

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



October 2012, Autumn Issue



St Pauls, Wokingham

Pastures new

After several years as our Ringing Master, John Manley has moved to Ruislip, where his wife is now Vicar. John did a lot for the Branch during his time with us, for which we are very grateful and I hope we will be able to maintain some of the momentum he developed.

He encouraged us to develop 10 bell ringing to the point where we entered the Guild 10-bell competition last year, and Graham is hoping to put together a band so we can enter this year too.

John also ran a weekly improvers session at Binfield, but so far no one has agreed to take that over. John ran the daytime practices and encouraged several new people to come along and develop. I will take over running the practices (as well as organising them).

**John Harrison, Training
Co-ordinator**

Diary of Events

Saturday 20 October

Wokingham All Saints
10.00am - 12 noon
Branch 8 Bell striking competition
12—1pm Branch Practice

Saturday 17 November

Sonning
6.00pm – 7.30pm Branch Practice
7.30pm—9pm Branch Committee meeting

Saturday 15 December

Arborfield
10.30am—12 noon Branch Practice

Saturday 19 January

Twyford
10.30am – 12 noon Branch Practice

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices at Binfield on 6 November, 4 December and 8 January (provisionally).

Thanks to Andrew Dugdale from Arborfield who has kindly offered to print the newsletter for us free of charge.

Member survey

Last year we conducted a survey to find out members' views about Branch practices. It had a good response, and led us to implement several good ideas. This year we ran another survey to find what members knew about the purpose of the annual 'Committee meeting'. The title is a bit misleading. Every tower is entitled to send someone to it – it's not just the officers. The name probably dates back to late 1800s when the only Branch officers were Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer (all clergymen), and ringing was organised and run by a 'committee' of all the Tower Foremen.

The modern 'committee meeting' is intended as a forum where important issues can be discussed in depth ahead of the AGM. One representative from each tower ensures that a wide range of views are represented, while keeping the size manageable. As well as clarifying things, the meeting can ask the officers to do further work before bringing something to the AGM. That's what it should be, but in recent years, many towers have not been represented, and some others are only represented because they happen to have one of the officers.

The response to this year's survey was much lower than last year – perhaps members have less interest in 'meetings' than in 'practices' – but the picture that emerges from it is of many members having no idea what the meeting is for, and not having their views sought on topics to be discussed.

On the positive side, the survey invited members to suggest things that the Branch should be doing to help recruitment and training, and that produced quite a lot of good ideas for the officers to consider.

You can download the full results of the survey from: http://odg.org.uk/sdb/documents/minutes_reports/

If you missed the survey and would like to add your 'six pennorth', go to: <http://odg.org.uk/sdb/survey/>

John Harrison, Webmaster

Birthday ringing at Sonning

Last year Sonning church organised an Auction of Promises to raise funds for church roof repairs and other work. It was very successful and because of generous buying a large sum was raised. The bell ringers submitted a couple of promises for sale, one of which was doing some ringing at a date and time chosen by the buyer to mark a special event.



Mike Hart, who lives in Sonning, bought one of these promises, and we were originally asked to ring when his son and family were over from Australia just before Christmas 2011. Family plans changed and the request for ringing was postponed until another suitable event, which proved to be his son Nick's 40th birthday when he and his family were here from Australia.

We started ringing at 11a.m. on Nick's birthday, Thursday 27th September, and the family came up to the ringing room and sat and watched us ring call changes for about 15 minutes. Because it was in the morning of a weekday we could not get eight Sonning

ringers together, so we were kindly supported by Sue Davenport from St. Paul's, Mary Ede from Finchampstead, Richard Hamilton from Twyford, and Roy Russell from Wargrave.

We then asked Nick if he would like to try ringing a bell, and he was very keen, so he did a few backstrokes with Rob Needham doing the handstrokes. The large grin on his face was a tonic to us all.

The family then went up to the roof to enjoy the view – the weather was kind and they enjoyed seeing the village from a different angle. Nick's father Mike said he had thought about learning to ring, so we are hoping that the Auction of Promises has raised not only useful funds but will also gain another ringer for St. Andrew's.

Rob Needham

My day out Ringing

In September I went on a bell ringing outing to ring at 4 towers. It was a lovely day and not raining, thank goodness! It was not too cold either. And I did do a fair amount of ringing including some ringing on 8 bells, which is nice as I mainly ring at six bell towers. Also, there was a lot of experience there as well.

I really enjoyed the day - all the bells were nice to ring and not on the heavy side. Except for the last tower I went to. These bells were not heavy there either.

However, It was most disappointing as at the last tower as I could not ring a bell. Why? You may well ask. Well, when someone like me who is vertically challenged the aid of a box helps. And at this tower there was only one box and this box was not even high enough.



I was so embarrassed and anxious, something that is not usually my nature. I had tried a bell and could not set it, due to the rope being too short and this was in front of some people who I did not know. And a taller ringer did not come to my aid either.

Although this tower was not in the branch, it is something that all towers should think about. Don't think just about you and the ringers in your tower but those who are coming to visit your tower. Perhaps consider whether your ropes need to be adjusted slightly so that they are lower.

If your band are all tall people then you don't need an aid for ringing, it easy to put a knot in the rope if it is too long. But do you have a few boxes for those who are coming to visit? Or do you have a new ringer and they are not as tall as the rest of the band?

I must admit that I do have my own box that I carry with me, and anyone else who is just out of reach of that rope is welcome to use it. But that day, at the last tower, time was getting on and the stairs weren't that good to allow me to carry my own box up. I'm also in possession of a ready made rope extension tail-end which I had left in the car. With regards to the extension tail end I will only use it if I feel confident to do so and if I have rung at a tower before.

We often have a laugh at White Waltham when asking the hypothetical question "When will the invention of the hydraulic floor come along? We would then not have the worry of knots and boxes!"

This is my own box and tail-end.

Lesley Graves, White Waltham

Are you getting your mail?

Do you receive this by email? If you have e-mail, and don't receive a few messages a month about Branch practices etc, your e-mail address isn't on the mailing list, or maybe you have changed your address without telling us.

All members are entitled to be on the list, so if haven't received anything from us recently, and want to do so, please send an e-mail to: postmaster@sdb.odg.org.uk and we will add you.

John Harrison, Postmaster

Peals & Quarter Peals (tower and in hand)

In hand

Wokingham, Berks

47 Brookside

Monday 1 October 2012 in 2 hrs. 37 mins. (15)

5040 Plain Bob Royal

Composed: H J Tucker

1-2 Elizabeth J Davenport

3-4 June D Wells

5-6 Kenneth R Davenport (C)

7-8 Bernard F L Groves

9-10 E John Wells

First peal 1-2. 500th handbell peal 5-6, 75th handbell peal as conductor. 700th together 3-4 and 9-10.

Sunday 15 July 2012

All Saints, Wokingham

1264 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Sian J Haseldine
- 2 Mary Spence
- 3 Stephen R Smith
- 4 Alan K Barsby
- 5 Alexander E Holroyd
- 6 Ellis N Thomas
- 7 Edward JW Manley
- 8 John A Harrison (C)

For evening service, and as a farewell compliment to Richard Woodward, a member of the band since 1982, departing to Bournemouth.

Sunday 30 September 2012

All Saints Wokingham

1320 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Oliver James*
- 2 Mary Spence
- 3 Sian J Haseldine
- 4 Jon P Tutcher
- 5 John A Harrison (C)
- 6 Stephen R Smith

*First quarter peal

Rung for Harvest Festival evensong.
Farewell compliment to David Rance,
retiring as Music Director.

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