

ODD BOB



Newsletter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
website: odg.org.uk/



St. Mary's, Twyford, Berkshire in 1913 (see page 5)

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From your Editor...

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

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

Contributions for the next issue, please, by the end of April 2013.

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

Amazing! What a summer!

No – not the weather, which was decidedly below par. But the ringing, which was heard loud and clear throughout our Guild as it was across the country.

The response from the membership as a whole to ring for special events was truly remarkable. Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee gave many bands the excuse (if they needed it!) to celebrate with quarters and peals, as well as shorter touches. This was a very impressive preparation for what followed with the Olympics and Paralympics: ringing to mark the progress of the Torch, to herald the day of the opening ceremony (I wonder exactly how many individual bells rang from 08:12 to 08:15 that morning), and to celebrate the many outstanding successes of Team GB.

Now that we can reflect on all that has been achieved, it seems to me that our commitment in ringing the bells of our diocese is a good indication of the strength of 'Team ODG'. Thank you, everyone, for your dedication.

With only three of our young ringers from last year's competition still falling within the age limit of the *Ringling World National Youth Striking Contest*, held in Birmingham in July, it was hardly surprising that we did not quite match the very high standard that we achieved in the 2011 event. Nevertheless, a 'B' is very creditable and I thank all those who rang for their enthusiasm and determination to improve. All but one of them will still be under 19 and eligible for next July's event (in York) so I am hopeful that practice will take them a little closer to perfection.

However, I would like to assure you that the band has not yet been selected! It may be that there are some youngsters out there who have been making good progress but have not yet been put forward. If they can ring Plain Bob and/or Grandsire Triples reliably and strike really well, I would be delighted to hear about them, and sooner rather than later.

One of the aspects of this contest that I enjoy is the uncertainty of how a band representing a particular area may ring from one year to the next, because of the way in which older members of the group may have moved on, perhaps to become part of a university society, to be replaced by younger and possibly less experienced ringers. In many competitions, at branch, guild and even national level, we tend to see the same faces year on year and develop perceptions of how a band is likely to perform.

Any successful group needs to be constantly nurturing ‘new blood’ if it is to remain strong, and this applies equally to towers and branches within the Guild as well as to a representative band of youngsters. Whereas ‘centres of ringing excellence’ such as Birmingham and London seem to attract top class ringers, at most of our Guild towers we must recruit and train if we are to increase numbers and improve standards.

I am delighted with the evident success of *The Big Ring Pull* in North Bucks in attracting recruits and giving them a solid start in their ringing. I hope that the lessons learned there will benefit other branches in similar ventures. Please can I remind you, also, that the Guild Education sub-committee is always ready to give advice and practical support. I urge and encourage you to make use of all that it has to offer.

Robert Newton, Guild Master

New Guild Secretary

As 2012 was rung in, I was minding my own business, adapting to a new pace of life after taking redundancy the previous summer from my job with the BBC at Caversham, which had brought me into the Guild’s catchment area some 25 years earlier. The ringing grapevine soon identified me as a man with time on his hands and acted to rectify this, so that I found myself first a Reading Branch ringing master and, by May, the new Guild secretary. It has been a steep learning curve since, but one that I am enjoying. My first engagement as secretary was a barbecue (in the Bicester Branch – many thanks to its organisers), which will come as no surprise to those who know me.



I came into the exercise by the traditional route of a ringing parent. My late father, Colin Champion, learned in Surrey, moving to Worthing on the Sussex coast in the mid-1960s. I learned at the town’s eight-bell tower at Heene and rang my first quarter there, aged 14, in 1975. (I bumped into another member of that quarter-peal band recently at my first Education Subcommittee meeting – it’s a small world.)

My first peal came four years later, followed by the delights of student ringing with the Cambridge University Guild. Then, in early 1985, I landed in Caversham, where the local band have put up with me ever since. It may have helped that I brought them a new recruit in due course: Julie, my wife of nearly

20 years, soon decided that going around on outings as a non-ringer was not for her and that if she couldn't beat 'em, she would have to join 'em.

When not ringing, I keep busy producing translations at Julie's behest, or playing cricket (a match-saving type of batsman for a club based at my old employer's site) or a little golf (not yet good enough for a handicap).

James Champion, Guild Hon. Sec.

Centenary of Twyford's bells

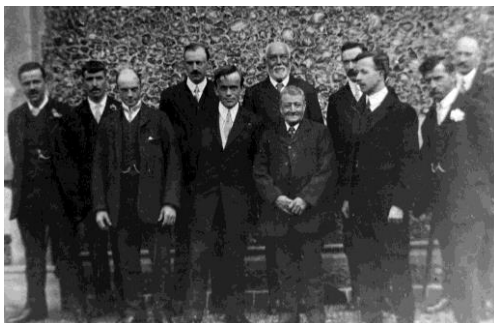
The bells of St Mary's, Twyford, Berkshire were installed as a complete Whitechapel peal in 1913. The church will be marking the centenary of its first peal on the bells on May 21st

1913 with a variety of events.

These include a service of re-dedication of the 8 bells, a tower Open Day / Ringing Day plus tea, and activities in the two primary schools.

A reprise of the 5040 Stedman Triples Thurston's 4 Part is planned, as well as selections from methods in the Twyford peal archive. The present ringers will don period costume for a

commemorative photograph with descendants of the original band. Recordings of the ringing and messages for posterity from ringers and the community will be sealed behind a framed copy of the 1913 picture of the new tower for a future generation to access (on, doubtless, more sophisticated technology than the humble CD and DVD). Everyone is welcome on Saturday April 27th from 2 to 4.30, refreshments available. More details at www.rustwychurch.org in due course.



First Twyford ringers (& a Hurst ringer)

Making and distributing images of children

(extract from the Diocese of Oxford, Safeguarding Handbook)

Making and publishing images of children is usually enjoyed by children and parents and can bring useful publicity, but there are some important issues to note. The issues are the same for still photographs, digital images or films, and regardless of the particular technology used. For convenience they are all referred to as images. Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998, and therefore the eight principles of the Act apply. These are as follows:

Personal data should be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept for longer than is necessary

- processed in line with your rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

Legitimate journalism is a ‘special purpose’ under the Data Protection Act, which exempts it from the requirement of security.

It is important that the consent of the children and their parents is obtained for the making and use of images of children. Consent is not needed if children are in a public place such as in the open air or at a fair or similar event. A church is not a public place in this sense.

Those taking photographs need to bear in mind that parents may have good reasons for refusing consent, for example:

- some children may have been involved in legal disputes, local authority care, or adoption, and their whereabouts should not be too widely known; parents of the affected children will know this and will appropriately withhold consent without necessarily giving the reason
- if individual children are identified, it would be possible for potential abusers to use them to target prospective victims
- images made using digital cameras can be manipulated for child pornography, which is a growing problem on the internet; this is particularly relevant if children are scantily dressed

Good practice is therefore as follows:

Obtain consent from parents and children before making images. Consent need not be in writing if it is not proposed to publish the pictures in any way, but if they are going to be distributed, used in a newspaper including the diocesan newspaper *The Door*, or put on a website, then a specific consent should be obtained.

Images are usually made in the context of a specific activity. If the event is a church service, nativity play or similar, then an oral notice can be given out at the beginning by the leader of the service or event, asking that any parent who objects to images being made of their child should either remove their child from view of the camera or approach the leader afterwards to ensure that any image they object to is not used. Alternatively, if the event is one for which specific parental consent is sought, add a suitable wording to the parental consent form, such as:

I consent to images and video recordings being made of my child and for these to be used in printed publications and on websites (adapt and delete as necessary).

- Where possible, each child should be part of a group
- If the photograph is to be distributed, avoid naming the child. If a name needs to be used, it should be only a first name. However, there may be circumstances where, with the explicit consent of the child and his parent, it would be permissible to use the child’s full name, for example when celebrating a specific performance or achievement
- If the child is named in full, avoid using their image

- If children are scantily dressed, e.g. for swimming, then focus on the activity rather than a particular child. Avoid full face and body shots
- Consider the age of the children involved
- Be clear about whether the image is to be retained for further use
- Store the image securely and dispose of it when it is no longer required.

