

Sonning Deanery Branch ODG – Reports for 2015 AGM

Branch Secretary's report

At the branch AGM in February all officers were re-elected. Twelve new branch members were elected to the ODG, plus two returning ringers to our branch. At the AGM the branch Ringing Master, Steve Wells, gave a presentation with slides about *An Approach to Recruitment and Retention of Bell Ringers*.

Throughout 2015 the branch training officer, Jackie Hazell, has been training six primary school children at Waltham St Lawrence tower. She has been assisted by Vikki Bulbeck, another Waltham St Lawrence ringer, and by Rob Needham. There are two training sessions a week, 3 children on a Monday and 3 on a Wednesday.

The joint support by Sonning and Wargrave of each other's practice nights during 2015 is working well and is helping to bring on several beginners, 4 at Sonning and 7 at Wargrave. Vinni Sullivan, the chief trainer at Wargrave, has put in a huge amount of ringing teaching during 2015. John Harrison and Andrew Elliston are also helping regularly at Arborfield's practices.

In February three Sonning ringers went to a Belfree wireless ringing simulator demonstration at a church in Leicester. Later Sonning ordered 6 sensors for the front 6 bells (total cost £630), and they were lucky to be given a PC on which to run the Abel ringing software. The ODG Education Committee recommended a grant of £140 towards the cost. The simulator will be available to support Sonning and the branch's training requirements.

On 2nd May, to mark the 300th anniversary of the first recorded peal in Norwich in 1715, a quarter peal of Plain Bob & Grandsire Doubles was rung at All Saints, Wokingham. On 3rd May a quarter peal of Plain Bob Major was rung at St Andrew's, Sonning.

On the actual 70th anniversary of VE Day, Friday 8th May, Waltham St Lawrence rang 600 Plain Bob Doubles with a completely local band. On 9th May All Saints, Wokingham rang a quarter peal of Cambridge Surprise Major.

In June Rob Needham became a full member of the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) and Vinni Sullivan and Jane Mellor went on the Module 1 ITTS course.

Our chairman has canvassed towers for their support of a major recruitment exercise in the branch that includes the use of the Charborough mini-ring of bells. The most popular event at which to hold the recruitment exercise is the Hurst show in June 2016.

To mark the day on which our Queen became the longest reigning British monarch, Wednesday 9th September, the following branch towers rang that evening: Easthampstead (quarter of Plain Bob Doubles), Finchampstead (long touch of Plain Bob Doubles), Hurst, Sandhurst, Sonning, Twyford, Waltham St Lawrence, Warfield, and Wargrave.

The band at Wargrave is steadily building in experience and in September four of the ringers gained their Level 1 *Learning the Ropes* certificates: Bill Bookless, Laura Lord, Val Salisbury, and Carlos Soares.

On October 5th, Julian Pettifer (Twyford) and Simon Roberts (Hurst) were successful in their first quarter peal on 8 bells – congratulations to them both. The quarter peal celebrated the life of Arthur Maurice Priest, a Hurst ringer, who died this day exactly 100 years ago following injuries sustained at the Battle of Loos.

Also in October was the joint 8-bell striking competition between Reading and Sonning Deanery branches, this year organised by the Reading branch and held at Shiplake. Reading Branch bands came first and second and Sonning came third. Our thanks go to Reading branch for organising the competition and for the excellent tea.

The following week was the Branch Outing, organised by Pam and Andrew Elliston, to five 6-bell towers in the Pangbourne/Streatley area. In addition to all members of our branch, members of neighbouring ringing areas were invited.

A busy month, October – the two members who did the Module 1 ITTS course earlier in the year, Jane Mellor and Vinni Sullivan, attended Teacher Module 2 ITTS courses. This course takes the teaching of new ringers who have basic bell handling skills through to method ringing. Since then Vinni has been accredited as a full member of ART.

Our training officer, Jackie Hazell, has now organised 3 training sessions (2 Basic and 1 Cambridge Surprise Major) from her plan of a session each month, and they have been most popular and useful.

And finally, towards the end of 2015, Laura Lord (Wargrave) passed Level 2 of *Learning the Ropes*, and Sue Portsmouth (Sonning) passed Level 2 in early 2016.

Rob Needham

Ringing Master

Saturday Branch Practices have been held each month and on nine Tuesday afternoons at Binfield. Wokingham AS has been holding occasional Surprise Major practices throughout the year. An average of 11 people attended the Binfield practices and 11 at the Saturday practices. We are grateful to those towers for letting us ring.

The October meeting was replaced by a Branch Outing to the west of Reading ringing at Purley, South Stoke, Pangbourne, Whitchurch & Streatley. Our thanks go to Pam & Andrew Elliston for organising it.

Twelve different methods have been rung at the Binfield practices and 11 at Branch Practices: Double Oxford, Cambridge, Stedman, Grandsire, Plain Bob, Rounds and Call Changes, Plain Spliced, Double Court, St Simons, St Clements, Original, Little Bob, Eynesbury, Oxford Bob Triples and Reverse Canterbury.

Leading up to the Guild 10-bell Striking Competition held at Warfield in November, a series of 10-bell practices were held at Warfield for the Branch to practice. Support for the practices was mixed and, as a result, the Branch was placed fourth out of four teams in the competition.

Five towers entered the 6-bell Striking Competition at Waltham St Lawrence in April with Wokingham AS, Easthampstead and Sonning coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively.

The joint Sonning Deanery and Reading, 8- Bell Striking Competition was held at Shiplake. Two teams from each branch entered. The results were: 1st Reading Branch, 2nd Tilehurst tower, 3rd Sonning tower and 4th Wokingham All Saints tower.

