



Old North Berks Branch Newsletter

No: 163

June 2024



Mini Outing — 24 April 2023

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Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2024 issue of the Branch Newsletter.

Congratulations are due to Millie Gall, Millie Bauwens and Bob Mannix who have all rung their first Quarter Peal.

Congratulations are also due to: Samuel Fuentes of Abingdon on gaining his LTR3 Certificate; and to Nicola Turner who has rung her 5000th Peal.

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

Secretary's Report

Ringling and refreshments took place on 1st January at Drayton. Once again this was a very popular event, with over fifty attendees having the opportunity to ring, socialize and eat! Thanks go to the Drayton ringers and friends for their hospitality and for providing a wonderful range of soups and cakes, which were enjoyed by all.

An EGM was held by Zoom meeting on Sunday, 14th January. The proposal by Stuart Gibson, seconded by Richard Loyd, was accepted to increase the annual subscription to £15 per member from 1st January 2024. This consists of £10 annual subscription to the Oxford Diocesan Guild and £5 additional subscription to the Old North Berks Branch. Of this £5, half will go to branch restoration projects and half will be used to cover the costs of heating and lighting incurred by our churches at branch events other than those held on the regular practice night.

This year we held our March AGM face-to-face for the first time since 2019. Now that our annual 6-bell striking competition takes place in June, we decided to hold the AGM at midday rather than in the evening, with ringing at Long Wittenham and North Moreton beforehand. The meeting took place in North Moreton Village Hall and was followed by a delicious light lunch kindly provided by the local ringers, giving everyone the opportunity to be social. The meeting went very smoothly, with no changes to branch officers.

At the AGM we discussed the rehangling of the five bells at Little Wittenham. The Faculty has been approved and the funds already raised, so the work will take place in July. A Faculty has also been submitted to rehang the six bells at West Hendred. Fund raising for this project is about to start and it is hoped that the work will be completed in 2025. We also discussed the project to rehang and augment to six the four existing bells at Sparsholt. Hedley French advised that this is now being included by the PCC as a part of a wider church restoration project, and the Faculty has not yet been prepared. The PCC so far has decided that repairs to the church roof are the highest priority. Hedley has been told that he cannot run the tower project separately, but hopes that this decision will be changed as the bell project would be delayed until beyond 2025. So far £11,000 has been raised, with a further £4,000 promised. Hedley is hoping to raise the remaining funds over the next eighteen months and is asking branch members if they have details of any charities that are known to donate to bell projects.

Our Treasurer, Stuart Gibson, reported that in 2023 the membership of the Branch was 259, an increase of 15 from 2022. There were two fund raising events in 2023. The barbecue (including the raffle and tea proceeds) raised £462 and the Quiz Night £536. Honey sales resulted in donations of nearly £435. The Branch, for the seventh year, collected a voluntary £2 donation with subscriptions. Everyone made the contributions to put towards Branch bell restoration projects and £514 was collected. One grant of £1,500 was paid to North Moreton towards the cost of augmenting to eight. A donation of £500 was made to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund. The Branch, at the end of 2023, had funds in the region of £6,200, which is well in excess of the reserves required by the Branch.

There have been seventeen new members elected to the Guild since the November newsletter: Samuel Fuentes, Simon Fuentes, Hannah McNeill, Crispin Mugabi and Tim Stedman (Abingdon), Daniel Atkins (East Hendred), Karen Adamson, Jenny Beech and Liane Beech (Cumnor), Michael Barry, Elizabeth Deans and Naomi Keogh (Harwell), Alison Reid (North Moreton), Oaken Walker (Radley), Nicky Kauert (West Hanney), Jonathan Diggle and Jennifer Dimbylow (West Hendred)

Branch practices have taken place at Cholsey, Harwell, Wantage, Steventon, Blewbury and Brightwell. There have been afternoon practices at Chilton, Blewbury, Brightwell and Milton. Surprise practices were held at Brightwell, Wallingford and Harwell. We have also held advanced practices at Milton and Blewbury, which are aimed at introducing intermediate ringers to the more complicated plain methods and to treble bob.

A very successful April mini outing was held on the 24th, when nineteen branch members rang at Drayton St. Leonard, Warborough and Dorchester Abbey, with lunch in the George at Dorchester.

Some dates for your diaries: The 6-bell striking competition and breakfast will be held on Saturday morning, 15th June, at Radley. Our main branch outing is planned for Saturday, 6th July and this will be followed by a barbecue at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson. Our autumn social event will be a skittles night and supper at Wallingford Sports Park on Saturday, 9th November.

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

Gill Loyd

Ringling Masters' Ramblings

Our branch continues to be one of the most active within the 15 branches of the Oxford Guild. Active describes many facets, and it is fair to say that certainly from a social and branch practice point of view we hold more events than other branches. We were slightly nervous about adding extra (advanced level) practices to an already busy calendar but the attendance has proved those fears to be unfounded. We hope that all practices are providing an enjoyable and useful experience for all. Please continue supporting these practices as they will help to elevate your skill within your tower band.