Katie Lane, Children's Officer

ODG 6-bell competition

The Guild 6-bell striking competition was this year hosted by the Banbury branch on 6th October 2012 at St. Nicholas, Tadmarton. It attracted entries from nine branches, each being represented by a tower from within its branch. As usual the test piece was one minute of rounds followed by 240 changes.

The weather was exceptionally fair for an enjoyable afternoon listening to really excellent ringing on an eclectic mix of founders' offerings which have been improved by Whitechapel's tuning machine and White's re-hanging. They are not difficult to ring or to hear either inside or outside, so a good choice for a striking competition.

The weather being kind meant the judges, James Marchbank and Ben Hockenhull, from Macclesfield, were able to sit in a secluded spot in the churchyard and determine the quality and accuracy of each band's test piece.

In his opening comments James explained how he had marked the ringing and how the scores were calculated. He commented that the ringing was of a very high standard throughout.

The teams were placed in the following order:

Position	Tower	Branch	Faults
1st	High Wycombe	EBSB	17.5
2nd	Thatcham	Newbury	19.5
3rd	Reading St. Mary the Virgin	Reading	20.5
4th	St. Aldates, Oxford	Oxford City	26
5th	Wantage	Old North Berks	30.5
6th	Drayton St. Leonard	South Oxon	34.5
7th	Woodstock	Witney and Woodstock	39.5
8th	Hanslope	North Bucks	40.5
9th	Bodicote	Banbury	44

Education Committee report

We have run three courses so far in 2012. Radley was 50% oversubscribed and Steeple Aston was 20% oversubscribed, both ran with the full five groups catering for Plain Hunt up to basic Triples. In contrast, the Michaelmas course was 25% undersubscribed and ran with only three groups catering for Stedman Triples, basic and advanced Surprise Major. Our thanks go to course organisers who have now stood down: Jon & Kay Chamberlain, who ran the Radley course since 2009, and Katie Lane, who ran the Michaelmas course from 2010. Ann Osborne has taken on organising the Michaelmas course, and Richard Stanworth continues to run the Steeple Aston course.

We developed the scheme for the Guild to award educational grants, which are now available, see: odg.org.uk/education/#GRANTS. We also provided input for the Guild's response to the Central Council led group working on training and recruitment to secure the future of ringing.

The final course in 2012 will be the 10 bell course at Aston Clinton in December. The 2013 training meeting will be on 2nd February, when people involved in training within branches can hear and exchange ideas about training, with both discussion and practical work. The format will change slightly in response to feedback from previous participants.

The next Young Ringers Award Scheme will run from April 2013 to March 2014, with awards presented at the AGM in May 2014. We are also exploring more widespread use of the scheme that we have developed (see separate article).

John Harrison, Education Sub-Committee Chairman

Young Ringers Award Scheme

The Education sub-committee will be running the Young Ringers Award Scheme next year from the 1st April to 31st March; this will allow one month for assessment before presentations at our AGM. We would like as many members as possible to encourage our younger ringers to take part. The scheme is designed to encourage and recognise our young ringers' achievements and progress throughout the period of their participation.

Registration for the scheme is free and open to Guild members younger than 18 years at the start of the 12-month period during which they participate.

The 2011 scheme has had positive feedback both during the programme and after the awards were made, and this is currently being reviewed by the Education committee. The Committee has been impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants and with the appreciation of their parents and mentors. It is now intended to run the scheme on a two year rolling cycle.

For those who may not be familiar with its format, there are three levels of award, Gold, Silver and Bronze that each participant may achieve. The awards follow an independent assessment of their submission at the end; each assessment is made against a marking scheme which is made available to all participants before they start the programme. There are no reasons, if age permits, why a participant could not repeat the scheme and make another submission to enhance their ringing experience and improve upon their previous level of achievement. A modest prize is given to each award winner and there is also a trophy for the best overall submission, retained until it is again awarded.

These awards are based on a combination of factors:

- Ringing skill and personal development (taking account of opportunity and level of prior capability)
- Service to the local band(s)
- Contribution to the wider community (both the ringing community and the non-ringing community)
- Breadth of interest and knowledge (awareness and understanding of ringing-related topics)
- Depth of knowledge and/or expertise (in any aspect).

To support and guide the participants during the programme they are each assigned a mentor, normally from their local tower. The mentor is asked to help them make the best of their participation by suggesting realistic objectives, discussing the best approach given the participant's temperament, skill level and opportunities, and by helping to interpret anything that isn't clear. During the scheme the mentor should monitor progress as well as offer a response to any request for advice or information.

At the end of the year, the participants submit evidence of their activities and achievements. The evidence may take any suitable form, but as a minimum should include some form of logbook covering a record of what has been done during the year, and a commentary that helps the assessors to understand what has been achieved. Pro-forma's are offered for the diary and skills sheets. All records of activities should be signed off by a responsible person, e.g. mentor, tower captain, branch ringing master, course tutor.

The Committee also organise events during the programme. During 2011 these were a visit to White's Bell-hangers workshop in Appleton, and a tower and belfry maintenance session. A tour of the Palace of Westminster Clock Tower (now the *Elizabeth Tower*) had to be deferred until after the awards were made earlier this year.

Further information can be found from the Guild's web site via the following link:

<http://odg.org.uk/education/YRA/>

If anyone would like to know more about the scheme they should contact a member of the Committee; we are also open to suggestions for activities that would be suitable for inclusion.

John Harrison (chairman)/Alan Bentley (secretary), Education Sub-committee

Towers and Belfries Committee Report

Since the last report, the committee has met five times with an average attendance of seven. Thirteen inspections/visits have been carried out, details of which are shown below.

- Chalfont St Giles (Tower Maintenance Award)
- Chesham Bois (perceived difficulty in chiming)
- Clewer (2 visits – removal of rope tubes to improve sound in ringing room)
- Great Coxwell (to assess prospect of re-hanging)
- Harwell (Tower Maintenance Award)
- Kintbury (Tower Maintenance Award)

- Liddington (to assess prospect of re-hanging)
- Oxford, St Giles (grant inspection)
- South Stoke (advice on ringing room access)
- Thame (Tower Maintenance Award)
- White Waltham (Tower Maintenance Award)
- Windsor Parish Church (advice on mobile telephone aerial installation)

Another successful maintenance course was held in July based at and around Woodstock (at Woodstock, North & South Leigh) and fourteen people attended. It is proposed to hold the next course in May, possibly in the Winslow area.

A successful rope-splicing course took place at Pangbourne on 10th March. Most of the time was spent on short splices. Comments from attendees were positive, but it was thought that more time was needed for the practical side of things and perhaps with more emphasis on the long splice. An open-ended practical session may be incorporated into the next course. Thirteen people have expressed interest for the next course which will probably take place in April or May.

A paper is being prepared on aligning clappers.

John Davidge, Chairman T&B Committee

Tower Maintenance Award Scheme

In the period since the last report the scheme has declined slightly with the number of current awards having fallen to twenty (from twenty three). The number of expired awards has risen and is now fifteen. The number of towers participating or expressing an interest is seventy-four, which is about seventeen per cent of the towers listed in the annual report last year. There have now been eighty-two inspections (of which nineteen were preliminaries), resulting in sixty-four awards (thirty-three Gold, twenty Silver, and twelve Bronze).

