

# ODD BOB



**Newsletter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers**  
<http://www.odg.org.uk/>

Marston, St Nicholas



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## **From your Editor...**

In a previous Odd Bob I set a little competition for members to send me photographs suitable for the front cover – no prize but lots of kudos! I have received many photos (my thanks to the contributors), but I am seeking a photo with an autumnal look for the next Odd Bob.

Don't forget to check regularly the Guild website at [www.odg.org.uk/](http://www.odg.org.uk/) and the many branch websites.

In particular the EBSB Fund Raising website address is: [www.bellfund.org.uk](http://www.bellfund.org.uk).

Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of October 2010.

Rob Needham

## **Data Protection Act 1998**

*As members should expect, a record of their membership is maintained on a combination of paper and computer systems. These records are used solely for the administration of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers and for notification of future events to members. They are not made available to anyone for commercial purposes. If any member wishes to inspect the records held, please contact the Guild Secretary.*

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## **Master's Mutterings**

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### ***F E Robinson Centenary***

Thank you to all those who contributed in any way to marking the anniversary of our first Master's death on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February. An account of items sent to me appears on pages 357 and 372 of *The Ringing World*. See also the peal report on page 408. Subsequently, it has been pointed out by John Eisel (page 392) that the peal Robinson claimed as his thousandth was probably his 1006<sup>th</sup>.

During the week in question, peals were rung at Bletchington, Shrivenham, Milton, Drayton\*, Wokingham (All Saints)\*, Cholsey, Milton Keynes (Downs Barn) and High Wycombe.

Quarter peals were rung at Adderbury, Caversham, Newport Pagnell, Reading (St Laurence), Sonning, Benson, Appleton\*, Aston Rowant\*, Drayton St Leonard, Combe, Little Milton, Wokingham (All Saints), Abingdon (St Helen) and High Wycombe. The Newbury Branch quarter peal week was also dedicated to Robinson's memory (*RW* page 326).

Several special touches were rung, for services or on practice nights, including those at Aston Clinton, Olney, Dorchester\*, Great Haseley, Hanslope, Emberton\*, Shiplake, Hambleden, Maids Moreton, Buckingham, Padbury, Mollington, Great Linford\*, Cookham\*, Warborough, Stonesfield, Church Hanborough\* and North Leigh. (\*denotes ringing which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb.)

It was particularly appropriate that Robinson was remembered at Stonesfield, Appleton and Drayton where he gave bells for augmentation, and at Wokingham where he passed away. He was, of course, vicar of Drayton for 30 years, where the organ case, choir stalls and bench ends bear testimony to his skill in wood carving.

### ***St. George's Day***

I was very pleased to receive advance notification of some 50 towers where ringing was planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Just about half of those were able to start at the suggested time of 6 pm but, no matter what time, the important thing was to ring. I am sure there must have been many more that I did not hear about.

Hopefully, our efforts, combined with those of ringers across the land, will have done much to raise public awareness of our Patron Saint and to give him a more positive profile. I am aware of two visits from the Press for photo opportunities on the day, and I was given a call by Radio Berkshire on the previous Sunday to explain on air why we were going to ring.

Again, thank you all very much for your efforts.

### ***Peter Davies***

Any members who knew Peter will, I am sure, be as saddened as I was about his passing. It is very rare for a Guild officer to die in post – an indication of his rapid decline. I recall Peter's invaluable contribution to the Guild over many years. He was our first Peal Secretary, served on the Towers and Belfries sub-committee for many years, most of them as secretary, and regularly enlivened the proceedings at meetings with his ready wit. More recently, his experiences as a director of *The Ringing World* have appeared in that publication and make fascinating reading. At his funeral, the church was packed with representatives of all aspects of his busy and committed life. Our deepest sympathy goes to Eunice and the family. May he rest in peace.

Robert Newton

## **Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund**

### **Report of the Managing Trustees for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009:**

#### ***Grants***

Four grants totalling £16,830 have been paid during the year to:

Benson	£4860	Olney	£7250
Hanwell	£4310	Reading St Laurence	£410

During the year grants were provisionally allocated as follows:

Shiplake	£7,600	Buckland	£3,190
Mapledurham	£1,820	Peasemore	£2,065
Olney	£1,250		

The grant to Olney was in addition to the Grant proposed in 2008 due to increased eligible costs and was paid during the year.

Seven provisional grants totalling £25,385 are outstanding. These projects are forecast for completion during 2010.

In accordance with the Trustees continuing policy of requiring an independent assessment of satisfactory completion of the work before payment of a grant, members of the Towers and Belfries Committee carry out an inspection on the Fund's behalf. The Managing Trustees wish to record their gratitude for this service.

The Managing Trustees have maintained grant allocations of 10% of the estimated costs of eligible work. If the final cost is materially different from the indicated cost at the time of application, the grant is reviewed and may be revised. The level of grant allocated depends on the number of applications and the income available for distribution, and may vary from year to year.

### ***Future Grants***

Two other grant application forms have been issued which may result in grants.

### ***Fund Raising***

New money raised in 2009 amounted to £9,806.54. Regular fund raising included £4,590.70 from branch donations (2008: £4,597), donations from PCCs of £166 (2008: £320) and £1,260.50 from the ringing day (2008: £726). Individual gift-aided donations amounted to £757 (2008: £212) and tax refunded from gift-aided donations amounted to £962.39. The Guild donated £550. There was a donation of £475 from the collection at Little Missenden rededication service and a donation of £34 from the Guild Handbell Day.

The Managing Trustees again wish to express their thanks to all those who helped to arrange the Ringing Day, and to all those who have contributed to the continued success of the Fund.

### ***Investments***

Investment income for the year was £18,155.78 (2008: £20,445). This reflects the overall financial situation with low interest rates during the year. However this is a far better outcome than the Trustees forecast at the 2009 Annual Meeting and compares favourably with 2007 (£18,558). Current indications are that the situation of low interest rates will probably be with us for some time.

The new money raised has been invested on a regular basis in accordance with advice received from the Diocesan Financial Advisor. Transactions are made on behalf of the Fund by the Diocesan authorities.

Ken Davenport

## **Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Report**

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The amount of new money raised this year is £2,649.88 which is well ahead of 2009 at this point in the year. This amount is composed of:

- Donations from branches totalling £2,342.88
- Donations from 3 towers totalling £110
- Donations from 2 PCCs totalling £45
- Individual donations totalling £152 (plus gift aid tax to be recovered).

The grant to Shiplake (£7600) has been paid and I am aware that several other projects are nearing completion.

At their last meeting in February no new grant applications were received for consideration. However since this meeting two application forms have been issued.

The Trustees continue to work closely with the Diocesan professional advisor to maximise the investment income that is available to pay grants, as well as to maintain the overall value of the investment portfolio during these challenging times.

At the annual meeting of the Bell Fund in March, the Trustees circulated an updated policy statement on future investment and grants. This was adopted and is printed separately in this edition of Odd Bob.

The Trustees remain most grateful to everyone for their financial support of the Bell Fund in so many ways.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

## **Restoration Fund Report**

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The amount of money received this year to date is £659.86 which is a good start to the year. The analysis of income is:

- Donations from 3 branches totalling £510
- Tower donation of £80
- Individual donation (plus gift aid) of £25
- Interest received from investments amounting to £14.86.

The grant offered to Padbury (£235) has been paid. In March, the Trustees offered a provisional grant to Thatcham of £95 and this has also been paid. The Trustees are grateful to the 2 members of the Towers and Belfries Committee for their prompt inspections and satisfactory reports on these two projects.

There are no outstanding grant applications.

The Trustees wish to thank everyone for their financial support to the Restoration Fund and hope that the good start to the year will be maintained.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

## **Financial support – Bell Fund and Restoration Fund**

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Application forms for regular donations by bank standing order (or for single donations) with an associated Gift Aid declaration to allow the income tax to be recovered, are available from me or by downloading from the Guild website.

The Trustees for both Funds commend this tax efficient form of financial support and thank those who already donate in this manner.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

# **Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Policy Statement**

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## **Policy Statement on Future Investment and Grants 2010**

At the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Trustees submitted a policy statement to clarify the position with future investments and grants. This action was a direct consequence of the national and international uncertainties in the financial markets and the economy in general at that time. The Trustees undertook to provide an annual update on the policy and this is the first such annual update. For ease of comparison, the 2009 assumptions are compared with the 2009 outcomes (shown in italic script).

