconsfield), Janet Edwards (Beaconsfield), Patricia Newton (tutor).
(In front : Uncle Roger, Mad Cow & friends)*

Sunday is not a day of rest for ringers. An early start at Burnham meant that we could ring for the service there before moving on to Farnham Royal. We were made very welcome at the Palm Sunday service at Farnham Royal, and the priest and parishioners were particularly grateful for our ringing as they do not have a regular band at this church.

Friendships develop really quickly on these youth weekends, and even as early as Friday evening it was good to see the youngsters ringing handbells together, with the more experienced helping those who had not touched handbells before (including the sheep and Mad Cow). I have organized seven of these weekends now, and I am sure that all students have enjoyed them and found them beneficial. It is good to see that earlier participants are now (or have been) active ringers whilst at Birmingham, Bristol and London universities. Some have been lost to the exercise, but I am sure that it will not be a permanent loss for all in this category.

Unfortunately the Eton Dorney Centre has increased its minimum number, which we do not seem able to meet at present, so there will not be a youth weekend next year. However, I hope to arrange a training day for our young ringers which may, perhaps, attract a few new faces. Finally, I should like to pay particular tribute to Barbara Payne and to my husband, Robert, who have helped with every weekend, and to Peter Day who has been to the last five courses. They have been a

tremendous support to me - not needing to be asked when it comes to clearing and laying tables, sweeping floors, tidying rooms, etc., let alone tutoring and helping with the ringing.

Patricia Newton

Mrs Gladys Pollard (1914-1996)

Many members of Guild committees and of the Old North Berks branch committee will learn with regret of the death from cancer of Mrs Gladys Pollard - after a brief but painful illness. Gladys Pollard was one of those wives and mothers, who though non-ringers themselves, supported in every way possible those of their family who did. Her home was always open for branch committee meetings, though she rarely appeared herself. The sausage rolls, mince pies, cakes, etc which for a number of years have been such an asset at Guild committee meetings at Radley were provided and made by her - for those who had come straight from work or travelled a distance they were most welcome - and at times, I am sure, smoothed the passage of what might have been acrimonious meetings. Our deepest sympathy goes to Daphne Pollard who has now lost both her parents.

Marie Cross

Ex-Master's Mutterings

I was overwhelmed by the splendid gifts presented to me and by the sincerity of the compliments received at the recent Guild AGM at Islip. The towers & belfries committee had already given me a model bell as a token of their appreciation, and the presentation at the AGM of a magnificent cut glass decanter (suitably engraved) and matching glasses, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers was a wonderful surprise. I will always treasure the bell and glassware as a memento of seven very busy but happy years as Master. They will be a constant reminder of the many friendships developed around the Guild during that time (and friends are welcome to come and sample the contents of the decanter). John Wells, Graham Firman and John White were all most complimentary in their tributes, and I was honoured to be made a Vice-President of the Guild. Thank you all for your support and fellowship during my period as Master.

Patricia Newton

Keep your Silverside up !

No, not a treatise on the beef mountain! Nor yet a "sizeist" remark about a friend in her swimming costume seated by a pool prior to a peal one torpid Friday last summer at Thatcham: though Jennifer never misses an opportunity to compare our relative poundages to her own detriment.

I refer, of course, to the Silver wedding celebrations of Bill and Jennifer Butler on 13th April this year, though in my search for inspiration, Roget did furnish me with "kill the fatted calf". Fortunately he also supplied "celebration", "presentation", "red letter day", "pledge", "solemnization", "honour" and "Te Deum" all of which are acutely relevant.

The day presented ringing friends with an immediate dilemma, especially those who had enlisted to help on the Radley course, but in this busy period when would there not have been a clash!

On Friday 29th March a peal was rung at Thatcham to celebrate the forthcoming event, being unusual only in that Jennifer took part in it after a protracted absence from peal ringing due to arthritis. Also celebrated in and around this time have been Bill's retirement and entitlement to

use his bus pass last autumn and his 50 years of ringing alongside Jennifer's 30 years ringing and 50th birthday 3 days later.



*Bill and Jennifer Butler pictured outside
Thatcham church*

There was a celebration of thanksgiving in Thatcham church in which Bill and Jenny renewed their marriage vows and took communion with assembled friends. Also they were able to give voice to "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", having had to wait 25 years for it, as it was denied them at their wedding! The anthem "The Lord is my Shepherd" was not quite what the congregation was expecting, but undercurrents of the Vicar of Dibley couldn't have come as a real surprise to anyone knowing the Butlers well. The music was a veritable pot-pourri with something for everyone, concluded by a triumphal rounding-off in Widor's Toccata.

Celebrations continued at the Memorial Hall with much food, many presents and a few colour-coded games to get people talking to each other.

Some of the guests arrived very late, almost too late for supper, and had sent their wives as the advance guard - you guessed it! They had been ringing celebratory peals in Kent ...and it added hugely to the badges with red stripes on !

Bobbie May

The VAT man will take less

provided you submit the claim for exemption

One of the choristers at Theale is a VAT inspector working from the Reading office and he has approached me to voice some concerns. He has recently been conducting a routine VAT inspection of a contractor who he knows from advertising frequently undertakes work in churches in the Diocese. He is also aware that for some of the work, exemption from VAT is applicable and is not being claimed. The effect of this to PCCs is that the cost is some 17.5% more than is necessary. He is concerned that PCCs are unaware of the circumstances where they can claim exemption.

The detailed information is set out in VAT Notice 708 - Buildings & Construction - Chapter 8 page 23 onwards. The local VAT offices at Reading (0118 964 4200) or Oxford (01865 386 100) are able to offer advice.

I have alerted the Diocese to this situation and suggested they provide publicity to PCC treasurers. Meanwhile, ringers who are also PCC members should take note of this situation if

their PCC is about to enter into contracts for this type of work. Significant savings are possible.

Brian Gatward

Best kept tower competition 1996

the judging of this event took place on Saturday 27th April. The judges were Bernard Stone, Len Palfrey and Ralph Elmes. As usual, the judges found some excellent steeple keeping. The result of this competition is as follows :

1st	Chalfont St Giles
2nd	Bray
3rd	Bradwell
4th	Thatcham
5th	Wokingham, All Saints
6th	North Leigh

A report has been sent privately to each tower for information. The judges have asked me to draw attention to the tower of Bradwell, Milton Keynes. This tower is a first-time entry to the competition and the church has been transformed in recent years. The tower and belfry is no exception and it is hoped that the work will continue in the future. The local ringers are to be "highly commended" on their achievements so far.

There will be a further competition in two years time. The Towers & Belfries committee hope there will be more entries next time round and asks branch officers to promote the competition in their towers. Now is the time to start preparations for the next time!

