

Sonning Deanery Branch ODG – Reports on 2018 for 2019 AGM

Branch Secretary's report

Sadly, Sonning has lost one of its regular ringers; Sue Thomas passed away in March 2018 following an illness. Sue had been at Sonning for some years, having been taught to ring at Hurst, and a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples was rung in her memory at St Nicholas, Hurst on the morning of her funeral. Sue had requested that the tenor bell at Sonning be tolled for her funeral, and we were honoured to carry out her wish. She is greatly missed.

Derek Titford, who has been Tower Captain at Waltham St Lawrence since 1997, has recently stood down and, as he puts it in an article for the Parish Magazine 'passed the position/baton/keys/ropes over to Jacquie Hazell'. Thank you to Derek for all the work that he has put in to keep the tower ringing, and congratulations to Jacquie on her new role.

At the AGM on 17th February 2018, 20 new members were elected to the Guild; the Branch also had three returning members. Most of the Branch Officers remained in post; changes were that the Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master swapped roles, Sue Portsmouth was elected Secretary, and the Training Officer position was still unfilled. Also, Rob Needham was elected Youth Officer at the AGM, having been acting officer since the previous post holder stood down in autumn 2017.

The Branch has held regular Branch Practices during the year, comprising the traditional Saturday BPs, a practice at Binfield on the second Tuesday afternoon each month, which caters for all standards, and a Surprise Major practice at All Saints Wokingham on the second Wednesday evening each month.

Attendance at the Young Ringers practices has been patchy mainly, it appears, due to other weekend commitments, but it is good to know that there are now a number of young learners within the Branch and that they are progressing well at their individual towers.

In April, Rob Needham organised a Sonning Deanery Branch mini-outing which visited three towers in the area – Goring, South Stoke and Cholsey. This was much enjoyed by all those who went along.

The Branch had a presence at the Hurst Show in June, with

the Charmborough Ring; this attracted a great deal of interest but unfortunately did not lead to any new learners joining us. Some visitors from outside the area did request details of towers more local to them, so we hope that they may have

In July, Matthew Steele from Twyford took part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in London as one of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers. Matthew conducted the band in call changes, and while they did not reach the final, they performed very well, and we understand are already practising for next year!

St Michael's, Sandhurst is back to regular practices on a Monday evening and the band is supported by four ringers from Yateley for which the tower is most grateful.

With the help of a grant from the Branch, for which the tower is very grateful, St Andrew's Sonning has had work carried out on the clappers of all 8 bells, including having wooden shafts fitted to the 7 and tenor.

The ART Loddon Hub has been active throughout the year and Vinni Sullivan has organised a number of quarter peal attempts to help learners progress and achieve new levels with their Learning the Ropes scheme.

In January Anne-Marie Adams of Wargrave passed Level 2, and Sally Kunzig of Wargrave gained Level 1. In February, Sally achieved Level 2 as well; one of the Twyford young ringers, Joseph Godfrey, achieved Level 1 in June 2018, and Imogen Reason of Wargrave reached Level 1 in August and Level 2 in November. Karen Daffey of Sonning, and Allison Leigh and Ann Thompson who ring at Waltham St Lawrence reached Level 1 in November 2018, and Holley Wakeling of Waltham St Lawrence completed Levels 2, 3 and 4 in November. Congratulations to them all.

Several Branch towers, including Sonning, Hurst, Arborfield and Barkham, have benefited over the last year from recruitment in response to the 'Ringing Remembers' programme, which is very encouraging. In part as a result of this, most of the Branch towers were able to ring on 11th November – everything from rounds and call changes to quarter peals - to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice.

Sue Portsmouth

Ringing Master's report

Saturday Branch Practices have been held each month except for April (6-bell competition), May and November (Business Meeting). We were able to run day time practices on Tuesday afternoons at Binfield eight times throughout the year. We have also held Surprise Major practices every month at All Saints Wokingham, 3 of these practices were turned into quarter peal attempts as we only had 8 ringers; all quarter peals were successful. We managed to run 9 Young Ringer practices throughout the year and my thanks goes to Rob Needham for organising them.

An average of 11.3 people attended the Binfield practices, 11.1 at the Saturday practices, 11.6 at the Surprise Practices and 9.6 people at the Young Ringers practices with an average of 4.1 young ringers from our branch. We are grateful to those towers for letting us ring. In all we had 101 different people attending our meetings throughout the year of which 86 were branch members. Leading towers supporting these meetings came from Arborfield, Easthampstead and Wokingham All Saints.

Congratulations go to Steve Wells & John Harrison attending 30 and 28 meetings respectively out of a possible 47.

