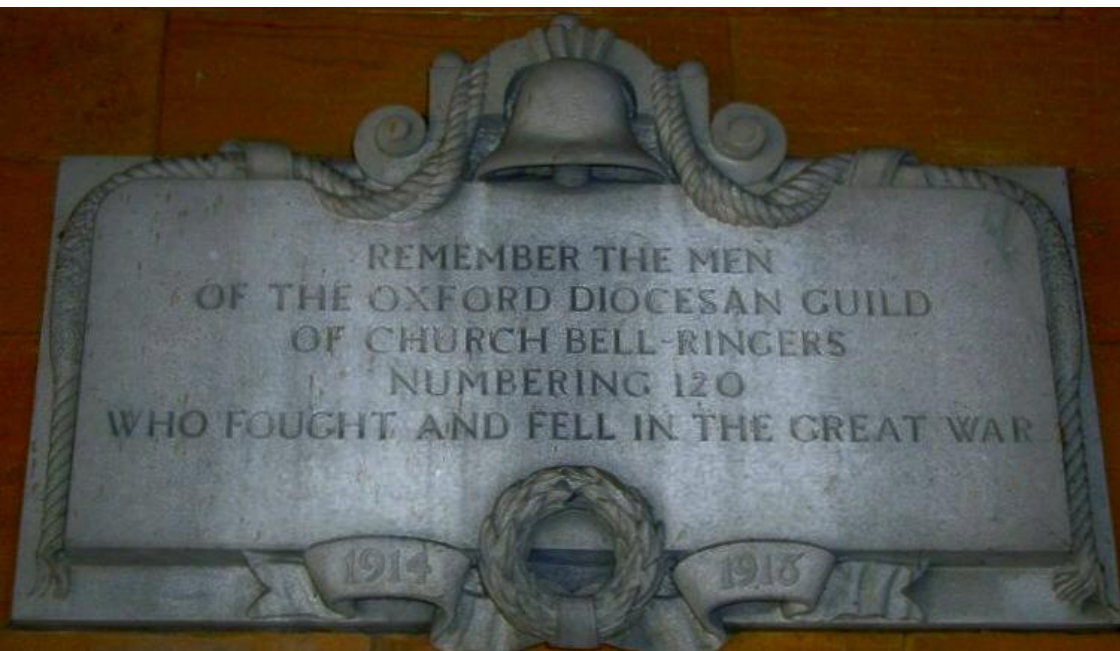


ODD BOB



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



Memorial in the cloisters of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford
(see article *The Great War and the ODG*)

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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 – I have received many photos (my thanks to the contributors). The next Odd Bob cover may well show line drawings rather than a photograph.

Don't forget to check regularly the Guild website at www.odg.org.uk/ and the many branch websites.

In particular the EBSB Fund Raising website address is: www.bellfund.org.uk.

Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of April 2011.

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

It was a pleasure to welcome Pip Penny to the Guild in mid October for the *Integrated Teacher Training Scheme – Module one – Teaching Bell Handling*. My thanks go to Alan Bentley for his impeccable organisation. I was in attendance merely as an observer and gained much from the day; the students and their mentors surely gained even more than I did. This is one of many pilot courses being held around the country and supported by the Ringing Foundation with the aim of creating a modern training structure for the teaching of bell ringing.

I expect that most of us who teach bell handling might have difficulty in remembering what it was like to be a raw recruit (it was certainly a great many years ago in my case). Because of our different learning experiences, how we go about developing competent and 'safe' ringers will vary between individuals. As well as being given some brilliant 'new' ideas, the course really challenged my thinking in the light of current educational theory. Over time, I am hopeful that there will be greater consistency of practice if the principles being put forward can be implemented.

An ITTS handout points out that 40% of ringers are now over 60 years of age; that we need more (and younger) ringers, that we need them quickly and that we need competent skilled teachers to train them.

As you will have read on page 25 of the previous Odd Bob, the North Bucks Branch are in the process of planning a day when they take bell ringing to the public in a shopping centre (with the aid of a mini-ring). The branch is also planning to put in place follow up sessions for the potential recruits who come

forward. There are several centres in other parts of the Guild where such an approach could pay dividends. I have heard it suggested that ‘the Golden Age of ringing is over, we can’t recruit enough people so we might as well enjoy it while it lasts and not worry about training’. Hopefully, like me, you are determined that this prediction must not, **will not**, come true. We wish North Bucks well with their venture and look forward to it bearing fruit.

Many members will recall another occasion when a visitor to the Guild demonstrated how to teach bell handling. I was amazed to discover that it is over 13 years since Steve Coleman taught a raw recruit to ring a bell unaided in one morning at Witney. Copies of a video of much of what went on were distributed to each branch and to the Stewards of the time. Are they still being used? Do you know where they are? Although not of the highest quality (this is the cameraman writing) the video is still worth looking at for some good ideas and, as you would expect, a degree of entertainment.

Moving on from the training of recruits, it surprises me how varied are the attitudes and enthusiasm displayed at the meetings and practices of different branches. No matter at what level we class our own ringing, we all need to develop our abilities, and branch practices will often provide opportunities to do so. Ringing Masters and Training Officers try hard to involve everyone but I find that occasionally there is a marked reticence to participate, which must be very frustrating for them. Please make them feel wanted and make the most of every branch practice. Incidentally, I was greatly encouraged to learn that some students on the recent Michaelmas training day have arranged their own follow-up practices. This is a far cry from those who fail to consolidate from one course to the next and makes the efforts of organisers and tutors so much more worthwhile.

It was very enjoyable to be a member of the band that rang a quarter peal at Dorchester to mark Colin’s ten years as Bishop. We send him our congratulations and thank him for his continued interest and support.

Robert Newton

The Great War and the ODG

Many members will be aware that the Guild has a memorial to those that fell in the Great War in the cloister at Oxford Cathedral; this mentions the 120 that fell. The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has a *Roll of Honour*, which also lists 120 from the Oxford Diocesan Guild although it is difficult to confirm if these are actually the same names!

Members may not be aware that over 1,100 names were written in the original book in 1924, and were gathered together by the Rev CWO Jenkyn MC, who at that time was the Master of the ODG. Rev. Cyril Jenkyn had served as a Chaplain during the Great War and received the Military Cross for bravery during that conflict.

The *Roll of Honour* is kept at St Paul’s Cathedral along with the *Roll of Honour for World War II*; the WWII Roll contains 300 names.

Turning back to those 120 listed from the Oxford Diocesan Guild, they were from 66 towers and fought with 43 different regiments; not surprisingly perhaps, 29 were with the Royal Berkshire Regiment and 23 the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. More details, photographs of the Rolls and other information can be found at: www.cccbr.org.uk/rolls

If you would like any specific details about those listed I would be happy to try and help.

I am very interested to hear from any tower where any of those listed are commemorated, perhaps by a special memorial, a peal board, photograph or a tower's Roll of Honour; this of course especially applies to any that are not listed. I should very much like to add any new names that are found.

The *Great War Roll* has had more names added over the years and there have been three addendums in total. The first lists members from the Truro Diocesan Guild, the second has additional names from the Kent County Association and the third contains 77 names that had been found as a result of more recent research. These last additions were ringers from a number of different Guilds and Associations and I am certain there are many more yet to be found! This third addendum effectively filled the last pages of the Great War Roll of Honour; very recent research has found a further 67 that should be added in the future and this clearly presents a problem.

It has been decided by the Central Council that a new book should be made, to the same high standard as the original, and the new names written in, again to the same high standard as the original. This will cost in excess of £2,000 and I am asking if ringers might like to contribute towards this. If so, cheques can be sent, made payable to *CCCB*, to 39 Maud Road, London E13 0JT. As the Central Council is registered as a charity, donations can be gift aided. If your circumstances allow this, a simple note with the donation confirming that the gift is made under the gift aid scheme should be added, together with your full name, address and post code.

Alan Regin
Steward of the Rolls of Honour, *CCCB*

Gill Burnett, 1944 – 2010

Gillian Margaret Burnett (nee Chiles), the former Tower Captain of Swallowfield, died on 1 September 2010, aged 66. She was born in Tamworth, Staffordshire in 1944. She went to Manchester University where she read French and Russian. There she met her future husband, Ian Burnett. They married in 1968 and moved to Riseley, south of Swallowfield, in 1972, when Gill was pregnant with their elder daughter, Catherine. She was extremely active in the local community and will be much missed. Among other things, she delivered Meals on Wheels and was a volunteer driver for Macmillan House in Wokingham.

