



Old North Berks Branch Newsletter

No: 161

June 2023



North Moreton's new bells:
left: at the Eijsbouts Foundry and right: being tuned at Whites of Appleton.

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Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2023 issue of the Branch Newsletter.

Congratulations to Karen Bishop, Andrew Forman, Tom Palmer, Mary Clare Palmer and Samuel Fuentes, who have all rung their first Quarter Peal.

Congratulations are also due to Elisha Small, Mary Leneis and Isaac Davis, who have all rung their first Quarter Peal 'inside'.

Congratulations are also due to North Moreton on the augmentation from 6 to 8 in very short time.

There has been lots of ringing throughout the Branch to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, and several towers have gained new recruits through the 'Ring for the King' campaign.

My best wishes for the coming months and don't forget to send in your reports for the next issue of the Newsletter.

Daphne Pollard

Chairman's Report

Welcome to everyone who has recently learnt to ring and especially to those who came to ringing through the "Ring for the King" campaign. I can promise you a lifetime of fun, learning, exercise and friendship through bell ringing.

Thank you to everyone who rang for the Coronation and a reminder to please record the ringing on Bell Board if you have not done so already. Ringing for the Coronation, and playing our part in the huge celebrations is something we should all be justly proud of. Personally, I've been heavily involved with the North Moreton Bell Augmentation (see reports elsewhere in the newsletter), completed just days before the Coronation so ringing for the King was especially poignant.

Rob Nickless

Secretary's Report

After several attempts ever since 2020 we finally managed to hold our Ringing and Refreshments event on 2nd January. This was a very popular occasion at Steventon, with almost forty attendees. Thanks go to the Steventon ringers and friends for their hospitality and for providing a superb range of soups and cakes on such a cold morning.



Our AGM was once again held successfully by a Zoom meeting, ably hosted by our Chairman, Rob Nickless. It was attended by twenty-one members, including the Guild Master, Katie Lane, and our Guild Branch Steward, Patricia Newton. All branch officers remained in position apart from Charles Morrish, who relinquished his role of Vice-chairman and became one of the Joint Ringing Masters. He will fully take up position in September and Philip Roberts kindly offered to continue in this role until then. We welcome Jenny Bennett of Wantage to the position of Vice-chairman. As the role of Branch Secretary has considerably expanded now that there are thirty-two branch practices to organise each year together with four social events, the two new roles of Practices Secretary and Social Secretary were created. These have been taken up by Bridget Taylor of Harwell and Mandy Winters of Blewbury.

Our Treasurer, Stuart Gibson, reported that in 2022 the membership of the Branch was 240, a decrease of 7 from 2021. There were two fund raising events in 2022. The barbecue (including the raffle and tea proceeds) raised £555 and the Barn Dance £337. Honey sales resulted in donations of nearly £200. The Branch, for the sixth year, collected a voluntary £2 donation with subscriptions. Almost everyone made the contributions to put towards Branch bell restorations projects and £466 was collected. No grants were paid out in the year, but it was decided to support the North Moreton augmentation to 8 with £1,500, and the rehang/augmentation of Sparsholt with £3,000. A donation of £500 was made to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund. The Branch, at the end of 2022, had funds in the region of £6,000, which is well in excess of the reserves required by the Branch.

Eleven new branch members were elected to the Guild: Millie Bauwens (Abingdon); Greg Locke (Aston Tirrold); Amelia Butterfield (Brightwell); Mark Collett (Cholsey); Jim Gulliver (Drayton); Rob Able, Paul Batho and Sarah Tenant-Flowers (East Hagbourne); Emily Young and Matthew Young (Milton); Simon Baker (Steventon). Sadly I have to report the passing of Jean Hazard, a former branch member and a ringer at West Hanney for many years.

Branch practices have taken place at East Hagbourne, Harwell, Wantage, Drayton and Long Wittenham. There have been afternoon practices at Chilton, Drayton, Brightwell, Marcham and Cumnor. Surprise practices were held at Brightwell and Harwell, with the practice at Wallingford cancelled through lack of support and a quarter peal of Stedman Triples rung in its place. We have also held two very successful advanced practices at North Moreton and Blewbury, aimed at introducing intermediate ringers to the more complicated plain methods and to treble bob.

We recently had a 'mini' outing of three towers (Islip, Bletchington and Kirtlington) with an excellent pub lunch in Sturdys Castle near Kidlington. This was attended by 15 branch members and was very successful, with good ringing at each of the towers.

Some dates for your diaries: The 6-bell striking competition and breakfast will be held on Saturday morning, 10th June, at Long Wittenham. Our main branch outing is planned for Saturday, 15th July and this will be followed by a barbecue at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. Our autumn social event will be a quiz night and supper in Blewbury Village Hall on Saturday, 18th November.

I look forward to seeing many of you on these occasions!

Gill Loyd

Ringling Masters' Ramblings

There is so much that we could write about in this edition of the branch newsletter; it is difficult to know where to begin, or to risk making the ramble more of a marathon! Hopefully 'Tower Talk' will provide much more than we can say about ringing in general, and the progress and events going on in the various towers within our branch.

In the last issue we were thanking you all for your efforts in ringing for the sad event of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As we write this, it is the end of a celebratory weekend marking the Coronation of King Charles III, with a great deal of ringing nationwide. We look forward to seeing your own performances on Bellboard, in The Ringing World, and in this or the autumn newsletter. Please remember that you can download some special coronation certificates from Bellboard, listing your tower members who rang for the Coronation. These will be nice keepsakes and also provide an historical record in your towers.

I am sure there will be much written about the North Moreton project which was covered by the BBC, including one of their reporters Anna Gray who recorded the first Stedman Triples rung on the bells on Coronation Day for her radio programme. Anna decided to learn to ring in Oxford (St Giles) as part of the Ring for The King initiative and she has been covering her progress in a series which has been distributed nationally on local radio stations. Not only was this an historical experience for her on the day, but it was her first ring at a tower away from her home. Let's hope that it will be the first of many as she has been a great ambassador for ringing in general. Follow her progress here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0f715v4> The two new bells are superb and fit in so well with the old bells. Congratulations to The Royal Eijsbouts Foundry and Whites of Appleton for an outstanding job completed on time.



Anna Gray with the ringers at NM on Coronation Day.

Anna's experience leads us to again emphasise the benefits of ringing at other tower and branch practices to gain experience and meet others at similar stages of ringing ability. Please do everything possible with whatever spare time you may have to get out and about. Tower correspondents have a key role to play in making sure that the notices of all Branch and Guild events reach every member to know when these practices or events are happening.

Those who attended the Branch AGM by Zoom, or have read the minutes, will know that there have been some new officers elected to serve the branch. In Ramblings we would like to express a very warm welcome to Charles Morrish who is already becoming active as a JRM as you will see from elsewhere in this newsletter. Charles had something of a 'Baptism of Fire' by running his first branch practice at Long Wittenham with a record attendance of 27 members! We would like to thank Philip Roberts for his loyal and excellent 7 years' service as Joint Ringing Master. Philip will still stand in for some events until Charles retires later in the year, and will also be arranging the branch outing in July. Many of you might fear losing Philip's legendary jokes, but we are assured that these will continue as the most enjoyable section of 'Ramblings'!

Speaking of which.....

