

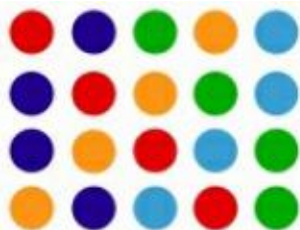
ODD BOB



Newsletter of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

website: odg.org.uk/





ART Module 1

Teaching Bell Handling Course

Saturday 16 February 2019

SMV, Kirtlington, OX5 3HF



Ellie from Kirtlington being presented with her LiR Level 5 certificate



Working in pairs on an ART course



The Maids Moreton band with their LiR Level 1 certificates & teacher accreditations

What do other teachers say?

As a Tower Captain of a relatively inexperienced band, I have always been grateful for but had to rely on more experienced ringers to come and teach new learners bell handling at our tower.

Having been approached to join an ART Course on teaching bell handling I was thrown completely outside of my comfort zone having other teachers around me who had rung for years and vastly more experienced than me.

What can I say, other than the course showed me that actually as a relative 'novice' I can teach bell handling in a safe and logical way.

Being paired with a mentor and having the support of other teachers on the course has provided me with lots of practical support and confidence to successfully teach a new ringer to handle a bell in a matter of weeks, which has been a revelation.

I would actively encourage other ringers and Tower Captains to look at the ART courses as they work well, lots of support is offered and you don't have to be a ringer of many years standing to be able to deliver good teaching.

Book your place on the course directly:

www.smartringer.org/public/daycourses

Or contact Lesley Belcher for more details:

lesleyjbelcher@gmail.com

Contents

Master's Mutterings.....	4
ODG Youth Team win the RWNYP Trophy for Excellence.....	5
ONB Branch's Young Ringers Outing.....	7
Why should I go on an ART course?.....	8
ART <i>Learning the Ropes</i> masterclass.....	9
Bells in Europe.....	9
Education Matters.....	10
The ODG Remembers.....	11
Guild Steward Report.....	12
Old North Berks Branch Ringing School.....	12
ODG 6-bell striking competition.....	13
Safeguarding Update.....	14
Towers & Belfries Committee.....	15
Librarian's Report.....	16
News from the Branches.....	17
Banbury.....	17
Bicester.....	17
Central Bucks.....	18
Chiltern.....	19
Chipping Norton.....	20
East Berks and South Bucks.....	21
Newbury.....	22
North Bucks.....	22
Old North Berks.....	23
Oxford City.....	24
Reading.....	24
Sonning Deanery.....	24
South Oxon.....	25
Vale of the White Horse.....	26
Witney and Woodstock.....	27
Points from Peals.....	29
Paying Peal Fees electronically.....	30
Guild Officers for 2018/19.....	31
Branch Secretaries.....	32
Diary of Events for 2018/19.....	33

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 2019.

Rob Needham

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

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

Six months have passed since our Guild AGM when our past master, Hilarie Rogers, asked if I would consider taking over from her. Even now I can still feel my shock at the suggestion and my immediate response, Not Me!

I asked for time to think about it because, since retiring from the stress of running a school, and more recently of being a governor at another, I really wanted to cut down on responsibility and concentrate on some quieter and gentler pleasures.

However, after a few sleepless nights and some serious discussions with people whose opinions I respect, I agreed to take on the job. I must add, my decision certainly was not because I want the title but because I would like to pay back to the Guild and ringing in general for: all the pleasure and delight it has given me; the many friends I have made; the visits to beautiful churches, with sometimes glorious bells, and sometimes not so glorious; the hard graft of learning methods; the joy of getting the ringing right; supporting the frustrated learner; celebrating successes; watching young ringers grow in confidence and skill; mourning the loss of friends and loved ones when they are no longer there to ring with us. And all the countless other joys and experiences that ringing brings into our lives.

How fortunate we are to be members of this historic Guild! The ODG is the largest in the country and among its members have been, and still are, some extraordinary ringers and many, many dedicated ones who continue to serve the churches in communities all across our territory. During this long, hot summer I have tried to attend as many events as possible. I have been present at village fetes; watched the grandson of a ringer have his first attempt at ringing on a mini ring; I have been to open tower days and seen the astonished expressions on the faces of visitors as they begin to realise what's happening when they hear our bells; I was delighted to be asked to be at try-out for Cuddesdon and met their enthusiastic learning band, it's splendid that the village, where Ripon College trains theologians, now has bells ringing out again (it has occurred to me that we ought to offer a course for new priests at the College!); I have been to meetings, practices and striking competitions; I have met new ringers and have found old friends.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making each and every event special.

This Guild has a fascinating and acknowledged history but so much has changed since its beginning in 1881. We are the future of the Guild, it is up to our members to celebrate its past and to ensure a vibrant future. Managing change can never be easy but it can be achieved by respecting what we have and working out together where we want the Guild to be and what we need to achieve, not in 100 years but the next 10. And that, dear ringers, is a whole other *Masters' Mutterings* in Odd Bob!

I will continue to explore the Guild; please let me know when you have an event that you would be happy for me to visit. I cannot promise to slip and slide my way to Mollington, Sandhurst, Coleshill or Milton Keynes on an icy winter night, but I am looking forward to meeting as many members as possible and sharing ringing with them.

Catherine Lane, Guild Master

ODG Youth Team win the RWNYC Trophy for Excellence

The eighth Ringing World National Youth Competition (RWNYC) was hosted by Southwark Cathedral Society of Bellingers, in London, on Saturday 7th July. Twenty-two teams of young ringers from all over England took part, and in the morning they rang in qualifier heats, at three different churches: St George in the East, Stepney; St Olave, Hart Street; and Christ Church, Cubitt Town. The top two teams from each qualifier then rang in the final at St James, Garlickhythe. Sussex Young Ringers (they rang call changes) came first, winning the Whitechapel Award, and the Oxford Diocesan Guild (ODG) team won the Method Ringing Category and the new Ringing World Editor's *Trophy for Excellence*. There were three young ringers from the Reading Branch in the ODG team, including the conductor, Anna Sherwood. This is the third year Anna has conducted the youth team.

Diana McClure

The ODG Youth Team comprises young ringers from six branches and we practise every fourth Sunday of the month at different towers across the guild. On the Monday before the competition, we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples, which proved to be very beneficial (as it helped us to consolidate on our striking) and is something we hadn't done before in the lead up to the competition.

We felt that the qualifier at Cubitt Town had some inconsistencies within the test piece (particularly with the leading) and that, on the whole, the band had rung better in the past. Qualifying for the final proved to be an excellent opportunity to show what the band was capable of, and led to some of the best ringing we had done together. We were all very pleased to get into the final and approached the test piece as though we had nothing to lose; it sounded a lot more confident. Several of the band ring at Shiplake in Oxfordshire on a regular basis, (one of our monthly practices was also there) and, as Garlickhythe bells are based on Shiplake, there was a sense of familiarity. Our success at Garlickhythe was celebrated by forming a human pyramid for the most imaginative team photo competition!

In between ringing for the competition, we rang at Cornhill, Magnus and St Mary-le-Bow. Three members of our band were very pleased to ring Bow's tenor for the first time! It was a great day out and many thanks to all of the organisers as well as all of the ringers that have given us guidance during our monthly practices.

Anna Sherwood

Many congratulations to our youth team who won the method ringing category at the RWNYS on Saturday 7th July and were presented with the Trophy for Excellence. The squad of 10 ringers, 8 plus 2 reserves, came from 6 branches across the Guild, Reading, Old North Berks, North Bucks, Central Bucks, Newbury and South Oxon. Sussex Young ringers won the Whitechapel Award ringing call changes.

This is a fantastic achievement. The young ringers meet once a month for a practice somewhere in the guild and this year supplemented this, once the team was known, with a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples at Thatcham with Hilarie Rogers taking Dougie Vale's place. An evening quarter peal in Thatcham when you are in the North Bucks branch is a tall order! The size of the guild and the travelling involved for many of the young ringers to get to practices is a challenge and thanks are due to parents and tower captains who make it possible. Robert Newton and Hilarie Rogers coach the ringers who are sustained by Daphne Pollard's Lemon Drizzle and chocolate cake.

This year's competition took place in London. With 21 teams from across the country taking part it was the largest gathering of young ringers to date. Bucks and Berks entered a team in their own right for the first time. Whilst the focus of the day is the competition there are handbell workshops, a treasure hunt, other towers to ring at and an opportunity to meet with other young ringers. As soon as we arrived to register the team at Hart Street Jake was chatting to ringers he knew from Essex, and Daniel joined the handbell workshop.

Having all travelled into London from different directions we met at Cornhill. Coloured wrist bands and programmes distributed the team disappeared up the tower with great enthusiasm.