Bobbie May writes: "I first met Gill when our daughters were in the Brownies, taking a swimming badge at Kendrick School. I was wearing a sweatshirt with a large bell on its headstock on the front. She said she had 'always fancied having a go at that'. I replied, 'Seven o'clock at Swallowfield, tonight!' Amazingly, she turned up and Jim Allen taught her, and also her daughters, Catherine and Laura.

Gill learned quickly and went on several Easthampstead courses. She had a ready wit and was always funny and extremely friendly to all and sundry. She was learning Stedman while I was learning Superlative and, looking at my diagram, remarked: 'Careful, you could cut yourself on that!'

She and I and our four daughters went on several bell ringing excursions, including an open day to the beautiful village of Buckland where we rang, roamed round the crafts in the village and the children swam in the pool, laughing, as I remember, most of the time.

As recently as this year she came with me to the Old North Berks 1st January ringing day but she felt that the bells at Hagbourne were probably beyond her, hinting at her condition, though she seemed very well at the time and jovial as ever. She had had treatment for breast cancer several years before but seemed to have beaten it and was back to ringing, even occasional quarter peals, though nobody thought much about it if she was missing from practice as she enjoyed jet-setting in her retirement.

For a while she was Tower Captain after Jim Allen died and Lynda Smith had moved to Devon, though she wasn't altogether happy about being in charge of adults.

She became Church Warden at Swallowfield and, like everything else she did, threw herself into it fully. She will be greatly missed, largely because she always brought the sunshine with her."

On 9 September, before practice at Swallowfield, a quarter peal was rung half-muffled in Gill's memory. 1260 Plain Bob Doubles: Bobbie May 1, Jean Clark-Maxwell 2, Tom Blomley 3, Stephen Jenkins 4, Alan Barsby (C) 5, John Clark-Maxwell 6.

Bobbie adds: "Although heavily pregnant, Gill's daughter Catherine joined us in ringing before the quarter peal and rang that nasty little treble extremely well. Gill's mother, now in her nineties, sat outside and listened to some of it."

Diana McClure

Geoff Dodd, a long-standing member

I first became a member of the Oxford Diocesan Guild in 1947, so I can claim over sixty years membership, but not all as a resident member. I was non-resident, so cannot claim my 50 years ODG membership as I lived at Highclere.

Living for many years within half a mile of the Berkshire County boundary, and ringing regularly at Newbury and Thatcham, (eight bells then), I go back a long way with the ODG. I lived four miles from Newbury by the milestone and rang more peals for the ODG than any other Guild.

My first peal of London Royal was at North Stoneham (Hants.) with a mainly Reading band, but courtesy had it in those days that peals were accredited to the Guild in whose territory it was rung.

An ODG band led by Tom (Richard T Hibbert) came to Highclere to ring the first peal of Stedman Triples on the fairly new eight. They were met by Frank Knapp, the local captain, and he told them, "This is a Winchester & Portsmouth Guild tower, all peals here are W. & P.; the key is in my pocket and there it will stay." The ringers huddled together and finally agreed they would ring it for the W. & P. Guild.

Fifty years later I commemorated that peal with another one of Stedman using the same composition, and ours was rung for the ODG.

Nine years now ringing at Newbury – full membership of the ODG paid, and full peal fees paid. But I cannot claim sixty years membership (or can I? – no claim made!) but I am proud to be a member of the ODG.

Geoff Dodd

[Geoff is also mentioned in the Points from Peals article on page 33, Ed.]

Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund Report

The amount of new money raised this year is £5,859.33 which is a good amount and if maintained will give rise to another good year of fund raising. This amount is composed of:

- Donations from branches totalling £2,917.33
- Donations from 7 towers totalling £842
- Donations from 4 P.C.C.s totalling £55
- Individual donations totalling £482 (plus Gift Aid tax to be recovered)
- Annual Ringing Day proceeds of £610
- Grant from the Guild of £550
- Collection from the AGM service at Speen £79.30
- Guild contributions to administrative expenses (50% of peal fees) £323.70.

Grants have been paid to Shiplake (£7,600), Clewer (£4,720), Mapledurham (£1,820), Peasmore (£2,065) and Great Brickhill (£5,000). The work at Buckland has been completed and I understand the inspection report will be available shortly.

At their last meeting in September the Trustees approved provisional grants to Chalgrove (£2,440), Cheddington (£1,050), Freeland (£2,670), Hampstead Norreys (£2,630) and Slapton (£2,270). These grants are expected to be due for payment during 2011 and 2012. The Trustees agreed to accrue £7,000 from 2010 income towards the project at High Wycombe. Details remain to be finalised but it is clearly going to be a costly project and the Trustees wish to be able to offer financial support in line with other projects. At the time of the meeting there were two application forms which had been issued but not yet returned. Since the meeting a further application form has 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. Investment income received for the first half of the year totalled £9,496.26 compared with my forecast of £20,000.

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

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

Financial support for the Bell Fund and the Restoration Fund

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

Restoration Fund Report

The amount of new money raised this year is £1,872.09 which is very encouraging. This amount is composed of:

- Donations from branches totalling £923.00
- Donations from towers totalling £246.04
- Individual donations totalling £115.00 (plus gift aid tax to be recovered)
- grant from the Guild of £550.00
- Interest received of £38.05.

Grants have been paid to Thatcham (£95.00), Padbury (£235.00) and Great Brickhill (£1,525). In September the Trustees approved provisional grants to East Ilsley (£300) and North Marston (£470), where both are maintenance projects. There are currently no outstanding applications for consideration. The Trustees thank everyone for their financial support.

Brian Gatward, Hon. Treasurer

Education Sub-committee Report

Jon Chamberlain stepped down as chairman of your Education Sub-Committee, and we are grateful for his efforts over the last few years. He has agreed to continue to organise the Radley course, so rather than leave the sub-committee completely, he was co-opted back in that role.

Our thanks go to Katie Lane, who took on organisation of the *Michaelmas Training Day*. This year it proved especially popular for advanced Surprise Major, and as a result we ran two of those groups. Running a large advanced course puts quite a strain on the Guild's resources, and we are exploring the feasibility of running two smaller advanced courses, to meet the increased demand and to spread the load. We are also looking at how students on advanced courses could receive follow up support. So watch this space.

In October, the Guild became one of the first ringing societies to try out Pip Penney's new *Integrated Teacher Training Scheme* (ITTS), which is being promoted by The Ringing Foundation. The scheme is based on modern teaching principles and research on how people learn new skills. It is still in a formative stage, so the Guild's experience of applying it will help to develop the scheme for more widespread use. Twelve students, together with mentors, took part in the first course at Steeple Aston.

Future events include the 10 bell training day in December and the Radley course in April. In February we are holding another Training Day, where we invite branch training officers, ringing masters, and anyone else actively interested in branch training to meet to share ideas with us and between each other. The morning will include discussion on topics of current interest and a practical session where we explore various practical exercises that can be used in training. We end by taking lunch together in the local inn.

In 2011 we are again running the *Young Ringers Award* scheme (see below), so please encourage any young ringers you know to take part.

John Harrison, Chairman

Young Ringers Award

Entries are now invited from young ringers who would like to take part in the 2011 *Young Ringers Award* scheme. If you are under 18, then why not enter. It will broaden your outlook on ringing, encourage you to seek new opportunities, and recognise what you achieve during the year. If you are over 18, and know any young ringers, then please encourage them to take a look at the scheme and consider entering.

The scheme has been revised since it was last run in 2008, to give more flexibility for individual participants to choose the way in which they wish to progress. It will include some events organised specifically for young people. Each participant will have a mentor with whom they can discuss any aspects of the scheme. It will of course be up to the participants to decide what challenges to set themselves and how much effort to put into meeting them. The scheme will run during the calendar year 2011 and participants will be assessed on their achievements during the year.

There are three levels of award: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Each participant will be assessed independently of the others, and may achieve an award at any level. In addition there is a shield and a small prize for the most impressive overall achievement.

