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Wednesday afternoon practice mini-tour — 25 April

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Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2018 issue of the Branch Newsletter.

We think there is plenty of interest in this edition, hopefully you will find something to enjoy.

Despite the sometimes-hostile weather earlier this year, plenty of events still took place.

Notable amongst these was the 200-anniversary dinner held at Appleton, a tradition which has certainly lasted the test of time. Also of note is the Branch's representation of the guild at the Tewkesbury ten-bell striking contest, it's a shame the result wasn't better but I'm sure things will go better next time.

We also have a couple of articles which give non-ringers perspective of our exercise.

Susan Read's ringing courses are going from strength to strength and bringing new ringers into the exercise which must be a good thing. They seem, in part, to be addressing the need for new recruits, a theme again prevalent in the Tower Talk articles. The courses are set to continue, so let's support them in whatever way we can. Similarly, the Young Ringers' events are continuing to engage our younger recruits and introducing them to the social side of ringing.

Congratulations go to Eden from Blewbury and Benjamin from Harwell for scoring their first quarter peals.

A big thank you to all our contributors, please keep the articles coming in, they're what make the Newsletter and please include pictures if you can, these always add interest to the newsletter.

My best wishes to all for the coming months, don't forget to keep a notepad and camera handy to record the events for the next edition.

Ian Minns

Finally, a thought to leave you with: Never ruin an apology with an excuse.

Chairman's Report

As I write this, at the beginning of May, Spring has finally sprung after what has been a long cold winter. This was demonstrated most clearly at the recent branch AGM and striking competition, as by the time we finished there was a good covering of snow! My thanks go to Cholsey for hosting this successful event (see separate report). Locally, I organised a ringing trip for the Churn Benefice ringers to ring all the bells in the Benefice on the same day. This meant ringing at Blewbury, East Hagbourne, Aston Tirrold and North Moreton and we also included the chiming bells at Upton, Aston Upthorpe and South Moreton to complete the set. Visits to Chilton and Harwell, as well as some delicious pub food and afternoon tea at North Moreton made up a most enjoyable day. My thanks go to all those who helped organise the event and to those that rang on the day. Hope you all enjoy a good summer.

Rob Nickless

Secretary's Report

2018 came in well when about thirty branch members went to the New Year's ringing with refreshments, hosted at Appleton. This was once again a very happy occasion for the Branch. I would like to thank Sylvia Harrison and the Appleton ringers for making everyone so welcome with refreshments ranging from flavoursome soups through to scrumptious cakes.

In March we held our six-bell striking competition and AGM at Cholsey. Thanks go to Jenny Jeskins and her ringers for providing such a delicious tea. The competition was not so well supported as in recent years with only four teams entering. Thanks go to our judges, Robert and Patricia Newton, who had braved it through snow to arrive on time from High Wycombe. They said that the four towers entering the competition had done a lot better than all the towers that had not managed to raise a team, and that they had heard some good ringing. The results were as follows: 1st Wallingford (20 faults); 2nd Abingdon (39 faults); 3rd Blewbury (92 faults); 4th Harwell (110 faults). The Wallingford ringers were invited to represent the Branch in the Guild 6-bell striking competition on Saturday, 6th October, in the Central Bucks Branch.

Talking of Guild striking competitions, the branch band ringing Stedman Caters in the Guild's 10-bell competition at Olney at the end of November 2017 was placed first. Old North Berks Branch will represent the Guild in the Tewkesbury Shield competition on 5th May 2018, ringing a course of Cambridge Surprise Royal.

At our AGM we had no changes to our branch officers. So far this year there have been fourteen new members from seven towers elected to the Guild. Julia Sargent reported that the six bells at Long Wittenham are becoming harder to ring. Whites of Appleton had recommended a complete rehang, with new bearings and fittings, and were confident that the bells could be successfully retuned (total cost £30,000). They also recommended the construction of a new ringing gallery. The Oxford Diocesan Guild has made a provisional grant of £6,000 towards the work on the bells and it was decided that ONB Branch will make a provisional grant of £3,000.

Following on from the meeting of Branch Officers, held after the ringing accident at St Helen, Abingdon, in January, we discussed ways we can improve safety in the Branch. This included reminding members that all tower captains and trainers should be DBS checked, 'Permission to ring' forms need to be used for minors and every tower should keep an attendance register. The Guild's Safeguarding Officer has agreed with the Diocese that towers will nominate on every occasion when there is a child under 16 present, who is not accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult, an adult to be responsible for safeguarding on that occasion. This adult should be aware of the behaviour in the ringing room and be prepared to take action if any inappropriate activity occurs. Towers need to ensure that everyone present can identify the nominated person and can approach them if necessary. If this procedure is followed there is no requirement to appoint a Children's Officer for every tower. The responsible adult should be identified on the attendance register.

Susan Read has continued to organise events for the young ringers in the Branch during school holidays and is also running a branch ringing school. There is an LTR2 (rounds and call changes) group that moves to different tower practice nights each week, and a new LTR1 (handling) group on Saturday mornings. There is room for other new ringers to join the LTR1 group.

Social events have continued with a mini-outing in April for our afternoon practice ringers. We went to Burghelere, Kintbury and Hungerford, and also had a pub lunch. This year's branch outing and barbecue will be on Saturday 21st July. Philip Roberts is arranging towers south of Banbury, with a pub lunch and afternoon tea. Stuart and Naomi Gibson are hosting the barbecue in the evening. I cannot impress enough upon you all that this is an event not to be missed! There will also be a skittles evening with fish and chips supper at Radley Village Hall on Saturday, 10th

November, kindly organised by Daphne and the Radley ringers. The hall has been booked and I will be sending out details of food choices nearer the time.

Finally a reminder about Armistice 2018: We have been asked by 'Battles Over' if we can all ring for fifteen minutes without muffling the bells at 7.05pm on Sunday, 11th November. Battles Over is a unique series of events in the morning and evening involving organisations and communities the length and breadth of our nation and in many countries abroad.

Gill Lovd

Ringing Masters' Ramblings

We are delighted to see several new faces coming along to the branch practices, some of whom have been introduced only recently to ringing through Susan's training initiative. We welcome all new ringers whether or not you have come through this route, and sincerely hope that you will continue to enjoy ringing within 'The Friendly Branch' of the Oxford Guild. It was pleasing to see several new ringers enjoying the delights of other towers and bells on the afternoon mini outing recently, with one new ringer counting 21, 22 and 23 for the total number of towers rung at so far!

Branch practices are being slightly better attended in recent times and we hope that this trend continues as it will ensure the continuance of this long held format in the branch. With good attendance, these practices can create opportunities for attempting methods or skills, which are sometimes not possible locally on a practice night. So if you are hesitant, please come along and see! Come with other members of your tower if you think this will be helpful.