Our heat, at noon, was at Cubitt Town and we needed all the time we had allowed to get there on the DLR. Then off to Magnus the Martyr to ring, eat lunch and wait for the results. Luckily other teams had picked up the 8.00 email saying results would be by email not text and their cheers alerted us to the fact we were through to the final.

The team decided the one thing they wanted to do was ring at Bow and would not dash off to ring at the other open towers. Four of them can add ringing the tenor there to their accomplishments.

A walk then to Garlickhythe for the final, we were the last team to ring at 16.10. Doug Hird kept everyone up to date with the football results so we knew England were doing well. A quick team talk from Hilarie with feedback from the ringing at the heat and off they went.

After the final they remembered there was a photographic competition for a team picture. The photo of the ODG team [*see front cover*] shows them having fun working together as they had when ringing:

Back Row – Thomas Sherwood (3) Cory Gibson (R) Anna Sherwood (7 C)

Middle Row – Sophie Martin (6) Adam Hird (R) Izzy Anderson-Besant (1)

Front Row – Daniel Page (2) Jake Reid (8) Dougie Vale (4) Josh Ball (5)

Then back to Bow for the results. The judges commented they, 'rang with purpose, good structure and an enthusiastic piece of ringing'.

It is a fascinating competition, designed to be inclusive of all bands. Ringers must be under 19 so the bands continually change. There were 4 ringers in this year's team ringing in the competition for the first time. That also means we need to say goodbye to ringers as well. Anna has been the team's conductor for the last 3 years and will not be able to compete with us next year. We wish her well at university and hope to see her return as a judge.

Jenny Page

ONB Branch's Young Ringers Outing

St Giles, Oxford, Monday 3rd September 2018

Every year early in September, the road between St Mary Magdalen and St Giles churches in Oxford is transformed into a magnificent fairground for two days. There are large and small fairground rides as well as stalls selling all manner of hot and cold foods, etc. The crowds and the noise are phenomenal! To allow the people some respite from the clamour, St Giles' church traditionally opens and serves tea and cakes. And the ringers there like to ring changes on handbells as PR for bell ringing and as quiet entertainment for those in the church.

This was the second time we had used this event as an opportunity for the young ringers to ring both church bells and handbells at St Giles. After all, with all the noise of the fairground, the tower bells were hardly going to matter to anyone trying to work nearby! And the vicar was pleased at having a group of young people happily trying to ring handbells as entertainment for the visitors.

There were eight young ringers there plus ten adults including some ringers. The young people represented just four branches this time: Old North Berks Branch, Oxford City Branch, Reading Branch and Witney & Woodstock Branch. Ringing ranged from call changes and plain hunt to plain bob doubles and triples. By request, we rang some ringing games: "Twister" (taking turns twisting to face the wall while ringing rounds) and also "killer" involving standing after a number of whole pulls determined by a die.

The church ladies provided some lovely filled bread rolls, cake and drinks as our refreshments, and then the young people paired up to try to find the answers to a quiz sheet about the church.

We followed this by taking out our handbells [*see photos on back cover*]. We attempted to ring plain hunt standing in a row in front of the pulpit with one bell each and swapping place physically with a neighbour between each ringing along the row. It worked with just six young people, but was not quite so successful with twelve (including three children who were just visiting the church).

Tunes were then rung on handbells using simple numeric music. We were surprised and glad when the congregation burst into applause after our rendition of *My Grandfather's clock*.

Meanwhile, some of the parents had been marking the church quiz sheets. We rounded off the afternoon by announcing the answers and awarding small chocolate bars as prizes before the young people dispersed.

Susan Read

Why should I go on an ART course?

Let's say first and foremost that there are ringing teachers who have never been on an ART course, who are great teachers, and who produce ringers who handle their bells very well. Always have been. Trouble is there aren't enough of them. This is what ART does – it teaches ringers to teach.

The ART Training Scheme is based on what the best ringing teachers already do, and couples this with ideas taken from other sports and activities across the world. It is relevant to teachers irrespective of their level of experience; everyone leaves the course "buzzing ... even the sceptics." The results are evident – as a returning ringer said, "I learnt more in my first lesson on Saturday [with an ART teacher] than in the last 15 years of on and off ringing."

If you've never taught anyone to handle a bell before then this course is for you. Beware though, you don't become a confident and competent teacher just by attending a course. You need to put into practice what you've been taught as soon as possible afterwards, working alongside an experienced mentor who can support and guide you as you learn. In the words of a nervous new teacher:

"I found the course enjoyable and un-threatening, with lots of opportunity to try out techniques on easy bells with friendly colleagues. There were lots of ideas for improving learners' handling and to sort out bad habits that inevitably crop up."

Experienced teachers will also get a lot from the course. No-one goes away without having learnt some new things, and you will have access to the *Learning the Ropes* scheme for your ringers – this month alone over 100 ringers have passed their Level 1 on the scheme. If you're agreeable, you might well be asked to mentor a less-experienced teacher as they put into practice what they've learnt. A Tower Captain who had been ringing for 48 years came away saying:

"Was I surprised! The course was terrific – all very logical, well laid out, well planned and terrifically delivered. Loads of little nuggets and tips, everything straightforward with easy to understand notes and booklets. Can't wait to get going now."

This is a course arranged for the ODG [see inside front cover] and the ODG will be looking to pair up new and experienced teachers to work together after the course and organise group teaching sessions so that you can become a competent and confident bell ringing teacher. Only then can you become accredited on the ART Training Scheme.

Lesley Belcher

ART Learning the Ropes masterclass

On Saturday 8th September, Josh (17) and I, accompanied by Susan and Tim (adults), travelled to Birmingham to attend the annual ART celebration event, for those who have achieved Level 5 of the Association of Ringing Teachers *Learning the Ropes* scheme. When we arrived we collected our lunches and were given details of our overnight accommodation.

Each student was assigned a personal mentor to help develop their ringing throughout the day. I was paired with David Hull and Josh with Paul McNutt. Before heading to the towers, we were welcomed and completed a few listening exercises as a group, to see if we could identify striking errors and know how to correct them. We were also given individual objectives for the weekend.

The first ringing of the day was at St Phillips (a twelve) where we rang a mix of methods so everyone's capabilities could be assessed. We worked closely with our tutors to develop our personal objectives and then went on to St. Paul's for targeted ringing on 10. In the afternoon we experienced the St. Martin's 16, before being joined by other groups throughout the afternoon, so that everyone could have an opportunity to ring on higher numbers. We were all encouraged to try something new, with the help of our tutors. I called call changes on 16, called touches of Stedman and Grandsire cinques and rang the tenor at the bullring! Firsts for Josh were ringing Grandsire Caters for the first time (a touch!), Little Bob royal inside, a touch of Cambridge Major, Cambridge Royal inside, and Littleport Maximus (inside to a touch). He was really thrilled!

In the evening we were treated to a delicious diner at Byrons, a burger restaurant. Later we played card games in Josh's palatial hotel room – cheat, blackjack and spoons.

An 'All You Can Eat' breakfast at our Premier Inn set us up for the next day when we walked to the Bullring for some handbells prior to the usual Sunday service ringing. We then were allowed to ring on both the 12 and the full 16 for the service, as well as witnessing some impressive spliced surprise Maximus by the famous Birmingham band. After stopping for coffee and some impromptu coursing order tuition from Michael Wilby (thank you!), we headed down to St Chad's for 20 minutes of ringing, before returning to St Paul's. There we rang a quarter of Cambridge Major, my first of Major as conductor and Josh's first of Surprise inside.

It was a brilliant weekend, and many thanks go to all of the organisers and helpers, in particular Stephanie Warboys, Simon Linford and Arthur Reeves for the time and commitment they put into making this event the huge success that it was.

Sophie Martin, age 15

Bells in Europe

In September I went to a presentation in Camberley about the installation of a ring of English style bells in St George's Memorial Church at Ypres, Belgium. The meeting was of a local retirement association but the audience was swelled by bellringers from Surrey, Hampshire & Berkshire who heard about it 'on the grapevine'.

The timing and place of the new installation are no accident. The church was built in the 1920s as a memorial to British and Commonwealth troops who lost their lives in the 1914-18 War, and it serves the needs of a local congregation as well as thousands of pilgrims who visit the battlefields. It was always intended to have a ring of change-ringing bells but the money ran out and the tower remained empty. In 1997 a chime of eight small static bells was installed but it was not until the centenary of the war that a project to fulfil the original vision by hanging a ring of eight change ringing bells took shape – a project that had the full support of the church community and Flanders Heritage Department, as well as ringers in UK.