Charles' Listening Course has been extremely popular with a fourth course imminent. Charles will arrange more as demand continues. This course does not teach striking or ringing skills but highlights the importance of listening whilst ringing, and identifying good from not so good ringing. All of our ringing amounts to a public performance, and although we might not identify poor striking when we are learning a new method, those outside might!

Our branch is also active in taking care of our 28 'ringable' towers with more projects than ever being completed or in the pipeline. The rehangings of the five Little Wittenham bells is the latest, and it is hoped that this work will be completed by Whites of Appleton in July. Congratulations to the Wittenham team and especially to Julia Sargent for heroic fund raising for both Little and Long Wittenham towers. The Wittenhams will have two excellent rings for many years to come.

Other projects are in the pipeline, including some long silent towers within our branch. Exciting times.

As a branch we enter teams for the 6 and 10 bell Guild Striking Competitions. ONB did really well at the last 10 bell competition held at Bicester, achieving a very creditable third place behind the expert teams of Reading and EBSB branches. We are hoping for many teams entering at our branch striking completion to be held at Radley on the morning of 15th June. We are very relaxed about teams entering, including inexperienced teams or indeed joint tower teams, as it is all about taking part and enjoying a social time with other branch members. In recent years our record has been 7 teams, let's see if we can beat that this year!

Many of you look forward to Philip's legendary jokes in Ramblings, some say that it is the best bit! So here we are for best bit from Phillip.

Q. What do Dentists call their x-rays?

A. Tooth pic's.

There were two wind turbines on a wind farm, one said to the other, "What music do you like?"

The reply was, "I'm a heavy metal fan".

Richard Loyd and Charles Morrish

TOWER TALK

Abingdon

The bishop of Dorchester came to St Helen's on January 30th for the licensing of our new assistant priest. We were very pleased to be able to ring for this special service.

Another church event which has become an annual affair is the wedding workshop in February. Once again we invited the couples into the ringing chamber where we gave them a demonstration of bell ringing. Unfortunately this has not proved very productive in persuading them to have the bells for their weddings.

A quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles at St Helen's in March enabled Millie Bauwens to ring her first quarter, on the tenor behind, and Samuel Fuentes to ring his first away from cover, on the treble. Another first in this quarter was for Michelle X who rang the 3rd to her first of Grandsire. Another quarter peal, on April 21st was rung for the Service of Music and Readings for Eastertide and enabled Isaac Davies to ring his first on the treble to triples. Congratulations to all four of them on those achievements.

Tim Pett

Appleton

In the autumn, four new learners were taught to ring by Barbara Payne and David Ockwell, three of them are now able to ring rounds and call changes and are ringing on Sundays; on some Sundays we have rung rounds on 10 bells. Two more villagers have expressed an interest in learning to ring and will be starting to learn shortly. Claire attended the Radley Course and enjoyed her ringing with the Bob Doubles Group – thanks to Chris Mundy her course tutor.

This year, the March 4th Celebrations took place on Saturday 2nd March; unfortunately, we lost the peal of Grandsire Caters in the morning. In the evening, our local ringers (including four of our learners and their families) were joined in the Village Hall by visitors and friends from all over the country and 68 people enjoyed an excellent dinner cooked by Colin. After the dinner and speeches, handbells were "lapped" to Stedman Caters, rung to changes and our traditional ringers' songs were sung.

We continue to practice on Friday evenings (7.30-9.00), our priority at the moment is concentrating on getting our learners to ring rounds and call changes on 6, 8 or 10 bells and plain hunting on 5 bells, and ring on Sundays – visitors are always welcome.

Michele Winter

Blewbury

Our Friday practices are still going strong. Visitors make such a difference and are always welcome, thank you.

We started off 2024 in style by ringing in the New Year, followed by a celebration with food and drink aplenty. Our tower "bottle store" seems to expand year on year. This year we needed a mole grip to open one of them!



We celebrated Christmas in January again this year with a Twelfth Night dinner in the village hall, along with a giant inflatable Father Christmas on his motorcycle. The format was still a winner, and the date is already booked for 2025.

Another annual event that we like to attend is the Churn Benefice outing, held each January. We ring (almost) all the bells in the Benefice (and visit a guest tower or two). It's a very sociable day, meeting up with ringers from each of the towers. Thank you to the organisers, and especially for the excellent, as always, lunch in North Moreton.



After the heavy rain this year, the stream through the Playclose was particularly deep for the Blewbury Duck Race on Easter Sunday, with water spilling over the tops of the wellies of those brave and foolhardy enough to man the finishing line. Ducks sold out well in advance, and good weather on the day meant a good attendance from the village to cheer on the intrepid yellow plastic quackers as they raced down the stream.

Christine Kowalczuk

Cholsey

We had an open day in January and had 50 visitors. Several families and everyone was very interested. We had three potential recruits and luckily one lady has joined us as a learner.

We have now progressed to ringing Grandsire Triples and Bob Triples if the whole band are present.

Anna and Frances have joined Charles etc on a ringing expedition to Derbyshire – we all enjoyed the Bakewell Tart and Pudding which they brought back with them.