Those who attended the AGM will know that there is a potentially exciting new restoration project at Long Wittenham. These bells are getting extremely difficult to ring and without a rehang project it is very likely that the bells will become impossible within the near future. The branch has offered a grant of £3000 towards this fund raising scheme to add to the £6000 already offered by the Guild. The project is still being considered by the Long Wittenham PCC and we wish Julia and all the Long Wittenham ringers the very best in their very worthwhile aim. There are possibly some additional projects in the pipeline at other towers, and I am sure there will be more to report on all of these in the next issue of the newsletter.

The branch team who scored a first ever success by winning the 10 bell Guild Competition earned the right to enter the national 10 Bell contest held at Tewkesbury Abbey on May 5th. At a most prestigious event and up against the best of the best 10 bell talents, sadly the team were overcome with the pressure and unfortunately fired out before the end of the course of Cambridge Surprise Royal. Sophie Martin has written more in this issue but we want to recognise the dedication and effort of the ONB team to get so far. We are small players in the field of 10 bell ringing, but we certainly have punched above our weight this year! Well done to the team and thank you for all the time and dedicated practice.

Now of course RM Ramblings would not be complete without the essential joke or two from Philip......

Four fonts walk into a bar. The barman says "Oi- get out! We don't want your type in here".

Make the most of the summer weather and try to get out as much as you can to enjoy all the practices and events throughout the branch.

Richard Lovd and Philip Roberts

TOWER TALK

Abingdon

As now seems to be the custom we held our "Christmas" dinner in February. This year we tried a new venue, the Bella Napoli restaurant in Abingdon. Some 20 of us were rather tightly packed in but the food was good and the service very efficient. Everyone had an enjoyable evening and thanks to Margaret Brock for organising it once again. I expect we will return there next year.

Our tower AGM took place in April. There were a few minor changes to the management structure. For several years we have had a Tower Captain and Ringing Master at St Nicolas and we have decided to do the same thing at St Helen's. Hugh Bishop remains Tower captain at St Nicolas and Brian Read in the same role at St Helen's. Sarah Barnes is Ringing Master at both towers with Isaac O'Shea her deputy. Sophie Martin has taken over as quarter-peal organiser from Matt Franklin and we thank Matt for his time in this role. All other positions remained unchanged. There was a long discussion on health & safety following from the accident at St Helen's. Unfortunately the very comprehensive report written by the church wardens has been declared confidential and cannot be published. However, with their permission, Brian managed to extract some of their recommendations, which he included in his report to the AGM. He will make enquiries to see if these can be circulated more widely and particularly to other towers in the branch.

All our learners are continuing to make good progress. Particular congratulations are due to Dan & Joe Gillett who rang their first quarter-peal, to Josh Ball for first treble-dodging quarter and first inside and to Sophie for ringing her first peal on 10 bells (Grandsire Caters) and her first of Royal (Cambridge Surprise), both within the same week.

Tim Pett

Appleton

March 4th 1818-2018

On March 4th 1818 there was a celebration in Appleton to mark the installation of the original ring of 6 bells in the tower. Squire Southby paid for the bells to appease the villages for acquiring the common land and the village green for his own benefit. Every year since this event has been celebrated, more recently on the first Saturday in March with a dinner in the Village Hall. As this year was the 200th anniversary we wanted to include the village in our celebrations, so last summer we started planning.

The School agreed to make it their local history project and, following a visit to assembly by Mark Walker and James Haseldine from Whites of Appleton, the children wrote poems and produced artwork. Years 5 and 6 visited the workshop and the tower. A group of children learnt to play a tune on handbells. The History Society also showed interested and, after a lot of research, produced a very good booklet.

As the end of February approached, the usual dinner which takes place on Saturday night, a special Family Service for Sunday and a Village Celebration in the Barn in Netherton Road had been organised. Then, it snowed!

On Friday, after difficult journeys from only 2 or 3 miles away, Appleton Ringers decorated the barn and set up displays which included the work by the school children, old photographs, items from Whites of Appleton and games for the children. Some people contacted us to say they would not be able to travel to Appleton but, as the weather improved on Saturday, contacted us again to say they were on their way.

Lucy Woodward composed two peals of 5200 Stedman Caters. One was rung on Friday, at St Thomas, Oxford and the other at Appleton on Saturday morning. There was also a peal of Cambridge Major rung at Cumnor.

The dinner was dedicated to the memory of Frank White and the board commemorating the peal rung after his funeral in 2011 was on display mounted on a bell wheel. Only 5 people were not able to get to the dinner so 100 of us sat down for the meal. The evening followed the usual format of good food, speeches, singing of traditional songs and handbell ringing.

On Sunday, many of those ringers who attended the dinner returned in time for ringing before the service. Events in the barn followed with a hog roast and bar. As well as the displays, entertainment was provided including again singing the traditional songs, morris dancing and handbell ringing by two adult groups and the group of chidren from the school. Whites of Appleton opened their workshop which gave ringers and village people a chance to see the work carried out there and have a go on their mini-ring. The day concluded with a Songs of Praise in the barn.

We were really pleased with the interest by village residents and this has resulted in 4 people now learning to ring.

Sylvia Harrison

Blewbury

We continue to ring twice a week and visitors are always welcome. Our numbers for a Friday practice fluctuate from a handful to over twenty. Our young ringers are progressing well and congratulations go to Eden who completed his first quarter peal in March this year. We also celebrated Dick's 80^{th} birthday last November with a quarter peal and a few bottles of fizz to follow. Our Christmas meal was a resounding success with a Fairy-tale theme seeing diners dressed in all manner of fantastical costumes including Hansel and Gretel, a fairy and a couple of trolls; and our Easter duck race went off swimmingly yet again.

We have had a few outings since the last Tower talk too; the first was to Oxford, last November, with most of the twenty or so ringers choosing to travel by train and walk between towers. Thank you first of all to Michele Winter who organised the towers for us, and met us with the key to Lincoln College where the ringing began. From there we were dispatched to StThomas' with a key and instructions to enter by the blue door. Having rescheduled this tower to avoid disturbing a christening, we arrived to find it still in full swing with four babies being baptised. We passed some time circling the church and interestingly all of the doors except one were blue. So which door did our key fit? You've guessed it – the brown one! We waited patiently outside for a while but the christening showed no signs of coming to an end so we crept gingerly into the back of the church and waited a while longer before climbing the stairs and shutting the doors behind us, leaving a look—out (or rather a listen—out) below to check the volume in the church while we rang up the bells. They were not too loud and so we continued. We also rang at St Giles, Mary Magdalen (lovely musical bells) and Carfax Tower (plain bearings and heavier than most that day, but surprisingly not as hard going as I feared). A very good day's ringing enjoyed by all!