The number of Branches having a tower in the “current awards” list is still at ten out of the fifteen branches, with EBSB still maintaining its predominant position (just), as follows:

Banbury	2	(Silver, Bronze)
Central Bucks	1	(Gold)
Chiltern	1	(Gold)
EBSB	4	(4 Gold)
Newbury	1	(Gold)
Old North Berks	3	(Gold, Silver, Bronze)
Reading	3	(2 Gold, 1 Silver)
Sonning Deanery	2	(Gold, Silver)
South Oxon	2	(2 Gold)
Witney & Woodstock	1	(Gold)

Members of the committee will be trying to persuade towers in their area, where the TMA has expired, to have a re-inspection. If your tower is in one of the remaining five branches without an award, 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

Mapledurham (St Margaret)	Reading	Expires 30.11.12
Reading St. Giles	Reading	Expires 31.12.12
Winslow (St Laurence)	Central Bucks	Expires 31.01.13
Chalgrove (SMV)	South Oxon	Expires 31.01.13
Wokingham (All Saints)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 28.02.13
Ellesborough (SS Peter & Paul)	Chiltern	Expires 28.02.13
Freeland (S.M.V)	Witney & Woodstock	Expires 31.03.13
Denham (St Mary)	EBSB	Expires 31.08.13
Bray (St Michael)	EBSB	Expires 31.10.13
Clewer (St Andrew)	EBSB	Expires 31.05.14
Thatcham (St Mary)	Newbury	Expires 31.05.14
Thame (St Mary)	South Oxon	Expires 31.08.14

Chalfont St Giles	EBSB	Expires 30.09.14
Kintbury (SMV)	Newbury	Expires 30.09.14
Harwell (St Matthew)	Old North Bucks	Expires 30.09.14

Silver Award

Cropredy (S.M.V.)	Banbury	Expires 31.12.12
Henley (S.M.V.)	Reading	Expires 31.08.13
Wantage (SS Peter & Paul)	Old North Berks	Expires 31.08.13
White Waltham	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.08.14

Bronze Grade

Letcombe Regis (St Andrew)	Old North Berks	Expires 30.11.13
Tadmarton (St Nicholas)	Banbury	Expires 30.09.14

Expired Awards

Dorchester (SS Peter & Paul)	South Oxon Branch	Expired 30.09.05
Deddington (SS Peter & Paul)	Banbury Branch	Expired 30.04.06
Finchhampstead (St James)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.07.07
Stoke Mandeville (St Mary V.)	Chiltern	Expired 31.12.07
Warborough (St Laurence)	South Oxon	Expired 31.12.07
Easthampstead (St Michael)	Sonning Deanery	Expired 31.12.08
Winkfield (St Mary)	EBSB	Expired 31.05.09
Purley (St Mary V.)	Reading	Expired 31.01.10
Benson (St Helen)	South Oxon	Expires 31.10.11
Sonning (St Andrew)	Sonning Deanery	Expires 31.10.11
Hungerford (St Lawrence)	Newbury	Expires 30.11.11
South Stoke (St Andrew)	Reading	Expires 31.03.12
Cookham (Holy Trinity)	EBSB	Expires 31.05.12
Fulmer (St James)	EBSB	Expires 31.05.12
Chalfont St Peter	EBSB	Expires 30.06.12
Peasemore (St Barnabas)	Newbury	Expires 30.06.12

John Davidge

Librarian's Report

There have been 12 library enquiries since May. These have been about:

- Date of election of Newbury branch member
- Date Great Shefford bells became unringable
- Early peals at Denham, Bucks
- Date of election of Witney and Woodstock branch member
- Bell moved from St Giles', Oxford to Radcliffe Infirmary
- Peal at St Ebbe's Oxford in 1974
- Information from "Campanologia" by Frank Blagrove
- Early peals at Stoke Poges
- Information about Checkendon bell ringers, 1918-1960s
- Date of earliest meetings of Vale of White Horse branch
- Phil Walker's notes to do with verifying earlier ODG peals
- Ringing Worlds for late 1940s were borrowed.

The Guild Library now has its own de-humidifier. It is in operation and I am pleased to say it does what it says on the tin: it has been condensing about a litre of water each week during the summer, and the humidity in the library has remained at a reasonable level throughout.

I have also bought three books that have been advertised in the Ringing World: *Ringing for Gold* by Peter Fawcett, *Yorkshire Tails* by Karl Grave and *360 Treble Dodging Minor Grids* by Anthony S Bishop.

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: odg.org.uk/reports/odg_insurance_definition.php

News from the Branches

Banbury

The Queen's Jubilee provided an opportunity for celebratory ringing. At the Steeple Aston practice before the Jubilee weekend, Radio Oxford came to record the bells as well as doing interviews with the Rector and several ringers. A Jubilee programme was broadcast on Tuesday 5th June which included these interviews with the bells ringing in the background.

Three Jubilee peals were rung in the branch. The regular Steeple Aston ringers rang a peal of Grandsire Triples on 2nd June; this was also the first peal on the new tenor bell. The second peal was rung at Duns Tew by Colin Turner and a visiting band. Duns Tew bells were re-hung in 1953 and a peal was rung on that occasion to celebrate the Coronation. The third peal of Plain Bob Royal was rung on 5th June at St Mary's, Banbury. In addition, many of our branch towers rang in celebration over the Jubilee weekend.



The Banbury band

Our branch Striking Competition and Barbecue at Bodicote was held in mid-June with over 60 people attending and eleven teams participating in the competition. This year there were two groups; one for call change ringing and one for method ringing. Bodicote scooped first place in both groups. As usual a barbecue feast was provided for all to enjoy.

A number of towers did the early morning ringing for the start of the Olympics on Friday 27th June.

This year our branch hosted the Guild 6-bell Striking Competition at Tadmarton. Nine teams participated so there were no heats. The final provided an excellent standard of ringing from all teams. The winning team was High Wycombe. Those who stayed for refreshments were treated to an excellent "bell-ringers' tea" provided by Lindsey Smith and her helpers at the village hall.

The Branch is delighted to hear of a potential future ringer, with the safe arrival of Simon George Lee on Tuesday 16th October, weighing in at 8 lbs 4.5oz. Our congratulations and best wishes to Adderbury ringers, Zoe and Colin Lee.

Heather Hughes

Bicester

Bicester Branch ringers have been active (in a low-key sort of way!) recently with ringing for the Queen's Jubilee – a peal at Brill, quarter peals at Bicester and Islip, and general ringing at Woodeaton and Souldern.

This was followed by ringing for the Olympics in Bicester and Kirtlington when the torch went through both places. There was more early morning ringing for the Olympics opening ceremony itself when Fringford rang their three bells (and had a video on YouTube as a result!), and Islip took part in the *All the Bells* project.

On Saturday 15th September Islip once again hosted the branch social and striking competition, with four tower teams (up from two last year), which made for a good competition that was judged by Lorna and Brian Curtis from the Witney & Woodstock Branch. Islip fielded a full local team and finished 3rd, the other three teams were combinations of towers. Bicester (finishing 1st), Launton (4th place) and Charlton (2nd place) teams were made of 50%+ tower members with a few extras to make up the team numbers – some had not entered a competition before and whilst apprehensive beforehand found it was actually quite good fun! We were delighted that our new Guild Secretary and his wife were able to come, in addition to some non-ringing friends and children.

Branch members have helped on the Steeple Aston course on 13th October, as well as appreciating the branch practices, which have ranged in numbers attending but been thoroughly enjoyable.

Sadly one of the Charlton-on-Otmoor band died in August at the age of 68. Gerald (Ged) Mann learnt to ring, along with his wife Angie and sister-in-law Dawn, in time for the Millennium. They have continued to be reliable members of the Charlton band. Our sympathy goes to all his family – he was a well-known figure in Charlton and his funeral service was packed with family and friends.

Do check out our website at www.bicesterbranch.org.uk for details (and encouraging reports) of forthcoming branch practices.

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

It has proved to be a busy ringing summer in CBB. (How good it would have been to add 'sunny' to those adjectives!) However it started with a sunny, social, Saturday afternoon in May – the new month for our CBB striking competition. Drayton Parslow hosted and fielded three teams, a huge achievement for a tower which until a short while ago had no regular ringing. Judged by John White from South Oxon, who reminded us that he had first judged 8 years ago, Aylesbury came out the winner. There were eight teams in total including a scratch one and visitors from Linslade, a very pleasing number.

This change of month enabled us to hold a half year meeting for the first time in years. Attendance was poor so this will need to be looked at. However, some key business was transacted that will enable quicker progress at the AGM. A new Branch Steward was recruited and got straight to work, and a way forward was agreed on our website which is currently in the doldrums.

Then began the run of celebratory ringing. Various ringing took place for the Jubilee with towers responding to local activities. The Olympic Torch route came through CBB on July 9th. Winslow, Whitchurch, Aylesbury and Waddesdon all rang it through their towns.

A number of towers were able to take part in the countrywide *All the Bells* event on the opening day of the Olympics, and finally Aylesbury were proud to ring for the pivotal Paralympic torch events.

One disappointment this year was the turn out for the September outing which took place in South Oxon. Too few expressed interest in the hiring of a coach, however this then seemed to have undermined people's commitment to turning out on the day despite some sunshine.