The assessment will take account of a wide range of activities related to ringing, as well as personal ringing performance. For example, things like conducting, ringing handbells, holding a tower office, or maintaining a ring of bells could contribute to the scheme. Other examples such as, organising branch activities, teaching other people, exploring ringing history or promoting ringing to the public could all contribute alongside advancement of the participant's own ringing, and of course regular service to his or her home

tower(s). The aim is to encourage good, all-round ringers, and to recognise those who show initiative in their own development and/or through other contributions.

The award is based on activity and progress throughout the year, and entrants will be expected to submit a log book together with any other appropriate evidence of achievement. In addition to the basic logbook they may submit supporting evidence in any suitable format (written, audio, video, web, ...).

The most important step is to apply to take part in the scheme, so if you are young then please apply now – and if you are not young then encourage someone you know to apply. There are some very talented and promising young people in the Guild and the scheme is there to encourage them. In previous years it has attracted some outstanding individuals.

There is more detailed information and entry forms on the Guild website at odg.org.uk/. Applications must be submitted by 31st December. If you have any questions or are unsure about whether the scheme would be suitable for you then please contact me by e-mail at edchairman@odg.org.uk or by telephone on 0118 978 5520.

John Harrison, Education Sub-committee Chairman

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

In the period since the April report only one award (White Waltham) expired, and two (Cookham and Chalfont St Peter) were renewed. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is now at 60, still about 12% of the towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been 65 inspections (of which 17 were preliminaries), resulting in 41 awards (18 Gold, 15 Silver, and 10 Bronze).

Despite the lapsed award, the period since the April report has therefore seen an increase in current awards from nine to fifteen which is, I think, the highest ever and very encouraging. Congratulations to the bands and steeple-keepers at Cookham, who on renewal updated their previous Silver Award to a Gold, and at Chalfont St Peter, who renewed a Gold Award. Congratulations also to the bands and steeple-keepers at Clewer and Peasemore, which qualified for an award for the first time, gaining a Silver, and at Fulmer which gained a Bronze. Harwell too achieved a first since the award scheme started; having at the first inspection gained a Silver, they immediately dealt with the issues that were losing them points, requested a re-inspection and gained a Gold – congratulations to all concerned.

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

Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
EBSB	5	(Gold x 3, Silver, Bronze)
Newbury	3	(Gold, Silver x 2)

Old North Berks	1	(Gold)
Reading	2	(Silver x 2)
Sonning Deanery	1	(Silver)
South Oxon	1	(Bronze)

If your tower is in one of the other seven, 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
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB Branch	Expires 13.05.12
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB Branch	Expires 30.06.12
Harwell (St Matthew)	Old North Berks	Expires 30.09.12

Silver Award

Reading St. Giles	Reading Branch	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
Clewer (St Andrew)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.12
Peasmore (St Barnabas)	Newbury Branch	Expires 30.06.12

Bronze Grade

Benson (St Helen)	South Oxon Branch	Expires 31.10.11
Fulmer (St James)	EBSB Branch	Expires 31.05.12

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
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
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 (St Mary)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.03.10

John Davidge

Towers and Belfries Committee Report

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

- Arborfield (Maintenance Advice)
- Buckland (Grant Inspection)
- Burnham (Sound Control Advice)
- Clewer (Grant Inspection)
- Fulmer (Correction of Odd-struckness)
- Great Brickhill (Grant Inspection)
- Harwell (Tower Maintenance Award inspection – Silver)
- Harwell (Tower Maintenance Award inspection – Gold)
- Hughenden (Correction of Odd-struckness)
- Mapledurham (Grant Inspection)
- Peasmore (Grant Inspection)
- Thatcham (Grant and TMA Inspections)

The latest information we have concerning the bells at the church of St Cross, Oxford, is that Listed Building Consent has been refused, so that the bells are unlikely to be able to be removed in the foreseeable future.

Two maintenance courses have been run, for the Vale of the White Horse and the EBSB branches, both of which were well attended.

An inspection by a reputable bell hanger which recommended that a ring of bells should not be rung full-circle, was subsequently “overturned” by a person with no professional qualifications or insurance. Following this we have contacted the underwriters at Ecclesiastical Insurance to establish the insurance position and they confirmed that in these circumstances the church insurance would not apply and that the responsibility, should an accident or damage occur, would rest with the church authorities. The same might also apply to the Guild insurance, where ringers are knowingly using bells brought back into use in this way. I would ask that anyone knowing an incumbent responsible for churches where the bells have been deemed unringable, or have been out of use for some time, to make them aware of the insurance requirements should the bells be brought back into use. The safest course, should bells be brought back into use by amateur labour, is to have them checked and approved by someone with recognised professional expertise and, most importantly, covered by professional indemnity insurance.

John Davidge

Guild 6-bell Striking Competition 2010

The 2010 6-bell striking competition was well supported this year with 10 of the 15 Branches being represented.

The City Branch hosted the event with Cowley bells being chosen for the final. This is a delightful 5cwt ring of six cast by Mears in the 1940’s with the front three ropes dropping very close together. Tea and refreshments were provided in the nearby Parish Rooms and the weather was just right with the sun shining throughout the afternoon and early evening.

Due to a general state of disorganisation in the Marchbank household (caused in part by a broadband failure at a crucial moment), heats were dispensed with and we had a 10 entry competition for Richard Alton and Kathy Hughes D’Eath to judge.

Richard introduced the process of judging a striking competition by explaining that there were distinct “pigeon holes” where each bell should be in each row. This was a precise point, and inaccuracies resulted in clipping or the rows stretching or contracting and thereby affecting the rhythm. Leading is very important. He then went on to give comments and observations of each test piece as follows.

	Team	Judges Comments	Accuracy
1	Drayton St Leonard, South Oxon	Very, very nice ringing. Very accurate. Minor irregularities with the tenor, the calls seemed to cause a very slight hesitation in the flow, but almost imperceptible	90%
2	Shrivenham, Vale of White Horse	Fastest test piece. Nice ringing with no major faults. Occasional dropped handstrokes. The tenor pushed this along. Minor trips throughout	86%
3	St Aldates, Oxford City	Perhaps slightly too fast. Leading was not consistent and accurate – caused rows to change length. Nice ringing	83%
4	High Wycombe, EBSB	Good ringing with no major issues. The rhythm was good but the rows were stretched and contracted	81%
5	Reading St Mary, Reading	Good ringing overall with few trips; leading was not sufficiently accurate and consistent	80%
6	Wokingham, Sonning Deanery	The slowest ringing for the test piece. Never quite settled and seemed slightly nervous	78%
7	Blewbury, Old North Berks	Nice ringing. Even speed throughout the piece, lots of little faults and an occasionally slow tenor made for uneven rhythm	76%
8	Great Linford, North Bucks	Too quick. Method mistakes added to the woes; leading throughout was good and ringing was improving	59%
9 =	Wing, Central Bucks	Early leads were trippy and uncomfortable but the ringing improved as it progressed. Failed to ring sufficient to complete the test piece	
9 =	Wooton, Witney and Woodstock	Test piece was slower than practice which seemed a more natural speed. Poor leading, little rhythm. Test piece fired out	



Congratulations to Drayton St Leonard on coming first. It is thought this is a “first” for around 45 years in South Oxon.

Thanks go to Richard and Kathy our judges, to Katie Lane who made all the arrangements for the towers and teas, to Jonathan Cresshull who was the Marshal and kept the teams in order and the judges fed and watered. Thanks to you all for entering and making it a very pleasant and competitive event.

Alan Marchbank

Librarian's Report

There have been eight library enquiries since the previous issue of Odd Bob. These have been about:

- Beginners' handbooks
- Date of membership election for 3 people
- Peal of Gonville TB at Aldermaston on 21 June 1967
- Peal at Chobham on 26 Mar 1951
- Whether quarter peal was rung at Aylesford in May 1957
- Loan of CD of Bells of Somerset
- Loan of 1960 Ringing World
- Evidence of ODG membership before WW1 for a Sonning ringer.

Work has continued on dividing the miscellaneous papers in the library into categories. It is getting quite advanced now, with many papers sorted into their categories, and the current major area being to sort through papers concerning Bells – Bell Restoration, Bell Fund, Redundant bells, and so on. It would be fair to say that the project is well into the end of the middle, and is now working towards the beginning of the end.

The Ringing World for 2009 has been bound, and the bookbinders are in the process of binding four copies of the Guild Annual Report, for 2004-2008.