The bells were installed in 2017, and are only the second in mainland Europe – the first being the ring of 8 at Dordrecht, Holland in 2008. With change ringing developing over 400 years ago and spreading around the world – to America in the 18th century, Australia in the 19th, and other commonwealth countries later – it has always seemed odd that it never spread to our nearest European trading neighbours, despite many other cultural exchanges in the field of both music and sport.

Now in the 21st century there are English-style bells in Holland and Belgium, with a ring of 10 to be installed at Vernet-les-Bains, France in 2019, and plans for another in Belgium before June 2019, the centenary of the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended the war.

It is ironic that we are finally sharing the art of bell ringing with our European partners at a time when England is distancing itself from them. And it is doubly ironic that the bells in Ypres commemorate a European war of a kind that closer ties between Europeans were intended to prevent.

Let's hope ringing in Europe isn't tainted by Brexit, as it was for a long time by the War of Independence in America. Can cultural sharing help overcome division?

John Harrison

Education Matters

Since the last Odd Bob, the Michaelmas, Steeple Aston and 10-bell courses have again taken place. Following an upturn in numbers during the last year, it is disappointing that there were insufficient applicants to warrant an 8-bell group at Steeple Aston. Only four groups were run instead of the usual five. With approaching 2,500 Guild members, it is baffling that there are so few jumping at the chance to develop their basic Triples and Major. Following the initiative of a conducting course last year, a conducting Stedman option proved successful at Michaelmas this time, along with a more basic Stedman group and two Surprise Major ones.

Richard Stanworth has decided to retire as organiser of the Steeple Aston course after several years at the helm. Thank you Richard, for all your hard work. Members of the Education sub-committee are delighted that Jo Knight and Jonathan Cresshull have agreed to step into this role. There are still opportunities for volunteers (such as former students?) to assist with the organisation of our Guild courses.

Only so much can be achieved on the day of a course. In my experience, it is often in the following days, weeks and months that something studied or practised suddenly makes sense and the student 'sees the light' or understands completely.

Course organisers, tutors and helpers hope that students will take every opportunity to consolidate what they have learned and that they will be supported in doing so throughout the Guild.

One theme arising from the excellent leadership seminar at Amersham in February was the need for centres of activity, which would facilitate training on an informal basis. These could cater for members of several branches – even from across association boundaries – by providing venues for regular practice in anything from basic bell handling through call changes, plain hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire, maybe even Triples and Major! If you think your tower might be an appropriate venue, please contact us (edchairman@odg.org.uk or edsecretary@odg.org.uk). As always, we urge and encourage members and branches to get in touch if they need any help or advice with training issues or have any suggestions about courses that we might run.

Hearty congratulations to the ODG band in the RWNYC, which was held in London at the beginning of July. This is the second time our Guild band has been the top method ringing team. The previous occasion was the inaugural contest in 2011 but this year they had a bonus by becoming the first to be awarded the Editor's Trophy for Excellence. It was most encouraging that a second band from this area (Berks & Bucks Young Ringers) also took part this year. The Young Ringers' Award is planned to start again in the spring. Please see the advertisement elsewhere in this edition [*inside of back cover*] and encourage your young ringers to participate.

Robert Newton (Education Sub-Committee Secretary)

The ODG Remembers



Since 2014 we have been remembering the 133 ODG ringers who we know were killed in the grim warfare of WWI. We have rung peals, quarters and touches for a great many of these ringers; they have never been forgotten.

The Guild has made a donation of £133 to the Royal British Legion and asked for our small cross to be placed with thousands of others at Westminster to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the conflict in November 1918.

Katie Lane

Guild Steward Report

One of the pleasures of being a Guild Steward is being asked to come and judge the Branch Striking Competition. So it was that I arrived at Headington in the City Branch on a pleasant evening in mid May. There were seven teams which was great to see. This included five tower teams, a “boys” team (who did really well) and a scratch team. Marston went on to the Guild final. After the results, we all had a chat about how we could improve our striking. This included:

- Letting the rounds settle properly before calling “go”, especially in the practice
- Ringing something simple.

We then had a chat about how to improve ringing in general. This included:

- Improving your bells and particularly simple adjustment to any odd-struckness (and there was quite a lot at Headington)
- Improving the ringers such as by courses dedicated to the basic skills.

We then went over to the pub and continued these discussions! And the result?

Headington ringers went up and sorted out the odd-struckness of their bells and were surprised to see how easy it was to do and the benefit it gave.

A few weeks later we were invited back to Headington to deliver the VoWH’s “listening, place-counting and rhythm” workshop with an eager bunch of about fifteen students from there and nearby towers. Everyone had a great time and there is every possibility of the workshop being adopted locally and run again from time to time.

Tony Crabtree (Guild Steward – W&W, OCB & VOWH)

Old North Berks Branch Ringing School

The Old North Berks Branch of the ODG contains 32 ringable towers, but around half of them don’t really have an effective band. As branch Training Officer I have the opportunity to address the problem. With the help of the other branch officers, I have been organising the towers in the branch in a collective effort. And the many experienced teachers of ringing in the Branch have helped immensely.

In May – July 2017 we ran a six week “Learn to Ring” course. We gave an hour’s one-to-one teaching three times a week, each at a different tower at 7pm on their practice night. Four people joined the course. By the end of six weeks the learners could almost ring solo. We had rung at thirteen towers and seventeen teachers had taken part.

From July to December 2017 the lessons continued circulating round our branch towers but just once a week and with fewer teachers and more participation by the ringers at the practice nights. The learners progressed and were joined by lots of other learners from around the branch.

We use the ART *Learning the Ropes* (LTR) syllabus to structure our teaching, with the bonus of certificates for the learners at strategic points in their progress. We named this group the LTR2 (Foundation Skills) group of our Branch ringing School. The LTR2 group continues to this day. We use lots of games and exercises to help the learners to learn to control their bells, to listen to their striking and to raise and lower confidently.

Meanwhile we set up further LTR1 (Handling) courses for new learners in January and October 2018. Saturday mornings 9.30 – 10.30 am seems to work well, again visiting a different tower each week. We recommend that each new ringer is attached to a branch tower where they receive an extra lesson each week between the Saturday sessions. We taught three learners in January and three more started in October.



Michelle X, Susan Read & Jackie Chan

Some of the new learners are really well motivated, support their towers enthusiastically and are out at other practice nights several nights a week. There have been of course a small number of learners dropping out through illness and moving house but more than half continue to ring. Many of those attending the LTR2 group are learning to ring plain hunt in their own towers.

Overall I am delighted with the results. The Branch Ringing School is gradually making a difference to our Branch, introducing novel exercises to our towers, raising awareness of striking and helping our teachers and tower captains to gain new teaching and ringing ideas from each other. We haven't managed to repopulate any of the towers in the branch yet, but we have made a start.

Susan Read, Training Officer, Old North Berks Branch

ODG 6-bell striking competition

The competition was held on 6th October at North Marston in the Central Bucks Branch, where we had a great welcome. The local arrangements and photos were expertly handled by Jeremy and Anne Pratt and ably assisted by a local catering team from North Marston. Various Guild Officers assisted in the church where the ground floor ringing room needed to be kept secluded for the teams to ring at their best. Ten teams entered. They were escorted, in driving rain from the warmth of the village hall to the church and back under the protection of numerous large umbrellas! The judges were Sharon Mills from Shelford and Sue Marshall from Kington plus trainee judge Gill. Hopefully Gill will feel confident to do the job for real one day!

A few teams struggled slightly with the long rope draft and sadly Faringdon didn't finish their test piece which was a pity as they had started so well. The scores were surprisingly close but there was a clear winner with High Wycombe taking the cup from Thatcham.

The final results were:



High Wycombe; L – R: Sheila Bruce, Sheila George, Josie Martin, Patricia Newton, Robert Newton (C) and David Sullivan

Band	Score	QP speed
High Wycombe	17	44½ mins
Wallingford	19	44½ mins
Drayton St Leonard	24	47 mins
Tilehurst	31	43½ mins
Wokingham All Saints	33	44½ mins
Thatcham	34	44½ mins
Stewkley	42	43 mins
Marston	42	45 mins
Shenley & Loughton	49	43½ mins
Faringdon	DNF	

Tony Crabtree, Deputy Master

Safeguarding Update

Before I begin the update on safeguarding, I should first introduce myself as the new Guild Safeguarding Officer. For those who don't already know me, my name is June Wells and I currently ring in the Reading Branch of the Guild.

In September of this year, we ran our first C2 training course at Kidlington, which was attended by a total of 33 tower leaders and other interested parties. It was a very successful morning, led by one of the Diocesan Safeguarding team, which provided a good insight to how we might introduce appropriate practice to our towers. Whilst the course was for a general church audience, there was some discussion specifically related to bellringing activities including practice nights. The plan is to run a further course during 2019, the content of which should be even more specific, given what we have learnt from the first occasion.

