

Sonning Deanery Branch ODG – Reports for 2020 AGM (on work in 2019)

Branch Secretary

Laurie Hall, who was a long-standing member of the ODG and a very active ringer until the end of the 1990s died in October. Laurie was tower captain at St Bartholomew's Church, Arborfield from the 1960s until 1999, and was Branch Ringing Master and joint Ringing Master in the 1970s.

A former Sonning ringer, David Willis, died very suddenly in December 2019. David rang at Sonning for many years before moving to Devon, where he was very active in the ringing community.

Stan Scott, a former Easthampstead ringer who was very well known across the Guild, died on 24th December 2019. He rang between 1956 and 2008 and held various posts in the Branch, including Ringing Master, on a number of occasions over the years.

Quarter peals and peals have been rung at many towers to remember Laurie, David and Stan; they are all sadly missed.

At the AGM on 16th February, 17 new members were elected to the Guild; the Branch also had two returning members. All the Branch Officers remained in post; the only change was that the Ringing Master and Deputy Ringing Master swapped roles. The Training Officer position was still unfilled.

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. A new monthly elementary practice has been introduced, also at All Saints Wokingham, which is intended to help ringers with jumping the hurdle from rounds to method ringing. There have been three of these practices so far and they are proving to be very popular

Attendance at the monthly Young Ringers practices has been fairly consistent, although three practices over the last year have had to be cancelled due to low numbers. There are currently 21 young ringers in the Branch, and it is good to know that all are progressing well at their individual towers.

In April, seven bands, including two of young ringers, took part in the Branch 6-bell striking competition at White Waltham. The competition was won by All Saints, Wokingham; congratulations to all who participated.

In July, Matthew Steele and Joseph Godfrey from Twyford and Imogen Reason from Wargrave took part in the Ringing World National Youth Contest in Liverpool as part of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers. The band rang call changes and performed very well; we understand that they are already thinking about next year!

In November the Branch hosted the ODG Ten-bell Competition at Warfield. Six teams took part, and the competition was won by Reading. The General Committee meeting and Bell Fund EGM in the afternoon were hosted by Sonning. Thank you to both towers for all the hard work that they put in to the organisation of these events

The ART *Loddon Hub* has been active throughout the year and Vinni Sullivan has continued to organise quarter peal attempts at various towers within the Branch; Katie Thomas rang her first quarter peal at St James, Finchampstead and there was also a first quarter peal for Keith Milner at Twyford. Many Branch ringers have been progressing in the *Learning the Ropes* programme. In February 2019, Nick Willson, Stephanie Milner, Keith Milner, Jeremy Carpenter and Duncan Kendall, all of Hurst and recruited through the *Ringing Remembers* initiative, achieved Level 1. In March 2019 Ellie Andrews of Sonning, and Joseph Godfrey of Twyford reached Level 2, and in April 2019, Katie Thomas of Sonning and Alexander Nicolai of Wargrave also reached Level 2. In May, Tabitha Mills of Wargrave reached Level 1, in July Joseph Godfrey achieved Level 3 and in September Edward Grant of White Waltham reached Level 1 and Imogen Reason of Wargrave and Benji Bass of All Saints Wokingham achieved Level 3. Benji also achieved his Bronze certificate in the ART *50 Ringing Things* challenge, which aims to encourage ringers of all ages, to experience a wide range of ringing activities. In November Karen Daffey of Sonning reached Level 2 and in December, Holley Wakeling of Waltham St Lawrence achieved Level 5 of *Learning the Ropes*. Congratulations to them all.

Sue Portsmouth

Ringing Master

Saturday Branch Practices have been held each month except for April (Striking Competition) & November (Business Meeting). We were able to run daytime practices on Tuesday afternoons each month except for July. We have also held Surprise Major practices every month except for September. We managed to run 9 Young Ringer practices throughout the year (an increase of 2 on last year) and my thanks goes to Rob Needham for organising them.

An average of 12.4 people attended the Binfield daytime practices, 15.7 at the Saturday morning practices, 12.9

at the Saturday afternoon practices, 12.6 at the Surprise Practices and 11.0 people at the Young Ringers practices.

The Surprise Practice is generally well supported, and we continue to try the Project Pickled Egg methods as well as the standard surprise methods.