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

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. Full details of the cover and benefits payable are on the ODG website: http://odg.org.uk/reports/odg_insurance_definition.html

Brian Gatward

100 years on

Researching family peals has been made easier by the recent release of the early *Ringing Worlds* on DVD together with the *Bell News* DVD (released a few years ago). By using these, Sue Davenport became aware of the first peals rung by her grandfather John Rance. John (who was often called Jack) learnt to ring at Easthampstead before becoming a ringer at his parish church of Binfield. He became tower foreman at Binfield and remained so until his death in 1953 as well as being a member of the choir. He was also for many years one of the Branch



representatives on the Guild Committee.

He rang his first peal at Winkfield in May 1910. His second peal was at Binfield on October 1st 1910 to mark the dedication of the new organ and re-hung bells, which included two recast bells. This was the first peal on the bells, and to mark the centenary of this event permission was obtained to ring a commemorative peal. A peal of Plain Bob Minor with seven different 720s, the same as the first peal, was successfully completed. Sue rang the same bell (3rd) that her grandfather rang in the first peal.

Other notable firsts rung by Sue's grandfather include:

- 27th January 1912, Hurst, first peal of Stedman on the bells
- 3rd August 1912, Hurst, first peal of major on the bells
- 26th December 1912, Arborfield, first peal on the bells
- 10th November 1913, Warfield, first peal on the bells
- 26th December 1913, Warfield, first peal of major on the bells.

He rang two peals on 3rd August 1914 at Hurst and Sonning, with the same person ringing the tenor to both peals. A footnote to the peal at Sonning says that an effort was made to stop the ringing during the last two courses upon a false rumour that "war was declared" by Great Britain. Another interesting footnote to a peal at All Saint's Wokingham on 1st February 1913 thanks the Rector for the use of the bells and for kindly altering the hour of evensong.

Oxford Diocesan Guild

All Saints, Binfield, Berks

Friday, 1st October 2010 in 2 hrs. 37 mins. (9 cwt.)

5040 Plain Bob Minor, 7 extents each called differently

- 1 David J Creasy
- 2 Robert H Newton
- 3 Susan E Davenport
- 4 John A Harrison
- 5 E John Wells
- 6 Kenneth R Davenport (C)

Rung for the centenary of the first peal on the bells, also Plain Bob Minor, rung on Saturday 1st October 1910. The ringer of the third was ringing the bell her Grandfather rang in that peal.

Ken and Sue Davenport

Mapledurham bells are ringing again

The six bells (tenor 7½ cwt) of St. Margaret, Mapledurham, were rehung and rededicated this year. Mapledurham is a small secluded brick-and-flint village on the Thames, a couple of miles up river from Caversham, Reading. As well as the church, there is the manor house, the old vicarage, a working water mill and almshouses.

The church itself is unusual as, although it is an Anglican parish church, it has a Roman Catholic south aisle. This aisle was added in the 14th century as a

family burial place, and is the property of the Catholic family that has lived in the manor house for centuries.

The Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading, rededicated the bells of St Margaret at the Patronal Service on Sunday 25th July, one of his final duties before he left Reading to become Bishop of Chelmsford. The service also celebrated the inauguration of the new parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham.

Bishop Stephen came from Caversham to Mapledurham by river steamer – appropriate as the new parish has the river Thames as its southern boundary – and was accompanied by 60 parishioners and friends of the parish. Bell ringing started an hour before the service, so that those on the boat were greeted by the sound of the bells coming across the water.

At the service Bishop Stephen blessed the bells. The treble's rope was handed to Tower Captain Richard Bisgrove, and the other five bells were rung. Afterwards refreshments were served in the garden of the Old Vicarage. Many thanks to the Cumming-Bruce family for providing such a lovely setting (and Pimms), to go with the sandwiches and bell-shaped cakes.



The bells date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Originally they all had crown staples, which can cause bells to crack. To prevent further damage to the bells the *Mapledurham Bell Restoration Appeal* was launched in September 2003 by the then steeplekeeper Mark Denley, in order to mount the bells on new headstocks and preserve them for

posterity. Unfortunately Mark was unable to carry on with the project, and it was completed by his successor, steeplekeeper Roger Hopkinson, under the chairmanship of the Rev Keith Knee-Robinson. The Whitechapel Bell Foundry removed the bells in February 2010, carried out the restoration work, and rehung them in May, with new headstocks and refurbished wheels. They are now very easy-going and a pleasure to ring.

On Sunday 10th October, after the morning service, a quarter peal was rung to celebrate the re-hanging of the bells. The local band was helped by two former Mapledurham ringers, who traveled from Hook Norton and from Long Crendon to ring.

News from the Branches

Banbury

Our branch activities continue in the usual way with branch, surprise and occasional practices geared towards enabling less experienced ringers to progress.

Since the last input from Banbury branch our 6-bell Striking Competition took place in the lovely setting of Hanwell churchyard. We were blest with a warm summer evening to sit and enjoy the ringing from the eight bands that had entered the competition. This year we were delighted to welcome Deputy Master, Alan Marchbank, together with the assistance of his son, to judge the competition. Once again Steeple Aston took the trophy with Banbury and Cropredy 1 taking second and third places respectively. In the usual way we enjoyed freshly cooked burgers, lamb, sausages, etc, provided by Hanwell ringers and their friends, together with a wide selection of salads and desserts which the other towers provided.



During June the Horton Hospital's Maternity and Children's Services were saved from closure. At the request of the local Banbury MP, Tony Baldry, Barry Davis organised a band, and on 30th June a peal of Grandsire Caters was successfully rung in celebration. BBC Oxford interviewed Barry on the morning of the peal. Before the start of the peal

Tony Baldry, the town mayor and other dignitaries, council members, George Parrish and his campaigners all climbed the steps to the ringing chamber to have their photograph taken with the peal band. Simon Pipe interviewed several members of the band including Barry and Jean Davis and Colin Lee (conductor) and this was broadcast just before 7.00 o'clock with the opening rounds leading into the news.

July is the month we tend to have our annual outing and this year was no different. Graham and Dorothy Clifton did the organisation and also provided good weather for the day. Over fifty ringers and their guests arrived at the first tower at Naunton, delightful bells, before moving on to Guiting Power where new ropes had been recently installed, so we had to contend with fluff and a certain amount of springiness whilst ringing. However, as you will see from the photo, this did not deter the under fifteen band. By this time it was almost time for lunch, so we boarded a train at Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, and enjoyed lunch and, for some, an



after lunch nap! After the train trip we made the short journey to Tredington then on to Deerhurst, a former priory. This was an interesting experience because rope sight is somewhat hindered by an arch across the middle of the ringing room. The last tower, Ashchurch, was cosy and not built for bands of well fed ringers but we managed! In the usual way the last port of call was a pub, the Harvest Home in Greet, where we rounded off a busy ringing day with a delicious meal after which we all made the homeward journey.

On 14th October, our Branch Chairman, the Revd Sue Burchell, was licensed by the Bishop of Dorchester at St Leonard's Church, Banbury as its new Priest-in-Charge. Sue has been a member of our branch for over thirty years and was Tower Captain at Great Tew for many years. She has moved together with her husband, Joe, to live in a slightly less rural setting. Although her own parish church has no bells, Sue continues to join in with branch activities when she is able. We wish her success in her new and challenging role.

Heather Hughes

Bicester

In the six months since the last *Odd Bob* we have had the sadness of losing one of our most enthusiastic members – Geoff James, whose funeral was held on 25th May at Middleton Stoney. He had been a long standing Tower Captain there, and had just celebrated 50 years membership of the ODG. The Guild banner was displayed during the service and many ringing friends attended the service. We will miss him.

The Middleton Stoney band has however been active in building on his work and has some recent learners to encourage.

Elsewhere Pam Newall has taken over from Jo Lamb (who has sadly had to retire from ringing) as correspondent in Ambrosden. Most towers have rung for summer weddings and Branch Practices have continued – the new ringing card is now available giving dates until late 2011 so please let me know if you'd like one.

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

Special Practices, outings, and a couple of striking competitions characterise summer in Central Bucks Branch (CBB).

