



Old North Berks Branch Newsletter

No: 148

June 2016



ONB 10-bell Striking Contest Team 2015 (placed 5th)

L-R in ringing order anticlockwise: 1. Susan Read, 2. Gill Loyd, 3. Richard Loyd, 4. Stuart Gibson, 5. Matthew Franklin, 6. Josie Irving, 7. Chris Tuckett, 8. Isaac O'Shea, 9. David Thomas, 10. Tim Pett (C).

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Editorial

Welcome to this latest issue of the Branch Newsletter for Summer 2016. Hopefully the good weather in April isn't the end of the season and we will have better to look forward to.

The reports, articles and calendar in this issue again illustrate what an active branch we have. Although the Chairman's Report and some of the Tower Talk articles remind us that not everyone is in a good position and there is still room to improve support within the branch.

Having said that, the award of a 'Highly Commended' certificate from ART proves we are doing some things right.

Congratulations go to Phoebe, Kath and Robert for getting their first quarter peals and to Sophie, Ieuan and David for getting their first peals.

Unfortunately this will probably be the last Newsletter I will edit with Daphne for the branch as redundancy and early retirement mean that the better half is looking further afield for our twilight home. I thank all contributors over the years for you my and the wider readerships enjoyment of your stories and reports over the years and I trust you will all continue to support Daphne and whoever succeeds me in maintaining the quality and variety of articles presented in future editions.

Do keep the articles coming in; they help to keep the branch informed and 'alive' to many readers not only locally but beyond our borders.

My best wishes for the summer ahead and the more distant future. Keep your clappers swinging.

Ian Minns

Finally, a few thoughts to leave you with:

Don't speak unless you can improve on the silence;

Never ruin an apology with an excuse; and

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Chairman's Report May 2016

Thank you to Philip Roberts for his excellent work as Chairman of the Branch. He will make a good job of his new post of Joint Ringing Master, to which he was elected at the Branch AGM in March.

I'd like to encourage the ringers of our Branch to work together more on the recruitment and training new ringers. By pooling our efforts there will be advantages for all of us – more teachers teaching together will ease the pressure on each teacher and bring more cooperation between towers. Hopefully that will give the teachers the chance to be more enthusiastic about teaching and ringing in general.

The advantages for the new learners will be that they will be part of a group of other people learning and supporting each other. Learning in a group will make the whole experience much more fun. And each learner will become used to ringing at a range of towers, developing a wider view of ringing.

Let's see if we can make a difference together and reverse the trend of dwindling numbers of ringers in so many of our towers!

Susan Read

Secretary's Report

Since my last report to the branch in November, we have held several social events that have all been very well attended. Our autumn skittles evening with fish and chip supper was held in Radley Village Hall. This was a good opportunity for sixty-three branch members and friends to socialise whilst displaying their bowling skills. Ten teams vied against each other over two matches and the competition was fierce. Then we had the individual 'knock-out' competition, where the bowling became even more fast and furious. It is interesting (and sometimes surprising) to see who the most competitive members are in our Branch! The evening was fun filled and thanks go to the Radley ringers for all their hard work in making it such a success. An amazing £346 was raised towards the ONB Branch contribution for the Radley Bell Restoration Project. I would also like to thank the Brightwell ringers for bringing along two very energetic youngsters, who were unstoppable in picking up the skittles for everyone.

Our annual New Year's Day ringing and refreshments event took place in Blewbury. After 90 minutes ringing, around 40 members and friends enjoyed homemade soups and a selection of cheeses and cakes. Four new members were elected to the Guild: Polly-Mirren Cockburn, Josiah Shields and Benjamin Small from Harwell, and Alison Saunders from North Moreton. I would like to thank Chris Cook and Anne Hales for helping me to make the catering a success.

Later in January, twenty-three afternoon practice ringers met in the Red Lion at Brightwell for lunch. This was followed by ringing at Brightwell and five new Guild members were elected (Arthur McClintock, Sophie Hannon and Tallulah Johnson from Letcombe Regis, Alistair Auckland from North Moreton, and Rob Smith from West Hanney).

In March we held our six-bell striking competition and AGM at the recently augmented ring of North Moreton. The competition was well supported with five teams entering and our thanks go to Ian 'Judge' Judd of Goring for his expert judging skills. Ian said that he had not been to North Moreton for over thirty years and he thought that the bells were now outstanding. Ian said that all the ringing had been to a good standard, and he made special mention of the tenor ringers of North Moreton and Blewbury. Once again it was especially pleasing to have a team made up entirely of young branch members. The team from Abingdon, ringing Cambridge Surprise Minor, were victorious and they will represent ONB at the Guild's six bell competition in October.

At the AGM we gained seven new members (Richard Goold and Izzy Pindar from Abingdon, Christine Kowalczyk from Blewbury, Fiona Lloyd, Chris May and Nick Wright from Cholsey, and Jack Cooke from Long Wittenham). It was a sad moment when Nick Clarke finally stood down as joint ringing master. After over twenty years' continuous service as a branch officer in various roles, we were unable to twist his arm any further to keep him as a branch officer. Thank you, Nick, for everything you have done for the Branch over many years and we hope that you will continue to support us whenever you are able. Nick's resignation caused a reshuffle of branch officers, with Philip Roberts of Harwell gallantly stepping into the breach and becoming one of the joint ringing masters alongside Richard Loyd. Susan Read was elected chairman and our new member, Fiona Lloyd, became vice chairman. I would also like to thank Mary Friskney for all her efforts as training coordinator over the past three years and am pleased that she is now our Guild Steward. Sadly no one felt they could follow in Mary's footsteps and the training position now remains vacant. After the AGM, Liz Woodhouse confirmed that she was moving from West Hanney (not far, but not in our Branch), and she no longer wanted to be branch webmaster. Thanks go to Liz and also to Mark Cooke of Long Wittenham, who has kindly offered to be interim webmaster until the 2017 AGM.

Susan Read continues to organise events for the younger ringers in ONB Branch and the Guild. The most recent was an outing in Cambridge, and this was held jointly with young ringers of the Ely Diocesan Association at the end of March. The day included ringing at all the Cambridge towers, a quarter peal and a treasure hunt, and was enjoyed by all. If you are interested in helping Susan, please email her at read@tesco.net.

In April we held a 'mini' outing, ringing at three towers in the neighbouring Newbury Branch. Starting with Chieveley and Peasemore, we then enjoyed a very generous pub lunch at the Crown and Horns prior to ringing at East Ilsley, where Charles and Rachel Morrish were elected to the Guild. Charles and Rachel have moved into our area from Carlisle, and I know that several towers were waiting with bated breath to see where they would decide to ring. Lucky Milton!

Our next gathering will be our full day outing in July to various towers in Hampshire, with a pub lunch and afternoon tea. This will be followed in the evening by a barbecue at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. Please come to this if you can, it is always a great day out.

Gill Loyd

Ringling Masters' Ramblings

As many of you know, there were some changes in Branch Officers at the AGM this year. Nick Clarke, after many years of continuous loyal service, decided that it was time to take a well-earned break from branch duties. Nick has been a stalwart for the branch doing both the Treasurer and Ringing Master posts, thank you for doing a great job and we hope that you may return for duty one day after your rest!