This period has concluded with a sunny, social, Saturday afternoon – this time in October at Wendover where the annual inter-branch *Orchard Cup* was contested with Chiltern. The punch line is the same because Aylesbury won again (*see photo on back cover*), for the 5th time, pipping CBB's Wing and the trio of Chiltern teams. Once again the indomitable Drayton Parslow ringers were there with two teams, and there was a visiting team from Linslade.

Diana Slevin

Chiltern

As with most Branches, Chiltern has been quite busy since the May edition of Odd Bob with lots of 'special ringing' for special events. In addition there has been the usual range of branch and tower practices, service ringing and weddings (of which there seems to have been an increase this year) – and of course with ringing to mark the Branch's 50th Anniversary.

The history of the Chiltern Branch was comprehensively described in the May Odd Bob, and I am pleased to report that the aspiration for all towers with ringable bells to partake in the celebration was achieved with one exception. A full record of the ringing that was carried out is given below this article (*on page 17*).

Ringing for HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee was also well supported, with towers ringing both on the day of the Thames Jubilee Pageant and in connection with local events such as village fetes and carnivals. Those towers that did take part seem to have found a sense of achievement, with one tower captain saying, "A pity Jubilees don't occur more often; we enjoyed making a joyful noise in the middle of the day, and reaching a wider public audience than usual".

Wendover ringers did master the complexities of Olympics Five Ring Doubles, and Aston Clinton succeeded with the Triples version. But there seems to have been very little interest in the method elsewhere. Doubtless one of Wendover's high spots was the *All the Bells* event on 27th July at (8.12 am!) to mark the opening of the Olympic Games. Not only the eight church bells but

also handbells and even toy bells were rung (a subtle bit of PR to initiate the much younger generation into the joys of ringing). At least one other tower turned out that morning, Weston Turville – and I'm told that the Rector rang his doorbell at the same time!! – but the event does not appear to have received widespread support within the Branch.

Work continues to restore Cheddington's bells. On 13th August started two and a half days of work to dismantle the bells in order to transport the headstocks back to the works of White's of Appleton to fit new bearings.

An account of this and subsequent work can be found at <http://www.cmmbells.org.uk/StGilesBells/BellRehangDismantling>.

Mentmore currently has no resident ringers, but ringers from nearby towers have got together and are holding practices on the 3rd Friday each month (7.30 – 9.00) for those who wish to consolidate or expand their repertoire of Minimus and Doubles (without a tenor) ringing. Quite a lot of work has been done to improve the handling of the bells, so come and give them a try! Visitors will be most welcome.

A Branch Quarter Peal Day is planned for November 17th (or thereabouts) and a 10-bell practice will be held at Aston Clinton on December 1st. For details, contact Ruth Groves.

Brian Robson

Quarter Peals for Chiltern Branch 50th Anniversary

Edlesborough 20.5.12, 1260 Doubles (600 St.Martin's, 660 Plain Bob), 1 Kevin Pughe, 2 Angela Blackburn, 3 Rose Nightingale, 4 Michael Pearson, 5 William J Stungo (C), 6 Richard Booth. This church is now redundant, and is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust; it is within the oversight of St Albans Diocese through its attachment to the Eaton Bray ecclesiastical parish; however, the tower was affiliated to the ODG at the time the branch was formed.

Ellesborough 23.4.12, 1320 of Reverse Canterbury Doubles celebrating both St Georges Day and the Branch 50th Anniversary with all the ringers except the tenor calling.

Great Kimble joined forces with **Halton**: both towers have small bands (four ringers each) but nevertheless did attempt a QP at Kimble; unfortunately it was unsuccessful but they plan to try again later in the year. However, five courses of St Nicholas Minimus were rung at GK.

Great Missenden rang a QP of Plain Bob Major (called by Jon Potter) to mark both the 50th Anniversary and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A significant crowd had assembled by the end, as the ringing coincided with the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon on the hill.

Ivinghoe 23.4.12, 1260 St. Simons, St Martins, Bob Doubles, 1 Michael Pearson, 2 Philip Denwood (C), 3 Rose Nightingale, 4 Richard Booth, 5 Charles Thorogood, 6 Corral McCormack.

Little Missenden 22.5.12, 1260 Grandsire Doubles, 1 Gillian Little, 2 Lucy Wilson, 3 Ruth Groves, 4 Peter Wiltshire, 5 Barry Cowper (C), 6 Martin Bolton.

Marsworth 19.4.12, 1320 Bob Doubles, 1 Rose Nightingale, 2 Philip Denwood, 3 Richard Booth, 4 Alan Masters, 5 Ruth Groves (C), 6 Keith Price.

Mentmore 21.4.12, although Mentmore currently have no members, a team was assembled to ring a QP of 1260 Grandsire Doubles, 1 Rose Nightingale, 2 Michael Pearson, 3 Richard Booth, 4 Charles Thorogood, 5 Barry Eglesfield (C). It is notable that the ringers of bells 2 & 5 were members of ODG before the formation of Chiltern Branch.

Monks Risborough 29.4.12, 1260 Bob Doubles, 1 Brian Highe, 2 Ann Tomkins, 3 Ruth Groves, 4 Penny Hollins, 5 Les Floyd (C), 6 Peter Haigh.

Stoke Mandeville 17.4.12, 1260 Grandsire Doubles, 1 David Argue, 2 Ann Tomkins, 3 Roger Powell, 4 Margaret Olliffe, 5 Ruth Groves (C), 6 Neil Lynch (1st quarter). Note that Neil is not a member of Chiltern Branch but he regularly attends SM practice nights from his home tower at Chesham.

Wendover This is a predominantly novice band, who doubted their ability to achieve a QP ringing a recognised method. Nevertheless, they rang rounds and call changes for 45 minutes non-stop with very few mistakes. Not a genuine quarter peal but an interesting evening.

Weston Turville 25.4.12, 1260 Grandsire Doubles, 1 Sue Robson, 2 Ruth Groves, 3 Andrew Leleux, 4 Brian Robson, 5 Matthew Smith (C), 6 John King (1st quarter).

Cheddington and Slapton: bells are not ringable at either tower. Slapton have no ringers, but Cheddington members joined with nearby towers so they made their contribution. Bledlow currently has no members and this is the only other tower in the Branch (apart from Halton, whose members rang at Great Kimble) where there was no special ringing to mark this Anniversary.

Chipping Norton

The Branch retained the ODBF shield for sponsored ringing by raising £1222.

Many of our towers celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with ringing for special church services and local events, which included a church flower display, an open-air service, and a street party. Four quarter peals were rung at Charlbury, Hook Norton, Swerford and Wigginton. Andrew Kenyon, achieved his first quarter peal, and Daniel Austin, his twenty-fifth. Mary Hardie also rang her first quarter earlier in May. Congratulations to all of them.

The Burford Benefice Ringers enjoyed a day of Jubilee ringing on a tour of the Windrush valley, visiting three towers in Gloucestershire and four in Oxon.

On the opening day of the Olympics, the bells were rung at Burford, Fulbrook, Taynton, Charlbury, and Hook Norton.

Four Guild members, Barry Acock, Rebecca Godfrey and Georgina Oliver, all from Leafield and Jennifer Lewis, from Burford, were elected at the August branch practice held at Charlbury.

Congratulations go to Dave and Joanne Murphy (nee Summers) of Charlbury on the birth of their son in September.

We were pleased to see Keith Mitchell back ringing, following his illness, at the Branch practice at Burford in September, and thank him for everything he has done in his role as Ringing Master for the Branch over the last five years.

Keith has decided to stand down from this role and Claire Tarrant, his deputy, is now Acting Ringing Master.

We welcomed the Guild Secretary, James Champion, to the Autumn Meeting at Enstone on October 13th when arrangements for the Guild AGM in 2013, to be held at Ascott-u-Wychwood, were discussed. That same day, four of our members attended the Steeple Aston one-day course.

We decided not to hold a Saturday Autumn meeting next year as only a few members attended. It will be replaced by an evening practice on a weekday next October which will be preceded by a meeting.

Finally, Branch members are very sorry to hear of the death of Martin Seth-Smith, a former Churchill ringer. He had recently been living at Shipton-u-Wychwood where he enjoyed listening to the bells. We send our condolences to his family.

Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

Several towers in the Branch rang peals or quarter peals to mark the Jubilee and London 2012 events. Particularly noteworthy was a peal of Grandsire Caters at Cookham, the first on the bells since augmentation in December 2006. Six local Cookham ringers took part, one ringing her first peal.

The usual weekday daytime practices, Surprise, Higher Number and regular Branch practices have continued and been well supported, with many members making encouraging progress.

The inaugural Branch novices' striking competition was held on 28 July at Chalfont St Peter. For the purposes of this event, a novice was regarded as being a ringer who had not yet rung a peal and who had not progressed beyond Plain Bob on 6 or 8 bells. One experienced ringer was permitted in each team to act as



conductor. Each team was required to ring 120 changes of a method or rows of call changes. David Cornwall kindly acted as judge and Hambleton were declared the winning team. Amersham and Clewer were the other competitors. This was a very successful and enjoyable event and is likely to be an annual fixture.

This year's Lorna Newton striking competition final was held at Lane End on 13 October. Teams from Beaconsfield, Chesham, High Wycombe (B), Lane End and Wooburn took part and some very good ringing was enjoyed by all present. The competition was judged by Peter Mackie,

who announced that the top three teams were placed very close, with Beaconsfield declared the winners. The picture shows Geoff Hopkinson (left), on behalf of the winning team, receiving the trophy from Robert Newton.

Chesham were in second place and were awarded the runner-up trophy, and the Wooden Spoon award went to Wooburn.

At the half yearly meeting that followed the striking competition six new members were elected and the forthcoming programme for the Branch was outlined. Grateful thanks were expressed to George Piggin and his colleagues for hosting the event and for providing the plentiful tea.

As many members will know, the old bells and frame at High Wycombe were removed from High Wycombe's tower just before Easter this year, and a reinforced concrete ring beam was installed in June. At the same time the ceiling of the ringing chamber was lowered by about 18 inches. Some of the old bells were sold to Horton in Ribblesdale, Kilburn, Bicknoller and Gloucester. The old third has been retained by the High Wycombe Society and metal from the other bells was reused by Whitechapel in casting the new ring. The new bells were delivered in early October and were available for viewing on the floor of the church on 10 October prior to installation in the tower. The new bells form a ring of 12 with two additional semitone bells. It is hoped that they will be in full use by Remembrance Sunday. Fund raising is going well, with about £265,000 collected so far.

After seven years of outstanding service, Mandy Salter has now handed the role of Branch Hon. Secretary to Peter Mackie, whose contact details are shown on the Branch website and at the back of Odd Bob.

Peter H Mackie

Newbury

What a busy summer, like most other areas the Newbury Branch managed a lot of ringing during the Diamond Jubilee, Olympic Games & Paralympics. Most towers managed to ring at least once for each occasion with a 2012 date touch of London Doubles being rung at Midgham just before the start of the Olympic opening ceremony.

Our 6-bell ringing competition and Branch social was held in July at Speen and we had a very good turn out. The competition was won by Thatcham, which went on to represent the Branch at the recent Guild 6-bell striking competition where it came a very credible 2nd. Our striking competition was judged by Lewis Cobb, MBE, from Bishops Cannings; he was aided by three branch members whom he tutored in judging during the afternoon. The afternoon finished with a fine bell ringers tea supplied by the members of the host tower with contributions from a local primary school.

In September we had the news that Kintbury tower had been awarded a Gold Certificate by the Tower Maintenance Scheme, congratulations go to the members there.

At the time of writing the ring at Great Shefford had not been installed but it should be complete by the end of October. It was a disappointment that the plans for them to be able to ring for the summer celebrations weren't fulfilled but there is a keen band of new ringers, who have been learning at Brightwalton & East Ilsley, ready and waiting once the bells are in place.

Branch practices are still very well attended and cater for all levels; unfortunately the October practice had to be cancelled at short notice due to the host tower losing the clapper from its Tenor the night before at their own practice.

Maureen Tarbox

North Bucks

In June we held our summer social at Padbury. Some general ringing, with tea and cake supplied by the Padbury ringers, was followed by the friendly branch striking competition. In recent years we've had about six teams enter the competition, but this year, partially due to the *Big Ring Pull* recruitment project, we had 16 teams entered with about 90 ringers taking part. The competition ringing was limited to just 60 changes in order to fit all the teams in. Hanslope won the competition and went on to represent the branch at the Guild finals.

Our annual striking competition against the Towcester branch was held in July at the estate church of Easton Neston just outside Towcester. Each branch rang three set pieces: Stedman, Plain Bob and Call Changes. North Bucks rang well, but not well enough, and were placed 2nd in each of the pieces.

In September there was an opportunity for all the new recruits from the *Big Ring Pull* to get together for an outing to sample their local towers around Milton Keynes. Many new ringers attended and were introduced to their first ringing outing experience; for most of them this was their first ring away from 'home'. This highly successful day, organised by one of the new recruits, is to be repeated on the anniversary of the *Big Ring Pull* course in March next year, when another set of local towers will be visited.

At the end of the month we held our Autumn meeting at Wavendon – a tower that had recently been silent but had restarted as a result of the *Big Ring Pull*. Thirty new members were elected at the meeting – mostly from the recruitment project, which was very encouraging.

Throughout this period the regular monthly branch practices and separate rounds and call change practices have continued. The five bells at Beachampton have recently been rehung and we held a very enjoyable practice there in July.

Jonathan Griggs

Old North Berks

It has been quite an active summer for the branch. Most of our monthly general practices, surprise major practices and improvers' sessions have been quite well attended. It can be very hard to guess which will be the best attended because what can be a poor month in one year can be a good month the next and vice versa. We would like to thank all those who have supported the Branch and helped to make all these occasions fun and with a lot of good ringing. Ringing

for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics were well supported throughout the branch, with peals, quarter peals and special ringing events.

We have recently had several new initiatives between some of our towers. The Harwell ringers are actively supporting the practices at Chilton on Mondays. Practices are open to ringers of all abilities and not just learners. The Abingdon ringers are now holding a joint practice on the first Tuesday of every month with the Milton ringers. It is felt that these joint practices will be of benefit to both towers by combining expertise.

On a sad note, we were sorry to hear of the death of Jack Berry of Wallingford. Until the onset of ill health, Jack had been an active member of the branch and had served as Tower Captain of Wallingford for many years.

Our branch outing was organised by Philip Roberts of Harwell on one of the few sunny days in June. Approximately thirty branch members and friends enjoyed ringing at Somerton, Middleton Stoney, Bicester, Islip and Bletchington. A relaxing lunch was held at the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester, and Janette organised afternoon tea for us at Bletchington. Over forty members and friends attended the barbecue that followed at the Pavilion on the Harwell site, with good food cooked extremely well by our chefs, Nick Clarke and Stuart Gibson. Croquet was played into the evening until rain stopped play (well, we couldn't expect to have a totally rain-free day this summer). Thanks go to everyone involved for arranging an excellent day for branch members.

Our next social event will take place in November and will be a skittles evening with fish and chip supper at Radley Village Hall. Thanks go to Daphne Pollard and her ringers for organising this for the branch. Skittles evenings in the past have always proved to be very amusing, with various strange items being bowled down the alley during the evening.

Ringing to celebrate the New Year will be held at Chilton on 1st January 2013 from 10.45am to 12.30pm. In the usual ONB tradition, light refreshments will be available – we wouldn't want to celebrate on empty stomachs!

Gillian Loyd

Oxford City

The Oxford City Branch has, as usual, been busy over the last few months. Branch practices in general have continued to be well attended and with a variety of methods rung. There have also been frequent joint practices with the Witney and Woodstock branch, giving a good opportunity to ring all around the local area as well as visits to many towers in neighbouring branches, encouraging numbers of learners and social events across the branch.

The highlight has been the branch outing to London in October, the second outing in as many years. Despite warnings of an austerity protest starting in Westminster on the same morning, we were fortunately not caught up in the demonstration, and started the day at the fine ring of ten at St Margaret's in Parliament Square.

Our youngest learners were pleased to ring on the new Royal Jubilee bells at St James' Garlickhythe, where Matthew Hall had the opportunity to ring the same bell that his father Robin had rung on the *Ursula Katherine* barge during the floating pageant!