The schedule of 'graduated branch practices' continues with great success, which enables ringers to progress independently of the possible limitations of their tower practices but also feeding back expertise to these. Visitors too have been welcomed, each adding to the mix and widening the scope, particularly at the advanced sessions. The practices also permit more familiarity with fellow CBB members so that outings are not as full of strange faces. It is nice to see visitors, as well as a good number of branch members, coming to our Advanced Major and other practices. Each person adds to the mix and enables us to ring a good variety of methods.

As well as benefiting from branch practices, our young ringers had their own outing to see inside Big Ben and ring at nearby London towers. The main Branch outing (*see photo on back cover*) was also to London and featured an eclectic mix of very different rings but ended at Edgware – a real village-style church swallowed by the metropolis. At last I saw where the Edgware Road, encountered so often in central London journeys, actually goes.

The CBB striking competition was held in high summer at Whitchurch, where Wing won and went on to the Guild competition. A mixed tower team of CBB young ringers put up a good performance despite never having rung as a band before.

In October Chiltern branch hosted this year's *Orchard Cup* at Ellesborough. This 6-bell striking competition between Central Bucks and Chiltern had been won by Aylesbury for CBB for the last two years so Chiltern were keen to try and win it back. However, I am pleased to report that Aylesbury retained the Cup for CBB for a 3rd year in succession. Many thanks to Chiltern for their hospitality – it is back to CBB in 2011.

Diana Slevin

Young Ringers Outing – Wednesday 1st September

The tour guide started with warnings – we were going to climb 334 narrow and winding steps, etc. From the base of Big Ben's tower, looking up the shaft that housed the winding staircase, we could see this was a long climb. The climb was divided into 3 stops, the 1st half way up in a room explaining the construction of the tower and the bells, and those involved in its design and build. Our guide talked us through the history, then on to the 2nd stop, the Clock Room.

The Clock Room was impressive; the mechanism was so simple that it felt like we really were inside a gigantic Grandfather clock. The single beam of the clock held three cylinders, each with a cable wound around it attached to a weight. The barrels and weights are the driving force behind the clock and its chimes – and therefore the power behind Big Ben's hammer. We saw these in action as the 11:45 chimes set about ringing. The clock is accurate to within a second a day! The pendulum is adjusted to achieve this tolerance by placing or removing old pennies from a collar around the arm.

Up we went again, this time to the top of the tower and into the Bell Chamber. The four chime bells sit around the centre bell, Big Ben, one in each corner of the tower. The largest of these chimes is 4 tons! Big Ben was the star, hanging from huge steel girders and looking every bit of its nearly 14 tons. When the noon chimes and hour struck we all had smiles on our faces – the noise was incredible! This was definitely an experience to witness, especially after the history lesson on the way up. The men who built this really did have a vision – to awe the rest of the world with their technology of scale and accuracy.

We stopped again at the clock level, this time to walk behind the four clock faces. Each one is at least as high as two floors of a house (around 20ft or 6

metres). We were lucky with the weather – the sun was out so all the hands cast clear silhouettes on the translucent pearl glass that made up the face. From this close vantage we were shown that the minute hand can be seen to move every 2 seconds on its journey around the face.

As a bonus our guide took us to view Westminster Hall. This was part of the original building and the oldest part of the Palace, which was mostly destroyed by fire. The hammer beam roof was reputed to be 13th century, forming an enormous covering to what was the most powerful court in this country. On the floors are brass plaques commemorating the kings, queens and nobles who laid in state within the large hall before their burial. A treat to see and a really good end to a fantastic morning.

After lunch we walked to Holborn – a gorgeous ring by Mears & Stainbank. We rang rounds and call changes, plain hunt and Grandsire Triples. Definitely one to return to, especially for the novelty entrance, a tiny, hobbit-sized door which we almost had to crawl through! The next church was Spitalfields with its maze of steps to the ringing chamber and fantastic ring of 8 cast by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon. We were more adventurous ringing the back six to Cambridge Minor plus a variety of methods and call changes.

Edited version of Hal Drysdale's article

Chiltern

Support for Chiltern Branch's monthly practices has been patchy, but individual towers report that their practices are generally well attended. Some towers have also managed to attract new recruits.

The Orchard Cup competition between towers in Chiltern and Central Bucks Branches was held at Ellesborough on 16th October and won by St Mary's, Aylesbury.

Holy Cross Church, Slapton (Grade II* listed) is currently undergoing a complete restoration programme. The five bells (the oldest bell is the second dated 1681, the next is the fourth dated 1715, both made by G. Chandler) have not been rung for at least ten years, and the Church is anxious to get them ringing again for 2012. Not only will that be in time for the Olympics, but also to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Chiltern Branch centenary – all of which seem like very good reasons for ringing out the bells! Whilst there is still a long way to go with raising the money needed (support and contributions would always be most welcome), a Faculty will be applied for shortly. This will allow things to be taken forward with Whites of Appleton as they have indicated that there is likely to be a significant waiting list.

Ellesborough rang for the rededication ceremony of the Boer War monument on Coombe Hill, Wendover, on Wednesday October 20th.

The annual Little Missenden Festival of the Arts was supported by local ringers who rang three times for three children's workshops, as well as arranging extended ringing for the Festival Evensong on the final Sunday.

St Mary's church, Wendover, has been closed both to church goers generally and to bell ringers in particular (there is no access to the tower) since July this year. This is to allow contractors to carry out repairs to the building fabric, re-wire the whole building, and install a new under-floor heating system. Problems with the under-floor heating installation have been encountered, and work will not be completed until mid January.

Brian Robson

Chipping Norton

The branch hosted the 2010 Guild Committee meeting at Shipton-under-Wychwood on Sat. March 13th in New Beaconsfield Hall and was attended by 51 members representing 15 branches. Ken Wakefield was elected to Distinguished Membership and was presented with a certificate at this meeting.

After several years without a band of ringers the regular practices are now being held again at Leaffield church. Some repair work was required in order to make the bells safe for inexperienced ringers, and Leaffield and Finstock residents during last Autumn raised £1000 by Dec. 2009, enabling this to take place. The dismantling of the damaged parts was performed by local helpers, including Brian Hall and Nigel Harrison, who took them to Whites of Appleton which repaired and replaced them.

The first public event took place on Tuesday 16th March 2010, which was for the official Induction service of our new vicar, Paul Mansell. Bells were also rung for a special birthday celebration service which was held on 29th September 2010 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of St Michaels and All Angels. The Bishop was very impressed with the ringing.

A visit from the local Finstock Brownies, their leaders, and the Leaffield Guides was arranged, with a challenge to climb a church tower. Both the Brownies and Guides were very impressed with our tower and it gave an opportunity to 'spread the word' about potential new ringers. Practices are 7pm – 8.30pm every Monday evening led by the tower captain Mandie Oliver. Training is going well – a new member of the team is now ringing unaided in just 11 sessions.



Girl Guides at Shipton under Wychwood

Shipton under Wychwood ringers also received a request for a tower visit from the local senior section of Wychwood guides. They were delighted to host six of the guides to the tower for a guided tour, a short introduction to ringing and a have-a-go, much enjoyed by all. Thanks to Mike Brooks and Nigel Harrison for the tour of the tower and their contributions. It was good to welcome some of the younger

generation to the tower. Following this the ringers celebrated the Guiding Centenary by ringing at 20:10 hours on 20.10.2010. This was also celebrated at other towers including Charlbury; many thanks to all who took part. A branch member from Charlbury, Peter Kenrick, had a marvellous ringing opportunity on a visit to New Zealand earlier this year. Peter visited the First Church of Otago, Moray Place in Dunedin, and had the opportunity to ring the treble, which is reputed to be the most southerly ringable bell in the world. In the 60ft spire there is a ring of eight Whitechapel bells installed in 1975. The church dates from 1873.

Tony Merry

East Berks and South Bucks

Our AGM this year was held at Marlow in April. We welcomed a new Deputy Ringing Master, Jan Galloway, with Fred Reynolds standing down after three years service, and a new Branch Representative, Margaret Carlyle. All other officers were re-elected. We were also pleased to present John Dieppe and Wenda Fowles with testimonials to their 50 years' membership of the Guild.

We have held two Branch training sessions, both well attended, on Plain Bob Doubles. The learners made a lot of progress during these sessions and also seemed to benefit from ringing at an unfamiliar church. We hope this will give them confidence to come out and join Branch practices.

