

Issue 49

ODD BOB

Newsletter of the



March 1997

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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 jrm@imladris.win-uk.net

The next issue of Odd Bob is scheduled to be distributed at the Guild festival in July. All contributions to me by 6th June 1997 please.

Odd Bob needs YOUR contribution now!

Master's Mutterings

The Millennium Project is now beginning to take shape in terms of what we are going to do about the problems presented. The first seminars on Recruitment, Teaching and Publicity are being organised and many others will follow in the next year or so. I hope as many members as possible will take advantage of these courses so that we attract the recruits we need and teach them well.

The official launch of the Project will be on Easter Day when we are asking clergy to make appropriate announcements in church. I hope as many bands as possible will be able to mount some sort of publicity event to coincide with this announcement, such as displays, opening the tower, special ringing, etc. Bishop Richard has expressed his support for the project and will be alerting clergy to the need to recruit new ringers in his next "Ad Clerum". This is only the beginning of the programme and we will need to keep the momentum going for the next three years. Publicity materials are being produced and should be available before Easter.

The winter months are marked by a decrease in Guild activities, but behind the scenes things are still going on. The reconsideration of the Guild rules is continuing to make progress, a Guild service book is being discussed and a large number of restoration projects are under way. All of these are of value to the Guild and I thank all those involved in the work. However, the main purpose of the Guild is to promote, maintain and improve service ringing throughout the Diocese and to do this we must rely on the dedication of all the members. It is always a pleasure to see or hear of the enthusiasm of local bands and this is never more apparent than at the successful conclusion of a restoration project. I have had the pleasure of attending a number of dedication or thanksgiving services in recent months and have been impressed by the dedicated way in which these projects have been achieved. It is particularly impressive to consider how relatively small groups of people have raised so much money and contributed so much time and energy. All of those involved deserve our congratulations and support.

Finally, on a very sad note, I would like to put on record my own and the Guild's thanks for the very significant contribution made by Bob Datson both in his own area and for the Guild as a whole. His untimely death just before Christmas has left a gap which will not be easy to fill. His cheerful disposition and enthusiasm will be greatly missed by us all.

John Wells

Report of the Bell Fund trustees for 1996

Grants

Five grants were paid during the year totalling some £10,500. During the year, grants were provisionally allocated as indicated below :

Alkerton	£150
Binfield	£2450
Wheatley	£2800
Turville	£3000
South Stoke	£670

It is our custom that on completion of work, an inspection is carried out on our behalf by members of the Towers & Belfries committee, and the managing trustees wish to record their thanks to the T&B committee for this service. On receipt of a satisfactory report arrangements are then made for the payment of the grant. If the eventual cost is materially different from

that indicated at the time of application, the grant is reviewed and may be revised. Unless there are special circumstances it is currently the policy of the managing trustees to make grants of 15% of the estimated cost of qualifying works.

Future grants

Eleven inquiries have been received which may result in applications for grants. This year there has been a slight rise in the number of inquiries received. This is without doubt due to the approaching celebrations and possibility of churches receiving funding from the Millennium Commission. Due to the expected nature of the Millennium Commission grant distribution, it is the belief of the managing trustees that this increase in applications will not cause any problems in funding during the next two years.

Fund raising

New money raised in 1996 amounted to £10,568. This included £1,389 from the Draw, £4,365 from branch donations, £813 from the ringing day and £2,538 from the sponsored ringing around leap day. The shield for the greatest amount per member raised was presented to the Chiltern branch who will hold this until the next leap year. The managing trustees wish to express their thanks to the organisers of the Guild Draw, June Saint and Stephen Rossiter, to all those who helped to arrange the ringing day and all those who have contributed to the continued success of the Fund.

Investments

Investment income during the year and available for distribution as grants was £12,227 (1995: £11,233). The total capital subscribed to the Fund at the end of the year was £145,503. This is invested in accordance with professional advice from the Diocese. The market value of the investments at the end of the year was £245,414.

Other business

The managing trustees have completed their review of the grant application form and guidelines for applicants and the new forms are now in use.

Bernard Stone

Treasurer's workload - a reminder

General Fund - Please send money, invoices and requests for payment to Terry Wagstaff (*contact details in the directory at the back of this issue*) and he will take the necessary action. Please ensure that cheques are made payable to "Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers".

Bell Fund and the Restoration Fund - Please continue to send items relating to the Bell Fund and the Restoration Fund to me. Note the changed post code and phone numbers in the Guild directory. Thank you for your co-operation.

Brian Gatward

25 years of a Guild bookstall

When I succeeded Marie Cross as Guild Secretary in 1970 I followed her pattern of travelling around the diocese, attending all the branch meetings. Over the course of the next year I discovered few of the members possessed any ringing books; most were reluctant to send off for them in case they were not what they wanted.

The choice was not very wide. Of the Snowdon series, only Grandsire and Ropesight were available. The Ringers' Handbook could be purchased in a six or eight bell edition, the Lancashire Handbook was still being advertised. Other than lists of compositions or methods, the Central Council Publications only offered the new Tutors' Handbook, or the old Beginner's Handbook. Prices varied from a shilling (5p) for the latter to eight shillings (20p) for Ropesight.

The Guild had a very good library, but, like today, it was rarely consulted. Eric Wood was Librarian, but rarely had time to attend more than the annual meeting. Even if it had been suggested, it wouldn't have been practicable to take library books to branch meetings so members could examine them.

I made a proposal to the Guild Committee that they should finance a bookstall which could be taken to meetings, and they agreed to this. Arthur Barker, who was Guild Treasurer at this time, allowed me nine pounds to purchase stock. This did not go very far. It was apparent a larger investment was required, but Arthur was reluctant to part with any more. After about a year I repaid the nine pounds float to Arthur and ran the bookstall on a personal basis.

It was always the principle on the bookstall to sell the books at the same price, or cheaper, than that at which members could obtain them personally. This took into account the poundage and postage and the fact that members did not have the bother of sending off for them!

As new books became available more and more were added to the stock until the original dozen or so titles exceeded 200 in 1995. A catalogue was issued giving a short description of each item and sales increased dramatically. At one Easthampstead course nearly five hundred pounds of stock were purchased by students and helpers. The capital investment now exceeded £2,000.

In 1995, as I was no longer travelling around the Guild to the same extent as in the past I decided it was time to call a halt and stop selling the books. The General Committee has spent a considerable amount of time debating if it requires the stock, and to date has not officially notified me of its decision. So, if someone would like to carry on ... !

William Butler

Robert Datson

It was, with much sadness, that ringers from all around the Oxford Diocese learned of the death of Robert Datson, which occurred on Friday, 20th December 1996. Bob, as he was always known, was 71 years old, and his health had declined rather rapidly over the last few months.

Bob was born in Eltham, Kent on 2nd August, 1925. His education was interrupted in 1939/40, due to the events of war. In September 1940, Bob together with his brother and sister, were sent to friends of his father in Victoria, Australia. Bob spent 1941 as a boarder of the Melbourne Grammar School. From 1942-1944, he became a Land Worker on a farm in Lilydale, Victoria, some 25 miles from Melbourne. Bob then returned to the UK and joined the Royal Navy as a Coder. He served on HMS Pioneer as part of the Pacific Fleet, before returning to Rosyth in June 1946. The following month, Bob found himself back in his native Kent at Chatham where he was discharged from the Royal Navy.

Bob then resumed his agricultural activity, which he continued until the day of his death. He met Jean, and discovered that she was a bellringer. Not to be beaten, Bob secretly learned to ring himself, and the first Jean knew about it was when he caught hold for some rounds at a Sunday ringing session for Evensong. Their romance blossomed and they were married at Boxley, Kent on 14th April 1951.

The first few years of marriage were spent with Jean's parents in Kent, but in 1957 Bob and Jean moved to South Oxfordshire, and in January 1959, to Glebe Farm, Spelsbury. This remains the family home to the present time.

Bob and Jean became parents, having three children - one daughter, Claire, and two sons, Neil and Hugh. Claire is the only one to take an interest in ringing, and she is well known in the Guild area, and especially in the Chipping Norton branch where she is the secretary. Claire and her husband have two sons, Mark and Jon, the only grandchildren in the family.

Bob and Jean were both loyal supporters of church activities in and around Spelsbury. Bob was, for many years a churchwarden and was largely responsible for getting the bells rehung some ten years ago.

By his own admission, Bob was not the greatest of ringers. His contribution to the ringing exercise, however, will not be forgotten. Bob was a keen supporter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers, and was, for some five years, a Guild Steward. He would make endless visits to meetings and practices, where he was always made welcome. He always looked forward to branch meetings, where he could enjoy a "damn good tea".

In his lifetime, Bob only rang one peal. He rang the treble to Plain Bob Minor at Spelsbury on 8th August 1981, when his daughter Claire, scored her first peal inside. This peal, conducted by Graham Clifton, was a compliment to the Reverend A C Sparling on his retirement after thirty years as Vicar.

Another gesture by Bob and Jean to the Oxford Guild came with the project to provide a ring of eight bells for Downs Barn in Milton Keynes. The frame made by the Guild was first assembled in the barn at Glebe Farm, Spelsbury. The work force was made most welcome, although it has to be said that the weather that Christmas, when most of the work was performed, was extremely cold. Nevertheless, the frame was built, and the project successfully completed when the frame was eventually assembled in the church at Downs Barn. Bob became a firm friend of the Downs Barn ringers, and enjoyed ringing there.

When Jean put a letter in the Ringing World saying that she had learnt to ring when "the ban on ringing was lifted", Bob was most encouraging, hence the formation of the '43ers. The first get-together was at Glebe Farm, Spelsbury in July 1993, and this has led to an annual re-union in different parts of the country.

Bob was always most helpful with the Women's Institute Half-Yearly ringing days held regularly in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire over the last six years.

Bob also served as a Freemason. In his time in Oxfordshire, he was a member of the Norton Lodge (Chipping Norton) and later a member of the Clavis Lodge (Bellringers), of which he was very proud.