Then in January most of the Blewbury ringers attended the Churn Benefice outing, ably organised by Rob Nickless (and possibly written up separately – but it was a good day and worth more than one mention anyway!). We rang all the bells in the seven churches of the benefice including the sanctus bells and chiming bells as well as all the tower bells on the same day – which is a first we think! Harwell and Chilton were also thrown in for good measure.

February saw us heading off on another outing to the towers of Warwickshire and North Oxfordshire – a real chiller of a day with coats back on between each ring and the prize for the coldest church of the day going to St Etheldreda's in Horley. Another good day's ringing with thanks for organising this one going to Richard, Gill and Vicky.

Christine Kowalczuk

Chilton

On 26 October 2017 some ringers from our Branch helped two people from Great Shefford, Peter Birtwhistle and Liz Saunders, to ring their first quarter in Chilton. (printed in ONB Newsletter Dec 2017)

On 1 January 2018 some visitors from Chiswick went to Great Shefford where Peter Birtwhistle conducted his first quarter of Grandsire Doubles for them.

These visitors then came on to Chilton where one of them, Mike Wigney, conducted 3 Spliced Suprise methods from his wheelchair. This was the first time I had seen anyone ringing from a wheelchair. We have only 12 steps up to Chilton ringing area; one of the band carried Mike up the stairs on his back while another took apart the wheelchair downstairs, carried up the pieces, and reassembled them upstairs for Mike to conduct the quarter. This process was reversed when they finished.

After that the Chiswick visitors went on to ring two more quarters that day, one in West Hanney and another in Steventon.

Kate Crennell

Cholsey

We have had an exciting event take place at Cholsey. Two of our Bellringers; Chris May and Fiona Lloyd were married on Valentines Day (14th Feb this year) at Cholsey Church. It was a lovely day and the bellringers joined them for the happy occasion.

Also we hosted the Branch AGM which went very well. Several people asked for the recipe for the Seedie Biscuits which if technology works I will include.

We are still progressing with our newest learners. David Over, the latest one was elected a guild member at the AGM.

Jenny Jeskins



Chris May and Fiona Lloyd

East Hagbourne

On Monday 4th December we rang the bells in memory of William Shorey who died on this day 100 years ago in World War 1. We rang all eight bells and it was lovely that several generations of his family came up the tower to meet us and watch us ring. The eldest member remained in the car outside as she was unable to climb the stairs. The family were very grateful that this had been done in his memory

On Sunday 31st December, New Years Eve, ringers gathered at the tower for 23:30 ready to ring out the old year and ring in the New Year. We rang the bells for about 20 minutes and then Janet Corderoy conducted a short service of thanksgiving. We sang a hymn and there was a reading and some prayers. Thank you goes to Janet for doing this for us. We then wished all our fellow ringers and visitors a happy new year. The tenor bell was tolled and this was followed by firing the bells several times, this is a custom in Hagbourne tower. Firing involves all the bells striking at exactly the same time; it causes the tower to move quite a lot hence it is only done once a year but makes an incredible sound.

Hope 2018 is going to get better as yours truly fell over on 3rd January and it had transpired that I had fractured my shoulder blade so I would not be in the tower ringing the bells for a while!

The cold and flu that was going around hit the tower quite badly as I am sure the locals had noticed with either no ringing or only a few of the eight bells ringing out. On Sunday 11th February it was the first time in memory that the bells were not rung for Sunday service. A couple of practices had also had to be cancelled. We hoped with Spring around the corner we would all make a good recovery and be back ringing especially for Easter.

The Old North Berks Branch AGM took place on 17th March following the branch striking competition. We did not enter a team this year as so many of us have been injured or sick or both.

On Tuesday 20th March there were 12 ringers in the tower 8 who could actually ring and 4 ringers who cannot ring yet as they are convalescing but it was great to see so many, a first for a couple of months! We celebrated with a glass of wine and some goodies.

The tower held its AGM on Tuesday 27th March this year along with a quarterly meeting. The AGM should have been in February but again due to sickness and injury it had to be postponed to a later date.

The tower was very sad to hear of the death of Michael Bishop who was Tower Foreman and a regular ringer in the tower some years ago. Sadly, I never rang with Michael as he had given up ringing before I learnt to ring. We would like to send our condolences to his wife Sheila and his sons Richard and Nick and their families. The bells were rung on 31st March at 1:30 for his funeral.

The bells were rung on Saturday 31st March at 10:00 to commemorate the anniversary of the death of William James Smith who died on 30th March 100 years ago. Unfortunately, we could not ring the bells on this day in 2018 as it was Good Friday.

A quarter peal attempt was made on Easter Sunday at 07:00 to celebrate Easter and to celebrate a special birthday of one of our ringers, Jill Garlick. Unfortunately, the quarter peal of Stedman Triples was not successful but many of the people who live around the church commented on the beautiful ringing, we even received a thank you card from one of them.

Shirley Goss

Harwell

Since December, Clive who I mentioned in my last report has moved to Exmouth, their gain is our loss and we wish him and Heather well. Just before he departed, we advertised for new ringers, I am pleased to say our three ladies are now ringing rounds and call changes with minimal supervision.

We also welcome Lucy, Brendon and John who have moved to Harwell and are experienced ringers. Three 11 to 12 year olds have come forward and have shown an interest and it is hoped to start a course again soon. (how tower fortunes change?) So, we are ringing lots of call changes, plain bob and grandsire doubles and having a good laugh as well as ringing on the eight whenever we can for the more experienced.

Benjamin has rung his first quarter, treble to well struck plain bob doubles (see report elsewhere). It is Polly-Mirren's turn next, after her exams have finished.

Three Blewbury ringers still come regularly and add greatly to our practices (as well as adding to the merriment and general buzz).

Our Boxing Day ringing again went well, with many villagers coming to look at us, ring and join us for coffee and mince pies. (I finally managed to get a coffee right at the end!) Already looking forward to this year!

I wish you and your tower a very successful summer.

Philip Roberts

PS: Why can't you hear a Pterodactyl in the bathroom?

A. Because it has a silent pee.

And what is a pirate's favorite letter?

A. You would think t' would be "R" but 'tis the "C" they love!

Letcombe Regis

Our new recruits, Caroline and son Matthew, had their first Sunday ring on Remembrance Sunday when along with Christine, George, Henry, Sophie, Anne, Toni and daughter Lily we rang half muffled. Also on that day Sophie embarked on working towards her Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The guidance notes outline a host of skills to be developed and these are transferable to other areas of life and work. Bell ringing is an ideal activity: as well as the effort, grit and perseverance involved in the improvement of the practical skill of controlling a bell in rounds and changes, this group activity develops social and interpersonal skills of loyalty, commitment and reliability. On top of that, it means getting up an hour earlier than necessary on a Sunday morning to be at the tower by 9:15 a.m.!