Richard Stevens

Handbell open evening

There will be an open evening on Thursday 24th October 1996 at 94 Eastern Avenue, Reading between 7.30 pm and 10.00 pm. Whether you are a novice or experienced method ringer - or even if you just want to come and watch - please join us for our open evening. Individuals or groups welcome but please advise numbers for catering to Helen McGregor (0118 966 0384), Ian Blagrove (0118 926 6623), Jenny Carter (0118 986 9261) or John Martin (0118 941 4530).

Helen McGregor

The future of the branch striking competition ... ?

Following the six-bell striking competition at Sandhurst on 20th April, it was somewhat disappointing to see barely a dozen people having tea and awaiting the judge to produce the results. Although seven bands took part in the competition (a total of 42 ringers) one would expect a better turn-out on a lovely Spring day. The fact that seven bands were raised in a 15 tower branch (with some 160 members), was not in itself a commendable attendance but at least there was some competition.

On entering the hall for tea, the judge was heard to comment on the small number present and to him this must have reflected the unfortunate attitude towards this event which has been prevalent over the last few years (apart from putting our officers in an embarrassing position!). Having participated in practically every competition since this event was inaugurated in the 1960's I feel it is a shame that it seems to have lost part of its purpose. For those who have

not experienced it, it may be worth mentioning how it used to be - and how I think it still should be.

The competition was devised not only to find the best in branch and Guild but to give an opportunity to less experienced ringers to hear good striking, to be able to differentiate between good, mediocre and poor ringing.

At a typical meeting, up to 12 bands would meet at 2.00 p.m. and a draw made to decide the order of ringing and, almost without exception, **everyone** would stay to the end to hear the results. All would enjoy the tea together and the occasion would be an enjoyable get-together with the intermixing of bands. Only very occasionally would a band need to dart away for a wedding at their own tower but invariably they returned to the tea. Somehow we always managed to cope with the weddings on the day.

Unfortunately, one or two towers found weddings a good excuse to then go home and this became a regular practice until the bands were taking part in the competition by **appointment!** They could put in a band but they would only be able to ring between certain times. This has made the secretary's job not only more onerous but generally rather boring in my opinion. It is fairly obvious that if a good turn-out is anticipated then it would be possible to obtain the services of highly competent judges - **and these people give up the whole of their Saturday afternoon for you!** The secretary cannot be expected to be embarrassed on your behalf in asking a recognised expert ringer to listen to a few bands and a dozen ringers (including the catering volunteers) at tea. I personally would be affronted and would not return to a branch which treated me so. I have judged many competitions outside this Guild and have always felt welcome and my comments of some value and I truly felt sorry for our judge this year who gave me the impression that the wind had been taken out of his sails when he realised the majority of the bands taking part had not had the politeness to listen to his comments.

It had been heard from some quarters that with the current entries their band wouldn't stand a chance of winning ... but that is not necessarily true. They may not appreciate it but the more experienced bands do suffer from nerves, perhaps even more so as they have more to lose. They can make method mistakes as much as the next one so on the day the bands are much more evenly matched than they perhaps realise. Of course they have to try harder and put a lot into it to oust the regular winners. Do they practise with this in mind ? Practise makes perfect they say and this certainly applies to ringing.

There are some members who go to listen to the Guild competition which usually comprises 2 heats and a final. This is where there is real competition and the standard is usually high and enjoyable. Maybe that is the crux of the whole thing - the reason for the effort put into each touch, each row of the method - the enjoyment we get out of listening to good ringing whether we are actually helping to produce the sound or listening to others. Listening and appreciating good ringing is also useful to all ringers for how else can one make any comparison with your own or any other band's standard ?

Bands should not become despondent because they haven't won - it can be done and when it does it can be very rewarding. The whole band (not just the selected band) gets an uplift from entering and even more if obtaining a place. Imagine the confidence derived from winning the Guild final! It took the writer and his bands 16 years of uninterrupted effort to achieve this,

with some thirds and seconds places to help along the way and subsequently two further wins over some 25 years. Those senior members among us know that in the 60's the towers who were strong then have changed and this is the inevitable swing of the pendulum of time. Your time will come but you have to work on it.

By raising the standard of ringing throughout our branch by a resurgence of enthusiasm for our competitions we can improve the standard of striking in each tower. It has nothing to do with whatever methods are rung - it has to do with listening and learning and striking well. Taking part all together is essential if this event is to be saved from becoming a worthless uninteresting date in the calendar.

Stan Scott (from the May '96 Sonning Deanery newsletter)

Stan Scott was quicker off the mark than I was; the May newsletter was out whilst I was still thinking what to say about this year's six-bell contest. I only hope I am not too late to catch the June issue. My delay has been to my advantage; Stan has so well expressed my own views that it only remains for me to add my support. What I can do, though, is to take the subject on a stage further. Stan has described the event as it used to be - and not all that long ago. One does not have to be long in the tooth to remember those glorious afternoons. The draw for ringing, strolling around the churchyard listening to (and gloating over) the clips and clashes of one's rivals. Those were the days! And do you remember how the sun always used to shine? Stan thinks that is how it still should be. Well, yes, that would be nice; but "should"? I am not so sure.

Would that be the opinion of each individual who did not come to this year's event, or of each individual who did come but left as soon as his or her own team had rung? Let him answer on his own behalf; we do not want him supporting an institution he thinks would be good for other people - they can answer for themselves. The question is: should we revert to a striking competition in its traditional (or original) form with the draw for ringing at the start of proceedings and would you be prepared, personal circumstances permitting, to stay on for the results?

Let me play Devil's Advocate in the cause of provoking some discussion. I submit that the annual six-bell striking competition be discontinued. I accept that its main purpose, to encourage good striking, still exists, but its subsidiary purpose as a social function to provide enjoyment, excitement and comradeship is no longer, for one reason or another, so important. Our work patterns and social habits have changed and there are so many other things to do on a Saturday afternoon. Should we feel guilty if we put a higher priority, sometimes by necessity on digging the garden, painting the fence, visiting distant relatives or choosing a new carpet than on spending three or four idle hours listening to church bells? I think not. In any case, a function in which people participate only grudgingly, out of obligation, is surely not worth hanging on to; after all ringing is supposed to give us pleasure.

So what is to be done? I hope our letters, Stan's and mine, produce some more response; and to be honest, I hope the welkin rings with support for Stan. If there is no response, then I reckon the Devil's Advocate has won.

Bill Mills (from the June '96 Sonning Deanery newsletter)

Towers & Belfries Committee

Main objects of the Committee's work

The following is a precis of the work undertaken by the Towers & Belfries Committee, and is provided in short form here for information.

