

**Minutes of the Old North Berks Branch Annual General Meeting
Held at All Saints, North Moreton on Saturday, 19th March 2016**

The 6-bell striking competition, evensong service and tea preceded the meeting.

Ian Judd of Goring judged the competition and gave the results, saying that he had very much enjoyed himself at North Moreton. He said that the bells were now outstanding and a vast improvement on his previous visit more than thirty years ago. He thought that all the entrants had done extremely well, and certainly better than any of the towers in the Branch that had not entered. The results were as follows: 1st Abingdon (40 faults); 2nd Blewbury (53 faults); 3rd Harwell (71 faults); 4th North Moreton (75 faults); 5th Youth team (87 faults). The Abingdon ringers were invited to represent the Branch in the Guild 6-bell striking competition on 3rd October in the EBSB Branch.

Twenty-five members attended the Annual General Meeting, including Mary Friskney (Guild Steward).

The Chairman thanked Ian for judging the competition, the five teams for taking part, the Reverend Jason St John Nicolle for taking the service and playing the organ, and the North Moreton ringers for providing an excellent tea.

The meeting began with a moment of silence in memory of Alec Samler of Chilton.

1) Apologies for absence

Received from: Hilarie Rogers (Guild Master), Stuart Gibson (Branch Treasurer), Ian Minns (Newsletter Editor), Dick Peters (Branch Representative), David and Kate Crennell, Cliff and Jill Garlick, Shirley Goss, Carina Lobley, Matt Napper, Jeanette Thomas, Roy Thorpe, Colin and Nicola Turner

2) Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 21st March 2015

Circulated and read, signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

3) Matters arising from minutes

The Chairman said that it was good to see Helen Diserens (Wallingford) and Jenny Jeskins (Cholsey) at the meeting. Peggy Rolfe (Wantage) is now much improved but is not yet ringing.

4) Officers' reports

Secretary's report

- We have held monthly branch practices, bi-monthly surprise major practices and monthly mid-week afternoon practices. On 22nd April 2015, the afternoon ringers had a mini-outing to Brightwell Baldwin, Warborough and Benson, with lunch at the Waterfront Café in Benson. In January twenty-two learners and helpers enjoyed lunch at The Red Lion before the afternoon practice at Brightwell.
- Susan Read organised several events for young branch members, including: ringing at Wallingford and a walking treasure hunt from Wallingford to Benson; ringing at St Giles, Oxford and a treasure hunt in the Natural History Museum; ringing at Shiplake. Susan is planning an outing in Cambridge jointly with young ringers of the Ely Diocesan Association on 31st March 2016.
- Since the 2015 AGM, there are ten new members from five towers: Polly-Mirren Cockburn, Josiah Shields, Benjamin Small (Harwell); Arthur McClintock, Sophie Hannon, Tallulah Johnson (Letcombe Regis); Alison Saunders, Alistair Auckland (North Moreton); John Hutchinson (Wallingford); Rob Smith (West Hanney). Sadly we have lost one long-standing member, Alec Samler of Chilton.
- Mary Friskney was elected to be our new Guild Steward at the Guild AGM in May.
- Philip Roberts organised the branch outing on 18th July. Over twenty members and friends rang at Swindon (Christ Church), Purton, Cricklade, Highworth and Faringdon, with a pub lunch in Cricklade and afternoon tea at Farindgon. Over thirty members and friends came to the barbecue, hosted by Stuart and Naomi Gibson. The food was excellent and there was fun on the croquet green. Thanks go

to Philip, Janette, Stuart and Naomi for arranging yet another super day for the Branch. As previously agreed, the proceeds of the barbecue and raffle were donated to the Radley Bell Restoration Fund.

- Wallingford represented the Branch at the Guild's striking competition on 3rd October. Together with Roy Thorpe of Brightwell, they were highly commended and placed fifth. The branch band entering the Guild's 10-bell competition at Warfield in November also came fifth.
- A very popular skittles evening and supper was held at Radley Village Hall on Saturday 14th November. 63 members attended and all enjoyed the evening. A total of £346.00 (including £112 from the raffle) was raised towards the ONB Branch contribution for the Radley Bell Restoration Project.
- New Year's Day 2016 ringing with refreshments at Blewbury was very well attended. I would like to thank everyone who helped me with the refreshments, especially Anne, Chris and all the wonderful cake makers. This was once again a very pleasant and successful occasion for the Branch.