This is but a touch of Bob's life, one dedicated to the service of others. He loved his home, his family and his church activities. At an age when most of us would be glad to retire and spend our later years in relaxation, Bob continued to run the farm at Spelsbury, being up at all hours to ensure that everything was running smoothly. It is probably this which contributed to his demise, as he had not been in the best of health for some months. On the morning of Friday, 20th December 1996, he had been around the yard to make sure all was in order. Not feeling well, he went to bed and simply passed away quietly.

A private family cremation took place on Friday, 27th December 1996. A Memorial Service followed on Monday, 6th January 1997, when Spelsbury Church was filled to capacity - over 200 people being present. This clearly demonstrated the regard in which Bob was held by many friends from different walks of life. The bells were rung before the service, and an extent of Stedman Doubles was rung for the service - Bob's favourite method.

Other known ringing performances in Bob's memory include peals at Spelsbury, Bicester and Oxford (SMV), and quarter-peals at Bicester and Banbury. We in the ringing fraternity have lost a friend who graced our presence on many occasions. Sometimes fairly serious, Bob did have a humorous outlook which came to the fore from time to time. If we have lost such a person, the family now have a large gap to fill, as their loss must be far greater than ours. In concluding this appreciation of Bob's life, we send them our very best wishes for the future, in their time of sorrow.

Richard Stevens

I would like to add to Richard Stevens' appreciation, my personal tribute to Bob Datson. Bob was a good, honest, down to earth man whose contribution to the Guild was very much appreciated by the other officers. He worked tirelessly as a steward. As Richard has said, Bob was not the best of ringers, but he did aspire to some basic Surprise methods, and he knew his limitations. He was always prepared to help out where he could and was ready to praise other people's achievements. At Guild Committee meetings Bob represented very well the interests of ringers from the rural branches and of Sunday service ringers who form the backbone of our Guild. He will be sorely missed by his many ringing friends.

Patricia Newton

Though I already knew him by name, Bob Datson - the person, really came to my notice when we were planning the Downs Barn project. We had been unfortunate that in the short space of one week we had lost two offers of workshops in which to construct the frame. Graham Clifton used his inside knowledge to plant the seed of an idea which, a few days later, took root and an offer of an alternative workshop was made.

Bob was cautious and made the offer conditional on the work being complete within what could have been an impossible timescale. If my memory serves me correctly we had fourteen days including Christmas and the New Year. This was agreed and he made a further offer - free run of his farm workshops and the use of any tools we required.

When the time came to start the work he took delivery of about 3½ tons of steel on a wet December evening, driving the forklift truck in the pouring rain. His enthusiasm whilst we worked away into the midnight hours knew no limits. Nothing seemed to daunt him. We ran

out of gas for the welder - new supplies arrived; we needed a painter - Bob arrived; the Guild Master was coming to paint; the carpet arrived!

We will never know the full extent of the chaos we caused to the running of a busy farm and I am sure that we never fully expressed our thanks to him and his whole family for their assistance in the project.

The ODG has lost a valued member and servant. Words of wisdom were there for the taking. Equally Bob was there to bring us quickly back to earthly matters when our debates strayed. Bob was in every sense a true gentleman. We remember his life with pleasure and mourn his passing with sorrow. May his soul rest in peace.

Bernard Stone

A constant man

An appreciation of Charlie Gough

Charlie Gough from Padbury, who was 103, died on Sunday 4th August. He joined the Guild in 1909 and was oldest and longest serving (87 years) member.

Charlie was a constant man. What ever he did he pursued it to the end. He is best known for his bell ringing, a skill he has handed on to many people. He joined his first company of ringers as a boy probationer and was still ringing at 98 when he rang for five weddings in the course of that year in his home village of Padbury. He spent the remaining five years of his life at Maids Moreton Hall. He was well looked after and continued to enjoy a full life.

On one occasion when his vicar called with one of the church wardens to wish him a happy birthday a member of staff knocked on his door and announced they were there, "Charlie, the vicar's here to see you", she said. "Oh! Hell" came the reply from within. Sometime later whilst engaged in conversation with the church warden he leaned forward and said in a conspiratorial sort of way, "Bill, you didn't tell me there was a woman in here as well." We gathered from a later conversation that he did not mind in the least.

Charlie was constant in his domestic arrangements as well. You never called on Charlie in the morning, that was when he was doing his jobs. Heaven help you if you got in his way! He was always pleased to see you and would chat about times past and incidents of village life. Sadly much of that has gone with him, but, thankfully some records remain as well as a fund of stories.

At his funeral at Padbury on 8th August, there were members of his old army regiment and many representatives of the Guild. A particular honour was the parading of the Guild banner. Following the funeral a half muffled quarter peal (1260) of Grandsire and Stedman Doubles was rung by

1 Bill Yates

2 Ray Vickers

3 Jim Liddle

4 Richard Stevens

5 John Wells (C)

6 Dick Lee

in his memory. On the Sunday following a quarter peal was rung at Maids Moreton.

Charlie was well respected by all who knew him, and, his contribution to the community was appreciated also. At his birthday, on Lady Day, he received a bottle of rum courtesy of Padbury Parish Council. That was always his favourite drink. As we have said, Charlie leaves behind a great legacy of constancy and tradition. However, the story go on.

On the day of his funeral all the bells had been rung up in anticipation of the service. "Are they up?" "Yes" says Nigel. The treble went, 2,3,4 went a gap followed by sixth striking. Nigel on fifth gave a pull, nothing! It would not budge. When asked what bell he wanted Charlie always replied "I'll have any bell you like so long as it is the 5th." See what I mean about constant.

Charlie was buried in his home village of Padbury with his beloved 5th rope. If bells beyond the stars are heard we all know who is on the fifth. Perhaps he now knows what happened to his cap! Charlie's passing marks the end of an era.

Terry Wagstaff

Jack Tompkins

Members of the branch will be saddened to hear of the death of Jack Tompkins of Wingrave at the age of 89. He was a Guild member for nearly seventy years having joined in 1927. Jack started ringing at East Claydon and was present at the inaugural meeting of the Mid Bucks Branch of the Guild at Granborough on 18th February 1928. In 1978 his photo appeared in the Ringing World with Mr. F. Gibbard at the 50th. anniversary of this occasion.

He became well known in the area in subsequent years, regularly cycling to branch meetings and other ringing events. In the early 1930's he settled in Wingrave where, with his wife, he became very involved in the church and other local activities. Jack was in the choir and later was a sidesman as well as being active in the tower, for some years being tower captain. His last ringing was to toll the tenor to herald in 1995, followed by call changes on the 4th. A few days later he was taken ill, had a spell in hospital, then was in Wing Lodge until his death.

Jack was a kind and helpful man, always regular and reliable in all he undertook. His ringing was mostly call changes, hunting the treble and covering on the tenor. It was not until 1983 that he rang his first quarter peal, the treble to Bob Doubles at Wingrave this being the first in the tower by a local band. In his latter years he helped in the training at the nearby tower of Aston Abbotts.

The funeral service at Wingrave on 7th November was conducted by the Rector, the Revd. Bob Willmott and attended by his son and family, many of his friends from the village, and by ringers from several towers in the area. The bells were rung open before the service to Grandsire & Bob Doubles.

Terry Wagstaff

Public Relations Officer's report 1996

Since this time last year I feel, and I probably speak for other Guild officers, that we have been overtaken by events. My 'main thrust for 1996' has had to join the queue of other important work which has had to be taken aboard by us all in the explosion of the Millennium project.

In bread and butter terms, the exhibition has continued to be in great demand throughout the Guild. There were several weekends when it was required at three separate venues and we managed to stretch the resources that far with a great deal of local co-operation! Its most memorable

appearance was at a lecture on ringing in the USA, given by Michelle Ellender towards the end of the year. Bookings have already been made for June 1997. At the moment we do not charge for its use, but already it has shown signs of wear and less than careful use. One or two of the poles have been forced and one has completely disappeared leaving the structure unstable. The outlay for this equipment was considerable and it would be a shame if we had to charge members for its use through careless handling.

We have continued to enjoy the same low-level interest from local press and radio that we did last year but to date haven't attempted "the big one", i.e television. Several members have given audiences to the press with a considerable amount of fair and accurate reporting. Local radio has also shown a flurry of interest in our art; the Millennium project had sympathetic coverage on Thames Valley FM. However, the Compton Bassett incident must have taught us all one thing at least, to be on our guard, since reporters have their own agenda and sometimes have disreputable ways of achieving what they want.

A useful Central Council forum at Southwark Cathedral in October was supported by half a dozen delegates from the Guild. It included a presentation on maintaining and improving the image of bell ringing. We decided that the public at large liked us and wanted us as part of their heritage and the involvement of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber has raised the public's perception of our importance in the Millennium goal. The slogan "10,000 more ringers needed" is becoming commonplace and people are beginning to realise the urgency of training more ringers. By the time this appears in print a new slogan could be "only 30 more months to go!". To become more proficient in our dealings with the media and to tackle the difficult task of approaching television, we are intending to hold a seminar in May 1997 for the branch liaison teams where Richard Thomas, the Diocesan communications officer will offer some professional guidance.

A poster competition held in the summer brought significant response from the membership and there were three worthy winners, Julie Russell, Graeme Chambers and Charlotte Powell. These designs should make their appearance in the near future in libraries, on church notice boards, in "The Door" and possibly national church publications. One or two of them have been selected for use on T-shirts, which will be produced initially in small numbers on account of cost, but we hope that members will be interested enough to order and purchase their own, thereby adding the personal touch to the recruitment drive! There were many other very good ideas and we are hoping to sift through them during the next three years to use them to keep up the recruitment momentum.

I have been contacted occasionally by members who have initiated good ideas to attract public attention but not enough of these good ideas are circulating. Please let me know about them so that they may snowball to good effect.

By the way, thank you to Joan Marshall for sending me back numbers of Odd Bob. I still need numbers one to five inclusive to complete the set!