In November we hosted the Branch Ringing School and six of our ringers benefited from Susan's tuition. Toni, Lily and George attended the October Young Ringers outing to Witney and Ducklington and in January Toni, Lily and Sophie went on the Bladon and Woodstock outing. At Christmas time it was great to have some of our former ringers, Hannah, Kate and Tallulah (on holiday from university and boarding school) back ringing with us.

At the beginning of April Graham, James and William from Whites of Appleton came to our tower and spliced terylene top ends to our six bell ropes to eliminate wear at the garter holes, and also cleaned and repainted the ironwork on the bell fittings and wooden bell frame.



On April 23rd we joyfully celebrated the birth of the new Royal Baby, Prince Louis, by ringing for half an hour in the evening!

Left is a photo of our young ringers taken on Christmas Eve. From left to right: Henry, Sophie, George (at top), Matthew and Lily.

Anne Williams

St Mary's Long Wittenham and St Peter's Little Wittenham

At last some positive news to report.

Following a survey by Whites about three years ago, there was no doubt that the bells at St Mary's are in need of refurbishment, and it was commented that the tower could benefit from a gallery.

Ringing in this church has become more difficult, and it has become obvious that we need to get the bell refurbishment done as soon as possible.

Applications to both the Oxford Guild and the Branch group have resulted in a promise of £9000 towards the restoration and tuning of the bells, which, Whites say, will result in more harmonious peal. We need full approval from the PCC before we progress further.

Unfortunately because of illness and injury we have not had a practice evening since January, and there has not been any ringing at Little Wittenham for several months. We hope to be back to full throttle with joyous ringing within the next few weeks!

It should be easier to recruit new ringers once the bells are in tip top condition.

A visiting band from St Vedast's Church in the city of London rang at St.Marys just before Easter, a welcome sound to brighten the rain filled day.

Julia Sargent

Milton

There is not much to report from Milton this time after the excitement of the previous six months. In addition to the peals rung on the bells we have rung one quarter peal. We are continuing to perfect London Surprise Minor as well as trying to hang on to as many of the other methods as we can. The Joint monthly DAMASCUS practices continue alternating between Milton and Drayton and are generally well attended.

Visitors are welcome at Practices on Tuesday, 7.45, however it is advisable to check before attending as we sometimes cancel if numbers look like being low.

Colin Turner

Radley

It is coming to the holiday season, so our numbers will fluctuate during this time, but we will still be ringing on a Sunday morning and Thursday evening. Some Thursdays we have had several visitors which swell our numbers. During Lent we had to cancel some of our Thursday practices as the Church was needed for the Lent Course. We are looking forward to Edward and Oliver coming back for the summer vacation, and Oliver will be staying for a further year while he does a placement in industry. Also, Joshua is continuing to improve Reverse Canterbury by learning the bobs. We also welcome Abi who has joined us from Abingdon.

Quarters have been rung on Remembrance Sunday (half-muffled) and 8th April to mark the centenary of the deaths of three soldiers from the parish who died during the Great War in November 1917 (two) and March 1918 (one). The one on Remembrance Sunday was also rung to welcome William James Lane, first grandson for Charlie and Yvonne Milward.

The 25^{th} annual Radley Course took place on 7^{th} April and as usual some of us cooked and served the evening meal

Daphne Pollard

Steventon

All change at Steventon in 2018! After being Tower Captain for more years than I have been alive (probably), Jack Jarvis has passed the job over to me.... a very hard act to follow and quite a challenge. In his time Jack must have taught half the village to ring and it is a shame that we do not have many village residents ringing in the tower. With all the new housing being built maybe some new ringing blood will be unearthed.

It was pleasing to see so many at the recent Branch Practice at Steventon, thanks to all who came along.

Whites came to inspect the bells recently, the outcome being that some work needs doing in order to keep the bells ringing for the future, although the bells themselves are in reasonable order. Included in the recommendations is the installation of rope guides which will make ringing at Steventon safer and more pleasurable. We are lucky that our new priest Phil is keen on having the bells ringing. Naturally, we will need to embark on major fundraising in order to pay for the work.

Claire Ward

Wantage

This year has started well with our inexperienced ringers learning new methods and our overall striking improving, especially for our Sunday ringing. We usually ring call changes on a Sunday but on a few occasions we have rung doubles methods which we have not been able to ring for a number of years.

Our 'daughter' church at Holy Trinity, Charlton under-went a refurbishment for approximately 5 months which meant for this period the congregation worshipped at the parish church. This had an impact on our Sunday ringing as we usually start ringing at 9.45am and their service started at 9.15am!

However, it was agreed that we could start ringing at 10.00am. In order to allow us more ringing time Dick Peters and I rang the bells up on a Saturday morning and we were both extremely pleased when the congregation returned to Holy Trinity, Charlton just before Easter.

As usual we rang for New Year and on the 6^{th} January rang a quarter peal to celebrate Fr John's 25 years service as the Vicar of Wantage.

We are grateful to our regular visitors, Richard and Gill Loyd and Liz Woodhouse, which enable us to ring the eight bells for practice nights.

Graham Stoter

West Hanney

Over the past 12 months we have been able to ring for the majority of Sunday services in spite of still being short of ringers. With the help of some regular visitors, we have also managed most practice nights.

At the end of last year we delivered 300+ flyers around both East and West Hanney trying to recruit new members, but alas there was not one reply!

It has been a pleasure to host four groups of visiting ringers and one of our newer members was delighted to ring his first quarter peal with one of the groups.

The Branch Practice at Hanney was enjoyed by all, as was the Training programme for new ringers with Susan Read.

At Christmas time a merry band with partners joined up for an excellent meal at our local pub, the Plough.

One of our newest learners was thrilled recently to successfully ring simple rounds and call changes to celebrate the christening of his grandson.

Jean Hazard

NEWSFLASH – Steventon

There are plans afoot to replace worn frictional parts at Steventon and install a rope guide. There has been no major work to the bells for almost 90 years and it is anticipated that this work will have a dramatic effect on the go and handling of the bells, which will ensure continued ringing at this tower for future generations. It is hoped that the work can be done in the next twelve months. There just remains the small matter of raising the money.... So, needless to say, we'll be looking for your support with this.