### **The Trustees have made the following basic assumptions:**

- The investment income is likely to reduce by at least 30% from the 2008 level as the direct result of the interest rate reductions implemented by the Bank of England and the associated impacts on the value of stocks and shares as the recession continues. If this assumption is accurate then the yearly investment income for 2009 will be around £14,000. *2009 investment income received was £18,155.78 and for 2010 is forecast to be £20,000.*
- The value of the Fund's investments is likely to reduce during 2009 from the valuation at 31 December 2008. A further reduction in value may be expected in 2010. This will limit options to reinvest in different holdings and by so doing benefit from capital appreciation from specific investments. During 2008 the overall value of investments fell by 8.5% to £293,379. *Value of investments at 31 December 2009 was £348,652.88 and included accrued capital appreciation of £65,911.19.*
- In line with past policy the Trustees will maintain an investment portfolio, balancing income with growth potential wherever possible and seeking to minimise risks to the capital value. They will continue to take advantage of the professional service offered by the investment advisor to the Diocese. However it must be noted that all financial commentators regularly remind us all that the current economic situation is really 'uncharted waters' and in these circumstances the best financial advice may well be to 'do nothing'. *During the year £50,000 was transferred from the deposit account with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England (where the average interest rate reduced from 3.056% for the 3 months ended 28 February 2009 to 0.600% for the 3 months ended 30 November 2009) and reinvested in Investment Funds. These funds are designed to provide both high income and capital appreciation.*
- The Trustees are aware that the foundries and bell hangers have generally full order books up to a year ahead and consider it unlikely that there will be a large number of new projects coming forward during 2009 and 2010. *Four provisional grants were offered during 2009.*

- The Trustees expect that new money raised during 2009 and 2010 may not achieve the same levels as recent years (2008 – £11,473; 2007 – £9,020; 2006 – £8,514) as the result of the economic downturn and the forecast increases in unemployment. *New money raised in 2009 totalled £9,806.*

**For 2010 the Trustees will:**

- Maintain the level of all outstanding provisional grant offers
- Allocate the available income in any year between the applications
- Seek to maintain each new provisional grant offer at 10% of the cost of eligible work
- Limit the maximum provisional grant to £9,000 (the amount of the previous largest grant paid)
- Continue the present policy of not considering projects where the cost is less than £2,000
- Continue to allocate provisional grants from the predicted income of future years to match as far as possible with the timescale of the project. This is particularly important for projects that seek support at an early stage in the fund raising process. This policy has been well received over the years.
- In view of the ongoing uncertainty of the financial situation, review this policy annually and report to the Annual Meeting.

**In conclusion for 2010 and the immediate future:**

- The Trustees will continue to review the level of grant to strike a balance between the income available and the number of calls for financial support. Both these variables are outside the control of the Trustees.
- If it becomes necessary for the Trustees to have to reduce the percentage from the present level of 10% then this change will be publicised as soon as possible.
- Should it become necessary to limit grants in any way, then priority will be given to projects that maintain bells in operational ringing condition rather than rehangng bells merely for the sake of improvement.
- Given the ongoing national and international financial uncertainties, it is not appropriate to speculate about the level of any reduction or its likely timing. However, given the experience of 2009, there are grounds for optimism for the future and the expectation that a reduction is less likely than previously envisaged.
- The Trustees wish to thank all those who support the Bell Fund and take this opportunity to restate the benefits of gift aiding donations whenever possible in order to increase their value to the Bell Fund by reclaiming the income tax.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer



## **ITTS – Integrated Teacher Training Scheme**

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At the beginning of the year the Education sub-committee were in the position of having to find a replacement for the *Laying the Right Foundations* (LTRF) seminar. After a good, many years John and June Wells decided it was time that we found a successor to their popular one day course, designed to help aspiring ringing teachers gain further knowledge and confidence. Coincidentally, at about this time we became aware of a similar course with the above title, created and developed by Pip Penney of the South East Wales Ringing Centre and the Central Council's Education Committee.

The scheme is currently being piloted in South Wales, apparently with a lot of success. One aspect that Pip is very keen to encourage and develop is the responsibilities of young ringers, and this is shown by the numbers who participate from the 16 to 21 age range.

The ITTS starts with a one day course, run by Pip, which covers both the practical and theory aspects of bell handling and skill development. However, where this scheme differs from most others is the 12 months of mentored support provided for each trainee by experienced ringing teachers. Further support is also available to both new teachers and mentors via the "Moodle" web site. It is important that the mentors attend the introductory course so that they can understand the general philosophy of the scheme as well as the more specific "Schedule of Learning".

Since this scheme appears to be a natural replacement for LTRF it has been decided by our Committee to run the course later this year and arrangements have been put in hand at Steeple Aston for nine students plus mentors to attend. If you think this scheme could benefit you and/or others it would be worth making a telephone call or sending me an e-mail for further information. *Please see the inside of the back cover for more details of the course.*

Alan Bentley, arb99net@netscape.net, 01296 393077

## **Obituary – Val Willard**

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Valerie Willard, the youngest of 5 children, was born in Leighton Buzzard on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1923. Her parents were grocers in the town and also had shops in Edlesborough and Hockliffe. All the family were musically gifted. Her elder sister played the viola and her brother Keith the piano; Val herself played violin in the English Youth Orchestra.

Val was educated at Berkhamsted School and would travel each day by steam train from Leighton Buzzard with her brother.

When she left school, she went to the University of London to study law, but was relocated to Cambridge due to the war. After a short time she was keen to do other things and decided to join the WRNS. It is understood that on her way to join up she was involved in a car accident at Stoke Mandeville and severely damaged her elbow, the rehabilitation of which led her to taking up bell ringing in 1944.

The same year, she went to work at Bletchley Park on the “Enigma” code breaking work which is now well known. On a visit to the museum about ten years ago, she expressed surprise that its secrets were being opened up. Val spoke Polish and Russian fluently. The work of “The Government Code and Cypher School” was formally recognised in July 2009 and Val received a badge and certificate signed by the Prime Minister just a few weeks ago.

At the end of the war she went to work for the Foreign Office in London but resigned from this post in February 1949 in order to take an extended holiday to South Africa. When she returned to England in July of that year, she was re-employed by the Foreign Office and in 1951 was posted to Melbourne, Australia. Returning by ship in January 1955 she went to work at the Foreign Office in Cheltenham, now known as GCHQ.

In 1957 her daughter Zoe was born and when Val retired in 1984 she moved from Cheltenham to live with her and her family at Princes Risborough, Bucks. The thought of a baby sitter on tap were soon dashed as “bookings” had to be made some weeks in advance to fit in with her bell ringing and orchestral activities (Cheltenham, Dursley and latterly Aylesbury Operatic Societies), which included a Royal Performance at Tetbury on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1981.

Val led a full and active life; she was an avid reader and crossword addict, and her bridge and backgammon play was formidable. She was also a regular volunteer reader at Monks Risborough School from 1990–2002.

Val learned to ring at All Saints, Leighton Buzzard and her name first appears in the tower record book (now in the Luton and Bedford Archive Office) on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944. She was taught to ring by Josiah Nicholls – the “Leader” as the term was known in the tower. Her name is included in the band which rang for the New Year 1945 (the war ban was on then so special permission must have been given). Her first quarter peal was rung for Christmas 1947.

Val was a member of The Bedfordshire Association of Change Ringers and she served as secretary of the Luton District in 1949, 1950 and part of 1951 until she went to Australia. Whilst in Australia she was a member of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Melbourne and her name appears on three peal boards in the tower there.

When Val moved with her job to Cheltenham in 1955 she fitted in well with the local ringers. She became an active member of the Cheltenham Branch of the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association, ringing many peals both tower and in hand and serving as Branch Secretary from 1977 to 1981. She was also well known in other Branches of the Association and would always be willing to help other less experienced ringers.

Moving to Buckinghamshire in 1984, Val joined the tower of Holy Trinity, Bledlow and was welcomed with open arms by the local ringers. The bells had just been augmented from a hard-going 5 to an easy-going ground floor ring of 8, all re-tuned and re-hung by Whitechapel earlier in the year. She was to be a great asset to Bledlow and other nearby towers. On becoming a resident member of the Chiltern Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild she was a very regular

attendee at Branch meetings and soon found herself with the post of Joint Ringing Master. She took this in her stride and served as Ringing Master or Assistant Ringing Master from 1986 to 1995, a long dedicated term.

Val was very meticulous with her ringing records. She had rung in 1771 different towers around the world – England, Wales, South Africa, Australia – and at the time when she visited Ireland, all the ringable towers both North and South of the border.

Enjoyment was to be found in peal ringing and over a period of 51 years Val had amassed a total of 648, 509 on tower bells and 139 ‘in hand’. These had been rung for over 20 different Associations, with over half the total being rung for the Gloucester and Bristol, and over 70 each for Bedfordshire and Worcester & District Associations and the Oxford Diocesan Guild. She was a very reliable ringer in a peal band but would often volunteer to ring the treble to enable someone else to score a peal ‘inside’.

Her first peal was rung in her home tower of Leighton Buzzard on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1948, 5075 Grandsire Caters composed and conducted by Joseph E. Arnold of the local band. Her final peal was rung at Hughenden on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1999 – a peal of 5056 Spliced Surprise Major conducted by John R. Mayne commemorating the first peal Spliced Surprise Major rung in the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of its performance at Whitley Bay.

Sadly her last ring was at the Church of SS Peter and Paul, Ellesborough, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003 in celebration of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee.