Bobbie May

Friends of the Central Council Library

It may seem strange that an ex-Librarian of the Oxford Diocesan Guild should be advocating members to join the Friends of the Central Council Library. However, I am an ODG representative to the Council, and they elected me on to their Library Committee ... !

What are the Friends? They are a group of people who are interested in ringing literature. This includes not only the written word, but also sound archives and computer ware. Currently there are about 60 individual members - two from the Guild - and about 30 corporate members, of which the Guild is one.

What are they for? Their subscriptions - minimum five pounds per year - help to maintain the Central Council Library, the largest and most complete collection of ringing books and other ringing ephemera in the world. Their subscriptions augment the Council grant which pays for rebindings, storage containers, new purchases and all the other items needed to keep the library service available to ringers everywhere.

What do the Friends get from their subscription besides the good feeling one gets from supporting a charity? A newsletter is issued annually which contains original essays on various aspects on ringing of interest to book lovers. For instance, one recently was how to identify all the various editions of Hubbard. The last one issued was some original research on Troyte and all the editions of his works. New Friends joining can ask for copies of these essays. Later this year a seminar is planned for Friends: I can't say more although I'm organising it!

What do you need to do to join? Just drop me a line - and five pounds - and I'll get you added to the list. This is a good time to join; 1997 is going to be a year of activity and you won't want to miss out. I know there are a number of Guild members who share my enthusiasm for books, so let's hear from you. You can get my address from the Directory under CC Representatives.

William Butler

Towers & Belfries Committee

Two major changes have occurred in the constitution of the committee with the resignation of both the chairman and secretary. Having taken early retirement and subsequently started a new career, with Whites of Appleton, Richard Stevens has stepped down as chairman. In addition Peter Davies decided that, because he was spending more and more time away from home on business, he would have to give up the task of secretary. At a committee meeting in November, Len Palfrey was elected chairman and Nick Belshaw was elected secretary, there being only one nomination for each post!

The whole committee would like to thank Richard and Peter for all the very hard work they have done over a considerable number of years as chairman and secretary, they will be a hard act to follow!! Fortunately both are able to remain as committee members, sharing their knowledge and continuing to take a part of the committee's workload.

From the results of a recent survey of the Guild for the Millennium Project it is evident that the workload is definitely unlikely to decrease!! The results indicated some 40 to 50 projects, at various stages, some of which were already known to the committee and all of which are likely to require inspections or maintenance courses or advice of one form or another. As a result the committee can look forward to a very busy and exciting period between now and the year 2000.

An up to date list of Towers & Belfries committee members will be published in the Annual Report and in the July 1997 edition of Odd Bob. In the meantime the new chairman and secretary can be contacted as follows:

Chairman

Len Palfrey
62 Horseshoe Road
Pangbourne
Reading
Berks
RG8 7LJ
0118 984 2698

Secretary

Nick Belshaw
3 The Crescent
East Hagbourne
Didcot
Oxon
OX11 9JY
01235 815452

Len Palfrey

Banbury

Since the last edition of Odd Bob, we have had a well attended half-yearly meeting at Deddington, with lively discussion and the high standard of catering we have come to expect. Thanks to all concerned. As a result of demand at that meeting the branch have organised a Stedman Triples training day on 22nd February and will be holding two Bob Doubles evenings, one each in March and April.

Our monthly branch practices are fairly well attended, as are our shared Surprise Major sessions, kindly organised by Claire Tarrant.

On the social side our branch dinner was held at Bloxham School on 14th February (Valentine's Day). Brian White kindly agreed to come and speak to us and with millennium publicity in mind, we invited the editor of the Banbury Guardian to be our guest.

Finally, it would be very wrong of me to write this without mentioning Bob Datson, who died just before Christmas. Bob had been a ringer for many years, was a loyal and conscientious servant of the Guild, and most important, a friend to many of us. Spelsbury church was overflowing at his memorial service and we know that he is now at peace.

Ian Rodrick

Bicester

The latest news line in this branch is that a second-hand bell has been acquired to provide a treble for the five at Caversfield. At the time of preparing this report, plans for installation are at a very early stage. For the record, however, the bell was cast at Whitechapel by Mears and Stainbank in 1876, has a diameter of 21 inches and weighs 2 cwt 18 lb prior to tuning. More news later.

Our deputy ringing master, Ken Ockwell was taken ill in January and has spent some time in hospital. Our best wishes are extended to Ken for a full recovery.

Members extend their greetings to Walter (Dick) Lee, a frequent visitor to Bicester, on the occasion of his 80th birthday on 21st January 1997. Two of our members took part in a peal of Plain Bob Major at Quainton on 25th January to honour the event.

Looking ahead, a full programme of practices and two outings are planned for the coming year. With the AGM due on 1st March, it looks like being a busy year for the branch.

Richard Stevens

Central Bucks

This year has so far seen a branch practice at Long Crendon which was well attended and the Annual meeting, held at Aylesbury on 8th February. This confirms the branch officers as follows:

<i>Chairman</i>	Terry Wagstaff
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Mike Dodd
<i>Secretary/treasurer</i>	Mark Sellin
<i>Ringing master</i>	Phil Dunn
<i>Deputy RM</i>	Peter Fay
<i>Branch reps</i>	Chris Carter & John Blackhall
<i>Branch steward</i>	Jo Osborne
<i>Auditors</i>	David Rake & David Streatfeild

The Millennium steering group is chaired by Phil Dunn

Apart from the usual elections and reports, Walter Lee was elected to the post of Vice-President, a discussion on the Millennium projects took time and will be discussed with every member by our now bi-monthly newsletter. I was pleased to welcome the shop to our Annual Meeting and I was also pleased to see that the change from traditional 1662 Evening Prayer to a more modern version resulted in much favourable comment and much louder singing!

The branch looks forward to welcoming the Guild in July for the Guild Festival and also for the autumn committee meeting.

Mark Sellin

Chiltern

The year ended on the usual cheerful note with the pub games evening when again Great Missenden demonstrated their prowess in all competitions apart from those directly related to ringing. It was an excellent evening and the Diocesan Bell Fund was £276 better off as a result.

The turn-out at the training day in November was almost too large. If this very welcome trend continues we will have to consider more sessions. Our thanks to Ellesborough and Bledlow for hosting us all.

Aston Clinton maintain their position as our premier competition tower. They formed most of the branch band which gained third place in the eight-bell competition, came fourth in the finals of the six-bell and won, very convincingly, the Orchard Cup. The one big disappointment was the low entry for the latter. Only one team from Central Bucks! However, it was a good afternoon and the Great Kimble ringers were excellent hosts. They even secured a bedroom in a house close by for Pat and Robert Newton - from which to judge the competition, you understand.

Recruitment and training are assuming greater importance now. Some towers are struggling but there is steady progress overall. Ellesborough are pleased with not only two new ringers but a couple of 'old' ones who are returning.

On 22nd January the bells of Great Missenden were rung half-muffled for the funeral of Fr Bogdan Sikorsky, a very well-known and much loved Polish priest. The Requiem Mass was held in the RC church in the village, followed by a procession to the cemetery. It was a big affair, attended by archbishops, ambassadors and half the Polish community, it seemed. A composite band was asked to ring for 'about fifteen minutes' while the procession moved through the village, passed the tower and into the cemetery. Call-changes were rung and the procession took forty five minutes. It must have been excruciatingly boring for those who normally notch up quarter peals in that time, but the ring was well appreciated and one old man expressed to the tower captain how they were 'much moved'. The event re-enforces the view that church bells are for the whole community and not just the 'C of E' bit.

Now for some really good news. Monks Risborough are back in business with a nice new treble and they look forward to seeing folk at their practices at 8pm on Thursdays. And - two tower captains have recently become fathers. Many congratulations to Allison and Stuart Swift (Wendover) for the birth of their son, Sam and to Louise and Stephen Parslow (Bledlow) for their daughter, Hannah.

Mike Davis

Chipping Norton

Unfortunately the branch practice at Chastleton in November was very poorly attended, with only five ringers there. However, we were able to ring a few Doubles. This was more than made up for in December, when the tower was fairly full, and with the help of some visitors, we were able to ring Cambridge Major, which is an achievement in the branch. The practice at Charlbury in January was also fairly well attended; Charlbury ringers are trying to get to grips with Kent Minor and it was possible to have a good practice at that. Also, there were a good number at Shipton-under-Wychwood on 1st February, when Cambridge Major was again attempted but we were not quite strong enough.

The branch hosted the Surprise Minor day on 11th January, which was well attended from different parts of the Diocese, everybody having a full and hopefully, profitable day. Thanks must go to all the helpers who gave up their time and the incumbents who made their towers available, two at shorter notice than the others.

On 20th December, peacefully at home, the branch lost one of its most loyal supporteress, when Bob Datson passed away, aged 71. There was a very private cremation on 27th December and a memorial service on 6th January, when Spelsbury church was full to capacity - comment had been made prior to the service that the church would need elastic sides! A peal of Plain Bob Minor was rung on 1st February, in thanksgiving for his life.

Charlbury has now got a new vicar, the Revd. Judith French, who was inducted on 23rd January, the first woman to have a living in Oxfordshire. She has moved from Rugby - hopefully she will soon make new friends in the town and feel at home. It is also understood that Leafeld bells are now being rung again on a fairly regular basis; perhaps all possible towers will be rung for the millennium!

Claire Tarrant

North Bucks

It has been a very quiet period since the last issue of Odd Bob. Monthly practices have continued as usual and the December quarterly meeting was held at Fenny Stratford. The

December practice had to be changed from Simpson to Wavendon at short notice because structural problems at Simpson have halted all ringing there for the moment.

Sadly, we have to report the death of Walter Mawby of Olney. He had been a ringer for over 60 years and worked on the land for all of his working life. The final hymn at his funeral was "We plough the fields and scatter", a most appropriate tribute.

Helen Stanworth

Old North Berks

Abingdon tower came in sixth place at Nettlebed in the Guild six-bell striking competition last October. This entitled them to compete in the Four Shires competition at Launton in November, where they came in third place after a closely fought contest. The winter social organised by Barbara Payne was held at the Isis Tavern on the river at Iffley where after ringing at Iffley church, skittles and food were enjoyed by all.

