

Branch Secretary's report

At the AGM in February 2013 were 28 Branch members and there were the following changes in branch officers: Secretary Rob Needham; Joint Deputy Ringing Masters Simon C Farrar and Graham E Slade; Bookstall Officer Pam & Andrew Elliston; no Ringing Master was elected. Twelve new members were elected. The AGM included two short talks by different members on their recruitment and ITTS training experience.

The Captain at Binfield tower, John Harper, had to stand down on health grounds and Dave Creasy stepped into his shoes. Binfield has several learners, and they benefit from attending the weekday Branch Practice (BP) held at Binfield on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month. The best attendance figure at the weekday BP at Binfield was 15.

St. Mary's, Twyford have done a DIY installation of a sound control system for the tower. Designed, built and installed by the ringers, it is very effective and it has reduced the sound level near the tower by about 20 decibels when the shutters are closed.

In April Easthampstead ringers tied in a ringing outing with travelling on the Watercress Line railway. The outing was very well attended to the extent that the ringers were given a whole carriage to themselves.

Our 6-bell striking competition was held at Sandhurst on April 20th. Five teams took part and it was really good to see several youngsters involved in the competition. The winning band was All Saints, Wokingham with 16 faults.

On April 27th two towers, Waltham St. Lawrence and Sonning, combined forces for an outing to four towers in the Devizes area. There were 17 ringers on the outing and as well as ringing at two 6-bell and two 8-bell towers, Tony & Alison Evans provided a welcome morning-coffee break, and we had a long, sociable lunch at a nearby pub.

The Sonning bell ringers organised a fund-raising Bric-a-Brac sale in the Woodley shopping centre in May, and in spite of it being a weekday with quite cold weather it was reasonably well attended. The proceeds were split three ways between the ODG Bell Fund, St. Andrew's bell fund, and the Sonning Deanery Branch account.

All Saints Wokingham went on an outing in June to the West Sussex area, and on 2nd June they rang a quarter peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major for the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation Day.

David Sullivan stood down as captain at Wargrave and the bell-ringing band is now run jointly by Lavinia Sullivan and John Coombes. Lavinia does the teaching at practice nights and John does the management, administration and secretarial work.

Warfield church underwent extensive restoration and improvement work since April and the tower was closed all summer. Binfield kindly accepted the Warfield ringers as visitors during this time.

It is with sadness that I have to record that John Harper died of cancer in July. On July 15th Binfield ringers were joined by many others from the area to ring the bells at the service of thanksgiving for John's life. In the following week two quarter peals were rung to commemorate and celebrate his time with us as a bell ringer. John was elected Tower Captain of Binfield in 2007 and he spent many hours training new ringers, several of whom are now valuable members of a revitalised band.

Towards the end of July various towers rang quarter peals to celebrate the birth of HRH Prince George: All Saints Wokingham, Sonning, and White Waltham are ones I was told about.

There were family events to celebrate with ringing in the summer. In August a quarter peal of *Wells Surprise Minor* was rung at Easthampstead to celebrate the birth of Eloise Sophie Curtis Wells on Aug 8th. On Saturday 21st September bells rang out at St. Paul's, Wokingham to celebrate the marriage of Elizabeth Davenport, a St. Paul's ringer. A peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung on the Saturday morning of the wedding. The following Thursday a quarter peal was rung at Binfield to celebrate her marriage, in which her mother, father and brother took part.

In August Twyford & Hurst combined bands had a grand ringing day in the City of London. They began with the ground floor ring of 6 bells at St Katherine Cree, then to the 8 bells of St Olave Hart Street, next the magnificent tower of 12 bells at St Magnus the Martyr, and finally the bells of St James Garlickhythe where the Royal Jubilee bells are hung.

Two towers in the branch achieved Tower Maintenance Awards during the year: Sonning and Wargrave; congratulations to them both.

The branch's 8-bell striking competition in October did not take place for lack of teams. Next year the 8-bell striking competition is going to be a combined Reading Branch and Sonning Deanery Branch joint competition.