Two towers entered the 6-bell Striking Competition at Finchampstead in April with Wokingham AS (B), Finchampstead and Wokingham AS(A) coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. Wokingham All Saints represented the Sonning Deanery at the Guild 6 Bell Striking competition and were placed 5th out of 10 bands. Let's try and have a few more towers entering the competition for this year!

In April we had a Branch Mini-Outing to the Goring area ringing at Goring, South Stoke, Cholsey. This was attended by 12 members from our branch plus 5 from outside. Many thanks to Rob Needham for organising it.

In June, the branch hired the Charnborough ring for the Hurst Show as both a recruitment exercise and to demonstrate

ringing to a wider audience. Many thanks to all who helped.

52 Quarter Peals have been recorded for the Branch during the year, 2 peals and 1 date touch. 3 of these QPs took place instead of the Surprise Practice. In the Quarter Peals, 35 firsts have been scored. Congratulations to all.

May I express my thanks to everyone who has supported Branch ringing activities throughout the year.

If we can do any more to support your tower or your own ringing, you only have to ask and we will see what we can do. However, I do encourage you all to attend our branch practices as generally we can cater for all ringing standards from just learning to ring to spliced surprise major.

Nigel Mellor

Sonning Deanery Branch Accounts

Year to December 31 2018

Treasurer's Report

The accounts have been examined and signed by an Independent Examiner.

Membership for 2018 is one down on 2017.

Grants of £1250.00 have been paid from the Bell Fund - £1000. to Sonning and £250. to Sandhurst.

As can be seen from the accounts the balance in the general fund is over £2000.00. I would like to propose that we transfer at least £1000.00 from the General Fund to the Bell Fund.

Our general expenses for 2018 were £104.05 – Newsletter, postage, printing etc. It is not expected that this will be exceeded by a large amount this year. Our income, based of 150 members, is £450.00.

Mike Davis is happy to continue to be an Independent Examiner.

Sue Davenport

AGM Balance sheet

<u>General fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Subs	1273.00	
Hurst show	150.00	
Subs to guild		790.00
Newsletter		70.00
Postage, stationery etc		34.05
Hurst show		426.72
General fund totals	1423.00	1320.77

Carry over of 2017 balances	2120.49	
<u>General fund balance</u>	<u>2222.72</u>	

<u>Bell fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Interest	22.72	
Branch Outing	17.40	
Tower grants		1250.00
Bell fund 2018 totals	40.12	1250.00

Carry over of 2017 balances	3465.55	
<u>Bell fund balance</u>	<u>2255.67</u>	

<u>Actual branch funds</u>	<u>4478.39</u>	
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Members paid	159	
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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

Youth Officer's report

Period of report – This YR report covers the year from the 2018 AGM to the 2019 AGM. One YR practice a month was scheduled, so there were a maximum possible of 12. Of these, 3 had to be cancelled for lack of numbers.

Attendance averages – Of the 9 practices that took place, the average number of YRs attending was 41/3, and the average number of helpers was 42/3. My thanks to the helpers, particularly Steve Wells and Nigel Mellor; between them they ran practically all the practices this last year.

I invite YRs from neighbouring branches to our YR practices, and also tell our YRs about YR practices in neighbouring branches, but there is very little take-up either way.

Number of YRs on books – As Youth Officer I maintain a password protected list of email addresses for YRs (or more usually, their parents). Currently there are 22 YRs on the list

(one from EBSB). At least 7 of the youngsters have never attended a YR practice since they were set up in April 2017.

Please let me know if you have any YRs that have now given up ringing, and tell me of new youngsters who you feel would benefit from YR practices.

Best time – This year, I asked all the YRs / parents whether Sunday afternoons were best or if Saturday mornings or afternoons would be more popular. There was a strong preference for leaving the YR practices on the Sunday p.m.

Next Schedule – I have recently issued a YR schedule for March 2019 to Feb 2020. I have avoided any tower having a YR practice close in date to a BP/event at that tower. I have issued an updated schedule at this AGM that shows several of the tower bookings have been confirmed. Please could other towers confirm their booking to me as soon as possible

Rob Needham

Branch representatives to the Guild

The SDB has two representatives to maintain and encourage connections between the Branch and the Guild (ODG). From February 2018 till February 2019 the representatives have been Sue Davenport and Jacquie Hazell.

The main duties of the Branch reps are to attend two ODG General Committee meetings (March and November) during the year. We aim to play an active part in the meetings. We represent the views and needs of the Branch to the Guild; and we report information from the Guild back to the Branch.

We attended the March meeting at Little Milton and the November meeting at Newbury; also the well-attended AGM held at Bodicote in May.