The traditional New Year's Day ringing was held at Long and Little Wittenham churches on a very cold morning. Coffee and a raffle raised some £33 towards branch funds. Diana Rowland who has been tower correspondent at the Wittenhams for very many years had her last ring at Long Wittenham before moving to Langport in Somerset. Diana went with our best wishes and thanks for all her work at Wittenham. Peter Collinson is now the sole remaining ringer at Wittenham and he has agreed to act as tower correspondent.

Marie Cross was in the news again when a picture in the local paper showed her receiving her MBE from the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Mr Hugo Brunner at her home on 1st December 1996.

The death of Harold Dunsden was also reported in the local paper. Sadly, he died just before Christmas. As well as being a bellringer at Blewbury tower he was also organist to two churches in Blewbury. Harold was well known and liked in the branch and he will be deeply missed.

Peter Starling

Oxford City

The New Year arrived fractionally later in Wolvercote than it did in other parts of the kingdom; there was a frantic scrabble because the conductor's watch was not fully synchronised with the rest of the world and barely three minutes were left for nimble and sober Jonathan Beale to whisk the muffles from the bells. Hardly anyone noticed and no-one seemed to mind, so the New Year was welcomed in the traditional way and everyone enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies on that frosty night.

The New Year's honours list provided another excuse for celebration and the St Giles' ringers were delighted to congratulate Dermot Roaf on being awarded a CBE for Political & Public service. His excuses for not being able to attend all practices are obviously genuine and so a quarter of Plain Bob Major was rung in recognition of his achievement.

The first branch practice for many years took place at St Giles' in December and although poorly attended was a success because it gave Simon Edwards the opportunity to ring his first

quarter of Cambridge Minor. In contrast the January branch practice at St Aldate's was attended by 18 people and hopefully it will set the target for the rest of the year.

Marston continues to win the race for quarters, 26 being rung there in 1996 with a variety of "firsts" in methods and personal achievements. Three peals were rung on the bells last year with City branch members in the bands. Marston is planning a tower outing in April and with several learners preparing for the millennium they have high hopes for the future.

There is always plenty of good ringing and fun going on at St Mary's, Kidlington. In early February, the Revd. Graham Smith's first ten years as vicar and the tower captain, Phil Sampson's 50th birthday were celebrated by a quarter peal attempt.

This year will be the centenary of St Mary's bells being augmented from six to eight and the replacement of the wooden frame with metal by Webb & Bennett of Kidlington. Both these were past ringing families and the names appear on many of the peal boards in the ringing room. There is a photograph that is thought to be the new metal frame being constructed in the yard and workshop in Millennium Street, Kidlington. The old yard has now been built on but the original house is occupied by a local historian and is called "Bellhangers"; one of the old wheels is outside the front door and a clapper inside. Kidlington tower will be open to the public during the annual Christian Aid flower festival in July in an effort to recruit ringers for the future.

Katie Lane

Reading

The training session held at Caversham on 27th December for young ringers did not attract as many under 20's as we had expected, but we hope it was beneficial for the four who braved the cold that morning.

There is a wealth of enthusiasm at Henley; 14 learners have responded to the recruitment drive. Several mornings have been dedicated to teaching them basic bell handling skills and some have already progressed to ringing in rounds. They were able to ring all eight bells on Christmas morning with a local band. Many thanks go to all the experienced branch members who have helped with this training.

On 18th January we ran a follow-up morning for some of the learners who benefitted from the one in June. This time, St Giles, Reading was the venue. There were 12 learners again - not the same combination as in June, assisted by 12 more experienced people.

Branch practices have continued to be well attended. The January one was preceded by a committee meeting to which a representative from all member towers was invited: nine towers were represented which we thought quite encouraging; hopefully more will feel it worth making the effort next year.

South Stoke ringers are still waiting for their bells to be restored to good working order. Purley ringers are hoping to get approval for the necessary work to be carried out on their bells soon. Sadly we have lost the ring of four at Ufton Nervet; the church has been made redundant and is probably going to be converted to a nursery school. We are hoping to adopt Stanford Dingley into the branch: they will move from the Newbury branch as it comes within the same benefice as Bradfield, so that will give us a new ring of four. In the future the

parishioners of Basildon are hoping to hold more services in Lower Basildon church and branch ringers will attempt to ring the four bells there for these services.

I think this all makes the future look very promising for tower bell ringing in our branch.

Rosemary Morgan

Sonning Deanery

There were two rehanging projects, at Binfield and Barkham. Fundraising for £16,700 at Binfield began in 1995 and continued in 1996, with a Valentine's Day concert at St Mark's and a flower festival in June at which china, tea towels and other items were sold. The amount was completed by a grant from the National Lottery fund. The last peal on the bells before rehanging was rung on 4th January and consisted of 7 Minor methods. The bells were removed later in January for restoration by White's of Appleton; the work should take about 4 months. All bells will be completely renewed without recasting: given new clappers, wheels, pulleys, iron headstocks and ball bearings; the frame remains. The Sanctus bell, which was cast by Ellis Knight in 1629 and is now unringable, will be rehung in a frame for chiming.

Barkham bells were removed by White's in October 1996 and returned in December. Barkham and Arborfield ringers organized a trip to Appleton to see their bells and also to try out some bells in nearby towers. Barkham 2, 3 and 4 were rehung on metal headstocks, and the treble was given a new slider mechanism. A new floor has been fitted above the church porch, so that ringing need not prevent access to the church; windows have been made in the new ringing room. Five new ringers for Barkham are being trained at Arborfield and Barkham. They would like to thank Bobbie May and her helpers for holding a summer ringing school, which was of great benefit to the band. Barkham bells were rededicated on 26th January at a service taken by the vicar of Barkham, the Rev David Rowe. The church was full of regular Barkham congregation plus ringers. In an optimistically toned sermon the vicar said that there was no point in having bells unless they were rung, and that the ringing of bells was not only a physical activity or a call to worship but both. He was pleased that the bells were now in good order and could once again call people to services. The bells were rung before and after the service. A set of photographs about the rehanging was displayed first at the back of the church and afterwards in the hall, where a fine tea was provided and Guild members entertained the gathering with change ringing on handbells.

Congratulations to Simon Smith, who rang his first peal, of Cambridge Surprise Minor at Dorney in October. A peal of Kent, Cambridge and Plain Bob was rung at Finchampstead in January to mark the retirement of the rector. During 1996, first quarters were rung by: Helen Palmer at Sonning; Claire Spencer at Sandhurst; Elizabeth French at Arborfield; Geoff Day at White Waltham; Gill Lovell, Michael Hall and Hugh Lunnon at Easthampstead; Loren Clifton and Danielle Brotherson at Finchampstead. Michael Smith (age 11) rang his first quarter for the carol service at White Waltham. This was a family affair conducted by his brother Simon; his other brother James and father Derek also took part. During the branch quarter-peal week in November, 21 quarters were successful, in ten towers, including four at Arborfield. Simon Smith rang 7 and conducted 3; Mike Dane rang 6 and conducted 4.

Saturday evening branch practices continue on the third Saturday of each month. At Twyford there is a branch practice on the first Friday each month and there is another practice elsewhere by invitation of a particular tower on their regular practice night. Experienced

ringers are required to assist Warfield at its practices every Wednesday. Contact Anne Carpenter (01344-775036) for exact times of practice.

Finally, a reminder about the handbell concert on the evening of Wednesday 18th June 1997 in the Bluecoat School at Sonning, to be given by the Coventry Handbell Ringers, a band of high school ringers from Charlottesville in America, who use more than one hundred bells and are performing at several venues in this country including St Paul's Cathedral. Tickets are available from Rob Needham, phone 0118-9267724.

Pam Elliston

South Oxon

This winter the branch has been busy celebrating its 75th anniversary, which is documented elsewhere. Branch practices and Surprise Minor practices have continued and occasional eight-bell practices are planned. The outing in October was well subscribed and a coach full of ringers and friends enjoyed a pleasant day in the Cotswolds.

A peal was rung at Chalgrove in October to celebrate the 60th birthday of the tower captain, Brain Gray. In addition to the ringing to mark the 75th anniversary, quarters were rung to celebrate the second anniversary of Great Milton ringers; as a 90th birthday complement to Bob Amott, retired tower captain at Thame and at Great Haseley as a 40th birthday complement to Hilarie Rogers. Great Milton ringers held a sponsored ring of 50 minutes rounds and call changes in October to raise £286 for the church roof appeal. Individual achievements include first quarter as conductor for Kay Tuckwell; first Cambridge Minor for Christopher Rogers; first York Surprise Minor for John Aspley; first Stedman Triples for Olive Lawrence and first on ten for Alan Keen.

Hilarie Rogers

Witney & Woodstock

The branch hosted the autumn general committee meeting at Combe in November. A capacity crowd packed the Reading Room to discuss a long agenda and afterwards enjoyed a very good tea. Thanks to all who helped.

Stonesfield launched their bell appeal to raise £17,000 in December, when two of their ringers, Robert and Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson rang their first quarter peal. Well done! The appeal has started well with some generous donations. The bells will be removed on 20th February for approximately three months. Practice nights will continue on Wednesday at Combe.

Langford will be undergoing a major overhaul of their bells beginning on 25th February. It is anticipated that the work will take between six and eight weeks.

There has been plenty of ringing in Ducklington recently and several of their new ringers have achieved their first quarter peal (congratulations to Robert Kinchin and Annie Hughes). Their regular ringers have also achieved some firsts. Notably they have succeeded in ringing and naming a method (or Doubles principle to be precise) which has never been rung before. With over ten youngsters learning hopefully even more will achieve their first quarter peals shortly.

The raising & lowering in peal course at Ducklington in January was very successful. John Harrison kindly agreed to be the course tutor and his teaching was greatly appreciated and a great help to all the students. There were two courses, the first for following up and down in

peal and the second for leading up and down in peal. A big thank you to all the helpers and to John for patiently ringing up and down so happily all morning.