Replacing Nick as joint Ringing Master is the familiar face of Philip Roberts, who many of you know very well. I am sure that he will make a very good RM and no doubt you will all want to attend the practices that he is running, not just for the ringing but to hear his latest jokes! We will do our best to keep him busy in his new era of retirement, no time for taking it easy Philip!

Some of the recent branch practices have been very well attended. It is also pleasing to hear of some individuals and towers organising additional special practices to encourage ringing development in their own local area. This is good news and, even if arranged on an occasional basis, can produce good opportunities for development in the branch. The branch striking competition was a great success this year, hosted for the first time ever by North Moreton. Some of the usual towers had difficulty getting that 'last' ringer to be available to make a team. Although we only had five entries, having a youth team and a North Moreton team made it an exciting and varied competition. Well done to everyone who took part and thanks for some brilliantly helpful comments from our expert judge Ian Judd from Goring this year, who had some good tips for good striking. Next year Radley will host the competition so you will have some more excellent bells and almost a whole year to practice for it!

There is much to look forward to within the branch with the Queen's birthday celebrations, Branch outing and BBQ, the return of Brightwell bells, various practices and of course The Olympics to keep us away from our ringing!

Keep up the good work of ringing, learning, practising, teaching, recruiting, supporting and most of all having fun!

Richard Loyd and Philip Roberts

TOWER TALK

Abingdon

The big event recently was a peal in April which included three of the Abingdon learners, Sophie Martin, Ieuan Hallas and Josh Ball, all ringing their first peal with Sophie getting it in just before her 13th birthday. With the kind permission of Colin and Nicola Turner we rang a peal of Plain Bob Triples at Milton. The band also included Isaac O'Shea and David Thomas, so with Tim Pett, Brian and Susan Read it meant a complete band of ringers who attend the Friday learners' practices at Abingdon. The peal attracted the attention of the Ringing World and was the featured performance on Bellboard for several days. I hope that one day it might be possible to ring a peal with a band of ringers who all learnt to ring in Abingdon.

We also held the tower AGM in April. Most of the post-holders were re-elected with the exception of Mark Walker, who has been replaced as St Helen's steeple keeper by Reg Sidlow with help from Isaac O'Shea, and Susan Read who has been replaced as quarter-peals organiser by Matt Franklin. We thank Mark and Susan for all their work over many years in these posts.

Tim Pett



Appleton

Our March 4th Dinner Day was very enjoyable and the peal in the morning was successful. Our Rector Lyn retired at the end of April and the ringers presented her with an engraved bell to mark the occasion of her last 'March 4th' as incumbent. We wish her and Phil a long and happy retirement.

Since the last newsletter Mike had a significant birthday and a quarter was rung on the day to celebrate this.

Sylvia Harrison

Blewbury

At St Michael's, Blewbury, the past few months have been busy.



We visited the Red Lion in Blewbury for our usual Christmas Ringers' Dinner, which this year had a 'Downton Abbey' theme. Attendees included representatives from above and below stairs, including several dinner jacketed guests, a cook and an ageing flapper. A good time was had by all!

The branch New Year's Day ringing was at Blewbury, and it was well attended. We were delighted to be hosts and received compliments from our guests about their lunch.



We had an outing to West Oxfordshire on 16th January, visiting towers in Eynsham, Bampton, Clanfield, Faringdon, Longcot and Shrivenham. Thanks to Tony Crabtree for letting us use the facilities at Longcot for our afternoon tea. All those who took part had a good time and the event extended everyone's ringing experience, but particularly that of some of our newer ringers, which contributes to our own tower ringing.

Our team was represented in the Branch striking competition at North Moreton on 19 March. We came second, and were very happy to do so!

The duck race on Easter Sunday was well attended, despite the inclement weather, but it was 'good weather for ducks'! Proceeds went to the Tower and Bell fund, which was good, since we have needed to use money from this to maintain our bells.

Following an inspection report by Whites of Appleton last year it was recommended that we replace the clappers, staples and pulleys. Taylors had fitted their design during the 1998 restoration, and these have proved troublesome in terms of handling and striking of particularly the back bells. James Haseldine from Whites worked with our own volunteer labour to replace these fittings with the latest Whites design (which were also made to the correct dimensions!).

The improvement is remarkable, and it took us some time to get used to the 'correct' striking of the bells, having spent years making manual compensations for the odd struckness. An unexpected but very welcome bonus has been the softening of the tone of the two 1906 Taylor trebles making the whole ring much more balanced in sound both inside and out. What a difference a clapper makes – please come and visit when you can to hear for yourself the improvement. The only downside to this project is that our 6th, despite all efforts, remains a difficult bell to raise and lower correctly compared with the others. This is a mystery which all the brains and expertise of Whites and others cannot fully fathom. However it does allow us to still claim that our bells are 'characterful'! Our thanks go to Whites, the ODG for a grant and the church PCC for supporting this worthwhile project.

We rang for St George's Day and on that day there was an attempt at a quarter peal of 8 spliced, which failed with only about eight minutes to go. Another attempt will be made! We are planning a peal attempt for June 11 to celebrate the Queen's Birthday, with a little help from our friends.

We are delighted to have welcomed two more learners who are making good progress. Ringers from Blewbury regularly visit other local towers, especially those in the Churn benefice, for practice and/or Sunday service ringing. We are also pleased that we have regular visitors to our Friday

practices, who contribute to the development of our tower's team, and we extend a warm invitation to any readers of this publication who would like to join us.

It has been said that ringing is a great hobby, because it includes physical activity, mental activity and social interaction. Blewbury ringers have certainly done their best to prove this over the last six months!

Gill Loyd

Chilton

Congratulations to Stuart Gibson who conducted a peal in February which was dedicated to the memory of Alec Samler our tower captain for many years; the PCC have approved our request to install a commemorative peal board in the tower.

Our note, published in the Chilton Village Newsletter, describing the joys of ringing and offering to show visitors how it's done and let them try a little for themselves, has not yet produced any response. This means we have too few members to have a useful weekly practice. Pat Samler who broke her hip last Autumn is progressing, but is not yet well enough to resume ringing. We are very grateful to members of nearby towers who assist our Sunday service ringing, we usually ring with between 4 and 6 people.

We welcome visitors to our Monday evening practices, 7.30 to 9pm, particularly from those towers with several learners who may be reluctant to venture into other towers and can gain confidence by ringing on our easy-going bells with their own tutors.

Please phone beforehand to check we are having an evening practice and remember that we do not ring on the evenings of Bank Holidays.

Kate Crennell

Cholsey

We have had a good time since Christmas.

On 10th January we had an open day with approximately 150 visitors (many of them children). As a consequence we now have four new recruits; three of whom have joined the Guild. The fourth will join soon as she is now ringing with us on Sundays.

We have been helped tremendously by Mary and Keith from Wallingford coming over to assist with the teaching.

Wallingford have also organised a four week training session at Cholsey on Wednesday afternoons for the Wallingford and Cholsey beginners.