Our Summer walking outing again proved popular this year with a pleasant walk along the river ringing at Purley, Pangbourne and Goring; (*photograph on back cover*). We finished our day with a very enjoyable meal at a local pub. We also held an out-of-branch practice in early September visiting Tring and Aston Clinton. All who attended had a good afternoon and evening, and we will be repeating this next year.

High Wycombe have made a clean sweep of our Branch competitions by winning the 6-bell striking competition in June and the Lorna Newton in October.

Mandy Salter

Newbury

On 15th May the Newbury Branch hosted the ODG AGM, at Speen. As Speen has a recently-revived band, it was particularly special to hold it there. Ringing beforehand was at Beenham, East Ilsley, Midgham, Peasemore, Thatcham and Chieveley. The usual generous Newbury Branch tea appeared to be very much enjoyed, but for most the surprising highlight of the occasion was the unsurpassed organ playing by Michael Evans, the brother of Thatcham ringer Rosemary Evans, which drew praise – and indeed applause – from all present.

On 22nd May was the Newbury Branch's annual outing. This year's was organised by Mike Hurst and our Ringing Master Mark Robins, and they took us to North Somerset. We started off at Rode, and rang at Midsomer Norton before stopping for lunch and a ring in Shepton Mallet. In the afternoon we

visited Pilton and Leigh-on-Mendip. As usual it was an interesting day, with a good assortment of towers.

June and July saw the saga of Angela Brown's quarter. At the beginning of June Angela had mentioned that the month marked 50 years since she learnt to ring – on the third – at Bucklebury. To mark the occasion, the Bucklebury band decided to celebrate with a quarter with Angela ringing the third, it being 'her' bell. On June 24th, 1260 changes of Stedman triples were rung, but a mix-up a few minutes from the end meant that rounds didn't come up. A 1250 of Yorkshire the next week fell apart after half an hour, so when the band next could meet up, safety was the watchword and a fine quarter of Grandsire triples was rung.

On the weekend of 16th/17th July, Kintbury tower was busy celebrating the marriage of their former Tower Captain, Adam Rae-Smith, to Melanie Perkins. Adam was also formerly Chairman and Ringing Master of the Newbury Branch. In recognition of the event, a Quarter Peal consisting of extents of Stedman Doubles, Grandsire Doubles and Bob Doubles was rung on the Friday afternoon before the wedding. On the Saturday morning, a Quarter Peal of 1376 Kintbury Surprise Major (a method written specially for Kintbury some years ago by Geoff Dodd) was rung by some of the Branch's most expert ringers, eliciting many appreciative comments from people in the village. The local Kintbury band then rang immediately before the wedding service and again afterwards in celebration.

August 7th saw Bill Butler's 80th birthday. It was celebrated in suitable style for one who has contributed so much to ringing over the years. He was to be in Japan on the actual day, so had a party in advance on July 10th, attended by numerous guests, including family from Britain and the USA. In the morning before the party, Bill conducted a Quarter Peal of 1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major at St Mary's Thatcham, and was presented with an engraved Whitechapel table bell by Tony Smith, the Tower Captain, before being toasted in Champagne and lemonade. On the actual birthday, August 7th, a Quarter Peal of 1260 Grandsire Triples was rung at Thatcham in celebration.

The monthly Quarter and Curry nights (not always curry and sometimes afternoons) started by Ringing Master Mark Robins are now an established feature and go from strength to strength. They are an enjoyable way to enable quarter peals for all standards of ringers, and combine them with a sociable event.

In September this year the Branch decided to exhibit at the Royal County of Berkshire Show in a low-key way, so that we could learn what might be successful in future years. We had two objectives: spreading information about bell ringing, and recruiting new ringers. We exhibited in the Hobbies Tent, and compiled an exhibition of model bells, a real bell, bell ropes, a display board of bell ringing information, copies of Branch newsletters, and CCCBR posters and leaflets. The stand was manned by a series of eight members of the Branch.

This was the first time we'd exhibited at the Show, and it was unknown territory. In the first objective we were reasonably successful – a steady stream of people stopped and struck up conversations about ringing. A few people expressed an interest in taking up bellringing, and some of these were from outside the Newbury Branch. Using Guild reports we could look up practice nights and put visitors in touch with their local towers. If any other branches have been approached by people who became interested at the Newbury Show, we'd be very interested to hear from you. Best of all, the Show organisers were impressed and enthusiastic, and we are now talking to them about exhibiting a mini-ring next year, and ringing for the Show's Sunday Service.

Tessa Allum, Newbury Branch newsletter editor

North Bucks

The Summer Social and Branch Striking Competition were held at Stowe in June. Following general ringing and the chance to chat over a cup of tea, five bands took part in the striking competition. As we were unable to find a judge for this it fell to the Deanery Ringing Development Leader for Buckingham, Richard, to adjudicate. He declared the Shenley and Loughton team the winners, with Great Linford second. As Shenley were unable to go to the Guild competition, Great Linford represented the branch at this event in October.

Our annual inter-branch competition against the Towcester Branch was again held at the beginning of July. Unfortunately we don't seem to do well in this event and judge Ian Wilgress judged the Towcester Branch the winners by two sections to one. Still this is more of a social occasion than a serious competition and the evening concluded with a get together in the village pub at Wicken.

The major topic of the Autumn Meeting at Downs Barn was the Branch Recruitment Project. Since the original idea put to the AGM, the officers had put together an outline project plan. This was discussed at the meeting and met with almost unanimous support. It is clear that something needs to be done to promote bell ringing and recruit ringers; doing nothing is not an option. There was an enthusiasm amongst those present to take this forward. One thing that came out of the discussions was that we need more people trained to teach bell handling before we can hold the recruiting day, otherwise we will not be able to make the most of this opportunity. As a result it looks as if we will not be ready to hold the recruiting day until early 2012, or late 2011 at the earliest.

Helen Stanworth

Old North Berks

It has been quite an active summer for the branch. Our monthly general practices, surprise major practices and improvers' sessions have all been well attended. We would like to thank all those from other branches who have kindly supported us and helped to make these fun occasions with a lot of good ringing.

On a sad note, we were sorry to hear of the death of Peter Starling of Appleford. Until the onset of ill health Peter had been an active member of the

branch and had served as Branch Secretary for several years in the 1980s and 1990s.

In June the Wantage and West Hanney ringers held 'Peter's Day' at Wantage parish church. This emotional but successful day gave Peter Davies' family and many of his ringing friends the opportunity to celebrate his ringing life. The day started with a communion service, followed by ringing sessions ranging from call changes to surprise major. Over refreshments we were reminded of many incidents in Peter's ringing career, with photographs on display together with a video and CD. £250 was raised by the ringers for Marie Curie Cancer Care and Sobell House. In the evening, officers of the Ringing World rang a quarter peal at West Hanney in Peter's memory.

We held another first rate outing in July and would like to thank Philip Roberts of Harwell for organising this for us once again. This year he took us to the Wokingham area, starting at Easthampstead, where some of our less experienced ringers found the light bells a little tricky. We then moved on to Binfield, enjoying the bells and church before having an excellent pub lunch at a local hostelry. After lunch we rang at Wokingham (All Saints), followed by Finchampstead. At Barkham we baffled ourselves with some complicated (or so it seemed to us) four-bell methods, then paused for breath over afternoon tea with delicious cakes. We were made very welcome at our last tower of the day, which was Shinfield.

Our thanks also go to Stuart and Naomi Gibson for giving us another super evening after the outing with a barbecue at their home. The food, as ever, was excellent and plentiful. The croquet again proved to be quite difficult in the dark, when it became too hard to see who was cheating and who was not!

In August many of our members supported the Cholsey ringers, who had hired the Charmborough mini ring as an attraction at the local horticultural society show. Their aim was to raise the profile of ringing in the locality by offering the general public the chance to ring a bell (with tuition from branch ringers), ask questions and watch demonstrations of ringing. The day was a huge success and ended with a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor. The bells rang fast and furious, but it was the weather that played the greater part in trying to wreck the attempt. A typical summer's day, at first the bright sunshine put two of our ringers at risk of getting sunstroke. However the build up to a major thunderstorm caused two other ringers to giggle uncontrollably, when their backs were soaked and chilled by the driving rain as though under a power shower, whilst their fronts were warm and dry. Fortunately the quarter was completed just before the lightning approached (not a good idea to be standing inside a metal frame with even more metal swinging overhead!).

