Old North Berks Branch Newsletter

No: 165 June 2025



Tony Crabtree's 'Stallpits Ring' mobile belfry at the Steventon village VE80

In this issue: Editorial 2, Secretary's Report 2, Ringing Masters' Ramblings 3, Tower Talk 4, Mini Outing 11, ODG Ringing Day 11, Tower Bells — Quarter Peals 12, Handbells — Quarter Peals 14, Miscellaneous Performances 14, Tower Bells — Peals 25, Ringing Outing Programme 17, BBQ Poster 18, Contact List 19, ONB Website 19, Programme for 2025 20. Copy date for the next issue 20.

Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2025 issue of the Branch Newsletter.

The majority of towers rang to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

I'm pleased to report that Ellen Bramhill from Blewbury is going to take on the production of the Newsletter. Good luck Ellen.

My best wishes for the coming months and don't forget to send in your reports to Ellen Bramhill ellen.bramhill@btinternet.com for the next issue.

Daphne Pollard

Secretary's Report

The year started well with ringing and refreshments at Cholsey on 1st January. Once again this was a very popular event, with more than fifty attendees. Thanks go to the Cholsey ringers for their hospitality and for providing an interesting range of savouries and cakes.

Our AGM was held at midday on a sunny Saturday in March, this year in the parish hall of St Helen, Abingdon. Before this we rang at both of the Abingdon towers. Following the meeting, we all enjoyed a superb lunch of jacket potatoes with all types of fillings, followed by cakes. I would like to thank the Abingdon ringers for their hospitality and for all their hard work in preparing such delicious food for us.

The AGM went very smoothly, with only two changes to branch officers. Daphne Pollard had already advised that she wished to stand down after many years as our newsletter editor. Mark Cooke also had advised that he too wished to stand down as branch webmaster, again after many years in this role. Both Daphne and Mark were thanked for all their hard work and dedication to the branch. Fortunately we were able to get new recruits for both of these important roles, and I would like to thank Ellen Bramhill and Mary Leneis for offering their time and expertise. Luckily we were able to persuade our excellent Chairman, Rob Nickless, to stay in post for another year; however he, Richard Loyd and I all expressed our intentions to stand down from office at the next AGM.

Stuart Gibson, our treasurer, advised that in 2024 the membership of the Branch was 273, an increase of 14 from 2023. There were 265 members who paid subscriptions, 3 Honorary members, 1 Life member and 4 associate members, who paid their Guild subscription through another Branch. The BBQ (including the raffle & tea proceeds) raised £447 and the Skittles Night £138. Honey sales resulted in donations of £436. For seven years the Branch had collected a voluntary £2 donation with subscriptions. In 2024 it was decided, instead, to collect an additional £5 per member, split between Bell Restoration Projects and Branch donations to those churches hosting additional Branch ringing events (e.g. Surprise, Advance and Afternoon practices) to go towards heating and lighting. £682 was collected for each in the year. £20 was paid to each tower hosting a Branch event (but not on their normal practice night), totalling £460. No grants were paid during the year but a grant of £900 was approved towards the rehanging of the 4th and 5th at Sutton Courtenay. There is one approved grant still unpaid for the rehanging and augmentation of Sparsholt bells (£3,000). A donation of £500 was made to the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund. The Branch, at the end of 2024, had funds in the region of £7,877 (£6,200 in 2023), which is well in excess of the reserves required by the Branch. Note: £3,900 is currently reserved for Bell Restoration Projects.

Four new members have been elected to the Guild since the last newsletter: Sam Gattis (Blewbury), William Small (Harwell), Kate Lowles and Simon Pearmain (Radley).

The various branch practices that have been held recently have been mainly well attended apart from the Surprise practice at Wallingford, which was cancelled through lack of support. Evening practices were at Harwell, Cumnor, Radley, Appleton, Marcham and Milton. Branch afternoon practices were at Steventon, Blewbury, Brightwell and Chilton. Two Surprise Major practices were at Brightwell. Advanced practices were at Milton, Abingdon St Nicolas and Harwell.

Over fifty branch members and friends took part in the social on 9th November, a skittles evening at the Wallingford Sports and Social Club with a fish and chips supper. Split into six teams, the victorious winners were the Cholsey Clangers. Our annual mini outing was on 23rd April, and we rang first at the pleasant eight at Hungerford. Then it was on to the much more difficult ring of eight at Aldbourne. Very fortunately we were all able to recover over lunch at various establishments in Aldbourne before going to our final tower, the easy going anti-clockwise six at Great Shefford.

Fortunately the rehanging of the 4th and 5th bells at Sutton Courtenay was completed in time for the Guild Ringing Day, which took place in ONB Branch on 5th May. This event only happens once every fifteen years and takes a lot of planning and organising. It was very pleasing that I was able to book twenty-six of our towers and arrange refreshments for breakfast, morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. May I give a big 'thank you' to all our branch members who helped to make this day a great success. Stuart, our treasurer, has already told me that the total amount raised by ONB Branch for the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund is a record amount (over £1,800)!

Here are some future dates for your diaries:

Saturday, 14th June – our branch striking competition during the morning at Chilton (there will be brunch refreshments!)

Saturday, 12th July – our branch outing will be in the Marlow/Henley on Thames area.

Saturday, 9th August – the branch barbecue is being held during the afternoon at Laurence Hall, Cholsey.

In November we are arranging a barn dance in Chilton Village Hall.