I was thinking about our new King today, we have had a dog (King Charles Spaniel), a cake (Victoria), ships (Queen Elizabeth and Mary) what will be named after King Charles III? Apart from the obvious new rose and the odd King Charles street on a new estate somewhere (I don't think we can afford a new aircraft carrier). Time will tell.

Janette was upset last week when she made an error in our holiday booking. I told her not to worry and to embrace her mistakes. She then gave me a hug (that was nice!).

What has eight wheels and flies?

Ans: A bin lorry.

Richard Loyd and Philip Roberts

TOWER TALK

Abingdon

Like most places we had a very busy weekend of ringing in Abingdon for the coronations of HM King Charles III and HM Queen Camilla. We started on Friday by ringing for the town's civic service held in St Helen's. We managed 8 ringers for a while until one had to join the choir and we dropped down to the back 6 for a service touch.

On Saturday afternoon we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples at St Helen's. This enabled Joe Gillett to ring his first quarter on 8 bells.

On Sunday morning we had the usual service ringing at both towers and then the ancient and rather quirky tradition of bun throwing in the afternoon. This takes place mostly for Royal occasions when the town councillors go to the top of the County Hall and throw buns to the assembled masses in the market square below. We always plan to ring St Nicolas bells while the buns are being thrown. This had been advertised as 4pm but what we were not told was that there was an hour and a quarter's entertainment first, including Morris men and belly dancers, and the actual throwing was due at 5.15pm. Some of our young ringers were bored and went to St Helen's for a ring to while away the time. In the end the ringing at St Nicolas was very well supported with most of our regular ringers, our young learners and a few who came back to ring after a long gap. We rang the coronation call changes and finished with a plain course of King Charles Delight Minor.

On Monday we did our bit for the Help Out day by ringing tunes on handbells in the church and having the tower open. Several people had a go at ringing tunes and some were very good at it which hopefully means we will have some promising recruits. A steady stream of people made their way up the tower where they were shown the bells and ringing was demonstrated on a single tied bell. Quite a few people, including some quite small children, had a go ringing just the back-stroke and again several expressed an interest in learning to ring. It also gave two or three of our local ringers the opportunity to try ringing with the simulator, covering to methods from Doubles to Cinques and ringing Plain Hunt Minor. That's something that we should do more often as it is a great way to improve the striking.

Tim Pett

Appleton

Ringling at Appleton has now returned to normal after the Covid-19 pandemic.

For the first time since March 2020, we were able to celebrate the 205th Anniversary of the bells on 4th March (this year on the actual day) with a peal of Stedman Caters successfully being rung in the morning and 64 people sitting down to dinner in the Village Hall. After dinner, handbells were "lapped" to Stedman Caters and Kent Treble Bob Major rung by a "scratch" band. Our traditional songs were sung and it was very good to see Norman Leslie taking part in the singing of a "Farmers Boy". Norm was a regular ringer at Appleton (along with his twin brother Den) until his marriage and always attended the March 4th celebrations. We were very sorry to hear that a few weeks later Norm had a fall and sadly passed away in hospital. His funeral was held at Faringdon Church on 14th April and many of the Appleton band and their families attended the service. We attempted a quarter peal later that afternoon, but unfortunately, it was miscalled.

We had a successful recruitment drive as part of the "Ring for the King" campaign and had 4 new recruits come forward from the Village, 2 of which Chantal and Walé are now ringing rounds. We also had 3 lapsed ringers come forward – two (Louise and Pat) learnt to ring at Aston and have not rung for 20 years and one (Clare) learnt to ring at Cumnor more recently.



The “Big Help Out” – scouts in Appleton tower



Returning to ring in Appleton to “Ring for the King” – Louise and her mum Pat, who learnt to ring at Aston and have not rung for 20 years.

We rang a peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal and a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples to celebrate the Coronation. We also had two sessions of general ringing, one on the Coronation Day and the other for the Village Service on 7th May and were very pleased to see Chantal, Walé and Louise ringing rounds and Pat and Clare ringing rounds and call changes (Kings and Queens) – all their hard work paid off! On Monday 8th May, we took part in the “Big Help Out” where all the village organisations had stands to attract volunteers – we had a steady stream of visitors to the tower with more than 30 people having a go at backstrokes, hopefully some of these will decide that ringing is for them.

We have now restarted practices on Friday evenings (7.30–9.00) and our priority at the moment is concentrating on getting our learners to ring rounds and call changes on 6 or 8 bells. We continue to ring for two Evensong services a month (2nd and 4th) and have now restarted Sunday morning ringing – visitors are always welcome.

Michele Winter

Aston Tirrold

We continue to ring in Aston Tirrold and rang for the King on 6th May. We are still an inexperienced band and would welcome any help from anyone! We meet on a Thursday from 7-8, visitors welcome, but do just check with me first that we have not cancelled our practice due to low numbers .

Rachel Marffy

Blewbury

Thanks again to our visitors who really make a difference to both numbers and expertise at our Friday practices. We ring all eight bells more often than not, and usually have enough people to stand by anyone learning something new.

In January, we replaced our usual Christmas dinner with a Twelfth Night supper. This was a great success, with hot meals served in the cosy surroundings of the Blewbury Manor Barn. The format was a hit, and the date has been set for a repeat next year.

Also in January, many of us attended the Benefice outing, ringing all the bells in the Churn Benefice in one day. It was a great opportunity to meet up with our fellow ringers from each of the towers, and to enjoy a few food stops along the way. We had an excellent lunch in North Moreton provided by Jo Nickless (Thank you, Jo), stopped for tea in Blewbury and finished up with an evening meal at The Bear in North Moreton. And, although I was too ill to attend, I understand that the tower outing to North Oxfordshire and South Warwickshire in February was also a great success, with the brunch at Gilks' in Kington and an evening meal at the Thai restaurant in Banbury being particular highlights. Apparently they all enjoyed the ringing too!

The weather held fair for our annual Duck Race on Easter Sunday with a good turnout from the village to watch our non-feathered friends float down the stream and to cheer them on to victory (or otherwise).

We have just enjoyed ringing for the Coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III on Saturday 6th May, and were pleased to be joined by our newest recruit, Val, who is making excellent progress. Several of us then ventured out that afternoon to ring at North Moreton on their lovely new ring of eight. Our visit was returned the following day when we were joined by some of their ringers to ring for our Sing for the King service at Blewbury.

Christine Kowalczyk



Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

As I draft this update, we have a couple of 'big' unknowns here in Brightwell.

We are fortunate in having four new adult learners, who were inspired to Ring for the King. Will we be able to get them ready to ring unaided in time? – a big unknown – and one that I should be able to confirm before this goes to Press (see below). If so, it will have been a fantastic achievement for them, as well as for me and Kevin, in getting them up to speed in three/four weeks!

Our other big unknown is the change of ownership to our neighbouring Brightwell Manor. The current owners have been very supportive of the church and very tolerant, welcoming even, of our ringing. Rumours abound as to the forthcoming owner – and the extent to which security will be a feature of their occupancy, let alone how supportive they will be of our church and our ringing. Only time will tell!

As for ringing, there is not a lot to say after the ringing for the late Queen in the last edition and ahead of the forthcoming Coronation. As usual, we are usually able to ring on Sunday mornings, even if it means 'Rev Kev' has to ring two out of four, or five. Sometimes we can ring on 6 – and it was a real pleasure to ring all eight bells, with a local band, on Easter Sunday.

