

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



July 2023, Summer issue

Chairman's message



Our Churches are now back in 'Ordinary time' (the period between Pentecost and Advent with no major liturgical events) and the ringing community also seems to be back into more ordinary time after the upheavals of Covid, Royal funeral and Coronation, along with attendant wild swings of optimism, pessimism, lost members, recruitment opportunities and extra ringing.

It would be tempting for us to heave a sigh of relief and drop back into the comfortable rut that we were in before. But we can't because it isn't the same rut – however much we would like to get back to 'normal' some things have changed. We've lost more ringers than we've gained, overall, and people have learnt to balance their lives in different ways that don't always prioritise ringing. They might be small changes but if your band is near a

critical threshold they can have a big impact, going from 'just enough' to 'not quite enough'.

The phrase 'new normal' is a century old but it's become much more common lately. We need to adapt to the changes around us by finding ways to do things so we can create a better new normal, and avoid being pushed into a normal that might be new but isn't better. On page 3 I look at one aspect of change within the Branch – the cancellation of practices.

The media frenzy over *Ring for the King* was in full flood when I wrote in the Spring. It generated lots of enquiries about learning to ring, and now the dust has settled it would be good to take stock of how well we did from it. How many of the enquiries were from suitable recruits (with a realistic impression of what ringing entailed)? Did we give them a good initial experience and effective teaching? If not, what stopped us doing so? And looking forward, if a similar opportunity arose again how would we respond? And would we wish for others (media, Central Council, Guild/Branch) to do things differently in future to make it easier for us? Please let us have your thoughts and experiences.

On pages 3 and 4, Rob has analysed the ringing that we did to *Ring for the King* within the Branch, and I'm sure all of you who took part are pleased to have contributed to the National celebration of the event.

It's always pleasing to see ringers making progress. We've had first peals for two of our young ringers, James from Arborfield and Becki from Sonning, and we also helped Julie, Jan and Jennifer to ring their first quarters. It was good to see them feature in the ART magazine *Tower Talk*. It is also good to see several of our young members ringing with their peers in neighbouring branches, and taking part in national and regional competitions.

As we enter the holiday season, don't forget to check if there is any ringing where you are staying. You will always be welcome, but if some of their own ringers are on holiday then you would be doubly welcome, and your contribution could make a big difference.

John Harrison, chairman

New Steward for Sonning Deanery

At the Guild AGM in May two new Guild Stewards were elected. One of them, Steve Rossiter, is now steward for our branch and two others: North Bucks and Chiltern branches.

Steve can be contacted on steward-5@odg.org.uk.



News snippets from the towers

All Saints

It's been a frantic month at All Saints Wokingham, following on after the excitements of the coronation. Within just a couple of weeks we have had both the official re-opening of the church building by the Bishop of Oxford (with service ringing of course) and then the departure into retirement of our rector (with an associated peal ringing in his ears). For ringers the re-opening of the building means that the temporary fencing has gone and we are now able to access the belfry in the conventional manner, by walking into church!

Steve Smith

Arborfield & Barkham

In April Adedayo Ajibola, one of our regular ringers for several years, left to live and work in America, and she rang her first quarter peal shortly before departure (details on next page).



Four of our new recruits passed Module 1 of ART's *Learning the Ropes*, taught by tower captain Darren Smith. Left to right are Archie, Andy, Jason and Sian.



Darren recently became an Associate Member of ART, having completed the "Bell Handling" teaching qualification.

For the King's Coronation, 14 of us rang the bells that day; details on the next page.

Our Friday evening practices, jointly with Barkham, continue to grow. Including enthusiastic attendance by the Shuttleworth family from Sonning, we have recently had up to 17 attendees. Including semi-absent students and yet another youth learner, we have a total of 23 people on our books. After a recent practice, we had our monthly social in the pub garden at the Bull at Barkham.

Unfortunately, Barkham's bells have been unringable since the Spring due to bird ingress and some extreme nest making in amongst the bells! We hope to be able to remove the detritus at the end of the summer as we now have enough people to ring simultaneously at both Sunday morning services.

Darren Smith

Cancellation of Practices

Looking for patterns in what is otherwise routine detail can sometimes be interesting.

When we introduced midweek daytime practices in 2006 we didn't know how much support there would be so we sent out invitations and only confirmed the practice when we knew there would be enough people present. Occasionally we had to cancel, which avoided anyone turning up and being disappointed. We did the same when we introduced Surprise practices, and more recently Elementary practices. The diary on the website initially shows 'provisional' and then either 'confirmed' or 'cancelled' for each such event.

Those labels are still on the website so we can compare what happened to practices in different years. With the current interest in the impact of Covid I looked at 2019, 2020 and the first half of 2023. I looked at weekday practices, Surprise/Advanced practices and Elementary practices. I didn't look at Youth practices where other factors were different between the years and I didn't look at Saturday practices, where we don't use the same system

In 2019 under 10% of practices were cancelled (2 out of 25 planned) but in 2022 28% were cancelled (13 out of 46 planned). In the first half of 2023 the figure is 16% (4 out of 25 planned). That looks as if we are getting back towards pre-pandemic levels, but the overall figures don't tell the whole story. All of the cancellations in 2023 were Advanced practices (4 out of 6 planned) whereas only 1 was cancelled in 2019. That's a significant change to a key element of the mix of practices we provide. We need to understand the factors behind it.

Chairman

Peals, quarter peals and interesting rings



Two first peals by young ringers in our Branch, James (left picture above) and Becki (right picture); details of the peals are on the back page.

Every ringable tower in the Branch rang for the King's Coronation on Saturday 6th May.

Below is a small selection of peals or quarters that includes all those rung for the King's Coronation.

There are also peals or quarters based on young ringers involved, and/or a 'first' for one or more of the ringers, *Ed*.