So, a busy summer ahead and plenty to look forward to!

Gill Loyd

Ringing Masters' Ramblings

There have been many branch practices since our last Ramblings back in November. Attendance has been mixed, with some being very well attended, others having only a few 'extra' branch members supporting local ringers, and sadly one practice (Surprise Major) abandoned through insufficient numbers. Hopefully tower captains will continue to encourage their members to come along. We try to make these practices inclusive to everyone. The exception is for the level of expertise required for the Advanced and Surprise Major practices. There is some evidence that Membermojo is helping with the advertising of branch events, by reaching all members directly rather than through tower correspondents. Please continue to support these practices, apart from being enjoyable they will help members to improve when they ring in their home towers.

Back in November the branch entered a team as usual in the 10 Bell Striking Competition held at St Thomas, Oxford. The team did a fine job coming a very creditable third against strong opposition. For the first time in a very long time, we have entered a branch team for the 8 bell competition to be held at Benson. Let's hope for success for them. Thank you to all who devote their time and effort to these competitions.

Mention must be made of the massive organisation and logistics required for hosting the Guild Open Day on May 5th. This event comes around every 15 years to our branch, and by all accounts it was a huge success. There has been a lot of positive chattering on national ringing social media about how good it was and especially the welcome and catering. Ringers travelled enormous distances to enjoy our bells. Final figures are not yet in, but it looks like once again ONB has achieved a record fund raising for the Guild Bell Fund. Well done to Gill and everyone involved in helping, you have done the branch proud. Quite astonishingly, we heard that two people made it to all 26 open towers and several others were over 20. That is either quite an achievement or utter madness!

That's it for now, please keep trying hard, and especially enjoy your ringing, and see you at a branch event soon.

Richard Loyd and Oliver Hyde

TOWER TALK

Abingdon

We recently held our Annual General Meeting. The only significant change was that Hugh Bishop stood down as Tower Captain of St Nicolas after very many years in the role. Our grateful thanks go to Hugh for providing such sterling service over such a long period. It has been decided to have just one Tower Captain to cover both towers going forward and this is Brian Read. Josh Ball remains Ringing Master for both.

We rang at St Nicolas for half an hour on VE Day. Several of our younger ringers took part in this which was very gratifying. Some of them were from Abingdon School which was appropriate as many of the school boys had taken part in World War II and sadly many had lost their lives. We were joined by Penny Clover, Councillor and Town Crier, although she didn't bring her bell! She presented all the ringers with a commemorative brochure and certificate of thanks for taking part in the VE Day celebrations.

We welcome Kevin and Lesley-Ann Beer back to Abingdon after Kevin's recent retirement. They have moved back into their old house in the Vineyard. We expect to see plenty of Kevin in the tower which will provide a welcome addition to the band.

Tim Pett



Appleton

Our learners continue to be taught in weekly sessions on Wednesday afternoons by Barbara Payne and David Ockwell, in addition to attending our practices on Friday evenings. We are very grateful to the Rector, Churchwardens and Alison Jeffreys (who lives in the Manor) for allowing this practice to take place on "open" bells, which is allowing them to progress more quickly, and they are all now ringing for Sunday services. We were able to ring on New Year's Eve for the first time since before the Covid pandemic.

In November, Toby Blackwell presented the tower with a two octave (chromatic) set of handbells for use by our ringers. Some of the learners rang carols during the Church carol service and six ringers rang tunes during the March 4th dinner, where the bells were also used for change ringing by other ringers present. David Ockwell has designed a cupboard for the base of the tower, which when completed, will enable storage of the new handbells and also store the "ringers jug".

In December, a peal was rung for the 200th anniversary of the founding of Whites of Appleton by members of staff, friends and colleagues. The March 4th Celebrations took place on Saturday 1st March; we rang the peal this year and congratulate Peter Day on ringing the 9th bell and achieving peals on every bell in the tower. In the evening, our local ringers were joined by visitors and friends and enjoyed an excellent dinner in the Village Hall; after the dinner handbells were "lapped" to Stedman Caters by members of Whites and our traditional ringer's songs were sung.

On Thursday 8th May, we rang to mark the 80th Anniversary of VE day as part of the national ringing at 6.30pm.

We continue to practice on Friday evenings (7.30-9.00) and visitors are always welcome.

Michele Winter

Aston Tirrold

We are very pleased to say that 2 of our band have managed quarter peals in our home tower recently, I think that this is the first time home ringers have rung in a quarter since 1993 !

We are ringing for peace on 8 th May .

We would love to welcome any more experienced ringers to join us any Thursday 7 – 8.

Rachel Marffy

Blewbury

Nearly all of our "new" ringers have now rung their first or even second quarter peal. Our practice nights are usually well attended by Blewbury ringers and visitors alike. So, thank you again to our visitors, who swell our numbers and provide some extra experience to help us learn new things.

We rang in the New Year and celebrated the occasion as usual with a glass of fizz. More celebrations followed in January when we held our tower dinner. And in February we had an outing to Northamptonshire, with ringing in several towers and plenty of food stops along the way!

On Easter Sunday the weather held fine for our annual duck race, with lots of people turning out to watch and cheer on their ducks as they made their way down the stream in the village playclose. The prizes were mostly won by bellringers, past and present, but of course they do buy most of the tickets!