As for the coronation update We decided to ring in the afternoon – and three of our four new ringers were able to join us to ring, as were our two young learners, with a 'stander-byer' each time (just in case – and rarely needed). Ringing mainly on 6, rounds and "Kings" (of course). There were eleven of us altogether – as per team photo (one youngster not in picture). Hopefully our new ringers will continue to ring with us – they do seem pretty enthusiastic!

John Dowling



Cholsey

We are doing well at Cholsey. We are lucky to have two new bellringers who have joined the Guild since the last AGM.

We have run an in-house Bob Triples Course here in Cholsey with the help of Wallingford and can now ring a plain course on a good day.

North Moreton have been practising here on a Monday while their new bells are being installed which is nice for us.

We will be ringing for the King on 6th and 7th May 9.30-10am for the Coronation and the open air Church service on the Sunday.

This week (end of April) I reached my 80th Birthday and the ringers gave me (and John) a lovely dinner at the Red Lion with a ringers Cake and Presents! After which we rang merrily.



We have also had an Extraordinary General Meeting and have appointed a Deputy Tower Captain, Secretary, Ringing Master and Steeple Keeper.

Jenny Jeskins

Cumnor

‘Ring for the King’ – I am pleased to report that we successfully rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla on Saturday, 6th May. Afterwards, there was opportunity for all of the band to ring, including our latest recruits (details are in the Quarter Peal and Miscellaneous Sections).

Tower open afternoon – This took place on Sunday, 7th May whereby visitors could watch a demonstration of bellringing, have a turn at chiming a bell and then climbing the tower. After all the exertions, visitors enjoyed tea and home-made cakes. Hopefully we will have attracted some new recruits!

Tower roof – The lead on the church tower roof has recently been replaced. Of interest were the removed lead sheets, covered in graffiti dating from the 1800s, which provided visitors with a glimpse of Cumnor’s history. Included were a range of symbols, outlines of shoes, a drawing of a violin (possibly the church musician), dates from during the war (perhaps a bored firewatcher) and the names of people enjoying the view! To preserve some of this history, a portion of the graffitied leadwork was kept and framed; it now hangs on the wall of the ringing chamber.

Jenny Dyer

Drayton

The last 6 months have seen several milestones being reached. Jim Gulliver started learning at the end of September 2022 and, with the help of the Branch Saturday Ringing School, is now ringing regularly for Sunday services. Tom and Mary Clare Palmer both rang their first quarter exactly one year after their first handling lesson. Mary Clare then rang a further quarter for International Women's Day on 8th March.

At the end of January we enjoyed a dinner with regular visitors to our practice to say farewell to Marcus and Jackie Gover. Marcus has accepted a new job based in Amsterdam but the bureaucracy involved in taking a job in the EU has meant that he has continued to appear periodically at practices and Sunday service ringing.

Finally, like many other towers, we rang all 8 bells to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. However, this was not the only ringing at Drayton that day as we also had to ring for a wedding a little later in the early afternoon!!

Nick Clarke

East Hagbourne

The handbell ringers played at the 'Mini' Ring and Sing that was part of the Christmas Tree Festival entertainment on the afternoon of the 17th December just before the Grand Draw and the announcement of the winner of the best dressed tree. Kelly, who is from the USA, joined our team following her marriage to George, one of our ringers. Kelly played the handbells in the States as a child and is now having tuition on the big bells.

We rang the bells for 2 funerals in December the first being Mary Napper of Blewbury on 9th December and then we were asked to ring for the funeral of Lady Caroline Lucas-Tooth of East Hagbourne on Wednesday 21st December. May they Rest in Peace.

The bells were rung at St Andrew's on 31st December at 11:30 and we rang in the New Year at Midnight. There were nine ringers in the tower, eight men and one female which is a first at Hagbourne in many years. We had an all 'boy band' ringing at one stage. Our token female ringer, was yours truly and it felt very strange being the only female ringer in the tower, fortunately there were a few female visitors. We had a small service at 11:50 and then the tenor was tolled at midnight and for the first time in a few years we were able to 'Fire' the bells which means the bells are all struck at the same time! This was a first for a few members of the band and definitely a first for me on the treble but we succeeded which was quite an achievement. This was followed by a glass of Prosecco, we were then joined by some revellers from the village, it was so lovely to celebrate the New Year again in the tower.

On Saturday 7th January about seven Hagbourne ringers joined the Churn Ringing Outing that was organised by Rob Nickless from North Moreton. We had a really good day's ringing with a lovely soup lunch at North Moreton Village Hall, thanks to Rob's wife. Some of the group also met up in the evening at The Bear in North Morton for a meal. A really nice day out but the weather was awful!

Sadly, our Tower Keeper, John Napper, was out of action for a while due to a detached retina but thanks to the NHS he is now well on the road to recovery and although he could not ring, he joined us in the Fleur after practice on a Tuesday.

We held our quarterly meeting in Holy Week on Tuesday 4th April, in West Hagbourne at the home of Jeff Powell. The meeting was well attended considering the road closure on Main Road, East Hagbourne. An enjoyable meeting with a few laughs too. A big 'Thank You' to Jeff and Coral for their hospitality and the wonderful hot cross buns.

We rang the bells at St Andrew's Church for the Coronation of King Charles III on **Saturday 6th May**. We rang from **09:00 to 10:00** to enable the band members to get home and watch the Coronation.

Shirley Goss

Harwell

After a slow response we had five people who answered the call to 'Ring for the King'. Three of these were returning ringers and two were complete beginners. With Mark, Darren, Stuart and Janette's help, I was able to set up two practices a week, alternating between Chilton and Harwell.

I am very pleased to say that all five have progressed well.

Unfortunately, one was unable to ring due to illness but the other four all joined in on Saturday 6th May making nineteen ringers in the tower. We rang a variety of methods ranging from Rounds to Plain Bob Triples in the morning before the Coronation. Following the Coronation, a quarter of Plain Bob Doubles was rung successfully. This was recorded by one of the villagers.

Philip Roberts



Marcham



Julia Davies presenting Sue Graney (second from the right) her certificate for ringing during the Coronation celebration, having answered the Ring for the King appeal back in February. After attending the Abingdon ringing school and tower practices in Marcham over the last couple of months, she joined other ringers from the tower in 45 minutes of ringing on the afternoon of Saturday 8th May, mainly rounds and call changes conducted by Isaac Davies (second from the left)

Julia Davies

Milton

The last six months have been relatively quiet but have seen Emily and Matthew progress to the point where they can both ring plain hunt on seven. This was put to good use when all eight Milton ringers rang for the King on Saturday 6th May. During the 30 minute session rounds and call changes, including Queens, Kings & Whittingtons were rung, as was Plain Hunt on Seven. We also pulled out in Kings and rang a few minutes of the change which must surely replace Queens in popularity? Whilst ringing down it was considered that catching in Kings would be a very drawn out process. Perhaps Queens still has a place in ringing? Several peals have also been rung here, including the first peal in a method named Coronation Alliance Major. Peals were also rung in memory of Charlotte Everett of Oxford and Peter Sawyer of Devon.

Colin Turner



North Moreton

Part One:

At the time of writing this (mid-April) the project to augment the All Saints ring of six to eight bells, is on target.

