Old North Berks Branch Newsletter

No: 164 December 2024



Photo courtesy of Derek Snee



Jack Jarvis of Steventon and the QP Board listing his achievements.

Photo courtesy of Jeanette Owen

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Editorial

Welcome to the Winter 2024 issue of the Branch Newsletter.

Congratulations to Wantage on winning the Branch Striking Competition and representing the Branch at the Guild 6-bell Striking Competition in October.

Congratulations are due to Jack Jarvis of Steventon on all of his achievements over his lifetime (see front cover and page 11).

Congratulations are due to Matthew Young of Milton and Lindsay Lott of Blewbury who have both rung their first Quarter Peal.

Congratulations are also due to: Hilary Mackintosh of Brightwell on gaining her LTR2 qualification; and to Colin Turner who has rung his 8000th Peal.

Sadly Peter Corderoy of Blewbury and Kate Crennell of Chilton have passed away recently.

It just remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Daphne Pollard

Newsletter Editor

I have been producing the Branch Newsletter for the last 14 years, initially with Ian Minns of Radley until he moved to Somerset a few years ago, and I think it is now time for me to retire from this post as age is catching up. If anybody would like to know more about what the job entails, please contact me at daphne@pollard43.plus.com

Secretary's Report

Following the success of the 2024 AGM during the morning and the lunch afterwards at North Moreton, it was decided at the October Committee meeting that we will continue with 'face to face' AGMs during the morning. The 2025 meeting will be held on 15th March and the Abingdon ringers kindly offered to be hosts. However, we will continue to have our February and October Branch Committee meetings by Zoom meeting. Therefore members can attend from the comfort of their own homes rather than having to face sometimes long drives in the dark. The only downside is that coffee, tea, cakes and a sociable chat afterwards is not possible!

Our Treasurer, Stuart Gibson, reported that so far in 2024 we have 264 paid up members (from 27 towers), along with the 3 Honorary and 1 Life members plus 4 members who pay a subscription through another branch. The total number of members is 272, which is thirteen more than in the previous year. Following the decision at the January EGM to increase the additional subscription to the Old North Berks Branch to £5 per member, which has been split to help cover donations to restoration projects and donations to towers hosting afternoon, surprise major and advanced practices, the figure raised for each so far is £680. The BBQ and Outing raised £477, with continuing honey sales a further £247, both of which will be given to various branch restoration projects.

At the October Committee meeting we heard that the fifth bell at Sutton Courtenay is currently unringable because of a broken gudgeon. It will be repaired most probably in spring 2025, with the cost of replacing the gudgeons and also the twisted wooden headstock with a metal headstock being £5933 +VAT, with some small allowances for local labour. The faculty is in process and a grant has been awarded by the ODG. It was agreed that a grant of £500 will be made from our Branch funds. More work at Sutton Courtenay is likely to take place over the coming years.

Six new members have been elected to the Guild since the May newsletter: Hilary Mackintosh, Alex Kingston and Dave Webber (Brightwell), Richard Pike (Wantage), Sarah Malin and Benjamin Malin (West Hendred). Sadly two of our members have recently died: Kate Crennell of Chilton and Peter Corderoy of Blewbury. Peter was a long-standing Guild member with over seventy years' membership, joining in 1952. He was also tower captain at Blewbury from 1996 to 2015 and will be much missed.

The various branch practices that have been held recently have been mainly well attended. Evening practices were at Wallingford, Sparsholt and Childrey, Marcham, Aston Tirrold, East Hagbourne and North Moreton. Branch afternoon practices were at Benson, Cholsey, Radley, Long Wittenham, Childrey and Abingdon St Helen. Surprise Major practices were at Drayton and Milton. Advanced practices were at North Moreton, Abingdon St. Nicolas and Chilton.

Our six bell striking competition was held during the morning of 15th June 2024 at Radley. It was judged by Jonathan and Jo Cresshull of Oxford, who were impressed by the number of teams entering and the quality of the ringing. Eight teams entered and the results were: 1st Wantage (10.5 faults), 2nd Blewbury (24.5 faults), 3rd Abingdon (33 faults), 4th Wallingford (39.5 faults), 5th Radley (71.5 faults), 6th Cholsey (77.5 faults), 7th Youth Team (131.5 faults), 8th North Moreton (unfinished). Thanks go to the Radley ringers for providing superb refreshments. Congratulations go to Wantage, who represented the Branch in the Guild 6-bell competition on 5th October and came 6th, and also came 3rd in the Guild raising and lowering competition.

The branch outing took place on 6th July to Moreton in Marsh, Broadwell (St Paul), Stow on the Wold, Great Rissington and Broadwell (SS Peter and Paul), with lunch at the Bell, Stow on the Wold, and afternoon tea in Broadwell. Philip said that he has been arranging the branch outings for at least twenty years and this will be his last. Both he and Janette were thanked for all the hard work they had both put into making some really great days out for branch members. The outing was followed by a barbecue for the last time at the home of Stuart and Naomi Gibson, which was attended by over fifty members, partners and friends. As ever the food was truly excellent and our grateful thanks go to Stuart and Naomi for hosting this event for us for the past twenty years. The good news is that this does not mean the end of outings and barbecues, as Mandy, our Branch Social Secretary, has some interesting plans afoot for next year, but I shall leave it to her to let you know!

Our next social event will be a skittles evening with fish and chips supper, which will be held at the Wallingford Sports and Social Club on Saturday, 9th November. Our annual New Year's ringing event is scheduled for 1st January 2025 in Cholsey.

May I wish all branch members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gill Loyd

Ringing Masters' Ramblings

As we approach the end of another busy year there is much to look forward to, but it is also a good time to reflect on our achievements as a branch and as individual members of our tower teams.

It has been a great pleasure to work alongside Charles Morrish as Joint Ringing Master, and to ring regularly with both Charles and Rachel at several local towers. We shall all miss them terribly, especially their humour and supportive approach to ringers at all levels of experience. Charles also brought some innovative thinking to the role, stretching the usual repertoire of methods and creating opportunities for learning and progression. Those who attended his popular listening course will surely remember his home made striking machine utilising a cooking pot! Charles and Rachel made many friends during their time in our branch and we hope to see them from time to time, and we wish them well in their new home in Newark.

