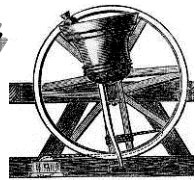




Branching Out

The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter



Monday 20th November 2017

Please keep your articles coming in for 'Branching Out'.

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk. The next edition will be out on Monday 18th December.

Please send me details of any special Christmas ringing events happening in your tower!

(Deadline for copy, 16th December)

Annual General Meeting on Saturday 18th November at St. Peter's Wolvercote.

Some key points.

Thank you to all of you who attended the AGM at Wolvercote, and a special thank you to Wolvercote for hosting. The dumb bell proved a real draw, and the tea laid on by the Wolvercote ringers was excellent. I thought it would be useful to highlight some of the key points from the meeting for those towers who weren't represented:



The AGM Raffle !

Committee – there have been no changes this year. We still have a vacancy for a second Branch Representative though, so please let me know if you would be interested, or would like to find out more about what it entails.

Election of new members – 7 new members were elected, and will receive their certificates at the half yearly meeting in May.

A warm welcome to all of you!

Branch Practices – there have been variable attendances through the year – from over 20 at some, to only six at another. Please do support branch practices if you can, they are a great chance for all of us to meet ringers who we don't normally get to ring with, and maybe try new things. The Committee will be meeting soon to plan the practices for next year, and it has been suggested that the late afternoon slot is great in summer (especially if we can find a nice pub to adjourn to afterwards), but some of the winter ones may be in the morning instead. All details will be circulated to towers, advertised in the newsletter and on our website events page.

Safeguarding - the Diocese has asked if all towers can have a children's officer (who would be separate from the Tower Captain/Training officer, and would also be DBS checked). This is looking fairly unfeasible for many towers, especially as the Diocese has asked that they always be present when a child is in the tower. I have circulated a form from Katie Lane to all towers. It is important you fill this in and return it so when Katie next meets with the Diocesan Officers, she can give accurate feedback reflecting the views of all towers in our branch.

Cuddesdon bells fundraising project – we have agreed to give £500 towards the fundraising efforts at Cuddesdon for now, and will discuss it again when we have more information about the progress of the project, at our half yearly Meeting in May.

Lindsay Powell. Oxford City Branch Secretary

A Message from our Ringing Master

Thank you to the Wolvercote ringers for hosting the AGM this weekend, and thank you all for having me as Ringing Master for another year. We'll plan the practice calendar before Christmas so we can let you know what's on as soon as possible.

Do you have ideas for practices? Let me know! *Andrew Freer* andrew.freer@gmail.com

Remembrance Day Ringing

The St Giles' band would like to thank others who helped with ringing at St Giles before the open-air Remembrance Day service on Sunday 12th November. All eight bells were rung, half-muffled, for the last half-hour before the service, but there were only four St Giles' ringers available, and the majority of the band was made up of ringers who had come on to St Giles' after having already rung elsewhere - two each from Marston and the Cathedral, and one each from Headington and Cowley - making it in effect a combined Branch contribution to a major civic event. *John Pusey*

Dates for your Diary – 2018

Full details from Ringing Master, Andrew Freer: andrew.freer@gmail.com or tour organizer, Hugh Deam: deamhugh@gmail.com

Saturday 20th January
Monday 12th February
Saturday 24th March

Ringling at Iffley (6) 2.00pm, followed by a Planning Meeting for 2018 at 3.00pm, at 92a Church Way, Iffley.

Morning Outing organized by Hugh (TBC)

Outing to Gloucestershire towers including Pucklechurch, Dyrham, Colerne, Marshfield and Nettleton (TBC)

Monday 2nd April
Monday 9th April

Morning Practice at Kirtlington (8) 16cwt (TBC)

Colin Taylor's Spring Outing.

If anyone else is interested in organizing a trip in 2018, please contact Hugh or Andrew.

For more details about everything else, please go to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk

Any articles or photographs for inclusion in 'Branching Out' please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk

The Cuddesdon Bells – another update!