At the last branch practice held at Wootton, it was good to see a number of their ringers, who benefitted, along with others, from an enjoyable and useful practice.

Congratulations to Zoe Clarke (Woodstock) and family, who have a baby daughter, Phoebe, born on 2nd December and to Sue and Alan Eustace who also have a baby daughter, Shona Kate, born on 21st December.

Lorna Smale

Vale of the White Horse

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun. Hardly have we completed one Odd Bob report than it seems to be time for the next. Such is the pace of life in the Vale of the White Horse!

We have a pretty full calendar ready for 1997, all towers are scheduled to host a branch event during the year and the dates are booked for two outings. The ringing masters are busy organising training mornings and we hope to arrange a "mid-summer madness" social event in June.

After a series of interregnums at various parishes in the branch it looks as though all the new clergy should be in place by the spring. We welcome them to our Deanery. All fully-ringable towers in the branch are now holding regular weekly practices and several towers are also running silent practices for their learners. Several projects for restoration or augmentation within the branch are progressing well with page after page of grant application forms being completed. To sum up, lots to look forward to in 1997!

Jackie O'Hagan

New Guild service book

The objective of the new service book is still much the same as for the previous book, which is to provide help and guidance for the various forms of worship within the Guild. It is recognised that different information is required for different circumstances.

The current book provides a form of service for meetings, together with a shortened version for branch meetings or outings. Suggestions for psalms and readings are given and a selection of hymns is included. The book also includes prayers for various occasions, a dedication service and an office for the admission of probationary members. In view of the changes to church services that have taken place in recent years inclusion of a new service format would seem appropriate.

Comments and suggestions of material for inclusion are being sought from the Guild members in general. So far the comments and material supplied have come from few sources; it will be assumed that this represents the wider view of Guild members unless more input is forthcoming. If you have any input please contact Bobbie May or myself.

Ken Davenport

Central Council Seminar - Sharing Good Practice

These five reports were held over from the November 1996 edition of Odd Bob and are included in full here to give members some feedback from our Guild representatives at last October's seminar at Southwark Cathedral.

Recruiting, training and retention of ringers

The workshop including Pat Newton and myself, involved people from across the country in a lively discussion. Topics covered ranged from how long it takes to train a band to the possible effects of the teenage sex drive in sustaining the interest of young people (would be trainers note: this should not be underestimated).

Delegates agreed that, in the past, the main source of new recruits has been the church congregation and the family and friends of established ringers. We considered possible ways of expanding the field from which recruits were drawn. Suggestions included setting up ringing exhibitions at local fayres, etc., and contributing to county council adult education schemes. Everyone agreed that, whilst advertising campaigns such as these were useful, there was no substitute for the personal approach, and that people would often make an effort to do something if asked personally.

Having "caught" our recruits, how then should we train them? We all agreed that beginners needed a home tower to identify with, but that, for various reasons, this was not always the best place for them to be trained. Some delegates felt that there was a place for local training centres, where beginners could be taught on bells of a suitable weight and ease of handling before returning to their own tower to progress further. Another suggestion was a register of tutors which would include people of proven ability to train learners, however some felt that this might be somewhat exclusive. Whatever the initial method of training used, the nurturing of learners was seen to be a corporate responsibility which extended to branch, Guild and even national level, not being restricted to a single tower or person. In order to achieve the breadth of experience needed to become a competent ringer beginners must be welcomed in towers outside their own.

Retention of learners, and experienced ringers, was thought to be the most difficult task. The social side of ringing is a very important contributor to the ease of retention. We all know the joys of a well earned pint after a hard evenings practice, but perhaps we should also be aware of groups which are precluded from taking part in this activity, due to age or other reasons, and ensure that we provide a diversity of social events associated with our towers and branches. We can also encourage the commitment of beginners by making use of other talents that they might have. We all agreed that the belfry should be a pleasant place to go, and it does not take an experienced ringer to wield a duster or vacuum cleaner or even to put on a coat of paint, neither does it take a very experienced ringer to fill the post of tower or branch secretary.

A positive atmosphere in the tower is very important to the happiness of its ringers, and to this end one delegate suggested the use of a touch book to praise good ringing. This could include not only peals and quarter peals but also normal length touches, rung for service or practice, in which the ringers have achieved a high standard.

At the end of the session all agreed that ringers were a special breed, who provided a network of friends across the country and even the world, and that we should all do our best to see that

the exercise was promoted in the best possible light by its existing members. After all our main aim is to provide bands to ring the bells to the praise and glory of God.

June Winter

Keeping the equipment in good order

There were five other members in my group for the discussion workshop. Christopher Groome acted as facilitator and asked us to discuss how Guilds should look after their bells. It was soon obvious that only one other Guild represented had a committee similar to our Towers & Belfries, and that was only formed three years ago.

It was generally agreed it was a good idea to form a committee of experienced people and that members should try to gain experience by working alongside professionals. Our Guild has been doing this for many years now, perhaps others will follow our lead. Other points raised were :

- Most Guilds were dissatisfied with their Diocesan bell advisor and would like the Guild to have some say in the appointment of such people.
- Another concern was the amount of conservation work now being insisted upon by English Heritage; some were concerned that these jobs would have a short working life.
- Some Guilds have their own lifting equipment etc. and carry out major work on their own. A number of people thought this was a little risky and did not want to get this involved.
- It was thought a good idea to offer the services of its T&B committee to all the architects on the Diocesan architects list, as some have limited knowledge about bells.
- One idea which the ODG might consider is a survey of all the bells in the Guild. The Peterborough Guild surveys all its towers every five years. This is done by a questionnaire to towers with members and by the T&B committee members at other towers. The Winchester & Portsmouth Guild is about to carry out a survey of all bells and fittings in the Diocese. This will be kept on computer and will give such information as "how many bells by one founder are there?" and will draw a map with their location.

Graham Clifton

Investing in new installations, augmentations and restorations

The discussion brief was to consider investing for the future bearing in mind three sub-headings :

1. Restoration and/or repair of existing bells,
2. Augmentation of existing rings,
3. Provision of new rings of bells.

The group considered the main subject to be the raising of funds to enable projects to proceed but did not differentiate between the three sub-headings. We also considered that the meaning of the word *investing* could be expanded to include the provision and training of labour to assist in any project.

The group discussed various aspects of the funding and administration of bell funds. It became apparent that there were no common standards that could be applied to all bell funds. We were somewhat concerned that at least one fund required that any recommended grant should receive the approval of a general meeting of the whole association. We expressed the opinion that there was little point in appointing trustees if you did not trust them! It also seemed probable that not all Guilds have an application form with which to seek funding. We were of

the opinion that corporate funding was not applicable to our understanding of fund raising. The general discussion after our brief end of session presentation showed that a number of other Guilds did have experience of corporate funding within their own areas. Perhaps we should actively seek sources of income or sponsorship from within our Diocese.

From our discussions it was clear that there was no standard level of grants. Some Guilds were only able to make grants of a fixed percentage of the qualifying work; some were giving about 5% of costs; others had no upper limit. Your Bell Fund trustees currently aim for a rate of approximately 15% of the cost of qualifying work - the precise level is individually considered for each application. The restricted income of the Restoration Fund limits any offers to a much smaller percentage.

Turning to labour there was general agreement that more could and should be done to encourage the setting up and training of groups of people who could either offer technical advice (albeit with non-professional status) or those who were able to assist, after suitable training, the professional bellhangers with individual projects. In this respect the ODG is better off than many other Guilds. We are fortunate that in our midst we have a number of people who are willing to offer advice or practical assistance. It must be remembered that almost all advice is given without the backing of professional status or insurance and that in many cases the main thrust of the advice must be to seek professional advice and guidance.

With a view to the financial savings that could be made, we acknowledged the increase in the involvement of unpaid volunteer labour in more and more bell projects. Brief consideration was given to the implications of the current Health & Safety requirements and it was agreed that we must seek full observance of any applicable rules or guidelines. It was suggested that the Central Council T&B Committee be asked to bring out a short, but informative, layman's guide regarding the interpretation of the rules.

From our limited discussions it became quite clear that the per capita fund raising varied tremendously over the country. Over the two funds that we operate it would seem probable that the ODG is around the average, at approximately £4.00 per head; not at the top of the league! As far as expenditure is concerned the ODG is much better off; at present we are spending almost £6.00 per head.

In general I believe that the ODG has got it about right - through our two main means of grant giving (the Restoration and Bell Funds) we are able to give substantial support to work in our Diocese. When we take into account the additional help that we can and do give by the use of our T&B committee and the local fund raising within our branches, we are doing at least as much as the average association and probably more than most! Keep up the good work.

Bernard Stone

Maintaining and improving the image of bell ringing

Much discussion took place, though not always with a clear objective of what we should be discussing or where we should be going. The obvious near-relation, recruitment, kept popping up to cloud the issue and we lingered a long time over our relationship with the clergy.

I think we felt that by being what we were; safe, reliable, caring, if slightly old fashioned, we already had a positive image: the Compton Bassett incident seemed only to draw sympathy for our cause.

We were aware that we didn't promote ourselves and tended to be reticent, while encouraging the photo-opportunity would probably be more useful. We did feel we needed to "modernise" our image somewhat. Perhaps with the new editorial appointment at the Ringing World we have the beginnings of an opportunity to realise this image.

At parish level it was felt that we needed to be wherever anything was happening to put our point of view, since we so often seemed to be marginalised. We should get ourselves on to the PCC and in the middle of any village fete with ringers' stalls and handbells.

At Diocesan level we should contact Diocesan secretaries and send articles to Diocesan magazines even if they weren't always used; press for special services and have displays at church concerts and any other social gathering.

At local level we should be more professional in our dealings with the press, since their time was precious; react quickly, anticipate their needs and have facts ready (names written down to avoid problems). Make use of technical advance; cameras on ringers with closed circuit TV etc; and generally have a business-like approach to our subject. Above all we should make personal contact with people we mean to influence.