1. To provide advice to towers within the Oxford Diocese on their bell installations and associated matters.
2. To provide advice to the trustees of the Guild Bell Fund regarding requests for grants from the Bell Fund.
3. To respond to requests from the trustees of the Bell Fund, for the purpose of advising them that work has been correctly carried out, and thereby recommending that grant monies awarded should be paid out as appropriate.
4. To provide similar advice to the administrators of the Guild Bell Restoration Fund as is provided to the Trustees of the Bell Fund.
5. To provide training courses with the aim of providing towers and ringers with self-help information.
6. To run the best kept towers competition in the Diocese of Oxford.
7. To act as the focus for the exchange of information on redundant bells between the Central Council, the Guild and other Associations.

Richard Stevens

Ten bell course

On Saturday 1st June the Guild held a 10-bell training course at Thatcham and Reading. The day started at 10 o'clock at St Mary's in Thatcham with a short introduction by Mike Till, the course tutor. There were seven students and they came from all over the Guild, their towers being Spelsbury, Wallingford, Charlbury, Wheatley and Brightwell. We started off with plain courses of Grandsire and Stedman Caters as well as some dodging practice. Later, we progressed to touches.

After a long break for lunch and the negotiation with Reading traffic the ringing resumed at St Laurence's, Reading. Good progress was made by all and towards the end of the afternoon we rang some Cinques.

The course was extremely well organised and I think that we all came away very pleased with what we had learnt. I would like to thank, on behalf of all the students, all those who helped us and rang with us, especially as they travelled so far (Northamptonshire for example). Let's hope the course stays for many years to come!

Mark Walker

A tribute to the Queen

On the evening of Saturday 20th April, in honour of the 70th birthday of Elizabeth II, some of the lady bellringers of Chipping Norton branch marked the occasion by ringing the bells at Spelsbury church. There were eight ladies present, others would have liked to have been there, but due to other commitments this was not possible.

I have been a ringer many years, but this was the first occasion I've attended an all female ringing session, and hope it will not be the last, as it was a very enjoyable and relaxed evening. Of course, all the ladies would agree with me, ringing is equally enjoyable in mixed company, but it seemed very appropriate for a female band of ringers to pay tribute to the Queen.

The evening was concluded by our drinking a toast to the Queen at the home of Mr & Mrs R Datson, who had kindly invited us in and provided refreshments. Our thanks go to Mr & Mrs Datson for their hospitality and to the Revd. Thornton for allowing us the use of Spelsbury bells.

Julie MacVicker

Guild handbell day

The 5th, and some people reckon the best so far, Guild handbell day was held at Easter on 6th April.

The day followed the format of previous years. Ringers could ask to ring specific methods. Prior to the start of the day a detailed schedule allocating people to quarters and detailing rooms to ring in was sent out. This enabled as many as 6 quarter peal attempts at any one time. Ringers not in a quarter spent time practising. This year the practice had a designated practice leader to ensure there was absolutely no slacking and skulking near the coffee. This worked well and ensured everyone could really make sure they had the best chance to ring something they would not perhaps otherwise had the opportunity to do.

The main objective of the day is to ring quarter peals. In all 31 were attempted with 22 being successful. This really is a reflection on the patience and skill of the many experienced ringers who supported the day. Thanks go to them.

Many thanks also to Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis who once again threw open their home for the day and provided great hospitality, a well planned day and with a little help from their friends, a superb lunch.

Helen is already making plans for the 6th handbell day which will be held, as usual on Easter Saturday. If you attended this year's day there is no need to do anything, you will be sent details automatically. If you would like to be sent details then please let Helen McGregor know on 0118 966 0384.

Jenny Carter

Banbury

The Banbury branch have continued with their usual activities, in particular twice monthly practices which have been fairly well attended. Our newly elected ringing master is Keith Abbott from Hanwell. In addition we have been supporting joint Surprise Major practices with the Bicester and Chipping Norton branches.

Our May bank holiday weekend outing this year was to Kent and included ringing at both Canterbury and Rochester Cathedrals. It was well attended and 26 of us sat round one large table for our usual Sunday evening meal - a pleasant time was had by all.

The annual branch dinner was held at Bloxham school, in their very comfortable new dining room - thanks to Alan Griffin for his organisation.

Finally, three members rang their first peals at Bodicote on 24th February.

Ian Rodrick

Bicester

The present year has been quite eventful for the branch, with a variety of things going on. This is in addition to the fact that the branch secretary (i.e. me) has taken early retirement and I am so busy, I don't know how I managed to get to work for the past 30 years or so !

At the branch AGM in February, the officers were re-elected with the addition of an assistant ringing master. Our congratulations go to Ken Ockwell who now occupies this post, having returned to ringing after a break of nearly 20 years.

Simon Cole, the branch ringing master, organised a most successful coach outing to the Evesham area on 30th March when all enjoyed a successful day. The highlight was the ringing on the 12 bells at Evesham - a magnificent ring.

To mark his 42nd birthday, Ken Ockwell arranged a peal for himself at Wootton Underwood and persuaded five others that Grandsire Doubles is ideal for a birthday present. Needless to say, he took us all for a drink afterwards! Nevertheless, our congratulations to Ken on his first peal inside.

On 18th May, the branch entertained the Guild at Islip on the occasion of the AGM. This is reported elsewhere but our thanks go to all concerned at Islip for providing an excellent tea and venue for this Guild meeting.

Branch practices continue each month and have provided useful experience for those who have taken part. A towers maintenance morning was also held at Kirtlington with useful tuition being given and received by those involved.

On a sadder note, the branch members were sorry to learn of the death of Harold Clifton on Saturday, 4th May 1996. Buster, as he was invariably known, had not been in good health in recent months, having suffered poor circulation and rheumatoid arthritis for some time. It was finally lung cancer which took him from us. Buster learnt to ring at Bicester at the end of the war, and only ever rang one peal - the treble to Grandsire Triples at Bicester on 13th March 1948. Nevertheless, he was, for 50 years, a loyal ringer at Bicester parish church and would always turn out for local ringing. It was only last autumn that he was no longer able to climb the stairs. Our sympathy is extended to his family at this time.

Richard Stevens

Central Bucks

Our branch practice in June also acted as the branch selection procedure for the six-bell striking competition team. This was a most enjoyable and sunny event held at Padbury. A total of seven teams took part and the competition was won by Aylesbury, who are looking forward to seeing the rest of the Guild in October, closely followed by Haddenham in second place and Quainton in third place. A special mention must go to the highly elated team from East Claydon who fielded a team for the first time and came fifth.

So far this year, there have been 10 new members ratified by the branch. Changes in the branch officers mean that the secretary/treasurer is now Mark Sellin and the ringing master is Phil Dunn who can be contacted on 01525 384107.