As you probably know one of our brand new ringers, Fiona Lloyd, is now your new Branch Vice-Chairman.

Jenny Jeskins

Cumnor

Our annual Christmas/New Year party on 19th January was very successful and enjoyed by all. This year we met in a ringer's house near the centre of Oxford, and despite the parking difficulties most of our ringers managed to attend.

We have a healthy band at the moment with our beginners making rapid progress. We usually manage to ring all eight bells on Sundays, and sometimes our evening practice has as many as fourteen ringers, with occasional visitors from other towers.



Our photo shows a team from a recent practice evening. Clockwise from treble (extreme right) Janette Swain, Gerard Ledger, Clare Saunders, Jenny Dyer (tower captain), Jill Last, Mark Benstead, Michael Gurl, Chris Green, Guy Matthews.

Gerard Ledger

Didcot

There was a big change for Didcot at the start of the year with Janette Roberts standing down as tower captain after 6 years. We are all very grateful for all her hard work in the past, especially in training and also expanding links to other towers. Luckily she is staying a member of All Saints' Didcot so we can still put her experience to good use!

Didcot tower is now jointly captained by Peter Jones and Kathryn Roberts-Lock (so we each have someone else to blame when something goes wrong!) We have also resumed our weekly practices on Monday nights from 6pm (with the ever popular coffee break!) and we continue to be ambitious in trying new 3-bell methods (our current repertoire includes Innominate and St Remigius)! Visitors are always welcome.

Kathryn Roberts-Lock



Didcot ringers (L to R): Bertie Doy, Kathryn Roberts-Lock, Janette Roberts, Peter Jones and Helen Walker. (Andrew Jones absent from photo).

Harwell

Since the New Year our learners Polly-Mirren, Benjamin and Josiah have come on and are getting to grips with method ringing. All three were elected to the Guild at the New Year's Day ringing at Blewbury.

We have also been fortunate to have 3 or 4 people (over 18) wanting to learn, time will tell if they become regular band members. Hopefully I can spend more time with them now I have retired (Ha Ha!)

Thanks to Chris, Christine and Matthew for coming over to swell our Thursday practice, both sides have benefitted from their presence.

We look forward to our next event, Monday May 27th, ringing prior to the Harwell Feast. This is a big local event which all Harwell ringers get involved one way or another.

On Sunday June 26th we hope to again have the tower open to coincide with the Harwell open gardens, there is also a flower festival and teas in the Church. The tower will be open from 2-4pm depending on the number of bell ringers available.

Philip Roberts

Letcombe Regis

On Remembrance Sunday there was no service at our church (we only have it at St. Andrew's once every six years) but to give our youngsters experience of half muffled ringing, the bells were rung up the evening before and the muffles were attached so we were able to pull straight off into rounds immediately after the two minute silence and we rang for half an hour.

During January and February we had a toilet and kitchenette installed in the vestry under the ringing chamber. This meant a cupboard helping to support our infamous ladder was removed causing it to be unstable so we were forbidden to ring for one Sunday! By the next week all had been rectified and our ladder is safer and more stable than ever! In addition, the wooden framework of our ancient Ellacombe chiming apparatus was removed from the vestry (it wouldn't have been very practical for it to have remained in the new toilet!) and it was taken up and reassembled in the ringing chamber. During this work the church warden noticed our decrepit old carpet and arranged for a brand new one to be fitted.

Two of our oldest teenagers, Kate and Nick, gave up in the summer as their sporting commitments on Sunday mornings meant they were hardly ever able to ring anyway. Our stalwart, Brennan, gave up after Christmas due to other commitments so we are down to four adults (Christine, Mark, Rob, Anne) and four youngsters (Arthur, Henry, Sophie, and Tallulah). Tallulah will be boarding at Cheltenham Ladies College in September (we are sure that talking about bell ringing in her interview helped her to get in!) so we desperately need to teach some new recruits but we can't find any. It was nice to have two of our former ringers Hannah and Vicky, both home from university, helping us out over the Easter holidays when dad Mark and sons Henry and Arthur were abroad on holiday.

Anne Williams

Long and Little Wittenham

Finding myself as 'acting reporter' for these two towers, and unsure what constituted news, I looked at some articles in recent newsletters on line. Even though I started ringing in 1999, it was the first time I had seen the magazine. (Shame on me!)

I felt like I do when we receive the 'round robin' type letter carefully folded in the Christmas card from people we haven't seen for years, but still exchange cards. They delight in telling you how well the children are doing, what fantastic grades they were awarded in exams, what amazing feats they have achieved, etc.

The newsletter is full of successes, peals and quarter peals, new ringers, celebrations. I now wonder just what to report from our Towers!

Monday night is practice night in Long Wittenham. We rely heavily on ringers from Hagbourne and Abingdon. There are only two local ringers from the parishes, and despite having an open afternoon and notices in the community and Church magazines we still haven't managed to attract any locals wanting to learn. How can we attract more ringers?

We used to ring at Little Wittenham if there was a fifth Monday in the month, but the bells are so difficult to ring now, this practice has been abandoned. We did ring for a village wedding in October, which was much appreciated by the couple and the guests.

However, the brilliant news from there is that on 23rd May the bells are due to be refurbished by Whites of Appleton and the Tenor will have a new headstock. Various grants were given and the Friends of St Peters made a substantial donation to the fund

Lighting has now been installed up the Tower steps which will help enormously, certainly making the decent less hazardous!

We welcome a young ringer, Jack Cooke from Abingdon, at different times through the school holidays – how I wish I had started ringing at twelve instead of fifty five! We have one local resident who is learning the basics.

Celebrations:

Dec 24th ringing before the Carol service in Long Wittenham. Luckily we were joined by two experienced ringers from Yorkshire to make a band of five, otherwise we were three.

April 23rd Ringing for St Georges Day and to celebrate the Queens 90th Birthday.

Julia Sargent

Milton

We were delighted to welcome Rachel and Charles Morrish to the Milton band and hope they enjoy their ringing at Milton and throughout the branch. Practices have given a good opportunity for some of the branch young and not so young ringers to try new methods which we were pleased to consolidate in quarter peals for special occasions. Claire Ward rang her first quarter of Cambridge inside to mark her wedding. This was followed by a first quarter of Plain Bob Triples for Claire, Oliver Hyde and Edward Walker to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. Well done Claire, Edward and Oliver.

We have been pleased to host a couple of practices for the Guild young ringers, a very worthwhile venture. It is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm of these young ringers. We wish the Guild band every success in the Youth striking competition in London in July.

There have been several peals rung at Milton, the details appear elsewhere. Of particular note are two to mark the happy occasion of Claire Ward and Bob Mannix wedding, with one being a new method named Ward-Mannix Alliance Major. It seemed appropriate to ring an Alliance method for a wedding though we could have rung a Delight but probably not a Surprise!

Nicola Turner

North Moreton

Following the successful quarter peal on 28 February, including two new to ringing from the North Moreton band, North Moreton felt sufficiently encouraged to take part in the striking competition on 19 March. It was a wonderful opportunity to show off the new kitchen facilities in the church and serve tea to the well-deserving ringers.