Joint Ringing Masters' report

- The pattern of ONB ringing practices, evolved over many years, still seems to be delivering the needs of most branch members as far as we can tell (on the basis that nobody has complained!).
- All practices are providing support and helping to develop the ringing ability of those attending, whatever their level of expertise. Meeting others at a similar stage of learning, and receiving encouragement from experienced ringers is one of the key benefits of being a member of a wider organisation than just your own tower. Therefore it would be risky to change something that is working well.
- All branch practices have been reasonably well attended apart from Aston Tirrold. The surprise royal/major practice at Wallingford was very good, as were all the other surprise practices. Unfortunately we had to discontinue arranging branch support for 10-bell ringing on Sunday evenings because of poor attendance.
- Generally branch towers are enjoying mixed fortunes. Some are developing well with newly recruited ringers making good progress, while a few are struggling to maintain a practice even on an occasional basis. A good sign is that many of the newer ringers are feeling confident to come to branch practices and also regularly visit other tower practices. Hopefully this trend will continue and the numbers at all practices will swell as time goes on.
- As has been previously raised by the Ringing Masters, there is a concern that there is no obvious succession plan to identify and support new ONB Officers into the future.
- Thank you to all the helpers, supporters and attenders at all our branch practices since March 2015.

Training Coordinator's report

- The monthly afternoon training sessions continue to be well attended, thanks particularly due to the more experienced ringers, who come along to support those who are trying to progress in their ringing.
- Gill Loyd organised a local outing in April intended mainly for those who come to the afternoon sessions. It was well attended and people seemed to enjoy themselves at three contrasting rings.
- Branch members continue to support in several towers, Aston Tirrold, North Moreton and Cholsey to name just those that have come to my attention. There is, of course, teaching going on quietly in many towers in the branch. If your tower could do with some help, either with a particular aspect of ringing or generally, it would be worth contacting the committee to see if something can be set up for you.
- Susan Read and the Abingdon ringers are, as ever, doing sterling work encouraging youngsters in the branch. Susan and I are helping to run the Guild's team of young ringers that takes part in The Ringing World National Youth Competition. Half of the team comes from Old North Berks Branch.

Treasurer's report

- In 2015 the membership of the Branch was 260 (2 less than in 2014). 251 members paid subscriptions, four of whom were members of the Guild through other Branches. In addition there were 7 Honorary and 2 Life members.
- So far in 2016 we have 172 paid up members (from 18 towers and 2 unattached) along with 7 Honorary and 2 Life members, plus 4 members who pay a subscription through another branch. 9 towers have not yet paid their subscriptions. Branch subscriptions must be paid over to the Guild

before the end of March to ensure members benefit from the Guild Insurance policy. So far everyone has paid without question the additional £2 requested by the Branch to help towards restoration projects within the Branch.

- The main fund raising event in 2015 was the skittles evening at Radley. The event proceeds and expenses did not go via the branch books as it had been agreed the proceeds would go directly to the Radley restoration project. The barbecue following the outing raised £250 (including the raffle) and this was also donated to the Radley bell restoration project.
- At the end of 2015, the Branch had funds in the region of £1,850, which is well in excess of the reserves it requires. The proceeds of future branch events will now be donated to Brightwell cum Sotwell, if required, to help with the restoration project which will get underway in April 2016.
- The accounts for 2015 have been examined and circulated, and are ready to be presented for approval at the AGM.

The accounts were adopted following a proposal by Janette Roberts, seconded by Anne Hales. Philip Roberts thanked all the branch officers for everything they had done throughout the year.

5) **Donation to the Oxford Diocesan Guild Funds and other recommendations**

- Richard Loyd proposed, seconded by Helen Diserens, that the Branch donates £250 to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund and £100 to the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers Restoration Fund. The proposal was agreed.
- There were no other recommendations. Richard Loyd said that the branch members have had a good track record of supporting restoration projects over the past ten years. Any money raised now will be put to good use when future restoration projects come to light.

6) **Bell restoration updates**

Radley

- All the work to rehang the bells has now been completed, including a new access ladder.
- The ringing chamber has recently been decorated.
- Philip Roberts has recently carried out an inspection for the Guild.
- Daphne Pollard and the Radley ringers thanked branch members for all their support.

Brightwell

- The bells are being taken out on 4th April.
- Sufficient funds have been raised to cover the total job, including strengthening work to the tower costing about £5,000.
- The grant of £3,000 offered by the Branch will not be required.
- Roy Thorpe has asked if any branch members will volunteer to help and Stuart Gibson is investigating transport for the bells.

7) **Election of officers**

- Nick Clarke (Joint Ringing Master) and Mary Friskney (Training Coordinator) wished to stand down. Both were thanked for their services to the Branch.
- The following were nominated and elected unopposed as branch officers:

		Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Susan Read	Helen Diserens	Anne Hales
Vice Chairman	Fiona Lloyd*	Jenny Jeskins	Daphne Pollard
Secretary	Gillian Loyd	Susan Read	Daphne Pollard
Treasurer	Stuart Gibson	Janette Roberts	Anne Hales
Joint Ringing Masters	Richard Loyd Philip Roberts	Kathryn Roberts	Mark Cooke
Training Coordinator	Vacant		
Training Coordinator for young ringers	Susan Read	Daphne Pollard	Jenny Jeskins

Newsletter Editor	Ian Minns Daphne Pollard	Susan Read	Janette Roberts
Webmaster	Vacant		
Branch Representatives	Josie Irving Janette Roberts Dick Peters	Kathryn Roberts	Susan Read

*Fiona Lloyd was elected as Vice Chairman after she had been elected to the Guild.