VE Day on 8th May brought a call for commemorations to mark the 80th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in Europe. To begin the day, a short address and prayer was made by Father Jason on the tower roof. This was followed by the raising of the Union flag whilst a lone piper created a most moving sound to be heard far across the village from the top of the tower. This was a unique moment, which we believe is a first for Blewbury. Then at 6:30pm we joined in the ringing of church bells in towns, villages and cities across the nation by ringing a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples here at Blewbury. Thank you to our visiting ringers who helped to make this possible.



Sadly, we were unable to ring for the VE Day event in St Michael's on 11th May due to the ringing chamber being occupied by bees. We hope that their residence is purely transient and they will soon move on to another home.

We are now looking forward to our summer ringing when we can arrive at and leave our practice in daylight.

Christine Kowalczuk

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

I would like to highlight two key items for this edition .... Our St Agatha's day ringing and the retirement of Rev Kev.

We were delighted to welcome branch ringers, guests and visitors from far and wide, as well as locals, to our St Agatha's day event on 5th February. Even one lady from Melbourne, Australia! In the morning, we rang a varied selection of rounds, call changes and methods. This included a touch, twice over, of 251 changes of Grandsire Triples (composed and conducted by Chris Tuckett, thanks). This was to commemorate the death of St Agatha in the year 251 AD. The picture is of the band for the second ring.



Hopefully, everyone also enjoyed our St Agatha's buns! Lunch followed with a range of simple, yet excellent, sandwiches. After lunch we had two quarter peal attempts.

The first was sadly brought to an unexpected end, a few minutes early, by our dog entering the ringing chamber!! The prospect of him being sent flying towards the ceiling was enough to fire it (the ringing!) out!! Again many apologies to the band – who were ringing an excellent Plain Bob Minor, at Millie Gall's first attempt at conducting.

The second was successful. Plain Bob Doubles, including a first quarter inside for Monika Jurgens (a Cholsey ringer) – see QP Section.

Whether this St Agatha's celebration becomes an annual event is yet to be decided. Views welcome.

Moving on .... "Rev Kev" (the Reverend Kevin Beer) has moved on. He retired from stipendiary Ministry at the end of April and moved house! We will miss him sorely here at St Agatha's. Our loss is though, Abingdon's gain and we wish him well. We organised a few farewell events for him, culminating in a Peal – Cambridge Surprise Major – on 27th. See details in Peals Section.

Practice night is still on a Tuesday (7pm beginners, 7:30 to 9pm all comers). Please do feel free to join us, especially on these lighter, warmer evenings.

John Dowling

Cholsey

We are still managing to ring on Sundays and Practice night. We have two new recruits from our open day: Kevin and Gary who are coming along well. One of our more experienced ringers, Gill Murray has moved back to Sheffield. We miss her but she is ringing locally so a visit in the Autumn is likely.

We are part of the Guild open day on May 5th so are looking forward to the event.

Jenny Jeskins

East Hagbourne

We rang the bells at St Andrew's on 31st December at 11:30 and rang in the New Year at Midnight. There were eight ringers in the tower and one visitor. The tenor was tolled at midnight and although one of our members had never fired the bells before she did really well. We were able to 'Fire' all eight of the bells which means the bells are all struck at the same time!

On Saturday 25th January several 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.

On Wednesday 26th February Jeff Powell organised a Hagbourne Ringers Supper at the Fleur for all members who could attend, great fun was had by all.

We now have training sessions for the members of our team who would like help with a method or calling a touch etc. We hope to have a session about once every two months. The team is asked what they would like help with and the session is set up accordingly. The first session was in March and was enjoyed by all who attended.

There was a quarterly meeting of HSCR on Tuesday 15th April at 8:00 during Holy Week. We all enjoyed our hot cross buns together this year at the home of Jeff Powell.

The bells were rung on Easter Sunday, 20th April at 10:00, for morning service.

Several of the team went on our annual Sally Forth weekend this year to the Swaffham area of Norfolk.

The bells were rung on Thursday 8th May at 6:00 for about 30 mins to commemorate VE Day.

Shirley Goss

Milton

With the departure of Charles and Rachel, following so soon after Oliver and Megan, we were getting a bit short on numbers. Nicola wrote a piece for "Milton Matters", the village newsletter, inviting people who were interested in learning to ring to come to a taster session one Saturday morning. Armed with cake, an essential component of such a venture, we went over to Church thinking that possibly we may be the only people there. We were very surprised when six people aged between 10 and 60, all of whom live in the village, turned up. All were given a go at backstrokes and a date for a future handling session was set. I am pleased to report that not only have all six maintained their interest we have picked up a further two recruits along the way.

With the impending arrival of the 80th anniversary of VE Day, this gave a focus for the group of an event to participate in. On May the 8th there was a tea party in church and ringing was advertised to close this event. Five of our new recruits came and rang in that session. All are now at different levels so rang to their own ability. Two are now ringing the whole process but still under supervision. We are grateful to Oliver and Nick who have assisted with the bell handling lessons.

One can't help but cast one's mind back to 2020, the 75th anniversary of VE Day. So much had been anticipated. The Bank Holiday had been moved to make a long weekend of celebration possible. Alas, all the plans came to nought because of COVID 19. Nicola and I chimed four bells (the maximum possible due to being in the same family "bubble"). There was thus an added element of joy to this year's event. The Friday prior to the anniversary a peal was rung to commemorate VE Day 80.

Several other peals have been rung during the last six months, including one to mark Cynthia Howell's significant birthday. A few quarters have also been rung, including one of Bristol Surprise Major arranged especially to enable Oliver to ring his first in the method.