In recognition of her work in the Chiltern Branch, she was made an Honorary Member of the Oxford Guild in 2005.

Val had been in hospital for a few weeks and sadly passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – eerily the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of her first peal.

Her funeral took place at Holy Trinity, Bledlow on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The Oxford Diocesan Guild banner was placed at the chancel crossing. The service was conducted by the Revd. David Dewick and a reading was given by David Bosanquet (grandson). A eulogy was given by Stephen Bosanquet (son in law).

A good company of ringers had gathered and the bells were rung open, at her request, before the service. At the end of the service, when her coffin had passed through the west door, a band comprising half G & B and half ODG members rang a nice touch of Stedman Triples, conducted by the ODG Master. General ringing followed and concluded with a course of Bristol.

Those of us who have been privileged to have rung with Val know that after ringing she would enjoy a pint in a “jug with a handle” and this gesture was extended to those who wished to join the family at the Lions of Bledlow.

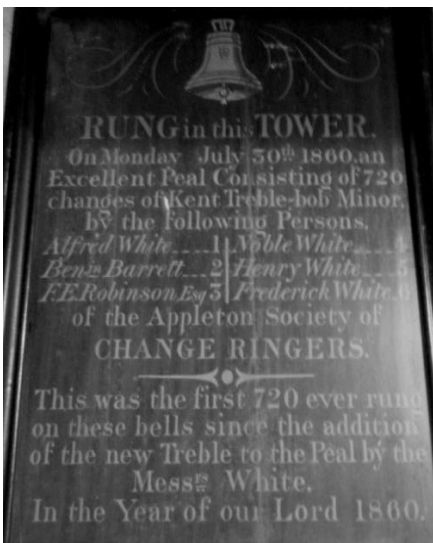
Brian Robson


## Stonesfield Tower and the Revd FE Robinson

Robinson donated the treble bell in Stonesfield tower, which carries the inscription ‘The gift of F.E. Robinson Esq A.D. 1860. F. Robinson M.A. Rector’, dedicated to his father who was rector for nearly fifty years until 1882, and who lies buried in the churchyard.

The same year Robinson rang a peal on Stonesfield bells with the White family of Appleton, and there is a peal board hung in Stonesfield ringing chamber to commemorate this achievement (*see below*).

On Thursday 18 February 2010 a Stonesfield band rang musical call changes on all 6 bells and Stedman Minimus on the back five; so we rang the bells as they would have sounded before Robinson donated the treble bell. And everyone had a turn ringing the treble bell in memory of Robinson’s special achievements.






**RUNG in this TOWER**  
 On Monday July 30<sup>th</sup> 1860, an  
 Excellent Peal Consisting of 720  
 changes of Kent Treble-bob Minor,  
 by the following Persons,

<i>Alfred White</i> .....	1	<i>Noble White</i> .....	4
<i>Ben<sup>ie</sup> Barrett</i> .....	2	<i>Henry White</i> .....	5
<i>F.E. Robinson Esq</i> .....	3	<i>Frederick White</i> .....	6

of the Appleton Society of  
**CHANGE RINGERS.**



This was the first 720 ever rung  
 on these bells since the addition  
 of the new Treble to the Peal by the  
 Mess<sup>rs</sup> White  
 In the Year of our Lord 1860.

The ringers were:

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 Peter Coveney | 4 Edward Johnson   |
| 2 Sylvia Dolan  | 5 David Thornton   |
| 3 Penny Fisk    | 6 Lindsey Thornton |

Lindsey Thornton, Stonesfield

## **Education Sub-Committee Report**

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A Stedman Caters Course, expertly tutored by our Master Robert Newton, was held at Aston Clinton in December. Six students enjoyed good teaching and did very well. But, there was a complaint that we helpers were not as rock solid as we might be and that not all touches came round. There's a lesson there! Do volunteer to be a helper but keep awake!

There was no snow in February this year and the training day for Branches to discuss their challenges and successes was held at Thame and enjoyed by all. It was heartening to hear that many of our branch's problems were shared by others and that we weren't the only one having difficulties. Ideas that had worked elsewhere are worth a try. Some of the ringing designed to stretch novices stumped the experts!

Cyril Crouch has resigned from the Sub-Committee. Perhaps he's going to spend all his free time ringing on the new bells at Shiplake. We thank him for his contributions over the years.

The last meeting of the General Committee confirmed the election of Richard Stanworth to the sub-committee and we welcome him.

We thank Robert Partridge from Shiplake for allowing himself to be co-opted and look forward to his ideas.

17<sup>th</sup> April saw the usual Radley Course, which was as popular as ever. A change this year was to have informal socialising after the evening meal, with fun handbell ringing for the adventurous ones (or those dragooned by Kay).

The usual courses are lined up for this year. After a long and successful run of the *Laying the Right Foundations* course for aspiring tower captains, in the autumn John and June Wells have asked for a break. The Guild is very grateful to them for all their hard work. We hope they have enjoyed it. The gap in our programme this year is being filled by *The Guild Teacher Training Day* run by Pip Penny of the Central Council. Alan Bentley is organising this at Steeple Aston on 16<sup>th</sup> October. More learner-friendly teaching can dramatically reduce drop out numbers, reduce teacher frustration and benefit the exercise in general. We hope this will be successful and become a calendar fixture.

Jon Chamberlain

## **Tower Maintenance Award Scheme**

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In the period since the November report six awards expired, with only one (Chalfont St Giles) being renewed. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is now at sixty, still about twelve per cent of the towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been fifty-five inspections (of which seventeen were preliminaries), resulting in thirty-six awards (fifteen Gold, twelve Silver, and nine Bronze).

Despite the lapsed awards (at the end of their two year period) with the towers concerned being listed at the end of this report, there has been some encouragement, with three towers qualifying for an award for the first time. Benson and Hungerford were inspected for the first time and qualified for a

Bronze and a Silver Award respectively. Congratulations to the bands and steeplekeepers at Thatcham, who had a preliminary inspection and achieved a Gold Award, and South Stoke who, having been on the “expired list” for some time, successfully upgraded their original Bronze to a Silver. Chalfont St Giles renewed their Gold award with their new steeplekeeper managing to maintain the standard of his predecessor by not losing a point. Cookham, whose award has expired, have applied to be re-inspected and this should happen at the end of April.

Seven out of the fifteen branches now have towers in the “current awards” list, with EBSB losing its previously pre-eminent position to Newbury & Reading. The details are as follows:

Banbury	1	(Bronze)
Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
EBSB	2	(Gold)
Reading	2	(Gold, Silver)
Sonning Deanery	2	(Silver, Bronze)
South Oxon	1	(Gold)

If your tower is in one of the other eight, how about trying to get your branch included by gaining an award?

The main features of the award scheme are as follows:

- There are three award grades (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) based on the results of an inspection using a marking sheet that is made available, in advance, to participating towers to enable them to prepare for the inspection.
- The grades will be based on the percentage of the "perfect" mark (currently 235), as follows:
 

Gold	85% +
Silver	70 – 84%
Bronze	55 – 69%
- The award takes the form of a certificate that is current for two years from the date of inspection (rather like an MOT) and can be displayed in the tower
- Towers holding current awards are listed in *Odd Bob* and the *Guild Report*
- Each inspection is carried out by judges from the Towers & Belfries committee and the detailed results of the inspection are made available to the tower
- Inspections can be requested at any time, via the Secretary or the Chairman of the Towers & Belfries committee (addresses elsewhere in *Odd Bob*), irrespective of whether the request is for an initial inspection or to try and improve an existing grade.

If you haven't already started, why not consider taking part? We will provide you with all the details of how you will be marked so that you can plan what has to be done to get an award; if asked, we will even do a preliminary inspection before you start, to help the process. If you do gain an award you can be confident that your tower and bells are in a good, safe condition and, whether or not an award is gained, you will be given useful information on how they can be improved.

### ***Current Tower Maintenance Scheme Awards***

#### **Gold Award**

Winslow (St Laurence)	Central Bucks Branch	Expires 31.10.10
Ellesborough(SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern Branch	Expires 28.02.11
Chalfont St Giles	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.03.12
Thatcham (St Mary)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.04.12

#### **Silver Award**

Reading St. Giles	Reading	Expires 31.10.10
Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.10.11
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.11.11
South Stoke (St Andrew)	Reading Branch	Expires 31.03.12

#### **Bronze Grade**

Benson (St Helen)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 31.10.11
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#### **Expired Awards**

Dorchester (SS Peter & Paul)	South Oxon Branch	Expired 30.09.05
Deddington (SS Peter & Paul)	Banbury Branch	Expired 30.04.06
Bray (St Michael)	EBSB Branch	Expired 31.07.06
Finchhampstead (St James)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.07.07
Stoke Mandeville (St Mary V.)	Chiltern Branch	Expired 31.12.07
Warborough (St Laurence)	South Oxon	Expired 31.12.07
South Stoke(St Andrew)	Reading Branch	Expired 30.06.08
Easthampstead (St Michael)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.12.08
Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 30.04.09
Winkfield (St Mary)	EBSB Branch	Expired 31.05.09
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB Branch	Expired 30.09.09
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB Branch	Expired 30.11.09
Purley (St Mary V.)	Reading Branch	Expired 31.01.10
Thame (St Mary V.)	South Oxon Branch	Expired 31.01.10
Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury Branch	Expired 31.01.10
White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.03.10

## **Towers and Belfries Committee Report**

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Since my last report in October, the Towers and Belfries committee has suffered a severe blow with the death of Peter Davies. Peter was, I think, the longest serving member of the committee and, as in everything else he did, was a great contributor, with a great fund of repartee and stories (not always about the matter in hand!). The current *Tower Maintenance Award* scheme was in fact Peter's idea and will, I hope, be a lasting memorial to him. He will be greatly missed on the committee and will be very hard to replace.