Old North Berks Wednesday afternoon practice mini-tour (a non-ringer's perspective)

Wednesday 25 April 2018 – sunshine and showers

The Ascension in Burghclere– $[6, 8cwt (\sim 410kg) \text{ in Bb}]$ – was a longish first drive (especially for Reg – no toilet (although Dove's disagrees) and the Yew trees were worried). Also a climb up through a trap door. The most interesting of the churches with a fine etched glass millennium window (the last designed by Laurence Whistler), wall tiles you can also find at Cragside, a couple of unusual Edwardian iron grave markers and exterior walls with interesting flint and a mason's mark. The ringing "sounded better as it went on".

Moving on to the quaint (ie no real parking) village of Kintbury and St Mary the Virgin [8, 12-1-14 (629kg) in E]. A fine church with GMT sundial and BST clock on the tower. Also wonderful ceilings, a nice village tapestry, an unusual memorial to a butler from a grateful family....and a toilet – a popular stop.

Lunch beckoned in the welcoming arms of the John o' Gaunt in Hungerford. A good lunch and some birthday presentations for Helen and Karen. Most of us couldn't find room for pudding but Daphne is reassuringly old school and put us to shame. Suitably refreshed we tottered down the canal to St Lawrence's Hungerford [8, 12-1-8 (626kg) in G].

Not the most picturesque of churches but plain and functional with an iron door to the bell tower. They were (somewhat hopefully) replacing a lead roof with more lead. A good lot of ringing to finish off and a chance for the obligatory group photo in the sun.

Bob Mannix (Claire's husband)

What's all this about the Branch Ringing School?

We are all skilled musicians, playing the biggest, loudest instruments in the world! But we find it difficult to persuade people to join us and learn to ring.

All our towers need more ringers. We need to do more recruitment. And having recruited, we need to teach our recruits to ring. Not many ringers are expert teachers of ringing. I'm trying to help.

We have had some limited success at recruiting more ringers using the Abingdon and Marcham Facebook groups. It might work for you.

We teach ringing from scratch on Saturday mornings, with the help of a number of our branch's best teachers and visiting a variety of towers in our branch. There is no reason why your learners cannot join us and have extra lessons with us.

We have a second group of learners who can already handle a bell, but need to improve their bell control and listening skills. This group meets on weekday evenings and visits a different practice night in our branch each week. The practices are run by a number of our branch ringers and are an enjoyable way of giving our learners a way of speeding up improving their ringing. It also gives them the chance to experience different towers and bells, and to meet lots of other ringers

Please let your learners know about the Branch Ringing School. Please email me for details.

Susan Read mail@abingdonbells.org.uk







Left to right are: Nicky, Sarah, Paul, Pete, Susan and David

13

Branch Ringing School visits East Hagbourne

The Branch Ringing School visited East Hagbourne on the evening of the branch practice. There were eight learner ringers (4 Aston Tirrold, 2 Sunningwell, 1 Marcham, 1 Abingdon), me, six local ringers, Christine from Blewbury and Mary from Wallingford. I organised a number of ringing games and the more expert ringers helped by joining in. For the second half of the meeting, Jeff and I alternated with grandsire and plain bob doubles for the locals and exercises for the learners.

During the evening, I presented Michelle and Jackie with their LTR2 certificates to show that they can now control their bells reasonably confidently. And to my surprise they gave me some chocolates and a bouquet.

We also had a brief business meeting and elected Odette Dawkins (Abingdon) a member of the Guild.

Susan Read



Young Ringers Outing (Bladon & Woodstock - 3 January 2018)

We were glad that the weather was bright and dry when we met at Bladon at 1.30 pm, perfect for walking.

The increasing trend of schools becoming academies and opting out of the holidays set by the County Council is proving difficult, with several young people having to miss the outing and return to school. So I was pleased to find we were quite a crowd with eleven young ringers, two younger siblings and twelve adults.

Branches represented among the young ringers were Banbury 1, Oxford City Branch 1, Reading Branch 1 and Old North Berks 8. I was pleased that we had a contingent from Blewbury in the ONB for the first time but sorry that Reading Branch's representation was reduced from their usual three or four to just one.

After raising the bells at Bladon we were able to ring call changes, plain hunt and bob doubles. We also played a game taking turns to throw a dice to choose which of a list of changes we pulled off in. And some of the young ringers were given the job of calling stand, new for some of them.

When we finished ringing we organised the young people into four teams, each with an adult. We had prepared a quiz with instructions on how to walk to Woodstock and sent the teams off at intervals. The first few questions were based in and around Bladon to make sure the young people found out a little about Winston Churchill and his connections to the village. Another question asked what the two men supporting the Woodstock coat of arms were wearing. Loin cloths and headwear made of oak leaves was the answer. Those men would have been cold that day!

Daphne was waiting for us at Woodstock with a lovely spread – chocolate cake, lemon drizzle cake, buttered cheese scones, tea, coffee and fizzy pop. Paul Lucas organised us all for a group photo and also took some informal shots of us in the tower.

Ringing in Woodstock included Plain Bob Triples for some and some games. We played "Killer" to test ringers' ability to set their bells and "Twister" where they took turns to tell other ringers to about turn (safely) while ringing. The idea was to see if they could remain in rounds whilst facing the wall. The rounds weren't brilliant but there were a lot of smiles!

The quiz was marked by one of the parents and resulted in such similar scores that all the youngsters and siblings received mini chocolate bars as prizes.

The next ONB young ringer outing will be in the February half term holiday, probably on Wednesday 14th February, (venue yet to be decided). Offers to organise something very gratefully received!

Susan Read ONB Training Officer



Young Ringers Outing (Old Marston & Headington –14 February 2018)

It was cold and drizzling on Wednesday. We had tried the walk a few days before. The first half was pleasant with allotments and sports fields and a bridle path. But the second half was a complex of not very interesting suburban housing which might result in young ringers getting lost. So we decided not to run a treasure hunt. Instead we decided to take the young people to the second tower by car.

We had had a reasonable response to our email about the outing. We met at 11 am with nine young ringers (under 18), one university student and five adult ringers.

Branches represented among the young ringers were Oxford City Branch 1, South Oxon Branch 3, Old North Berks 4 and Witney & Woodstock Branch 1. It was good to meet two young ringers from Thame, who found the bells we visited rather too light for their taste! Sadly there were several young people away with their families, not such a bad idea with such dismal weather in Oxford.

After raising the bells at Old Marston we were able to ring call changes, plain hunt and bob doubles. We also tried the "Twister" game we had played on the previous outing, involving turning round to face the wall while ringing rounds. The rounds weren't terribly good, but we enjoyed ourselves!