The six bells were finally removed and transported to Whites of Appleton on October 25th, where they joined the new Whitechapel treble; the original treble will now be melted down. Unusually, but fittingly, the new treble has two inscriptions – that bearing the dedication to Dr Ware of Cuddesdon, and on the opposite side 'This bell was one of the last cast in Whitechapel Replaces the former treble'. Below which is '1570 – 2017 Whitechapel' and the company logo. Unfortunately small cracks have now been found at the top of the tenor bell, which will necessitate it being transported to Soundweld in Newmarket for remedial welding, but this is not thought to hold up the work on retuning the five remaining original bells and the rehanging in Cuddesdon.



The photos show the new and the old treble, and one of the inscriptions on the new treble.

Brian Lowe, Tower Captain, Horspath.

News of Stanton St John (5)

Katie Lane has recently had some information about Stanton St John, following a request from her to find out if there was any progress being made with the proposed rehanging of the bells.



The good news is that Whites of Appleton have taken on the work, and will go ahead with it next year, according to the specification agreed with Whitechapel.

More news about Stanton St John when we get it!

Hello from Western Australia!

We are always pleased to welcome visiting ringers to our towers here in WA. As you all probably know, your own Paul Lucas was one of our



recent visitors during his holiday 'down under'. During a chat before service ringing at St George's Cathedral one Sunday morning, Paul and I discovered that we are both editors of our respective branch newsletters (mine being for WAANZAB). The inevitable question arose: do you find it hard to get contributions?

Paul very kindly agreed to write a story about his holiday for our newsletter, **Look To!** But what could I do in return? It's nearly 20 years since I was last in Oxford. Then it occurred to me that I owe the Oxford Diocesan Guild a debt of gratitude...



When grappling with Stedman Triples and finding my ringing reference book not up to the task, I began searching the ringers' library at the Bell Tower. There it was: your **Educational Leaflet 7e!** Clear, succinct and with lots of diagrams!! Not only did it describe pictorially what to do at the calls, but also what to do next!!

Quarter peal of Stedman Triples achieved, I moved on to Cambridge Surprise Minor. History was repeating itself. I searched on the internet for some better reference material and found an equally helpful booklet about Cambridge.

Quarter peal of Cambridge achieved (eventually), I was told to look up London. At this stage, I realised that the two booklets that had helped me so much were from the same source. Good old Google: "Oxford Diocesan Guild London Surprise Minor" - Eureka!! We're still on the journey to conquering London, but I'm fairly confident that I'll be googling you again by the middle of 2018! Thank you, ODG!

Julie Taylor – Editor 'Look To' Newsletter

An Outing to some Gloucestershire Towers – Monday 23rd October

For the final outing of 2017 three towers within the Cotswold Water Park (Kempford, Meysey Hampton and South Cerney) were visited.

The Water Park was created in the latter half of the 20th century and covers some 40 square miles and incorporates 150 lakes of varying sizes. About a dozen churches with bells lie within the catchment that also takes in some North Wiltshire and West Oxfordshire villages. Given its beach and wide ranging water sports facilities the park is still something of a treasure yet to be fully discovered and the first tower, **Kempford (6)** could hardly have done more by way of illustrating the idiom 'a hidden gem'.



Kempford

The church has a history richer than many a cathedral, with at least four English kings having worshipped here as well as the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. The vaulting under the tower is decorated with armorial bearings of 16 Lancastrian roses. Hardly a surprise then to find the church commands lavish praise in the Pevsner architectural guide and England's Thousand Best Churches by Simon Jenkins. The lighter bells at the following towers gave us the chance to ring six different Minor methods and some lesser known Doubles variations such as St Peter's and St Stephen's.



Meysey Hampton

The cruciform plan church of St Mary's church in **Meysey Hampton (6)** is also 13th century, possessing much of historical and architectural interest also, being situated to the west of the village green and its centrepiece of the ancient water pump standing atop a podium constructed of Cotswold stone, with seven steps leading up to the pump. Three visitors to the



South Cerney

church whilst we were ringing - a grandfather from the village and two granddaughters from Worcestershire - had their curiosity sated when they came up to have a look at what we were doing and we were able to give the girls a chance to chime the bells once we had rung down. After lunch at the main hub of the water park, overlooking one of the lakes, we concluded at **South Cerney (6)** which we visited the month previously as part of the Mystery Outing, but which have bells well worth ringing on time and again. Thanks are due to all those who have made the experiment with Monday outings a success. **Hugh Deam**

Old North Berks Branch - Young Ringers Event at Witney & Ducklington - Wednesday 25th October

We met at 10.00am at Witney's imposing church in bright cool sunshine. I had arranged the outing at rather short notice and was sorry to find



that lots of the usual young ringers were going away for half term. Having expected only three young ringers I had asked some adults to come and make up the band. Paul from Headington, Daphne from Radley, Alison from North Leigh came to support us as well as Andrew, Roger and Hazel from the towers concerned.