Since the last report, twelve inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below.

- Benson (Grant & Tower Maintenance Award inspections)
  - Bishopstone (correction of "odd-struckness")
  - Chalfont St Giles (Tower Maintenance Award inspection)
  - Fulmer (correction of "odd-struckness")
  - Highworth (correction of "odd-struckness")
  - Hungerford (Tower Maintenance Award inspection)
  - Kintbury (Advice on quotes)
  - Padbury (Grant inspection)
  - Thatcham (Grant & Tower Maintenance Award inspections)
  - Shellingford (correction of "odd-struckness")
  - Shiplake (Grant & Tower Maintenance Award inspections)
  - South Stoke (Advice on quotes & Tower Maintenance Award inspection)
- The committee has agreed a revision to the contents of the Guild publication on Maintenance and is awaiting the appointment of a Guild Website Manager before providing the details to be added to the website.

Advice has been given to two towers (Harwell and Chilton) on sound control and a visit arranged to a tower with an effective system to help them in the design process.

At the time of our last committee meeting it had not proved possible to interest the church authorities in obtaining a faculty for the removal of the bells at the church of St Cross, Oxford (which is to be leased to Balliol College on a 999-year lease). However, since then the situation has changed markedly for the better and the College is now very keen to have the bells removed. The College architects have a lot of information to include in an application for Listed Building Consent for the removal of the bells. Also included are examples of consent from precedents where bells have been removed from Grade 1 buildings and have not been replaced for one reason or another. Christopher Pickford has prepared a masterly "detailed recording" report with which the College is delighted. A faculty is also being prepared and the Oxford Society is working with the College to effect this. Everyone is hoping that the consents will be approved in time for removal in the December 2010/January 2011 period.

John Davidge



## Guild 8-bell Striking Competition 2010

Bank Holiday Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May was thankfully bright and dry – even if the wind was a bit blustery and chilly it afforded good conditions for standing outside the ancient and picturesque Church of St Mary, Wendover, to listen to the seven teams that battled over the 8-bell trophy.

The bells were just right – easy going and not difficult to hear, but just tricky enough to strike to keep the ringers full attention. They have recently been augmented from 6 to 8 by the addition of trebles and the ringing room moved down the tower to a balcony in the upper half of the tower arch. Whites are to be congratulated on delivering another quality augmentation and re-hang.

The competition was organised and hosted by the Chiltern Branch and as we had 7 entries, a single “final” was judged by Robin and Jill Leale from Kingston upon Thames. Delicious sandwiches, cakes and mugs of tea were provided to a continuous stream of ringers throughout the contest by a team of ladies, and served from tables at the chancel steps. It was somewhat daunting to be on the ringers gallery ready to perform and realising that there was an “audience” looking up from the tea tables, mugs and plates in hand....no pressure at all really!!

The ringing was of a high standard throughout the contest, with probably only one method mistake being made throughout the entire contest.

In presenting the results Robin and Jill commented that:

*Ringling was of a good standard throughout and it is impressive that there were seven entries ringling to this standard, and other than for one team there were no method mistakes.*

*Generally the ringling was thought to be a bit slow for the bells, most of the teams were ringling at an equivalent peal speed of 3hrs 12mins. Only Team six pushed the bells along somewhat more.*

The judges provided constructive feedback on each team’s performance in the order in which they rang, as follows:

Team	Judges Comments	Faults Awarded	Position
Reading Branch	Ringling at a steady pace, but rhythm inconsistent due to slightly erratic leading	50	5
Banbury Branch	Steady ringling which improved throughout the piece. Leading was a bit erratic and generated 2 or 3 minor errors	52	6
South Oxon Branch	This team took longer to settle down. There were no errors but there were some slow leads which upset the rows that followed	62	7
High Wycombe	Good strong rhythm from the start, 1 minor trip in the last lead, only minor striking errors. Very good ringling	25	1
St Mary with St Laurence, Reading	Another good piece of ringling. Consistent beat, no errors and only minor irregularities	27	2

*Table continued on next page*

North Bucks Branch	Quickest ringing of the contest. Took time to settle down and ring to same speed. No method mistakes, good steady ringing	45	4
EBSB Branch	Noticeably slower after team 6, steady error free ringing, took a little while to settle. No method mistakes	40	3

Congratulations to High Wycombe, who just “pipped” Reading to first place, (*see photographs on the back cover*). Pat Newton representing the High Wycombe band was presented with the trophy by the judges.

Our thanks go to Barry Cowper for making the necessary arrangements for the contest, Stuart Lawrence and Ruth Grove who were our marshals, and also to the providers of the tea: Liza Hutchins, Elizabeth Sorrell and Jean Weston.

I very much look forward to seeing you all at the 6-bell contest in Oxford Branch in October. I would like to see a band from each Branch – let’s have some heats to manage!

Alan Marchbank

## **Librarian’s Report**

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There have been ten library enquiries since Odd Bob issue 81. These concerned:

- All Saints, Wokingham peal in 1932
- G.E.Stone, early 20<sup>th</sup> century ringer in Oxford
- Bell rededication service information
- Peal at Burgh, Suffolk in 1998
- Rev. F.E.Robinson’s home tower
- Three requests for information about the date members joined the Guild
- Information relating to Vale of White Horse branch
- Peal at Drayton in 1978.

Work has continued on dividing the miscellaneous papers in the library into categories; about one third of the material has now been sorted. A topical paper came to light, relevant to this year’s message from the Bishop of Oxford asking for bells not to be rung during Holy Week. There are several papers in the library on the subject of Holy Week ringing, including a note about a Guild meeting reported on page 349 of the Ringing World for 1948. Members passed a resolution saying that the Guild “disapproves of the ringing of church bells during Holy Week, except where it is the custom to ring half-muffled on Good Friday to commemorate the death of Our Lord”. The subject was up for discussion then, as now!

The usual reminder – if you would like some information, or would like to visit the library or borrow a book, you are very welcome to, just let me know.

Doug Beaumont

## **ODG Group Personal Accident Insurance**

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For a number of years, the Guild has arranged Group Personal Accident Insurance cover for Guild members and those under instruction by a Guild member. In May 2009, the benefits were increased and the lower and upper age limits on cover were removed.

### **Scope of coverage**

Guild members are covered whilst ringing or attending to routine maintenance work to the bells in any church or bell tower, or whilst travelling to or from a church or bell tower to practice or take part in bell ringing anywhere in the United Kingdom. (*Routine maintenance* means any works for which approval in accordance with the Care of Churches Measure is not required – separate cover can be arranged where needed in connection with these more major items of work).

Insurance is extended to include members teaching bell ringing and persons under instruction by a Guild member at a church or bell tower within the Diocese of Oxford.

### **Benefits payable**

<b>Age Range (years)</b>	<b>Temporary Total Disablement</b>	<b>Permanent Disablement or Permanent Partial Disablement</b>	<b>Death</b>
16 – 70	£300 per week for up to 104 weeks	£30,000	£30,000
Under 16	Nil	£2,500	£2,500
71 – 75	Nil	£2,500	£2,500
Over 75	Nil	Nil	£2,500

Medical expenses up to £1,500 are payable for those aged 16 – 70 years and up to £125 for the other age groups.

Claims and queries should be directed in the first instance to:

The Honorary General Treasurer  
Mr.B.J.Gatward  
Grangemead  
Bath Road  
Devizes, SN10 1PH (01380 721009)

Claims must be confirmed in writing.

Please remember that it is a condition of all policies that claims must be reported to the Insurers as soon as practicable. A claim that is not notified within a reasonable time may be rejected.

## News from the Branches

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### Banbury

The first peal of 5040 Plain Bob Minor was rung on the re-hung and augmented bells at Hanwell during December. The peal was also rung to welcome Revd John Reader to the Ironstone Benefice. Andries Bosland and Heather Bletchly, both Cropredy ringers, achieved peal firsts.



Keith Abbott, Andries Bosland, Heather Bletchly, Alan Griffin Barry Davis, Graham Clifton (C). First for 2& 3.