On May the 13th we hosted the Branch practice. Unfortunately, some of our ringers were unable to attend (due to family reasons, not because it was the Branch practice) and with only two people who wouldn't have been at our practice anyway, we were only able to ring six bells.

Colin Turner



Milton ringers and friends following ringing for the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

North Moreton

On 31 March, our youngest ringer from All Saints, Charlie Nickless, organised and rang a successful quarter peal as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. It coincided with the usual NM practice night and a family celebration. To celebrate both occasions the ringers were joined by around twenty other ringers, plus friends and family for 'fizz' and refreshments.

All Saints is functioning well, despite the continuing stonemasonry work on the east window in the Chantry Chapel. All our activities have the addition of continual dust, as the window frame is prepared to receive the repaired medieval stained-glass. There will be plenty to celebrate on its return.

Beryl Jones

Radley

Nothing much changes at Radley – we ring for Service on Sundays and Thursday practices. Over the Christmas period, the bells were rung for the Carol Service, the Midnight Service and 11am Service on Christmas Day.

Oliver has been teaching two new recruits – Lily and Kate. Kate has moved into the village to live in the new houses being built and turned up one Thursday and said she would like to learn – we welcomed her with open arms as our numbers had been dwindling. And then in the New Year Simon joined us. He had started attending the 11am Service and one day he heard us ringing just 4 bells. This renewed his memory that he rang when he was a teenager and so he came along to 'give it another go', and is doing well. Kate and Simon were both elected to the Guild at the branch AGM. Liane has also returned to ringing, having learned when at Uni. She and her daughter Jenny had been ringing at Cumnor but as she lives on the edge of Abingdon finds it more convenient to come to Radley. And then two more experienced ringers, Alison and Peter, turned up one Sunday – they also have moved into the new houses. So on Sundays the ringing chamber can be quite crowded!

We again provided the evening meal for the Radley Course at the end of March.

We rang some rounds for VE Day during practice on 8th May.

Since Easter Radley Church has been closed for 12 weeks for building work. Fortunately we are able to ring on most Thursdays, but it is decided on a weekly basis depending on where in the Church work is being carried out.

Daphne Pollard

Steventon

Ringing for Steventon village VE80 weekend

Steventon village held a four-day VE80 weekend in glorious weather from 8-11 May 2025. To open the weekend, we rang on Thursday evening as everyone in the village was walking up Steventon Hill to see our own beacon being lit as one of the national chain of beacons. We were delighted to see Reg Baker ring solo as part of the team for the first time.

The main event was held for all four days at Aces High, a company located just beyond the church. They are the world's foremost specialists in aviation and military art who relocated to the village from Wendover in late 2023.

They had plenty of space to host this large event which included the teaching of five classes from two local primary schools; the landing of a Hurricane, Dakota, Spitfire and various other old planes on the adjoining grass airstrip; two choirs and a trio singing wartime songs; a short service of remembrance and thanksgiving in the company of a Second World War veteran; plenty of displays of military vehicles and equipment from the era; jeep rides; re-enactors; various cockpits into which visitors could climb; food stalls; a bar; and displays by local organisations, including by Steventon History Society and our own on Ringing in the Second World War.

In this pleasantly busy mix was Tony Crabtree's mobile belfry, which he kindly lent us for the day on the Saturday as a recruitment exercise. Sixteen ringers emerged out of the woodwork to have a go, as well as many visitors who were surprised at how difficult it was to be co-ordinated enough to ring. It was a joy to see many young children having a go with their parents' help, including a very first ring for Rex Loutit, aged one, alongside his mum Katie who is an occasional ringing visitor to our village from Bristol, and the non-ringing members of the Baker family. The mobile belfry ringing was accompanied by young children sitting in the middle of us, by the surprisingly loud sound of model, remote-controlled army tanks complete with moving crew and firing guns operating alongside us, and by jiving and swinging to the Second World War disco also next to us, which took over every now and then from our ringing. Grandsire Doubles competed with the Chattanooga Choo-Choo!

Am I the only person in the Branch who didn't know that Jenny Bennett of Wantage is the sister of Vicki Chapman of Chelmsford Cathedral, our CCCBR Vice-President? I worked in Essex for a few months in 2015 or 2016 and so had known Vicki and Colin from my couple of visits to the Cathedral. I knew that ours was a special VE80 event but I was still somewhat surprised to see that our reach for the weekend had got as far as Essex until the sibling connection had been explained. Jenny and Andy Bennett, Vicki and Colin Chapman, Tony and I sneaked off for a quick ring in the church which Tony suitably called as a touch of 80 changes of Grandsire Doubles.

A different team of six rang a quarter peal on Sunday afternoon to close the four-day event. I have never previously been ringing with the sound of a Dakota and Spitfire roaring overhead as they took off for home: it was rather emotional and required additional concentration in the middle of the QP. I'm told that the emotion was happening outside of the tower too, with visitors seeing and hearing the roar of the planes leaving on Sunday afternoon and, when that tailed off, our bell ringing took over as the visitors walked home past the church.

A huge thanks goes out to Tony for loaning us his mini ring for the day and to Kit Margey for coming along and helping him and us with gusto.

Jeanette Owen

Wantage

Ringing at Wantage remains consistent with Sunday service ringing and Tuesday practice nights. We're still thankful for our core of regulars and the visitors who allow us to ring all eight bells. Luckily Dick Peters has returned from his recent knee surgery.