Fortunately the gap left by Charles' departure has been very quickly filled by Oliver Hyde, who kindly stepped forward to become a Joint Ringing Master. Oliver learned to ring at Radley under Daphne's expert tutorship and has become a popular supporter of many towers in our branch, and is a regular attendee at the many branch practices. Please make yourself known to Oliver when you meet him, as he does not know all of you personally, and he is keen to understand your individual capabilities and ambitions.

Recently, we met with Bridget to plan the 2025 practices. The outline calendar should appear in this edition. Once again it is a very busy schedule, reflecting the enthusiasm of our membership to support this number of practices. This is a very positive situation, but it does require quite an ongoing commitment from everyone to sustain at this frequency. It is worth reminding ourselves of the purpose of these different types of practice, especially for new members, and those who have yet to attend any for the first time.

Branch Evening Practices

These are hosted by branch towers, with the aim of all ringable towers hosting at least once during a two year cycle. They are held on their practice nights and are specifically designed to support and help the local host tower ringers. It is therefore important for the local ringers to attend these, and not regard it as 'a night off' or shy away for fear of going wrong in front of strangers. The attendance of other branch members creates both ringing and social opportunities, enhancing the overall ringing experience. We encourage tower captains to 'do their bit' by encouraging attendance at these practices, where ringers of all standards will be made welcome. These are the only practices where branch business such as election of new members is possible.

Branch Afternoon Practices

These have been established for several years, and continue to be popular, especially with those who prefer not to go out on dark cold nights. Again, ringers of all levels of ability will be very welcome, enjoying ringing in a fun and inclusive atmosphere.

Branch Advanced Practices

These are still in their infancy, having been introduced to provide opportunities for ringers to progress beyond the basic methods of Plain Bob and Grandsire. So far they have been quite well attended, and the feedback has been positive. Their success depends on sustaining this level of support and for the RM's to understand the method ambitions of the attendees. Therefore, please engage with others on this so that we can maximise the benefits of this new, but useful practice. A whole range of methods can be possible with, ideally, no Plain Bob or Grandsire. They are not a focus on Surprise methods, although these might be attempted occasionally if requested and resources allow. As always, these will be supportive, tolerant and friendly, providing a good environment for learning and practice.

Branch Surprise Practices

These are possibly the most vulnerable of all of our practice offerings. As the years go by, the number of ringers within our branch at this level of expertise has declined. There was a time when 8 spliced was on the menu at most practices, but this is now more the exception rather than the rule. As a counter to that trend, we do have a few members who are attempting to make the difficult and challenging first move into Surprise Major (Cambridge) ringing. It is our sincere hope that these practices will continue to provide the opportunity for Surprise Major ringing for branch members. If we lose this, it will be hard to re-establish, and it will be a great shame. We appeal to all ringers at this standard, whether novice or expert, to support these practices during 2025 whenever possible.

We hope this all makes sense and that it will encourage good attendances throughout next year. Remember that all of these practices are offered for help and encouragement, but it is also important to prepare with homework if necessary beforehand. Many experienced branch members are also very willing to support anyone who would like to arrange their own learning experience. All it takes is to book a tower, and spread the word for inviting a few helpers along. Tower captains may also take a similar approach for anyone willing to put in the effort to learn.

Apologies for the rather long 'Ramble' this time, but we should conclude by congratulating Wantage for representing the branch so magnificently in the 6 bell Guild striking competition, coming a creditable 6th from 15 branches, and also for entering the raising and lowering competition held on the same day. We hope to enter a branch team for the Guild 10 bell competition on November 23rd.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in 2025 for another fun year in ONB!

Now for Philip's contribution:

I called into the pet shop the other day just to have a look around and came out with a newt. It wasn't a crested newt, just a common one and I called it tiny, because it was my newt!

The AGM of the Newshire Branch had five motions to vote on. These were:

1) should the annual subscription be raised to £10?

2) should the next meeting be at Langton?

3) should there be an outing this year?

4) should the peal fee be £1 per rope?

5) should there be a striking contest?

Of those present, 2/3 voted in favour of motion 1, 1/2 were in favour of motion 2, 5/6ths voted for motion 3, 3/4 for motion 4, and only 12 people were in favour of motion 5.

How many voting members were there?

Each of those present voted for 3 motions and against 2.

Answer next newsletter.

Richard Loyd and Oliver Hyde

Goodbye ONB

Sadly, it is time for me and Rachel to say goodbye to the Branch. Maybe a few words might be in order.

It is ten years since we embarked on the big adventure south on account of taking a new job, which actually was a last bid to find a route upwards within Network Rail. Believe me; I tried hard to secure a position nearer to my roots. Destiny determined that Oxfordshire it should be.

After a two year eternity trying to sell our house in Cumbria, we settled on living in Didcot. How fortuitous that was. We found ourselves plumb in the middle of a bell ringing hotbed. Best of all, the people we found are largely of a similar mindset to ourselves. Which is to say that bell ringing represents an important part of their lives, they desire to keep progressing, uphold standards and traditions, and above all they value and promote real camaraderie. The ringing here has matched the excitement and elation I got in my first few years when just a youngster.

The ONB is very active with something to suit all capabilities and encouragement to match. Over the years, through house moves and ringing trips, I can vouch for the fact that this is not "a given". There are many areas of the country that are a ringing wilderness. The sheer effort of keeping a band going is too great. Good rings of bells stand idle and neglected. This is a really serious problem and reflects the difficulties facing the Church of England itself. We cannot turn a blind eye and assume there will always be bells for us to ring. Recently the Branch voted to give donations to the host tower every time we visit for a practice. This is but a tiny step in acknowledging some responsibility of self interest. I have had a lifetime of pleasure. I want successive generations to have the same opportunities. We are going to have to work hard to ensure this.

I have had the honour of holding the Joint Ringing Master's job. This I have discovered is not nearly so easy as I might have imagined. May I thank everyone that has given me encouragement as I felt my way forward. Perhaps another few years at it would give me the wherewithal to get on top of the job. It is unfortunate to be leaving quite so soon. Life presents many dilemmas.