The Advent Carol service was held at Tadmarton Church, attended by 30 – 40 people. This year as well as handbell ringing by Steeple Aston ringers, we enjoyed Christmas music and carols from Verna Wass and her musicians. The service was conducted by Revd Cannon Timothy Wimbush who gave an amusing address. After the service, mulled wine and

mince pies were served.

Although the snowy weather in January and February caused a certain amount of disruption to practices, etc, the Firsts and Tower Challenge fortnight went ahead, culminating in a jacket potato supper, quiz and, most importantly, the presentation of certificates to all those ringers and towers who had achieved "firsts". The evening, held at Tadmarton's recently refurbished village hall and organised by the Social Committee, was much enjoyed by all those who attended.

The Cartwright Arms Hotel in Aynho was the venue for our Annual Branch Dinner which was attended by 46 people. After the meal we were given a short talk by Chris Mew which was interesting and entertaining, the finale being audience participation in the singing of the chorus of his ditty.

We are now looking forward to the warmer weather arriving when we can hopefully take pleasure at the branch striking competition and barbecue in June at Hanwell, and an outing combining a train journey with ringing in between, during July.

Heather Hughes

## **Bicester**

We had our AGM on Saturday 20 February at Islip following, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year running, our format of a morning meeting with lunch in a nearby pub, in this case the Swan. Numbers attending were down on previous years and all officers agreed to stay in post so formalities were reasonably short! The annual service was taken by the Area Dean of the Bicester and Islip Deanery, the Reverend Charles Masheder, and Mrs Mary Hatwell, a ringer from Charlton-on-Otmoor, played the organ which was much appreciated.

Anthony Cole, as well as organising the website for the Bicester Branch, also organised a well supported Spring Car Outing a month later on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March in the Buckingham Area. We rang at Maids Moreton, Buckingham, Great Horwood and Winslow and much enjoyed them all – our thanks go to those who unlocked for us, as well as to Anthony who managed it all with such aplomb!

Kathryn Grant

## **Central Bucks**

**There's a buzz in Central Bucks at the moment.** Lead by our dynamic duo of Hal Drysdale, Training Officer and Heather Dobson, Ringing Master, a programme of regular targeted practices is enabling ringers to develop at their own pace and not just as defined by their own tower. In addition to the conventional Saturday Branch Practices, these additions include 6- and 8-bell 'Improvers' sessions and advanced 8-bell. We are hoping this intermixing of ringers, together with outings and striking competitions, will reinforce the community CBB spirit still more, especially within the growing young ringers group.

An increase in email communication with tower contacts has been backed with a new website [www.bellringing.biz/cbb](http://www.bellringing.biz/cbb) though conventional newsletters will still be produced.

At our February AGM we also decided to make a greater effort to raise more for the ODG Bell Fund as CBB has been a net gainer over the last few years. Novel ideas to date include sponsoring Hal to cut his hair (you can see why if you check out the newsletter on the website). More ideas would be welcome.

The AGM also saw us agreeing to support the request to the Guild from the ringers at Padbury and Hillesden to transfer those towers into the North Bucks branch. We were sad to lose them but wish them well in their new branch.

Diana Slevin

## **Chiltern**

The Chiltern Branch 2010 AGM was held at Monks Risborough on 17<sup>th</sup> May, attended by the Guild Master and some 23 members. All officers were re-elected for another year.

Chiltern Branch practices are held regularly on the third Saturday of each month, but attendance continues to be sporadic. Any suggestions on how to increase the popularity and success of these events would be appreciated.

The lack of news emanating from the towers is perhaps indicative of the modesty of the ringers in being reluctant to advertise their achievements; I am grateful to the Editor of the Branch newsletter ("*Quarter Turn*") for the following snippets. For example, *Ringing World* recently included the name of our Branch Chairman in the list of leading quarter-peal ringers for 2009. Ellesborough is the only tower in the Branch to hold a current Tower Maintenance Award – a "Gold" no less – so congratulations are due to the Steeple Keeper and his helpers. Aston Clinton was fifth in the list of peals rung in the Guild in 2009, albeit most were rung by visitors (although Ros Nicholls from the local band did ring her first peal last year).

Cheddington's fund raising activities continue apace (approximately half the funds required have now been secured) with a wide variety of activities, including a Tower Open Day aimed primarily at non-ringers, which hopefully may both raise money and attract new recruits. A full account of their aims and fund raising progress can be found at [www.cmmbells.org.uk/StGilesBells/RestorationBlog.html](http://www.cmmbells.org.uk/StGilesBells/RestorationBlog.html) including forthcoming fund raising events.

Ellesborough, Weston Turville, Monks Risborough and Great Missenden all rang on 23<sup>rd</sup> April to celebrate St George's Day.

We apologise to anyone who has tried unsuccessfully to access the Chiltern Branch website in the last few months, but we hope to be back online very soon, with the address [www.chiltern.odg.org.uk](http://www.chiltern.odg.org.uk).

Brian Robson

## **Chipping Norton**

Anne Hoyle

## **East Berks and South Bucks**

Another new initiative! EBSB Ringing Master, Katharine Firman, organised a quarter peal "weekend", the aim being twofold – to help branch members to ring a 'first' and for bands to be 'joint' in the sense of being made up of ringers from at least two towers. Altogether 14 quarters (out of 15) were successful with over 70 ringers (from 19 towers) taking part. There were six first quarter peals, several firsts in method, a "1<sup>st</sup> as conductor" and one "1<sup>st</sup> quarter for 40 years". The only unsuccessful quarter was scored at a second attempt in January at Beaconsfield and celebrated the birth of Charlie, a grandson for Ken and Angela Darvill, and was the first inside for local ringer Andrew Halford.

Branch collaborative quarter peal ringing has been deemed so successful that a couple more were rung in March (including two “first of method” – Yorkshire S Royal) and the full autumn event is expected to become a regular feature of our Branch programme.

The Christmas Social was ably hosted by Penn and our traditional Post Christmas Outing took us to Worplesdon, Old Woking, Oatlands Park and Egham.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, the newly initiated Branch email group proved very useful as a means of communicating cancelled practices resulting from the adverse weather conditions. There have also been some interesting discussions, for example contractual arrangements regarding wedding ringing.

Fund raising for the High Wycombe restoration project is progressing well. A concert held in January raised over £850 and consisted of the fairly newly-formed handbell team ringing tunes, the Chiltern Concert Band playing a wide variety of music, and three leads of Kent Maximus on handbells. Whilst it is not possible to ring the back four bells at High Wycombe, as there are two 2nds Caters is occasionally rung (an “interesting” sound and somewhat challenging ropesight!), including a quarter peal of Grandsire Caters rung on Christmas Eve. Otherwise, ringing continues on the front eight bells, now regularly including Glasgow and/or Belfast on practice night.

Bray ringers have been supporting the ringing at Cookham and Boyne Hill, Maidenhead whilst their tower was being restored. Their bells are now ringing again and the Bishop of Reading attended a thanksgiving service for the restoration on Sunday, 18th April.

Langley is thriving, with up to 19 people at (sometimes twice weekly) practice nights and a recent visit to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. They would also like to suggest that others copy their idea of donating a wedding fee to a tower appeal, with Gift Aid by the ringers making it worth even more. They point out that if every tower in the Branch were prepared to donate fees from one wedding a year to current and future bell restoration projects then a hugely significant sum could be raised.

Maryanne Roach for Mandy Salter

## **Newbury**

The Branch held its second quarter peal week in February. This year 27 attempts out of 30 were successful. They included 73 ringers, with several firsts and ranged from Minimus to Royal. The week was dedicated to Rev F.E. Robinson. At the end of the week the Branch held its dinner at East Garston village hall where the ringing master presented certificates to notable firsts during the quarter peal week. Our thanks go to our ringing master, Mark Robins, for organising the week, to all the ringers who took part, to the towers for allowing their bells to be used, and to Maureen Tarbox and Tessa Allum for organising the dinner.

On March 6<sup>th</sup> the Branch held its AGM at Thatcham. The 33 members present stood in silence to remember Shirley Goodman of Beedon and Harry Larkham of Beenham who had died in 2009. The officers presented their reports, all of which speak of healthy ringing activity in the branch. All of the current officers were re-elected.

Branch practices continue to be reasonably well attended, including the one in January when there was so much snow around. Mark did suggest that ringers who don't normally attend these practices give it a try sometime. The *Quarter and Curry* monthly quarter peal and meal event also has good attendance. Mark was thanked for all the hard work he puts into organising ringing in the branch.

A discussion took place about the change to the Guild rules regarding the election of Distinguished Members and the guidelines for this. Many of those present suggested that the current wording could preclude the ability to honour ringers who had served their local Church with distinction but had not held significant office in the Guild. The secretary was asked to bring this up with the Guild officers. Our chairman, Mike Till, was congratulated for having been elected joint ringing master at Winchester Cathedral.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> we held a Branch Committee meeting, also at Thatcham, and the following evening the officers met to discuss issues which had arisen at the committee meeting. Amongst other points the secretary had suggested the Branch might consider adopting the Guild method of a rota for future AGMs and Committee meetings. This was felt to be a good idea and the secretary will now canvas all towers in the Branch where there are members to see if they would be prepared to be included in such a rota. We also discussed how we might run some recruiting events.