Several of us have attended Charles' listening courses but I fear that improvement is going to be an uphill battle.

Jenny Jeskins

East Hagbourne

The Christmas Tree Festival was a great success this year with over 100 decorated trees appearing throughout East and West Hagbourne. There were also 30 trees in church including one sponsored by the bellringers and also a Memory Tree. The theme was 'All Creatures Great and Small' and the ringer's tree was decorated with all the little creatures that we share the ringing chamber with like spiders, ladybirds, flies and bats but just in case anyone was worried we do NOT have tarantulas in the tower although there were two on our tree!

We rang the bells at St Andrew's on 31st December at 11:30 and rang in the New Year at Midnight. There were seven ringers in the tower and there were a few visitors. We had a small service at 11:50 and then the tenor was tolled at midnight and although there were only seven of us, we were able to 'Fire' the bells which means the bells are all struck at the same time! This was followed by a glass of Prosecco, we were then joined by a couple of revellers from the village, it was so lovely to celebrate the New Year in the tower.

On Saturday 7th January four 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 Jo. St Andrew's hosted the tea and cake in the afternoon following a ring on our bells by the group. Some of the group also met up in the evening at The Red Lion in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell for a meal. A really nice day out but the weather was very cold!

On Wednesday 31st January Jeff Powell organised a Hagbourne Ringers Supper at the Fleur for all members who could attend, great fun was had by all.

We miss Jill Garlick at our ringing practices on Tuesday evenings following her awful incident of flooding in her home while she was visiting her sister in the USA but we look forward to her joining us again once it has all been sorted. Jill is now living with her family the other side of Wantage but she does join us for ringing for morning service on a Sunday and you will see her at other events in the village during the day. Hope it gets sorted soon Jill!

The ringers had a table at the Hagbourne Club Fest on Saturday 16th March in the village hall, the day was well attended with over 30 clubs present. A big thanks to Daniel Dawson and Alan Foster for taking charge of the display on the day as a few of the team were having to 'man' other tables (clubs).

There was a quarterly meeting of HSCR on Tuesday 26th March at 8:00, this was also our AGM which we had to cancel in February as too many of the officers of the society were unable to attend. We all enjoyed our hot cross buns together this year at Jeff's house.

The bells were rung on Easter Sunday, 31st March at 10:00, for morning service.

We rang for a wedding on Saturday 20th April, one of only two booked at St Andrew's Church this year.



Several of the team went on our annual Sally Forth weekend this year to Gloucestershire.

Shirley Goss

"Docking Procedure". In loving memory of Cliff Garlick. Hagbourne ringer for 61 years. Tower Forman (1981-1993) (1996-2004).

Milton

The last six months have seen quite a bit of ringing at Milton, with the usual mix of visitors, quarters and peals. Colin has been pretty much out of action during this period following spinal surgery at the end of November. He is now starting to make a slow return to normal and at the time of writing this has rung two peals, using a perching stool, also several quarters of which he was able to stand for the last one.

Christmas Day was a busy one here. It was the only calendar date that Nicola had not rung two peals on the same day on. As you will imagine planning for this took some time to find enough ringers willing to alter their normal routine to participate. This became even harder when Colin was unable to ring, fortunately a willing replacement was easily found. Colin rang two peals on Christmas Day 1995, so we do not need to arrange this again. For ease both peals were to be rung at Milton one before the 9.30am service and the other after. The bells were left up the previous evening and were in changes by 6.30am. The band adjourned to our house for breakfast – apart from Nicola who had to fulfil her duties as Churchwarden. The second peal commenced before 11am and by 1.30pm both peals were scored. Before you ask, we had no complaints whatsoever. The ringers then returned to our house for a full and well-earned Christmas dinner. I claim no small part in the success of this for expertly turning on and regulating the oven to ensure the Turkey was cooked to perfection.

We rang a quarter peal of London S Minor on January 23rd with a predominantly local band. This is a method we have been ringing on practice night for some time.

The next highlight came on February 4th when Nicola rang her 5,000th peal. She is the 16th person and only the second lady to reach this total. This involved a considerable amount of juggling as Nicola wanted to ring it at Milton and other existing commitments needed to be worked around. It also had to be later rather than sooner to enable Colin to ring in it.



The band for Nicola's 5,000th peal.

A further quarter peal was rung on 7th February, the 50th anniversary of Colin's first quarter which was rung at Sunningwell. It would have been nice to ring this one at Sunningwell, but the spiral stairs would have been a step (or 30) too far!

Finally, a peal of Easton-in-Gordano Delight Major was rung on March 10th to celebrate the life of Nicola's father, Ian, who passed away in February. Ian had lived and rung in Easton for 50 years before moving to Sutton Courtenay five years ago. It was fitting that one of the Easton ringers was able to take part in this peal.

Emily is now able to hunt the treble to Plain Bob Doubles and Matthew can ring inside to plain courses, so we are able to ring this on Sundays for service.

Colin Turner

Radley

Ringling at Radley continues on Sundays and Thursdays as usual, although for various reasons, occasional practices have had to be cancelled.