At the AGM Hilarie Rogers stepped down as Guild Master, and Catherine (Katie) Lane took over instead. This is quite significant for our Branch because Katie started to learn to ring, as an adult, during the 1980s, at one of our towers - Waltham St Lawrence. Katie made a special visit in September to join us at a Monday evening practice. It was very good to see her – she renewed old acquaintances, especially with Tower Captain Derek Titford – they learnt to ring at the same time.

The main topic at the Guild meetings over the last year or so

has been the plan to update the Guild website. This process has NOT gone smoothly so far.

Katie reported at the Newbury meeting that it was giving her sleepless nights! We await more positive news soon. It will be good to have an up-to-date and interactive website for all Guild members to use. Hopefully it will encourage more participation in Guild activities by more members.

Please do make use of the Guild – after all we all pay for it (£5 each per year!).

The **Guild day training courses** are well worth attending, and span all levels from learning Plain Hunt, to ringing Surprise methods on 10 bells, or conducting Stedman Triples, and all stages inbetween.

Do read the **Guild magazine “Odd Bob”**, which is published twice a year, and has been edited for a long while by our own Rob Needham! The magazine is full of interest and information – I particularly like reading about what is happening in all the other branches.

And the **Guild provides activities for Young Ringers**. Now we have more Young Ringers in the branch, it would be good to see them joining in with others in the Guild.

Jacquie Hazell

Training Officer's report

In the absence of a Training Officer the Chairman has organised some courses: Raising & lowering in peal (August, 4 students) and Ring with simulator (August, 2 students, November, 2 students), with a striking session in January 2019.

The training need survey at the start of the year was completed by 37 members with a need expressed for a total

of 70 course places now, and a possible future need for a further 120 places. Demand is spread across the dozen plus courses offered but with much more demand for some than others.

Having a training officer in place who can focus on the task should enable the Branch to deliver more training to meet the unmet need.

John Harrison (Chairman)

Bookstall Holder's report

There is nothing significant to report for 2018 in respect of the Bookstall.

It is taken to Branch Practices and other ringers gatherings.

The bookstall is simply an 'at cost' service to members of the branch and cannot make a profit. It enables members to browse what books, etc. are available, and it can save members the task of ordering items themselves.

There is a small cash balance, detailed below.

With the advances in on-line purchasing, I do not believe that the bookstall can expand any further, but it does still appear to offer a useful service.

I also have copies of two Whiting Society publications, written by Stuart I. Bamforth, which are available for members to peruse.

- An Introduction to Ringing Multi-Method Doubles – Doubles Series – Book 1

- A Compendium of Plain Doubles Methods – Doubles Series – Book 2

If anyone has suggestions as to what other publications could usefully be held, I shall be pleased to receive them.

Opening cash balance	£18.37
Sales during year	£29.40
Purchases during year	£42.80
Expenses	£ 0.00
Closing cash balance	£4.97

Sue Portsmouth

Webmaster/Postmaster's Report

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year. It 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/

The main changes have been revisions to the diary, updating the contacts pages, adding newsletters and meeting papers, adding striking competition results and pictures, and updating the 'Latest news' links on the home page.

I have done some preliminary work on how to make the site adapt to be easier to use on small screens like phones.

In January I ran a web based survey to gather members' training needs.

E-mail services – I manage the following Branch e-mail lists – Members, Officers, Towers, Wedding volunteers and Quarter peal volunteers. The Members list has 185 subscribers (compared with 166, 152, 141, 136 in previous years). That is more than the number of members, but it includes some non-members who regularly ring in the Branch. The number of subscribers on other lists is unchanged: Wedding volunteers 34, Quarter peal volunteers 11, Young ringers 21. The quarter peal volunteer list was created over a year ago at the request of tower representatives at the 2017 Business meeting but so far no one has used it to request help to form a quarter peal band.

I provide support if needed to the lists that are separately managed – the young ringers list and the tower lists for Arborfield, Twyford, Warfield, Wokingham All Saints and Easthampstead (unused since 2011).

When Branch or tower officers' change, or change addresses, I ensure that the relevant 'official address' is correctly redirected.

All email addresses are periodically affected by spam, and the lists are no exception. They all include features to trap suspect messages. It works well, and members never see the trapped messages, but deleting them can be a chore – for me and the other list managers – when there is a deluge.

I am sometimes asked why spam is being sent from Branch e-mail addresses. The answer is that it isn't, but the spam pretends to be from an address that might be familiar to the recipient, which makes it more likely to bypass any filters that only let in known addresses. This usually means that both the recipient and fake sender address have been 'harvested' from the same infected computer. Spammers don't care what the addresses are. The advice I give is to treat such messages as you would any other spam – just delete them. The problem eventually goes away when the spammers move on to using a fresh set of addresses or get shut down.

John Harrison