The new bells will become the treble and number two. They were successfully cast a few days ago at Royal Eijsbouts foundry, in the Netherlands and will start their journey to North Moreton.

Meanwhile, we have not been idle. Whites, the bell hangers, plus volunteer labour re-configured the belfry, creating the additional frame to take the new bells. Young Charlie Nickless proved particularly useful; nimble and with smaller hands, he managed many of the more awkward jobs.

There is more still to do. The bells will need tuning, delivered to All Saints and re-hung. Our ringers will need to tackle eight rather than six bells and with luck ring them loudly and clearly and hopefully accurately, for the Coronation.

Bearing in mind the restricted time scale – barely six months – to fund and deliver, this project will be quite an achievement.

Part Two:

It seems a long time ago since writing the above. A number of things could have gone horribly wrong – but they didn't. Yes, there was a several day delay in the journey from foundry to Whites, but that time was made up. Three days were spent pushing, pulling, hauling and fixing by a load of men who seemed to be having the greatest of times. The bells, headstocks and ropes were all in place within three days.

Part Three:

A week to go to C-Day. Still work to be done – 'fettling' was one of the jobs (and no, I don't know what that is), but on Tuesday, late afternoon, the new ring of eight sounded across the village, clear and sweet. Our lovely ring of six bells had become an even better ring of eight. It was a magical moment, but no magic involved, just a lot of hard graft, piles of 'bacon butties' and it must be admitted, our fair share of luck.

Part Four and Conclusion:

Twenty ringers (see photo on p4) gathered to ring on Coronation day. A party was held in the evening to celebrate. Both the Coronation of course, but more importantly for us, to celebrate a job well done.

Beryl Jones



The bell hangers.

Radley

Like many other towers, we rang on the 6th May to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. We had 'general ringing' in the morning for half an hour and a Quarter Peal was rung in the afternoon (details in the QP and Miscellaneous sections).

Oliver attended a rope splicing course last year and has been waiting to be able to use the knowledge he gained. That happened at the end of April when the Treble rope needed splicing – well done Oliver. Now I can hand over the job, having spliced the ropes at Radley for over 60 years.

Unfortunately we will be losing another ringer – Charlie, and his wife, are moving to the Cheltenham area to be nearer their daughter and family.

Once again we provided the evening meal for the Radley Course in April. We were also asked to ring at the end of a Funeral in early May.

Daphne Pollard



The Quarter Peal band in order of ringing left to right.

Sparsholt

The bells at Sparsholt rang out for a packed Church on the evening of Thursday, 13 April 2023 as ringers from across the Ridgeway Benefice (Sparsholt, Letcombe Regis, Letcombe Basset, Kingston Lisle and East Challow) celebrated the Installation of the Revd Vanessa ("Ness") Brunner-Ellis as the new Rector. During the Service, the new Rector chimed a bell seventeen times, hopefully suggesting she plans to stay for some time.

Hedley French



Ness Brunner-Ellis and Hedley French – Chime the bell.

Sunningwell

Sunday ringing takes place at Sunningwell, whenever there is Divine Worship. However, on account of a dearth of ringers, such ringing is not always with the full complement of 6 and sometimes worshipers are welcomed by only 4 bells.

Ringing at weddings continues, thanks to valued assistance from neighbouring towers, in particular Radley, whose experienced ringers add a quality to the wedding cadences that is much appreciated.

Sunningwell continues to be visited by ringers from other towers, both as part of externally organized ringing courses and by Bands wishing to ring quarter or full peals.

Mike Wykes

Wantage

Along with our regular Sunday morning ringing and Tuesday Practice nights where we have anything between 5 and 8 ringers, our ringing levels have lowered slightly since the last newsletter, although we haven't yet had to cancel a session.

We rang for all the Christmas services and 6 of us rang out the Old and in the New Year. Wantage hosted a Branch Practice in February. Although it wasn't very well supported we did get all 8 bells ringing and methods included Stedman Doubles, Cambridge Minor, R&CC, Plain Bob Doubles and Plain Bob Minor, and Plain Hunt Triples.

Most of the tower organisation remains the same following our Tower AGM in February, with myself as Tower Secretary and Dave Endacott remaining as Tower Captain. During Holy Week we spent the evening of what would have been our practice night clearing detritus from bell pits and generally tidying and housekeeping of the tower and ringing room. We have also benefitted from the church sorting out the trip hazard on the steps in to the ringing room.

Following a very generous bequest/gift to the tower, a quarter peal of Stedman Doubles was scheduled for Saturday 29th April but was not successful. This will be re-scheduled for later in the year. Wantage marked the occasion of the Coronation of King Charles III by having general ringing prior to the Civic Service that was held at 4pm on Sunday 7th May (Pic below) and there was a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles rung on Monday 8th May, to mark the occasion, (details in QP section).

We do intend entering a team in to the Branch Striking Competition to be held at Long Wittenham on 10th June, so we look forward to seeing you all there.

We have yet to make any plans for a tower outing, so watch this space. And Wantage currently have no new recruits in the pipeline, so it's very much the status quo here at the moment.

Jenny Bennett



l-r: Duncan Francis, Liz Woodhouse, Robert Haine, Graham Stoter, Dick Peters, David Endacott, Andy Bennett, Jenny Bennett, Teifi Walters and Sarah Macdonell.

West Hanney

Although we have a very small team of ringers we have on most Sundays been able to ring for services.

We had the bearings on all six clappers replaced toward the end of last year after advice from Whites. We also had a shock when the Clapper from the fifth detached itself after the centre holding bolt sheared off. You can imagine the noise when it hit the floor/ceiling above us.

Whites have subsequently told us the main bearings on the No 5 bell are worn and will need replacing in due course. This will be quite expensive as a cradle will have to be built in the tower to hold the bell whilst the work is done.

We have persuaded an ex ringer to rejoin the band and although she hadn't rung for perhaps 20 odd years she was back into it straight away. We also have two other people who have expressed an interest in learning. Fingers crossed!

The news of the death of Berice Large shook us as she was always so supportive towards us. She came to many practices, especially when we changed to afternoons, and often helped us out at wedding rings.

Even more upsetting was the loss of Jean Hazard, a ringer for many years and until the middle of last year our Secretary. With the permission of Colin, her partner, and her Daughters we rang a tribute to her on the evening of her funeral. A large family group and other mourners stood outside 'The Plough' and clapped our efforts which was much appreciated, and we subsequently received a lovely written thank you.

Jean loved hearing the bells even after her wrists would no longer let her handle a rope and on a Sunday morning Colin said he was often ordered out of bed to open the window so she could listen to our efforts.

At the time of writing we are planning to 'Ring for the King' twice over the May weekend. On the actual day of the Coronation and on the Sunday as the church are organising a celebratory weekend culminating with a service in the evening. With the help of two Wantage ringers on the Sunday we should be able to ring all six on both occasions.

Sleepy Hanney is still making a noise!

Chris Surman

Helping the 'Inbetweenies'

The newly established bi-monthly Advanced Practices have been enormously helpful in providing opportunities for us 'inbetweenies' to ring with more experienced ringers. These Advanced Practices, as well as our focussed Stedman Triples and Kent practices, are great fun, stretch the mind, and are helping our ringing progress by providing opportunities to ring methods that we rarely have a chance to ring at the usual practice nights. Without the support and encouragement of the more experienced ringers who have given their time, this would not have been possible. Thank you to everyone involved.