In the end, seven young ringers arrived including Misha from Banbury Branch, Matthew and Toby from Oxford City Branch and Lily, George, Joe and Phoebe from the Old North Berks Branch. And they brought two parents with them. So we were quite a crowd, especially in the small tower at Ducklington!

After raising the bells at Witney we were able to ring call changes, plain hunt on seven and bob doubles. When we finished ringing we organised the young people into three teams, each with an adult. We had prepared a quiz with

instructions on how to walk to Ducklington and sent the teams off at three minute intervals, with strict instructions not to visit the playground they would be passing!

At Ducklington, Daphne had prepared a lovely spread – chocolate cake, lemon drizzle cake, buttered cheese scones, tea, coffee and fizzy pop. There wasn't much left by the time we ascended the tower to ring the light bells! At the prize giving, all the youngsters received a mini-mars bar as prizes with the girls (who got most answers right) receiving extra bars.

We dispersed at 12.30 pm, leaving just enough time for some of us to make it to the Old North Berks Branch Practice at Milton for 2.00 pm!

The next young ringers outing will be in the Christmas holiday. Venue and date to be decided. **Susan Read – O.N.B. Training Officer**



A Focused Practice at Bletchington (6) on Saturday 11th November

For three and a half hours on Saturday afternoon, eleven ringers from seven towers in three branches of the ODG came together for a focused



practice on the beautiful **Bletchington** bells. A number of Kirtlington ringers had failed to get onto their chosen Steeple Aston courses and generously offered cake in return for a more modest course of our own, which turned out to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Nourished by exemplary chocolate brownies, scones and rock cakes, it was hugely encouraging and well worth the exertion to see each of the five enthusiastic ringers reaping the rewards of their labours and breaking new ground. Thanks to 'Bayles', Janet perfected her 3-4 up dodge in Bob Doubles and was then able to ring several courses of Plain Bob on three different bells, two of them for the first time. Stu rang his first blows of Cambridge and Little Bob in preparation for his move to Worcester and its fine Cathedral in December, and for Rob, Steve and Colin, we hope the 3 opportunities to consolidate touches of Plain Bob Doubles, Plain Bob Minor and Cambridge Minor will herald the advent of quarter peal opportunities, possibly as an early Christmas present. Thanks to all participants – Steve, Stu, Colin, Janet and Rob, and Hugh, Judy, Paul, Neil and Mike.

Alison Merryweather-Clarke

Sketches of some of our ringers by Heather Spears!

The artist Heather Spears (Canadian by origin, but now living mainly in Copenhagen) appeared in Oxford about a year ago, hoping

mainly to obtain permission to draw new born babies in the maternity hospital.

Permission wasn't immediately available, and while exploring Oxford to fill her time, she found her way to watching ringing sessions at St Giles and elsewhere, and some may remember her sitting quietly but industriously in corners while ringing went on.

Apparently she found that watching ringers' bodies in motion was close enough to her interests!

Some of you will remember seeing a copy of Heather's sketch of Kathy Xu ringing at St Giles, printed as a postcard.

Heather turned up again in October for another visit, which was much briefer but nevertheless gave her opportunities to watch ringing at five different towers including St Aldates, the Cathedral, and Lincoln College. This time her interest seemed to focus more specifically on wrist positions while ringers' hands are briefly motionless at the top of the stroke. After she returned home, she sent us copies of sixteen new pictures. Four of her new sketches are shown here, and I would be happy to supply copies of the full set to anyone who is particularly interested.

29 sketches from her first visit are accessible online at:

www.facebook.com/heatherspearsauthor

John Pusey