Meanwhile, it's worth reminding ourselves of the basics for those of us with youngsters in our towers:

- Parents of youngsters learning to ring should be introduced to the tower and the basics of how we teach
- A permission to ring form (available on the Guild website or from me) should be completed for each youngster and stored confidentially on church premises, not at anyone's home
- It is parents responsibility to deliver to and collect from ringing
- A register should be kept of all those attending practice, including visitors
- A person should be allocated for each practice to be responsible for monitoring general behaviour, preferably not the person running the practice
- Those involved in 1:1 teaching should have a current DBS check and it is advisable that there should be two responsible adults present at each session.
- Ideally, teachers and tower leaders should complete on line C0 and C1 training prior to completing a C2 training course
- Children should not leave the belfry with anyone, including other young people, during practice
- Good health and safety practice should be followed at all times

A long list, but not as onerous as it sounds once the practice is established.

There has been some concern about how the record keeping fits in with current GDPR requirements. The current wisdom from the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee is that paperwork should be kept indefinitely, though there may be stronger guidelines on this when a firm policy has been established.

Finally, I think it's well worth saying that once the practice is established within the tower it should run smoothly and be unobtrusive so that we can all get on with doing what we do best, which is to enjoy our ringing in a very positive, multi-age environment, as members of a coherent and supportive team. Long may it last!

June Wells, Guild Safeguarding Officer

Towers & Belfries Committee

The Committee has met twice since the Spring Odd Bob, in May and August at Radley church hall.

John Davidge had indicated his intention to stand down as our Chairman, and at the May meeting Tony Crabtree was elected. Our thanks go to John for all his hard work during his 17 years as Chairman. At the same meeting Len Palfrey indicated his intention to withdraw from "front line" inspection work but has kindly agreed to continue to work for the Committee, dealing with the Tower Maintenance Award certificates.

During the last six months committee members have been very active with courses, grant inspections, TMA inspections, general advice or minor work at Black Bourton, Wingfield, Sandhurst, Cuddesdon, North Leigh, Sonning, Longcot, Lower Heyford, Middleton Stony, Taynton, Watlington, Chinnor, Bray, Wantage, South Leigh, Theale, Lower Basildon, Witney, Wokingham All Saints, Thame, Marlow, Loughton, Fulmer, Cookham, Weston on the Green, Tadmerton, Swalcliffe, Dorchester, Maidenhead, Cheddington, Stanton St John, Woodeaton and Penn. There may be others that I have forgotten and it shows just how active the committee and its members have been.

The Committee presently has ten members (plus Guild Officers) but it would welcome new members; particularly in the East and especially the North East of the Guild. New members do not necessarily need to be "experienced" in belfry matters but must have a practical outlook, be keen & able to learn and be prepared to work as part of a team. Please contact Tony Crabtree if you are interested.

There have been several Tower Maintenance Award (TMA) inspections including Penn's first inspection where they achieved Silver standard; well done. There are thus 22 "current" awards and a further 28 recently "expired", representing 50 towers or about 19% of the ODG. Inspections are completely free and there is lots to be gained from the inspection and the advice you may receive, so please get in touch if you would like a visit and help us nibble away at that remaining 81%!

There have been two courses run. A small course was held at Longcot dealing with clapper maintenance and correction of odd-struckness. The second was a major all-day affair held in October at Lower Heyford, Weston on the Green and Middleton Stony. In a break with tradition, several topics were offered, covering safety, rope splicing, bell maintenance, belfry & tower improvements and major projects. The day dawned with twenty students and six leaders at our base at Lower

Heyford. After the initial group session, we broke into three groups for each of the morning and afternoon sessions covering bell maintenance, rope splicing and tower/belfry improvements. The students split roughly equally between the groups. Some tried two topics and others stayed with the same topic all day.

Feedback was that the day was much appreciated. Several students have already said they would like to return to our next course either to reinforce what they learned or to try other topics. The Committee will be considering the feedback and hopefully planning future courses building on this framework. As soon as the dates are known, they will be published so people can get them in their diaries ready for when bookings open.

Tony Crabtree – Chairman

Librarian's Report

There have been 20 library enquiries since Odd Bob issue 98. These have been about:

- peal at Old Windsor in 1962
- peal at Newbury in 1972
- peal at Blewbury in 1957
- ODG peals headed *Oxford Society* in 1940s
- membership no. for Tilehurst ringer
- DVD *Craft of Bellringing* was borrowed
- Cholsey bells and ringers
- peal at Marlow in 1993
- ringer at Iffley in 1952

Eleven queries about ringers who died in the Great War, and were, or may have been, ODG members at: Stoke Poges, Padbury, Spelsbury, Stratton Audley, Pangbourne, Cholsey, St Aldates Oxford, Aston Clinton, Penn and Bletchley.

The job of sorting boxes of miscellaneous material, which has been in progress for a number of years is now more or less finished. The material has been categorised and placed in box files on the bookcase shelves. There are however still a number of further boxes of material outside the bookcases, such as reports on Guild bell installations. These have to remain in boxes because there is no room for further storage units.

Some very useful progress has been made with the archive of Guild minute books: the complete minute book for the period 1981 – 1993 has been photographed and placed on the archive. Many thanks to Rob and Pauline Needham for carrying out the photography work.

The Central Council library is in the first stages of setting up a querying facility on their catalogue. This facility is likely to include references to books in the ODG library. Any further developments regarding this will be reported as they occur.

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, please let me know.

Doug Beaumont, Guild Librarian

News from the Branches

Banbury

At the Branch AGM in April, Rosemary Hemmings took over as Branch Secretary from Heather Bletchly who had done the job for five years. There were six new members elected to the Guild, they received their certificates at the half yearly meeting in October. Lionel Smith is continuing as Ringing Master for the third year with Harry Gibson appointed as his deputy.

The Branch entered a team in the Guild Eight Bell striking competition last May at Shrivensham and came third, only two faults behind the second placed tower and four faults behind the winner.

The Branch striking competition was held on 2nd June at Steeple Aston. The method ringing competition was won by Bloxham, with Banbury second and Bodicote third. The call change competition was won by Steeple Aston and Cropredy came second. Afterwards members attended a barbecue.

The Branch outing was in July organised by Sue Burchell, Branch Chairman, and was to the Aylesbury area. Ringing was at Long Crendon, Chearsley, Aylesbury, Waddesdon, Quanton and Ambrosden, followed by a pub meal in Ardley.

The Branch held a successful Stedman weekend on 1st and 2nd September, arranged by Ringing Master Lionel Smith, where four quarter peals, two of doubles, one of triples and one of caters were rung. Several firsts in method were achieved.

Over the past six months the Branch has held practices to cater for all levels of ringing abilities. Towers included Hanwell, Banbury and Steeple Aston.

The Branch Dinner was held on 8th September at the *Gate Hangs High* near Hook Norton.

The Half Yearly Meeting was held on 20th October at Cropredy with ringing beforehand at Wardington and Cropredy.

Rosemary Hemmings

Bicester

The most exciting news from the Bicester Branch in the last six months has been the formation of a new band in Weston-on-the-Green. Although there has been little ringing in the tower recently, a group of local villagers had said how much they wanted to hear their bells rung and learn to ring them. With the encouragement of the Rev Gareth Miller, Rector of the Akeman Benefice, and the approval of Tower Captain, Bob Hessian, 'something had to be done'!

Unfortunately there is little spare teaching time throughout the Bicester Branch but wonderfully Lesley Belcher, through the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART), has stepped in and ran a taster evening on 26 July when eight potential recruits came along to hear, try and have the art of bellringing explained. At that evening, seven ringers came from Buckingham, Abingdon and Maids Moreton to give time, enthusiasm and expertise alongside four local ringers (including Branch President, Willie Haynes).

Lesley followed this up – with nine other ART/ ODG ringers – producing a schedule of teaching for the nine individuals using Weston plus Bletchington, Kirtlington and Islip towers. We, in the Bicester Branch, owe a tremendous debt of

gratitude to fellow ringers who have so willingly given of their time to teach a new band. At the time of writing, all seven are doing well and made these comments: ‘Ringing is so fulfilling...thanks again to our patient and lovely tutors’, and ‘there is a new passion in the village and there is a new component in the post office chat’.

We held our striking competition and BBQ on 1st September in Islip. Although only Ludgershall and Islip were able to enter tower teams, we mustered five separate teams with the gentlemen’s team somehow winning the trophy. Thanks to all who helped, took part, and particularly to Philip Curtis who expertly judged the teams’ efforts.