Fund raising to complete the ambitious £151K project continues. The North Moreton Fete is on 8 May at 2.00pm and a Summer Lunch on 24 July.

Monday night practices are well supported and visitors are always welcome. To encourage new ringers there will be an Open Tower Event on 18 June, 10.30 – 12.30pm, giving an opportunity to visit the newly installed ringing gallery and to learn more about the art of ringing.

The hand bells are now rung regularly and we meet once a month. It is hoped that the result of these labours will provide additional entertainment for special services.

Beryl Jones

Radley

We were very lucky that the refurbished bells were returned in time for us to ring for the Christmas services – the midnight service on Christmas Eve followed, traditionally, by the 8am and 11am Services on Christmas Day.

The bells were very loud when they were returned which apparently was due to their tuning having been very successful. The first new access ladder was damaged on arrival at Whites and we had to wait for a new one to be made. When it eventually arrived and fitted in February, together with the new floor under the frame, the bells returned to their original, acceptable, volume. Mike from Sunningwell, who comes to our practices, offered to help with the redecorating of the ringing chamber, and we are very grateful for his help with this. A new carpet was laid a couple of weeks ago and so we are now finally finished!

At the beginning of the Confirmation Service on Sunday 14th February, Bishop Colin dedicated a prayer to the refurbished bells, and the photo shows those ringers who were able to attend the service, with the Bishop. After the Confirmation Service the first Quarter was rung on the refurbished bells, and was also dedicated to the memory of a soldier from the village who died in the 1914/18 war.

As usual, the annual Radley Course took place on 9th April and once again several of us cooked and served the evening meal. Some of the regulars who usually serve the meal were unable to come this year so Oliver and Edward came and helped serve and wash up – many thanks boys.

After ringing for a wedding, we attempted a Quarter on St George's Day, but unfortunately it came to grief about three quarters through.

The annual ODG 8-bell striking contest was held on 2nd May and Edward was part of the Youth Team which entered.

Daphne Pollard



Wantage

This has been a challenging period at Wantage as our experienced ringers have been depleted due to either work or family commitments. Although our Sunday ringing has continued and always ring at least 6 bells, our practice nights have been disappointing. At least this gives our inexperienced ringers the chance to ring more often but we do not have the experienced ringers available to help them make progress in methods, striking their bells etc.

Due to family commitments I have not been available to ring for some weeks and I am grateful to Dave Endacott for leading practice nights and Sunday ringing.

Graham Stoter

West Hanney

Our numbers for Sunday ringing have diminished as the year has progressed, though only on a couple of occasions have we failed to ring for Morning Service. On Practice nights the first half hour has been spent with two novices who are making excellent progress, and for the final hour our four regular ringers arrive. We have been fortunate to be joined by up to another four experienced ringers on occasions, which enables us all to get more interesting practice and we are very grateful to these visitors. At our recent AGM, our very patient and long serving Tower Captain, Liz Woodhouse, was finally allowed to retire, but she had to take the drastic step of actually moving from West Hanney to Stanford in the Vale in order to do so! We take this opportunity of thanking Liz for her friendship and dedication to the Hanney Tower and wish her and Eric every happiness in their new home. Our new Captain is Rosi Rollings, who is doing a great job, especially with our new recruits.

We celebrated the Queen's birthday, St George's Day and Shakespeare's birthday with one of our Soup Lunches in the Church. It was, as always, well attended and a very happy occasion, raising £278 for Church and Tower funds.

Jean Hazard

Old North Berks Branch earns an award!

Last year, the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) advertised their ART Awards for the first time. The teaching awards are open to everyone not just those who are ART Members. They encourage and recognise the people and groups leading best practice and innovation in the teaching and development of ringing.

I applied on behalf of our branch for recognition of the excellent work we do as a branch, teaching and encouraging school-aged ringers. Several of our towers now have a number of young people within their bands. And the mini-outings held in every school holiday have been a positive factor in encouraging enthusiasm for ringing and helping the young people to feel part of a wider social group.

It is not widely known that some members of the ODG Education Committee recognise that the ONB is now a “hub” for young ringers. The team the ODG enters into the Ringing World National Youth Contest each year contains several youngsters from our branch. In fact, our branch will probably provide half of the 2016 team.

At the prestigious ART AGM and conference held at the Loughborough Bell Foundry on 12 March 2016, our branch was awarded a “Highly Commended” certificate. The application from the winning team, Brighstone on the Isle of Wight, may be seen on the ART website:

<http://ringingteachers.org/recognition/awards/Sarah-Beacham-Youth-Group-Award>

Susan Read

Chairman, Old North Berks Branch



Young Ringers Event (St Giles, Oxford and Natural History Museum) – 30th December 2015

We met to ring at St Giles in Oxford on 30th December 2015 with twelve young people aged between 11 and 17 years old and ten adults. Ringing varied between rounds and Plain Bob Triples. Some rang Mexican Wave for the first time.

Everyone descended the steep ladders and steps to the church where the young people were arranged in three teams, each with one or two adults. They were given question sheets and instructions to go to the nearby Natural History Museum and to complete their question sheet. They were sent off at two minute intervals and asked to return to St Giles with the answers.

As the youngsters returned the refreshments were tucked into – soft drinks and cake and tea. This was followed by attempting some carols on handbells. Not everyone had tried this before so there was some serious concentration as well as some smiles.

Steve Everett had kindly offered to run some light-hearted games. There was the game where everyone had to bunch together and reach out to hold a random hand from the other side of the group with each hand, then to try to untangle themselves without letting go of the other hands. And a game involving sitting in a tight circle, clapping a rhythm together and passing on a message from one to another in time with the clapping. There was lots of giggling and fun with Steve's games.

Meanwhile some of the adults had marked the quiz. The prizes were awarded just in time before the parents arrived and everyone left for home.

Susan Read



Young Ringers Outing to Cambridge – 31st March 2016

On Thursday 31st March, a group of 15 young ringers from the Oxford Diocesan Guild (8 from Abingdon, 2 from Wargrave, and 1 each from Harwell, Bloxham, East Hagbourne, Amersham and Newbury) joined with 12 younger members of the Ely Diocesan Association to visit some of the most renowned towers in Cambridge. After an early start followed by a long journey, we were more than happy to kick-start the ringing at St. Mary & St. Michael's tower in Trumpington. While it was slightly cramped up in the ringing chamber, the lovely-sounding ring of eight more than made up for it. It was in this tower, after the general ringing, that some of us attempted a quarter-peal of Plain Bob Triples, composed and conducted by David Thomas. After a few tricky patches and worried looks, the band, consisting of four ODG ringers and four EDA ringers completed the ¼ successfully in 43 minutes.

Whilst some were busy up in the ringing chamber, the other young ringers were making their way to the next 6-bell tower (St. Edwards). On the way, a few teams completed a travelling quiz, for the chance to win prizes later on. The tower of Great St. Mary came next; as a ring of 12, this was the highlight for many. Although it was sometimes a struggle to hold the bells up enough, they sounded great when struck properly. Next, there was a quick visit to St Bene't; this ring was challenging due to the long draughts and stretchy ropes. We then popped into Christ's College for some well-earned refreshments and a go on a mini-ring bell. Our penultimate tower was Our Lady's; this ring was considerably heavy (a 31cwt eight), with many boys scrambling for a go on the tenor. Finally, we headed over to St. Andrews, another 8, for our last ring of the day!