Bridget Taylor and Christine Kowalczyk

Thoughts on ONB Ringing

General considerations

My election as Branch Ringing Master gives me a fresh reason to look at the issues related to getting pleasure from the pastime I have pursued since boyhood. Although my level of participation has ebbed and flowed over the years, it has always remained appealing. It turns out that the driving factors have probably changed from time to time. You might identify with some of the following:

Discovering the ins and outs of what makes the familiar sound of bells as we hear them.
Visiting areas of historical buildings that are usually out of bounds.
Understanding and mastering the technique of bell handling.
Meeting a whole new set of friends.
A reason to visit towns and villages previously unknown.
Fascination at the concept of change ringing.
How far can I go with exploring the more complex methods?
Can I conduct?
Can I run a practice?
Can I help others benefit from my experience and enthusiasm?

The list could go on and on. The common theme is that these are positive driving forces. As with everything in life, there is always another side to the equation:

I am out of my depth and seem unable to master the art.
I feel looked down on by the good ringers.
I feel left out with nobody helping me and taking time to explain things.
I am putting in the effort, but my local band doesn't seem to progress.
I have mastered the basics but am stuck in a rut. It has become repetitive.
My work and family commitments don't fit in with the arrangements at my tower.
I am scared to take the plunge to show up somewhere I am not known.

Thinking about such issues guides my view of what Ringing Guilds and Associations exist for. Let me say right from the start, although there are necessary organisational and safety standards to maintain, I do believe that these are incidental to our main purpose. Although we need to give these due respect, our *raison d'être* is to enjoy our ringing individually and as a group, teach and promote the skills required to maintain acceptable standards of ringing and preserve our valuable assets whilst observing our function as servants of The Church.

At all costs, we must avoid projecting the image of a stuffy, elite and bureaucratic organisation which exists solely to perpetuate the importance of a chosen few. These are harsh words, but we can so easily fall into that trap.

I am reviewing what my role is. Let me lay my cards on the table. I am not the most accomplished ringer around, but I have a lot of experience and enthusiasm. I think it fair to rate myself as a steady Sunday service band member but limited in conducting skills. This leads me on to regard my Ringing Master role as a facilitator of aspirations. I may not have all the necessary skills at my fingertips. If I can't do it, I will try to enlist the right help. Importantly, this can only come to fruition if I am aware of need and desire.

Meetings

Most participation is by attendance at meetings. I have turned my focus on what these should achieve. Hopefully there is a shared enjoyment in the social side and the interaction with new bells and different band members. Above this, many people will see meetings as an opportunity to extend their abilities, taking advantage of the extra strength in depth. I see this as a major incentive to attend, and long may it continue.

I need to be mindful of the positive and negatives such as those listed above. Everyone is different, with their own specific driving forces, fears and difficulties. So how might meetings be constructed to benefit all in attendance?

Generally, if we are good at something, we derive pleasure from it. The inverse is that we may put off attempting things we struggle with. There is considerable satisfaction to be gained with the success of achieving the next goal. Meetings need to provide the right incentive to persevere without the fear of embarrassment. I need to find a way of upholding the standard of ringing whilst accepting that failures will occur in the process of people's horizons.

Perhaps this can be solved by employing the following approach.

- Meetings should strive to send everyone home having achieved something, be it participation in well struck ringing, or advancing towards realistic goals.
- Attendance at a meeting should lead to enjoyment and not be seen as a duty.
- The structure of the ringing could have twin aims. When it is decided what the next piece of ringing will be, it should be made clear whether this is to be a showpiece with minimum errors, or an advancement piece where we accept the participants limitations.
- Showpieces would be aimed at technical competence and a demonstration of what good ringing sounds like. (It is too easy to lose track of what we are striving for when all we get is a diet of poor ringing because we aimed too high.) These should on no account be seen as elitist. Well struck rounds are quite as good as well struck London Surprise. Showpieces are an individual's opportunity to derive pleasure from demonstrating their skill at whatever level. Ringing is a team event where everyone is equally important to the outcome.
- Advancement pieces would be the opportunity to extend skills. There will be an expectation of completion of the piece, whilst accepting there may be flaws in the execution.
- When ringers come forward to catch hold for a piece of ringing, there should be a high degree of confidence in a successful outcome. Ringing meetings are not training events as such. It is reasonable to expect that good bell handling skills have already been acquired by new ringers, and proper preparation and homework has been undertaken for those upping their call change/method ringing.
- Placing bands as opposed to open invitations to catch hold is a tricky issue to get right. No-one wins when there are too many inexperienced ringers in a band. Who does and doesn't get invited to ring stirs up all sorts of emotions. Let it be said, it will only be done with the best of intentions and to achieve a positive result. It is very difficult to do this effectively and in a fair manner.
- To avoid disappointment, do not be a shrinking violet, speak up and let it be known what you aspire to and feel confident you can achieve. We should strive to have an atmosphere of encouragement and shared pleasure in the demonstration of an individual's skills or those of a band.
- Inclusion is a buzz word in today's society. We should cultivate the sort of atmosphere that attracts attendance. If only we could encourage ringers to give meetings a try and in return, we could reward them with a satisfying experience...

Training

There already exists a framework for training, be it bell handling, advanced ringing or surprise methods. I am sure there is scope for tailor made training where need is identified. I would include longer length ringing such as quarter peals which are so valuable in aiding concentration, ropesight and good bell control. Again, communication on these matters is essential and individuals or tower captains should be encouraged to approach the committee or myself where help is required.

Conclusion

Many ringers may be unaware of the possibilities that exist and what pleasure awaits them, should they choose to give it a try. The Guild is for all of us. Ringing should be fun, let's make the most of it.

May I encourage all towers to promote attendance at our meetings. Where there is nervousness, why not let me know in advance that you are coming. I will make sure you are duly welcomed and your needs catered for. There is nothing worse than turning up as an unknown ringer and being scared to stand up and ring! It is my duty to welcome you and to give you suitable ringing opportunities. It is your interest and enthusiasm that counts. I look forward to seeing you.

And finally!

Last night was the evening meeting at Long Wittenham. It was very well attended (hurrah for that). Was I able to uphold my aims? Well no, not exactly. It proved a great deal harder to put into practise than I imagined. I am still not sure that I spoke to everyone, that individuals went home with a lasting sense of pleasure and that the selection of ringing was good enough to further their self belief.

I tried, but one thing is for sure, I need prompting from those that can see where there are gaps, and particularly, the needs and desires of an individual is being overlooked. It seems to me that much as for the actual ringing, the management of meetings is a team effort. I beg your help to make each meeting enjoyable for all. I want to make things work for everyone.

No shrinking violets remember!

Charles Morrish

Young Ringers Practice (8 January 2023 – Kirtlington)



At the January Young Ringer practice held at Kirtlington, we were glad to meet some young ringers from the Banbury, Bicester, Reading and Vale of White Horse branches as well as from the Oxford City Branch. We hoped they would join us to ring at other towers in future months.

Susan Read

Young Ringers Practice (12 March 2023 – Islip)



We were pleased that a record number of seventeen young ringers attended the practice at Islip. There were six from the Old North Berks Branch and up to three each from the Banbury, Bicester, Oxford City and Vale of White Horse branches. Ringing ranged from rounds to Cambridge Major with lots of fun ringing exercises for the many rounds ringers present.