Our next social event will take place in November and will be a quiz evening and supper at Harwell Village Hall. Quiz evenings in the past have always proved to be very competitive, and I am sure that many of our members are swotting up on political, sporting and other events even as I am writing this.

Gillian Loyd

Oxford City

Among a wide variety of City Branch events that have taken place in recent months was a very successful summer picnic at St James, Aston Abbots. This charming village takes its name from the abbey that served as a country residence for the abbots of St. Albans. Abbey House is built over the original abbey and served as the military operations base for the exiled Czech president Edvard Benes during World War II. The garden has a lake with two islands named after the ships (Erebus & Terror) used by Sir James Clark Ross, the discoverer of the magnetic North Pole (1831) who lived in the village. The church was rebuilt during Victorian times with the tower remaining from C16 and three of the bells (2, 3 & 5) dating back to 1652, cast by blacksmiths in Drayton Parslow.



After a day of heavy showers the weather was kind to us in the early evening as we pooled our provisions under the tree at the front of the churchyard where we spent a pleasant hour having a picnic after ringing the bells!

Having just hosted the Guild 6-bell Striking Competition it is interesting that I have again found some appropriate copy from our Branch Newsletter No. 1:

Five teams entered the Branch's annual Striking Competition, which this year was held on May 8th. The venue was St Peter's, Great Haseley, and all the contestants enjoyed ringing these pleasant, easy turning bells. The result was a surprise win for the Iffley band, whom the judges, Messrs. E.R.Venn and F.Lewis, placed above the Headington team who so often triumph in these competitions. Wolvercote and St. Giles' followed close behind; St Aldate's succeeded in disqualifying themselves. Iffley will therefore be representing the Branch at the Guild Striking Contest at Mursley, near Winslow, on Saturday 5th June. The best wishes of the Branch go with them.

Farewell to Christian Burrell and Susie Pavelin! After around three years in Oxford, Christian and his wife Alice are moving to 'that other place' – Cambridge! Alice has secured a good job in the city, so she and Christian have decided to move up there. During his time in Oxford, Christian did a marvellous job with training at Iffley, and calling many a quarter peal at towers all over the area!

Susie has lived most of her life in Oxford and first started ringing in 2005 at Cowley. Now she has moved all the way to Aberdeen to start a new job and a new life up there.

It goes without saying that we wish them both well.

Katie Lane

Reading

The Branch tends to hold three practices a month. The Branch Practice, which caters for all abilities, is usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month. The Advanced Practice, which has now returned to Shiplake after the work on the bells was completed, is usually on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The last Sunday in the month is usually a 'higher numbers' practice at Reading St. Laurence. Attendance at the practices is still very varied.

In June the Branch outing was to Gloucestershire, organised by Stephen Rossiter and June Saint, with six towers being visited.

September saw the Branch 6-bell striking competition taking place at the beautiful setting of Mapledurham; the bells have been recently rehung. There were eight teams taking part this year with three of those being novice bands and competing for the John Butler Trophy.

The judge, Colin Lee from Adderbury, was well placed and well looked after in the Old Rectory just across the road from the church. He said that he had enjoyed listening, but was surprised at how slowly the bells had been rung as they were a very nice light six. The winners were St Mary's Reading, winning the Topper trophy and representing the Branch at the Guild 6-bell competition, with Tilehurst coming a very close second. The winners of the Novice competition for the John Butler trophy were Englefield. It was really good to see the three novice bands taking part.

On a sad note, two Branch members have passed away this year. Don Drayton passed away on the 2nd May, aged 95. Don had starting ringing at Mapledurham in 1946 and rang until 2007. Don was a true gentleman in all senses of the word; he was always quick to praise and encourage others.

Gill Burnett passed away on 1st September. She was a past Tower Captain and Church Warden at Swallowfield. The Branch was represented at both funerals.

The latest Branch Newsletter can be found on the Branch web site www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk

Ken Baker

Sonning Deanery

Several of our towers are having problems in maintaining past levels of ringing, and collaboration between neighbouring towers is increasing. While Easthampstead, Sandhurst and Twyford have gained new members, ringing at Hurst is now infrequent and shortage of ringers has been noted at Waltham St. Lawrence, Wargrave and Arborfield; even with guests from Reading branch, Sonning no longer manages to ring for every evensong. Attendance at branch practices has varied greatly, and the 8-bell striking competition did not take place because no tower could raise more than 7 ringers on the day.

On a more positive note, the Heritage Open Day in September at Wokingham All Saints was very successful, with many visitors touring the tower and enjoying the view from the top. For the biennial Sonning Scarecrow Weekend in

May, one face of the tower was decorated by the bell ringers with Wizard of Oz characters on a 30ft long yellow brick road.

At the height of summer and even continuing now, large numbers of ladybirds were seen on ringing-room windows and up the staircase at some towers.

In August, Sonning ringers and choristers visited their former vicar, now at Upton Snodsbury in Worcestershire, for ringing and singing for the evensong service. There was time beforehand to look round the pretty village and, for a few daring souls, to climb up the tower for the view from the roof.

Old photographs of two soldiers who were killed in WW1, and who rang at Sonning, have been investigated. One ringer was local and his name is on a commemorative plaque in St. Andrew's church. The other was a Sonning ringer before the war but may have lived elsewhere by the time he enlisted because he has no commemorative plaque. The investigation of the history of these ringers was greatly helped by Alan Regin, Steward of the Rolls of Honour, CCCBR (*see article on page 4, Ed.*) and by Doug Beaumont the Guild Librarian.

Waltham St. Lawrence had a very interesting ringers' outing to the Isle of Wight in September; they rang at three towers, consumed two meals outdoors in glorious sunshine, and had a guided tour up St. Catherine's lighthouse.

Fundraising has begun at Twyford, with a concert by pianist Charles Timberlake, towards replacing pulleys and renovating clapper bearings. Bell 6 is no longer rung, as there is a risk of the clapper jamming against the frame, possibly with damage to the main bearings or the bell itself. Enthusiastic members of the band are planning to extract its clapper assembly and deliver it to White's of Appleton for repair in time for Remembrance Sunday. At Arborfield, fundraising is about to start towards welding the cracked headstock of bell 2; it is still being rung and checked weekly for further damage.

Several towers participated in marking the Guiding Centenary and their renewal of promises with ringing at 20:10 on 20 October 2010.

Pam & Andrew Elliston

South Oxon

The South Oxon Branch has had quite a lot of construction taking place. Chalgrove bells are being refurbished and so they are now our nomadic band of ringers! You can find them at Brightwell Baldwin and Benson. They began the work of removing the bells in July – and they hope to see them installed again in December. We all look forward to having a branch practice at their tower.

Shabbington too is having work done on their tower. Their ringing chamber, which doubles as a vestry, will be getting a new ringing floor above the vestry. The ringers are looking forward to having a dedicated ringing room, and hope that all the work will be done by Christmas or the New Year. While the work is underway they are ringing at Little Milton and Great Haseley. Benson tower had their first peal on their newly re-hung bells on Easter Monday.

The young ringers in our branch are definitely coming along. We have a 12 year old in the Benson tower who has run his first quarter peal to Grandsire Doubles.

Drayton St Leonard featured on Radio Cherwell (the John Radcliffe Hospital radio station). Hilarie Rogers was interviewed and some of the Wednesday night practice ringing was taped for the show. We hope that the patients were entertained and cheered by our performance!

Cornish ringers were here in South Oxon in September. They visited Drayton St Leonard, Dorchester and Warborough (at least!). I believe that every comment I have heard regarding these visiting ringers has been about how impressive and very different the West Country ringing technique is. The method of ringing up in peal, ringing a touch and ringing down in peal – without standing – was very “striking” indeed.

Our Spring Outing was to Stourhead in Wiltshire. It was a very enjoyable day. The group rang at three churches, including St Peter’s, which is near the gardens at Stourhead. I am happy to report that none of the branch got lost at all on the trip!

The final point of note is that Drayton St Leonard won the Guild 6-bell Striking Competition in October. This is notable in that the last time a South Oxon Tower won was in 1965. All of the hard practising did indeed pay off!