Overall, it was an incredible day out and even the weather was kind to us. Many thanks go to the Cambridge ringers and to the organisers, Alan Winter, Barbara le Gallez, Catriona Shearer and Susan Read who made this day possible.

By Sophie Martin
Age 12



Abingdon School

For several years now after school on Fridays a group of pupils from Abingdon School along with two teachers have been attending ringing practices at St Helen's run by Susan and Brian Read. Recently three of the boys have passed different stage of the ART Learning the Ropes training scheme: shown left to right in the photo are William Sheffield (level 5), Jamie Farrow (level 3) and Scott Elkington (level 2). All three boys also ring at their local towers at weekends.



Sally forth outing April 2016 in the Essex area

We were very fortunate that two of our longstanding ringing friends live in the Thaxted area and agreed to organise our first ringing trip this year. That made it much easier for them to arrange knowing the friendly natives and nicer towers.

Pat & Ian had chosen a very nice pub to meet and greet – the Three Horseshoes, Farnham and after a long lunch we moved to the first tower of MANUDEN (6 x 9cwt) rung from a balcony which had been installed since last we visited in 1996. Then on to HENHAM a ground floor ring of 6 x 8cwt. Tea was taken and a happy birthday chocolate cake was presented to Jill. Fully replete we went

on to GREAT EASTON a bit more meatier 6 x 12 cwt ground floor ring with a long draught and Janet gibbed (as she was so unused to ringing with lots of rope thrashing about). So we moved on to the magnificent spire of THAXTED (8 X 15cwt) ground floor ring. It was very convenient as the hotel was opposite so we could park up and walk across the road.

The hotel was entertaining a duo of musicians that evening – one from Iron Maiden and one from Manfred Mann!! So we explored the delights of the town, half of our group going for an Indian and the other half – a more conventional restaurant.

After an interesting breakfast (tongue in cheek) we assembled at RADWINTER one of only 2 upstairs rings of 8 x 12 cwt. It was unfortunate that Pat had been taken ill during the night but Yorkshire and Cambridge Surprise Major were successfully rung on these easy going bells.

On to ASHDON with a ring of 8 x 15cwt bells the tenor of which was very loud compared to the other 7. It was most irritating when ringing. Another ground floor ring at HELIONS BUMPSTEAD (8 x 12cwt) then across the road to lunch at the Red Lion, with only one breed of bitter beer available! The next village on was STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD which had been augmented to a 6 x 14 cwt for the millennium. English Heritage had not allowed the alteration of the wooden frame so the extra bell was tacked on the side as best as they could. Not only that, there was no steeple!!! On to WETHERSFIELD with a large wooden support in the middle of the ringing circle making it difficult to see the ringer opposite in the vast ground floor ring of 8 x 11cwt. Tea and cakes were taken in what is considered to be the coldest church in Essex!!

Different again was the next tower of GREAT BARFIELD (8x15cwt) where the tower captain had three electric fires alight making it very homely indeed. (Note the proliferation of ground floor rings especially selected for the benefit of your scribe.) Back to the hotel for a very slowly served meal followed by bed.

Sunday saw us at FELSTED a wonderful 8x12cwt which is Ian and Pat's local tower. They kept the best till last. It would be very difficult not to ring these bells well. They are so easy going and sound so good. Pat had recovered by now and was able to join us for this last ring for the morning service. So 3 leads of Bristol Surprise Major was scored. We said our farewells in the tower, some to come home and some to stay for the service. No hymn books and some could see the writing on the screen. Singing was accompanied by electric guitar, treble recorders and drums.

So – many thanks to Ian & Pat for all their hard work arranging everything (and Cliff for the fine weather) home for a very weary party, to be in time to ring for evensong. It's all go – isn't it?

Cliff Garlick

Stallpits Ring at Abingdon



On Saturday 7th May, Tony Crabtree kindly brought his mini-ring from Shrivenham for the morning and we set it up in Abingdon Market Place. The ringers had been asked by St Helen's Church to advertise its forthcoming festival week "The Hope within Us", to culminate in a sermon by ex-Archbishop Rowan Williams. It was a gloriously sunny day, the town was very busy and we were accompanied by several Morris sides (and belly dancers). Lots of youngsters had a go at ringing a bell. Although it was not our primary aim, we did collect the details of some potential recruits for our next handling course.

Brian Read

Photo by Alastair Fear.

QUARTER PEALS

Abingdon, St Helen, 28 November 2015. **1282 Lincolnshire Surprise Royal**: Phillip A Butler 1, Lucy A Warren 2, Elaine M Scudamore 3, Andrew P Deamer 4, Keith W Scudamore 5, Jonathan D Storey 6, Matthew C Gardiner 7, Katharine A Hill 8, Edward R Mack 9, Gareth L M Lawson (C) 10. First in method: 2, 3, 6 & 7.

Abingdon, St Helen, 29 November 2015. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Rebecca Taylor 1, Priscilla Morris 2, Margaret Brock 3, Sarah Barnes 4, Susan Read 5, David Thomas 6, Matthew Franklin (C) 7, Brian Read 8. Rung for the Advent Carol Service.

Wallingford, 29 November 2015. **1260 Plain Bob Minor**: Philip Mills 1, Nuala Clements 2, Katherine Foster 3, Mary Friskney 4, Keith Anderson 5, Chris Tuckett (C) 6. Rung for Advent Sunday.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 6 December 2015. **1260 Doubles** (540 Grandsire and 720 Plain Bob): David Thomas (C) 1, Susan Read 2, Ieuan Hallas 3, Sarah Barnes 4, Brian Read 5, Josh Ball 6. Rung for the Patronal Festival Evensong.

Blewbury, 26th December 2015. **1260 Stedman Triples**: Richard Loyd 1, Gillian Loyd 2, Jo Knight 3, Matt Napper 4, Josie Irving 5, Mark Vincent 6, Stuart Gibson (C) 7, Matthew Phillips 8. Rung during the Boxing Day Walk and to mark the 104th birthday of William (Bill) Dent Robinson.

Abingdon, St Helen, 31 January 2016. **1300 Doubles** (480 Grandsire, 480 St Simon's and 340 Plain Bob): Rebecca Peberdy 1, Susan Read 2, Brian Read 3, David Thomas (C) 4, Sarah Barnes 5, Phoebe Astbury 6. First quarter peal: 6. Rung for the Evening Service.

Appleton, 1 January 2016. **1260 Grandsire Doubles**: Michele Winter (C) 1, Sylvia M Harrison 2, Andrew J Dyer 3, Jenny A Dyer 4, Michael J Harrison 5. Rung to mark the New Year.

Appleton, 17 January 2016. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Fiona J Davis 1, Sylvia M Harrison 2, Barbara H Payne 3, Michele Winter 4, Peter J Heritage 5, Michael J Harrison (C) 6, Bernard J Stone 7, Peter H M Day 8. For Evensong, also 70th birthday compliment to the conductor. 1st on 8 – 1.