Susan Read

Young Ringers Practice (16 April 2023 – Dorchester Abbey)



On 16 April the Young Ringers met to ring at Dorchester Abbey (and eat cake). With ten young ringers, we rang lots of rounds based exercises and also some plain bob doubles. Another successful opportunity for our young ringers to renew their friendships and have fun.

Susan Read

Young Ringers Practice (14 May 2023 – Longcot)



Our branch holds a practice specially for young ringers every month. They are held on Sunday afternoons. At the practice on 14 May we met at Longcot and were privileged to ring on Tony Crabtree's mini-ring (as well as the tower bells). It was a struggle for some to manage such little bells, but everyone had a good time and we even heard some rounds occasionally!

Susan Read

ART Presentations at Abingdon and Drayton



Elizabeth (14) attends an after school ringing practice once a week in Abingdon. She has earned her Learning The Ropes Level 3 certificate for which she had to ring two quarter peals, one covering to a doubles method and the other ringing the treble to plain bob doubles. Susan Read presented the certificate in Abingdon in March 2023.

Susan Read



Debbie Greenfield presented Jim Gulliver with his Learning the Ropes Level 1 certificate on Monday 24th April at Drayton.



Dan Gillett (24) and Joe Gillett (19) share more than just being brothers. They were both Scouts, both started to learn to ring at Abingdon in 2016 and both worked toward the Duke of Edinburgh Award. They both continued with their Scouting for some years, and Joe achieved his Chief Scout's Gold Award. Both continue to ring, and attended Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) day courses to learn how to teach bell handling and up to plain hunt, becoming accredited ART teachers at the end of 2022 (see picture with their mentor, Susan Read).

Their service to the church and to ringing was implemented as part of their work toward all three levels of the D of E Award. Both achieved their Gold D of E Award and were presented, Dan at St James' Palace (2019), and Joe at Buckingham Palace (2023).

Susan Read

The Renovation of Sparsholt Church Belfry

Of the four bells at Sparsholt Church, two date back to 1578, one to 1603 and the last is more recent at 1914; they are all mounted within a wrought iron frame which was put in around the same time as the most recent bell.

The bells are considered to be well tuned; however, they are challenging to ring. The belfry requires renovation to improve the bearings of the bells, replace some of the wood on the bell wheels, renew the pulley wheels and ensure the rope drops from the belfry to the ringing room on the ground floor are straight and the ropes are not rubbing where they pass through the three floor levels. As there is space in the bell frame, in addition to the renovation of the tower, it would also be possible to augment the existing four bells with an additional two bells, thereby making a ring of six.

Work is under way to plan the renovation and augmentation project; whilst fund raising has already secured some £11,000 of the estimated £30,000 total cost of the work.

The local bellringers are keen to ring at Sparsholt on a regular basis once the upgrade work on the tower has been completed and the bells are easier to ring. The discussion of the renovation project in the local community has generated a significant number of expressions of interest in learning how to ring the bells.

Hedley French



Bells rang out on International Women's Day at Drayton

Wednesday 8th March is International Women's Day, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and marking a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

It is celebrated differently around the world. In many countries including Cambodia, Eritrea, Germany, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal and Ukraine, it is an official public holiday. How this is marked varies considerably: in Germany, only Berliners are given the day off work, whereas in Nepal, this privilege is only given to women. In China, working women are given half a day off work and the day is celebrated like a combination of Valentine's day and Mother's day: men buy gifts and cards for their wife, mother and sometimes their daughters and media coverage of the day is extensive. In Russia, where it has been an official public holiday since 1965, the day was originally considered a day of feminist action. However, it has morphed into a romantic occasion where women are given flowers and chocolates in appreciation.

To mark the occasion locally, without the need for flowers or chocolates, Bridget arranged an all ladies quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Doubles (details in QP section).

In 2024, IWD is on Friday 8th March. Will other towers arrange all-women quarter peals to celebrate the achievements of women?

Bridget Taylor

TOWER BELLS — QUARTER PEALS

Abingdon, St Helen, 12 November 2022. **1275 Stedman Caters**: Nicholas J Green (C) 1, Helen M Maynard 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Cindy Maude 4, Kathryn P Cocks 5, Martin J Turner 6, Jackie Roberts 7, Mike Pidd 8, David G Maynard 9, Nigel A L Mellor 10. Rung in celebration of the birth of Evey Elizabeth Carter on Monday 7 November 2022, a granddaughter for Cindy & Philip Maude.

Appleton, 12 November 2022. **1259 Grandsire Caters**: Michele Winter 1, David L Thomas 2, Craig M Robertson 3, Stephen H Stanford 4, Simon A Bond (C) 5, Simon L Edwards 6, John H Napper 7, Alan M Eyles 8, David C Ockwell 9, Bernard J Stone 10. Rung half-muffled in memory of the Fallen. Also, remembering Patricia Wagstaff, whose thanksgiving service took place immediately after this quarter.

Abingdon, St Helen, 20 November 2022. **1253 Stedman Triples** Comp. Patrick W J Deakin: Sarah Barnes 1, Sarah Ockwell 2, Susan Read 3, Brian Read 4, David Thomas (C) 5, Peter Heritage 6, Josh Ball 7, Hugh Bishop 8. First Stedman: 7.

Blewbury, 13 December 2022. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Karen Bishop 1, Gill Loyd (C) 2, Christine Kowalczyk 3, Jill Garlick 4, Richard Loyd 5, Andrew Forman 6. To celebrate the birthdays of Peter Corderoy and Dick Street. 1st Q: 1 and 6.

Harwell, 29 December 2022. **1260 Plain Bob Minor**: Darren Williams 1, Elisha Small 2, Benjamin Small 3, Mark Vincent 4, Sebastian Small 5, Nick Clarke (C) 6. 1st inside: 2.

North Moreton, 1 January 2023. **1440 Plain Bob Minor**: Charlie Nickless 1, Rachel Morrish 2, Gill Loyd 3, Richard Loyd 4, Karen Walker 5, Charles Morrish (C) 6. 1st QP of minor 1. 1st QP of minor on an inside bell 5.

Drayton, 16 January 2023, **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Tom Palmer 1, Mary Leneis 2, Bridget Taylor 3, Michael Winter 4, Nick Clarke (C) 5, Mary Clare Palmer 6. 1st Q: 1 and 6, 1st inside: 2.

Marcham, 6 February 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Elizabeth McNeill 1, Susan Read 2, Isaac Davies 3, David Thomas 4, Josh Ball (C) 5, Samuel Fuentes 6. 1st Q: 6. First quarter inside: 3. First quarter on the treble: 1. Rung to celebrate the birth of Hazel Chan, daughter of Jackie Chan, a ringer at this tower.

Wallingford, 8 February 2023. **1260 Stedman Triples**: Gillian Loyd 1, Mary Friskney 2, Malcolm Fairbairn 3, Nick Clarke 4, David Endacott 5, Richard Loyd 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Daryl Dixon 8. Met short for a Surprise Royal Practice.

Abingdon, St Helen, 19 February 2023. **1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Sarah Ockwell 1, Susan Read 2, Sarah Barnes 3, Alexandra J Marchbank 4, Josh Ball 5, Brian Read 6, David C Ockwell (C) 7, Isaac O'Shea 8. For Choral Evensong.