One thing I do hope is that I managed to convey my enthusiasm and enjoyment. I will never be in the higher echelons of ringing, but I feel that enough years have passed for me to have accumulated experience that I can pass on. Rightly or wrongly, I have introduced my thoughts through the Listening Course. This is still in its infancy. The further it goes the more I have to analyse and understand what good change ringing is all about and how to explain it. I am firmly of the opinion that a lot of ringers stumble on the essential skills after years of toil, me included. How much better if we could short cut this through enlightenment at an early stage? I hope the wheels have been set in motion and others will take this further in whatever form. To those that gave their time to attend, I truly hope it was a help.

Never forget that bell ringing is a "team sport". We have to gel as a band with ropes in our hands, but just as importantly, as friends. Each individual's input is crucial to the shared reward. Here in Oxfordshire Rachel and I have reaped that reward in abundance. Thank you. I hope that we will dodge together once again in the not too distant future.

Charles Morrish

Charles' Final Branch Practice

21 members attended Charles' final branch practice North Moreton. Charles looks relaxed and 'demob happy' at the end of his Ringing Master duties!





TOWER TALK

Appleton

Our four learners have been joined by two more learners and 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. Three of them are now plain hunting on 5 and 7 bells and the others are ringing rounds and call changes; all of them are ringing regularly on Sundays. Recently, the learners had their first experience of half-muffled ringing for the All Souls service, following the funeral of David Alner (a previous Churchwarden and Treasurer) and on Remembrance Sunday.

In July, we welcomed our new Rector, Reverend Wealands Bell with general ringing before his installation service and a quarter peal on the following Sunday. Wealands was previously Chaplain at Magdalen College School and lived in Radley. He came to take services during the interregnum and liked the Church and parishioners so much that he applied for the post!

Recently, we received the wonderful news that Toby Blackwell is going to donate a set of handbells to the tower and the learners have started learning to ring tunes on handbells and practising Christmas Carols ready for when the handbells arrive towards the end of November and we are hoping to ring for the Village Carol Service on Christmas Eve.

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

Michele Winter

Aston Tirrold

We continue to practice on Thursdays at 7.00 and sometimes are short on numbers so we love to see visitors of any standard.

We managed a quarter peal in September which was an achievement considering our noisy bells.

Rachel Marffy

Blewbury

We are incredibly sad to report that Peter Corderoy, a long term Blewbury ringer and former tower captain passed away in September at the age of 83. Peter was taught to ring as a young boy by his father Claude and rang throughout his life at St Michael's and elsewhere. Between them, Claude and Peter represented nearly a century of ringing in St Michael's tower, maintaining a band to keep the bells ringing on most Friday nights, for Sunday worship and other special events. It was a rare occasion for Peter not to be there early, and he could be somewhat tetchy with any ringers who arrived late! He only withdrew from bellringing when his illness prevented him from coming up the tower steps. He was very proud to ring for the funeral of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth and for the Coronation of King Charles III. Peter was also proud to have rung a quarter peal at St Michael's for the 1953 coronation at the tender age of 12! His final quarter peal was for his 80th birthday when he rang the tenor.

Blewbury ringers and friends rang a quarter peal of Peter's favourite method of Stedman Triples on the afternoon of his funeral on October 21st. Then on November 8th, instead of our usual practice, we held an informal celebration of Peter's life and contribution to the village for all who knew Peter. This began with a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples by a local band, followed by general ringing, and afterwards there was a tribute from Father Jason, and refreshments in the church with an amazing table of cakes in true ringers' style. We had a very good turnout from Peter's family, the village and ringing communities. Despite the 'fuss', we decided that Peter would have been proud and delighted by the appreciation shown for his lifetime commitment to Blewbury bells.

Christine Kowalczuk



This photo of Peter (left) was taken on the occasion of his final quarter peal rung for his 80th birthday (a few hours before his 81st birthday due to Covid delays). He rang Blewbury tenor, and was so pleased.



This photo was taken during the tribute by Father Jason on 8th November.

Cholsey

We are slowly progressing with our ringing and in conjunction with Aston Tirrold we can ring plain courses of Grandsire and Bob triples. Our aim is a quarter peal of Bob Minor and a plain course of Stedman.

We have had a good time in the last couple of months. One Saturday we went to London and rang at Christ Church in Hampstead (Tenor 25 cwt!) – Monika managed to ring it. This was followed by dinner and then a play called Bellringers.

The following Saturday we had a local outing visiting Chalgrove, Benson, Dorchester Abbey and Warborough (see page 19). We were joined by Blewbury Ringers which helped and we had a very pleasant Lunch at the waterfront Benson.

At this moment our ropes are with Avon Ropes who are going to replenish the tail ends for us.

All for now.

Jenny Jeskins

Cumnor

2024 began with us ringing the new year in, followed by mulled wine and lots of mince pies. Thus began a wonderful year of ringing. Our Wednesday practice nights have been as lively as ever, with around 12 regular attendees, presided over by Cumnor's chief ringing expert – Cookie the dog who offers us lots of sage advice whilst reclining on one of the bell mats. A few weeks into the new year, we had a dinner where each ringer brought a dish along with them. It was a very enjoyable evening of merriment and a highlight of the year. In April we had the pleasure of ringing at the wedding of Sarah, a member of our band. Then in October, on a bright, sunny day, we went on a ringing trip, visiting the towers of Stanton Harcourt, Standlake, and South Leigh. We enjoyed ringing lots of new bells and exploring three beautiful churches; we were especially fascinated by the Doom Painting in South Leigh.

Jenny Beech

East Hagbourne

The bells were rung for the wedding of Charlie Brant and Courtney Lockyer on Saturday 20th April. A few of our friends from the local towers helped out on this occasion as some of the team were away in Gloucestershire on the Sally Forth ringing outing.

A couple of the group attended a Branch mini outing in late April to the Dorchester area. Always fun to visit other churches and ring different bells and often including a pub lunch! Always nice to catch up with or meet other ringers in the branch too.

The bells were rung on Sunday 12th May to celebrate 'Bell Sunday'. 'Bell Sunday' is an annual opportunity to celebrate the contribution of bell ringers to the life of the church, and to acknowledge the part that bells play in worship and community life all year round. The Sunday occurs as close as possible to St Dunstan's day (19th June) but as this was Pentecost this year it was agreed to celebrate the day a week earlier. St Dunstan is known as the Patron Saint of Bellringers.