St Bartholomew, Arborfield, Berkshire

Sunday, 2 April 2023 in 43m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Adedayo A Ajibola
- 2 Nicola M Lee (C)
- 3 Darren Smith
- 4 James H Moynihan
- 5 Michael V Boys
- 6 Brian Fisher

First quarter peal 1. First in ODG 6. Rung for Adedayo, who is leaving us after 6 years to live/work in California.

St John the Baptist, Shottesbrooke

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 42m

1260 Doubles: 600 St Martin's, 660 St Simon's

- 1 Lesley S Cross
- 2 Martha C Hazell
- 3 Vikki E M Bulbeck
- 4 Simon D Smith (C)
- 5 Jacqueline M Hazell
- 6 Charley Smith

To celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III at Westminster Abbey later this morning.

St Lawrence, Waltham St Lawrence

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 44m

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Charley Smith
- 2 Jacqueline M Hazell
- 3 Martha C Hazell
- 4 Kathryn Titford
- 5 Simon D Smith (C)
- 6 Lesley S Cross

To celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III at Westminster Abbey later this morning.

St Andrew, Sonning
Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 51m

1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Becki Shuttleworth
- 2 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 3 Sue Portsmouth
- 4 Alison Clayton
- 5 Pam Elliston
- 6 Rob Needham
- 7 Robert A Partridge (C)
- 8 Andrew Price

Rung to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

First of Triples: 1

The ringer of the 2, Geoffrey M Harvey, also rang for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

St Bartholomew, Arborfield

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 42m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Charlotte N Lee
- 2 Nicola M Lee (C)
- 3 Darren Smith
- 4 Joseph E Murrell
- 5 James H Moynihan
- 6 Brian Fisher

First QP: 1. First in ODG: 4.

Ringling to mark the Coronation of King Charles III.

St Lawrence, Waltham St Lawrence

Sunday, 7 May 2023 in 43m

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Charley Smith
- 2 Jacqueline M Hazell
- 3 Simon D Smith (C)
- 4 Kathryn Titford
- 5 Vikki E M Bulbeck
- 6 Lesley S Cross

Celebrating the Coronation of HM King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Westminster Abbey yesterday.

Rung following the special Coronation morning service.

St Paul's, Wokingham, Berkshire

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 3h 1

5040 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Christopher P Cole
- 2 John A Harrison
- 3 Janet E Menhinick
- 4 Nigel A L Mellor
- 5 Steven J Field
- 6 Richard M Bishop
- 7 Mike Pidd (C)
- 8 Alan K Barsby

Rung for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

First peal of Grandsire: 6.

Circled the tower to peals: 8.

All Saints, Wokingham, Berkshire

Sunday, 7 May 2023 in 46m

1312 Kent Treble Bob Major

- 1 Kristin L Fitch
- 2 Stephen R Smith
- 3 James H Moynihan
- 4 Neil G Curnow
- 5 James M Champion
- 6 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 7 Jon P Tutchter
- 8 John A Harrison

Rung for the Coronation of King Charles III. First Treble Bob: 3.

All Saints, Wokingham, Berkshire

Monday, 8 May 2023 in 2h 57

5056 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Jane A Mellor
- 2 Kristin L Fitch
- 3 Nicola M Lee
- 4 James H Moynihan
- 5 John A Harrison
- 6 Stephen R Smith
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 8 Graham E Slade

Rung for the Coronation of King Charles III.

First peal: 4. First peal inside: 2.

St Michael and St Mary Magdalene, Easthampstead

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 42m

1320 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- 1 Andrew Mitchell
- 2 Stephen Wells
- 3 Graham Scott
- 4 Daniel Chafen
- 5 Barbara E Wells
- 6 Rachel Moss (C)

Rung to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles

St John the Baptist, Shottesbrooke

Sunday, 7 May 2023 in 42m

1260 Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Place Doubles

- 1 Lesley S Cross
- 2 Martha C Hazell
- 3 Vikki E M Bulbeck
- 4 Jacqueline M Hazell
- 5 Simon D Smith (C)
- 6 Charley Smith

Celebrating the Coronation of HM King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Westminster Abbey yesterday.

All Saints, Wokingham, Berkshire

Saturday, 24 June 2023 in 2h 58

5152 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Becki Shuttleworth
- 2 James M Champion
- 3 James H Moynihan
- 4 Christopher P Cole
- 5 Tom Blomley
- 6 Mike Pidd
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 8 John A Harrison

Farewell compliment to David & Lorraine Hodgson after David's 26 year service as Rector of this church.

First peal: 1. First peal of Surprise: 3.

Chairman	John Harrison	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 978 5520	chairman@sdb.odg.org.uk
Ringling Master	Nigel Mellor	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 979 2037	brm@sdb.odg.org.uk
Deputy Ringling Master	Steve Wells	Easthampstead	01344 452202	dbrm@sdb.odg.org.uk
Treasurer	Sue Davenport	St Paul's, Wokingham	0118 978 6554	treasurer@sdb.odg.org.uk
Secretary	Jan Glen	Binfield	07840 104455	secretary@sdb.odg.org.uk
Youth Officer	Jennifer Moynihan	Arborfield	07745 605146	youth@sdb.odg.org.uk
Branch Reps	Sue Davenport vacant	St Paul's, Wokingham	0118 978 6554	committee@sdb.odg.org.uk
Bookstall	Jennifer Moynihan	Arborfield	07745 605146	bookstall@sdb.odg.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Rob Needham	Sonning	0118 9267724	editor@sdb.odg.org.uk
Webmaster	John Harrison	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 978 5520	webmaster@sdb.odg.org.uk
Training Officer	Jane Mellor	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 979 2037	training@sdb.odg.org.uk