The Binfield daytime practices have been well supported and they have been advantageous to the Binfield ringers who are able to attend. We have continued to expand our repertoire of plain methods and use the ART methodologies to introduce ringers to

change ringing. All of these practices have seen an increase on the number of attendees compared with 2018. We are grateful to those towers for letting us ring.

This year in November I introduced a new monthly practice aimed at ringers who are able to ring a bell in rounds; the aim is to work up towards change ringing. These practices are run along the ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) methodology which is designed to have intermediate steps to help jump the hurdle from rounds to change ringing. The long-term goals for the group of ringers attending the practices are:

- Improve bell control, change of speed and ability to dodge without the bell 'dropping'
- Full understanding of the concept of place; can ring call changes by place
- Plain hunt with good striking

These practices are being held on the first Tuesday evening of each month at All Saints Wokingham, two have been held so far in 2019 with an average attendance of 14.5. The practices are based on ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) methodology and the feedback from the attendees has been very positive. Due to the introduction of this new practice, the midweek Binfield practice has been moved to the third Tuesday of each month.

Seven bands enter the 6-bell Striking Competition at

White Waltham in April with Wokingham AS, Twyford and Wargrave coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. This was a significant increase in the number of bands entering from previous years. Well done to all 38 people who attended and rang in a band. Wokingham All Saints represented the Sonning Deanery at the Guild 6 Bell Striking competition and was placed 5th out of 8 bands.

For the first time since 2011 the Branch entered a team in the Guild 10-bell competition, which was held at Warfield and judged by Louise Booth and Peter Joyce. We came a very creditable 3rd out of 6 bands.

118 Quarter Peals have been recorded for the Branch in Bellboard during the year, 4 peals and 1 date touch. Leading towers were All Saints Wokingham (25), Sonning (23) and Waltham St Lawrence (22). There were also 42 quarter peals associated with the Loddon Hub ringers, thanks to Vinni Sullivan for organising these. Congratulations to Katie Armitage and Benjy Bass for ringing quarter peals to achieve their ART Learning the Ropes (LtR) Level 3 and also to Holly Wakeling for achieving LtR Level 5 by ringing a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor inside. Other notable performances include Ken Davenports 500th peal and the first quarter rung in many years at Twyford by a local band.

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

Nigel Mellor

Youth Officer

This report covers the year from after the 2019 AGM to the 2020 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.

Standard of ringing – It is most gratifying to see the steady improvement in the ringing ability of the YRs. As the ability of the YRs increases (Little Bob, Kent, Stedman, Cambridge Surprise Minor, ...) it is becoming more difficult to get enough helpers to make the practices productive for the more experienced YRs. The assistance of adult helpers would be much appreciated.

Attendance averages – Of the 9 practices that took place, the average number of YRs attending was nearly 5, and the average number of helpers was 6. My thanks to the helpers, particularly Steve Wells and Nigel Mellor; between them they ran practically all the practices, although I try to give the more experienced YRs an opportunity to run part of a practice.

Surprisingly, the highest attendance by Sonning Deanery YRs was the December 2019 practice when 9 YRs took part.

I invite YRs from neighbouring branches to our YR practices, and also tell our YRs about YR practices in neighbouring branches, but there is 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). I have recently done a maintenance exercise to remove YRs that no longer wish to stay on the distribution list. Currently there are 22 YRs on the list (one from EBSB). I am aware of new YRs at Wargrave, Twyford and Easthampstead who may soon wish to join.

Next schedule of YR practices – I issued a YR schedule for March 2020 to Feb 2021 at our Business Meeting in November, but so far only one tower has confirmed its date. Please could towers confirm their booking to me as soon as possible.