Once again we provided the evening meal for the Radley Course in April.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Radley for the Branch Striking Competition on Saturday 15th June.

Daphne Pollard

Sunningwell

The bells are rung to welcome worshippers at Divine Service, on most Sundays when this takes place at Sunningwell. An encouraging development in 2023 was the arrival of three new ringers at Sunningwell Band, all of whom are experienced ringers, and they are a welcome addition to the Band, as is Barbara Payne, who rings when she is able to attend.

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

The photograph shows a view of some of the current Band, with (left to right) Megan Bardsley, Derrick Stevens, Richard Youdale, Bob Evans, Brenda Thomas and Brian Thomas. Other Band members not shown in the picture include Oliver Bardsley, Carol Moodey and Barbara Payne.



Mike Wykes

Wallingford

We have continued with regular practices and Sunday ringing. Attendances at ringing sessions continue to be good, with a full range of abilities and progress being made all round. A very fine new carpet now adorns our ringing chamber (after many years of discussion....!)

Chris Tuckett

Wantage

Along with our regular Sunday morning ringing and Tuesday Practice nights where we have a steady core band of about 10 ringers. Due to the weight of the bells and the ageing band, we ring the front 6 more than all 8 these days. We are grateful to those regular visitors who join us on practice nights, helping us to maintain our ringing standard. We do have a returning ringer who is progressing well and will soon be able to join us on Sunday mornings, and be made a member of the Guild.

We rang for a number of services over the Christmas holiday time. This year for New Year we decided due to H&S we would not muffle the bells and try to get them removed for after midnight. Instead we rang diminishing rounds which seemed to work well. This involved standing the treble, then the 2nd after a few more blows, then the 3rd etc, until it left the tenor striking 12 blows at midnight. The key is to make sure the treble goes off again before the tenor strikes 14. All good fun.

We rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles on Sunday 14th April to mark a visit from the Bishop of Oxford as he celebrates a confirmation service at Wantage. Details in the QP section.

We intend entering a team into the Branch Striking Competition to be held at Radley 15th June, the new format makes for a very enjoyable day. Hope to see you there.

Jenny Bennett

West Hanney

St. James Bellringers are still managing to ring 4 or 5 bells for Sunday Services most weeks.

One of our ringers, Nicky Kauert, who we persuaded to return to ringing about 12 months ago, has now completed one of Susan Read's training courses and follow up day and is already teaching two new ringers who we have persuaded to join us.

We also now have a very capable and experienced ringer who has moved back into the village. Kelvin Gascoyne is the son of Peter and Jenny Gascoyne. Jenny was a very experienced ringer who rang at Hanney for many years before deciding to retire from the ropes several years ago.

We have only rung for one wedding so far this year, and to date no more are booked.

We did have a clanger fall off the number five bell when the main central holding bolt sheared off last year, and more recently a stay split on the treble whilst teaching a newcomer, otherwise no major problems above!

Major changes are planned for St. James Church in the future which includes the provision of toilet facilities but will also involve the bell tower. We should be getting a total makeover with, amongst other things, the fitting of double doors between the main church and the tower, radiators to extend the heating system into our ringing room and new rope guides to replace the less than attractive existing ones which are basically scaffolding poles.

That then is the latest news from Sleepy Hanney.

Chris Surman

Branch Foundation Skills Practices

When you can handle a bell...

You feel on top of the world because you can ring unaided, but then you are asked to ring with other people, and suddenly ringing is a whole lot more complicated! You start to ring rounds but just keeping with everybody else is difficult. You have to learn to ring at a steady speed, following another bell.

Next, you try to follow the instructions of call changes. You might understand what the instruction means, but putting it into practice is not easy. Learning to change speed is important and it takes time to learn to change place at handstroke cleanly.

And then, traditionally, someone will tell you it is time to learn Plain Hunt. It can be very daunting with a lot of extra things all happening at once. Lots of new techniques are required including changing speed at backstroke, ringing consecutive slow and quick blows, looking for the bells in front and behind you, counting places continuously, knowing when to change speed and so much new jargon. These new skills upon which all change ringing is based are known as **FOUNDATION SKILLS**.

There are a number of fun rounds-based ringing exercises we will be using to help new ringers to improve on their foundation skills at the monthly practices I am organising for the branch. Places are limited so please contact me to book.

Steady ringers, please come and take part to ensure a reasonable standard of ringing, – and perhaps learn a few new tricks!

Susan Read
ONB Branch Training Officer
07941 580468
training-officer@onb.odg.org.uk

Samuel Fuentes receiving his LTR3 Certificate

On Friday 29 March 2024, Samuel (15 yrs.) received his Learning the Ropes Level 3 certificate (LTR3). Samuel rang two quarter peals to qualify for LTR3, one covering on the tenor, and the other, ringing treble to plain bob doubles. Samuel is now ringing for services every Sunday and is a valued member of the Abingdon Society of Bell Ringers and is also a member of the Oxford Diocesan Guild.