North Moreton, 26 February 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Charlie Nickless 1, Gill Loyd (C) 2, Rachel Morrish 3, Christine Kowalczyk 4, Richard Loyd 5, Rob Nickless 6. To celebrate Charlie's 13th birthday.

Drayton, 8 March 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Mary-Clare Palmer 1, Jill Garlick 2, Zoe Bowden 3, Bridget Taylor 4, Gill Loyd (C) 5, Mary Leneis 6. First on treble: 1. Rung by an all ladies band in celebration of International Women's Day.

Harwell, 11 March 2023. **1280 Superlative Major**: Beverley Perry (C) 1, Sue Sawyer 2, Lesley Tucker 3, Jane Dunn 4, Janet Deem 5, Neil Williams 6, Graham Tucker 7, Neil Deem 8. Visiting band from Devon.

North Moreton, 26 March 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Helen Aitkins 1, Gill Loyd (C) 2, Christine Kowalczyk 3, Josie Irving 4, Richard Loyd 5, Rob Nickless 6. Last quarter peal on the six bells before their augmentation to eight.

Drayton, 12 April 2023. **1250 Cambridge Surprise Major**: Susan Read 1, Sara Jones 2, Lorna Curtis 3, Catherine M A Lane 4, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke 5, Brian Read 6, Nick Clarke (C) 7, John G Pusey 8. Engagement compliment to Sarah Barnes and Will Carr.

Milton, 12 April 2023. **1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Nick Clarke 1, Lorna Curtis 2, Susan Read 3, Brian Read 4, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C) 5, Catherine M A Lane 6, Sara Jones 7, John G Pusey 8. Engagement compliment to Sarah Barnes and Will Carr. 1st in m as cond.

Abingdon, St Helen, 6 May 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Susan Read 1, Sarah Ockwell 2, Brian Read 3, Josh Ball 4, Peter Heritage 5, Joe Gillett 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Dan Gillett 8. Rung to celebrate the Coronations this day of HM King Charles III and HM Queen Camilla. 1st Q on 8: 6.

Cumnor, 6 May 2023. **1260 Grandsire Doubles**: Nicholas Speller 1, Janette Swaine 2, Christopher Brown 3, Guy F Matthews 4, Andrew J Dyer (C) 5, Jenny A Dyer 6. To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Harwell, 6 May 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Nick Clarke 1, Elisha Small 2, Bridget Taylor 3, Lyn Small 4, Mark Vincent (C) 5, Philip Roberts 6. Rung for the Coronation of King Charles III.

Radley, 6 May 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Charlie Milward 1, Alban Walker 2, Ann Belcher 3, Sally Mulholland 4, Mark Walker (C) 5, Oliver Hyde 6. To celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III.

Appleton, 7 May 2023. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Catherine M A Lane 1, Sarah J Ockwell 2, Michele Winter 3, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke 4, Peter W Spain 5, David C Ockwell (C) 6, Peter H M Day 7, Bernard J Stone 8. Celebrating the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Wantage, 8 May 2023. **1260 Grandsire Doubles:** Graham Stoter 1, David A J Endacott MBE 2, Teifi Walters 3, Sarah Macdonell 4, Andy Bennett (C) 5, Liz Woodhouse 6. Rung to celebrate the Coronation of HRH King Charles III. Jenny Bennett, Dick Peters, Robert Haine and Duncan Francis would like to be associated with this quarter peal.

MISCELLANEOUS PERFORMANCES

Appleton, 6 May 2023. **Rounds and call changes, including Kings and Queens.** Chantal Adepoju, Walé Adepoju, Pat Cox, Louise Russell, Clare Saunders, Peter Day, David Ockwell, Sarah Ockwell, Michele Winter (C). Rung to mark the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Chantal and Walé learnt to “Ring for the King” and Pat, Louise and Clare returned to ringing as part of the “Ring for the King” campaign.

Cumnor, 6 May 2023. **Rounds.** Jenny Beech, Lianne Beech, Andrew J Dyer, Jenny A Dyer, Guy F Matthews, Amy Morgan, Isabella Morgan, David Nowakowski, Nicholas Speller, Janette Swaine. To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Harriet Morgan, aged 4 years, rang the sanctus bell (0-3-0).

Marcham, 6 May 2023. **Rounds and Call Changes:** Julia Davies, Jackie Chan, Bob Anderson, James Crafer, Michelle X, Isaac Davies (C), Sue Graney.

Radley, 6 May 2023. **Rounds, Call Changes including Kings and Queens, Stedman, PB Doubles:** Daphne Pollard, Ann Belcher, Maurice Belcher, Sally Mulholland, Charlie Milward, Oliver Hyde, Mark Walker, Alban Walker, Oaken Walker, Lisa Astbury, Anne Curtis, Michelle X. Rung to celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III.

Sutton Courtenay, 6 May 2023. **Rounds and Call Changes:** Adrian Bampton, Amélie de Chazal, Christopher de Chazal, Louis de Chazal, Barnaby Haynes, Adam Jenkins, Philip Kimber, Reggie Lambert, Bryony Landsbert, Caroline Lomax, Oliver Lomax, Henry Lowe, John Napper, Brian Read, Susan Read, Malcolm Ross, Nathan Shestopal, William Stead, Julia Twaits, Tim Twaits, Alexander Urquhart. Rung by ringers from Abingdon School Bellringing Club & All Saints’ Sutton Courtenay.

Abingdon, St Helen, 7 May 2023. **Call Changes:** Angela Martin, Daniel Gillett, Elizabeth McNeill, Isaac Davies, Joe Gillett, Josh Ball, Lucy Davies, Peter Heritage, Priscilla Morris, Susan Read. Rung to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Abingdon, St Nicolas, 7 May 2023. **Coronation Call Changes and King Charles Delight Minor:** Angela Martin, Beryl Yeats, Brian Read, Carole Sidlow, Daniel Gillett, David Thomas, Elizabeth McNeill, Felicity Masheder, Hannah McNeill, Isaac Davies, John Tuson, Joe Gillett, Josh Ball, Lucy Davies, Margaret Brock, Michelle X, Peter Heritage, Priscilla Morris, Reg Sidlow, Susan Read, Tim Pett. Ringing on the occasion of the Coronation of King Charles III to accompany the throwing by Town Councillors of five thousand buns from the roof of the County Hall to citizens in the Market Place, thus following an over 400-year custom to celebrate Royal events.

Appleton, 7 May 2023. **Rounds and call changes, including Kings and Queens:** Walé Adepoju, Pat Cox, Louise Russell, Clare Saunders, Peter Day, David Ockwell, Barbara Payne, Vivian White, Michele Winter (C). Rung before the morning service to commemorate the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

TOWER BELLS — PEALS

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 22 November 2022, 2h34, **5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Robert H Newton 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Colin M Turner 5, Michael J Dew 6, Robert J Crocker 7, Frank W Rivett 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 4 December 2022, 2h40, **5096 Omega Alliance Major:** Cynthia E Howell 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Nicola J Turner 4, James Kirkcaldy 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8. Rung as an engagement compliment to Hannah Martin and Brett Franks.