Our branch diary sees practices at Quainton on 13th July and Hillesden on 10th August. Our practices in September and October are used for the branch outing and the Orchard Cup, a friendly striking competition between the Central Bucks and Chiltern branches.

I am also pleased to report that the branch now has a working version of its administration computer software, after Terry Wagstaff has finished and loaded version 3.0.

Mark Sellin

Chiltern

There has been some bowing and scraping down at Little Missenden recently - but not for long. Barry Cowper has emerged triumphant, and unopposed, as the new Guild Secretary and Ruth Groves joins Colin Walter as one of the two branch ringing masters. Ruth takes over from Val Willard who we all thank for the great work she has done for the branch. It is also good to see John White, our chairman, serving as Guild Deputy Master.

It is good to have Bledlow's bells back in action. Not only was there work to be done on the tower but the ringing floor was the only available space for dumping stuff while other parts of the church received the attentions of sundry craftspersons. Thus, the bells were silent for a little longer than expected.

Monthly meetings and eight-bell practices follow a well-established pattern. We had a good gathering at Mentmore recently and enjoyed both the ringing and delicious cake laid on by Russell Hudleston and his band. We also experienced, about five minutes before the end, the unnerving sensation of a bell and its clapper parting company. This is sad for Mentmore, for so much effort has been put into their bells recently. Hopefully, it will not be long before the problem which caused it has been solved.

Our annual service and AGM was held at Great Missenden with ringing also at Little Missenden. It was a marvellous day and about 50 ringers enjoyed Maxine Belfield's superb tea.

Finally, our congratulations to Trefor Lloyd Jones of Little Missenden for learning to ring again after a severe stroke - this time one-handed!

Mike Davis

Chipping Norton

Unfortunately the branch was not able to do any sponsored ringing for the Guild Bell Fund this year, for various reasons. However, the branch has been fairly busy, the peal attempt that was lost at Burford in December was successful in March.

At the AGM at Charlbury on 4th May, all officers were re-elected with the exception of the branch representative; Nigel Harrison was elected in place of Sally Austin (who was elected a Steward at the Guild AGM). It was also decided to start a branch bell repair fund and various fund raising ideas were discussed. The Guild Millennium project was also discussed and the chairman stated that he would write to Bobbie May with a view to borrowing the Guild publicity material to circulate round the branch, in the hope of recruiting new ringers in time for the Millennium. It was also decided to try and help Leafield but help must come from that parish as well.

There were 10 new members elected to the Guild and one re-election. The branch membership has, over the last few years, risen very slightly, with most towers being rung on Sundays.

Over the past few months, there have been combined Surprise Major practices with Banbury and Bicester branches; these have been interesting and varied. There has been an evening at Burford to practise Cambridge Minor and another is planned at Taynton on 12th June.

Best wishes go to Jean Datson of Spelsbury, who is recovering well after a fall the weekend after Easter, when she cracked a bone in her pelvis.

Claire Tarrant

East Berks & South Bucks

The last few months have been quite eventful for the EBSB. On 2nd March we had a very entertaining branch dinner held at Wycombe Heights Golf Club with 'AJB' (A.J. Barnfield) as our guest speaker - having said that, he had us joining in and contributing to the general furore and an enjoyable time was held by all. Thank you Peter for the organisation.

We held our AGM at Hughenden on 27th April and there was a change of some of the officers. Peter Bruce stood down as ringing master, as did Colin Fowles as deputy ringing master and Marcia Dieppe as secretary. The meeting duly elected Clive Buswell of Beaconsfield as ringing master and David Moore of Fulmer as deputy ringing master with me as secretary. Thank you very much to all the retiring officers - you all did sterling work for which we all are most grateful.

Saturday 8th June saw our annual 6-bell striking competition. Only four teams entered, which was a little disappointing after the high number of entrants last year, but the judges, John Martin and Bobbie May, joined us at Winkfield and battle commenced! After a delicious tea provided by the Winkfield ringers the judges announced the results. As in all good contests, the results in reverse order: Winkfield, Bray, Beaconsfield and the winners, High Wycombe. Our chairman, Graham Firman, duly presented the captain of the High Wycombe ringers with the silver plate.

The Lorna Newton knock-out competition is now under way, albeit belatedly. Branch ringing for the remainder of the year follows our normal pattern of Surprise practices on the second

Saturday and branch practices on the fourth Saturday but please see your copy of Odd Bob for any variations.

Jane Payne

North Bucks

There were a number of changes of officers at the AGM held at Emberton in March - branch secretary is now Helen Stanworth, treasurer David Bardwell, ringing master Richard Stanworth and assistant ringing master Denby Murduck. The other change is that Alan Marchbank along with Doug Hird are now our committee representatives

Monthly practices have been well attended, particularly Hanslope in March. Was it because it was an eight-bell practice or because the special method was Double Norwich? Attendance at the other practices has also been up, even Shalstone at the Western end of the branch. The special methods have been well rung at the practices and continue to provide a focus for the more experienced ringers.

Our branch 6-bell striking competition was held at the beginning of June at Milton Keynes (Middleton) with 5 teams taking part. The combined band from Shenley & Loughton were placed first by judges David Adams and Richard Horne from the Luton district of the Bedfordshire Association. It was a close contest with only a few faults separating the top three teams. As we were restricted for time the test piece was reduced from 240 changes to 120. This proved fortuitous as one of the ropes broke less than 240 changes after the last band had finished!

The following week an afternoon mini-ringing school was run for three students wishing to progress in Plain Bob Minor. These are held whenever there are enough requests for concentrated training in basic methods and have proved very helpful to those taking part.

We managed to enter a team in the Guild eight-bell striking competition. This was not our strongest team as several people were away over the bank holiday and we did not do as well as we have in previous years.

Helen Satnworth

Old North Berks

On 16th March our combined branch AGM and six-bell striking competition was held at Brightwell church. Three officers retired at the meeting, namely Bernard Stone our chairman for the past seven years, Eluned Hallas our treasurer for the past five years and Sylvia Harrison who has edited our branch newsletter for the past three years. Thank you all for your loyal and devoted service to the branch. We especially wish Bernard every success in his new post as chairman of the Guild Bell Fund.

To replace these officers we elected Jon Chamberlain as the new chairman, Nick Clarke as the new treasurer (also remaining as deputy ringing master) and Peter Butler from Blewbury took over as newsletter editor. Our best wishes go to all three in their new jobs.

Seven teams took part in the branch six-bell competition, the winners being Abingdon who will go through to the Guild final in October. Tony Crabtree from the Vale of the White Horse branch judged the competition for us. As well as electing Mr Ralph White of Appleton as a life member of the Guild we elected seven new members to the Guild.