We have had a change of Tower Captain this spring so the format of practice nights has changed slightly. Rather than ringing ***all*** the things we know, we are concentrating on fewer things that can help more people progress. For example; Plain Bob Minor, so some can practice plain hunting the treble, but others can improve ringing it inside, and others can learn how to call it, then some surprise minor for more experienced ringers. Or an evening of Grandsire Triples, again so some can practice plain hunting, some can learn to ring inside and others learn to call it, blending that with Stedman Triples for the more advanced amongst us. It makes for a more collaborative experience as everyone is learning and everyone is helping others to learn

We were able to ring for all the Christmas and New Year events held in church at the end of last year. We have not had any occasion to ring any quarter peals since the last newsletter. At the time of submission, we have a few weddings scheduled for 2025. Some of our ringers are supporting a Wellbeing Event at the Beacon in Wantage, at the end of April, where they are hoping to share information with the public about bellringing alongside other local community groups. A possible recruitment opportunity?

We are looking forward to having the bells available for the ODG Open Day on 5th May. And plan on ringing to celebrate the anniversary of VE Day prior to a Civic Service being held in Wantage on Sunday 4th May. With the help of a friend of the tower, we are also planning on entering a team in to this years Branch 6 Bell Striking Competition too.

Jenny Bennett

Mini Outing – 23 April 2025

On April 23rd, our mini outing visited Hungerford, Aldbourne and Great Shefford churches (the latter was a delightful round tower church). It was a typical spring day and the 14 attendees shared a lunch break at the Blue Boar and Aldbourne Post Office and Deli.

Please keep your diaries free for the outing on July 12th – full details shortly.

Furthermore, our annual BBQ is now a lunchtime and afternoon event. Please see the poster for more details.

Mandy Winters

ODG Ringing Day — 5th May 2025

So, it's all over for another fifteen years: the turn of our Old North Berks branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild to host the ODG ringing day.

There are great advantages of having our ring of bells in the body of the church and the Ringing Day was one of them. Those lingering were able to socialise with one another. Those on duty were able to see everything that was going on. Accompanying children soon found the play area, well within sight. Quiet time right at the end was time for our team to enjoy tea and cake together.

Duties were happily undertaken by the whole team: the money-takers, the tea and cake makers, the floating helpers, the washer-uppers and the ringing team fillers-in. We made sure that every-one signed the visitors book, no-one jumped the queue and teams were put together from an un-known set of arrivals and skills. I feel a bit guilty about the couple who just wanted a quiet cuppa and cake but who were clearly capable of filling in for a few rings when we were one or two short.

What was most notable was that ODG ringers were well and truly in a minority: visitors from far afield were the majority. Our first arrived an hour and ten minutes before our slot of 4:30-5:30pm with a few others close behind: half a dozen or more rings had happened before 4:30. It suited us because some visitors were then happy to have refreshments, so it was more money in the pot.

Standout visitors were the three young lads clearly trying to grab as many towers as possible and, when faced with the option of me needing two out of three of them to fill in for Cambridge Minor, they said that they'd swap a ringer half-way through the method. *'No, you won't. Today isn't a day for tricks like that'* was my response. Thanks to the lady from Sonning who stood aside for them without being asked. The three young men soon legged it out of the tower onto the next one on their list. I reflected that those doing the rounds in a hurry were akin to someone saying that they've 'done Portugal' when they've flown in and out in a weekend, with no time to get under the skin of a country or, in our case, understand the go of the bells or their setting in a beautiful Grade I listed church. We're an eclectic mix and it makes it all the more fun!

So, to the 55 people who visited our church, to those from outside of the Guild from Beverley to Boreham, Cardigan Bay to Cambridge, Epsom to East Sussex and Hampshire to Hertford, with Aldershot, Bristol, Cheshire, Guildford, Ilminster, Kent, Loughborough, Moreton-in-Marsh, Old-ham, Redditch and Suffolk in-between, and to those from within the Guild, thankyou to you all for visiting and for helping to plump up our Guild funds.

Jeanette Owen
Steventon

TOWER BELLS — QUARTER PEALS

Blewbury, 20th November 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Lindsay Lott 1, Gillian Loyd (C) 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Ellen Bramhill 4, Richard Loyd 5, Val Stevens 6. 1st quarter peal away from tenor: 1

Milton, 20 November 2024. **1250 Lincolnshire Surprise Major:** J Caroline Flockton 1, Christopher Tuckett 2, John G Pusey 3, Simon L Edwards 4, Andrea Falk 5, Stuart J Flockton 6, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C) 7, Timothy G Pett 8. First in method – 5.

Appleton, 22 November 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Michele Winter 1, Elizabeth R Mullett 2, Lindsay Powell 3, Catherine M A Lane 4, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke (C) 5, Dana Josephson 6, John G Pusey 7, Paul C Lucas 8. Rung in celebration of the adventurous and accomplished life of Oxford ringer Bernard Masterman. Bernard's funeral this afternoon was followed by a thanksgiving service in this church during which 3 leads of Kent Treble Bob Royal were rung in handbells by 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 of this band.

Abingdon, St Helen, 1 December 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Sarah Ockwell 1, Simon Yarrow 2, Susan Read 3, Sarah Carr 4, Peter Heritage 5, Tim Pett (C) 6, Brian Read 7, Samuel Fuentes 8. Rung for the Advent service

Milton, 2 December 2024. **1280 Bristol Surprise Major:** Catherine Hughes-D'Aeth 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Colin M Turner 4, Nicholas J Clarke 5, Oliver J Hyde 6, Robert C Beavis 7, John N Hughes-D'Aeth 8. First in method – 6.