One of our quarterly tower meetings was held on Tuesday 4th June following a short ringing practice.

The Church Fete was held on Saturday 27th July starting at 1:00 and was held in and around St Andrew's Church. We opened the tower to visitors for a small fee. This proved to be very popular and over 100 visitors went up to the ringing chamber and then up to see the bells that were all down for safety reasons. A very big thank you to Daniel, Alan and Jeff who did a great job welcoming visitors and telling them about our lovely ring of eight bells. One of the visitors, an American gentleman, came back on the Tuesday evening to see the bells actually ringing which he thoroughly enjoyed.

The bellringers ran one of the Summer Teas in church again this year to raise funds for the tower. Well done to all the cake makers and waiters/waitresses on the day.

On Tuesday 10th September the Old North Berks branch practice was held at St Andrew's East Hagbourne.

A quarterly meeting of HSCR took place on Tuesday 8th October following a shortened ringing practice.

The bells were rung for a wedding of Matthew Bianchini and Laura Pickett on Friday 4th October.

Sunday 20th October was "Ringer's Sunday" and there was a special evensong at 6:00 to celebrate this special day. At the end of the service this year a group of four ringers who play the ukulele played a comical song called "The Hagbourne Ringers" composed by John Napper, the congregation were able to join in with the chorus. The service was followed by light refreshments. A very enjoyable evening.

On Sunday 10th November we rang the bells for Remembrance Sunday for Evensong at 6:00, the bells were rung half muffled.

We are now getting ready for our Christmas festivities which includes our wonderful Christmas Tree Festival from the 6th – 14th December.

On Tuesday 31st December we will ring in the New Year starting at 11:30 PM.

Shirley Goss

Harwell

My Bell ringing experience

I have been bell ringing for about 18 months. It was something that I had always wanted to have a go at!!

When l saw a poster appealing for returning and learner ringers to "Ring for the King", I thought it was a sign!!

Although harder than I was expecting, I have made progress! I can now ring rounds, call changes and am currently learning Plain hunt.

Bell ringing is a physical activity, is mentally challenging (remembering the bell sequences), but it also ticks the social 'box' as well.

We have a weekly practice (Thursdays) and of course ring on Sundays. We also meet up with other local towers, go on outings and ring at other bell towers, have quiz nights, skittle evenings and a yearly BBQ.

I would thoroughly recommend it! Give it a go!

Elizabeth Deans

Milton

The highlight of this last six months must be Matthew's first quarter peal. He rang the treble to Plain Bob Doubles extremely competently and required no correction throughout. Well done, Matthew.



The band for Matthew's first quarter peal.

We rang for the DAMASCUS parish confirmation service, and it was pleasing to welcome ringers from all four villages with ringable bells to join us for this joyous occasion.

On the 1st of July we rang a quarter of Yorkshire S Major for Oliver who is a regular at our practices. This was consolidated on the 28th of July when a peal in the same method was rung.

Our annual half day outing was held on Tuesday 30th July, this year we went deeper into Buckinghamshire with a variety of towers. We started at Slapton, this long unringable five have been rehung and augmented to six. Mentmore was next where the anti-clockwise five caused one or two difficulties for our learners – the bells came at them in apparently the wrong order. Aldbury, just into Hertfordshire, was next where we partook of tea and cake following the ringing. The last tower was Waddesdon which now has one of the few remaining rings of steel bells. One of our band was heard to comment that if all bells sounded like this he would have lost interest in ringing a long time ago!

August the 14th saw our only wedding of the year requiring bells.

Practices have continued to see a range of methods rung. One Tuesday we rang Cambridge S, London S, Double Oxford B Minor with Plain Bob & Grandsire Doubles. We have had a foray into Killamarsh TB Minor (at Charles' request), Carlisle S and a refresher of Annable's London S.

Sadly, in October Charles and Rachel moved to pastures new after eight years ringing at Milton. We were able to mark the occasion with a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples which Charles called. It had long been an ambition of his to do this. We wish them well in their new home in Newark, Notts.

Colin Turner

Radley

Ringing at Radley continues on Sundays and Thursdays as usual. Numbers attending seem to fluctuate for various reasons.

On 8th June we rang for the wedding of the daughter of one of our Churchwardens.

We hosted the Branch Striking Competition on Saturday 15th June which had a record number of entries.

The Branch afternoon practice was held at Radley in July. Unfortunately it was not very well attended.

As usual the bells were half muffled for Remembrance Sunday and the practice nights before and after.

Daphne Pollard

Steventon

The visit of the Dean of Westminster Abbey to Steventon church

At the age of 90, Jack Jarvis of Steventon church has just completed his 78th year as a bell ringer, his 80th year as a chorister and his 31st year as a Lay Minister. In the past, he has completed 12 years as a churchwarden, 63 years as Tower Captain, held every position on the PCC, including Chairman during interregnums, and been carpenter of the vestry furniture and font cover. Since the 1960's he has overseen or undertaken the maintenance of the church fabric, including painting the ceiling in the 1980s. He is the person who opens and closes the church for the public each day, receives the post on the church's behalf and thinks of Steventon church as his home. As a ringer, he has also held the post of steeple keeper and can tell of the times when he would chime three bells when short of ringers, one with a rope loop attached to his foot, and a fellow ringer would chime a fourth bell, thus keeping going the ringing for Sunday service.

All of Jack's service to God has been at our one church: a remarkable duty of service. He has, with admirable calm, rung for the service, sung for the service and led the service.

Prior to 2022, Jack had only ever rung one quarter peal, to mark the release of Terry Waite, special envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury, from almost five years of solitary confinement in the Middle East in 1991. Even then, the QP was at St Nicholas Abingdon, not at Steventon. It was time that Jack rang one in his own church tower, so we arranged to ring his favourite, Grandsire Doubles, to mark his 75th year of membership of the ODG, and we were delighted when Jack agreed to be in it. He took the 2, so that he could lean on the wall if he got tired. A wonderful picnic lunch followed in the churchyard under the shade of a yew tree, accompanied by other ringers plus the village vicar, the vicar's wife and the churchwardens.