Shortly before Easter we learned with sadness of the death of Mrs Gladys Pollard at Radley. Although not a ringer herself her home at 49 Foxborough Road, Radley has been the venue for branch committee meetings for the past 10 years thanks to her generosity. Highly respected in Radley she will be missed and our deepest sympathy goes to her daughter Daphne.

The Radley course got off to a good start on Saturday 13th April with a full complement of tutors and students. An active day ensured that everybody worked up a good appetite to enjoy the superb evening meal prepared by Daphne Pollard and her helpers. Thank you to all who helped to make the day such a success.

The ringing day on 6th May was blessed with a fine day and started in fine form with over 100 ringers at Cumnor in the morning. The total raised for the Bell Fund was in excess of £800, a truly excellent result. Thank you to all the incumbents, tower captains and stewards who helped to produce this success. Eight teams competed in the eight-bell competition at Harwell in the afternoon with the ONB branch team being placed in fourth place - a very creditable result. There was great pressure on Douglas Jordan and his team of lady helpers to produce tea and sandwiches for over 90 ringers. Many thanks for coping so heroically.

Two Surprise Major practices have already been held at Drayton and Sutton Courtenay under the direction of Nick Clarke and have proved to be very popular. More will be held over the summer months.

Peter Starling

Oxford City

Kidlington appears to be gaining in skill and members and Friday night practices are well attended with good handling and good striking being the order of the day. This year Peter Franklin will achieve 50 years Guild membership, another member will be celebrating his 50th birthday and a ringer's grandfather will be 100 in November. Quarter peals will be attempted for all these milestone occasions.

Wolvercote and St Giles' also rang quarters: Wolvercote rang a date touch for the last leap year of the century and the Queen's 70th birthday and St Giles' monthly attempts have resulted in several 'firsts' for ringers on the treble, an inside bell and as conductor.

This year Marston has been regularly ringing two quarter peals a month to satisfy the demand and are steadily increasing the variety of methods. The Sunday service band is now sufficiently confident to attempt at least a dozen different Doubles methods. A re-enactment of the 350th anniversary of a sermon preached during the siege of Oxford by Cromwell's parliamentary army was preceded by a quarter.

Visitors to recent practices at Ifley may be forgiven for wondering what was going on. Bell ropes have been continually raised up and lowered down through the ceiling and ringers have been seen wandering around with rulers and calipers.

The simple explanation is that the sallies of some newly purchased ropes have been sticking (resulting in some rather challenging handling problems) in the ceiling holes, despite the assurance that they were made to the standard thickness of 1.88 inches and the holes being 2 inches. After several 'helpful' suggestions such as "widen the hole in the ceiling", "what if I

brought a razor along" and "see if a poodle barber can trim them for us", it was decided to return them to the manufacturers. The old spliced ropes are back on but it is hoped that normal bell rope passage will resume as soon as possible.

Katie Lane

At the branch six-bell striking competition at Horspath on 8th June, the rather disappointing turn-out of only two teams did not prevent an exciting evening. Well into Marston's test piece, the rope on the fifth broke and there was much activity before the competition could resume. Marston then started from scratch, followed by friendly rivals Kidlington. Most of those listening, including the teams themselves, were unsure as to who would win. However, judge Richard Stevens from Bicester was able to see clear water between the teams and placed Kidlington first and Marston second. Our thanks to Richard for judging and our apologies for keeping him hanging around in the churchyard.

Len Porter

South Oxon

Since the last Odd Bob the winners of our two striking competitions have been decided. The Holloway Shield is competed for on a league basis over the winter months and involves playing every other competing team home and away. It was won by Aston Rowant (17 points) with Drayton St Leonard second (14 pts) and Chinnor third (12 pts). Towersey were fourth on 5 points and Great Milton, in their first year of competition, gave everyone a close run and were unlucky to end up fifth. The final points don't really reflect the closeness of many of the matches! For this competition, teams can ring a minimum of four bells but the other competition is a straightforward six-bell competition. This year five enterprising bands took part, at Berrick Salome on 23rd March. According to the judges, everyone rang well and the marks were close. The winners were Chinnor, followed by Benson, Drayton St Leonard, Warborough and Great Milton.

A peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung at Great Haseley on 20th April - two branch members took part (John Tchighianoff and Meg Way, branch chairman and vice chairman respectively) along with Andrew, Julie and James Haseldine from Long Crendon and Stephen Walker who used to ring at Haseley. The occasion was the Golden wedding of Doreen and John Aspley, tower captain at Great Haseley. In addition to this, two congratulatory quarter peals were rung and John himself was allowed to ring in these!

Other quarter peals of note included Stedman Triples at Warborough on 12th March and on Mothering Sunday five branch members rang in a quarter of Bob Caters over the border at Long Crendon. A "long touch" of Grandsire Doubles was rung at Tetsworth on 30th April, in memory of George Slater who used to ring at Little Milton and to welcome the new vicar of Tetsworth. The ringers were planning to ring a quarter peal but I believe the bells had a different idea! Finally, a small group of ringers who are available during the daytime have started ringing quarters around the branch.

The branch AGM was held at Ewelme in April - there was only one change of officer when Terry Gibson from Thame was elected ringing master to replace Louise James who did not wish to stand again. We are grateful for her enthusiasm and loyalty to the branch for the past few years.

Hilarie Rogers

Reading

Reading continues to be quite an active branch. The branch practices have been very well attended so far this year. Burghfield bells in March proved to be an interesting challenge, particularly for our less experienced ringers. I was not able to be at Goring for the April practice but evidently over 30 ringers were there that evening and managed to ring a good range of methods. Stratfield Mortimer St Mary was our venue for the May meeting; almost equally well attended but with more emphasis on the beginners stages. At both Burghfield and Mortimer it would have been nice to see more local support for the practices.

Three teams from the Reading branch area took part in this year's Guild eight-bell striking competition at Harwell on 6th May. The two tower teams : Reading, SS Mary & Laurence and Tilehurst came first and third respectively and the team made up of other branch members came sixth out of eight. Well done to all of them, particularly Ralph's team (sixth) who are not used to ringing together as a band.

There was good branch support for the leap year sponsored ringing week. Reading came third behind Chiltern and Vale of the White Horse branches by raising £470.70, i.e. £2.40 per capita.

During the year it is our intention to arrange training mornings for ringers of similar ability, where they will have the opportunity to get together for theoretical explanation and concentrated practical experience of their next level of ringing. The first of these will be at Pangbourne on 15th June for call changes and plain hunting.