Social Events Report

Just a reminder of the upcoming events:

6th July - Branch Outing and BBQ

9th November - Skittles Evening at Wallingford Sports and Social Club

Mandy

Email: social-secretary@onb.odg.org.uk

Guild 10-bell Striking Competition 2023

ONB members from 8 different towers came together to enter the Guild 10 Bell Competition at Bicester on Saturday 25th November 2023. After a couple of practices on the simulator at Abingdon, the team rang the special touch of Little Bob Royal. We were delighted to be placed third just behind two of the best, and most practiced 10 bell teams in the Diocese. Well done to the branch team!

Richard Loyd

New Year Ringing – Drayton, 1st January 2024

Some 50 or 60 ringers from across the Branch sacrificed a lie-in for the prospect of soup and incidental ringing at St Peter's, Drayton, on New Year's Day 2024. The more serious among the visitors prosecuted their business in the annex, where they admired an impressive composition of confectioneries in multiple variations, and the local band rang plain courses of Leek and Potato and Broccoli and Stilton on the easy-going four-ring hob. In the ringing chamber, meanwhile, drowsing ladybirds shifted fitfully in their midwinter slumber as iridescent threads of rounds, call changes, and various methods nicely struck wove lively new-year patterns into the shimmering tapestries of their mute mysterious dreams. When the washing-up suds had settled, the hosts were left to reflect on a fine morning enjoyed by all, and a handsome sum raised for the Branch funds by donations.

Tom and Mary Clare Palmer

Ring and Ride – April 6th 2024

I have always maintained that pulling on a rope is only a small part of the pleasure derived from our hobby. The ringing and cycling day proved the point.

The weather forecast wasn't too great. Gusts of high wind were expected, possibly rain as well. We were not to be put off though, and as it happened we kept pleasantly warm and dry throughout. As for the wind, well, it was a handicap, but the participants are gritty people and neither that nor the hills were going to defeat us.

Ringers are such a cheery lot. This was a very inclusive group and even the strong, young riders didn't shoot off leaving us old ones far behind. As for the ringing, there was a considerable spread of abilities. But this didn't matter, there was one aim, to enjoy ourselves, and in this we succeeded.

Four towers were visited, Shalbourne, Burbage, Marlborough and Chilton Foliat. Each, in their own way enjoyable. The lovely 8 at Marlborough really stood out, though.

I am sure there will be a repeat, and other similar ventures might come to fruition. There really is no need to be limited to the regular format of the weekly practice night and service ringing.

Charles Morrish

Yesterday, you helped a little dream of mine come true!! When I returned to ringing (after 30 odd years!) I immediately wanted to combine a day out ringing with cycling. I think we proved yesterday it's a recipe for success!! I'm so pleased Charles, Val and Andrew were more optimistic about the weather forecast than I was and convinced me not to cancel. See lots of photos attached.

Thanks for all your enthusiasm throughout the entire day, it was a treat to have all our "stuff" transported by car – thanks Rachel, Christine and Helen, combined with our new friends Jan and Mick and nominal rider Andrew (😊) you made quite the perfect advanced party at all the churches. Thanks to Charles who did a wonderful job at organising all things ringing related and was the perfect partner in crime to piece the day together. As a cycling group I was blown away with the friendliness and supportiveness of you ALL. We chatted, giggled, huffed, puffed and created some fun memories to recall in our respective towers on practice nights! Special thanks to Bob and Claire our hero mechanics who kept at least 2 of you cycling to the end and a special mention to Chrissy – a hero in her own category!! Below is Chrissy's account of the day.

Statistics

- 5 ringers
- 10 riders
- 1 motorbike
- 35.8 miles (58km)
- 2,199ft (670m) climbing
- 4 hours 30 mins of cycling (with 10 riders - 2,700 minutes of smiles!)
- 4 churches - 24 bells
- lots of methods (wish I had made a note)
- lots of steps!

So, that's a wrap until the next time, and there will be next time.

Thanks again, see you all soon.

Lindsay Lott

Meeting in the car park at 9.30am, I thought, 'I wonder if they'll stop me riding if they know my bike half works. I know, I won't tell them'.

Well, not only did they find out after the first ride to church, but they fixed it too! Thank you kind people!

I won't lie, the first uphill slog, I thought to myself 'WHAT WERE YOU THINKING CHRISSY!' But these guys were awesome. So patient, helpful and funny. I couldn't stop smiling the whole day even though my bike broke again and I ended up riding with one gear resulting in cramps in my feet, wondering 'WHAT AM I DOING HERE'?

But everyone's enthusiasm and joy from riding and ringing were contagious and I just had to continue to see what would happen next.

I'm a new ringer, ringing for roughly a year now but was always welcomed and encouraged to ring.

We all witnessed a miracle at Marlborough where we discovered a bike shop opposite the church that could fix a lady's bike that had just broken, (they said my bike had no hope, well I did get it off Freecycle (now known as 'Trash Nothing') so you get what you pay for ;-)) Comfy sofa's in the church to eat our lunch, Costa coffee to drug us up to finish the ride. It was meant to be.

Groups of ringers and non-ringers, riders and non-riders, all helping each other and making the day even more magical.

A tower that had bells going anti-clockwise, that was a real treat! And a well-earned drink at the end to celebrate.