Forthcoming events this year include the Guild AGM at Speen on May 15<sup>th</sup>. We are pleased to be able to host this event and are grateful for the work that has been put in by Branch officers and the members of Speen church to make this all happen.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May the Branch outing will be to North Somerset, and on July 10<sup>th</sup> we will have the Branch Social and 6-bell striking contest at the newly overhauled 6 at Peasmore. At the Branch AGM the ringing master encouraged all towers to send a band to this contest if at all possible. We are hoping that one of the bands which take part in the Branch contest will go on to represent the Branch at the Guild contest. Mark had been hopeful of taking a band to the 8-bell contest on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, but as this is a Bank Holiday and there are a number of other ringing activities taking place on that day he has again been unable to find sufficient ringers.

David Wilcox



## **North Bucks**

The Christmas celebration continues to grow in popularity. Great Linford were the hosts and made this a tower event as well, ensuring good support from them as well as the rest of the branch.

For the first time our band for the 10-bell striking competition were able to benefit from having a ten bell tower within the branch where they could practice together. They managed to get together on a couple of occasions but, due to last minute unavailability, the band that rang in the competition hadn't managed to practice together.

The AGM was held at Woughton on the Green where there were a couple of changes of officers due to David Phillipson standing down as he is going to work abroad. Our thanks to David for his contribution to the running of the branch. Doug Hird took on the post of Deanery Ringing Development Leader for the Newport Deanery and Hugh Butler was elected as a Branch Representative.

We can now welcome Padbury and Hillesden to the branch as their transfer from the Central Bucks Branch has been ratified. This brings the whole of the Buckingham Deanery within our branch, supporting our vision of a closer association between the branch and the church authorities.

Last time I wrote that it was not clear if our move to Saturday practices was working to improve support for branch events. Now that the pattern of events has become more established it looks as if the plan is working. The last three Saturday practices have been very well supported, with so many at Fenny Stratford that people had to wait downstairs for a turn to ring as the ringing room was full.

We are turning our attention to raising the awareness of bell ringing in the branch and recruiting new ringers. A proposal was put to the AGM that we explore the possibility of holding an event in the Milton Keynes Shopping Centre as a public relations exercise and recruiting event. It is estimated that up to 100,000 people visit the centre on a Saturday and travel for up to 1½ hours to get there. In order to give this event impact it is hoped to have one of the portable mini-rings for demonstrations and have-a-go opportunities. This sort of event will need careful planning with support from all of our branch as well as neighbouring branches and Guilds, and follow up sessions arranged to train any new recruits. This event is unlikely to happen this year as we are determined to have everything in place to ensure its success.

Helen Stanworth

## **Old North Berks**

Ringling in 2010 got off to a good start with the East Hagbourne ringers inviting the Branch to New Year's Day ringing and refreshments.

Sadly we lost a loyal and long-standing member, Peter Davies, at the beginning of February. Tower Captain of Wantage, Branch Newsletter Editor, member of the Guild Tower and Belfries sub-committee and Director of The

Ringling World, Peter will be sorely missed in many ringing circles for his tireless efforts, warmth of character and incisive intellect.

In March we held our six-bell striking competition and AGM. The competition was well supported with seven teams entering. This is the most for many years and made for a very sociable occasion. Our thanks go to Robert and Patricia Newton for their expert judging skills. At the AGM we gained both a new chairman (Mandy Winters) and a web master (Liz Woodhouse), and thanks were given to the two hard-working retiring officers, Cliff Garlick and Keith Anderson. It was decided to continue with the positions of Joint Ringing Masters (Richard Loyd and Lee Pinnington), as they had worked well together over the previous year. To date this year we have elected ten new members and re-elected two members to the Guild from nine different towers, and we are pleased to see that the branch is continuing to grow.

Attendance at our monthly branch practices is still variable and can range from less than ten to over twenty-five. Strangely, bad weather seems to have no adverse effect on attendance, with our February practice being one of the best attended despite the freezing weather conditions. These practices are generally designed to coincide with a tower practice within the branch with two special methods chosen to assist the local band. However, many other methods can be rung depending on the skills of all those attending. It appears that sometimes some of the local band members do not go to their practice when a branch practice has been scheduled and this is definitely not what is intended.

Our autumn social event gave many branch members and friends a chance to display their bowling skills at a skittles evening with fish and chip supper held in Radley Village Hall. This was a fun occasion for everyone and we would like to thank Daphne Pollard, her ringers and assistants for all their hard work in making the event such a success. An amazing £168 was raised for branch funds. After the supper, it was Cliff Garlick's pleasure to award Daphne with a testimonial certificate from the Guild in recognition of more than 50 years continuous membership.

Our next social event is an outing to the Wokingham area, with opportunities for a pub lunch and afternoon tea. This will be held on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July and will be followed in the evening by a barbecue at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. All branch members and friends are most welcome to take part at any time during the day, and are encouraged to join in the ringing during the intervals between refreshments.

Gillian Loyd

## **Oxford City**

The first week of 2010 was a sad one for the City Branch as we lost two long-serving and significant members of our branch.

Stephen Ivin was eminent throughout the world of ringing and his remarkable contribution to the art has been celebrated fulsomely elsewhere.

T. Peter Franklin had been a City Branch member since 1946 and had held various offices in the branch. He was much respected and well-liked by all who knew him. His genuine interest in ringing matters meant that he supported all branch events, and he worked tirelessly to promote ringing within the branch and at Kidlington in particular. He enthused young ringers and encouraged the more mature; he was the patriarch of St Mary's and he never failed to provide a much valued contribution to Odd Bob! He was very proud that Elliot and Abigail, his grandchildren, are able to continue the Franklin family ringing tradition.

We miss both distinguished men unreservedly.

Our Ringing Master, Hugh Deam, continues to encourage many keen ringers, new and experienced, to gain skills and understanding. There have been several ringing occasions comprising quarter peals, branch practices and outings.

We are indebted to those towers, within and outside the branch, that have allowed us to use their bells with the fixed intention of fast-tracking these keen learners so that they are more swiftly able to benefit the next intake of learners in their home towers. The work that has been put in over the past few years has seen the standard of ringing for our 8-bell practices increase markedly.

Shuffling through some old papers which were fading beyond recognition in St Ebbe's, I came across the City Branch Newsletter One. It seemed a curious stroke of fate, as we have just reinstated a City Branch Newsletter.

I do not know the date of this typewritten copy but it informs the branch that the new Guild Master is to be Mr William Butler – so I am sure someone will be able to enlighten me.

It starts:

*The Editor has much pleasure in presenting to the Branch this first issue of its newsletter. Cordial thanks go to those who assisted in its compilation; equally heartfelt thanks will go to those who feel inclined to volunteer any kind of help in the production of further issues.*

*One thing our newsletter is going to need is an arresting title. I can't think of anything more exciting than "Wake Up, Spires!" Any bright ideas, anyone?*

*Another request I feel justified in making is for a supply of lighter items. In a Branch of our size I'm not anticipating any lack of news, but it would add greatly to the readability and attractiveness of the newsletter if the artistically and poetically inclined among us were to submit items designed to entertain rather than to instruct or inform.*

*Talking of instruction, perhaps it might be a good idea if our newsletter contained a regular feature of interest to the many young learners in the Branch. I'd be very pleased to hear from anyone who might like to contribute anything of this kind.*

*With these few remarks the Editor declares this newsletter well and truly open, and hopes that the Branch will find it useful, readable and interesting.*

If there are more copies of this publication available to the City Branch please send them to me, and let me know who this Editor was. Thank you.

Katie Lane

## **Reading**

In December we held our Annual Advent Carol Service at St Giles' Reading, with members of the Branch supplementing St Giles' choir. Ringing took place before the service and then *The County Borders* handbell team rang at the beginning of the service. The evening finished off with mulled wine and mince pies.

The Branch AGM took place in February at South Stoke. Ringing took place before the service, which took the form of Evensong, followed by the excellent tea, with the AGM meeting starting after the tea.

There was no change to the Branch Officers. The Branch Practices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month now take place between 18.00 and 20.00.

Ken Baker

## **Sonning Deanery**

The branch AGM was held in February at Twyford. Here the following changes in Branch officers were made: Simon Milford replaced Rachel Moss as Chairman, Pam Elliston replaced Andrew Moss as Secretary, Sue Davenport became a branch representative at Guild meetings, and John Harrison became Webmaster, with assistance to be given by the previous webmaster Aidan Hopkins. Eric Bowes remains Treasurer, Andrew Elliston remains a branch representative and Rob Needham remains Bookstall officer. Sarah Boys continues as newsletter editor.

Thanks to all the officers for their hard work over the year.

In addition to monthly branch practices on Saturdays, weekday practices continue, usually held on the first Tuesday of the month at All Saints Wokingham.