Bobbie May

Vision, leadership & management

The morning presentation on this topic had concentrated on the implications for tower leadership. This had been a comprehensive appraisal of the tower leaders role and contained many of the ideas discussed at our own Tower Leaders seminars. The group decided that it would be difficult to improve on this in a short time and so agreed to consider the more difficult area of the implications at branch and Guild level.

The discussion was wide and varied and frequently encroached on the other groups topics. What was clear was that Guilds differ considerably in size, mode of operation and what they expect. This made a general statement about good practice difficult.

We started by referring to the millennium and noted the opportunity for guilds to rethink their aims and modes of operation. We agreed that in many cases the aims and objectives of Guilds were as applicable today as they were when they were written 50 - 100 years ago. However, society has changed and the ways in which the aims are achieved need to be reconsidered. So in the area of "vision", the recommendation was a clear one that Guild's and branches need to reconsider what their aims are and the ways in which they achieve them. It was also suggested that Guilds should produce a "Mission statement" as a means of helping to focus on these issues.

On the matter of leadership, we looked at the role of the Officers. It was strongly felt that, normally, there should be some time limit on the period of office so as to avoid "officer burn-out" and to encourage others to come forward to serve. The question of developing latent talent and training officers needs urgent consideration at Guild and Central Council level. The Guilds and branches and therefore the officers, exist to serve the members. This implies an outward looking style of leadership with the officers interacting with the members at both branch and individual levels. In this way the aspirations of the membership can be identified

and acted upon more easily. It was also noted that effective delegation of responsibilities was to be encouraged.

In the area of management structure, the group agreed that Guild rules should be regularly reviewed so that effective management was made possible. In other words, rules should enable effective management, not hinder it. The committee structure should allow effective consultation and decision making so that business meetings are short and efficient.

Other examples of recommended practice which arose during the discussion were these :

- Branch officers, particularly secretaries, should meet regularly to discuss common concerns.
- New members should be welcomed to the Guild and provided with a comprehensive description of the facilities offered.
- Relations with the clergy and other church members should be improved with regular letters to clergy, inputs to Synod meetings and Ministry training courses.

As with other topics for the day, many of these ideas are in operation or being considered by our own Guild. But some such as a "Mission statement" and the training of officers need our urgent consideration.

John Wells

Guild Striking Competitions

We shall soon be embarking upon the 1997 "season" of competitions, with the 8-bell in South Oxon on 5th May, the 10-bell at Amersham on 12th July and the 6-bell finals in the Banbury branch on 4th October. I do hope that as many bands and branches as possible will try to enter these contests and enjoy the experience of doing so.

In recent years it has been heartening to see more bands taking part, particularly in the 6-bell and it has more commonly been necessary to organise eliminator heats earlier in the day. This of course means that the draw for these heats has to be made in advance and conductors advised accordingly. In one or two instances the organisers have been informed after the draw has been made that one or more members of the band cannot be present at the appointed time. This has resulted in some adverse comment from the other teams who may be affected by the re-arranged times, and there are also practical problems to be overcome with the towers hosting the competition and the judges who are kindly giving up their time.

Following discussion at the November general committee meeting and the Finance & General Purposes committee in January, it has now been resolved that once made, the draw will be considered as sacrosanct and no reorganisation will be permitted. Thus, if a band is unable to be present at its original allotted time it will have to withdraw from the competition.

If there is likely to be any reason why a band cannot be complete at a certain time, such as wedding ringing, then this must be stated on the entry form. If any band is otherwise affected by unavoidable problems on the day (eg. traffic, transport delays) then every effort will be made to accommodate them with the consent of the other teams involved. The decision of the organisers shall be final. Good luck in the 1997 competitions.

John White

Millennium project update

At the Guild AGM in May 1996, the project was approved and a working group was set up. In the first instance, the working group needed to know the scope of the facilities and the size and scope of the problems facing all the towers in the Guild in approaching our objective of ringing all the ringable towers for the new millennium.

Since we started, the objective has changed in as much as we are now looking to ring all bells rather than ringable towers.

A questionnaire was sent to all branches seeking core information and asking for a liaison team to be set up for communication and encouragement locally. The response has been very good and an analysis of the replies so far indicate that we are looking at :

- 21 towers requesting maintenance help/maintenance courses/tower inspections
- 44 towers applying for augmentation/restoration
- 31 towers unringable. Some of these could be ringable if the will is there and some could be chimed.
- A high number of three bell towers.

A tower maintenance course is being prepared to meet the requests of the many towers above.

In terms of people, it looks like we need to recruit and train some 800 new ringers. Hopefully, a good proportion of these may be lapsed ringers to whom the idea of ringing for the millennium appeals.

Communicating our objectives and inviting people to join us occupies much of our time presently. We have run a "design a poster" competition and the entries have come up with some original and inspired ideas which, on their own or mixed and matched, will be appearing through our publicity campaign. The first posters and leaflets will be out in time for Easter. Word of mouth is also productive. How many lapsed ringers do you know? Will you talk to them?

A seminar is being arranged in May to discuss recruitment. The outcome of this should allow us to progress your ideas in some fresh, as well as tried and tested, ways of recruiting.

Before we plunge into a major recruitment drive, we need to ensure that we can cope with training and retention. To this end, a course is being prepared to train and further develop the skills of the 40+ ringers who have expressed an interest to date.

It is encouraging to hear the growing numbers of ringers around the Guild who are saying "Ring for the millennium". The momentum is starting early which is good as there are only 34 months to go.

Stirling Maguire

75 years in South Oxfordshire

The South Oxon branch of the Guild was formed in November 1921 at Great Milton. Its 50th anniversary took the branch by surprise, although some quarters were arranged in time. With its 75th anniversary looming, the branch secretary was determined not to be caught out again

and raised the subject at the tower captains' meeting in March. A branch peal and a social were the ideas which found favour and the latter came to fruition on 9th November. Chalgrove was chosen as the venue. It is centrally positioned, but more importantly possesses a willing, efficient ringer experienced in catering! From the outset Jeanette Barrington calmly took on the organisation of the food - a hot meal to be served simultaneously to 70 people - and cooked most of it herself. After everyone had been fed, the entertainment began. Representatives of most of the eighteen towers in the branch took part, providing a varied and enjoyable programme. The evening was compered by our chairman, John Tchigianoff, who himself gave an amusing rendition of an anonymous ringing poem. Chalgrove choir sang impressively, both traditional and contemporary numbers; the Thame ringers led us in singing "Songs from the Forties" and the Drayton St Leonard ringers produced a "Goon Show" complete with sound effects and some surprises. Amongst individual performances was a very clever monologue by the vicar of Chalgrove, some flute music from Wheatley, some more poetry and a short sketch. Dorchester ringers kept us on our toes with a written quiz whose answers all included the word "bell" and the evening was brought to a fitting conclusion by Benson handbell ringers with some spellbinding numbers.

Anyone paying attention will have noticed that a peal was also on the suggestion list. An attempt was made on 16th November at Dorchester but came to grief after about two hours; undaunted, a further attempt took place at Warborough on a chilly 28th December and suffered the same fate. There were, however, several successful quarter peals which included many notable achievements, especially first quarters for Clare Atkins, Clare Hewitt, Charles Dickerson and Judy Vanstone; first as conductor for Mark Walker; first Triples as conductor for John Tchigianoff, first Triples for Kay Bartholomew, first Bob Triples for Christopher Rogers and first Kent for Jeanette Barrington. Julie Haseldine, who rang in two quarters, is the only person to have rung in quarters for the 50th anniversary! Congratulations to all who rang, particularly to those who tried so hard to ring a peal.

Hilarie Rogers

1997 Central Council Education Conference

Towards the Millennium

To be held at St Margaret's, Leicester on Saturday 5th July 1997, starting at 10.00 am. Cost £10, including lunch and refreshments. To book your place, or for further information, contact Michael Henshaw 01482 656270 or Ron Warford, 0191 285 3878

The objective of the conference, as in previous years, is to enable ringers from different Guilds with a common interest in all aspects of training ringers to meet together and exchange ideas and good practice. The extra element this year is the focus on the "Ring in 2000" initiative for the millennium.

You don't have to be a specialist in education, or even an officer to make this event worth attending. You just have to think recruiting, training and retaining ringers is important enough for us all to try to do a little more to make it happen better. There will be plenty of discussion as well as presentation, so whether you are a natural "discusser" or "listener" you should find the event stimulating. Those who attended the three previous conferences went away satisfied. This higher profile event should be even more successful. We can learn a lot by sharing problems and ideas with people in different organisations

John Harrison

Points from peals

Evelyn Taylor and Graham Busfield both rang their first peal at first attempt. The peal, at Shinfield, was rung for the six-parishes choral Evensong in the presence of the Bishop of Reading, and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the re-hanging of the bells. Adam Jenkins rang his first peal as conductor. Congratulations to Simon Edwards, Philip Livermore and Simon Smith who have rung their first peal, and to Jill Ward who rang her first inside.

Bill Butler had a strange footnote to a handbell peal 'First handbell peal of Royal on this continent', especially as the peal was rung in Reading! Bill has also circled Thatcham tower 42 (yes, forty-two) times.

Philip Agg conducted a peal on his wedding morning at All Saints, Sutton Courtenay. He and Tracey Bennett were married there later in the day.

A peal at West Buckland was rung to celebrate Arthur Crooks' 80th birthday.

Congratulations to the band who rang the peal at Exeter on 28th September. Bristol Maximus was the method and special congratulations must go to Marc Hart and John Martin who rang the 72cwt. tenor together. The peal took just one minute short of 4 hours.

Marc Hart rang the 59cwt tenor at York Minster single handed to a peal of Yorkshire Maximus. Many congratulations to him and the rest of the band for this 4 hour and 11 minute performance.

On the 29th September 6 ringers, all of whom had rang at least 100 peals in 1996 already, rang a peal together at Lutton, Lincolnshire. This peal was Colin Turner's 905th different tenor to a peal, beating Pat Cannon's record of 904 tenors. Pat was known as the 'Tenor King', so a suitable nickname for Colin is needed now!