Steventon, 4 December 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles**: Bridget Taylor 1, Jeanette Owen 2, Oliver J Hyde 3, Robert Beavis 4, Tom Palmer (C) 5, Bob Mannix 6. To celebrate the birth of Alfred Joseph Roundell Palmer, son of Tom and Mary Clare, practice night ringers at this tower. Alfred & Mary Clare were present throughout. Mum's first ring since giving birth, a touch of PB Doubles after the QP.



Image shows parents and child with an amazing nursery ring of 8, manufactured by Bob Manix and Mary Leneis

(Image: Mary Leneis)

Blewbury, 26th December 2024. **1260 Stedman Triples**: Ellen Bramhill 1, Josie Irving 2, Gillian Loyd 3, John H Napper 4, Richard Loyd 5, Mark Vincent 6, Stuart Gibson (C) 7, Matthew Phillips 8. Rung to celebrate the 80th birthday of Mike Gettings, a ringer at this tower.

Radley, 30 December 2024. **1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor**: Benjamin Small 1, Laura S Watt 2, Oliver J Hyde 3, Sebastian C Small 4, Natasha Claus (C) 5, Edward A S Walker 6.

North Moreton , 26 January 2025. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Charlie Nickless 1, Mary Friskney 2, Jill Garlick 3, Stuart Gibson (C) 4, Josie Irving 5, Gillian Loyd 6, Richard Loyd 7, Rob Nickless 8. To mark the 80th birthday of Beryl Jones, a local ringer and huge supporter of the two recent bell projects. First quarter on the augmented bells. First quarter of triples: 1, 8

Milton, 4 February 2025. **1344 Yorkshire Surprise Major**: Bridget Taylor 1, Alison Lee 2, Rosemary K Hemmings 3, J Caroline Flockton 4, Jenny M Page (C) 5, Catherine M A Lane 6, Millie C Gall 7, Alison T Merryweather-Clarke 8. First Treble Dodging Major – 1.

Brightwell, 5 February 2025. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Josephine Butterfield 1, Bridget Taylor 2, Mary Friskney 3, Chris Tuckett (C) 4, Monika Jurgens 5, Katie Lane 6. First quarter inside: 5. Part of the ringing at the church to mark St Agatha's Day.



Brightwell Quarter Peal band.

North Moreton, 31 March 2025. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Charlie Nickless 1, Gillian Loyd 2, Jill Garlick 3, Josie Irving 4, Mary Friskney 5, Stuart Gibson (C) 6, Richard Loyd 7, Rob Nickless 8. 50th birthday compliments to Jo, wife of 8 and mother of 1.

Blewbury, 21 April 2025. **1288 Grandsire Triples**: Gillian Loyd 1, Jenny Bennett 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Josie Irving 4, Andy Bennett 5, Mark Vincent (C) 6, Richard Loyd 7, Andrew Forman 8. Rung to celebrate Easter & as a pre-birthday compliment to Gill Loyd. 1st Grandsire Triples: 3.

Blewbury, 8 May 2025. **1344 Grandsire Triples**: Mandy Winters 1, Gillian Loyd 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Alex Sharpe 4, Darren Williams 5, Mark Vincent (C) 6, Richard Loyd 7, Matthew Phillips 8. Rung to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Steventon, 11 May 2025. **1440 St Clement's College Bob Minor:** Bridget Taylor 1, Jeanette Owen 2, Mary Leneis 3, Tom Palmer 4, Stuart F Gibson (C) 5, Oliver J Hyde 6. Rung with the sound of a Spitfire and Dakota roaring overhead as they left the village VE80 celebrations. First in Method: 3, 4 & 6:



Steventon Quarter Peal Band
(1 to 6)

(Image: Stuart F Gibson)

HANDBELLS — QUARTER PEALS

(* Botley is in the Parish of Cumnor)

Botley* (2 Long Close), 17 April 2025. **1256 Spliced Plain Major (3m)**: Craig M Robertson 1-2, Lindsay Powell 3-4, Joe Norton (C) 5-6, Michele Winter 7-8. With best wishes to Tracy's ribs.

Botley* (2 Long Close), 17 April 2025. **1272 Kent Treble Bob Minor**: Joe Norton 1-2, Lindsay Powell 3-4, Craig M Robertson (C) 5-6. Fastest in the method in hand by all; 25 mins.

Botley* (2 Long Close), 17 April 2025. **1296 Gainsborough Little Bob Royal**: Lindsay Powell 1-2, Joe Norton 3-4, David L Thomas (C) 5-6, Craig M Robertson 7-8, Michele Winter 9-10.

MISCELLANEOUS PERFORMANCES

Appleton, 4 November 2024. **Rounds and call changes.** Peter H M Day, Andrew J Dyer, Eva-Maria Gibbs, Catherine E Hampson, Anthony Harris, David C Ockwell, Barbara H Payne, Clare Saunders, Bernard J Stone, Michele Winter, Richard Youdale. Rung following the funeral of David Alner, a former Churchwarden and Church Treasurer, who did so much for the church and the Alms Houses.

