



# Branching Out

## The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter



Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018

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

Email me with your news and photos to: [paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk).

The next edition will be out on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May. (Deadline for copy, 26<sup>th</sup> May.)

### Ringing Master's Report

April's branch practice was at St Giles. We rang methods from plain bob doubles to Cambridge minor before leaving to enjoy the sunshine. Don't forget that there's no Branch Practice next month because of the guild AGM at Bodicote (and people's other commitments). **Andrew Freer**

### Branch Secretary's Report

No report from Lindsay this month, but you'll be delighted to know that she will be updating you on the new 'confidentiality' rules and regulations in the next edition which is going to affect all of us! **Lindsay Powell**

### Dates for your Diary

Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> April	Advanced Simulator Practice at Headington – Stedman Triples to Surprise Major.	3.30pm onwards
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Dave Jennings' Outing to Essex: Coggeshall (10) 10.30am; Greenstead Green (6) 11.30am; Halstead (8) 12.30pm; Toppesfield (8) 1.30pm; Lunch at The Green Man, Toppesfield; Ridgwell (6) 3.30pm; Haverhill (6) 5.00pm.	
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	A Morning Practice at North Leigh (6) 9cwt (open to all abilities)	10.30am-12noon
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday Practice at Chilton (6) 7cwt (open to all abilities)	10.30am-12noon
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> May	Young People's holiday ringing event run by Susan Read (venue t.b.c.)	
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Donna Bennett's outing to Northamptonshire (quite a tight schedule!) Barnack; 11:00 am (6) 8cwt; Castor (8) 10cwt; 12:15. Lunch 1:30 to 2:45 at the Prince of Wales in Castor (menu to follow closer to the date) 3:15 Cotterstock (6) 8cwt; 4:30 Oundle (8) 25cwt; then homeward by 5:30. If you would like a seat on the minibus please email <a href="mailto:dcmurphy2@btinternet.com">dcmurphy2@btinternet.com</a> Pickups will be likely to be at Marston and Iffley between 7:50 to 8:10 am.	

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

For more details about everything else, please go to the Oxford City Branch website: [www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk)

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

### A list of Branch Practices coming up

May: The Half-Yearly Meeting and Striking Competition have been moved to June as there is a clash with the Guild AGM which has been moved to avoid the Royal Wedding. Coupled with Andrew Freer's wedding, two bank holidays and the Branch Secretary's holiday, June looked the better option.

Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June:	Headington (8) Branch Practice 10.30am – 12 noon (on the simulator), followed by tea, and the Striking Competition on open bells from 1.00pm onwards.	
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> June:	Branch Outing organised by Andrew Freer - all day. Venues (t.b.c.), but probably Old North Berks Branch towers.	
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> July:	Cowley (6) Branch Practice	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> August:	Yarnton (6) Branch Practice	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> September:	Marston (6) Branch Practice	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> October:	Wolvercote (6) Branch Practice	10.30am - 12 noon
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> November:	Wheatley holding the AGM in the afternoon – actual time still to be confirmed	
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> December:	Iffley (6) Branch Practice	10.30am-12 noon (tbc)

**Please remember that all these Branch Practices are open to people of all abilities. Everyone is welcome!**

### The latest on Bernard Masterman's health

Bernard has now been moved to the Witney Community Hospital in Welch Way, Witney OX28 6JJ. He is expected to stay there at least until the end of April. His condition will then be reviewed again, and after that he may be moved once again. The hospital is not prepared to give out information about patients except to close relatives; but one could ring them on Oxford 904222 or 904674 to confirm whether Bernard is still there (NB: The Witney number which comes up in the Google listing for the hospital is no longer in use). Visiting hours are: 1400-1630, and 1800-2000.