Wall space is sparse in our 'ringing chamber' in the south door entrance into the church. But room existed for a peal board, so Andrew Beckwith of Berwick-upon-Tweed was asked whether he would make one to mark Jack's QP. I don't think that Andrew is so keen to make them these days and has never before made one for a church that he didn't know and couldn't visit, but I'm sure that he could relate to Jack's achievements: Andrew has previously been a Benedictine monk, is 84 years of age, is a bell ringer and a carpenter. So, I consider us lucky to have been able to commission the finest woodcarver of peal boards in the UK to make a board for our church. It was designed by Andrew to look like our church tower and was complete and in place ready for Jack's 90th birthday: the weekend when Jack ceased being a Licensed Lay Minister.

Jack is the person who has spoken more than anyone of our link to Westminster Abbey. The Abbey is our patronal church because our village was gifted to it 625 years ago by King Richard II in return for the bill owed for hosting the wedding celebrations to his second wife, Queen Isabella. The Abbey's ownership lasted until the late 1800s but the patronage has been retained in perpetuity, being one of only twenty out of 16,000 Church of England churches to be able to declare that the Abbey is its patron. It was therefore obvious that the Dean of Westminster Abbey should be the person invited to dedicate the peal board as a fitting tribute to Jack's years of service. He was given as much flexibility as he needed on dates and Jack requested a traditional service of evensong.

We were delighted when the Dean agreed and arrived at our church on 29th September 2024 for the service. He dedicated the peal board, gave the address and was remarkable in his ability to tie so much of it to Jack. He also made the congregation laugh several times and had our full attention: a consummate professional. The home team rang prior to the service and drank and ate snacks with the congregation after the service, around the ringing 'chamber', with Charles Morrish as joint Branch Ringing Master taking over the running of the ringing afterwards for all other visiting ringers. These included Katie Lane as Master of the Guild, those who had been on standby on the quarter peal day, and those who have been of past help to our tower either maintaining it or ringing with us when we needed to boost our numbers. The Dean left our humble little church with a big warm glow and he responded that he had been overwhelmed by the welcome that he had received. It was, indeed, a fitting tribute to Jack's service to God.

Jeanette Owen



The arrival of the peal board in the village, with our usual practice-night team

Photo courtesy Chrissy Gidney

Sunningwell

The tower now has more ringers in the band than bells, allowing regular ringing prior to divine Service on Sundays, which is much appreciated by churchgoers and villagers alike.

Ringers from other towers often visit, both as part of externally organized ringing courses (including training courses) and by Bands wishing to ring quarter or full peals.

Mike Wykes

Wallingford

We have continued regular practices and ringing for all Sunday services with good numbers attending and strong commitment from the regular band.

Chris Tuckett

Wantage

Ringing at Wantage continues to be fairly 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 on eight bells. We are pleased to announce that Richard Pike, our most recent addition to the band, has been made a Guild member and is progressing nicely. However, we are currently missing Dick Peters while he recuperates from knee surgery. We all wish him a speedy and painless recovery.

Our regular ringing has been leavened with ringing for 4 weddings and a blessing this year and tolling or ringing half muffed for funerals, together with the following occasions:

On the 30th of June we rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles with the aim of welcoming our new curate, Thomas Frances Caroe, and celebrating his ordination. This was followed by general ringing and a celebratory evensong.

On the 16th of July a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples was rung in memory of Kerry Hardy, with three Wantage ringers participating in the mixed band. We also welcomed an audience of Kerry's family and friends for this special occasion.

Finally, we were very pleased to gain first place in the June Branch Striking Competition. This was followed by an extremely enjoyable day out in Shottesbrooke and Binfield for the ODG Striking Competition and Raising and Lowering Competition. On a day with an overall very high standard we were not disgruntled with coming 6th in the striking competition.

Teifi Walters



The band who rang the QP to welcome the new curate, Thomas Frances Caroe.

Branch Striking Competition at Radley — 15 June 2024

This year we had a record 8 teams participating in the branch striking competition. These were drawn from seven tower teams and an excellent and very spirited youth team, complete with their own identity bibs! The new format of a Saturday morning with refreshments, but without the addition of a formal annual meeting, seems to be universally popular. I think this is how we will continue in future years. The judges Jo and Jonathan Cresshull arrived early with their black labrador puppy Evie, who seemed to be quite at home with the proceedings! No doubt Evie will be very used to the sound of bells during the coming years. After ringing up and a plain course of Grandsire, Jo and Jonathan seemed satisfied that they knew the bells and settled themselves out of sight behind the organ to mark the teams. Without exception, each team displayed a sense of pre performance nerves, and perhaps it is just as well that we aren't so nervous about our Sunday service ringing! I won't go into detail about each team here, except to say how delighted I was to see all of the teams throwing themselves into the competition and having a fun time.

Congratulations to the Wantage team, who once again demonstrated that focusing on accurate striking pays dividends. The church hall provided the perfect venue for socialising and enjoying the outstanding 'running buffet' provided by Daphne and her team. Thank you to everyone who helped make the day so enjoyable. I know that at least one team is already practising for next year, and it would be great to see 8 or even more teams entering next year!

Richard Loyd



Jonathan Cresshull, one of the judges, presenting the Winners Trophy to Dave Endacott MBE of Wantage.





Abingdon



Blewbury



Cholsey



North Moreton



Radley



Wallingford



Wantage



Youth Band

Congratulations to Brightwell Ringer



Hilary Mackintosh, rings at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell near Wallingford. She completed the Learning the Ropes level 2 Foundation Skills qualification on 13th August at an ONB practice at Sunningwell. Hilary has been taught to ring partly by her tower captain and partly by the Oxon Ringing School. The ringers at Brightwell are delighted with Hilary's fast progress in ringing.

Susan Read

Skittles and Supper Evening – 9th November 2024

The branch held its Skittles and Supper social evening on November 9th at Wallingford Sports and Social Club. What a fun night! Large teams battled each other in friendly fashion for the tin of chocolates: let's hear it for the Cholsey Clangers, Alley Cats (Radley and Harwell ringers), Rowstock Rowdies (assorted chatty ringers), Blewbury Belles/Boys and No Idea (including Milton and Abingdon ringers).

The final result was a tie between the Cholsey Clangers and No Idea with 79 points. After three knockout rounds, the Cholsey Clangers were awarded first prize and No Idea the runner-up prize. Following the team competition, an individual knockout round took place which was won by Richard Loyd.