The branch outing on 6 March was to the Vale of the White Horse area. Six towers were visited including Shrivenham where some of us rang on ten bells for the first time. An enjoyable time was had by all. Thanks to the organisers for arranging a day of varied towers and pleasant scenery. Andrew Moss was in training for his London to Paris charity cycle ride and cycled between the towers.

The 6-bell striking competition was held at Shottesbrooke in April, with five teams entering. It was won by All Saints Wokingham with some fine Cambridge Minor; Easthampstead came second and Sandhurst third. Thanks to the judges

Jim and Helen Diserens, who provided some useful comments afterwards and also praised the newly formed band from Twyford for participating by ringing rounds. A skittles evening completed the day, which included a hearty serving of lasagne each.

Two training courses were held in April: *Elementary Bob Calling*, run by Rachel Moss, and *Rope Splicing*, by John Harrison. These were much appreciated by the participants. Sonning tower has benefited as two new bob callers have been practising what they learned.

Easthampstead tower said goodbye to two long-serving members when Margaret and Nigel Bearne moved to the country to live near Winchcombe, having joined Easthampstead in 1970. We wish them the very best in their new home and ringing area.

Ringling for St Georges Day took place at several towers and St. Andrew's, Sonning organised a quarter peal day, ringing at three towers and enjoying a lunch in the garden of a pub.

Waltham St. Lawrence has very recently lost three ringing members who have supported the tower for many years. Tony Evans is moving to Gloucestershire, and Jacqueline and Martha Hazell are moving to Lewes, Sussex. The tower captain, Derek Titford, and his wife entertained all the ringers and supporters to a lovely farewell supper. The three leavers are wished the very best in their new homes and ringing areas.

Pam Elliston

## **South Oxon**

Amy Herlihy

## **Vale of the White Horse**

Branch practices and training evenings continue to be well supported and there was also a good turnout for the Annual Dinner at The Lamb in Buckland in February.

We visited Shrivenham for our AGM in March. All but one of the officers were re-elected – Carina Lobley takes over as Branch Rep. Four new members were welcomed to the Guild, three from Shrivenham and one from Uffington.

Buckland tower is currently without bells. After tuning, they will be re-hung with new fittings in the existing frame. Soundproofing will be installed between the bell chamber and ringing room, and it is hoped to fit a Saxilby ringing simulator.

Ringers from Ashbury and Bishopstone continue their close association and are busy raising funds for the installation of a new galleried ringing room, lower in the tower, at Bishopstone. This will reduce sound levels and make access easier.

Following a tower visit by the top class of Faringdon Primary School, Jon and Kay Chamberlain ran an after-school bell ringing club for some of the children earlier this year. They were all able to ring a bell on their own by the end of the course, and hopefully some will decide to continue as ringers.

Alan Avery rang his first peal (Bob Caters) at Shrivenham on St George's Day. Darran Ricks' first peal as conductor (Grandsire Caters) commemorated the centenary of the death of Revd. Robinson, the Guild's first Master. First quarter peals were rung by Ruth Cooper, Sam Cooper, Fiona Stretch and Rebecca Brooks. Congratulations to them all.

Lucy Laird

## **Witney and Woodstock**

The bells at the church of St Mary the Virgin in Freeland have been more or less out of action for a number of years – officially classified as un-ringable – but are now well on the way to being back in use after undergoing major refurbishment. It is hoped that the work will be completed by September. The committee of the bell appeal fund certainly knows how to organise successful fund-raising events. This year the fund has raised money at several well-supported events including a music evening, coffee mornings, a fun run, a village-wide garage sale and a riotous auction of promises. People have been extremely generous with their gifts and pledges; one notable example at the auction of promises (which raised a magnificent £8000) was £75 paid for a prize-winning pavlova. Ten new ringers from Freeland are learning to ring at Combe and Church Hanborough and it's hoped that other local ringers will return once the new band start regular ringing at Freeland.

Our AGM in February this year was held at Wootton. The Wootton members provided excellent refreshments and some very welcome hot drinks to counteract what had been a decidedly chilly church service. The branch committee remains largely unchanged; Ian Davey-Wilson has taken on the role of Branch Representative whilst also managing the website. Seventeen new members were elected which maintains Branch membership at 180.

Richard White's quiz night later in February has become a welcome annual event and is the perfect activity for boosting Branch funds. As in previous years, the quiz night was held at Woodstock's Tennis and Bowls club, and this year more teams than ever took part. As usual, delicious food was brought by each team and there were also the customary heated exchanges as to who had won the quiz. After a couple of recounts, Woodstock was declared the winner.

Requests from the Guild's Master for special ringing have been well supported. Stonesfield, Church Hanborough, North Leigh and Combe all took part in the commemorative ringing to mark the centenary of the death of Revd. F.E. Robinson, with Combe ringing a quarter peal that included a significant proportion of Stedman Doubles. Ringing for St George's Day has been encouraged by the Guild and is becoming increasingly popular; this year ringers at Alvescot, Aston, Bladon, Church Hanborough, Eynsham, North Leigh (ringing a quarter peal of April Day), Stanton Harcourt, Witney (including Ducklington ringers) and Woodstock all marked the day.

Anthony Williamson

## Points from Peals

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Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 saw the centenary of the passing of Revd Francis E. Robinson, the Guild's first Master and the first 'thousand pealer'. This notable anniversary was marked with peals and general ringing throughout the Diocese. This included a peal at All Saints Wokingham where Robinson is buried, and a peal at Drayton where he was vicar between 1878 and 1908, and also donated two of the bells to augment the ring to eight. He rang his last peal on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1910, a peal of Stedman Triples, at St. Andrew's Church, Uxbridge, Middlesex. It was therefore fitting that members of the Guild were able to repeat this performance on the exact anniversary and with the same composition.

Congratulations are extended to Tim Pett who rang his 3,000<sup>th</sup> peal on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The method chosen had not been rung before and was aptly named Trimillennial Surprise Major for the occasion. Congratulations also to David J. Perry who rang his first peal at Benson on 5<sup>th</sup> April. This was also the first peal on the bells since they were rehung clockwise in a cast iron frame.

In May 2009, St. Mary le More, Wallingford was closed to complete a major reordering and maintenance project. This was finally completed in January 2010 and the Bishop of Reading rededicated the building at a special service on Sunday February 28<sup>th</sup>. This was celebrated with a peal of Swindon Surprise Royal on the following Saturday.

A band, all of whom were over 75 years old, rang the peal at St. Mary, Lydiard Tregoze on 15th January. This was possibly the first peal to be rung by an over 75 band, the oldest member being Eric Sutton who is 80. This was also Bill Butler's 1000<sup>th</sup> different tower to a peal.

Sadly, Stephen Ivin passed away in January after a long illness. He was a first class ringer and groundbreaking composer, and his expertise extended to bells and bell hanging. The recasting and augmentations at 'St Thos' and 'Mary Mags', Oxford, are testaments to Stephen's knowledge and abilities. Stephen rang 29 peals for the ODG: 257 for the Oxford Society, and 50 for the Oxford University Society. A number of peals have been dedicated to Stephen's memory, often with the compositions specially chosen as a tribute him.

Peals have also been rung in memory of Gerald Johnson, a former ringer of Chenies tower who died on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009, in thanksgiving for the life of T Peter Franklin, a ringer at Kidlington since 1943 who died on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2010, and in memory of Peter G Davies of Wantage.

Claire F. Roulstone

# Guild Officers for 2010

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Mr Jim Diserens

Mrs Wenda Fowles  
Mrs June Wells

Mr W (Willie) Haynes  
Mr Ken Wakefield



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**Mr John A Harrison**

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# Diary of Events for 2010

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the [www.odg.org.uk](http://www.odg.org.uk) web site for diary updates on an ongoing basis.