Abingdon, St Helen, 14 February 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Susan Read 1, Sophie Martin 2, David Thomas 3, Ieuan Hallas 4, Brian Read 5, Sarah Barnes 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Josh Ball 8. 1st quarter inside - 2. For Evensong on St Valentine's Day.

Radley, 14 February 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Daphne Pollard (C) 1, Oliver Hyde 2, Ann Belcher 3, Edward Walker 4, M Ian Minns 5, Maurice Belcher 6. First Quarter on the bells after refurbishment. Rung after the Confirmation Service. Also to mark the centenary of the death of Pte Gibbens of this parish, died 21 November 1915.

Appleton, 16 February 2016. **1296 Grandsire Caters**: Comp. S A Bond: Nicola J Turner 1, Michele Winter 2, Robin O Hall (C) 3, Barbara H Payne 4, Jenny A Dyer 5, Simon L Edwards 6, Owen H Winter 7, Peter H Day 8, Bernard J Stone 9, Colin M Turner 10. In thanksgiving for the life of Gillian Nora Mary Savings (1935-2016), Michele's mother, on the day of her funeral at this church.

Abingdon, St Helen, 18 February 2016. **1298 Cambridge Surprise Minor**: Susan Read 1, Brian Read 2, Tim Pett 3, David Thomas 4, Isaac O'Shea 5, George J Vant (C) 6.

North Moreton, 28th February 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Kath Pilgrem 1, Alice Aukland 2, Jill Garlick 3, Gill Loyd (C) 4, Richard Loyd 5, Robert Nickless 6. For evensong. First quarter peal on the bells since augmentation. First quarter peal 1 & 6.

Abingdon, (30 St Amand Drive), 2 March 2016. **1264 Plain Bob Major**: John Pusey 1-2, Susan Read 3-4, Joe Norton 5-6, Tim Pett (C) 7-8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 6 March 2016, **1320 London Surprise Minor**: Isaac O'Shea 1, Susan Read 2, Sarah Barnes 3, Brian Read 4, Tim Pett 5, David Thomas (C) 6. First in method: 2, 3, 4 and 6. Rung for Evensong.

Abingdon, St Helen, 13 March 2016. **1280 Cambridge Surprise Major**: Priscilla Morris 1, Susan Read 2, Sarah Barnes 3, Peter Heritage 4, Brian Read 5, David Thomas 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Ryan Mills 8. 1st Surprise - 3.

Milton, 15 March 2016. **1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor**: Philip Roberts 1, Daphne Pollard 2, Claire Ward 3, Nick Clarke 4, Nicola J Turner (C) 5, Colin M Turner 6. First of Surprise inside - 3. Rung as a wedding compliment to Claire Ward & Bob Mannix 27/2 and a 60th Birthday compliment to the treble ringer.

Wallingford, 27 March 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Minor**: Philip Mills 1, Nuala Clements 2, Jo Gamester 3, Katherine Parker 4, Tony Diserens 5, Chris Tuckett (C) 6. Rung for Easter Sunday.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, 2 April 2016. **1273 Grandsire Triples**: Comp. C M Meyer: Katy Haines 1, Jeremy R Pratt (C) 2, Ian W Davies 3, Kevin J Beer 4, Stephen J Wooler 5, Roy A Thorpe 6, Nigel R D Orchard 7, Sue M Haines 8. Rung by friends and family to remember with great fondness Roger Heyworth ("Ogwash") whose 70th birthday would have fallen around this time. Nicki Gumbrell, Robin Heyworth, Daniel Haines and Jenny Heyworth were abroad and thus sadly unable to take part but wish to be associated with this quarter. Also rung in memory of James R E East and Doris K East of this village whose anniversaries are at this time. The final quarter on the bells before rehangings.

Abingdon, St Helen, 10 April 2016. **1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Comp. Andrew J Rawlinson: Rebecca Franklin 1, Brian Read 2, Susan Read 3, Sarah Barnes 4, David Thomas (C) 5, Matthew Franklin 6, Tim Pett 7, Ryan Mills 8. First in method: 4. First Major as Conductor: 5. Rung for the Evening Service.

Wallingford, 23 April 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Monika Jurgens 1, Mary Friskney 2, Keith Anderson 3, Nuala Clements 4, Roy Thorpe 5, Kevin Beer 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Philip Mills 8. Rung as part of the town's St George's Day celebrations.

Milton, 26 April 2016. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Colin M Turner 1, Rachel Morrish 2, Charles Morrish 3, Claire Ward 4, Edward Walker 5, Oliver Hyde 6, Nicola J Turner (C) 7, Daphne Pollard 8. A 90th Birthday compliment to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. First on 8 - 4,6. First inside on 8 - 5.

Abingdon, St Helen, 1 May 2016. **1320 Norwich Surprise Minor**: Sarah Barnes 1, Susan Read 2, Brian Read 3, Ryan Mills 4, David Thomas 5, Tim Pett (C) 6, Hugh Bishop 7. Rung for evening service after meeting short for Major.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 5 May 2016. **1260 Plain and Little Bob Minor**: Becci Franklin 1, Jeanette Thomas 2, Sarah Barnes 3, David Thomas 4, Matt Franklin 5, Tim Pett (C) 6. Rung for the Ascension Day service.

PEALS

Abingdon, St Helen, 10 November 2015, 3h02, **5042 Bristol Surprise Royal**: Comp. Benjamin D Constant: William Butler 1, Beryl R Norris 2, W John Couperthwaite 3, Colin M Turner 4, Graham A C John 5, Vernon B Bedford 6, Bernard F L Groves 7, Timothy G Pett (C) 8, Peter Bridle 9, Ian G Campbell 10.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 15 November 2015, 2h32, **5056 Gateshead Delight Major**: Stuart P B Talbott 1, Peter G C Ellis 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Colin M Turner 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

Chilton, 10 December 2015, 2h33, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (32m)**: Comp. 1-4: J S Warboys SU0403: Kenneth R Davenport 1, June D Wells 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Christopher M Tuckett 4, E John Wells 5, Stuart F Gibson (C) 6. 4, 5: Most Methods to a Peal. 2: Most Minor Methods to a Peal.

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN GUILD, **Milton**, 15 December 2015, 2h38, **5152 Spliced Surprise Major (8m)**: Timothy G Pett 1, Martin J Turner 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Bernard F L Groves 4, Vernon B Bedford 5, W John Couperthwaite (C) 6, Colin M Turner 7, Peter Bridle 8.