In November Eddie Martin died in the USA while undergoing an operation for an aortic aneurism. Eddie and his wife Ann were loyal ringers at Easthampstead for 6 years. Eddie actively encouraged tower and hand bell ringing. He will be particularly remembered for his expertise in conducting Stedman. His ringing compositions are well known in the exercise.

In January seven members of the branch attended the one-day ITTS "*How to Teach Bell Handling*" course at St. Helens Abingdon and all thought that it was an excellent course.

Rob Needham

Treasurer's AGM Report – 15 February 2014

The attached accounts have been inspected as now have the 2012 accounts.

Membership

Year	Paying	Non-Paying	Total
2013	168	4	172
2012	171	5	176
2011	158	8	166

General

I transferred £700. to the Deposit account in order to take advantage of the better interest rates. This has meant the interest from this account has again increased.

General fund income & expenditure

At year end our Ringing World account was £8.22 in credit. No expenditure has been incurred from the Newsletter this year. I understand a claim for expenses in 2013 is yet to be submitted.

Bell fund income & expenditure

The year end balance is as indicated on the balance sheet, there are no outstanding expenses and no unfulfilled commitments that I am aware of.

Balances

Year	General	Bell
2013	£ 1,028.07	£3,189.15
2012	£578.59	£3,001.84
2011	£248.09	£2,977.88
Total Branch Accounts at 31 st December 2013		£4,217.22
Represented by	Deposit Account	£3,808.40
	Bank Account	£408.82

6 advanced subscription payments to Guild for 2014 were made.

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD of CHURCH BELL RINGERS SONNING DEANERY BRANCH – 2013 Accounts

General fund	Income	Expenditure
Subs	£1,344.00	
Subs to guild		£840.00
Advance Subs to guild 2014		£30.00
Newsletter		£0.00
Postage, stationery etc		£31.50
Competition Judges		£14.51
General fund totals	£1,134.00	£894.52
Carry over of 2012 balances	£578.59	
General fund balance	£1,028.07	
Bell fund	Income	Expenditure
	Interest	£17.76
Fundraising	£169.55	
Bell fund 2013 totals	£187.31	£0.00
Carry over of 2012 balances	£3,001.84	
Bell fund balance	£3,189.15	

Sue Davenport, Hon Treasurer

Branch Representatives. Report

- Two Committee meetings took place in 2013 at Kidlington and Thatcham. The March meeting followed the Bell Fund A.G.M.
- Archdeacons of Oxford and Berkshire invited to become Vice Presidents. Both were honoured and accepted.
- Thank you received from Ringing Foundation for £1,000. grant agreed at AGM.
- Guild still requiring a Public Relations Officer.
- Ringing World Roadshow at Newbury Racecourse 6th September 2014. Guild members to be encouraged to attend.
- Steeple Aston course oversubscribed and Michaelmas course under subscribed Education committee to look at options.
- A long discussion re Guild striking competitions – composition of teams and rules to be looked at by F&GP committee.
- Peal fees to remain at 50p
- Committee formed for Kimberley Project – very little progress so far.

Sue Davenport

Bookstall Holder

The bookstall has had quite a good year, with sales of £90.70 and the purchase of £68.50 of new stock.

The float has increased from £18.88 to £41.08, while total stock value has decreased from £339.91 to £314.88. The transactions are summarized below:

	SOLD	Items	Value
Personal Progress Card		21	£4.20
1 per learner (aka What's My Next Work?)		11	£9.20
New Ringer's Book		5	£47.50
20 questions		2	£0.40
Doves Guide (old version)		1	£7.00
Diagrams (red)		1	£4.50
Diagrams (blue)		1	£12.00
Ringing circles		1	£2.50
Badge		1	£1.70
Follow-on book		2	£1.70
TOTAL			£90.70
	BOUGHT		
Personal Progress Card		30	£6.00
1 per learner (aka What's My Next Work?)		12	£10.00
Diagrams (blue)		2	£24.00
New Ringer's Book		3	£28.50
TOTAL			£68.50