Members of the Branch have been active ringing quarter peals – Anne Martin of Launton (first inside Plain Bob Doubles) with Richard and Jan Haseldine, and Jill Bailey of Ludgershall, and both Steve Vickars and Ellie Seddon of Kirtlington (Doubles and Triples). Even your correspondent took part as lady number 70 in Alison Merryweather-Clarke’s 40th quarter peal as part of Alison’s ‘60QPs/100Ladies’ 2018 quest.

Gus Bridges, Bletchington, rang his first quarter peal at his home tower:
Sunday, 14 October 2018 in 41m (8–0–1 in A)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Steve Vickars
- 2 Hugh Deam
- 3 Ellie Seddon
- 4 Colin P Taylor
- 5 Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C)
- 6 Gus Bridges

Ellie Seddon became the 100th ringer to achieve her Level 5 ART certificate in September – less than two years after her first lesson – congratulations to Ellie and her teacher, Steve Vickars.

Congratulations also to bellringers Bob Hessian, Weston-on-the-Green; Hilary Walbank, Chesterton; and Jen Hudson, Middleton Stoney, who were all admitted to the Fellowship of St Birinus at Dorchester Abbey in September. Although not necessarily chosen for their services to ringing it was good to know how much they are valued in other spheres of church life too.

On 8th April John Harris of Launton died after a long period of ill health – he was our Vice-President for many years and known to retain his interest in ringing and the Bicester Branch to the end. May he rest in peace.

Kathryn Grant

Central Bucks

As the last issue of Odd Bob came out we held our 6-bell striking competition. With rules slightly simpler than the Guild competition, 6 bands plus a branch officers band, took part on the easy going 6 at East Claydon. We had a most enjoyable afternoon and early evening despite the less than pleasant weather.

We were very pleased to welcome Jonathan Cresshull and Jo Knight from Oxford as our judges and they gave some very helpful and encouraging remarks, the results were:

1 - Stewkley, who then went on for the first time to represent the branch in the Guild 6-bell competition, 2 - Aylesbury, 3 - Wing, 4 - Cuddington, 5 - East Claydon and 6 - Stewkley B, with the officers scoring the best result overall (phew!) but not being an eligible band did not feature in the rankings.

We then adjourned to the Mushroom Club in Claydon for a very sociable drink and barbeque. Lots of happy chat and Pool playing, excellent food and drink with the barbeque well sheltered from the rain!

Through the summer, practices have continued well, with better support now that we are visiting towers where the local ringers need help rather than trying to visit all towers in the branch.

In August Whites of Appleton installed a new set of rope guides together with flapper boards at the notoriously awkward ground floor ring of 6 at Hardwick. Following a well supported try out session it was also decided to add new synthetic top ends to the ropes (which are now in place), and the overall view is that these are now a very much more manageable ring. The try out was observed by interested villagers and the following week 7 recruits started to learn to ring. With only one dropping out, we have 6 new ringers, registered as part of the 1400 for the Armistice, most of whom are handling on their own. Practices have resumed on the first and third Thursday of each month with support from across the branch. Visitors prepared to help in lots of rounds are very welcome!

The end of the summer saw a big change for many young people in this branch as elsewhere. The last four young ringers from Nether Winchendon, who have been ringing together for eight and a half years, have now headed off for University. A quarter peal of Winchendon Place Doubles on their own bells seemed a fitting good luck complement, and this was duly rung by two of them with three of their original (and continuing) ringing tutors. Another was busy elsewhere and the fourth had already left for St Andrews. We all wish them well for their future lives.

Other teenagers making good progress are those at Aylesbury where 5 of them are spurring each other on. One has achieved his LtR level 3 and 2 others have rung their first quarter peals. Another of our teenagers, at Wing, rang his first quarter, as did the first of the adults in the new band at Chearsley. In all 9 quarters were rung by branch members within the branch across the summer.

Anne Pratt

Chiltern

Monthly branch practices are well supported by an increasing number, including regular visitors from our neighbouring branches of Central Bucks and the Western District of the Hertfordshire Association. Practices always conclude with a chat over tea and cakes.

Several towers including Stoke Mandeville and Cheddington have received help to extend their ringing abilities and help for Weston Turville and Ellesborough is hoped to be arranged. A training day for Cambridge Minor is also to be organised.

The Branch half yearly meeting was held in September at Weston Turville and we were very pleased to welcome the new Guild Master, Katie Lane, to the meeting. An update on what the Central Council was now supporting for *Ringling Remembers* was given. There was a suggestion that the half yearly meeting be dispensed with, but this prompted a wide-ranging discussion which came to the conclusion that the meeting was a very useful forum for both dispersing information and airing differing views.

The annual inter-branch Orchard Cup striking competition between Chiltern and Central Bucks was hosted by Chiltern this year at Marsworth in October. A record 9 bands entered, including a branch officers' team from each branch who are ineligible to win under the competition rules. In a close fought competition judged by Alan and John Marchbank, honours went to Aylesbury Geriatrics band (their own choice of name as there was also an Aylesbury Youth band), 2nd place Little Missenden and 3rd place Cheddington. The competition is a friendly one to encourage regular ringers at each tower to improve their striking. A substantial ringers' tea concluded the event.

Slapton's restoration and augmentation project soldiers on. Their Heritage Lottery application was finally submitted, however, unfortunately they have just received news that they have not been successful and are currently considering whether to resubmit an amended bid. The branch continues to support this appeal and granted it a further £250 at the half yearly meeting (making a total of £1,000). The branch is also planning a quiz night on 26 January 2019 in Slapton Village Hall at 6.30pm. We hope neighbouring branches will also come and support this event. Tickets £10, bring your own drinks and glasses.

Clare Carpenter

Chipping Norton

The restoration work at Taynton has been completed and the bells were rededicated in April. Branch members were invited to open ringing on the bells in June. At Ascott-under-Wychwood, work to improve the tenor bell and frame is nearing completion. Shipton-under-Wychwood bells are undergoing major restoration and it is hoped that they will be returned in time for Christmas. A number of branch ringers have been involved in each of these projects and this has been very much appreciated by all concerned.

As bells have moved out of towers so too has the branch seen the departure of some of its incumbents. The Revd. John Acreman retired from Hook Norton at the end of June. He was branch chairman for several years and always very supportive of the ringers.

Special practices have continued on the third Tuesday of most months.

A tower captains' meeting was held in June and the Branch Autumn meeting followed the October practice at Churchill. We remembered Diane Huffer, the former tower captain there, who died in June.

WW1 commemorative half-muffled quarter peals have continued at Hook Norton in memory of local men named on the War Memorial. A half-muffled quarter peal was rung at Spelsbury on 26th September in memory of Harry Harris of that tower. It marked the centenary of his death and was also dedicated to three other ringers from Spelsbury who died earlier in WW1.

Congratulations go to Christine Stevens who rang her first quarter peal at Shipton-under-Wychwood in June, an eightieth birthday compliment to her mother.

We send our best wishes to those members who are undergoing medical treatment and to those members who have moved on to universities.

Christine Harris

East Berks and South Bucks

Although Windsor Castle is a “Royal Peculiar” and the bells are manned by an appointed band, some of the Castle ringers are members of EBSB Branch. There was much excitement on 19th May when Prince Harry and Meghan Markle married at St George’s Chapel with lots of ringing at the Curfew Tower and at Windsor Parish Church. A peal of Yorkshire S Major was rung at Amersham for the occasion, and quarter peals were rung at Cookham, Dorney, High Wycombe and Hughenden.

Sadly our Branch band had to withdraw from the Guild 8-bell contest at the last minute due to ill health of one of the ringers. High Wycombe took part, but too many method mistakes in the test piece of Double Norwich meant they were placed 4th in the contest at Shrivenham.

The wedding of Jill Galloway and Colin Parker at Amersham on the day of the Branch 6-bell contest attracted ringers from at least three towers in the Branch which meant that High Wycombe was the only “official” entry for the contest. Josie Godfrey and Peter Jasper also assembled two bands of young ringers, with adult support. This proved excellent experience and practice for the youngsters prior to the *Ringling World National Youth Contest* in London. The Bucks and Berks Young Ringers band consisted of girls from Wycombe High School plus Matthew Steele from Sonning Deanery who called the changes for the test piece. During the day they visited seven towers in the city with bells ranging in weight from 6 to 48 cwt, and enjoyed ringing handbells at St Mary le Bow while waiting for the contest results.

High Wycombe represented the EBSB Branch in the Guild 6-bell contest at North Marston. The band included two Sheila’s – one who had broken her shoulder a few months ago and didn’t know whether she would even ring again, and the other who had returned to ringing a few months ago after a break of about 20 years. It was especially pleasing for them to be in the winning band.