In the break between the first and second rounds, we all had a supper of fish and chips or sausage and chips, followed by amazing desserts provided by Daphne, Gill, Janette, Josie and Christine K. Thank you very much for a delicious end to the meal.

Thank you to everyone who made the evening a success including Philip Roberts for the raffle and the young gentlemen who organised the arranging of skittles and scores.

Until the next time.=

Mandy Winters





Cholsey Outing and Celebrating Jenny Jeskins 40 years as Tower Captain

On Saturday 5th October, the Cholsey band plus friends from Blewbury, Aston Tirrold and Milton enjoyed a local tour of four towers. The event celebrated the 40th year as Tower Captain at Cholsey for Jenny Jeskins. The morning saw us ringing at Chalgrove, and Benson. We had a wonderful lunch by the river Thames at the Waterfront cafe. In the afternoon we rang at Dorchester and Warborough. Jenny was presented with flowers and a card from the band at the final tower of the day before we retired to the local pub (appropriately named The Six Bells) for a drink.

Jenny said 'I started ringing in Wallingford under the tuition of Jack Berry as a teenager, but then stopped ringing as I was training in London. When I married John and moved to Cholsey Jill Bradshaw said that they were short of ringers in Cholsey and would I like to join, so I did. I became Tower Captain in 1984 after the death of Ron Hancock. I am most pleased to have maintained a Band of Ringers all this time. Some of which are still ringing with us and to welcome all our new ringers.'

Jenny creates a very warm welcome, and fun environment to enjoy ringing. This is clear from the number of local village ringers we have, who have learnt ringing at Cholsey. During the celebratory tour we were proud to ring some Bob and Grandsire triples featuring many of the ringers Jenny has supported in learning. Congratulations and thank you to her!

Gillian Murray



Harwell and Drayton Outing

Harwell and Drayton ringers joined forces on Saturday 2nd November for a ringing outing in the Milton Keynes / Buckingham area. Some were unable to make it on the day, so thirteen ringers set off to experience new bells. We began the day with the 6cwt eight at Downs Barn. The light bells were a new and slightly startling experience for some, but everyone coped admirably.

We then moved on to the easy 11cwt ground floor ring at Loughton. Recently refurbished, they introduced an 8-bell frame in the hope some generous benefactors would augment the six at some point. There was even space in the ringing circle for the two extra ropes. Now that's forward planning! They are lovely bells.

We had a good lunch at The Shoulder of Mutton at Calverton. Having taken our pre-order the week before, they unfortunately didn't start cooking for quite a while after we arrived. This meant the tempting dessert menu would have made us late for the next tower, just down the road so most of us wistfully declined.

The 9cwt eight at Calverton rang a little heavier than their weight suggested, but are an easy ring all the same.

Finally, on to the 10.5cwt six at Padbury. The second ground floor ring of the day. The raise was perfect – without any clashes but sounded slightly odd, none-the-less. It was only when they were all up that we realised the three was tied! Thankfully, the tower captain was still there, so he quickly untied it so we could start again. Although they weren't as tuneful as Loughton, they were an easy ring and we finished the day with Little Bob Minor – enhanced (?) by some American Halloween treats, provided by Mary.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable day. When there aren't always enough on practice nights, we enjoy the opportunity to draw on the experience of the combined towers.

Bridget Taylor



Colin Turner's 8000th Peal

Colin has lived in the branch all his life, learning to ring at Sunningwell in 1973 and his first peal was at Cowley on 14th February 1976. Peals were few and far between in the early days, but the pace started to build in 1985 when that year's total was 36. In 1989 he rang 303 peals, all on tower bells. This remained a record until 2016 when he rang 334, again all on tower bells. This record still stands. He was the 154th person to ring 1,000 peals (the first being Rev F E Robinson of Drayton), this was achieved on 5th December 1990. The total continued to build, averaging 200 a year until 2020 when COVID struck. At that time 8,000 was in sight, but things were slow to return to "normal". Without the COVID interlude, assuming the then current rate had been maintained, the 8,000th would have been achieved mid-2021. Alas that was not to be. The slow start up following COVID together with some spinal issues which required surgery, meant that the 8,000th did not happen until 17th November 2024.

The band for the peal was selected from the people Colin has rung most peals with. The seven ringers were among the top 14, seven others are either no longer with us or no longer ringing peals. Nicola is his leading peal ringer with almost 4,400. Peter Ellis, who called the peal, is leading conductor with around 1,900 peals. The peals have been rung in 4,362 different towers with 1,580 ringers. Just over 800 peals have been rung at branch towers – all except Culham where the last peal was in 1964, shortly afterwards the bells were declared unringable and have remained so ever since.



The band who rang in Colin's 8000th Peal (clockwise from front right:) Cynthia E Howell, Nicola J Turner, John R Martin, Colin M Turner, Timothy G Pett, Richard L Thumwood, Peter G C Ellis, Robert J Crocker.





ONBB New Year's Ringing & Refreshments

Wednesday, 1st January 2025

St Mary's, Cholsey

10.30am — 12.30pm

Everybody welcome





QUARTER PEALS

Abingdon, St Helen, 19 May 2024. **1280 Cambridge Surprise Major**: Susan Read 1, Cathy Hampson 2, Sarah Ockwell 3, Brian Read 4, Simon Yarrow 5, David Ockwell 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Josh Ball 8. Rung for the Pentecost Evensong service on the feast of St Dunstan, patron saint of bellringers

Milton, 28 May 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Matthew Young 1, Rachel Morrish 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Nicola J Turner (C) 4, Oliver J Hyde 5, Colin M Turner 6. First attempt: 1.

Abingdon, St Helen, 16 June 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Michelle X (née Butler) 1, Susan Read 2, Daniel Gillett 3, Sarah Carr 4, Josh Ball 5, Isaac Davies 6, Tim Pett (C) 7, Samuel Fuentes 8. 1st as Treble on 8 and completes "Learning the Ropes" level 5: 1. 1st on 8 inside: 6.