* Subject to confirmation	AGM Annual General Meeting	AP Advanced Practice
BP Branch Practice	EP Elementary Practice	HY Half Yearly Meeting
QM Quarterly Meeting	RCP Ringing Centre Practice	SC Striking Competition
SM Surprise Major	SP Surprise Practice	CM Committee Meeting

## MAY 2010

<b>Sat</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Guild Event</b>	ODG	Newbury Branch, Hungerford	*
			AGM		
Sat	15	Sonning Deanery	BP	Barkham	10.30 – 12.00
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP	Marsworth	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	17	Bicester	BP	Bicester (10), Triples & Major Practice	19.30 – 21.00
Mon	17	Banbury	BP	Bodicote	7.30 – 9.00
Tue	18	Central Bucks		Stewkley Progress Practice (6-Bell)	7.30 onwards
Thu	20	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Fri	21	EBSB	AP	Amersham (12) Higher Numbers Practice	7.45 – 9.15
Sat	22	EBSB	BP	Fulmer (6), Beginners Practice	5.00 – 7.00
Sat	22	Central Bucks	AP	Cuddington (8-Bell)	6.30 – 8.00
Thu	27	VOWH	SC	Hinton Waldrist	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	28	EBSB	BP	Cookham (10) Weekday Daytime Practice	2.30 – 4.30
Sat	29	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	BP	Aston Clinton 8/10-Bell Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	29	EBSB	AP	Hughenden (8) Advanced Surprise Practice	7.00 – 9.00

## JUNE 2010

Tue	1	Central Bucks	BP	Aylesbury, Progress Practice (8-Bell)	7.30 onwards
Sat	5	Oxford City	BP	Headington (8)	10.00 – 12
Mon	7	Banbury	SP	Bloxham	7.30 – 9.00
Mon	7	Bicester	BP	Brill (6)	19.30 – 21.00
Thu	10	ONB	BP	Wallingford (10)	20.00 – 21.30
Sat	12	Banbury	SC	Hanwell	5.45
Sat	12	Central Bucks	SC	Whitchurch (6-Bell)	TBC
Sat	12	EBSB	SC + BP	Hitcham (6)	5.00 – 9.00
Sat	12	Reading		Branch Outing	TBA
Sat	12			Wantage, Ringing Day in memory of Peter Davies	10 onwards
Tue	15	Central Bucks	BP	Stewkley Progress Practice (6-Bell)	7.30 onwards
Thu	17	Banbury	BP	Wardington	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	17	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Thu	17	VOWH	BP	Asbury (6)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	19	Sonning	BP	Warfield	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	19	Oxford City		Outing	TBC
Sat	19	Chiltern	SC	Ivinghoe	TBC
Mon	21	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6) Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	26	VOWH		TBA Branch Ringing Outing	TBA
Sat	26	Central Bucks		near Cheltenham, Hal's Family Steam Train Outing	TBC
Sat	26	EBSB	BP	Denham (8)	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Little Milton	7.00 – 8.30

## JULY 2010

Sat	3	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre		Aston Clinton, 8/10-Bell Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	3	Oxford City	BP	Northmoor	10.00 – 12
Tue	6	Banbury	SP	Hanwell	7.00 – 8.30
Thu	8	VOWH		TBA, Single Method Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	10	Oxford City	BP	St Thomas (10)	18.30pm onwards
Sat	10	Chiltern		Great Kimble, Branch Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	10	Reading	BP	Checkendon (8)	6.00 – 8.00
Sat	10	Central Bucks	BP	Wingrave	6.30 – 8.30
Mon	12	Banbury	BP	Great Tew	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	15	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	17	Sonning	BP	Wokingham, St. Paul's	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	17	Banbury		Train & Ringing Outing	
Sat	17	Chiltern	BP	Bledlow	7.00 – 9.00
Sat	24	South Oxon	BP	Berrick Salome	7.00 – 8.30
Mon	26	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6), Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Wed	28	VOWH	BP	Coleshill (6)	7.30 – 9.00

## AUGUST 2010

Fri	6	Banbury	SP	Adderbury	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	7	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre		Aston Clinton, 8/10-Bell Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Tue	10	Banbury	BP	Steeple Aston	7.30 – 9.00
Wed	11	ONB	BP	Childrey (8)	19.30 – 21.00
Sat	14	Reading	BP	Padworth (6)	6.00 – 8.00
Sat	14	Central Bucks	BP	Granborough	6.30 – 8.30
Thu	19	VOWH	BP	Buscot (4), BP + Picnic	6.30 onwards
Thu	19	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	8.00 – 9.30
Sat	21	Sonning	BP	Finchampstead	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	21	Chiltern	BP	Mentmore	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	23	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6), Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00

## SEPTEMBER 2010

Thu	2	VOWH		TBA, Single Method Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	4	Oxford City	BP	Yarnton (6)	10.00 – 12
Thu	9	Banbury	SP	Great Tew	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	11	Oxford City	BP	North Hinksey	10.00 – 12
Sat	11	Reading	SC	Swallowfield, (6-Bell)	TBA
Sat	11	Central Bucks		TBC, Branch Outing	TBC
Tue	14	ONB	BP	Sunningwell (6)	19.30 – 21.00
Thu	16	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Waltham St. Lawrence	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	18	Chiltern	BP	Weston Turville	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	20	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6), Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Wed	22	Banbury	BP	Banbury	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	23	Banbury		TBC E&C Bloxham, Tower Reps	7.30
Thu	23	VOWH	BP	Buckland (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	25	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre	BP	Aston Clinton, 8/10-Bell Practice	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>		<b>Shiplake Ringing Centre, Michaelmas Training Day</b>	<b>10.00 – 8.00</b>

## OCTOBER 2010

Fri	1	Banbury	SP	Steeple Aston	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>Oxford City Branch, (6-Bell)</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Fri	8	Banbury	BP	Mollington	7.30 – 9.00

Sat	9	Oxford City		TBC Outing	TBC
Sat	9	Reading	BP	Caversham (8)	6.00 – 8.00
Sat	9	Central Bucks	BP	Swanbourne	6.30 – 8.30
Sat	9	Chipping Norton		Spelsbury Autumn Meeting, ringing from 5.45pm and meeting at 6.30pm	5.45 onwards
Sat	9	South Oxon		TBD, Autumn Outing	TBD
Sat	9	Chiltern		Ivinghoe Branch Training Morning	10.30 – 12.30
Fri	15	ONB	BP	Blewbury (8)	20.00 – 21.30
Sat	16	Sonning	SC +	Hurst, 8-bell striking competition	10.00 – 12.00
			BP	followed by branch practice	12.00 – 1.00
Sat	16	Banbury	HY	Adderbury	
Sat	16	Chiltern	SC +	Little Missenden, Orchard Cup	7.00 – 9.00
			HY		
Thu	21	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	23	South Oxon		Drayton St Leonard, Autumn Meeting	4.00 – 5.30
Mon	25	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6) ,Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Tues	26	VOWH	BP	Stanford in the Vale (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	30	Aston Clinton Ringing Centre		Aston Clinton, 8/10-Bell Practice	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>		<b>Steeple Aston Training Day</b>	

### NOVEMBER 2010

Sat	6	Oxford City	BP	Wolvercote	10.00 – 12
Tue	9	ONB	BP	Milton (8)	19.30 – 21.00
Thu	11	Banbury	BP	Adderbury	7.30 – 9.00
Thu	11	VOWH		TBA, Single Method Training Evening	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	13	Reading	BP	Mapledurham (6)	6.00– 8.00
Sat	13	Central Bucks	BP	Long Crendon	6.30 – 8.30
Thu	18	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	20	Sonning	CM +	Sandhurst, St Michael	6.00 – 7.30
			BP		7.30 – 9.00
Sat	20	Oxford City	AGM	Garsington	15.00 onwards
Sat	20	Chiltern	BP+	Wendover etc, Branch Quarter Peal Day	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	22	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6), Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00
Fri	26	VOWH	BP	Longcot (8)	7.30 – 9.00
<b>Sat</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>EBSB Branch, (10-Bell)</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>	<b>GCM</b>	<b>EBSB Branch</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Sat	27	Banbury	SP	Bodicote	7.30 – 9.00

### DECEMBER 2010

<b>Sat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>GUILD EVENT</b>		<b>Aston Clinton, 10-Bell Training Day (Royal) The Aston Clinton 8/10-Bell Practice will be rescheduled</b>	
Sat	4	Oxford City	BP	Mary Magdalen (10)	18.30 onwards
Sat	4	South Oxon	BP	Chalgrove	4.00 – 5.30
Fri	10	ONB	BP	Appleton (10)	19.30 – 21.00
Sat	11	Reading		Pangbourne, Carol Service	TBA
Sat	11	Central Bucks	BP	Cuddington	6.30 – 8.30
Thu	16	Reading	AP	Shiplake (8)	7.30 – 9.00
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Easthampstead	10.00 – 12.00
Sat	18	Chiltern	BP	Ellesborough Followed by the 100 Club Christmas Draw	7.00 – 9.00
Mon	27	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6), Minor Practice	7.30 – 9.00

# **COURSE FOR NEW TEACHERS**

## **I T T S**

**Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

**at STEEPLE ASTON**



**Introduction 9.30 a.m.**

Teaching a skilled activity – theory **9.45–10.00**

Practical session – *The basic components* **10.00 – 11.30**

### *Coffee*

Becoming a good teacher – theory **11.50 – 12.10**

Practical session – *Joining both strokes together* **12.10 – 1.00**

### *Lunch*

Solving handling problems – theory **2.00 – 2.20**

Practical session – *Solving Common handling problems* **2.20 – 3.00**

The importance of foundation skills – theory **3.00 – 3.20**

Practical session – *Teaching ringing up and down* **3.20 – 4.20**

### *Tea*

Coaching Considerations – theory **4.40 – 5.00**

Practical session – *Skills development* **5.00 – 5.40**

Running a good practice – theory **5.40 – 6.00**

6.15 Information about the Moodle site, data collection, role of mentors, etc.

**6.30 finish**

Please note the programme may be subject to change.



*The Guild 8-bell competition winners – High Wycombe*



*Second, St Mary with St Lawrence Reading*