We continue to hold Surprise Major practices at Caversham on the third Thursday of the month, 8.00-9.30 pm and higher number practices at Reading, St Laurence on the last Friday of the month, 8.00-9.30 pm.

Rosemary Morgan

Sonning Deanery

Fundraising continues for Binfield rehangng. The promised fund is now past £13000 of the £16700 required and the results of a lottery application are awaited. A flower festival and tower open day are planned, and some profits from the Binfield Open Garden scheme will be donated to the bell fund. Rehangng will soon take place at Barkham. Five new ringers are being trained there. The new floor has been installed so that ringing is no longer from the entrance to the church, and windows have been made in the ringing room. The first quarter peal at Wargrave since the bells were rehung was rung for the ecumenical service on 19th May. It was the first quarter on eight for Graham Munday (age 11) and the first inside to Grandsire for Mark Munday (age 13). In February, a branch quiz was held at Woodley. This was well attended, and raised much-needed funds for rehangng projects. The six-bell striking contest at Sandhurst was won by Easthampstead.

Saturday evening branch practices continue on the third Saturday of each month. At Twyford there is an elementary practice on the first Friday and a more advanced practice on the third Friday each month. Experienced ringers are required to assist Warfield (10 bells) at its practices every Wednesday. Contact Anne Carpenter (01344-775036) for exact times of practice.

Please note the Sonning Deanery eight-bell striking competition on 21st September will be at Wokingham, All Saints.

Pam Elliston.

Witney & Woodstock

At the AGM held at Bampton in February Tim Martin was elected chairman, Lorna Smale secretary and Jenny Haviland newsletter editor. The branch has decided to try holding eight-bell practices in addition to the normal monthly practices. With Grandsire Triples chosen as the method, the first was held at Southleigh in March, followed by a second at Woodstock in April and the third at Bampton in June. They are proving very popular and look set to continue.

Our 1996 striking competition was held at Alvescot on 8th June. The teams enjoyed a lovely warm summer's evening while waiting in beautiful countryside to ring. The results were :

Method ringing		Call changes	
1st	Stonesfield	1st	Stonesfield
2nd	Bampton	2nd	Bampton
3rd	Witney	3rd	South Leigh
4th	North Leigh	4th	Ducklington
5th	Ducklington		

Well done to all those taking part.

Lorna Smale

Tower Snippets

Congratulations to **Richard Stanworth** who rang his first 8 bell quarter at Wicken on 25th February at the age of 12.

Well done also to **Pauline Needham** who rang her first quarter on 8 at Sonning on 18th February.

Congratulations to **Eleanor & Michael Shakespeare** and **Hilary Wallbank** who rang their first quarters at Islip on 29th February and Middleton Stoney on 1st March respectively.

Helen Palmer rang her first quarter peal at Sonning on 7th April.

The new tower secretary at **Wargrave** is Mrs Sue Ferguson, 18 Ridge Way, Wargrave, Reading, Berks, RG10 8AS. Tel 0118 940 3032.

Guild directory and information

The OBJECTS of the Guild as set out in the Rules are as follows :

1. The encouragement of the attendance of its members both at service ringing and at public worship.
2. The recruitment and training of new ringers, so that there be regular service ringing in all the towers within the Diocese where bells are ringable.
3. The promotion of interest in the care of all the bells within the Diocese.
4. The promotion of the art of change ringing.
5. The recognition of the true position of ringers as church workers.

In order to help carry out these objects the Guild provides a variety of services as follows :

Education

In addition to the Easthampstead ringing course held in September, ringing courses will be arranged both at branch and tower level. These can be one day courses or a series of evenings. Contact Miss Marie R Cross, *see education sub-committee listing*.

Library

The Guild maintains a comprehensive Library from which books may be borrowed. For details contact Mr Philip G Brown, *see Librarian in Guild officers listing*.

Books for sale

At General Committee meetings and General Guild meetings, also at some branch meetings you will find a travelling bookstall. Books cover a wide field from elementary change ringing to the history of change ringing; tower maintenance and the history of bells.

Exhibition display material

This, together with the necessary stands, is available for tower opendays, public libraries, etc. A full list of the material can be found in *Odd Bob*, July 1991, page 36. Contact Mrs Bobbie May, *see Public Relations Officer in Guild officers listing*.

Towers and belfries

The towers and belfries committee exists to help your tower with any problems which you might have with your bells, their fittings, sound control or the tower itself. We can - with the help of the education committee - arrange a maintenance course for your area, or on a smaller scale, show you what you should be doing to maintain your own tower. Contact Mr Richard C Stevens, *see Towers and Belfries sub-committee listing*.

The Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund

This makes grants towards bell restoration. Any donations or assistance in fund raising will help this objective. Contact Mr Brian J Gatward, *see General Treasurer in Guild officers listing*.

Guild Officers for 1996 - 1997

Master	Mr E John Wells	'Victoria Lodge', 91 Waverley Road, Reading, Berks, RG30 2QB	0118 957 2552
Deputy Master	Mr John S White	70 Selwyn Court, Long Meadow, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 7EQ	01296 85822
General Secretary	Mr Barry W M Cowper	'Avondale', 45 Longfield Drive, Amersham, Berks, HP6 5HE	01494 725566
General Treasurer	Mr Brian J Gatward	'Grangewood', Mill Lane, Calcot, Reading, Berks, RG31 7RS	0118 941 3097
Assistant Treasurer	Mr Terry Wagstaff	6 Firs Close, Whitchurch, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 4LH	01296 641755

Librarian	Mr Philip G Brown	'Lucketts', Clay Bank, Hook Norton, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 5PA	01608 737207
Report Editor	Mr John F Payne	53 Walker Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 2QU	01628 24490
Newsletter Editor	Mr John R Martin	90 Fairway Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG30 4QB	0118 941 4530
Peal Secretary	Mr Graham G Firman	7 Laburnham Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 4DB	01628 36484
Public Relations Officer	Mrs Bobbie May	4 Halfacre Close, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berks, RG7 1DZ	0118 988 4172
Membership Secretary	Mr Stephen Murrell	The Old Chapel, Salford, Chipping Norton, Oxon	01608 645303
Guild Stewards	Mrs Sally A Austin (Banbury, Chipping Norton & Witney & Woodstock)	16 Austins Way, Hook Norton, Oxon, OX15 5LQ	
	Mr Ken R Davenport (Sonning, Reading & Newbury)	47 Brookside Wokingham Berks, RG41 2ST	0118 978 6554
	Mr Simon Cole (Bicester, Oxford City & South Oxon)	83 Bristol Road, Bicester Oxon, OX6 7TH	01869 247525
	Mr David M Joyce (North Bucks, Central Bucks & Chiltern)	4 Woad Lane, Great Linford Village, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK14 5HE	01908 667025
	Mr Colin Fowles (EBSB, V of the W H & Old North Berks)	127 Meadfield Road, Langley, Slough, Berks, SL3 8HY	01753 671507