Rob Needham

Sonning Deanery Branch Accounts
Year to December 31 2019

Treasurer

Sue Davenport

AGM Balance sheet

<u>General fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Subs	1321.00	
Subs to guild		820.00
Competition Judges		12.78
Newsletter		25.10
Postage, stationery etc		18.91
Teas	34.00	
General fund totals	1355.00	876.79
Carry over of 2018 balances	2222.72	
<u>General fund balance at 31/12/19</u>	<u>2700.93</u>	

<u>Bell fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Interest	34.64	
Branch Outing	169.40	
Bell fund 2018 totals	204.04	
Carry over of 2018 balances	2255.67	
Bell fund balance	<u>2459.71</u>	
Actual branch funds	<u>5160.64</u>	
Members paid	165	

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

Branch representatives to the Guild

The March meeting was preceded by the AGM of the Bell Fund. Following adoption of the accounts the meeting then discussed the proposed merge of the Bell Restoration Fund with the Bell Fund. The Charity Commission could not see any problem with this. A lengthy discussion took place and the outcome was that the Trustees of the Bell Fund liaised with the Trustees of the Bell Restoration Fund to get their agreement and also that Committee members got feedback from their Branches.

The November Committee Meeting was held at Sonning. This was preceded by an Extra Ordinary meeting of the Bell fund. A firm proposal was put to the meeting on the merger

of the two accounts. This was passed by a large majority with the proposed completion date of 31st December 2019. (Note – this has now taken place).

The committee meeting followed. A proposal from the Guild Secretary to reduce the number of members required to form a quorum be reduced from 50 to 25 was discussed. A vote was taken and this was defeated.

The members were then split into small groups to discuss how members could be made more aware of the Guild and what it has to offer. Feedback from all groups felt that verbal contact was more effective than sending out emails, notices etc.

Sue Davenport

Training Officer

In the absence of a Training Officer the Chairman has organised some courses: Striking (January, 5 students), Rope splicing (February, 6 students), Ringing with a simulator (April October, November, November, 11 students total), Listening (May, 8 students).

A course on Bob calling was arranged for November but cancelled when several people dropped out.

Following the training need survey two years ago the Branch delivered targeted training to 24 people amounting to 38 places. Although this is by no means all the need identified, much of the remainder is fragmented or with a poor match between people and indicated need. It is also two years old, so we will run a new survey to get a more up to date picture.

So far the focus has been on training individual ringers but the need to develop the capability of bands has also been identified. There is some overlap, since ringing is a team

activity, and individual competence can contribute to a band's performance, but in terms of organisation and delivery the two are very different.

Individuals who think a particular course would help them are motivated to attend, and are likely to put some effort into follow up activity (though this can be more difficult). With a band the needs are likely to be complex, with different perception of the need and different levels of commitment. To make meaningful progress with a whole band is likely to require long term support, unlike a course where much less input is needed to give individuals useful experience and insights that they can take away and work on.

Developing a programme of support to develop one or more bands will require discussion to agree what is needed and how it can be provided.

John Harrison (Chairman)

Bookstall Holder

There is nothing significant to report for 2019 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 negative cash balance, detailed below, which will be recouped against future sales.

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.

Sales this year have comprised copies of Ringing Circles and One per Learner cards.

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

Copies of the Diagrams book in spiral bound A4 format are also available; these are much easier to read than the small hardback format. I have two for sale, but as they are £25 each, they may be more appropriate as a tower purchase rather than for an individual.

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

Opening cash balance	£4.97
Sales during year	£17.00
Purchases during year	£30.00
Expenses	£0.00
Closing cash balance	(£8.03)

Sue Portsmouth

Webmaster/Postmaster

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year. It includes contact details for officers, events diary, towers information and contact details, information on Branch services including training courses, newsletters reference documents, reports and pictures of events, Branch history, and useful links. The website is at: odg.org.uk/sdb/

The main changes have been addition of newsletters, meeting papers, competition results and pictures, and updating the diary contact pages and 'latest news' on the home page.

E-mail services – I manage the Branch e-mail lists – Members, Officers, Towers, Wedding volunteers and Quarter peal volunteers. The Members list has 197 subscribers (compared with 185, 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. There

are 35 subscribers on the Wedding volunteers list and 12 on the Quarter peal volunteers list, both an increase of 1 from the previous year. The Wedding volunteer list was used five times and the Quarter peal volunteer list was used once.

I provide support if needed to the lists that are separately managed – the young ringers list and the tower lists.

Currently they are Arborfield, Warfield, Wokingham All Saints. The Twyford list was recently discontinued and the Easthampstead has been unused since 2011.

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

Relatively little spam was sent to the lists, all of it trapped on the server and not transmitted to recipients.

John Harrison