I have been keeping in touch with Bernard's sister, who says that he is eating well, and making some progress with walking, but that indications of brain damage are becoming rather clearer. She has had some sensible conversations with Bernard, mostly talking about the past, but she doesn't think he knows where he is now, and quite often his speech becomes unintelligible. **John Pusey**





## Cuddesdon Bells update

The six bells left Whites on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, and were placed on the nave floor ready for a service of "christening" the new treble and blessing

the other five, by Bishop Humphrey Southern, Principal of Ripon College the next day, Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm. The short service was very well attended, with seven of the newly trained Cuddesdon ringers there among about 60 people. At the last minute it was realised that the ropes were also to be blessed; but the only ropes available were the old ones, mouldering away and covered in dust somewhere up in the tower... these were retrieved, the dust hastily shaken off and laid out for the service! Nobody noticed, and a convivial round of drinks followed by way of celebration.

The bells, headstocks and wheels will then be hoisted up the tower to their rightful home during next week and a further bulletin will come from me when all is complete, and they are all ready to ring out again ! **Brian Lowe, Acting Tower Captain, Cuddesdon**



## Colin Taylor's Outing to Warwickshire

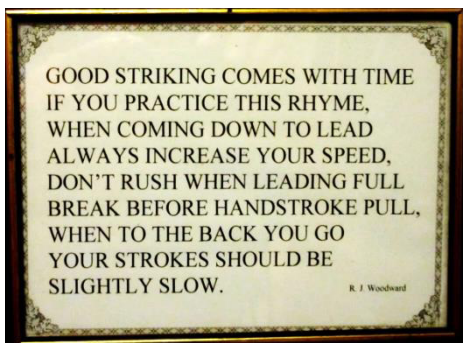
My first job was in Birmingham, so I approached its southern outskirts with feelings of warmth and pleasure.

**St James, Shirley** – a Victorian

church – sported a readily managed set of eight bells encouraging us to ring fast and accurately, culminating with Yorkshire and Cambridge Major. An interesting feature was the compact ceiling rope rings which caused us ringers to hear each strike at varying volumes depending on which ceiling rings were occupied by its' sally.

We then retreated from the great city to the Warwickshire countryside, where the six bells at **Lapworth** provided manageable mellow bells. Rhyming advice on how to achieve good striking was displayed in the ringing chamber (see below).

The stunning blues and greens in the modern stained glass window – The Window of Hope – were striking too.



GOOD STRIKING COMES WITH TIME  
IF YOU PRACTICE THIS RHYME,  
WHEN COMING DOWN TO LEAD  
ALWAYS INCREASE YOUR SPEED,  
DON'T RUSH WHEN LEADING FULL  
BREAK BEFORE HANDSTROKE PULL,  
WHEN TO THE BACK YOU GO  
YOUR STROKES SHOULD BE  
SLIGHTLY SLOW.

R. J. Woodward

After a good pub lunch at the Wharf Inn, overlooking the Stratford Canal - just three miles from the spectacular Lapworth flight of locks, and Grand Union canal interchange – our group of fourteen visited **Packwood Church** with its' challenging set of eight bells.

Additional tower visits sandwiched these main venues, so that a smaller core of enthusiasts visited eight towers that day.

I believe we all enjoyed the outing. **Colin Taylor**



## Old North Berks Branch - Young Ringers Outing to Iffley and Cowley on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April

Iffley must have been surrounded by farmland and the river until relatively recently, but of course was swallowed up within Oxford around a hundred years ago. We drove down the main street, which still feels like a village with many narrow turnings which looked as if they might lead to fields and orchards. At the end it broadened out to frame the attractive honey coloured church. There we happily met up, nearly twenty ringers including seven young ringers under eighteen years old.



Lots of branches were represented among the seven young ringers: Banbury Branch, East Berks and South Bucks Branch, Oxford City Branch, Reading Branch and Witney & Woodstock Branch each were represented as well as two from our own Old North Berks Branch. We have often had more young people but lots were away with their families, making good use of the two week break from school.

We enjoyed the lovely Iffley bells, and especially remember the unusual central pillar in the ringing chamber! Our young ringer from Amersham called some excellent call changes for us. We also rang some Plain Bob, Stedman and Erin doubles. For a game, we threw a dice to decide which named change from a list to pull off in, then rang plain hunt on five from that change! It made our young ringers think, but they rung it successfully.