6 General Committee members

Mr Graham J Clifton	Mr A (Tony) Crabtree	Mrs Wenda Fowles
Mr W (Willy) Haynes	Mr Mike K Till	Mr Brian Newman

Central Council Representatives

Mr W (Bill) Butler	8 The Waverleys, Thatcham, Newbury, Berks, RG18 3EZ (See Newsletter Editor)	01635 862309
Mr John R Martin	2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2DA	0118 978 5520
Mr John A Harrison	20 St Amand Drive, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 5RQ	01235 526033
Dr Tim G Pett	The White House, 11 Plowden Park, Aston Rowant, Watlington, Oxon, OX9 5SX (See Guild Stewards)	01844 352926
Mrs Patricia M Newton		
Mr Ken R Davenport		

Financial information

Subscriptions	Resident members	£5.00
	Non-resident life members	£5.00
Peal fees	30p per person	
Annual report	£2.50 (+57p postage and packing)	
Badges	£1.50	

Branch Secretaries

Banbury	Dr Ian Rodrick	'Silverdale', Weeping Cross, Bodicote, Oxon, OX15 4ED	01295 253817
Bicester	Mr Richard C Stevens	'Dellow', Blackthorn Rd, Launton, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 0DA	01869 243920
Central Bucks	Mr Mark Sellin	4 Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1DN	01296 392175
Chiltern	Mr Mike C J Davis	1 Rookwood Way, Great Missenden, Bucks, HP16 0DF	01494 891312
Chipping Norton	Mrs Claire E Tarrant	6 Marlborough Place, Charlbury, Oxon, OX7 3SH	01608 811290
East Berks & South Bucks	Mrs Jane Payne	<i>(See Report Editor)</i>	
Newbury	Mrs Fiona Rock-Evans	'Brae House', Salisbury Rd, Hungerford, Berks, RG17 0LH	01488 682747
North Bucks	Mrs Helen Stanworth	11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham, Bucks, MK18 7BW	01280 814172
Old North Berks	Mr Peter P Starling	7 Chambray Close, Appleford, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4NT	01235 847469
Oxford City	Mrs Katie Lane	'Catchmole Cottage', 12 High St, Wheatley, Oxon, OX33 1XX	01865 874026
Reading	Mrs Rosemary Morgan	'Rosene', Dark Lane, Bradfield, Berks, RG7 6DE	0118 974 4624
Sonning Deanery	Mrs Pam Elliston	142 Butts Hill Rd, Woodley, Reading, Berks, RG5 4NS	0118 969 5967
South Oxon	Mrs Hilarie Rogers	4 High St, Drayton St Leonard, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 7BA	01865 890163
Vale of the White Horse	Mrs Jackie O'Hagan	'Brubell', 13 Chapel Rd, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 8LE	01367 718994
Witney & Woodstock	Mrs Lorna Smale	43 Knott Oaks, Combe, Oxon, OX8 8PJ	01993 891721

Education sub-committee

Chairman	Mrs Patricia M Newton	<i>(See Central Council reps)</i>	
Secretary	Mr Mike K Till	17 Quarrington Close, Thatcham, Berks, RG19 4YE	01635 866186
Members	Mr Alan J Griffin	'Rosebank', Bloxham, Banbury, Oxon	01295 720359
	Miss Marie R Cross	6 Radley Rd, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3PQ	01235 520868
	Mr E John Wells	<i>(See Guild Master)</i>	
	Mrs Bobbie May	<i>(See Public Relations Officer)</i>	
	Mr Simon Cole	<i>(See Guild Stewards)</i>	
	Mr John A Harrison	<i>(See Central Council reps).</i>	

Guild educational leaflets

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Rope splicing | 2. Bibliography | 3. Plain Hunt to Bob Doubles |
| 4. Maintenance | 5. Running a 1 day course | 6. Sound control |
| 7. Stedman | 8. Grandsire | 9. Bob calling for beginners |
| 10. Handbell ringing | 11. 8 Doubles methods | |
| 12. Surprise Minor : Cambridge to London, Part 1 (Cambridge) | | |
| 12. Surprise Minor : Cambridge to London, Part 2 (Building on Cambridge) | | |
| 12. Surprise Minor : Cambridge to London, Part 3 (London) Parts 2 & 3 form a single leaflet | | |

50p per copy inc. p&p. Set of 13 titles £6.00. Discounts for bulk orders. Cheques to *Oxford Diocesan Guild* please. From : Mrs Anne Carpenter 41 Napier Rd, Crowthorne, Berks, RG1 1 7EJ.

Education committee - course titles

Plain Hunt	10 bell methods
Plain Bob Doubles	Towards better conducting
Grandsire Doubles	Towards better striking
Stedman Doubles	Raising and lowering in peal
Doubles and Minor	Tower leadership (seminar)
Plain Bob Minor	Computers & simulators in ringing
Cambridge Minor	Rope splicing
Triples methods	Tower maintenance (by T&B committee)
Stedman Triples	Handbell ringing (methods)
Plain Major methods	Listening
Surprise Major methods	Bell handling on video

Towers and belfries sub-committee

Chairman	Mr Richard C Stevens	'Dellow', Blackthorn Rd, Launton, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 0DA	01869 243920
Secretary	Mr Peter G Davies	'Narrogin', Longworth Rd, Charney Bassett, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 0ET	01235 868646
Members	Mr Nick Balshaw	3 The Crescent, East Hagbourne, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 9JY	01235 815452
	Mr John Blackall	2 Alpin Rd, Bedgrove, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 9BT	01296 27930
	Mr Philip Brown	<i>(See Guild Librarian)</i>	
	Mr Graham J Clifton	'Stedman Cottage', Middle Aston, Oxford, OX5 3PZ	01869 47273
	Mr John C Davidge	'Rowallan', Back Lane, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks, HP8 4PD	01494 873325
	Mr W (Willy) Haynes	'Brinsmore House', Oddington, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2QZ	01865 331303
	Mr Len Palfrey	62 Horseshoe Rd, Pangbourne, Reading, Berks, RG8 7JL	0118 984 2698
	Mr Bernard J Stone	3 Bell Close, Grove, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7NH	01235 766673
	Mr Ralph A Elmes	'Phoenix Cottage', Nuffield, Oxon, RG9 5TE	01491 641874
	Mr Alan Marchbank	6 Broadway Avenue, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK14 5QF	01908 611434
*	Mr E John Wells	<i>(See Guild Master)</i>	
*	Mr Barry W M Cowper	<i>(See General Secretary)</i>	
*	Mr Brian J Gatward	<i>(See General Treasurer)</i>	