Everyone is eager for the next one. Thank you organizers and helpers. And if you know anyone getting rid of their bike, do let me know ;-)) ;-)) ;-))

Chrissy Gidney
Ringer at Steventon





Mini Outing – 24 April 2024

On April 24th, the branch organised a ringing outing which took in three towers and lunch. We started at Drayton St Leonard, ringing a range of methods on their newly-hung 6 bells. What a great start to the day. Warborough tower was the host for our mid-morning ringing, enabling us to ring an assortment of 8 bell methods and indulge in much chatting and socialising in the elusive sunshine whilst waiting to ring.

The George Hotel in Dorchester on Thames provided a lovely lunch for us in one of its 'baronial chic' dining rooms, and was conveniently located for us to walk across the road and ring at Dorchester Abbey for our early afternoon session. The abbey ringing chamber exudes a sense of occasion and grandeur and we certainly endeavoured to do it justice through our ringing.

Overall, 23 ringers joined us in total, representing 11 towers. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Mandy Winters
Social Secretary



Sue Dyke (Warborough) with Josie Irving and Jill Garlick who were reminiscing about old times.



Lunch during the Mini Outing

QUARTER PEALS

Milton, 19 October 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Triples:** Richard E White 1, Lindsey Thornton 2, Lisa Ryan 3, Lorna Curtis 4, Malcolm Fairbairn 5, Michael Probert 6, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C) 7, Anthony Williamson 8

Abingdon, St Helen, 19 November 2023. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Susan Read 1, Sarah Ockwell 2, Daniel Gillett 3, Sarah Barnes 4, Brian Read (C) 5, Peter Heritage 6, Josh Ball 7, Isaac Davies 8. For Choral Evensong.

Wallingford, 17 December 2023. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Millie Gall 1, Karen Walker 2, Nuala Clements 3, Mary Friskney 4, Chris Tuckett (C) 5, Philip Mills 6. For the Christmas Carol service. First quarter at first attempt: 1.

Milton, 27 December 2023. **1344 Plain Bob Major:** Philip Roberts 1, Mary Friskney 2, Rachel Morrish 3, Nicola J Turner 4, Edward A S Walker 5, Andy Bennett 6, Oliver Hyde 7, Charles Morrish (C) 8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 2 January 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Minor:** Isaac Davies 1, Jeanette Thomas 2, Susan Read 3, Brian Read 4, Josh Ball 5, Tim Pett (C) 6.

Milton, 4 January 2024. **1280 Cambridge Surprise Major:** Michael Probert 1, John G Pusey 2, Nick Clarke 3, Brian Read 4, Sara Jones 5, Catherine M A Lane 6, Susan E M Read 7, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C) 8.

Milton, 23 January 2024. **1272 London Surprise Minor:** Rachel Morrish 1, Colin M Turner 2, Charles Morrish 3, Nicholas J Clarke 4, Oliver J Hyde 5, Nicola J Turner (C) First in method -5.

Wallingford, 28 January 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** John Hutchinson 1, Jo Gamester 2, John Dowling 3, Nuala Clements 4, Josie Irving 5, Mary Friskney 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Philip Mills 8.

Milton, 7 February 2024. **1260 Plain Minor (3m):** Bernard J Stone 1, Timothy G Pett 2, Nicholas J Clarke 3, Colin M Turner 4, Oliver J Hyde 5, Nicola J Turner (C) 6. On the 50th anniversary of Colin Turner's first quarter peal. Treble to Plain Bob Doubles at Sunningwell.

Chilton, 15 February 2024. **1320 Kent Treble Bob Minor:** Philip Roberts 1, Gill Loyd 2, Bridget Taylor 3, Charles Morrish 4, Richard Loyd 5, Nick Clarke (C). Rung by past and present Branch Officers.

Wallingford, 25 February 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Triples:** Nuala Clements 1, Jo Gamester 2, Millie Gall 3, John Dowling 4, Wendy Simon 5, Mary Friskney 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Philip Mills 8. First of Triples and first inside, at first attempt: 3; also celebrating a significant Birthday.

Wallingford, 10 March 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Minor:** Philip Mills 1, John Dowling 2, Nuala Clements 3, Millie Gall 4, Robert Partridge 5, Chris Tuckett (C) 6. Rung to welcome Revd Sarah Nesbitt as Team Rector of the Wallingford benefice, following her collation & licensing the previous Wednesday.

Milton, 11 March 2024. **1250 Cockchafer Surprise Major:** Lesley Tucker 1, Sue Sawyer 2, Beverley Perry 3, Janet Deem 4, Neil Deem 5, Neil Williams 6, Graham Tucker 7, Leslie E Perry (C) 8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 17 March 2024. 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Samuel Fuentes 1, David L Thomas (C) 2, Michelle X 3, Daniel Gillett 4, Alexandra J Marchbank 5, Millie Bauwens 6. First Q: 6. First away from cover: 1. First in method: 3. Rung as a birthday compliment to Angela Bauwens and Michelle X.