The Lorna Newton Contest is a knock-out contest that runs during the spring/summer. The final took place at Burnham on 13th October, prior to the Branch Half Yearly meeting. Having been runners up last year, Amersham were delighted to be placed first, followed by Chesham, High Wycombe “B”, Cookham and Turville. All bands were congratulated on reaching the final.

It is pleasing to see the Amersham band still thriving following the move of Iain Anderson and Elva Ainsworth to York in the summer. Alan Ainsworth is due to join them very soon. Alan has lived in Amersham for nearly 50 years. All the family rang,

and they made a huge contribution to ringing at Amersham and further afield. Alan has rung over 4900 peals, many of which have included people at the “development stage” of their ringing. I am personally grateful to Alan for his support in my early peal ringing career, inviting me to ring at towers all over the country and encouraging me to ring new and challenging methods. He will be missed by his many friends in the area, although I have heard rumours that he is keen to travel back to ring more peals down here.

Pat Newton

Newbury

As another busy six months pass, we see the Newbury Branch quite active in a number of areas. Our recent successes in Guild striking competitions continued with us awarded first place at Shrivenham in the 8-bell event in May. Not resting on our laurels, we were represented by Thatcham in the 6-bell and look forward to the 10-bell competition in November that takes place on our home turf at Newbury.

Our annual branch outing saw us ringing in the Shrivenham area and was well attended with the usual mix of ringing and socialising over a good lunch.

Our two monthly Branch Practices are now very well supported under Di Bridle’s leadership, with an all-comers practice on the first Friday of the month and a Surprise practice, run jointly with neighbouring Andover District, the following week. These meetings continue to give valuable experience at all levels to those wishing to progress, with social contact while sitting out. Our monthly weekday “ring and pub lunch” events also attract a good following and are usually outside our branch, which allows “grabs” for some. Recent trips have included Tangley, Purley-on-Thames, Shellingford and Streatley.



*Richard Marshall &
Amanda Marchant*

The “Marshall Shield” trophy, previously awarded annually for novice progress, was this year awarded to Amanda Marchant and the Lambourn ringers for raising an impressive £14,000 for bell repair work, and for being a friendly, progressive and enthusiastic tower, largely due to Amanda’s hard work and influence.

Current focus around the Branch is on forthcoming commemorations for the First World War armistice centenary and also ringing to remember fallen tower members who went off to fight, on the centenaries of their passing. We look forward to our Christmas ringing programme, followed in February by our quarter peal week and branch dinner.

Mark Robins

North Bucks

[No article received – Ed.]

Old North Berks

All scheduled branch practices have taken place, with an improving attendance at the evening monthly practices, especially from newer ringers who have stayed on after the learners' practices. We hope that this trend continues and again encourage tower captains and others to attend with new ringers at least one of these practices in a year.

Susan Read, our Training Officer, has been very busy over the summer months. In June she organised a half-term ringing club for our young ringers, and in September there was ringing and a quiz at St Giles in Oxford. The branch ringing school continues to recruit new ringers for our towers. Susan is about to start teaching our third LTR1 group of new learners this autumn. The two previous courses were very successful and participants are now ringing in their home towers.

After a period of limited bell restoration activity, the Branch is now looking at two exciting restoration projects at Steventon and Long Wittenham. It is likely that the Steventon project will be completed in the coming months, but the larger and more complex project at Long Wittenham might take longer. We look forward to the improvements at both towers and the resulting local recruitment and training opportunities.

On a sad note, in August we were sorry to hear of the death of Phyllis Brook of East Hagbourne. Phyllis learnt to ring at Aston Tirrold and was a Guild member for many years. She will be sadly missed.

Our branch outing was once again arranged by Philip Roberts of Harwell and this year the weather was fine. Over twenty branch members and friends visited Tadmarton, Bodicote, North Aston, Deddington and Steeple Aston. This was an excellently organised outing and included a pub lunch in Adderbury and afternoon tea at Steeple Aston. It was followed by a barbecue at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson with 60 in attendance. As usual, the food was superb and there was fun on the croquet green. Thanks go to Philip, Janette, Stuart and Naomi for arranging a good day for the Branch. The proceeds of the barbecue and raffle went into the branch fund and will be used for future restoration projects.

In November we will hold our next social event, a skittles evening with fish and chip supper at Radley Village Hall. Thanks go to Daphne Pollard for organising this for the Branch. Skittles evenings have always been very entertaining, with a variety of round objects being bowled down the alley to take the skittles gatherers unawares. Ringing to celebrate New Year will be held at North Moreton on 1st January 2019 from 10.30am to 12.30pm, with light refreshments available to get the year off to a good start.

Thank you to all members who have continued to support the branch practices and ringing activities.

Gill Loyd

Oxford City

Our half yearly meeting was held in June at Headington. There was an excellent turnout and it incorporated our striking competition, which this year drew in 7 teams, including the ever-popular boy band. We also had handbell ringing in the church and a wonderful tea provided by the Headington ringers. Congratulations to Marston who won, and went on to represent the City branch in the Guild six bell competition.

We have continued to hold a monthly branch practice, moving around the towers in the Branch. Attendance has varied from only seven to over twenty, and we try to take every opportunity to encourage more branch members to come along.

In July the Cuddesdon bells were put back and are a pleasure to ring. A quarter peal of plain bob minor was rung on them on Thursday 16th August to celebrate their refurbishment: 1. Hugh Deam, 2. Catherine MA Lane, 3. Maarit Kivilo, 4. Paul Lucas, 5. Simon L Edwards, 6. Isaac O'Shea (C).

There have been several first quarter peals in the branch – congratulations to Jamie Brown (Cowley), Benjamin Poole (Marston) and Brenda Gratwicke (Kidlington), all ringing the tenor to doubles, and to Nora Tarczy Novak (Kidlington) ringing the treble to doubles. Other firsts include both Rachel Croft and myself taking our first steps in conducting quarter peals. I've certainly got a long way to go before I will be confident in keeping a band right, but it's an exciting journey.

There are lots of opportunities for people to progress their ringing if they wish. The St Aldates practice provides the opportunity to progress with surprise minor, and both Headington and St Giles host a monthly triples and major practice. Hugh Deam continues to organise outings in the surrounding areas, and sometimes further afield.

In September Headington invited Tony Crabtree, the Guild Deputy Master to bring his ever popular *Listening, place-counting and rhythm* workshop to their practice night, which was very well attended.

Last but not least, big congratulations to Katie Lane, who has now become Guild Master. We wish her all the very best in her new role and hope we will be able to provide her with lots of support as she takes the role forward.

Lindsay Powell

Reading

[No article received – Ed.]

Sonning Deanery

The ART *Loddon Hub* has continued to be very active, with Vinni Sullivan organising a number of quarter peal attempts at various towers within the Branch.

Vinni also assisted with the training of a local band on the bells of St George's Memorial Church in Ypres, Belgium. The local band will ring on 11th November to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice, a feat which is all the more remarkable in having been achieved within 9 months from their first lessons. It is a tribute also to the dedication and commitment of the members of the new band,

some of whom have a long journey to attend the practices, and of the visiting teachers. Pam Elliston and Sue Portsmouth from Sonning had an opportunity to help at a practice session in September, and very much enjoyed ringing the lovely bells.

Sally Kunzig of Wargrave achieved ART Level 2 in February 2018, and Ellie Andrews, Sonning, gained her Level 1 in May. One of the Twyford young ringers, Joseph Godfrey, achieved Level 1 in June 2018, Imogen Reason of Wargrave reached Level 1 in August, and Karen Daffey of Sonning reached Level 1 in November. Congratulations to them all.

In April, Rob Needham organised a Sonning Deanery Branch mini-outing which visited three towers in the area – Goring, South Stoke and Cholsey. This was much enjoyed by all those who went along.

SDB hired the Charmborough Ring for the weekend of the Hurst Show in June. The helpers had a very busy time demonstrating and explaining the ring to the many interested visitors that came to see and listen. Unfortunately there was no lasting recruitment of new learners following the weekend, though some visitors who had come from further afield did request contact information for towers closer to them.

In July, Matthew Steele from Twyford took part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in London as part of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers. Matthew conducted the band in call changes, and while they did not reach the final, they performed very well and are already practising for next year!

St Michael's, Sandhurst is back to holding regular practices on all 6 bells on Monday evenings, following necessary work on one of them. A full restoration plan is taking shape with a view to the work being carried out in 3 year's time.

A number of new ringers have started lessons at various towers, including Sonning and Hurst, over the last few months. This is in response to the *Ringing Remembers* programme, and is very encouraging.