Ringling at St Magnus the Martyr gave many of our ringers a rare chance to ring on twelve, which proved to be useful practice before visiting the more challenging bells of Southwark Cathedral later in the day. Many thanks are due to all those who made the day such a resounding success – from the organisers and the towers that allowed us to visit, and to the ringers from outside the branch that supported us on the day.

Katherine Stonham

Reading

The Reading Branch still holds three practices a month: a General practice held on Saturday mornings to cater for all abilities, a Surprise practice, and a Higher Numbers practice – all with varying attendance figures.

It has been a busy few months with ringing in the Branch for the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. For the Jubilee celebrations there was several peals rung which included “first pealers”. For the opening of the Olympics, St Mary’s Reading bells were broadcast on BBC Berkshire.

The Branch Outing on the 7th July was a joint outing with St Mary’s and St Laurence’s Reading to the area around the preserved Watercress Railway Line.

There have been three training days organised by our Training Officer and held at Shiplake. The first one, held on 23rd June, was for the Under 21s and eight youngsters took part. The second training day was held on Wednesday 12th September when the day was arranged for members of Checkendon tower, the day being run by John and June Wells. The third training day was at the request of South Stoke tower, and was held on Saturday 6th October. It was run by Ian Judd in the morning and by Ann Osborne in the afternoon. Thanks go to all the helpers who assisted with these courses.

The Branch 6-bell striking competition was held at Nettlebed on Saturday 8th September – a glorious afternoon. Nine teams took part in the competition this year. It was again marked as one competition but two trophies were awarded. The Topper Trophy was for the winning team, and that team represents the branch at the Guild 6-bell competition.

The John Butler Trophy was for the winning novice band. This year there were three novice bands. Ken and Sue Davenport from the Sonning Deanery branch were the judges, and they placed St Mary’s Reading first to win the Topper Trophy. Mortimer, who came a very good sixth place, won the John Butler Trophy. This is the first time Mortimer had entered a team in the striking competition for many years so well done to them.

If you would like to read more about the Reading Branch you can visit our website www.odgreadingbranch.co.uk and read the Reading Branch News.

Kenneth Baker

Sonning Deanery

Earlier in the year our Deputy Ringing Master, Graham Slade, organised a Branch ringing outing to the Staines & Egham area, and our branch is most grateful for all the work he put in on our behalf.

After several years as our Ringing Master John Manley has moved to Ruislip, where his wife is now Vicar. Thanks are due to John for doing a lot for the Branch, encouraging 10-bell ringing to the point where we entered the Guild 10-bell competition last year, and running a weekly improvers' session at Binfield. Monthly daytime practices continue at Binfield, with useful progress being made by those who attend.

For the Queen's Jubilee, Easthampstead church held a very successful flower's festival and the bell ringers participated with a flower arrangement that incorporated bells, ropes and a wheel, and they also had the tower open for visitors. For the Sonning Village festival during the Jubilee holiday, Sonning bell ringers made and displayed an 8 metre Jubilee banner down the outside of the tower, and a peal was rung on the Monday morning.

There were mixed views in the branch about the *All the Bells* project for the opening of the Olympic Games; some towers saw it as a PR or recruitment possibility and took part.

At Sonning it proved most popular with the general public, who chimed the bells vigorously at 8.12a.m. on that Friday morning.

A survey of members was carried out to ascertain what members knew about the annual branch 'committee' meeting, and to invite suggestions relating to the recruitment and training of ringers.

Dwindling numbers and an injured tower captain at Arborfield has led to the suggestion that resources be pooled between Arborfield and two towers not in our branch: Shinfield and Eversley.

Only two towers entered the 8-bell striking competition at Wokingham All Saints, both ringing Grandsire Triples. The home team beat Sonning 7.5% to 15% faults, while a combined band rang Stedman and scored 10% faults.

Last year an Auction of Promises raised funds for tower roof repairs at Sonning, and one of the bell ringers' promises was fulfilled in September 2012. A Sonning resident and his son's family (visiting from Australia for the son's 40th birthday) were given a demonstration of ringing by a band of 8 ringers from Sonning and other local towers. Then family members were allowed to chime a bell and ring a few backstrokes before going to the top of the tower for the view.



Andrew Elliston

South Oxon

As I review all of the activities over the past eight months, I realise that we, as a branch, have been extremely busy! We began in February with our AGM, which was held at Chalgrove. All of the branch officers stayed in post this year. The week after the AGM was the Guild Leap Year Sponsored Ringing week where we rang a branch quarter peal at Great Haseley. In March we held our striking competition at Chinnor with four towers participating, and on the 7th May the South Oxon Branch hosted the Guild Ringing Day. Twenty seven towers were open in and around our branch to raise money for the Guild Bell Fund. May and June had extensive ringing for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. July and August were busy with Olympic and Paralympic activities.

On Friday 27th July, as part of the *All the Bells* project, there was widespread bell ringing (of all sorts). It was a huge success with many towers participating. Here are a few brief comments from the towers in the branch about their ringing for the opening of the Olympic Games on Friday the 27th July 2012:

- Aston Rowant: Five early birds!
- Benson; Fast rounds – with a change of ringers to allow everyone a chance to ring, and breakfast afterwards
- Brightwell Baldwin: Four enthusiastic ringers!
- Chalgrove: Bright and early
- Chinnor: Also for the Paralympics on 29th August!
- Dorchester: Right on time as noted by Canon Sue Booyo
- Drayton St Leonard: With assistance from Bishop Colin
- Great Milton: A huge noise and good fun
- Little Milton: Early morning ringing!
- Marsh Baldon: New comers chime!
- Shabbington: Chimed in the Olympics
- Thame: Fast and Furious – complete with a change of ringers so all could ring
- Towersey: All 3 bells!
- Warborough: Local school children chimed the bells!

What I gleaned from reviewing all of this activity is that the towers thoroughly enjoyed the Olympic ringing! Even if it was a rather early time of the day for us to be ringing, this event seems to have captured the imagination of many.

We are now very close to welcoming the Marsh Baldon tower into our branch; we are only waiting for the Guild to approve the paperwork. This group of ringers started ringing just after Christmas 2011 in order to be able to ring for the Diamond Jubilee this year – which they did – and the best thing is, they are all continuing with their bell ringing!

This year we have not had a branch outing, but we do continue to have branch practices on most months. The branch is running a Tower Twinning program (where towers are paired up and visit each other for selected practices). This activity has been very well received. It provides an excellent opportunity to visit other towers for ringing as well as socialising. There have also been monthly

practices for Doubles, Major and Surprise Major/Minor methods, with quarter peals being organised to reinforce what's been learned at these practices.

The towers have reported significant ringing over the past eight months in addition to the Jubilee and Olympic ringing. There have been many weddings, St George's Day, and quarter peals to mark births and deaths. I feel I can report the South Oxon Branch has been happily busy ringing - or is it busy happily ringing?

I end this report with a sad note. On 20th July 2012 Noel Bartlett died. Noel was formerly tower captain at Aston Rowant, chairman of the South Oxfordshire Branch, member of the ODG Committee and of the Guild's Towers and Belfries sub-committee. A memorial service was held at SS. Peter & Paul, Aston Rowant, on Thursday 23rd August at noon. To celebrate Noel's life and the contribution he made to the South Oxford Branch and the Oxford Diocesan Guild, a branch quarter was rung on the 25th August.

Amy Herlihy

Vale of the White Horse

The Branch 6-bell striking competition was held on the back six at Longcot in May. Eight teams, representing seven towers out of a possible ten with ringers, took part. Judges Peter and Barbara Holden presented the Greenley Shield to Shrivenham, and the Ringing Master's award for the most improved band went to runners up Longcot. Usually the winning tower goes on to represent the Branch at the Guild competition, but this year the Shrivenham ringers were otherwise engaged on October 6th, celebrating the marriage of band members Pete Tombs and Helen Weaver.

Sharon Berrisford organised an enjoyable BBQ with a game of Aunt Sally at the Radnor Arms in Coleshill in July. For the uninitiated this is an outdoor pub game that involves trying to knock a wooden 'Dolly' off a pole several metres away with what looks like a rolling pin. This was more challenging than expected but great fun and the teams 'encouraged' each other with plenty of helpful advice!