Milton, 6 December 2022, 2h42, **5088 Bristol Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Claire F Roulstone 2, Ian G Campbell 3, Beryl R Norris 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Stuart F Gibson 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Martin J Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 10 December 2022, 2h38, **5100 Beacon Hill Alliance Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Robert J Crocker 2, Richard L Thumwood 3, Alan M Eyles 4, Michael J Dew 5, Ian Roulstone 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Sunningwell**, 10 December 2022, 2h46, **5040 Surprise Minor (22m):** Michael Chester 1, Richard L Thumwood 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Robert J Crocker 4, Alan M Eyles 5, Peter G C Ellis (C) 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 18 December 2022, 2h34, **5088 Lessness Surprise Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Cynthia E Howell 4, Robert J Crocker 5, Simon L Edwards 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, Peter G C Ellis 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 15 January 2023, 2h35, **5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Robert J Crocker 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Michael J Dew 6, Alan M Eyles 7, Colin M Turner 8.

OXFORD SOCIETY, **Milton**, 20 January 2023, 2h43, **5088 Bristol Surprise Major:** Bernard J Stone 1, Michele Winter 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Claire F Roulstone 4, Andrew A Ward 5, Ian Roulstone 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8. Specifically arranged and rung in affectionate memory of Charlotte Everett, whose funeral took place earlier today. Remembering many happy times.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 29 January 2023, 2h30, **5040 Metro Alliance Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Timothy G Pett 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Charlotte A Boyce 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Alan M Eyles 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 11 February 2023, 2h30, **5040 Lessness Surprise Major:** Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Timothy G Pett 4, Mark Edwards 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, Colin M Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 19 February 2023, 2h31, **5040 Bloody Bush Edge Alliance Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Richard L Thumwood 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Alan M Eyles 5, Simon L Edwards 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8. Wishing John H Napper a speedy recovery.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton**, 4 March 2023, 2h48, **5041 Stedman Caters**: Jonathan Cres-shull 1, Michele Winter 2, David C Ockwell 3, Gwen Rogers 4, Craig M Robertson 5, Stuart F Gibson 6, Alan M Eyles (C) 7, Jonathan C Mills 8, Philip Rogers 9, Bernard J Stone 10. 50th for the Society: 2. Rung on March the 4th Dinner Day for the 205th anniversary of the bells.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 5 March 2023, 2h29, **5012 Blanchland Alliance Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Richard L Thumwood 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Timothy G Pett 4, Colin M Turner 5, Charlotte A Boyce 6, Alan M Eyles 7, John R Martin (C) 8.

Harwell, 20 March 2023, 3h1, **5056 Cambridge Surprise Major**: Alison Merryweather-Clarke 1, Catherine Lane 2, Simon Edwards 3, Timothy Pett 4, Christopher Tuckett 5, Jon Tutchter 6, Stuart Gibson (C) 7, Mark Edwards 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 15 April 2023, 2h35, **5040 Zeal Hill Alliance Major**: Charlotte A Boyce 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Claire F Roulstone 5, Ian Roulstone 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8. Remembering our friend Peter J Sawyer.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 16 April 2023, 2h33, **5024 Bristol Surprise Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Alan M Eyles 4, Ian Roulstone 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Claire F Roulstone 7, Colin M Turner 8. An 80th birthday compliment to Bernard Groves.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Chilton**, 19 April 2023, 2h39, **5040 Surprise Minor (23m)**: Nicola J Turner 1, Richard L Thumwood 2, Colin M Turner 3, Claire F Roulstone 4, Peter G C Ellis (C) 5, Robert J Crocker 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 19 April 2023, 2h36, **5040 King Edward Alliance Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Mark Edwards 3, Robert J Crocker 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Colin M Turner 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Milton**, 4 May 2023, 2h37, **5040 Coronation Alliance Major**: Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Nigel A L Mellor 5, Alan M Eyles 6, Peter G C Ellis 7, Colin M Turner 8. Rung for the forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton**, 8 May 2023, 2h50, **5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal**: Craig M Robertson 1, David L Thomas (C) 2, Christine C Darby 3, Michele Winter 4, Timothy G Pett 5, John G Pusey 6, Richard H Youdale 7, Alan T Winter 8, David C Ockwell 9, Alan M Eyles 10. Celebrating the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

HANDBELLS — PEAL

(* Botley is in the Parish of Cumnor)

OXFORD SOCIETY, **Botley***, (2 Long Close), 7 May 2023, 2h49, **5000 Kent Treble Bob Royal**: Peter Spain 1-2, David L Thomas (C) 3-4, Lindsay Powell 5-6, Craig M Robertson 7-8, Michele Winter 9-10. First on 10 in hand: 7-8. First on 10 on an inside pair: 5-6. First treble dodging royal: 1-2. Celebrating the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Old North Berks Branch



Barbecue & Croquet



*Join in the fun after the Branch Outing
on*

**Saturday 15th July 2023
from 7.00pm**

At the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson

The Croft

Milton Hill

(A4130 between A34 Didcot exit and Rowstock)

£15.00 each (payable on the day)

All proceeds to branch funds

All names to Gill Loyd by Friday 7th July please



Telephone: 01235 850459

Email: gillianloyd@gmail.com



Please note:

Soft drinks will be provided, please bring your own alcohol

ONB Branch Outing

Saturday 15th July 2023

- 09.30 – 10.30 **Fulbrook** (6) (4-0-13) (T)
St James the Great
(Postcode: OX18 4BN)
Tower TBC
LUNCH TBC
- 13.30 – 14.30 **Chipping Norton** (8) (14-1-4) (T)
St Mary the Virgin
(Postcode: OX7 5NT)
Tower TBC
TEA TBC
- 16.30 – 17.15 **Chadlington** (6) (8-3-13) (T)
St Nicholas
(Postcode: OX7 3LX)

Free Prize Draw for attendees!

Lunch choices to philip.roberts@sky.com or 01235 861409
by ***Saturday 8th July***

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.

Contact List

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ONB Website:	🌐 www.onb.odg.org.uk	

NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for copy for the next issue in December 2023 is 17th October 2023. But please don't wait until then, send your news, pictures, and quarters in as they happen.

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Programme for 2023

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, 7th June – Surprise Major Practice** – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Saturday, 10th June** – Striking Competition – Long Wittenham (6) (from 10.00am)
- Wednesday, 14th June** – Branch Practice – Sparsholt (4) (6.30–7.15pm)
Childrey (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 28th June** – Branch Practice – Cholsey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 5th July – Advanced Practice** – Cumnor (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Saturday, 15th July** – Branch Outing and Barbecue
- Wednesday, 26th July** – Branch Practice – Radley (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 2nd August – Surprise Major Practice** – TBC (8) (7.45–9.15pm)
- Thursday, 10th August** – Branch Practice – Aston Tirrold (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 23rd August** – Branch Practice – North Moreton (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 6th September – Advanced Practice** – Harwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Tuesday, 12th September** – Branch Practice – East Hagbourne (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 27th September** – Branch Practice – Steventon (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 4th October – Surprise Major Practice** – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 11th October** – Branch Practice – West Hanney (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 25th October** – Branch Practice – Childrey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 1st November – Advanced Practice** – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 15th November** – Branch Practice – Cholsey (8) (8.00–9.30pm)
- Saturday, 18th November** – Quiz and Supper in Blewbury Village Hall
- Wednesday, 22nd November** – Branch Practice – Chilton (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
- Wednesday, 6th December – Surprise Major Practice** – Brightwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Thursday, 14th December** – Branch Practice – Harwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
- Wednesday, 20th December** – Branch Practice – Blewbury (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
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