Andrew Elliston

Training report

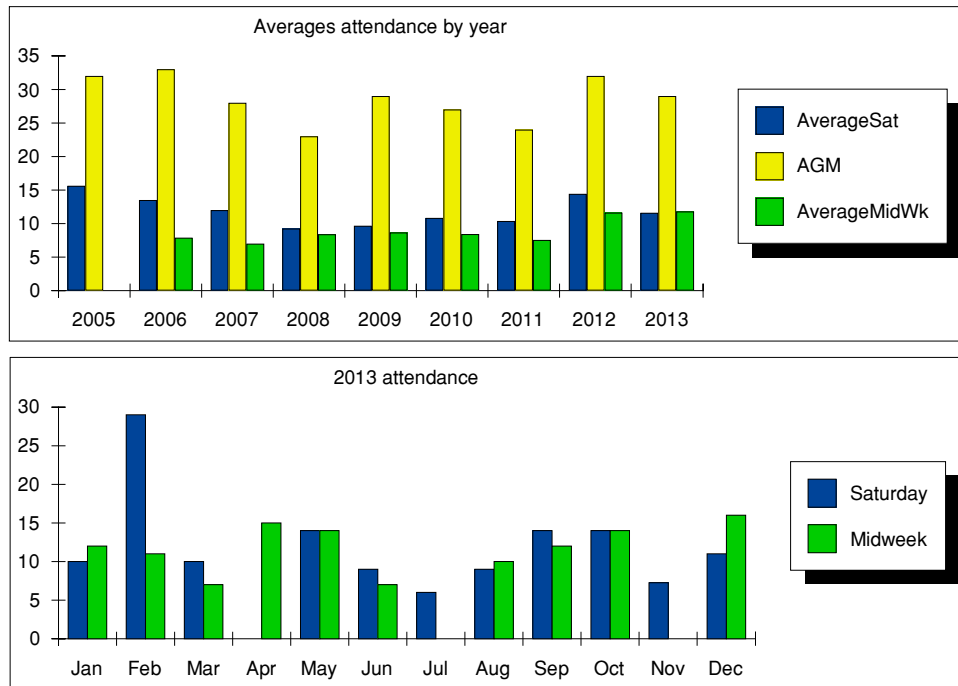
*This report serves two purposes. It is the Training Co-ordinator's report to the AGM.
It is also the Branch report to the annual Guild Training meeting.*

Courses – For the second year running the Branch ran no courses. My only excuse is pressure of other activities.

Details of courses offered, and an on-line application form are on the website at: <http://www.sdb.odg.org.uk/training/>. There are status reports on each course (when last rung and how many waiting). Most courses have only one or two people waiting. The lists are probably out of date, and should be reviewed.

For the last few years the number of Branch members wanting to attend a Maintenance course seems to be down to a trickle – too few to ask the Guild Towers & Belfries Committee (which runs the courses) to put one on for us – so we have directed our members to the courses that the Committee has run elsewhere in the Guild.

Practices – Average attendances at mid-week daytime practices is similar to last year but attendance at Saturday practices and the AGM is down slightly (though still higher than the previous two years). Only two mid-week practices were cancelled for lack of support.



Note: February is the AGM. There are no Saturday figures for April (striking competition). There was no weekday practice in July & November.

10-bell ringing – We have been attempting to ring a monthly 10-bell quarter peal with mainly Branch bands. Six were rung up to August, but none have been rung since.

Inter-tower assistance – As in previous years, several Branch members are involved in helping with the tuition of ringers from other towers, either at the learner's tower or by inviting learners to sessions at their own tower.

Concerns – Few of the bands in the Branch would consider themselves as 'strong' and several rely on support from other towers.

We failed to elect a ringing master this year, and as a result have been operating with two deputies, which is not the ideal arrangement.

I have held the post of training co-ordinator since it was created in 2003, having done the job unofficially for the previous ten years since Hugh Baxter stood down as Ringing Master. I have tried to continue the system that Hugh introduced where we asked members what courses they would like and then organised courses around their needs. The main demand has always been for skills courses with hardly any requests for courses in specific methods of the type run by the Guild. Over the years this approach has enabled us to run far more courses than would have been practical for a small branch using the traditional model of fixing the course and a date and waiting to see who applies. I hope that this approach will be continued and revitalised by my successor.