We were treated to an excellent talk and visit to Iffley church by Elizabeth, a member of the congregation there. It was difficult to believe that the beautiful crisp carving on the outside stonework of the church was nearly 900 years old! And it was fascinating to hear about the anchorite who built a cell against the north wall of the church with a window into the church. She lived there and devoted herself to Christ for ten years, never stepping outside her cell, until she died.

We walked the mile to St James, Cowley along what must have been a farm track between the two villages. There we were treated to scones, biscuits, cake, tea and pop kindly provided by Daphne. And we rang the light bells there, including a requested game of Twister as well as the proper methods.

The next ONB young ringer outing will be in the Half Term holiday, probably on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May, (venue yet to be decided). Offers to organise something very gratefully received!

**Susan Read, ONB Training Officer**

## First Quarter Peal congratulations to Jamie Brown

A quarter peal was rung at St James, Cowley on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April. This was the first quarter peal for Jamie Brown (centre) from Cowley tower, and the first outside of her home tower for Mary Carroll from Iffley (right).

Well done to Jamie for not only scoring his first quarter, but also for organizing it.

1260 Doubles, 2 methods, Reverse Canterbury & Plain Bob

1. Mary Carroll 2. Susan King 3. Charlotte Furneaux

4. Lindsay Powell 5. Hugh Deam (c) 6. Jamie Brown



## Oxford City Branch Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018 at Kirtlington

Twelve ringers from eight towers and three Branches braved the flooded roads to attend Easter Monday morning's Branch Practice at Kirtlington.

Although slightly down on strength from January's practice at the same venue, we still benefitted from the conducting skills of Hugh, Paul and Malcolm.

We rang an extensive repertoire of methods including: A couple of plain courses of Grandsire Triples; an attempted plain course of Plain Bob Major; a few courses of Plain Bob Triples for Andrew; two touches of Grandsire Triples, including one for the correspondent; a few touches of Plain Bob Minor for Andrew, and a couple of plain courses of Stedman Triples including a first go for the correspondent.

All in all, a good practice. **Steve Vickers - Tower Captain, Kirtlington**



## Bicester Branch Outing 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018

This year's spring outing was to 5 towers in the Old North Berks branch, where I grew up (although I only had rung at two of these before the outing).

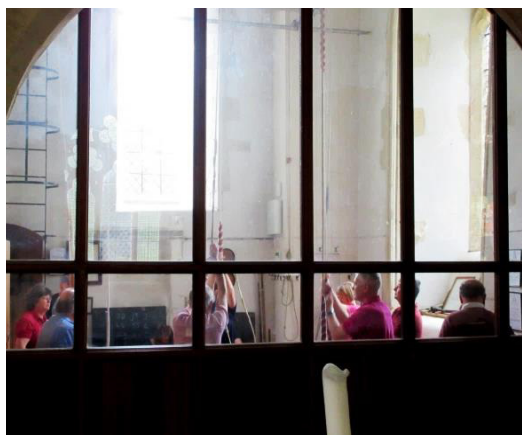
On a fine spring morning, 11 Ringers from Bicester, Oxford City and Witney & Woodstock branches gathered at **St Peters, Drayton** near Abingdon, a light ring of 8 bells with strong sound control, where the walls of the Ringing chamber are covered with many Peal boards, several commemorating peals rung by clergymen, as well as peal conductor John Pladdy's 1000th Peal.

First up, we had a plain course of Grandsire Triples, followed by





Andy Goldthorpe calling changes on 8. We then rang a plain course of Plain Bob Triples, before ambitiously attempting a plain course of Plain Bob Major for Elizabeth. We rang Plain Hunt on 7 for Sue, and then attempted a touch of Grandsire Triples before ringing down.