Rob Needham was elected Youth Officer at the AGM, having been acting officer since the previous post holder stood down in autumn 2017. Attendance at the Young Ringers practices has been patchy mainly, it appears, due to other weekend commitments, but it is good to know that there are now a number of young learners within the Branch and they are progressing well at their individual towers.

Derek Titford, who has been Tower Captain at Waltham St Lawrence since 1997, has recently stood down and, as he puts it in an article for the parish magazine 'passed the position/baton/keys/ropes over to Jacquie Hazell'. Thank you to Derek for all the work that he has put in to keep the tower ringing, and congratulations to Jacquie on her new role.

Sue Portsmouth

South Oxon

One of the highlights of our summer was a very enjoyable Branch Outing to the Forest of Dean. 29 ringers, 2 non ringers and a jolly dog called Nelson had a great day out, ringing at five contrasting towers. Ringing ranged from call changes and Plain Hunt for the less confident ringers, to Steadman and Cambridge for the experts.

As well as ringing, we learnt about the Severn Bore at our first church, St Peter's, Minsterworth, which is situated on the banks of the river. Their bells have an interesting history – in 1702 the medieval tower was struck by lightning, followed

by an extensive fire which caused the bells to melt down! The 1788 replacements were recast by Taylors of Loughborough in 1903.

The outing encompassed the historic village of St Briavals – where several of us enjoyed a walk around the remains of the Norman fortress, and chat with local volunteers who were cleaning out the moat. The final church had a ground floor ring, with a rather strange human-sized cage affair next to one of the ropes; we could only conclude that this was where ringers guilty of clipping would be incarcerated.

We concluded the day with a meal at a pub on the way home. Sadly for us, Kay Bartholomew who organised the outing has decided that she would put away her Dove's Guide and let someone else take on the mantle. Kay has organised wonderful outings over several years, often incorporating a ride on a steam train, so it was fitting that some ringers managed to fit in a visit to Dean Forest Rail ride during their lunch break.

Thame Tower was in the local newspapers during the summer – they have recruited new ringers in the form of two families. Great to have some youngsters learning the ropes, and we enjoyed their lively company on the Summer Outing.

Quarters have been rung throughout the Branch to celebrate special occasions. Chalgrove and Berrick ringers rang at Berrick Salome as a compliment to Rev. Canon Ian Cohen to mark his retirement as vicar of Chalgrove and Berrick Salome. Ian oversaw the rehanging of the bells at both churches in his parish, probably a unique achievement for an incumbent and something for which both villages are very grateful.

In July, Chalgrove ringers rang to celebrate the Silver Wedding Anniversary of Teresa and Andrew Davis, and in September, quarters were rung at Brightwell Baldwin to celebrate the Golden Wedding Anniversaries of Clive and Maureen Bosley and John and Shirley Tchighianoff. We are fortunate to have such a stalwart set of people in our branch. On checking the minutes of the AGM 25 years ago, congratulations were recorded to Andrew on his engagement to Teresa, John Tchighianoff was Chairman of the Branch, and Rev Ian Cohen led the AGM service.

Jane Willis

Vale of the White Horse

Alan and Kath O'Shaughnessy have been stalwarts of the Buckland band for almost sixty years. With Alan stepping down as Tower Captain and Kath retiring from ringing altogether, the Branch thanks them both for their long service and dedication to ringing at Buckland and in the Vale. Mark Willis takes over, with David Page as deputy.

In April, Zoë Williams and Joe Norton ran a four-week beginners' handbell method ringing course in Stanford in the Vale. Twelve people took part altogether – two had no previous ringing experience, six were tower bell ringers and five already had significant experience of change ringing on handbells. Everybody made excellent progress from different starting points, and all succeeded in ringing Plain Hunt on a pair of bells by the end of the course. The group were keen to continue learning, so the sessions are now a regular fixture of the Branch calendar on the second and fourth Friday afternoons each month.

This year's Branch striking competition was held at Longcot in May, and was judged by Oxford City ringer Rosanna Cretney, assisted by Paul Hambidge. There was a good turnout, including four slightly nervous ringers who were taking part in their first ever striking competition. Faringdon were the clear winners of the Greenley Shield, but the margins between 2nd, 3rd and 4th were very small. Hinton Waldrist received the Ringing Master's trophy for the most improved tower.

As part of a new recruitment drive, Faringdon ringers held an open-tower day during the church flower festival at the end of August. It was very successful, with lots of interested visitors, and as a result they are now teaching six new ringers.

Katharine Timberlake organised an enjoyable annual dinner at the *Woodman* in Fernham. Unfortunately, the October date clashed with several church events that ringers were involved with so attendance was lower than usual, but we still had a great time!

Canon Richard Hancock has been an enthusiastic supporter of ringing during his 18 years as vicar of the Shrivenham and Ashbury benefice. Sadly (for us) he has been appointed to a new post in Dorset. A farewell quarter was rung at Shrivenham, and after discovering that the bells at Sixpenny Handley (where he was to be installed) are 'hung dead', we arranged to take Tony Crabtree's Stallpits mini-ring to Dorset to welcome him to his new parish. We were joined by three ringers from Dorset, and a quarter peal of Bob Doubles came round to applause from Bishop Karen and the assembled clergy as they waited to process into church for the service.

Notable achievements have included first quarter peals for Amanda Jefferies, Gavin Mason and Carol Morris, who all covered to doubles.

Lucy Laird

Witney and Woodstock

Steve Goddard 1958–2018: Bell ringer and so much more. Steve first appeared at a Monday night practice in Bampton in 2001. He was in the RAF at Brize Norton and looking for a local tower at which to ring. It very quickly became clear, (as ringers have observed since his untimely death) that he was a 'top bloke'.

He was an extremely accomplished bell ringer, a great asset in any tower and very



Steve, second from left

free with his help and advice to those ringers less able. Always cheerful and happy, with a zany sense of humour, he not only threw himself into the doings of the Bampton ringers, but also many of the other towers in the Witney and Woodstock Branch of the Oxfordshire Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. In fact he was the branch Ringing Master for three years, from 2003–2005 inclusive.

In 2007 he was in the team that rang the first full peal on the refurbished Bampton bells after the lengthy restoration, but sadly it was also the year he retired from the RAF and left us to go back to his home in Cornwall. A few years later he

relocated to his home county of Essex to be nearer his parents and also to marry, something he had always told us he would never do! We made him a farewell presentation at our Annual Dinner that year.

Steve had fought off cancer in his mid-thirties but wasn't able to on its return. A commemorative half muffled quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung on Bampton's bells on the evening of Tuesday 4th September, and many other quarters and full peals have been rung in memoriam on very many towers all around the country. Most have been followed by a visit to a local hostelry to toast Steve and reminisce and laugh about all his antics!

Michael Probert organised a great W&W branch outing to the Northamptonshire district in October, visiting 6 towers with an excellent lunch stop at *The Cromwell Cottage*. This was made slightly complicated by one of the clappers breaking at Duston, which was on the original itinerary, but the tower captain had already found a replacement tower at East Haddon so we felt a donation towards the repair was in order. Another very successful day out.

There have been a number of celebratory QPs rung at Freeland in the last six months. The first of these was on the 11th May to celebrate the wedding of two Freeland ringers, Zoe Monkley and Matthew Jordan, the following day. On 7th September we rang to celebrate the engagement of Mark Probert and Melissa Dee. On 21st September we rang a QP including 10 m/p/v to celebrate the 65th birthday of Michael Probert. Michael continued his celebrations the following day by ringing a QP of Superlative Surprise Major at Witney. It was his and Neil Ephgrave's first in method and also marked Alison Merryweather-Clarke's 600th QP.

Since the previous edition of Odd Bob we have built on the theme of ladies bands celebrating relevant anniversaries and achievements, with many from our branch and beyond breaking new ground in the process. We are grateful to very many female ringers from neighbouring branches and guilds for their support.

QP successes from our own branch have included a 1st major inside (Julie Minch), 1st inside (Lucy McGregor and Zoe Jordan, also Zoe's first as Mrs Jordan), and my favourite, a 1st QP for Marysia Hermaszewska which she saved up to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the day the first lady peer entered the House of Lords by ringing a QPA with Witney's own lady peer, The Right Honourable The Baroness Cox, of Queensbury. The photograph shows the band in the sunshine outside Ducklington church after enjoying colour-coded Green, White and Violet chocolates (Give Women Votes). Front row, l-r: Julie Minch, Caroline Cox, Lindsay Powell. Back row, l-r: Fiona Methley, Alison Merryweather-Clarke, Marysia Hermaszewska.



Finally, St Mary's at Witney will be joined on 11/11 for rounds and call changes by the 9 Air Cadets who have been training for the last year under the *Ringings Remembers* initiative.