Appleton, 1 January 2025. **Call changes and Plain Hunt.** Peter H M Day, Eva-Maria Gibbs, Julia Gibbs, David C Ockwell, Sarah J Ockwell, Michele Winter. Starting at 23.30 on 31/12/24, plain hunt, call changes, plain hunt, the tenor tolled at midnight and call changes to celebrate the arrival of 2025. The first New Year's Eve ringing since before the Covid pandemic.

Appleton, 8 May 2025. **Call changes and Plain Hunt.** Peter H M Day, Eva-Maria Gibbs, Julia Gibbs, Anthony Harris, Roger Mitty, Barbara H Payne, Clare Saunders, Vivian J White. Ringing to mark the 80th Anniversary of VE day as part of the national ringing at 6.30pm.

Radley, 8 May 2025. **Rounds.** Lisa Astbury, Ann Belcher, Maurice Belcher, George Broadhurst, Lily Glenn-Pearce, Oliver Hyde, Kate Lowles. For the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Steventon, 8 May 2025. **General Ringing:** Rounds and call changes, firing, plain hunting. Reg Baker, Simon Baker, Jim Gulliver, Jack Jarvis, Mary Leneis, Bob Mannix, Jeanette Owen, Bridget Taylor. On the 80th anniversary of VE day. Includes Reg's first independent ringing of rounds, call changes and firing (age 8).

Steventon (The Stallpits Ring), Aces High, Skyfall, Church Lane, Steventon, Saturday, 10 May 2025 (5lb 14oz). **Method Ringing, Firing 80 Times, General Ringing and Have-A-Go Ringing.** Jeanette Owen, Jack Jarvis, Oliver Hyde, Mary Leneis, Bob Mannix, Simon Baker, Reg Baker, Bridget Taylor, Tony Crabtree, Kit Margey, Sue Portsmouth, Jenny Bennett, Andy Bennett, Vicki Chapman, Colin Chapman, Katie Lucas Loutit, Rex Loutit. At the VE80 weekend held for the village, principally to let visitors have a go and for recruitment purposes. A first ever ring for Rex and for two members of the Baker Family.

Steventon, 10 May 2025. **80 Grandsire Doubles:** Jeanette Owen 1, Jenny Bennett 2, Tony Crabtree (C) 3, Vicki Chapman 4, Andy Bennett 5, Colin Chapman 6, Rung for the village VE80 weekend.



TOWER BELLS — PEALS

Milton, 19 November 2024, 2h42, **5088 Ealing Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Ian G Campbell 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Martin J Turner 8. 500th peal on the bells – 1.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 13 December 2024, 2h31, **5024 Spliced Surprise Major (8m):** Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Alan M Eyles 6, Ian Roulstone (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

Appleton, 14 December 2024, 3h5, **5039 Grandsire Caters:** James A Haseldine 1, Julie A Haseldine 2, Catherine M A Lane 3, Nigel S Taylor 4, John H Napper 5, Andrew Haseldine (C) 6, Mark J Walker 7, Stephen H Stanford 8, Graham J Clifton 9, Jack A Knowles 10. Rung for the 200th Anniversary of the founding of Whites of Appleton Ltd by members of staff, friends and colleagues. First on 10 – 10.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY, **Abingdon St Nicolas**, 24 December 2024, 2h32, **5040 Surprise Minor (7m):** Nicola J Turner 1, Oliver J Hyde 2, Colin M Turner 3, Ian Roulstone (C) 4, Robert J Crocker 5, Claire F Roulstone 6. Rung prior to the Christmas Eve Crib Service. First of Surprise Minor inside and most methods – 2.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DA **Milton**, 27 December 2024, 2h47, **5056 Dereham Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Ian G Campbell 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Daniel J Watson 5, Simon L Edwards 6, Mark Edwards 7, Simon W Edwards (C) 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 30 January 2025, 2h39, **5040 Glaswegian Alliance Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, John N Hughes-D'Aeth 7, Ian Roulstone (C) 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 16 February 2025, 2h40, **5152 Booth Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Charlotte A Boyce 3, Colin M Turner 4, Jody A Wood 5, Alan M Eyles 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Philip J Payne 8.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton,** 1 March 2025, 2h56. **5003 Grandsire Caters:** Christine C Darby 1, Michele Winter 2, Robert H Newton 3, Andrew J Dyer 4, Patricia M Newton 5, Catherine E Hampson 6, Alan M Eyles (C) 7, David C Ockwell 8, Peter H M Day 9, Bernard G North 10. On March 4th day for the 207th anniversary of the bells. Circled the tower: 9.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 5 March 2025, 2h42, **5056 Spliced Surprise Major (4m):** Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, John N Hughes-D'Aeth (C) 3, Colin M Turner 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Ian Roulstone 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS **Milton**, 28 March 2025, 2h54, **5040 Plain Bob Major:** Timothy F Collins 1, Ian P Hill 2, Lesley A Knipe 3, Michael Hatchett 4, F Eric Roberts 5, David P Hilling 6, R Mark Esbester 7, Roy Le Marechal (C) 8. The first peal to contain more than one ringer aged over 90. The ringer of the 4th is 90, and the ringer of the 5th is 92.

GLOUCESTER & BRISTOL DA **Milton**, 6 April 2025, 2h40, **5088 70th Birthday Delight Major:** Debby M Talbott 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Stuart P B Talbott 5, Marc Hart 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Ian G Campbell 8. Arranged and rung as a 70th birthday compliment to Cynthia.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 10 April 2025, 2h37, **5056 Spliced Surprise Major (9m):** Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Claire F Roulstone 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Timothy G Pett 6, Ian Roulstone 7, John N Hughes-D'Aeth (C) 8.