The next tower was **St Blaise, Milton**, another light ring of 8, but preferred by most as we could clearly hear all the bells. More Grandsire Triples here, including a successful touch with Ellie trebling, called by Hugh, plus Plain Bob Triples, Plain Hunt on 7 and a touch of Plain Bob Minor for Ellie and Andy. We repaired for lunch at the **Cherry Tree in Steventon**, before our 3rd tower, **St Michael, Steventon** (11 cwt), at the far end of the village, reached via a level crossing. We were joined by Jan and Richard Haseldine, Bicester deputy Ringing Master and by Malcolm and Clare Fairbairn. Many of the group found the 6 bells the most challenging, due to the long draught and 'flighty' ropes. However, we rang plain courses of Cambridge and Stedman, a plain course and a touch of Bob Minor and attempted another plain course of Cambridge as well as several courses of Plain Hunt on 5. Onto **St James the Great, West Hanney**, my very first tower and a 'stately' ring of 6, tenor 18 cwt.

We were welcomed by Michael, a local ringer, who joined us in an attempted plain course of Cambridge. Further touches of Plain Bob Minor and one of Grandsire Doubles successfully completed, we rang more Plain Hunt on 5 then my first touch of Stedman, assisted by Hugh.

Our final tower was **All Saints, Marcham**, a fairly light ring of 6, but anti-clockwise, which caught a few out, including myself. This was compensated by the very clear ringing circle. A successful touch of St Clements Minor, more touches of Bob Minor and Grandsire Doubles plus a plain course of Stedman and our day was complete.

**Steve Vickars – Tower Captain, Kirtlington**

## News from Witney

Some of you may be aware that 2018 marks the 775th anniversary of the original dedication in 1243 of the newly rebuilt church in Witney to St Mary the Virgin - the first "Witney Feast". It also coincides with my appointment as Tower Captain/Steeple Keeper and renewed enthusiasm from the incumbent and his team to increase the number of Witney ringers and actively encourage and promote ringing in Witney.

Nigel Chapelle, who is co-ordinating the 775 event, is very enthusiastic about bell ringing and told me he wants to hear St Mary's bells ringing all the time! He places particular emphasis on Quarter Peals and Peals as often as we can, especially on Major feast dates.

Naturally, that was music to my ears so I am passing on this good news with the message that St Mary's bells are open for business and if any of you want to organise your own QPA or Peal, or assist me in arranging and ringing QP's and Peals, then please get in touch.

I have a partial band and conductor for a 775 anniversary peal attempt on 08/09/18, so anybody who is confident of their Grandsire Triples or Plain Bob Triples for this attempt then please do get in touch.

Sadly, we are currently having to cancel most Sunday Service ringing (09:45 – 10:45) due to low numbers (regularly 3 or less). Please feel free to come along to Witney after your own Sunday Service ringing if time allows, but try and let me know if you are definitely coming so I don't cancel and you are left outside a locked tower!

The congregation and incumbent are missing our Sunday ringing but are supportive of our need to recruit and re-build the band and are keen to assist. We now have a recruitment poster in the porch and I shall be regularly addressing the congregation and contributing to newsletters with my recruiting hat on.

On a more upbeat note, Rebecca Smith (Deputy Tower Captain) and I are busy training 10 Air Cadets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays for their Duke of Edinburgh award culminating in the national 11/11/18 ring; and aiming to host ringing for all levels of experience on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (rounds and call change upwards) and 4<sup>th</sup> (Triples & Major) Tuesdays between 19:30 and 21:00. I am appealing for all to use the Witney Ringing spreadsheet whenever possible to assist me in organising ringing. If you are in receipt of the link (<https://tinyurl.com/y8dotv7f>) you should be able to access it, and if you want to be added to (or removed from) the spreadsheet, please let me know.

On another subject, I am starting work on a new Witney & Woodstock branch website. If any of you have good quality digital photographs or videos of W&W branch related towers, team members and ringing related stuff (as high a resolution as possible), please submit a copy (not the original) to me for possible inclusion in the finished website.

**Andrew Goldthorpe**