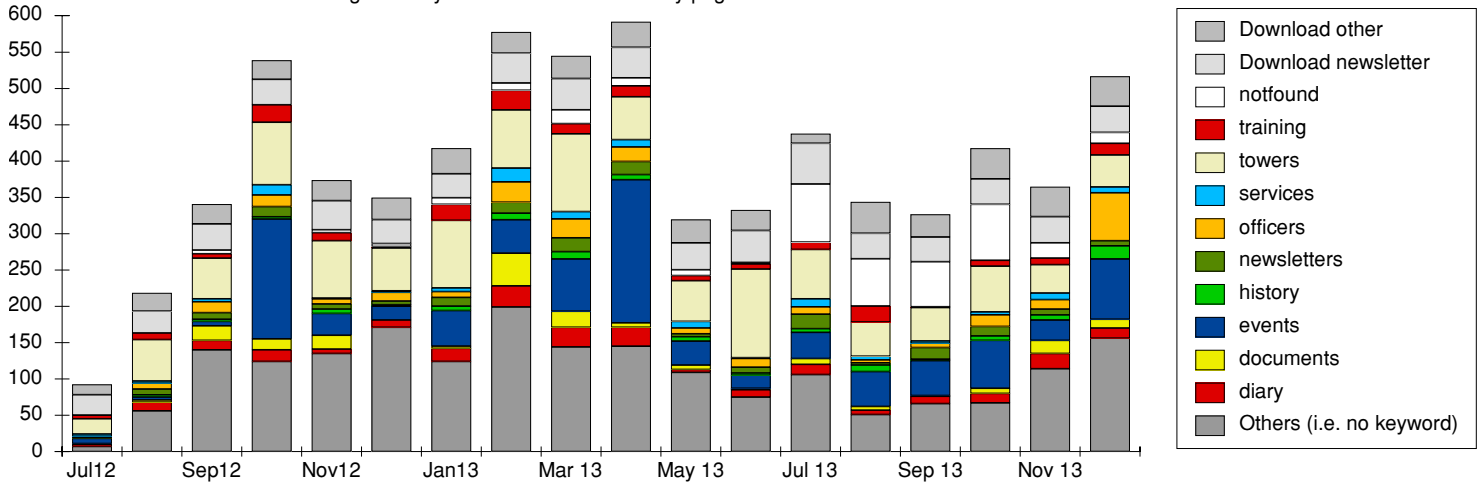
John Harrison

Webmaster/Postmaster Report for 2013

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year, with periodic additions. The site includes full contact details for officers, an on-line diary, contact details for towers, with organised by practice night, number of bells and map, details of training courses (with an application form), full list of all Branch and Guild services, copies of all newsletters since 2005, reference documents, reports and pictures of events, the history of the Branch, and a list of useful ringing links. The website is at: odg.org.uk/sdb/

I have monitored usage of the website since late July 2012. During 2013 there were nearly 4350 page hits – an average of over 12 per day. 870 documents were downloaded, slightly over half of them newsletters. If all the newsletters are downloaded by members, that corresponds to 87% of members downloading each quarter's newsletter.

Sonning Deanery Branch website – Monthly page hits and downloads



E-mail lists – I manage four Branch e-mail lists (Members, Officers, Towers & Wedding volunteers) and provide assistance if required for the four tower lists hosted by the Branch (Easthampstead, Twyford, Warfield and Wokingham All Saints).

I try to keep the addresses on the list up to date and complete, but I can only do so when given the information. the number of members on the list is almost the same as last year (136) but we have /// more members /// tower correspondents to check that all their members were on the members e-mail list. ///I suspect that the number with no e-mail is fewer than 20%, so we could probably add more, if I knew about them.

Please tell me if your e-mail address changes. If you manage a tower e-mail list, please tell me when you change anyone's address – changes you make don't automatically get copied to the members' distribution list.

I occasionally respond to other Guild members running websites and/or mailing lists asking for help.

John Harrison,