Drayton, 1 April 2024. 1260 April Day Doubles: Nick Clarke (C) 1, Bridget Taylor 2, Mary Leneis 3, Tom Palmer 4, Oliver Hyde 5, Jim Gulliver 6. 1st in m for 2, 3, 4 and 5. 35th Wedding anniversary compliment to ringers of 2 and 6.

Wantage, 14 April 2024. 1260 Grandsire Doubles: David Endacott 1, Liz Woodhouse 2, Teifi Walters 3, Graham Stoter 4, Andy Bennett (C) 5, Sarah Macdonell 6. Rung prior to the Confirmation Service presided over by the Bishop of Oxford. Also in celebration of the life of Beryl Stoter (mother of 4th). Jenny Bennett, Dick Peters and Robert Haine would like to be associated with this quarter.



L to R: in order of bells rung. (Photo by Jenny Bennett)

Steventon, 17 April 2024. 1260 St Simon's Bob Doubles: Jeanette Owen 1, Oliver J Hyde 2, Mary Leneis 3, Tom Palmer 4, Robert Beavis (C) 5, Bob Mannix 6. 1st Q: 6. 1st in method: 3 & 4. 1st in high-vis trousers: 5.



L-R: Jeanette Owen, Oliver Hyde, Mary Leneis, Tom Palmer, Robert Beavis, Bob Mannix (Image: Mary Leneis)

Abingdon, St Helen, 21 April 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Triples:** Composed by David L Thomas (No. 741) composition number 124113 on Composition Library: Isaac Davies 1, Michelle X 2, Tim Pett 3, Bridget Taylor 4, Susan Read 5, Josh Ball 6, David Thomas (C) 7, Samuel Fuentes 8. First on 8: 2 and 8. First treble to triples: 1. Rung for the Service of Music and Readings for Eastertide.

Steventon, 28 April 2024. **1260 Grandsire Doubles:** Jeanette Owen 1, Bridget Taylor 2, Mary Leneis 3, Tom Palmer 4, John H Napper (C) 5, Bob Mannix 6. To celebrate the 90th birthday yesterday of Jack Jarvis, a member of the ringing team, and to mark his retirement today as a Licensed Lay Minister. Rung by members of three of the churches in the DAMASCUS Benefice. 1st inside in method: 3. 1st in method: 4.



Band in bell order
(Image: Tim Owen)

Drayton, 6 May 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Minor:** Bridget Taylor 1, Nick Clarke (C) 2, Mary Leneis 3, Mary Clare Palmer 4, Tom Palmer 5, Michael Winter 6. 1st of Minor 4 and 5.

EIGHTH PEAL

Abingdon, St Helen, 5 April 2024. **630 Grandsire Triples:** Susan Read 1, Jeanette Thomas 2, Hugh Bishop 3, Priscilla Morris 4, Peter Heritage 5, Brian Read 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Isaac Davies 8. Rung following the Marriage of Melissa Louise Benbow and Joel Matthew Bengel-Abbott with the Best Wishes of the Band.

PEALS

Milton, 5 December 2023, 2h42, **5088 Ipswich Delight Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Nigel A L Mellor 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Beryl R Norris 4, Martin J Turner 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Ian G Campbell 8.

NON ASSOCIATION **Abingdon, St Nicolas**, 24 December 2023, 2h25, **5040 Surprise Minor (23m)**: Nicola J Turner 1, Simon W Edwards 2, Robert J Crocker 3, Ian Roulstone 4, Peter G C Ellis (C) 5, Claire F Roulstone 6. Rung prior to the Christmas Eve Crib Service.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 25 December 2023, 2h34, **5088 Lessness Surprise Major**: Adam R Crocker 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Claire F Roulstone 3, Richard L Thumwood 4, Simon W Edwards 5, Ian Roulstone 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Robert J Crocker 8. Completes all dates of the year – 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 25 December 2023, 2h42, **5152 Xmastide Delight Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Adam R Crocker 2, Robert J Crocker 3, Claire F Roulstone 4, Ian Roulstone 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Simon W Edwards 8. Completes all the dates of the year for two-peals-in-a-day – 1.

OXFORD SOCIETY **Milton**, 20 January 2024, 2h32, **5040 Surprise Minor (41m)**: Craig M Robertson 1, Alan M Eyles 2, Peter W Spain 3, Jonathan C Mills 4, David L Thomas (C) 5, Alex J Parsons 6.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 5 February 2024, 2h36, **5088 Bristol Surprise Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Colin M Turner 4, Claire F Roulstone 5, Robert J Crocker 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Michael E C Mears 8. 5,000th peal – 2. For patronal Festival.

Wallingford, 6 March 2024, 3h7, **5079 Stedman Caters**: Timothy G Pett 1, Robert H Newton 2, Patricia M Newton 3, Catherine M A Lane 4, Robert A Partridge 5, Simon L Edwards 6, Christopher M Tuckett (C) 7, Stuart F Gibson 8, Stephen J Crawley 9, Kevin V Beer 10. Rung to welcome Revd Sarah Nesbitt as the new Rector of the Wallingford benefice, on the day of her collation and induction this evening.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 10 March 2024, 2h42, **5152 Easton-in-Gordano Delight Major**: George Unsworth 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Colin M Turner 4, Nicola J Turner 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Richard O Humphries 8. Rung in thanksgiving for the life of Ian Crichton, father of 5.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 23 April 2024, 2h33, **5040 Newton Alliance Major**: Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Richard L Thumwood 3, Colin M Turner 4, Robert J Crocker 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Ian Roulstone 8. Rung in Memory of Simon Rogers. 500th peal in the tower – 4.