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

By a happy coincidence, the branch striking competition at Hinton Waldrist in May was held on the 80th birthday of Dennis and Norman Leslie, so there was a lovely birthday cake to share as well as the usual nibbles. Shrivensham came first out of the seven teams and went on to represent the branch at the Guild competition at Cowley in October, achieving second place for the third year running.

The rehanging of the bells at Buckland was completed at the end of June. The sound and handling are much improved, and the Saxilby simulator is proving to be a worthwhile addition. The first quarter on the re-tuned bells was rung prior to the rededication service on 9th October.

Darran Ricks arranged an enjoyable branch outing to Gloucestershire on the last Saturday in June. The weather was perfect but the minibus was rather unreliable and failed to start on several occasions – we thought we might have to get out and push! We rang at Wotton under Edge, North Nibley, Stinchcombe and Long Newton, returning via Wiltshire towers Malmesbury Abbey and Brinkworth.

Caroline and Ifor Phillips organised an entertaining quiz night at Faringdon Bowls Club in October. In between breaks for baked potatoes and puds, the eight teams puzzled over ten rounds of questions on topics including current affairs, music, time and sport. The top three teams were barely a point apart and the evening raised £108 for Branch funds.

We had another useful quarter peal week in October. Out of ten attempts, nine were successful, and although there were no first quarters, several firsts in method were achieved.

Congratulations to Andrew Baxter who rang his first quarter peal at Uffington in May, and to Doreen Leslie who received a Guild Distinguished Membership Award.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

Whites completed work on the Freeland bells at the beginning of October. This is now reputed to be the lightest ring of bells in Oxfordshire and the official entry in Dove's Guide reads 'Ring remodelled; tenor now 3-3-3 in D (former 4, 6 broken up)'. The branch website archive has photos of the installation and a video of the new bells being re-cast at the Whitechapel foundry. Bishop John is due to re-dedicate the bells on 11th November.

The branch striking competition was held in May at St Leonard's church in Eynsham. The event was well supported in spite of clashing with an England world cup match and a local morris dancing celebration. John White again kindly agreed to judge the competition and all the teams appreciated his constructive comments. The call changes and method competitions were won by Combe and Wootton respectively. Wootton subsequently went on to represent the branch in the ODG six-bell striking competition, the first time we have been represented for several years.

In summer, the branch social (held at Ducklington) began with a presentation of nearly thirty certificates for *Firsts Fortnight*. Under this new initiative, inspired by the Banbury branch, individual members and towers were encouraged to try something for the first time, ranging from ringing rounds to a quarter peal of Cambridge Minor. Following this, we all enjoyed an excellent barbecue and the customary highly competitive Aunt Sally.

It had been agreed at the AGM that this year's branch outing would be to London in October. Richard White put considerable work into researching the towers, organising the coach and other aspects of the trip. An unexpected link was that each church had suffered extensive damage during World War II and the subsequent re-building and restoration resulted in some wonderful rings, particularly at St. Clement Danes. Central London towers demand a very high standard of ringing so thanks must go to those who gave their support from outside the branch.

Breaking news... 'Spider Disrupts QP at Wootton'. Here's an extract from an e-mail I received from a ringer describing the last moments of an innocent spider...

I was thankfully only ringing the treble when I saw a HUGE spider emerge from the corner by the door and slink along past the 4 and 5 under the bench. Not wanting to put everyone off too much, but being absolutely terrified, I just said "HELP!" which perhaps wasn't terribly informative as I don't think anyone else had noticed it! The conductor looked a bit nonplussed, and we carried on ringing, but the ringing master saw the terror in my face and looked at me quizzically so I hissed "SPIDER!" to her. Then it skirted round behind the tenor and ended up in the corner behind me to my right. Horrified, I started stamping my feet to keep it away from me, and it ran in front of me towards the 2, who managed to stamp on it, much to my relief, but by then I'd put everyone off so much they had to stop! I felt terrible; I was so relieved we had time to start again and it was 2nd time lucky!

Anthony Williamson

Points from Peals

A number of significant anniversaries have been recognised over the past few months. Bill Butler celebrated his 80th birthday and a number of peals were rung to mark this event. Alan Ainsworth also arranged and conducted a peal at his home tower, Amersham, to celebrate his 75th birthday. Among those taking part were his three children, Elva, Joanna and Mark, and it was also apt that this was Mark's 100th peal.

A peal at St. Helen, Abingdon was rung by five married couples as a compliment to Susan and Brian Read on their 40th wedding anniversary. Similarly, a peal at Newbury was rung by friends of Philip and Heather Grover to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. Philip and Heather rang the same bells for their wedding peal to the same method and composition.

On 6th August 2010, Edgar Skipsey arranged and rang a peal at St. Peter's, Staines. This was on the exact 50th anniversary of his first peal, at the church where he learnt to ring.

Other recent events have included a peal rung by members of the Old North Bucks Branch as a retirement compliment to the Reverend Chris Stott, Rector of Harwell and Chilton for 25 years. Also, a peal at SS Peter and Paul, Olney was specially arranged as a farewell to Trish and Holly Phillipson, leaving for Australia to join David.

Congratulations to several ringers who have reached personal milestones: Robert Crocker (3,400th peal), Nicola Turner (3,000th peal), Patricia Newton (700th peal in hand), Michael Moreton (700th peal of Stedman), and Alan Ainsworth (200th peal of Bristol S. Major).

After 50 years of peal ringing and some 3,775 peals, Geoff Dodd has decided to retire from peal ringing. It was therefore fitting that his last peal was at Highclere, his home tower. Two peals were subsequently dedicated to Geoff's retirement with appreciation from the ringers for his peal organisation and commitment. A new Surprise Royal method, aptly named "Farewell Geoff Surprise Royal" was rung at Thatcham by a band Geoff has rung regularly with over the years.

Other footnotes include the 100th peal of Cambridge S Maximus on handbells by a resident Guild band, a peal at St. Paul, Wokingham to mark the last visit of Stephen, Bishop of Reading, to this church before his move to Chelmsford, and the first peal on the bells at Peasemore since they were rehung by Whites of Appleton. A peal at Banbury celebrated the success of the campaign to retain Children's and Maternity Services at the Horton General Hospital.

Sadly, Sarah Napper, daughter of John and Pat Napper of Sutton Courtenay passed away and a number of peals were rung in thanksgiving for her life. A peal was also arranged and rung specially for Carol McClure, a local ringer at Bletchington, who was seriously ill. She was able to listen to it and enjoy it. Sadly, she died the following Saturday.

Claire F. Roulstone

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Diary of Events for 2010 & 2011

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the 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

NOVEMBER 2010

Sat	27	GUILD EVENT	SC	EBSB Branch, 10-Bell, Amersham	
Sat	27	GUILD EVENT	GCM	EBSB Branch, Beaconsfield	
Sat	27	Banbury	SP	Bodicote	7.30 – 9.00

DECEMBER 2010

Sat	4	GUILD EVENT		Aston Clinton, 10-Bell Training Day (Royal) The Aston Clinton 8/10-Bell Practice will be rescheduled	
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

MARCH 2011

Sat	12	GUILD EVENT	SGM	North Bucks	
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APRIL 2011

Sat	16	GUILD EVENT		Radley Training Course	
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MAY 2011

Mon	2	GUILD EVENT		Old North Berks, Annual Ringing Day	
Sat	21	GUILD EVENT	AGM	Bicester Branch	

JULY 2011

Sat	9	GUILD EVENT		Festival, Oxford	
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OCTOBER 2011

Sat	1	GUILD EVENT	SC	6-bell Striking Competition, Reading Branch	
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Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Established 17th January 1881

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RADLEY ONE-DAY COURSE

Based at Radley (near Abingdon)

SATURDAY 16TH APRIL 2011

Methods offered:

**Plain Hunt, Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles,
Minor, Triples and Major
(subject to demand)**

Cost £25.00 including evening meal

**Details and an application form will be available after
1st December 2010 from Jon and Kay Chamberlain,
and on the Guild Website**

E-mail: jonandkaycham@tiscali.co.uk

or send A5 s.a.e. to:

**24 Nursery View, Faringdon, SN7 8SJ
Tel: 01367 242647**

**Closing date for applications is 31st January 2011
after which places will be offered (limited to 25)**



EBSB Summer Walk Outing, outside Goring church, June 2010



Central Bucks Branch Outing, Saturday 11th September