We travelled to Headington in four cars and then found how difficult it was finding parking spots. We all got to the church in a reasonable time though and while Daphne prepared the ploughman's lunch and pizzas for us all, most of the young people played card games. Paul hadn't realised what had been planned and took his car load of young ringers up the tower and organised ringing on the simulator. He wondered why it took the rest of us so long to park. We wondered where he and his car load were but of course couldn't hear the bells ringing!

Luckily we found Paul and the boys by the time lunch was ready and everyone enjoyed the spread Daphne provided. Paul Lucas organised us all for a group photo and also took some shots of the girls playing card games.

Whilst ringing took place, the adults had to go and rescue their cars from two hour parking slots around Headington.

The next ONB young ringer outing will be in the Easter School holiday, probably on Wednesday 4th April, (venue yet to be decided). Offers to organise something very gratefully received!

Susan Read ONB Training Officer



Young Ringers Outing (Iffley and Cowley – 4th April 2018)

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 30th May, (venue yet to be decided). Offers to organise something very gratefully received!

Susan Read ONB Training Officer



Tewkesbury Shield 10-bell Competition

After placing 1st in the guild 10-bell competition, the ONB Branch team had the opportunity to represent the Oxford Diocesan Guild at the prestigious National 10-bell striking competition in Tewkesbury Abbey. Prior to the competition, we held four practices – two at Abingdon, one in Wallingford and High Wycombe – to ring together as a team and practice the competition method: Cambridge Surprise Royal. At each practice we found that the last lead was slightly problematic, thus our practice piece became a lead of little bob followed by the last lead of Cambridge!

We all arrived at Tewkesbury Abbey on Saturday 5th May in time for the 11 o'clock draw (some in more exciting ways than others!) and were allotted the 12 o'clock slot. Unfortunately, after a reasonable practice piece, the band was overcome by the pressure and the test piece came to a disappointing end just after halfway through. However, it did mean that we could retreat to the Tewkesbury Park Restaurant sooner and enjoy lunch there – a bonus that we couldn't hear the other, rather more successful teams! It was a very enjoyable day overall, with some lovely weather and food (and ringing). We definitely took on the challenge with much enthusiasm and dedication, so well done to the team for their commitment to the practices and the competition, and we will try our best to qualify for next year's competition!

Sophie Martin



The band enjoying some well -deserved lunch after the competition!

The Bells! The Bells! ... Actor/writer Geoff Hales visits the tower practice.

I have appeared many times in Henry Irving's fine drama of haunting and horror, but these bells are different; Irving's bells were on a horse-drawn sledge and so nearer to "Jingle Bells" than to the peal of St Helen's, Abingdon, where I am going to see/hear a practice on a January night.

The stairs to the bell-chamber are perilously steep and narrow for one who takes size 14 in shoes, and they seem to go on for far too long. I grope ever upwards ("Nearer, my God, to thee") and find myself at last in a room full of welcoming ringers.

- --Do you ring bells? (hopeful enquiry)
- --No (apologetic)

I feel I should apologize for this gap in my education. All I know of ringing comes from reading "The Nine Tailors" back in the mists of time. On the walls of the chamber are boards with the names of teams of ringers who have done mighty deeds in years past. Among the reverend gentleman who took part, I looked in vain for the name of the Rev. Theodore Venables, who led the team in which Lord Peter Wimsey took a rope that winter's night, in Dorothy L. Sayers's detective story set in the snowbound fens, where they rang a peal of 15840 Kent Treble Bob Major in 9 hours 15 minutes. Also on the wall is a vertical ladder leading to a hatch, up which I wouldn't go, not for a cache of stolen jewels. It turns out to lead to the church clock, so I won't need to.

--Better to keep both feet on the floor, says the gentleman next to me on what I want to call the "sub's bench". Cross your legs over and you can get a foot entangled with a rope, not an experience to be recommended. Don't try it at home.

"What is this jangling in my ears?" demands the tormented Irving in the play. No jangling here: a sweet melodic ringing from above. Practice has begun. Up and down, up and down, catch and half-release, catch again. Faces redden with effort; this looks like serious exercise. "Lincolnshire!", shouts someone – nods from the ringers. The ropes descend again and rise to holes in the ceiling. What must the noise be, up in the belfry? Enough to drive the bound wretch in the book to madness and death, as it nearly drove Lord Peter.

Stop, breathe, announce the next peal [method], call someone off the bench and onto a rope. "Change (but not decay) in all around I see". And they rise and fall again, breathe, pause, release, catch, release again, till suddenly it is nine o'clock. Get your coats, you've pulled.

And go down those stairs again. "Gentle Jesus, day by day, keep me in the narrow way. Let it be the pub for me, not a night in A and E." And I am spared, for the pub, where the talk is of bells and the beer is excellent.

Geoff Hales

New Year's Day 2018 at Appleton





QUARTER PEALS

Abingdon, St Helen, 26 November 2017. **1272 Surprise Minor (2m)**: Josh Ball 1, Susan Read 3, Brian Read 3, Sophie Martin 4, Isaac O'Shea 5, Tim Pett (C) 6. 1st quarter in these methods – 4, 5

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 10 December 2017. **1296 Surprise Minor (2m)**: Josh Ball 1, Susan Read 2, Brian Read 3, Sophie Martin 4, Isaac O'Shea 5, Tim Pett (C) 6. Rung for the Patronal Festival Evensong.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 17 December 2017. **1260 Plain Bob Minor**: Isaac O'Shea 1, Simon Yarrow 2, Josh Ball 3, Brian Read 4, Sophie Martin 5, Matt Franklin (C) 6. First quarter inside: 3. Rung for the Carol Service.

Appleton, 24 December 2017. **1295 Grandsire Caters**: Sarah Ockwell 1, Michele Winter 2, Barbara H Payne 3, Sylvia M Harrison 4, Jenny A Dyer 5, Peter H M Day 6, Catherine E Ockwell 7, Michael J Harrison (C) 8, Bernard J Stone 9, David C Ockwell 10. For Christmas, rung before the Carol Service.

Blewbury, 26 December 2017. **1280** Cambridge Surprise Major: David Endacott 1, Ellen Bramhill 2, Gillian Loyd 3, Josie S Irving 4, Mark Vincent 5, Charles Morrish 6, Stuart F Gibson (C) 7, Richard Loyd 8. Rung during the annual Boxing Day walk to celebrate the life of William Dent Robinson, who died age 105 years on the 4th December. First of Cambridge S Major 2.

Chilton, 1 January 2018. **1320 Spliced Surprise Minor (3m):** Mike Wigney (C) 1, Charles Turnbull 2, John Hawes 3, Roderic K Bickerton 4, Gill Tomlinson 5, Tony Nunn 6.

