

## **ONB Officers' report to the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2019 Annual General Meeting**

### **Secretary's report**

- We have continued to hold monthly branch practices, bi-monthly surprise major practices and monthly mid-week afternoon practices. Susan Read has organised events for young branch members during school holidays
- Since the last AGM there have been fourteen new members elected to the Guild: Odette Dawkins, Willow Gathergood-Dains, Philip Kimber and Michelle X (Abingdon), Helen Aitkins (Blewbury), Louise Helen Wymer (Brightwell), Thomas Addison and Helen Stutley (East Hagbourne), Sebastian Small and Bridget Taylor (Harwell), Caroline Wright, Matthew Wright (Letcombe Regis), Jackie Chan (Marcham) and Sonia Wall (West Hanney).
- 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
- A branch band entered the Tewkesbury Shield 10-bell competition in May and, unfortunately, was unable to complete the test piece, which was a plain course of Cambridge Surprise Royal. Congratulations go to the Wallingford ringers, who represented the Branch in the Guild's 6-bell striking competition at the beginning of October and were placed second. The branch band ringing Plain Bob & Little Bob Royal in the Guild's 10-bell striking competition in Newbury was placed equal second.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> April, the afternoon ringers had a mini-outing to Burghclere, Kintbury and Hungerford with lunch at the John O'Gaunt in Hungerford.
- The Branch outing on 21<sup>st</sup> July was organised by Philip Roberts of Harwell. 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.
- On 10th November 60 members and friends attended the skittles evening with fish and chip supper at Radley Village Hall. The event raised £397 for branch funds. Thanks go to Daphne Pollard for organising the food and also to her ringers at Radley for making such an enjoyable time for everyone.
- New Year's Day 2019 ringing with refreshments was held at North Moreton and there were over thirty attendees. Thanks go to Beryl Jones and all the North Moreton ringers for the excellent refreshments, which ranged from jacket potatoes with delicious fillings through to scrumptious cakes. This was once again a very happy occasion for the Branch and a good start to the New Year.

### **Joint Ringing Masters' report**

- All scheduled branch practices have taken place, with improvement in attendance at the evening monthly practices, especially from newer ringers who have stayed on after the scheduled learner's practices. There is still a need to increase attendance at these practices from the wider branch membership, which would provide even better learning opportunities. It seems that our newest members are more inclined to venture out than the more established membership. The afternoon and Surprise practices continue to be well supported and successful in their aims.
- Tower practices appear to be generally healthy with relatively few towers being 'silent', but some would benefit from either local recruitment or support from neighbouring towers. Of particular note is the success at Aston Tirrold, who have produced a team from absolute zero and who now ring regularly for practice and Sunday services. Well done to all. Other towers are also recruiting and training new ringers with some very creditable retention rates and successes.
- Having achieved first place in the Guild 10 Bell striking competition, unfortunately the pressure of the national competition at Tewkesbury Abbey proved too much and our branch team failed to complete the test piece.
- The Wallingford 6 bell team once again represented the branch at the Guild competition at North Marston with 10 of the 15 ODG branches taking part. Another excellent result was achieved by their being placed second against some very stiff competition.

- The ONB team was awarded a very satisfying equal second place in the Guild 10 Bell striking competition, held at Newbury in November. This was an excellent achievement for a team drawn from around our branch towers and who do not practice regularly together. Thank you and well done to everyone who took part in the competitions, you represented the ONB magnificently.
- The branch continues to restore our bells to tip top condition, with projects currently underway or in readiness at Steventon, Long Wittenham, Letcombe Bassett, Sparsholt and potentially others in the longer term. We look forward to improvements at these towers and the consequential local recruitment and training opportunities that come with bells in good condition.
- Thank you to all members who continue to support the branch practices and ringing activities.