* denotes ex-officio member

Guild information on the internet <http://www.dra.hmg.gb/odg/odg.html>

Diary of Events for 1996

*	Subject to confirmation	SC	Striking Competition
BP	Branch Practice	HY	Half Yearly Meeting
SP	Surprise Practice	QM	Quarterly Meeting
EP	Elementary Practice	AP	Advanced Practice
SM	Surprise Major	AG	Annual General Meeting

JULY

Sat	13	Guild	Festival - Adderbury	All day
Sat	13	Guild	SC 10 bell competition - Banbury	
Sat	13	Central Bucks	BP Quainton	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	13	Wtney & Wstck	BP Woodstock	7.30 - 9.00

Fri	19	North Bucks	BP	Beachampton	7.30
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Ellesborough	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	20	Sonning Deanery	BP	Wokingham, St Paul	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	27	North Bucks	SC	Versus Towcester branch at Buckingham	
Sat	27	EBSB		Bar-B-Q & Social - Beaconsfield	
Sat	27	South Oxon	BP	Dorchester	7.00 - 9.00

AUGUST

Sat	3	Chipping Norton	BP	Shipton under Wychwood *	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	3	North Bucks		Joint meeting with Beds Assn	
Wed	7	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stoney	7.30
Sat	10	Central Bucks	BP	Hillesden *	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	10	EBSB	AP	Amersham	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	10	Reading	BP	South Stoke	7.00
Sat	10	Wtney & Wstck	BP	Ducklington	7.30 - 9.00
Wed	14	Old North Berks	BP	Didcot & North Moreton (Rev Canterbury)	7.30 - 9.00
Fri	16	North Bucks	BP	Chicheley	7.30
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Slapton	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	17	Sonning Deanery	BP	Shottesbrooke	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	24	EBSB	BP	Hughenden	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	24	South Oxon	BP	Aston Rowant	7.00 - 9.00
Wed	28	V of the W H	BP	Shellingford	7.30 - 9.00

SEPTEMBER

Thu	5	Bicester	BP	Charlton-on-Otmoor	7.30
Sat	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Leafield *	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	7	EBSB	SP	Chesham	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	7	North Bucks	QM	Newton Longville	3.30
Sat	7	Reading	SC	Shinfield	5.00 - 7.00
Fri	13	Guild		Start of Easthampstead course	
Sat	14	Central Bucks		Branch Outing *	
Sat	14	Wtney & Wstck	HY	Witney	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Stoke Mandeville	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	21	North Bucks	SC	Call change contest at Maids Moreton	3.30
Sat	21	Old North Berks	HY	West Hanney	5.30 - 9.00
Sat	21	Sonning Deanery	SC	8 bell contest at Wargrave	
Sat	28	Guild		Tower leadership seminar - Kidlington	
Sat	28	EBSB	BP	Wooburn	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	28	South Oxon	BP	Great Haseley	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	28	V of the W H	HY	Coleshill	

OCTOBER

Fri	4	Guild		Branch secretaries meeting - Radley	
Fri	4	Bicester	BP	Ludgershall	7.30
Sat	5	Guild	SC	6 bell competition - Reading branch	
Sat	5	Chipping Norton	BP	Chipping Norton	7.30 - 9.00
Wed	9	Bicester		Branch holiday in Yorkshire begins	
Thu	10	Old North Berks	BP	Sunningwell (St Clements)	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	12	EBSB	AP	Slough	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	12	Reading		Outing to Ringwood & Bournemouth	
Sat	12	Wtney & Wstck		Branch outing - Tewkesbury	
Fri	18	North Bucks	BP	Loughton	7.30
Sat	19	Bicester		Half-day outing	
Sat	19	Central Bucks		Orchard Cup - <i>see Chiltern branch</i>	
Sat	19	Chiltern	HY	Great Kimble - Meeting & Orchard cup	2.30
Sat	19	EBSB		Hillingdon joint meeting	
Sat	19	Sonning Deanery	BP	Finchampstead	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	19	V of the W H		Autumn car outing	p.m only

Sat	26	Bicester		Branch ½ day outing
Sat	26	EBSB	HY	Meeting & Lorna Newton final - Hambledon
Sat	26	South Oxon		Branch outing

NOVEMBER

Sat	2	Chipping Norton	BP	Enstone	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	2	Sonning Deanery		Start of branch quarter peal week	
Mon	4	Bicester	BP	Bicester	7.30
Sat	9	Central Bucks	BP	Aston Abbots	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	9	EBSB	SP	Chalfont St Giles	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	9	Reading	BP	Caversham	7.00
Sat	9	Wtney & Wstck	BP	Eynsham	7.30 - 9.00
Thu	14	Old North Berks	BP	Wallingford (Single Oxford)	7.30 - 9.00
Fri	15	North Bucks	BP	Stony Stratford	7.30
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Marsworth	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	16	Sonning Deanery		Committee meeting - Warfield	
Sat	23	Guild		Autumn general committee meeting - Witney & Woodstock branch	
Sat	23	EBSB	BP	Wraybury	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	23	South Oxon	HY	Towersey	7.00 - 9.00
Wed	27	V of the W H	BP	Ashbury	7.30 - 9.00

DECEMBER

Tue	3	Bicester	BP	Islip	7.30
Fri	6	V of the W H		Branch dinner	7.30
Sat	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Burford	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	7	North Bucks	QM	Fenny Stratford	3.30
Sat	14	Central Bucks	BP	Cuddington	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	14	EBSB	BP	High Wycombe (also Christmas social)	
Sat	14	Old North Berks		Branch social	Evening
Sat	14	Reading	BP	Reading, St Laurence	7.00
Sat	14	South Oxon	BP	Great Milton	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	14	Wtney & Wstck	BP	Stanton Harcourt	7.30 - 9.00
Fri	20	North Bucks	BP	Simpson *	7.30
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Bledlow	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	21	Sonning Deanery	BP	Waltham St Lawrence	7.00 - 9.00

1997 Guild events

8th March	Spring general committee meeting	Vale of the White Horse
5th May	8 bell striking contest & ringing day	South Oxon
17th May	Guild annual general meeting	Sonning Deanery

Tower Leadership seminar

Saturday 28th September 1996 at Kidlington

Cost : £3.00

Seminar leader : Bill Butler

This is the 6th and final seminar in this series and is open to all tower captains, deputy tower captains, potential tower captains and anyone else who is interested in tower leadership and band management.

If you have not attended one of these seminars, please come and share your experiences and problems, and benefit from the experience of other ringers

For further details please contact :

Patricia Newton (contact details in the Guild directory)