Wantage, 6 January 2018. **1260 Plain Bob Triples:** Celia Leeson-Cox 1, David Endacott MBE 2, Liz Woodhouse 3, Sarah Howell 4, Gillian Loyd 5, Richard Loyd 6, Joe Norton (C) 7, Graham Stoter 8. To celebrate Fr John Salter's 25 years service as Vicar of Wantage.

Milton, 9 January 2018. **1260 Doubles (6m)**: Daphne Pollard 1, Rachel Morrish 2, Nicola Turner (C) 3, Charles Morrish 4, Colin Turner 5. Most methods – 2.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 18 January 2018. **1260 Plain Bob Royal:** Susan E M Read 1-2, Tim Pett 3-4, Rosanna Cretney 5-6, John G Pusey 7-8, Joe Norton (C) 9-10.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 1 February 2018. **1312 Kent Treble Bob Major:** Susan Read 1 -2, John Pusey 3-4, Joe Norton 5-6, Tim Pett (C) 7-8.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 22 February 2018. **1260 St Clement's College Bob Minor:** Susan E M Read 1-2, Tim Pett 3-4, Joe Norton (C) 5-6. Rung to celebrate the 70th birthday of Pete Tombs.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 22 February 2018. **1260 Plain and Little Bob Minor**: Susan E M Read 1-2, Tim Pett 3-4, Joe Norton (C) 5-6.

Blewbury, 3 March 2018. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Eden Bramhill 1, Gillian Loyd (C) 2, Ellen Bramhill 3, Richard Loyd 4, Michael Winter 5, Matthew Phillips 6. First quarter peal 1.

Abingdon, **St Helen**, 11 March 2018. **1280 London Surprise Major**: Nicola Turner 1, Sophie Martin 2, Alison Merryweather-Clarke 3, Stuart Gibson 4, Ryan Mills 5, Nick Clarke 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, David Thomas 8. First blows in the method - 2. First quarter of London S Major and completes the standard 8 – 3.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 15 March 2018. **1264 Plain Bob Major**, Comp. Joe Norton: Susan E M Read 1-2, John G Pusey 3-4, Joe Norton (C) 5-6, Tim Pett 7-8. With best wishes for Bernard Masterman, currently on life support.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 29 March 2018. **1264 Plain Bob Major:** Tim Pett 1-2, Susan E M Read 3-4, John G Pusey 5-6, Joe Norton (C) 7-8.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 30 March 2018. **1344 Plain Bob Major:** Susan Read 1-2, Tim Pett 3-4, David Thomas (C) 5-6, Sophie Martin 7-8. First in hand: 7-8.

Harwell, 1 April 2018. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Benjamin Small 1, Gillian Loyd 2, Mark Vincent (C) 3, Richard Loyd 4, Philip Roberts 5, Matthew Phillips 6. First Q – 1.

Blewbury, 2 April 2018. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Stephanie Runting 1, Rachel L Mahoney 2, William Stafford (C) 3, Sophie L Martin 4, George J Vant 5, Alexander M Fishburn 6, Isaac J O'Shea 7, Marc A McDonald 8. First of Grandsire 4.

Radley, 8 April 2018. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Daphne Pollard 1, Charlie Milward 2, Ann Belcher 3, M Ian Minns 4, Edward Walker (C) 5, Claire Ward 6. To mark the centenary of the death of L/Cp Horace Stevens of this parish, died 21 March 1918. First quarter on a covering bell – 6.

Abingdon (30 St Amand Drive), 19 April 2018. **1344 Little Bob Major:** Susan E M Read 1-2, Tim Pett 3-4, John G Pusey 5-6, Joe Norton (C) 7-8. First LB Major in hand as conductor.

PEALS

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Drayton**, 16 November 2017, 2h44, **5088 Buckland Dinham Surprise Major**: Peter Bridle 1, Helen J Piper 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Robert J Crocker 4, Nicola J Turner 5, Colin M Turner 6, Bernard F L Groves (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

Chilton, 27 November 2017, 2h29. **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (7m):** E John Wells 1, Josie S Irving 2, June D Wells 3, Timothy G Pett 4, Simon L Edwards 5, Stuart F Gibson (C) 6.

Chilton, 16 December 2017, 2h43, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (7m):** J Alan Ainsworth 1, Janet E Menhinick 2, Catherine M A Lane 3, Beryl R Norris 4, John G Pusey 5, Kenneth R Davenport (C) 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Harwell**, 17 December 2017, 3h03, **5012 Clitheroe Alliance Major**: Robert J Crocker 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Peter G C Ellis 5, Colin M Turner 6, Claire F Roulstone 7, John R Martin (C) 8. Rung for Christmas.

Milton, 21 December 2017, 2h47, **5152 Spliced Surprise Major (17m)**: E John Wells 1, June D Wells 2, Anna E Sherwood 3, Daniel J Page 4, Stuart F Gibson 5, Robert A Partridge 6, Jack E Page 7, Colin G Newman (C) 8.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 24 December 2017, 2h30, **5040 Minor (7m):** Josh D Ball 1, June D Wells 2, E John Wells 3, Sophie L Martin 4, Isaac J O'Shea 5, Timothy G Pett (C) 6. 1st peal of Minor - 1, 4.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 31 December 2017, 2h30, **5088 Searight Delight Major**: Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Debby M Talbott 4, Michael J Dew 5, Stuart P B Talbott 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.

NON-ASSOCIATION, **Milton**, 12 January 2018, 2h46, **5040 Stedman Triples**: Nicola J Turner 1, John Pladdys (C) 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Simon L Edwards 4, Hilda C Ridley 5, John H Napper 6, Simon W Edwards 7, John R Ridley 8.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 13 January 2018, 2h28, **5040 Stedman Doubles:** Alan M Eyles 1, John Pladdys (C) 2, David L Thomas 3, Isaac J O'Shea 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Simon W Edwards 6. First Stedman Doubles: 1,3,4,5. Completes Stedman family: 3, 5

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 14 January 2018, 2h37, **5088 New Cambridge Surprise Major**: Colin M Turner 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Timothy G Pett 4, Susan V Gambling 5, David M Gambling 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Richard L Thumwood 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 28 January 2018, 2h39, **5152 Tynemouth Surprise Major**: Brian Bladon 1, Robert J Crocker 2, Colin M Turner 3, Charlotte A Boyce 4, John C Sheppard 5, Katharine J Salter 6, Nicola J Turner 7, John R Martin (C) 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 29 January 2018, 2h31, **5040 Barlow Alliance Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Christopher J Pickford 2, Kenneth R Davenport 3, Beryl R Norris 4, John C Sheppard 5, Colin M Turner 6, Darran Ricks (C) 7, Peter Bridle 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 4 February 2018, 2h39, **5152 Uppingham Delight Major**: Charlotte A Boyce 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Richard L Thumwood 3, Colin M Turner 4, John C Sheppard 5, Charles E J Morrish 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Nicola J Turner 8. For Patronal Festival.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Sunningwell**, 10 February 2018, 2h47, **5040 Surprise Minor (41m)**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Darran Ricks 2, Robert J Crocker 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Peter G C Ellis (C) 5, Colin M Turner 6.