### **Training Officer's report**

#### **Outings and events for young ringers**

- The following events took place - 4<sup>th</sup> April: Ringing at Iffley and Cowley, with a guided tour of Iffley church; 29<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June: Ringing Club in Abingdon; 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Ringing at St Giles, Oxford, with a quiz and handbell ringing; 24<sup>th</sup> October: Ringing in Cholsey, with refreshments and party games in the church; 2<sup>nd</sup> January: Ringing on tower and handbells in Radley, with board games; and 20<sup>th</sup> February: Ringing in Thame and cooking in the Thame Barns centre. Ringing interspersed with interviews by Channel 5 news, broadcast at 5pm.
- There will be a Ringing Fest in Oxford on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> April. This is an all-day event booked with the help of the Oxford Society, and is for all the young ringers from the ODG plus a group of young ringers from Gloucestershire. Towers booked: St Thomas, St Mary Mag, St Giles, Magdalen College, Lincoln College, St Aldates and Carfax. There will be a quiz sheet for young ringers with questions in between towers. Lunch, organised by Daphne Pollard, and a striking competition for individual ringers on Alan Griffin's simulator will both be in St Giles Parish Hall.
- The next planned events will be 29<sup>th</sup> May: South Stoke, Streatley and Goring (tbc), with walking along the river between the towers; 29<sup>th</sup> June: ART M1 course for young people at Abingdon. This is organised by the ODG and will be advertised nationally; Summer 2019: Ringing week for young people at Abingdon (mornings only); Summer 2019: Stanford in the Vale and Shellingford, with a walk between the towers.

#### **ART Course to learn to teach ringing handling**

- Organised by the ODG and held at Kirtlington on Saturday 16th February, two new teachers (Kathryn Roberts-Lock and Mark Vincent) and a mentor (Debbie Greenfield) from the ONB attended the course. They need to practice the skills they learned over the next few weeks and will be assessed in the autumn for Associate Membership of the ART.

#### **Branch Ringing School**

- A ringing course took place from October 2018 to January 2019. Three learners attended including a mother and her eleven year old child. The mother and child sadly dropped out before the end of the course. In retrospect, the course was too dry for the child and the mother had to give up when the child lost interest. The remaining learner continues and is ringing both strokes together now.
- Another ringing course is starting on 2 March, partly as an opportunity for our new teachers to practice teaching. We have three people on the course, and others have expressed an interest.
- From January 2018 the LTR2 (foundations skills) group have moved to a different practice night / tower each week from 7.00 – 8.00 pm. This group (up to ten ringers from several towers around the branch) continues to meet weekly and attends most of the Branch Practices. Many of them can now ring plain hunt. Although this is not on the syllabus of LTR2 it is worthwhile training which many of our branch practice nights can help with. I am continuing to organise these practices week by week.
- I am immensely pleased with the help I have been given by other ringing teachers from all over the branch. I arrange for three ringing teachers to teach at each LTR1 Handling session. As the learners progress beyond handling to LTR2, Foundation Skills, it is less necessary to have other teachers present, but it is often useful to have a second teacher, especially at practice nights where the whole band is comparatively inexperienced.
- Although we are using the ART syllabus, all experienced ringing teachers are welcome to help. I am really glad that there are so many good ringing teachers in our branch and that they have been so generous with their time. Nevertheless, I would like to recommend that each tower tries to find someone from

their band who is willing to train as a teacher of ringing, not only to help with the Branch Ringing School but as a way of training the next generation of Tower Captains, with the mutual support of others from other towers.

- There are currently only 19 ONB towers which I can book reasonably often. I have started occasionally taking the sessions to towers outside our branch and have been once each to Benson, Dorchester and Witney. Altogether we have used 28 different towers so far. Attending so many towers is proving to be a big advantage as the learners are not frightened to ring in other towers, are happy to attend branch events and know most of the branch officers.
- I would like to thank all those who have opened their towers, helped to teach and rung with the learners from the Branch Ringing School. Their help is much appreciated.

#### **Treasurer's report**

- In 2018 the membership of the Branch increased by 4 compared with 2017, at 273. There were 265 members who paid subscriptions, 6 of which were a member of the Guild through another Branch. In addition there were 6 Honorary and 2 Life members.
- So far in 2019 we have 173 paid up members (from 17 towers and 2 unattached) along with the 6 Honorary and 2 Life members plus 4 members who pay a subscription through another branch. 9 towers have not paid their subscriptions to date. Branch subscriptions must be paid over to the Guild before the end of March to ensure members benefit from the Guild Insurance policy.
- The main fund raising event in 2018 was the Skittles evening at Radley. This raised £397 including the raffle, with an additional £380 from the BBQ (including the raffle) following the outing. Honey sales raised £216 and the Outing tea £39.
- The Branch, for the third year, collected a voluntary £2 donation with subscriptions. Almost everyone made the contributions to put towards restorations projects. Again, this has been retained awaiting a suitable project. The branch has committed to support both the projects at Long Wittenham and Steventon. £516 was collected in the year.
- Six youth events were organised by the Branch resulting in an overall loss (£68). Donations were made to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund (£250) and the Oxford Diocesan Guild Restoration Fund (£100).
- The Branch, at the end of 2018, had funds in the region of £6,243, which is well in excess of the reserves required by the Branch.
- The accounts for 2018 have been examined and circulated ready to be presented for approval at the AGM.