Milton, 20 December 2015, 2h38, **5056 Bristol Surprise Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Colin M Turner 2, Peter Bridle 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Stuart F Gibson 5, Christopher M Tuckett 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, Timothy G Pett (C) 8. The conductor has now called a peal on every date in the year.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Abingdon, St Nicolas**, 24 December 2015, 2h25, **5040 Surprise Minor (41m)**: Comp. J S Warboys (SU0308, SU0403): David L Thomas 1, Susan E Marshall 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Colin M Turner 4, Peter G C Ellis (C) 5, Robert J Crocker 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 26 December 2015, 2h34, **5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Colin M Turner 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Paul M Mason 3, Debby M Talbott 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Michael J Dew 6, Stuart P B Talbott 7, Robert J Crocker 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 3 January 2016, 2h31, **5024 Mosse Delight Major**: Peter Bridle 1, Nicholas D Brown 2, Colin M Turner 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Russell A Brown 5, Timothy G Pett 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 12 January 2016, 2h57, **5040 Spliced Surprise Royal (4m)**: Comp. D F Morrison (No 1760): Maurice F Edwards 1, Beryl R Norris 2, June D Wells 3, Martin J Turner 4, E John Wells 5, W John Couperthwaite (C) 6, Colin M Turner 7, Bernard F L Groves 8, Peter Bridle 9, Timothy G Pett 10.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 17 January 2016, 2h38, **5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Colin M Turner 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Debby M Talbott 4, Stuart P B Talbott 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Darran Ricks 7, Peter Bridle 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Drayton**, 21 January 2016, 2h49, **5088 Spitalfields Crypt Trust Surprise Major**: Robert J Crocker 1, Helen J Piper 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Nicola J Turner 5, Colin M Turner 6, Bernard F L Groves (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 31 January 2016, 2h38, **5088 St Blaise Delight Major**: Ashley C Fortey 1, Katharine J Firman 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Graham G Firman 6, Darran Ricks (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8. The first peal in the method.

Milton, 2 February 2016, 2h40, **5120 Spliced Surprise Major (4m)**: W John Couperthwaite (C) 1, Beryl R Norris 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Timothy G Pett 4, Colin M Turner 5, Bernard F L Groves 6, Peter Bridle 7, Martin J Turner 8.

Chilton, 11 February 2016, 2h36, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (41m)**: Comp. J S Warboys (SU0309 and SU0403): Kenneth R Davenport 1, June D Wells 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Christopher M Tuckett 4, E John Wells 5, Stuart F Gibson (C) 6. 1st 41 spliced: 2, 4 & 5. Most methods as conductor. Rung in memory of Alec Samler, member and tower captain of this tower.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 14 February 2016, 2h23, **5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Peter G C Ellis 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Darran Ricks 4, Nicola J Turner 5, Stuart P B Talbott 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 18 February 2016, 2h31, **5088 Friendly Delight Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Timothy G Pett 2, Robert J Crocker 3, Helen J Piper 4, Stuart P B Talbott 5, Colin M Turner 6, Bernard F L Groves (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 28 February 2016, 2h33, **5152 Burnham Beeches Delight Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Peter G C Ellis 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Timothy G Pett 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8. Rung as a wedding compliment to local ringer Claire Ward and Bob Mannix.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 2 March 2016, 2h36, **5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Debby M Talbott 3, Roger Baldwin 4, Darran Ricks 5, Stuart P B Talbott 6, Colin M Turner 7, Peter G C Ellis 8.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton**, 5 March 2016, 2h48, **5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal**, Comp. D F Morrison (no. 6298): Julie A Haseldine 1, Michele Winter 2, Andrew Haseldine 3, Simon L Edwards 4, Jonathan Cresshull 5, Joanna E Knight 6, Stuart F Gibson 7, Robert H Newton (C) 8, Stephen H Stanford 9, Leon G Thompson 10. 400th peal as conductor. For the 198th anniversary of the bells.

Chilton, 7 March 2016, 2h37, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (41m)**: Comp. John S Warboys (SU0309 and SU0403): Ian G Judd 1, Antoinette J R Jackson 2, June D Wells 3, Stuart F Gibson 4, E John Wells 5, Timothy G Pett (C) 6. Most methods to a peal – 2.

Abingdon, St Helen, 8 March 2016, 3h04, **5040 Vermuyden Surprise Royal**: Comp. Graham A C John: John C Sheppard 1, June D Wells 2, Beryl R Norris 3, E John Wells 4, Martin J Turner 5, W John Couperthwaite 6, Peter Bridle 7, Timothy G Pett (C) 8, Colin M Turner 9, Bernard F L Groves 10.

Chilton, 15 March 2016, 2h42, **5040 Surprise Minor (7m)**: J Alan Ainsworth (C) 1, Catherine M A Lane 2, Maurice F Edwards 3, Janet E Menhinick 4, Simon L Edwards 5, Christopher M Tuckett 6. Remembering David Lane, 15th March 2011.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 16 March 2016, 2h39, **5120 Bristol Surprise Major**: Robert J Crocker 1, Peter G C Ellis 2, Colin M Turner 3, Timothy G Pett 4, David G Salter 5, Nicola J Turner 6, Bernard F L Groves (C) 7, Katharine J Salter 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 20 March 2016, 2h28, **5040 Eastington Alliance Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Colin M Turner 2, Charlotte A Boyce 3, Cynthia E Howell 4, Michael J Dew 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Peter G C Ellis 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 3 April 2016, 2h34, **5040 Shildon Alliance Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Claire F Roulstone 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Michael J Dew 5, Peter Bridle 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 9 April 2016, 2h33, **5040 Ward-Mannix Alliance Major**: Brian Bladon 1, Robert J Crocker 2, Nicola J Turner (C) 3, Bernard F L Groves 4, Ian Roulstone 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Colin M Turner 7, Claire F Roulstone 8. The first peal in the method. Rung in celebration of the blessing, yesterday, of the marriage of Claire Ward and Bob Mannix. 1,700th peal – 5; 850th peal together 5 and 8; 100th peal on the bells 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 13 April 2016, 2h30, **5088 Ropsley Delight Major**: Brian Bladon 1, Timothy G Pett 2, Claire F Roulstone 3, Michael J Dew 4, Stuart P B Talbott 5, Colin M Turner 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

Milton, 17 April 2016, 2h36, **5040 Plain Bob Triples**: Comp. C Ravenscroft: Susan E M Read 1, Sophie L Martin (aged 12) 2, Brian J Read 3, Ieuan Hallas (aged 16) 4, Isaac J O'Shea 5, David L Thomas 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Josh D Ball (aged 15) 8. First peal at first attempt 2, 4, 8. Rung by an all Abingdon band.

Cholsey, 19 April 2016, 2h52, **5152 Spliced Surprise Major (10m)**: Timothy G Pett 1, Martin J Turner 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Colin M Turner 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, W John Couperthwaite (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Harwell**, 24 April 2016, 3h03, **5120 Hardington Mandeville Surprise Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Hilary A Beresford 2, Colin M Turner 3, Nicholas J Clarke 4, Robert J Crocker 5, Adam R Crocker 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 25 April 2016, 2h28, **5040 Johnston Alliance Major**: Brian Bladon 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Nicola J Turner (C) 3, Michael J Dew 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Timothy G Pett 6, Robert J Crocker 7, Colin M Turner 8. The first peal in the method. R.I.P. Johnston, much loved long term resident of Puddleduck Cottage.

Drayton, 3 May 2016, 2h42, **5056 Bristol Surprise Major**: Colin M Turner 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Martin J Turner 4, Vernon B Bedford 5, Kenneth R Davenport 6, Peter Bridle 7, Timothy G Pett (C) 8.