The peal on the 4 bells at Shellingford on the 3rd of October was Joe Norton's first tower bell peal as conductor. The peal was rung half-muffled in memory of his mother, Gail Norton, who was tower captain.

Helen Piper has rung her 850th peal, Patricia Newton her 800th peal for the Guild and Donald Carter has rung his 400th on a tenor. Peter Windley rang his 400th peal, Joan Hooton her 500th peal and Nichola Crichton her 900th peal. Tim Pett rang his 1,400th peal and has completed 500 peals as conductor. Alan Ainsworth has rung his 500th peal on 10 tower bells, and also his 2,200th peal on tower bells. Peter Bridle has rung his 2,100th peal. By ringing a handbell peal of Bristol Major, David Lane has rung 400 peals for the Guild. Bernard Groves has now called 100 peals of Maximus on tower bells.

A peal at Dorney was sponsored in aid of the Childrens' Society Harvest-A-Peal.

Timmy Mallet from Cookham (children's TV and radio personality with lots of different pairs of glasses), rang his first peal for 24 years.

Bill Butler has rung his 1,500th peal. Surprisingly it wasn't rung at Thatcham but at Aston Clinton. The peal was of a new method, Novembre Delight Major. The name November had

already been used for a Delight Royal method that does not contract to a regular Major method.

A peal at Saintbury, Gloucestershire was rung by the light of a calor gas lamp and six candles as the church is not "on the electric".

A peal was rung at West Wycombe to celebrate the marriage of Lyn Young & Richard Lee, married at St Botolph, Bradenham on 16/11/96.

Claire Edwards has rung several tenors to peals of Maximus recently including Amersham, Aston (Birmingham) and St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Lady friends of the late George Swift, all from the E.B.S.B., rang a peal at Chalfont St Giles in his memory.

Graham Firman

Holly was our guinea pig

At the recent tower leadership seminar, Bill Butler repeated his theories about teaching learners and at Bradwell recently we adapted some to try out a new teaching programme for our latest recruit. Holly had been on our waiting list for several months - ever since she came along to watch one of Naomi's lessons and started adding her voice to the rest of us who were trying to persuade Naomi to catch the sally more often.

Prior to starting the training sessions we all had a session with our diaries to find a week where enough of us could keep up the commitment as well as a chaperone/helper. The plan was to have an hour of practice every day, so that there was no time to forget or lose momentum as happens with weekly lessons.

Lesson one was set for Saturday morning, but had to be cut short due to a double booking of the church. Backstrokes were looking good, with just a quick taster of handstrokes before we had to stop. Lesson two wasn't spoilt by the snow and by the end, handstrokes were going well. Monday evening was spent getting the two separate strokes going more smoothly and consistently, then putting the two together. Tuesday was spent polishing the finer points of balance, but by then I was being firmly told to "stand over there because I don't need you"!

Wednesday was our normal practice night and that meant not only hearing the bell for the first time but also having to ring rounds with (and meet) the rest of the band. Although a few nerves meant the odd bump of stay (and wince of steeple keeper), progress was still looking great. After having to drop Thursday from our programme, Friday evening was spent working on a few bits of fine tuning, followed by Holly proving us wrong by setting ten consecutive handstrokes.

After another break on Saturday, Holly came along to ring for her first Sunday service and to be presented with her blue badge from the "one per learner" scheme. Although I'm not an absolute fan of Pam Copson's progress cards, they were ideal for recording this rapid progress. Rather than colour in the bell for each item achieved, Holly was asked to write the date instead - we now have a permanent record of this early progress.

Where next? After another good bit of practice night ringing (yes once a week is all the rest of us can cope with, Holly) it was time to go for the first tower grab and attend a branch quarterly meeting. Unfortunately, a bad cold spoilt these plans but Holly was elected a member of the Guild (yet another tick on the Copson sheet) just two weeks after her first lesson.

What have we got out of this? Another (very keen) member of the band; worries about how on earth to keep this rate of progress going; respect for Holly's parents who supported her by delivering and collecting her for every lesson. Most of all I realised how much more energy and enthusiasm a twelve year old has compared to us ancient ones who were helping and teaching. Next time your band has a learner to teach, think about using a similar system - it may be exhausting but it worked for us. Well done Holly, when will you be wanting your green badge?

David Joyce

Guild handbell day - change of venue

Helen McGregor and Peter Bevis are moving on March 14th, The handbell day will therefore take place at:

Badgers Bottom, Dysons Wood Lane, Tokers Green,
Nr Reading RG4 9EY. Tel 0118 972 3722

A map will be included with the schedule of quarter peals. The date remains March 29th 1997. Non ringing guests welcome for lunch - £3.00. Please advise additional numbers.

Helen McGregor

Tower Snippets

Congratulations to **Charles Herriott** and **Jonathan Goodchild** who have recently rung their first quarter peals. Both have been rung at All Saints, Wokingham and both rang the treble to Plain Bob Minor.

Burford ringers have recently been subjected to a rather strange selection of Doubles methods: Northolt Little Place, Greenford Little Bob, Perivale Alliance and Hangar Lane Little. Northolt and Greenford were not unacceptable, having similarities to Reverse

Canterbury and Plain Bob respectively. Perivale was certainly found to be more interesting and musical and was repeated at two or three practices. Hangar Lane, an own composition and one of little merit, was quickly abandoned. Why were these methods selected? Those familiar with the London Underground will know that Northolt, Greenford, Perivale and Hangar Lane are four consecutive stations on the Central line. It also just happens that the first letters coincide with the initials of one of the Burford ringers!

Congratulations to Russell Shipton and Elizabeth French who have recently rung their first quarters at **Arborfield**. Also to **Eileen Shipton** who has completed her first quarter as conductor.

Seven serviceable ropes with fresh tops for sale. Would suit a short draught (16 - 18 cwt ring, overall length approx 40'). **Price £10 each o.n.o.** Contact Alan Ainsworth, Amersham, tel 01494 727970.

Congratulations to Stewart Becker who rang his first quarter at **Piddington** on 1st November and also to **Loren Clifton**, Finchampstead, 15th September, **Dannielle Brotherston**, Finchampstead, 1st December, **Michael Smith**, White Waltham, 22nd December, **Clare Dyer**, Cumnor, 29th September.

Sonning church are hosting a **ringers and singers concert** in aid of the church organ fund. The concert is to be held on 18th June 1997 at 7.30 pm and will feature the Coventry Handbell Ringers from USA and the Piggott School Choir from Wargrave. More information and tickets available from Rob Needham, tel 0118 926 7724.

Anyone interested in a **holiday in France**? If so, you might like to consider a house advertised in the Old North Berks branch newsletter by Louise and Peter Butler (tel. 01235 851011). The house is situated four miles South of Chalais, within easy reach of Bordeaux, Cognac and St Emilion. All money received from ringers will be given to the **Blewbury Bell Fund** for rehangng of the bells.

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 Mrs Patricia M Newton, *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 popular range 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 Len Palfrey, *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	15 Lytham End, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG31 6FG	0118 941 0061
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, Whitechurch, 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	127 Meadfield Road, Langley,	01753
(EBSB, V of the W H	Slough, Berks, SL3 8HY	671507
& Old North Berks)		

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,	01635 826799
	Newbury, Berks, RG18 3EZ	
Mr John R Martin	(See Newsletter Editor)	
Mr John A Harrison	2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham,	0118 978 5520
	Berks, RG40 2DA	
Dr Tim G Pett	20 St Amand Drive, Abingdon,	01235 526033
	Oxon, OX14 5RQ	
Mrs Patricia M Newton	The White House, 11 Plowden	01844 352926
	Park, Aston Rowant,	
	Watlington, Oxon, OX9 5SX	
Mr Ken R Davenport	(See Guild Stewards)	

Guild Trustees

Mr W (Bill) Butler	(See CC representatives)	
Mr Derek Fowles	10 Lynden Close, Holyport,	01628 29538
	Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 2LB	
Mr T Geoff Holden	"Crispins", East End, North	01993 881624
	Leigh, Witney, Oxon, OX8 6PX	

Financial information

Subscriptions	Resident members	£5.50
	Non-resident life members	£5.50

Peal fees	30p per person
Annual report	£2.50 (+50p postage and packing)
Badges	£1.50
Guild History	£3.00

Branch Secretaries

Banbury	Dr Ian Rodrick	'Silverdale', Weeping Cross, Bodicote, Oxon,	01295
		OX15 4ED	253817
Bicester	Mr Richard C	'Dellow', Blackthorn Rd, Launton, Bicester,	01869
	Stevens	Oxon, OX6 0DA	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,	01494
		HP16 0DF	891312
Chipping	Mrs Claire E	6 Marlborough Place, Charlbury, Oxon,	01608
Norton	Tarrant	OX7 3SH	811290
East Berks &	Mrs Jane Payne	(See Report Editor)	
South Bucks			
Newbury	Mr Dave Smith	43 Chaucer Crescent, Speen, Newbury, Berks,	01635
		RG14 1TP	30782
North Bucks	Mrs Helen	11 Valley Road, Linden Village, Buckingham,	01280
	Stanworth	Bucks, MK18 7BW	814172
Old North	Mr Peter P Starling	7 Chambray Close, Appleford, Abingdon,	01235
Berks		Oxon, OX14 4NT	847469
Oxford City	Mrs Katie Lane	'Catchmole Cottage', 12 High St, Wheatley,	01865
		Oxon, OX33 1XX	874026

Reading	Mrs Rosemary Morgan	'Rosene', Dark Lane, Bradfield, Berks, RG7 6DE	0118 974 4624
Sonning	Mrs Pam Elliston	142 Butts Hill Rd, Woodley, Reading, Berks, RG5 4NS	0118 969 5967
Deanery			
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	53 Bath Rd, Thatcham, Berks, RG18 3GF	01635 827957
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) <i>Parts 2 & 3 form a single leaflet</i> | | |
| 13. Plain, Little and Double Bob Minor and Plain Bob Major. | | |

50p per copy inc. P&p. Set of 14 titles £6.30. Discounts for bulk orders. Cheques to *Oxford Diocesan Guild* please. From : Mrs Anne Carpenter 41 Napier Rd, Crowthorne, Berks, RG45 7EJ. Fax. 01344 771319.