Milton, 13 February 2018, 2h41, 5152 Spliced Surprise Major (23m): E John Wells 1, Anna E Sherwood 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Beryl R Norris 4, W John Couperthwaite (C) 5, June D Wells 6, Martin J Turner 7, Peter Bridle 8.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL ASSOCIATION, **Milton**, 24 February 2018, 2h43, **5040 Grandsire Triples**: John H Napper 1, Julian O Howes 2, Simon W Edwards 3, D Paul Smith 4, Colin F Salter 5, Richard B Pullin 6, George M Salter 7, Gareth L M Lawson 8. Rung strictly silent and non conducted.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton**, 3 March 2018, **5200 Stedman Caters**, Comp: Lucinda J Woodward: Michele Winter 1, Andrew Haseldine 2, Julie A Haseldine 3, Lucinda J Woodward (C) 4, James A Haseldine 5, Patricia M Newton 6, John H Napper 7, Robert H Newton 8, Stephen H Stanford 9, Bernard J Stone 10. Rung to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the installation of the original ring of 6 bells, given by Squire Southby, at St Laurence Appleton. Circled the tower: 2, 500th Peal: 5

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 4 March 2018, 2h40, **5024 Great Kingshill Surprise Major**: Brian Bladon 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Alan M Eyles 4, Simon L Edwards 5, John C Sheppard 6, Colin M Turner 7, John R Martin (C) 8. Rung in thanksgiving for the life of Jim Taylor.

Chilton, 9 March 2018, 2h44, **5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (7m):** David A Cornwall 1, Maurice F Edwards 2, J Alan Ainsworth 3, Catherine M A Lane 4, Stuart F Gibson (C) 5, Kenneth R Davenport 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Drayton**, 15 March 2018, 2h48, **5152 Humphlet Surprise Major**: Robert J Crocker 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Helen J Piper 3, John C Sheppard 4, Peter Bridle 5, Colin M Turner 6, Alan M Eyles 7, Bernard F L Groves (C) 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 18 March 2018, 2h30, **5040 Magna Carta Alliance Major**: Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Darran Ricks 3, Janet E Menhinick 4, John C Sheppard 5, Colin M Turner 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, Peter G C Ellis 8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 21 April 2018, 3h01, **5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal** Comp Philip A B Saddleton: E John Wells 1, Sophie L Martin 2, June D Wells 3, Anna E Sherwood 4, Josie S Irving 5, Nicholas J Clarke 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Kenneth R Davenport 8, David L Thomas 9, Colin G Newman 10. First peal of Royal (aged 14) - 2.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 22 April 2018, 2h37, **5088 The Wombles Delight Major**: Katharine J Salter 1, Alan M Eyles 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Charlotte A Boyce 4, John C Sheppard 5, Simon L Edwards 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.



Presentation of Striking Competition Trophy to Chris Tuckett on behalf of Wallingford

STRIKING COMPETITION TEAMS



Abingdon



Blewbury

ONB Branch Outing

Saturday 21st July 2018



Don't Forget: Free Prize Draw for attendees!



Harwell



Wallingford

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Old North Berks Branch

Barbecue & Croquet



Join in the fun after the Branch Outing on

Saturday, 21st July 2018 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 proceeds to branch funds

All names to Gill Loyd by Friday, 13th July please

Telephone: 01235 850459

Email: gillianloyd@gmail.com

Please note:

Soft drinks will be provided, please bring your own alcohol

Christmas Quiz—THE ANSWERS

Branch Towers from their anagrams:

1. GONNA BID ABINGDON

2. BASH ENTOURAGE EAST HAGBOURNE

3. DRY LEA RADLEY

4. TWO MEN HALTING LONG WITTENHAM
 5. ROSALIND TROT ASTON TIRROLD
 6. DERWENT SHED WEST HENDRED

7. KING COLE LOCKINGE

e.g. TOE CLIMBERS LETCOMBE REGIS
 AT TWENTIETH MILL LITTLE WITTENHAM
 A NUT COUNTERS TOY SUTTON COURTENAY

11. SHORT PALS SPARSHOLT

12. TELECASTS MOB BET LETCOMBE BASSETT

13. ON THE STORK NORTH STOKE
 14. VENT NOTES STEVENTON
 15. FALL DOWN RIG WALLINGFORD

Seedie biscuits

125g unsalted butter, softened 100g flour (I used brown SR)

100g caster sugar 150g seeds (mostly sunflower, some pumpkin)

100g muscovado sugar 100g oats

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Oven 160 fan.

Lined baking tray with non-stick paper

Beat sugar and butter until smooth; add egg and mix again. Stir in vanilla, then add other ingredients and combine gently.

Take spoonfuls, shape into balls then flatten gently on the tray(s). Space well apart as they do spread. 10 - 12 minutes in the oven until lightly brown at the edges. Allow to cool on trays for just a minute then put on cooling rack. Makes 16 - 18.

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 December 2018 is 23rd October 2018. 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

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.

Wednesday, 6th June – Surprise Major Practice – Brightwell (8) (7.45–9.15pm)

Thursday, 14th June – Branch Practice – Aston Tirrold (6) TBC (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 27th June – Afternoon Practice – Marcham (6) (2.00–3.30pm)

Saturday, 21st July – Branch Outing and Barbecue

Wednesday, 25th July – Afternoon Practice – Radley (6) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 1st August – Surprise Major Practice – Goring (8) (7.45–9.15pm)

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

Wednesday, 22nd August – Afternoon Practice – Cumnor (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 12th September – Branch Practice – West Hanney (6) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 26th September – Afternoon Practice – Drayton (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 3rd October – Surprise Major Practice – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)

Friday, 12th October – Branch Practice – Blewbury (8) (8.00–9.30pm)

Wednesday, 24th October – Afternoon Practice – Cholsey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

Saturday, 10th November – Social Evening – Skittles and Supper at Radley

Monday, 12th November – Branch Practice – Didcot (3) (6.00–7.00pm), Little Wittenham (5) (7.30–8.30pm)

Wednesday, 28th November – Afternoon Practice – Chilton (6) (2.00–3.30pm)

Wednesday, 5th December – Surprise Major Practice – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)

Wednesday, 12th December – Afternoon Practice – Harwell (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

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