Chilton, 5 May 2016, 2h34, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (41m)**: Comp. J S Warboys (SU0309 & SU0403): E John Wells 1, June D Wells 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Christopher M Tuckett 4, Kenneth R Davenport 5, Stuart F Gibson (C) 6. For Ascension Day. 5: Most Methods to a peal.



Radley Bells Re-hang Report

As you will remember from the last newsletter, Whites removed the bells and fittings from the tower on 7/8 September last year following which they were retuned by Whitechapel. We were hoping to get the bells back in early December ready for Christmas ringing.

The story continues with some preparatory work on the frames being done by Whites before the bells were returned to the church on 10 December for the congregation to inspect over the week-end prior to re-hanging the following Monday. The bells looked fine, cleaned up and with their new headstocks on, a social event with refreshments was held on the Saturday to welcome them back properly with the bells staying on display for Sunday services.

Work started on the re installation the following Monday with the first ring taking place on the Friday. To say the bells were a little loud would be an understatement! The New Year brought further work with a new floor fitted below the bell frame (which has helped the sound levels no end), a new access ladder to the belfry, the ringing chamber redecorated and a new carpet fitted. So everything is looking bright and new now.

As you will see in our Tower Talk report, the bells have been blessed following a confirmation service and we have rung the first quarter. Plans are now in hand to ring the first peal this summer, giving Oliver and Edward a chance to score their first peal.

There is always a lot of work behind the scenes on projects like this, to make sure the visible (and audible) parts succeed. All the ringers (including our regular visitors) gave freely of their time and energy to make sure we succeeded in getting the bells rehung to a modern standard and the ringing chamber refurbished. The vicar and the PCC gave tremendous help and advice and kept us on track when needed. Of course a big thankyou must go to all the local parishioners and others who supported us with their generous donations to the fundraising.

In the end, the proof of the pudding is in the eating and, although biased, we think we have an excellent ring of bells now with no obvious foibles. Do come and try them for yourselves and hopefully you will agree with us.

Thanks again to all in the Branch and Guild who supported us with the project.

Daphne Pollard and Ian Minns



The bells on display for all to see before being rehung.



The Tenor returns home

The Tenor goes back in much easier than it came out!



New Members from Cholsey



Fiona Lloyd



Chris May



Nick Wright

Friday 8th April

A bright Friday morning in April saw a hive of activity at Didcot Civic Hall. Local tower members were busy preparing for the reception following the Marriage Blessing at Steventon later that day of Claire Ward and Rob Mannix.

Jack Jarvis conducted the truly individual service, the bells rang out and apart from a short shower the weather stayed fair.

In true ringers fashion a superb afternoon tea was partaken followed by a barn dance and excellent supper. It appeared a good time was had by all!

It was a masterpiece of co-operation and organisation by Radley, Drayton, Milton, Steventon, Harwell and Didcot tower members. We all wish Claire and Rob many happy years together.

Janette Roberts



A new ringer – Easter Morning

To ring a bell across the land, a call to praise my rope in hand
A gentle pull a listening ear, relax breathe deep and have no fear
Watch and count and hear the bell, past years gone by it's truth to tell
Of Jesus risen from the grave, our lives to share our souls to save

So many ringers here gone by, a touch a bob 'look to' they cry
A joyful noise ring out today, a bit untidy, but, who's to say
The perfect method yet to come, there's time enough it can be done
With practise, concentration, time, the fun is ours, the praise is Thine.

Fiona Lloyd - Easter morning rounds and simple call changes St Marys Church Cholsey 27.3.16



New Committee Member taking the meeting very seriously



ONB Branch Outing

Saturday July 16th 2016

09:30 – 10:30	GOODWORTH CLATFORD, St Peter (8) (7cwt) (Postcode: SP11 7SF)
10:45 – 11:45	HURSTBOURNE PRIORS, St Andrew (8) (14cwt) (Postcode: RG28 7SB)
12:00 – 13:30	LUNCH – White Hart, Newbury Street, Whitchurch (Postcode: RG28 7DN)
13:30 – 14:30	WHITCHURCH, All Hallows, (10) (26cwt) (Postcode: RG28 7AS)
14:45 – 15:45	to be confirmed
15:45 – 16:15	TEA
16:30 – 17:30	to be confirmed

As in previous years, there will be a

Free Prize Draw for people attending!

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers
Old North Berks Branch

Barbecue & Croquet

*Join in the fun after the Branch Outing
on*



**Saturday, 16th July 2016
from 7.00pm**



At the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson

*The Croft
Milton Hill*

(A4130 between A34 Didcot exit and Rowstock)

£10.00 each (payable on the day)

All names to Gill Loyd by Friday, 8th July please

Telephone: 01235 850459
Email: gillianloyd@gmail.com

Note: Soft drinks will be provided, please bring own alcohol

ONB Branch Programme for 2016

Please make note of the varied start and finish times which are designed to mirror local requirements for practices. The Surprise Practices are intended for all levels of Surprise ringing and we particularly welcome branch members who wish to learn Cambridge major from minor standard. Please contact Richard Loyd if you would like to be added to his email reminder list for the Surprise practices.

Friday, 10th June – Branch Practice – Appleton (10) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 22nd June – Afternoon Training – Harwell (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Saturday, 16th July – Branch Outing and Barbecue

Wednesday, 27th July – Afternoon Training – West Hanney (6) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 3rd August – Surprise Major Practice – Goring (8) (7.45–9.15pm)

Wednesday, 10th August – Branch Practice – Childrey (8) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 24th August – Afternoon Training – Sutton Courtenay (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 14th September – Branch Practice – West Hendred (6) (7.30–8.30pm)

Wednesday, 28th September – Branch Training – Milton (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 5th October – Surprise Major/Royal Practice – Appleton (10) (7.30–9.00pm)

Thursday, 13th October – Branch Practice – Radley (6) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 26th October – Afternoon Training – Cholsey (8) (**tbc**) (2.00–3.30pm)

Tuesday, 8th November – Branch Practice – Wantage (8) (7.30–9.00pm)

Saturday, 12th November – Quiz and Supper – Brightwell

Wednesday, 23rd November – Afternoon Training – Chilton (6) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 7th December – Surprise Major Practice – Sutton Courtenay (8) (7.30–9.00pm)

Monday, 12th December – Branch Practice – Marcham (6) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 14th December – Afternoon Training – Drayton (8) (2.00–3.30pm)



Old North Berks website

The Old North Berks website can be found at www.onb.odg.org.uk. The website is a valuable tool providing up to date information and a means of contacting the branch officers and the towers within the branch. It should be the first port of call for details about branch events. Why not visit it now and add it to your favourites. If you spot any incorrect or missing information then please contact the webmaster at webmaster@onb.odg.org.uk.

Or would you like to include something on the website. Why wait for the Branch Newsletter to report a special event in your tower. Maybe there has been a special birthday or a first quarter or you have been on a tower outing. Just email the webmaster with the details and maybe a photo. Let's hear about these events as they happen.

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NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for copy for the next issue in November 2016 is 18th October 2016. But please don't wait until then, send your news, pictures, and quarters in as they happen.

Published by the Old North Berks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild

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