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 Len Palfrey	62 Horseshoe Rd, Pangbourne, Reading, Berks, RG8 7JL	0118 984 2698
Secretary	Mr Nick Balshaw	3 The Crescent, East Hagbourne, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 9JY	01235 815452
Members	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 347273

Mr John C Davidge	'Rowallan', Back Lane, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks, HP8 4PD	01494 873325
Mr Peter G Davies	'Narrogin', Longworth Rd, Charney Bassett, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 0ET	01235 868646
Mr Ralph A Elmes	'Phoenix Cottage', Nuffield, Oxon, RG9 5TE	01491 641874
Mr W (Willy) Haynes	'Brinsmore House', Oddington, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2QZ	01865 331303
Mr Alan J Marchbank	6 Broadway, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK14 5QF	01908 611434
Mr Richard C Stevens	'Dellow', Blackthorn Rd, Launton, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 0DA	01869 243920
Mr Bernard J Stone	3 Bell Close, Grove, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7NH	01235 766673
* Mr E John Wells	(See Guild Master)	
* Mr Barry W M Cowper	(See General Secretary)	
* Mr Brian J Gatward	(See General Treasurer)	

Please note that the membership of this committee is currently under review

* denotes ex-officio member

Guild information on the internet

<http://www.dra.hmg.gb/odg/odg.html>

Diary of Events for 1997

*	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

MARCH

Sat	8	Guild	Spring general committee mtg - Uffington	
Sat	8	Central Bucks	BP	Swanbourne 6.30 - 8.30
Sat	8	EBSB	SP	Fulmer 7.00 - 9.00
Sat	8	Oxford City	BP	Iffley 7.00 - 8.30
Sat	8	Reading	BP	Theale
Sat	8	Wtney & Wstck	BP	Clanfield 7.30 - 9.00
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP	Great Kimble 7.00 - 9.00
Sat	15	Old North Berks	AG	Drayton (also SC) 3.00 - 8.00
Thu	20	V of the W H	BP	Shellingford 7.30 - 9.00
Fri	21	North Bucks	BP	Sherington (Stedman Doubles) 7.30
Sat	22	EBSB	BP	Amersham 7.00 - 9.00
Sat	22	South Oxon	SC	Tetsworth 2.00
Sat	29	Guild	Handbell day - Badgers Bottom	

APRIL

Wed	2	Chiltern	AP	Great Missenden 7.45 - 9.00
Sat	5	Guild	Youth day - EBSB branch	
Sat	5	Bicester	Branch coach outing	
Sat	5	Chipping Norton	BP	Kingham 7.00 - 9.00
Mon	7	Bicester	BP	Brill 7.30
Tue	8	Old North Berks	BP	West Hendred 7.30 - 9.00
Sat	12	Guild	Radley course - Radley	
Sat	12	Central Bucks	BP	Waddesdon 6.30 - 8.30
Sat	12	EBSB	SP	Winkfield 7.00 - 9.00
Sat	12	Reading	BP	Henley
Sat	12	Wtney & Wstck	BP	Church Hanborough 7.30 - 9.00
Fri	18	North Bucks	BP	Kempston (G'sire Cats & Yorkshire Roy) 7.30
Sat	19	Chiltern	AG	Cheddington & Mentmore

Sat	19	Oxford City	BP	Garsington	7.00 - 8.30
Sat	26	Guild		Teaching bell handling - Witney	10.00 - 1.00
Sat	26	Chipping Norton	AG	Spelsbury	3.00
Sat	26	EBSB	AG	Marlow	
Sat	26	South Oxon	AG	Shabbington & Wheatley	2.30
Mon	28	V of the W H	BP	Shrivenham	7.30 - 9.00
MAY					
Mon	5	Guild	SC	Ringling day & eight bell competition - South Oxon branch	
Tue	6	Bicester	BP	Islip	7.30
Tue	6	Chiltern	AP	Stoke Mandeville	7.30 - 9.00
Fri	9	Old North Berks	BP	Appleton	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	10	Guild		Recruitment & retention - Long Crendon	2.00 - 5.00
Sat	10	Central Bucks	BP	Marsh Gibbon	6.30 - 8.30
Sat	10	EBSB	SP	West Wycombe	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	10	Oxford City	HY	Wolvercote	7.00 - 8.30
Sat	10	Reading	BP	Strealey	
Fri	16	North Bucks	BP	Leckhampstead (Rev Cant Doubles)	7.30
Sat	17	Guild	AG	Binfield	
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Slapton	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	24	EBSB	BP	Lane End	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	24	North Bucks	BP	Joint meeting @ Olney	7.00
Sat	24	South Oxon	BP	Aston Rowant	7.00 - 9.00
Tue	27	V of the W H	BP	Coleshill	7.30 - 9.00
JUNE					
Wed	4	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stoney	7.30
Fri	6	Chiltern	AP	Aston Clinton	7.45 - 9.00
Sat	7	Chipping Norton	BP	Hook Norton	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	7	North Bucks	SC	Great Linford	7.30
Fri	13	Bicester	SC	Middleton Stoney	
Sat	14	Central Bucks	SC	Steeple Claydon	5.30
Sat	14	EBSB	SC	Dorney	
Sat	14	Old North Berks		Social - Wantage	pm
Sat	14	Oxford City	SC	*	
Sat	14	Reading	BP	Checkendon	
Fri	20	North Bucks	BP	Hillesden (All Saints Doubles)	7.30
Sat	21	Chiltern	SC	Marsworth	
Fri	27	V of the W H	BP	Stanford in the Vale	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	28	EBSB	BP	Beaconsfield	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	28	South Oxon	BP	Benson	7.00 - 9.00
JULY					
Thu	3	Bicester	BP	Woodeaton	7.30
Sat	5	Chipping Norton	BP	Taynton	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	5	Reading	BP	Padworth	
Sat	5	V of the W H		Coach outing	All day
Mon	7	Chiltern	AP	Bledlow	7.45 - 9.00
Wed	9	Old North Berks	BP	Cholsey	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	12	Guild		Festival - Aylesbury	
Sat	12	Guild	SC	Ten bell competition - Central Bucks	
Sat	12	EBSB	SP	Hambleden	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	12	Oxford City	BP	Horspath	7.00 - 8.30
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Bledlow	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	26	EBSB	BP	Cookham	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Ewelme	7.00 - 9.00
AUGUST					
Fri	1	Bicester	BP	Ludgershall	7.30
Sat	2	Chipping Norton	BP	Churchill	7.30 - 9.00
Wed	6	Chiltern	AP	Great Missenden	7.45 - 9.00

Sat	9	EBSB	SP	Clewer *	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	9	Oxford City	BP	Marston	7.00 - 8.30
Sat	9	Reading	BP	Nettlebed	
Tue	12	Old North Berks	BP	Abingdon, St Nicolas	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Weston Turville	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	23	EBSB	BP	Hitcham	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	23	South Oxon	BP	Brightwell Baldwin	7.00 - 9.00
Tue	26	V of the W H	BP	Uffington	7.30 - 9.00

SEPTEMBER

Mon	1	Bicester	BP	Bicester	7.30
Tue	2	Chiltern	AP	Stoke Mandeville	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	6	Chipping Norton	HY	Enstone	7.00
Sat	6	Reading	SC	Whitchurch	
Fri	12	Guild		Start of Easthampstead course	
Sat	13	Central Bucks		Branch outing - Evesham	
Sat	13	EBSB	SP	Denham	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	13	Oxford City	BP	Cowley	7.00 - 8.30
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Little Missenden	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	20	Old North Berks	HY	East Hagbourne	5.00 - 8.00
Sat	27	EBSB	BP	Bray	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	27	South Oxon	BP	Watlington	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	27	V of the W H	HY	Ashbury	

OCTOBER

Fri	3	Guild		Branch secretaries meeting - Radley	
Fri	3	Chiltern	AP	Aston Clinton	7.45 - 9.00
Sat	4	Chipping Norton	BP	Chipping Norton	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	4	Guild	SC	Six bell competition	
Sat	4	EBSB		Joint meet - Hillingdon, Slough & Langley	
Tue	7	Bicester	BP	Islip	7.30
Sat	11	Central Bucks	SC	Orchard Cup - Wing	
Sat	11	Oxford City		Outing	Afternoon
Sat	11	South Oxon		Outing	
Sat	11	Reading		Branch outing	
Sat	11	V of the W H		Car outing	
Mon	13	Old North Berks	BP	Steventon	7.30 - 9.00
Sat	25	EBSB	HY	Chalfont St Peter	
Sat	25	South Oxon	HY	Great Milton	7.00 - 9.00

NOVEMBER

Sat	1	Chipping Norton	BP	Chastleton	7.30 - 9.00
Mon	3	Chiltern	AP	Bledlow	7.45 - 9.00
Wed	5	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stony	7.30
Sat	8	EBSB	SP	Chenies	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	8	Old North Berks		Social & ringing - Radley	
Sat	8	Reading	BP	Swallowfield	
Sat	15	Oxford City	AG	North Hinksey	
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP	Stoke Mandeville	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	22	EBSB	BP	Iver	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	22	South Oxon	BP	Chinnor	7.00 - 9.00
Mon	24	V of the W H	BP	Faringdon	7.30 - 9.00

DECEMBER

Sat	6	Chipping Norton	BP	Burford	7.30 - 9.00
Wed	3	Chiltern	AP	Great Missenden	7.45 - 9.00
Thu	4	Bicester	BP	Kirtlington	7.30
Sat	13	EBSB	BP	Old Windsor - also social	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	13	Reading	BP	Reading, St Giles	
Sat	13	South Oxon	BP	Thame	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP	Aston Clinton	7.00 - 9.00
Sat	27	EBSB		Post Christmas social & ringing	