The Branch marked the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with four quarter peals and general ringing at most towers. Ringers also participated in Martin Creed's work *All The Bells* on the opening day of the Olympic Games. Faringdon began with rounds on eight and ended with a minute of firing. At Shrivenham the front six were rung half way up, remaining there for a minute, then lowered. Four ringers and two lapsed ringers managed to chime all eight bells at Longcot, and at Bishopstone the local ringers were joined by the volunteers who had been taught to chime the bells for the Jubilee celebrations.

A family quarter of Bob Doubles was rung at Uffington to celebrate Elaine Baber's birthday in July. This was her niece Bryony Baxter's first quarter and nephew Ian Baxter's first as conductor. Valia Battat of Hinton Waldrist rang her first quarter at Appleton in September.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

It was a busy summer with Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Olympic Torch relay, Olympic and Paralympic Games, which all made for a hectic ringing schedule.

A band represented the Branch at the ODG 8-bell striking competition and achieved 8th place. The practices in the run-up to the competition proved quite eventful, with a broken rope and stuck clapper to be overcome. The team made lots of progress throughout the practices, saving their best performance for the day itself.

Many towers rang to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at the end of May and the beginning of June as well as at the end of July to mark the start of the Olympics. Besides general ringing and 7 quarter peals, 3 peals were rung. On Saturday 2nd June at Combe 5040 Doubles consisting of 3 methods and 4 variations were rung in 2hrs 51mins. This was a notable achievement for the band in that four "firsts" and one 50th were scored; it was Lorna Curtis' 50th peal and her 1st as conductor, and also the 1st peal for three other members of the band, Anthony Williamson, Alison Merryweather-Clarke and Michael Probert. The other ringers were Lindsey Thornton and Brian Curtis.

Lorna then rang a second peal at Freeland on Monday 4th of 5040 Surprise Minor consisting of 7 methods in 2 hrs 19mins. It was the first peal rung on the remodelled bells and the first in the tower since 1st December 1900.

The third peal was rung as Bampton on Wednesday 20th June and was the first peal in Clanfield Delight Major. The peal was rung by a visiting band of ringers.

The annual Branch striking competition was held at Freeland on 16th June with 6 bands entering the call changes competition and 5 bands contesting the method section. Once accustomed to the light bells and the close proximity of the 2nd and 3rd ropes, bands performed well. Woodstock (*see back cover*) repeated their success of 2011 by winning both competitions and went on to represent the Branch at the ODG's 6-bell competition in October at Tadmarton achieving a creditable 7th place. We were very grateful to Kay and Jon Chamberlain for judging the competition and providing valuable feedback at the results ceremony. Post competition food and drinks were taken at The Oxfordshire Yeoman to conclude a very enjoyable evening.

On Monday 9th July the Olympic Torch passed the eastern edge of the Branch and the Woodstock band entered into the celebrations with ringing as the torch visited Blenheim Palace, sounding out near and far as the bells could be heard in the background of radio interviews with David Cameron.

On the following Saturday a Branch Practice and summer social was held at Ducklington. Forty members braved one of the many summer downpours as we entered St Bartholomew's to ring and all were concerned as to what soggy state our barbecue would be in. We needn't have worried as by the time the practice had finished the skies had cleared and *The Bell* had efficiently taken the precaution of erecting a marquee to ensure our food was prepared and served under cover. Post barbecue we held a raffle to help with fund raising for Rob and Kate Austin's Savings Fund to Help Give Rob a Lift. £125 was raised and

other towers made their own donations. Presentations were also made of 20 *Firsts Fortnight* certificates to recognise people's progress in taking up the challenge to ring something new. A very competitive Aunt Sally brought what had been a very enjoyable evening to a close and our thanks went to Roger Barnes for organising a splendid social event.

At the end of July the Branch hosted the Guild basic bell maintenance course held at Woodstock, North Leigh and South Leigh.

Branch practices continue on a monthly basis, which are supplemented with monthly single method, minor, triples and major practices. Eight bell practices are now shared with the City Branch, with both branches benefiting from increased opportunities to ring triples and major methods including Stedman and Cambridge. Thanks to these practices, and with help from ringers outside the Branch, some members have achieved their first quarter peals in various triple and major methods.

Congratulations to Terry Hester of Witney for reaching 50 years as a Guild Member, having been elected at Bampton on 22nd September 1962. A tremendous achievement and Terry has given superb service to his tower, Branch and Guild.

Congratulations are also due to Alison Merryweather-Clarke and Lindsey Thornton for successfully completing Module 1 of the Integrated Teacher Training Scheme and becoming Associate Members of the Association of Ringing Teachers.

And finally, congratulations to Julie Minch (North Leigh), Margaret Hewitt (Freeland) and Val Atherton (Freeland) for ringing their first quarter peals.

Michael Probert

Points from Peals

The official Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II provided the inspiration for a number of peals (24) with peals by local bands, and at towers which rarely appear in peal reports. Peals at Tilehurst (first by Sunday service band for 18 years), Freeland (first peal on the remodelled bells and the first in the tower since 1900), Cookham (first peal on the ten bells by a local band and friends), Denham (first on the bells since 1953) have been recorded. These Diamond Jubilee peals include first peals for Diana McClure, Christopher Johnson, Anthony Williamson, Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Michael Probert, Kate Hollins, Andrew Slater, Paul Smith, and Claire Fisher.

The Diamond Jubilee peals also included first as conductor for Lorna Curtis and Kay Bartholomew, and other notable milestones were: first on 8, Godfrey Reynolds & Heather Bletchly, first on 10: Mandy Salter, Timmy Mallett, Andrew McKerlie, Sam Maynard, Freddie Daniel, 1st triples inside, David Bardwell, 1st inside: Shirley Smith, Guy Matthews, 1st Stedman, Mark Vincent.

Alan Ainsworth has now rung peals for the Coronation, Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Congratulations to all who took part in this national celebration.

Peals rung for other significant events

HM the Queen's birthday, the 91st birthday of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, Bill Butler's election to life membership of the Central Council, and to congratulate the Revd Daniel Sandham on his induction as Vicar of St. John the Evangelist, Brownswood Park.

On the centenary of the first ladies peal by an all ladies band at Chalfont St Giles.

To celebrate the Silver Weddings of Chris and Sarah Cole, and Alan and Helen Barsby.

Birthday compliments: John Marchbank, Isabel O'Mahoney (18th), June Wells and David Philipson (60th), Robert Newton (65th) John Couperthwaite (70th).

250th peal on the bells, Witney. 100th peal on the bells, Bucklebury. 25th peal on the new bells, Wokingham St Paul.

Personal Achievements, handbell peals

First peal Liz Davenport, first in hand: Hilarie Rogers, Susan Read. First on 10, Jack Page. First London Royal in hand, Christopher O'Mahoney. First Spliced Surprise Royal in hand, Oliver Cross. 500th handbell peal and 75th handbell peal as conductor Ken Davenport.

Personal Achievements, tower bell peals

Congratulations are extended to Bernard Groves on achieving his 5000th peal. Peals were also rung to mark 50 years as a ringer for Phil Sampson and Terry Hester (20 years of these as ringing master at Witney).

1st peal, Ron Burgess. 1700th peal Pat Newton. 1000th peal of Major, Cynthia Howell. 750th for the Guild, David Salter. 1250th peal on tower bells, John Couperthwaite. 700th together, John and June Wells. 600th peal as conductor, John Couperthwaite. 500th peal together, Alan Ainsworth & Claire Roulstone. 100th peal together, Alan Ainsworth & Janet Menhinick. 50th peal: Lorna Curtis, Simon Read. 50th together, Stephen Stanford & Richard Horne. Most Spliced Surprise Royal: Antoinette Jackson and Bob Partridge (13 methods), Robin Middleton (12 methods). First Bristol Surprise Royal, Cynthia Howell. First Belfast Surprise Major: Josie Irving, Stuart Gibson. Completion of Surprise Major alphabet, Katie Lane. Completion of tower bell peals on all 366 dates of the year, Robert Newton.

Peals have been rung to remember several well known and respected members of the exercise: Joyce Cornwall, Alison Regan, Clive Holloway, Harry & Mary Wells, and Jim Diserens on the first anniversary of his death.