- The Secretary will contact Liz Woodhouse to see if she wishes to continue as Webmaster.
[Note: After the meeting, Liz Woodhouse indicated that she wished to stand down. Mark Cooke offered to become Interim Webmaster until the 2017 AGM.]

8) Election of new members

- The following were proposed as new members of the Branch and Guild:
Abingdon: Richard Goold and Izzy Pindar (proposed by Susan Read)
Blewbury: Christine Kowalczyk (proposed by Richard Loyd)
Cholsey: Fiona Lloyd, Chris May and Nick Wright (proposed by Jenny Jeskins)
Long Wittenham: Jack Cooke (proposed by Peter Collinson)
 All were seconded by Susan Read and elected as members.
- Blewbury:** Jackie Maguire (proposed by Gillian Loyd and seconded by Janette Roberts) was re-elected to the Guild.

9) Social events

- On 27th April there will be a mini-outing to Chieveley, Peasemore and East Ilsley, with lunch at the Crown and Horns, East Ilsley.
- The outing and barbecue will be on Saturday 16th July. Philip Roberts will arrange ringing at various towers in Hampshire (including Goodworth Clatford, Hurstbourne Priors, Whitchurch and Highclere), with a pub lunch and afternoon tea. Stuart and Naomi Gibson are hosting the barbecue.
- There will be a quiz evening and supper at Brightwell Village Hall on Saturday, 12th November.
- New Year's Ringing and Refreshments will be at St. Helen, Abingdon on Monday, 2nd January 2017.

10) Events for young ringers

Susan Read reported:

- There will be an outing in Cambridge jointly with young ringers of the Ely Diocesan Association on 31st March 2016, with ringing at all the Cambridge towers, a quarter peal and a treasure hunt.
- Other events for 2016 have not yet been fixed, but could include a June outing organised by the Sonning Deanery Branch, an August outing, a visit to East and West Hendred, and ringing, carols and skittles at Radley for Christmas.
- The officers of the Branch are very supportive of our work with young ringers, but we could do better if we put our heads together and worked on recruitment and retention on a broader basis.
- We need to have a 'hub' of experienced trainers to support all tower trainers. If we work as a group, we can help new members feel involved and be able to learn from each other.

The Chairman thanked Susan for all her work with young ringers.

The Secretary will liaise with Susan to arrange a meeting of tower trainers.

11) Any other business

- Jenny Jeskins thanked the branch members who had helped to remove and refit the Cholsey clappers.
- Susan Read reported that the application for an Association of Ringing Teachers award for the Branch's work with young ringers was awarded Highly Commended by the judge, Stephanie Pattenden. Susan received the certificate on behalf of the Branch at the award ceremony at Taylors of Loughborough on Saturday, 12th March.

- Mary Friskney (Guild Steward) reminded members of the following Guild events
 - 2nd May – Guild Ringing Day and 8-bell striking competition in the Newbury Branch
 - 21st May – Guild AGM and activity day in the Vale of the White Horse Branch
 - 9th July – Guild Festival in Oxford
- Special events for ringing are:
 - 23rd April – St George's Day
 - 11th/12th June – The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations
- Peter Collinson reported that work will start at Little Wittenham on 23rd May to rehang the tenor bell in situ and refurbish the fittings of the other bells.
- Richard Loyd reported that the clappers and pulleys at Blewbury are being replaced by Whites of Appleton because the clappers made by Taylors for the 1998 rehang were the wrong size. The treble clapper will be given a smaller ball to make it less shrill. This work is being funded by a grant from the ODG, and donations from the local ringers and PCC.
- Richard Loyd (seconded by Jenny Jeskins) proposed that the Branch obtain a trophy or shield to be awarded to the winning team at the 6-bell striking competition. It was agreed that Richard will investigate and purchase a trophy or shield, which will be awarded to Abingdon, winners of the 2016 competition.
- There will be a book sale at North Moreton Village Hall on 2nd April. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the gallery, kitchen and accessible toilet fund.
- Nick Clarke said that branch members will be invited to attend a service at 11.30am on Sunday, 22nd May, for the unveiling of a blue plaque to Revd F E Robinson.

12) **Date of 2017 Annual General Meeting**

Next year's AGM will be held on Saturday, 18th March 2017.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....