Wantage, 30 June 2024. **1260 Grandsire Doubles:** Graham Stoter 1, David Endacott 2, Jenny Bennett 3, Teifi Walters 4, Andy Bennett (C) 5, Sarah Macdonell 6. Rung to welcome our new curate Thomas Frances Caroe, who was ordained Deacon 29th June 2024 at Christ Church Cathedral. There was also general ringing later where Robert Haine, Dick Peters and Duncan Francis joined those listed above, prior to a welcome reception and celebratory Choral Evensong for Frances at Wantage.

Milton, 1 July 2024. **1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Robert C Beavis 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Catherine Hughes-D'Aeth 3, Nicholas J Clarke 4, Colin M Turner 5, Oliver J Hyde 6, Charles E J Morrish 7, John N Hughes-D'Aeth 8.

Blewbury, 13 July 2024. **1260 PB Doubles:** Andrew Forman 1, Gillian Loyd (C) 2, Rachel Morrish 3, Charles Morrish 4, Richard Loyd 5, Lindsay Lott 6. 1st Q: 6. 1st away from tenor: 1.

Appleton, 14 July 2024. **1259 Grandsire Caters:** Sarah J Ockwell 1, Barbara H Payne 2, Catherine E Hampson 4, Michele Winter 4, Michael J Harrison 5, Peter H M Day 6, Simon L Edwards 7, David C Ockwell (C) 8, Jonathan Cresshull 9, Bernard J Stone 10. Rung to welcome the Reverend Wealands Bell as Rector of Appleton with Besselsleigh.

Steventon, 4 August 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Bridget Taylor 1, Jeanette Owen 2, Tom Palmer 3, Mary Leneis 4, Oliver J Hyde (C) 5, Bob Mannix 6. 1st as Conductor: 5. With best wishes for Chrissy Gidney, fellow Steventon ringer, who is moving to Cornwall tomorrow. Birthday compliments to the ringer of the 4th for tomorrow.

Abingdon, St Helen, 1 September 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples**: Sarah Ockwell 1, David Ockwell 2, Cathy Hampson 3, Susan Read 4, Brian Read 5, Tim Pett (C) 6, Josh Ball 7, Samuel Fuentes 8. Arranged and rung as a Golden Wedding compliment to Peter and Jane Heritage.

Blewbury, 13 September 2024. **1260 PB Triples:** Helen Aitkins 1, Jenny Bennett 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Gillian Loyd (C) 4, Josie Irving 5, Richard Loyd 6, Andy Bennett 7, Matthew Phillips 8. 1st triples: 1. 1st in m: 3.

Radley, 14 September 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Minor:** Isabel Hitchings 1, Isobel Murphy 2, Barbara Pettit 3, Keith Murphy 4, Reg Hitchings (C) 5, Anthony P Foster 6. 200th this year 3

Aston Tirrold, 26 September 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Helen Aitken 1, Rachel Marffy 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Charles Morrish (C) 4, Charlie Nickless 5, Rob Nickless 6.

Milton, 27 September 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Nicola Turner 1, Rachel Morrish 2, Maureen Velvick 3, Mary Friskney 4, Colin Turner 5, Oliver Hyde 6, Charles Morrish (C) 7, Philip Roberts 8. Marking Charles and Rachel's impending move away. Thanks for the great ringing at Milton over the last 8 years. Also, "celebrating" the conductor reaching pensionable age.

Wallingford, 20 October 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Triples**: Shelley Harris 1, John Dowling 2, Millie Gall 3, Katherine Parker 4, Kevin Beer 5, Mary Friskney 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Philip Mills 8. First of Triples: 1.

Blewbury, 30 October 2024. **1260 Stedman Triples:** Jill Garlick 1, Gillian Loyd 2, Nick Clarke 3, Josie Irving 4, Mark Vincent 5, Richard Loyd 6, Stuart Gibson (C) 7, Matthew Phillips 8. In memory of Peter Corderoy, ringer at this tower for 72 years & tower captain from 1996-2015.

Wallingford, 3 November 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Minor**: Philip Mills 1, Jo Gamester 2, Wendy Simon 3, Katherine Parker 4, Mary Friskney (C) 5, Millie Gall 6. For All Souls service.

Milton, 6 November 2024. **1312 Bristol Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Patricia Newton 2, Timothy G Pett 3, Chris Seers 4, Colin M Turner 5, Chris Bailey 6, Stuart Gibson 7, Robert Newton (C) 8. First in method: 4.

Blewbury, 8 November. **1260 PB Triples**: Helen Aitkins 1, Ellen Bramhill 2, Christine Kowalczuk 3, Richard Loyd 4, Michael Winter 5, John H Napper 6, Mark Vincent (C) 7, Andrew Forman 8. Rung in celebration of the life & ringing of Peter Corderoy, a ringer at this tower for 72 years & Tower Captain from 1996 to 2015.

Appleton, 10 November 2024. **1259 Grandsire Caters:** Andrew J Dyer 1, Barbara H Payne 2, Michele Winter 3, Sarah J Ockwell 4, Peter H M Day 5, Megan A Bardsley 6, Oliver P Bardsley 7, David C Ockwell (C) 8, Catherine E Hampson 9, Bernard J Stone 10. Half-muffled in memory of the Fallen.

Wallingford, 10 November 2024. **1260 Grandsire Triples:** Wendy Simon 1, Jo Gamester 2, Katherine Parker 3, Millie Gall 4, Mary Friskney 5, Kevin Beer 6, Chris Tuckett (C) 7, Philip Mills 8. Half-muffled for Remembrance.

Drayton, 21 November 2024. **1260 Plain Bob Doubles:** Bridget Taylor 1, Nick Clarke 2, Michael Winter 3, Frank Cullen 4, Tom Palmer (C) 5, Mary Leneis 6. First as conductor. To welcome Alfred Joseph Roundell Palmer, a first child for Mary-Clare and Tom.

WEDDING TOUCH

Abingdon, St Helen, 8 June 2024. **504 Grandsire Triples**: Jeanette Thomas 1, Susan Read 2, Sarah Ockwell 3, Alexandra J Marchbank 4, Peter Heritage 5, Brian Read (C) 6, Tim Pett 7, Joe Gillett 8. Rung following the Service of Marriage between Jessica Farmer and Samuel Huntley, with the Best Wishes of the band.