Several towers are receiving help from the Branch to assist in teaching people to ring bells and to develop their band's capabilities. This is a long term commitment and we are grateful to those ringers who now support other towers on a regular basis.

Steve Wells

Webmaster/Postmaster Report

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year, with periodic additions. Mostly these relate to the on-line diary or the addition of details and/or pictures of events.

The site includes full contact details for officers, an on-line diary, contact details for towers (organised by practice night, number of bells and map), details of training courses, 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 can't this year present any statistics for website usage because the monitoring facility on the Guild server has not been working since mid 2014.

E-mail lists – I manage four Branch e-mail lists (Members, Officers, Towers & Wedding volunteers). The Branch also provides four tower lists (Easthampstead, Twyford, Warfield and Wokingham All Saints) and I occasionally provide advice or support. Most notable this year was when at the start of November I discovered that some lists were not delivering mail. I raised this with the Guild server managers and it transpired that all Guild hosted mailing lists had stopped delivering mail to non-Guild address. The problem was fixed towards the end of the month.

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 more than last in the last two years (152 v 141 v 136). This is getting close to the number of members (though several people are on the list who are not members but periodically attend events within the Branch although they live outside it. From time to time I discover that there are members who aren't on the list, despite periodic requests for tower correspondents to check that all of their members are on it.

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, since changes that you make don't automatically get copied to the members mailing list.

I occasionally respond to other Guild members who run websites and/or mailing lists and ask for help.

John Harrison

Bookstall Holder

Sales have been fairly slow, totalling £63.55 since the last AGM, and only £34 of new stock has been needed. I have taken the bookstall to most of the Saturday and midweek branch practices but have rarely been able to be proactive at selling items. According to the most recent price guide, total stock value will be £314.53 when a recent order worth £10 is received, and there is now a float of £12.63.

The transactions are summarized below:

| SOLD | Items | value |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| | Personal Progress Card | 12 £ 2.40 |
| | 1 per learner | 20 £16.70 |
| | New Ringer's Book | 2 £20.00 |
| | Follow-on Book | 3 £ 2.55 |
| | Badge (Large) | 11 £18.70 |
| | Beginners' Plain Bob | 2 £ 2.00 |
| | Beginners' Grandsire | 1 £ 1.00 |
| | Easy Stages – Grandsire Doubles | 1 £ 0.20 |
| | TOTAL | £63.55 |
| BOUGHT | | |
| | Personal Progress Card | 10 £ 2.00 |
| | 1 per learner | 18 £15.00 |
| | Badge (Large) | 10 £17.00 |
| | TOTAL | £34.00 |

Andrew Elliston

Training report

(This report was presented verbally at the AGM)

Targeted Training Practices – A programme of these practices has started (in the planning stage in last year's report). Ringers, who would like to practise something in particular, sign up for these practices in advance. There are 'Basic' and 'Advanced' practices. 'Basic' is roughly up to Bob Minor; 'Advanced' is anything beyond that. A strong band is then arranged to ring around the learners.

A one-off practice was held in July at All Saints, Wokingham – learners practised ringing up and down (not in peal). Since then, the practices have run (usually) on the first Friday evening of each month. So far, these have happened:

- December: BASIC – at WStL – 2 learners – place-making & early plain hunt
- January: ADVANCED – at Twyford – Cambridge Surprise Major
- February: BASIC – at WStL – 4 learners – place-making & dodging

Many thanks to all those who have helped out so far. Please let me know if you would like to join in with these practices.

Surprise Practices – The monthly 2nd Wednesday evening Surprise practice has carried on successfully at All Saints Wokingham. Ringers confirm in advance if they are able to attend. Many of those who attend find it very valuable. Thanks to Nigel Mellor, who organises and runs it.

Tower Practices – A lot of training takes place on a week-by-week basis at the practices of each of our towers. Several ringers regularly go to help out at a tower, or towers, other than their 'own'. This helps ringers to make more progress than would otherwise be possible.

Branch Practices – The usual branch practices have continued monthly on 3rd Saturday, and 1st Tuesday (Binfield). As well as the social aspect, there is an opportunity for people to ring with more experienced ringers, and to ring a wider variety of methods than is possible at some towers.

Young Ringers – We now have young ringers at Wargrave, Twyford, Easthampstead and Waltham St Lawrence. (If I've missed out your tower – Sorry!) We are aiming to improve our provision for young ringers in the coming year.

Jacquie Hazell (Training Officer)

Accounts

Sonning Deanery Branch Accounts Year to December 2015

AGM Balance Sheet

| <u>General fund</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>Expenditure</u> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Subs | £1,264.00 | |
| Branch Outing | | |
| Interest | | |
| Subs to guild | | £780.00 |
| Competition Judges | | £21.06 |
| Newsletter | | £52.00 |
| Postage, stationery etc | | £32.22 |
| General fund totals | £1,264.00 | £885.28 |
| Carry over of 2014 balances | £1,444.96 | |
| <u>General fund balance</u> | <u>£1,823.68</u> | |

| <u>Bell fund</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>Expenditure</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Interest | £22.93 | |
| Fundraising | £0.00 | |
| Bell fund 2015 totals | £22.93 | £0.00 |
| Carry over of 2014 balances | £3,262.01 | |
| <u>Bell fund balance</u> | <u>£3,284.94</u> | |

Total branch funds **£5,108.62**

Signed: S. Davenport

 Treasurer

I certify that these accounts are in accordance with the books, statements and vouchers given to me by the Treasurer. No matter has come to my attention that gives me grounds for concern.

Signed: I M Davis FCIS


Examiner