Ken Davenport, Peal Secretary

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Diary of Events for 2012/13

Some of these dates may change, so you should check the odg.org.uk web site for diary updates on an ongoing basis.

TBC	To Be Confirmed	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 2012

Sat	24	Guild	SC (Ten Bell)	Central Bucks Branch	Long Crendon
Sat	24	Guild	Autumn General Committee Meeting	Central Bucks Branch	Long Crendon
Sat	24	CBB	8 Bell Advanced	Long Crendon	tbc
Sat	24	EBSB	Novices Practice	Fulmer (6)	4pm–6.30pm

DECEMBER 2012

Sat	1	Guild	10 Bell Training Day	Aston Clinton (10)	TBC
Sat	1	EBSB	10 Bell Practice	Cookham (10)	5pm–6.30pm
Mon	3	Chipping Norton	BP	Leafield (6)	7.30–9.00pm
Tue	4	CBB	8 Bell Practice	Aylesbury (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	5	Bicester	BP	Charlton-on-Otmoor (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Tue	4	Sonning	BP	Binfield (6)	2pm–4pm TBC
Sat	8	South Oxon	BP	Ewelme (6)	4–5.30pm
Sat	8	North Bucks	Christmas Celebration	Emberton (6)	5pm
Sat	8	Reading	BP + Mince Pies	Streatley (6) + Goring (8)	10.00am
Sat	8	Banbury	Carol Service	Wardington (6)	6.30pm Ringing, 7pm Service
Sat	8	EBSB	BP + Social	TBA	TBA
Sat	8	CBB	BP	Dinton (6) tbc	7–8.30pm
Thu	13	ONB	BP	Wallingford (10)	8.0pm – 9.30pm
Thu	13	Banbury	SP	Cropledy (8)	7.30pm
Sat	15	Sonning	BP	Arborfield (6)	10.30 – noon
Mon	17	Bicester	Grandsire Doubles and Grandsire Triples	Bicester (10)	7.30–9pm
Tue	18	CBB	6 Bell Practice	Stewkley (8)	7.30 –9pm
Thu	20	Reading	SP	Shiplake (8)	8–9.30pm
Sat	22	CBB	8 Bell Advanced	tba	7 –8.30pm
Mon	26	Banbury	Boxing Day Ringing	Deddington (8)	10.30 – noon
Tue	27	EBSB	Outing	TBA	TBA

JANUARY 2013

Mon	1	Banbury	New Year Ringing	Banbury (10)	10.30 – noon
Mon	1	ONB	BP	Chilton	10.45– 12.30pm
Mon	7	CN	BP	Chadlington (6)	7.30pm–9pm
Mon	7	Bicester	BP	Bicester (10)	7.30pm–9pm
Tue	8	Sonning	BP	Binfield (6)	2pm–4pm (TBC)
Fri	11	Banbury	Doubles & Minor	Cropredy (8)	7.30pm
Sat	12	Reading	BP	Mortimer, St. John (6)	10.00 – noon
Tue	15	Bicester	Plain Bob Minor and Stedman Doubles	Islip (8)	7.30–9pm
Thu	17	Reading	SP	Shiplake (8)	8.0 – 9.30pm
Sat	19	Sonning	BP	Twyford, Berks. (8)	10.30am–12 (8)
Sat	19	Banbury	Young Ringers Practice	Banbury (10)	10.30am–12
Thu	24	Banbury	Tower reps meeting	TBC	7.30pm
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Thame (8)	4–5.30pm

FEBRUARY 2013

Fri	1	Bicester	BP	Kirtlington (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	2	Banbury	Quiz and Social	TBC	TBC
Tue	5	Sonning	BP	Binfield (6)	2pm–4pm (TBC)
Sat	9	CN	BP	Chipping Norton (8)	10.45am – 12.15pm
Fri	15	ONB	BP	Appleton (10)	7.30–9pm
Sat	16	Reading	AGM	Shiplake (8)	3pm – 7pm
Sat	16	Sonning	BP	Waltham St Lawrence (6)	2pm – 4pm
Mon	18	Bicester	Plain Bob Major and Stedman Doubles	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Thu	21	Reading	SP	Shiplake (8)	8 – 9.30pm
Fri	22	Banbury	Doubles & Minor	Mollington (6)	7.30pm
Sat	23	South Oxon	AGM	Drayton St. Leonard (6)	from 3pm
Sat	23	Bicester	AGM	Ludgershall (5)	7.30 – 9pm
Sun	24	Reading	Higher Numbers Practice	Reading St. Laurence (12)	1.00 – 2.30pm

MARCH 2013

Sat	2	CN	AGM	TBA	Ringing 5pm, Service 6pm, Meeting 6.30
Tue	5	Bicester	BP	Islip (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	9	Reading	BP	Rdg. St. Giles (8)	10.30
Sat	9	Banbury	Branch Dinner	TBC	TBC
Mon	11	Banbury	BP	Bodicote (8)	7.30pm
Sat	16	Banbury	Young ringers practice	Steeple Aston (8)	10.30 – noon
Sat	16	ONB	SC	Milton (8)	3.30pm
Sat	16	ONB	AGM	Didcot (3)	5 – 8.30pm
Wed	20	Bicester	Grandsire Doubles	Bletchingdon (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Thu	21	Reading	SP	Shiplake (8)	8 – 9.30pm
Sat	23	Banbury	SP	Banbury (10)	7.30pm
Sat	23	South Oxon	BP	Great Milton (8)	4 – 5.30pm
Sun	24	Reading	Higher Numbers Practice	Reading St. Laurence (12)	1.0 – 2.30pm

APRIL 2013

Fri	5	Bicester	BP	Ambrosden (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	10	ONB	BP	North Moreton (5)	6.30 – 7.30pm
Wed	10	ONB	BP	Aston Tirrold (6)	7.30 – 8.30pm
Fri	12	Banbury	SP	Steeple Aston (8)	7.30pm
Sat	13	Reading	BP	Swallowfield (6)	10.00 – noon
				TBC	
Mon	15	Bicester	RCP Doubles and St. Clements Minor	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Thu	18	Reading	SP	Shiplake (8)	8.0 – 9.30pm
Sat	20	Banbury	AGM	Cropledy (8)	3pm ringing, 4pm service followed by tea and meeting
Sat	27	Banbury	Doubles & Minor	Hanwell (6)	10.30 – noon
Sat	27	South Oxon	SC	Chalgrove (6)	7pm
Sun	28	Reading	Higher Numbers	Reading St. Laurence (12)	1.0 – 2.30pm

MAY 2013

Wed	1	Bicester	BP	Piddington (5)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	8	ONB	BP	West Hanney (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Thu	9	Banbury	BP	Somerton (8)	7.30pm
Sat	11	South Oxon	Outing	TBC	TBC
Sat	18	Banbury	Young ringers practice	Swerford (6)	10.30 – noon
Sat	18	ODG	AGM	Ascott u. Wychwood (6)	
Mon	20	Bicester	Little Bob Minor and Grandsire Triples	Islip (8)	7.30–9pm
Sat	30	Banbury	SP	Cropledy (8)	7.30pm

JUNE 2013

Wed	5	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stoney (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Thu	13	ONB	BP	Radley (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	19	Bicester	Grandsire Doubles	Bletchingdon (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	22	South Oxon	BP	Marsh Baldon (5)	7–8.30pm

JULY 2013

Thu	4	Bicester	BP	Stratton Audley (5)	7.30 – 9pm
Tue	16	Bicester	Stedman Doubles and Plain Bob Major	Islip (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	27	South Oxon	BP	Dorchester (8)	7 – 8.30pm

AUGUST 2013

Fri	2	Bicester	BP	Ludgershall (5)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	12	ONB	BP	Didcot (3)	6.30 – 7.15pm
Wed	12	ONB	BP	Long Wittenham (6)	7.30 – 8.30pm

SEPTEMBER 2013

Mon	9	ONB	BP	Marcham (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	28	South Oxon	Special Practice	TBA	TBA



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Aylesbury, Orchard Cup winners, L to R: Peter, Grant, Sue, Andrea, Sue, Mike (Capt.)



*2012 Witney and Woodstock Branch 6-bell striking competition winners – Woodstock
L to R: Ron Burgess, Zoe White, Richard White, Jeannie Tognola,
Bernard Coggins, Ian Davey-Wilson*