Andrew Goldthorpe

Points from Peals

The total number of peals recorded to date this year is 206 compared with 227 in the same period last year.

Firsts: A number of firsts have been recorded as ringers, particularly younger members, have made progress. Congratulations to all concerned.

- First Peal: Andrew Goldthorpe , David P Harding
- First Peal as conductor: Neil R Ephgrave
- First Minor: Alison T Merryweather-Clarke
- First Surprise Major: Lindsay Powell
- First on 8: Thomas Blomley, Neil R Ephgrave
- First Lincolnshire Surprise Major in hand: Christopher M Tuckett
- First Spliced Major (6m): Rose-Anne Kimber
- First Spliced Major (8m): Thomas R Sherwood
- First Royal: Sophie L Martin
- First on 10 in hand: Anna E Sherwood
- First London Royal: Thomas R Sherwood
- First Spliced Royal (4m) as conductor: Anna E Sherwood
- First Spliced Royal (4m): Thomas R Sherwood
- First on 12: Alan M Eyles, Thomas R Sherwood.

Personal Milestones: Significant milestones recorded since the last report include:

Alan M Eyles and Daniel J Page (100), Graham N Scott and June D Wells (100 together), Colin G Newman (400), Kenneth J Darvill (500), Michele Winter (700), W John Couperthwaite (750 as conductor on tower bells), Beryl R Norris (900 for the Guild), Douglas J Beaumont and Janet E Menhinick (1,000), E John Wells (1,500 for the Guild), Patricia M Newton (2,000), Anthony J Cox (2,000 as conductor on tower bells) Peter Bridle (2,500 on a tenor).

Most methods (Surprise Minor 25) David L Thomas, (Plain Royal 6) Marcia L Dieppe, (Surprise Royal 4) Joanne P Druce, D Giles Winter.

Events: Peals were also rung for the official birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the birth of Prince Louis of Cambridge, 775th anniversary of the dedication of St Mary the Virgin, Witney, the 800th anniversary of All Saints, Loughton, and to mark the Institution, Installation & Induction of the Revd Sally Bottomer, as Rector of the United Benefice of Aston Clinton with Buckland & Drayton Beauchamp.

Personal events: Peals were rung: for the birthdays of; Peter Bridle, Joanne Druce, Christopher O'Mahony, Rachel Moss (50), Timothy Pett, Stephen Rossiter, Stanley Scott (91), Doris Turner (90), June Wells; for the wedding of Jillian Galloway & Colin Parker, and the wedding anniversaries of Jennifer and Nigel Herriott, Graham and Janet John, Patricia and Robert Newton, Margaret and Martin Whiteley (40 years); J Alan Ainsworth (70 years as a ringer).

In memoriam: Ringers, friends and family members remembered were: Beryl Coombes, Derek Francis, and Right Revd Peter Nott, Peter (Doug) Peterson, Pte John Allen who died 18th April 1918.

Ken Davenport, Peal Secretary

Paying Peal Fees electronically

If you would like to pay peal fees electronically, instead of sending in cheques, then please contact the peal secretary (peals@odg.org.uk) to obtain the details.

Thank you.

Stuart Gibson

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Diary of Events for 2018/19

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 2018

Wed	21	W&W	BP	South Leigh (8)	19:30
Sat	24	ODG	General Committee Meeting	Newbury	afternoon
Wed	28	ONB	BP	Chilton (6)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Wed	28	Central Bucks	Improvers 8-bell	Haddenham	7 – 8.30pm

DECEMBER 2018

Sat	1	W&W	BP	Tackley (6)	10:30
Wed	5	ONB	S Major	Drayton (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Thur	6	ONB	BP	Radley (6)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Thur	6	Bicester	BP	Charlton-on-Otmoor (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Fri	7	CN	BP	Burford(8)	7.00 – 8.30pm
Fri	7	Newbury	BP	Compton (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	8	EBSB	BP and social	Amersham (12)	6pm onwards
Sat	8	Oxford	BP	Iffley (6)	10.30 – 12.00
Sat	8	South Oxon	BP	Warborough (8)	4.00 pm
Wed	12	ONB	BP	Harwell (8)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	15	Sonning	BP	Waltham St Lawrence (6)	4.30 – 6pm
Sat	15	Chiltern	BP and social	Halton (4) & Wendover (8)	9.30 – 11.30am
Mon	17	Bicester	SP and social	Kirtlington (8)	7.30 – 9pm

JANUARY 2019

Sat	5	CN	BP & pub lunch	Chadlington (6)	11.00 – 12.30pm
Tues	8	Bicester	BP	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	19	Chiltern	BP	Great Kimble (6)	9.30 – 11.30am
Sat	19	Sonning	BP	Arborfield (6)	10.30 – 12.00
Sat	19	EBSB	BP	Bray (8)	11.30 – 1.30 pm
Wed	23	ONB	BP	E. Hagbourne (8)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	26	South Oxon	BP	Thame (8)	4.00 pm

FEBRUARY 2019

Sat	2	Reading/SDB	Joint 8-bell SC	TBD	morning
Wed	6	Bicester	BP	Weston-on-the-Green (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	6	ONB	S Major	Brightwell (8)	7.45 – 9.15pm
Sat	9	CN joint with Banbury Branch	BP & pub lunch & pm ringing	Hook Norton (8), pm tower tbc	11.00 – 12.30pm
Sat	16	Chiltern	BP	Bierton (6)	9.30 – 11.30am
Sat	16	EBSB	BP	Dorney (6)	2.00 – 4.00 pm
Tues	19	ONB	BP	Abingdon, St Helen (10)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	23	South Oxon	AGM	Marsh Baldon	3.00 pm
Wed	27	ONB	BP	West Hanney (6)	2.00 – 3.30pm

MARCH 2019

Sat	2	CN	Ringling, service & refreshments, AGM	Chipping Norton (8)	3.00, 4.00, 5.00
Sat	9	Guild	General Committee Meeting	Kirtlington	2.30pm
Sat	16	Sonning	BP	Sandhurst (6)	4.30 – 6.00
Sat	16	Chiltern	AGM	Bledlow (8)	9.30 – 1.00pm
Sat	16	EBSB	BP	Lane End (6)	10.30 – 12.30
Sat	16	ONB	SC/AGM	Sutton Courtenay (8)	SC 3.00pm Service 5.00 Tea 5.45 AGM 6.30
Tues	19	Bicester	SP Grandsire & PB Doubles	Islip (8)	7.30 – 9pm
Sat	23	South Oxon	BP	Drayton St Leonard(6)	4.00 pm
Wed	27	ONB	BP	Milton (8)	2.00 – 3.30pm

APRIL 2019

Fri	1	Bicester	BP	Ludgershall (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	3	ONB	S Major	Drayton (8)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	6	Guild	Radley Course	Radley	All day
Mon	8	ONB	BP	Chilton (6)	7.30 – 9.00pm
Sat	13	Guild	Youth Ringing Event	Oxford	All day
Sat	13	EBSB	Walking outing	TBA	9.30 – 5.00 pm
Sat	27	EBSB	AGM	Clewer (6)	3.00 pm onward
Sat	27	Sonning	6-bell SC	White Waltham (6)	p.m.
Sat	27	Bicester	Outing	TBA	10am onwards
Sat	27	South Oxon	Striking Competition	Brightwell Baldwin	7.30 pm

MAY 2019

Mon	6	Guild	Ringling Day	North Bucks	All day
Mon	6	Guild	Eight-Bell Contest	North Bucks	Afternoon
Wed	8	Bicester	BP	Middleton Stoney (6)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	8	ONB	BP	Cholsey (8)	8.00 – 9.30pm
Sat	11	South Oxon	Branch Outing	TBC	Whole Day
Sat	18	Sonning	BP	Wokingham, St Paul (8)	10.30 – 12.00
Sat	18	Guild	AGM	Great Missenden (8)	All day
Tues	21	Bicester	SP Little Bob Minor & Grandsire Triples	Bicester (10)	7.30 – 9pm
Wed	22	ONB	BP	North Moreton (6)	2.00 – 3.30pm
Sat	25	South Oxon	BP	Shabbington (6)	7.00 pm



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Young Ringers' Award Scheme 2019

Are you under 18 on 1st September 2019?

Do you like a challenge?

Learn more about bells and ringing

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Celebrate your progress

Meet other young ringers

Tell others about your hobby

Entry forms and further details are available from
Robert Newton, The White House, 11 Plowden Park,
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Tel: 01844 352926 email: edsecretary@odg.org.uk

Closing date for completed applications: 31st March 2019



ONB's Young Ringers Outing to St Giles, Oxford – tea



ONB's Young Ringers Outing – 'walking' handbells