MISCELLANEOUS PERFORMANCE

Appleton, 9 July 2024. Andrew J Dyer 1, Jenny A Dyer 2, Anthony Harris 3, Eva Gibbs 4, Julia Gibbs 5, David C Ockwell 6, Barbara H Payne 7, Aidan Saunders 8, Clare Saunders 9, Michele Winter 10. Ringing before the Induction of Rev Wealands Bell as Rector of Appleton with Besselsleigh.

PEALS

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 12 May 2024, 2h35, **5040 Lancastrian Alliance Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Charlotte A Boyce 3, Colin M Turner 4, Ian Roulstone 5, Claire F Roulstone 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, John R Martin (C) 8.

Milton, 4 June 2024, 2h42, **5088 Dereham Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, June D Wells 2, Beryl R Norris 3, Colin M Turner 4, Martin J Turner 5, Nigel A L Mellor 6, Timothy G Pett (C) 7, Richard L Thumwood 8. Rung for the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

Abingdon, St Helen, 29 June 2024, 3h9, **5043 Stedman Caters:** Comp. Richard I Allton, Timothy G Pett 1, David C Ockwell 2, Cheryl A Watson 3, Daniel J Watson 4, Jeremy A H Samson 5, Simon L Edwards 6, Alan M Eyles (C) 7, Mark Edwards 8, Janet E Archibald 9, Stuart F Gibson 10.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 14 July 2024, 2h31, **5024 Don's Delight Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Timothy G Pett 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Michael J Dew 6, John R Martin (C) 7, Claire F Roulstone 8. 500th peal on the bells – 4. Remembering Richard C L Brown.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 28 July 2024, 2h34, **5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Robert C Beavis 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Oliver J Hyde 6, Claire F Roulstone 7, Ian Roulstone 8. First on 8: 6. In memory of Chris Kippin.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 25 August 2024, 2h39, **5152 Ilchester Castle Surprise Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Nicola J Turner 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Charlotte A Boyce 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Alan M Eyles 7, John R Martin (C) 8.

OXFORD SOCIETY **Milton**, 1 September 2024, 2h50, **5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Andrew J Dyer 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Michele Winter 3, Colin M Turner 4, Gwen Rogers 5, Stuart F Gibson 6, Peter W Spain 7, Philip Rogers 8. To mark the 50th anniversary of Michele's first peal for the Oxford Society – Appleton 3rd September 1974.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 13 September 2024, 2h41, **5160 Whitley Bay Alliance Major:** Timothy G Pett 1, Robert J Crocker 2, Cynthia E Howell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Claire F Roulstone 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Ian Roulstone 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 29 September 2024, 2h39, **5088 Lessness Surprise Major**: Oliver J Hyde 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Alan M Eyles 3, Colin M Turner 4, Robert C Beavis 5, Mark Edwards 6, Richard L Thumwood 7, Claire F Roulstone 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 20 October 2024, 2h43, **5152 Old Down Surprise Major:** Sally A Brown 1, Charlotte A Boyce 2, Nicola J Turner 3, Colin M Turner 4, Richard L Thumwood 5, Richard J Clements 6, Mark Edwards 7, John R Martin (C) 8.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 25 October 2024, 2h40, **5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major:** Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner (C) 2, Simon L Edwards 3, Colin M Turner 4, Alan M Eyles 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Mark Edwards 7, Simon W Edwards 8. In eager anticipation of Alan's marriage to Katherine tomorrow.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**,7 November 2024, 2h36, **5088 Bristol Surprise Major:** Nicola J Turner 1, Ruth Curtis 2, Ian G Campbell 3, Colin M Turner 4, Robert J Crocker 5, Alan Regin 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Paul F Curtis 8. Rung by a band all of whom have rung in excess of 5,000 peals.

APPLETON SOCIETY, **Appleton,** 9 November 2024, 2h56, **5075 Grandsire Caters:** Michele Winter 1, Simon L Edwards 2, Catherine E Hampson 3, Stephen H Stanford 4, Simon A Bond (Composed and C) 5, Peter W Spain 6, David C Ockwell 7, Alan M Eyles 8, David L Thomas 9, Bernard J Stone 10. Half-muffled in memory of the Fallen. 1,250th peal: 10; Circled the tower: 4; Circled the tower twice: 7.

ST BLAISE SOCIETY **Milton**, 17 November 2024, 2h32, **5024 Lessness Surprise Major**: Cynthia E Howell 1, Nicola J Turner 2, John R Martin 3, Colin M Turner 4, Timothy G Pett 5, Richard L Thumwood 6, Peter G C Ellis (C) 7, Robert J Crocker 8. Colin Turner's 8,000th peal.



The Wantage band who represented the Branch in the Guild 6-bell Striking Competition Final.

NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for copy for the next issue in June 2025 is 15th April 2025. But please don't wait until then, send your news, pictures, and quarters in as they happen.

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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, 1st January – Ringing and Refreshments – Cholsey (8) (10.30am–12.30pm)
Wednesday, 8th January – **Advanced Practice** – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 15th January – Branch Practice – Cumnor (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 22nd January – Branch Practice – Brightwell (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 5th February – **Surprise Major/Royal Practice** – Wallingford (10) (7.30–9.00pm)
Thursday, 13th February – Branch Practice – Radley (6) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 26th February – Branch Practice – Chilton (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 5th March – **Advanced Practice** – TBC (7.30–9.00pm)
Friday, 14th March – Branch Practice – Appleton (10) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 15th March – AGM – Abingdon St Helen (am)
Wednesday, 26th March – Branch Practice – Blewbury (8) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 2nd April – **Surprise Major Practice** – Brightwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Monday, 7th April – Branch Practice – Marcham (6) (7.00–8.30pm)
Wednesday, 23rd April – **Mini Outing and Lunch**
Wednesday, 7th May – **Advanced Practice** – Harwell (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Tuesday, 13th May – Branch Practice – Milton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Wednesday, 28th May – Branch Practice – Sunningwell (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
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 – TBC (from 10.00am)
Wednesday, 25th June – Branch Practice – TBC (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 (tbc) July – **Branch Outing**
Wednesday, 23rd July – Branch Practice – Radley (6) (2.00–3.30pm)
Wednesday, 6th August – **Surprise Major Practice** – North Moreton (8) (7.30–9.00pm)
Saturday, 9th August – **Branch BBQ**
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 – TBC (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, 8th (tbc) November – **Autumn Social Event**
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)