HANDBELLS — PEAL

(* Botley is in the Parish of Cumnor)

OXFORD SOCIETY, **Botley*** (2 Long Close), 29 March 2023, 2h46, **5120 Kent Treble Bob Royal**: David L Thomas (C) 1-2, Lindsay Powell 3-4, Peter W Spain 5-6, Craig M Robertson 7-8, Michele Winter 9-10.

ONB Branch Outing

Saturday 6th July 2024

- 10.00 – 11.00 **Tower** TBC
- 11.15 – 12.00 **Broadwell** (Glos.) (6) (6-0-4)
St Paul
(Postcode: GL56 0YD)
- 12.15 – 13.30 **LUNCH**
The Bell, Stow on the Wold
Menu to follow
(Postcode: GL54 1AJ)
- 13.30 – 14.30 **Stow on the Wold** (8) (T)
St Edward (27-2-24)
(Postcode: GL54 1AB)
- (There is a major car event in Stow, parking may be difficult.)
(**The Bell** is opposite a public car park and there is parking at Tesco's.)
- 14.45 – 15.30 **Tower** TBC
- 16.15 – 17.15 **Tea and ringing at**
Broadwell (Oxon.) (8) (GF) (T)
St Peter & St Paul (15-2-12)
(Postcode: GL7 3QT)

Free Prize Draw for attendees!

Lunch choices to philip.a.roberts@sky.com or 01235 861409

by Saturday 29th June

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Old North Berks Branch

Barbecue & Croquet



Join in the fun on

Saturday, 6th July 2024
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 Mandy Winters by Friday, 28th June, please

Email: social-secretary@onb.odg.org.uk



Please note: Soft drinks will be provided

Beer and wine will be available for donations to branch funds

You can bring our own alcohol

No dogs, please

Contact List

Newsletter Editor:	Daphne Pollard ✉ 20 Kennet Road, Abingdon OX14 3ST 📧 newsletter-editor@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 532887
Branch Chairman:	Rob Nickless ✉ 2 Bear Lane, North Moreton, Didcot OX11 9AS 📧 chairman@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 51047
Branch Secretary:	Gillian Loyd ✉ Dornie Lodge, Besselslea Road, Blewbury OX11 9NW 📧 secretary@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 850459
Branch Practice Secretary:	Bridget Taylor 📧 practices-secretary@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 07715 105476
Branch Social Secretary:	Mandy Winters 📧 social-secretary@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 07768 161147
Branch Treasurer:	Stuart Gibson ✉ The Croft, Milton Hill, Abingdon OX13 6BD 📧 treasurer@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 820491
Joint Ringing Master:	Richard Loyd ✉ Dornie Lodge, Besselslea Road, Blewbury OX11 9NW 📧 ringing-master-1@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 850459
Joint Ringing Master:	Charles Morrish ✉ 16 Cromwell Drive, Didcot OX11 9RB 📧 ringing-master-2@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 01235 352273
ONB Website:	🌐 www.onb.odg.org.uk	

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.

Programme for 2024

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, 5th June – Surprise Major Practice** – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 12th June – Branch Practice – Sparsholt (4) (6.30–7.15pm)
Childrey (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 15th June – Striking Competition – Radley (6) (from 10.00am)
Wednesday, 26th June – Branch Practice – Cholsey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 3rd July – Advanced Practice – Abingdon St Nicolas (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
Monday, 8th July – Branch Practice – Marcham (6) (7.00–8.30pm)
Saturday, 6th July – Branch Outing and Barbecue
Wednesday, 24th July – Branch Practice – Radley (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 7th August – Surprise Major Practice – Sutton Courtenay (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Thursday, 8th August – Branch Practice – Aston Tirrold (6) (7.00–8.30pm)
Wednesday, 28th August – Branch Practice – Long Wittenham (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 4th September – Advanced Practice – Chilton (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
Tuesday, 10th September – Branch Practice – East Hagbourne (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 25th September – Branch Practice – Childrey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 2nd October – Surprise Major Practice – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Monday, 7th October – Branch Practice – North Moreton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 23rd October – Branch Practice – Marcham (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 6th November – Advanced Practice – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 13th November – Branch Practice – Cholsey (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 9th November – Skittles Evening and Supper – Wallingford Sports Park
Wednesday, 27th November – Branch Practice – Steventon (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 4th December – Surprise Major Practice – Brightwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Thursday, 12th December – Branch Practice – Harwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 18th December – Branch Practice – Blewbury (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for copy for the next issue in December 2024 is 15th October 2024. But please don't wait until then, send your news, pictures, and quarters in as they happen.