Abingdon, St Helen, 12 April 2025, 3h, **5040 Cambridge Surprise Royal** (Comp. by P A B Saddleton): Craig M Robertson 1, David L Thomas (C) 2, Peter W Spain 3, Samuel M Senior 4, Martin V Crick 5, Mark J Walker 6, Daniel Graham 7, George J Vant 8, Jonathan C Mills 9, Daniel J Smith 10. First of Surprise: 5.

Brightwell, 26 April 2025, 2h51, **5056 Cambridge Surprise Major** (Comp. Charles Middleton): Robert H Newton 1, Christopher M Tuckett 2, Patricia M Newton 3, Millie C Gall 4, Kenneth J Darvill 5, Isaac J O'Shea 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Kevin V Beer 8. Arranged and rung specially as a retirement compliment to Kevin by a band of his ringing friends past and present.



ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 2 May 2025, 2h40, **5096 Yatton Alliance Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Cynthia E Howell 2, Claire F Roulstone 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Mark Edwards 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Ian Roulstone 8. To commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

ONB Branch Outing

Saturday 12th July 2024

9:45 – 10:45 **Maidenhead, All Saints** (8) (15-0-13) (T)
(Postcode: SL6 4HE)
A few parking spaces on the road in front of the church, in Rutland Road opposite the church and a very small church car park.

11:15 – 12:00 **Burnham,** St Peter (8) (12-3-13)
(Postcode: SL1 7HX)
On street parking in The Precincts (SL1 7HU) or a small Tesco's car park 5min walk (£1.80 for 2hrs). Very limited parking at the church (not recommended). The village has a one-way system.

12:00 – 14:00 **LUNCH**
Lots of choices of cafés in Marlow (leisure centre at Pound Lane Car Park has a café 'The M café & bar'). Hillier Garden centre (before getting into Marlow) has a café. If you want lunch in Burnham before going to Marlow there are options there too.

14:00 – 15:00 **Marlow,** All Saints (8) (15-0-2) (T)
(Postcode: SL7 2AA)
Very busy town with no parking close to the church. Allow lots of time to find a car park (Pound Lane Car Park [SL7 2AQ] is 5min walk from the church).

15:30 – 16:10 **Hambleden,** St Mary the Virgin (8) (11-0-25)
(Postcode: RG9 6RP)
Parking either outside the church or up the lane past the Stag & Huntsman pub. Local café staff said that the village could be very busy in summer.

16:10 – 17:00 **TEA**
Options include the café in Hambleden or numerous cafés in Henley.

17:00 – 17:45 **Henley-on-Thames**, St Mary V (8) (21-2-0)
(Postcode: RG9 2AT)
Very busy town with no parking close to the church. Mill Meadows or the station car parks are large but 10min walk from the church. Greys Road car park (RG9 2AA) is smaller and 5mins from the church. Options of on street parking.

DINNER
Lots of options for dinner afterwards if wanted.

Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Old North Berks Branch

Barbecue, Games & Fun



on



Saturday, 9th August 2025
from 12.00

At the Laurence Hall, Cholsey (Church Road – parking outside the church and walk to hall)

£18.00 each (payable in advance by BACS transfer)

Account details: Sort code 30 93 93
Acc. No. 1724 6860
Name of account: Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell-ringers (Old North Berks Branch)
Reference: Mandy W BBQ

All proceeds to branch funds

All names to Mandy Winters by Friday, 28th July, 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 your 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:	Oliver Hyde ✉ 5 Lower Radley, Abingdon, OX14 3AX 💻 ringing-master-2@onb.odg.org.uk	☎ 07711 961256
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 2025

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, 4th June – **Surprise Major Practice** – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Monday, 9th June – Branch Practice – Little Wittenham (5) (6.30–7.15pm)
Long Wittenham (6) (7.30–8.30pm)
Saturday, 14th June – Striking Competition – Chilton (from 10.00am)
Wednesday, 25th June – Branch Practice – Abingdon, St Helen's (10) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 2nd July – **Advanced Practice** – Blewbury (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Tuesday, 8th July – Branch Practice – Wantage (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 12th July – **Branch Outing**
Wednesday, 23rd July – Branch Practice – Marcham (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 6th August – **Surprise Major Practice** – North Moreton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 9th August – **Branch BBQ** – Cholsey (afternoon)
Wednesday, 13th August – Branch Practice – Steventon (6) (7.00–8.30pm)
Wednesday, 27th August – Branch Practice – Long Wittenham (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 3rd September – **Advanced Practice** – Chilton (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
Monday, 8th September – Branch Practice – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 24th September – Branch Practice – Childrey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 1st October – **Surprise Major Practice** – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Tuesday, 7th October – Branch Practice – Abingdon, St Helen's (10) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 22nd October – Branch Practice – West Hanney (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 5th November – **Advanced Practice** – Drayton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 15th November – **Autumn Social Event** – Barn Dance – Chilton Village Hall
Wednesday, 12th November – Branch Practice – TBC (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 26th November – Branch Practice – Cholsey (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 3rd December – **Surprise Major Practice** – Harwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Tuesday, 9th December – Branch Practice – Brightwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 17th December – Branch Practice – East Hagbourne (8) (2.00–3.30pm)

NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for copy for the next issue in December 2025 is 14th October 2025. But please don't wait until then, send your news, pictures, and quarters to Ellen Bramhill as they happen.

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