

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



January 2012, Winter Issue

Branch Outing report - 22 October

This year's Branch ringing outing was in the Wallingford/Dorchester area and was excellently organised by Pam and Andrew Elliston (from Sonning) – they even arranged for lovely weather all day.

We started with an hour of ringing at St Mary-le-More, Wallingford, which is a 10-bell tower, but unfortunately we did not have enough good ringers to ring a 10-bell method. We then moved on to Benson nearby, an 8-bell tower.

The last tower before lunch was St Mary the Virgin at Ewelme, a delightful and historical church set in a lovely village. While the six bells were being rung at the back of the church, Brian O'Callaghan from Sonning, gave an impromptu talk about the history of the church, the almshouses, and the tomb of the Countess of Suffolk. The Countess was a most generous benefactor to the church, almshouses and village school.

Lunch was taken at The Chequers, Berrick Salome, and then there was ringing at the nearby church of St Helen, a 6-bell, ground-floor ring in a tower with an interesting construction involving very large wooden beams. There were also wooden shingles on parts of the outside of the church, and it was set in a lovely sylvan setting with few neighbours to annoy with the sound of the bells. Warborough, just north of Dorchester, was our 5th tower of the day, another ground-floor ring but with eight bells. And finally to Dorchester Abbey, a pleasant ring of eight bells in a huge and light ringing room.

Our thanks to Pam and Andrew Elliston for the organisation of the outing, and to the ringers who ran the ringing sessions in the various churches.



St Helen's church, Berrick Salome

Branch Quiz Night report - 12 November

This was held at St. Paul's Church Hall, Wokingham and our thanks go to Sue Davenport for arranging the hall booking and for opening up the hall for us an hour before the start. The quiz was organised by the St. Andrew's Sonning bell ringers, who are most grateful for the support of the event by towers in the Branch. The teams came from far and wide and included friends of Pam's, a team of Sonning Handbell Ringers and their neighbours, and a full team and a bit from Woodley National Womens' Register (NWR) (to which Pauline Needham belongs).

The quiz was divided into eight rounds, four before supper and four after, plus two picture rounds that could be answered at a more leisurely pace over the whole evening. The quiz questions seemed about the right difficulty because the winning team answered about 80% of the questions correctly. The raffle was well supported and our Chairman, Simon Milford, made the draw at the end of the evening. There were plenty of prizes available, so many of the contestants went home with something. Our thanks are due to all the members who kindly donated the prizes for our raffle.

continued

Diary of Events

NB: 1 January 2012

Subs are Due!

Please make sure you pay your

Tower Treasurers £6, by 29/2/12 .

Saturday 21 January

Wokingham All Saints
10.30am—12 noon
Branch practice

Saturday 18 February

Easthampstead
3pm - 4pm Ringing
4pm Service, followed by tea
5.15pm - AGM starts
7pm - 9pm -Evening ringing

Saturday 17 March

Sandhurst St Micahael
10.30am –12 noon
Branch Practice

Saturday 5 May

Branch outing (see page 3)

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices at All Saints, Wokingham on 10 January (NB this will be held at Binfield), 7 February, 6 March and 3 April (provisionally).

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

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The quiz first prize (two large tins of chocolates) had to be shared because two teams tied for first place with 90 points out of a possible 110. The winning teams were *Missing Links* (NWR) and *Clochemerle* (Sonning members/ a French visitor/ NWR).

Thanks are due to Peter Kemm who researched and set all the questions and was the Quizmaster for the evening; there were unusual subjects for some rounds – one round was on chocolate! Also thanks to the Sonning members and friends who helped with the meal preparation, and particularly Pauline Needham for doing most of the work involved in the 5 P's: **p**lanning, **p**urchasing, **p**reparing, **p**lating and **p**roducing the supper, (and washing up).

The income from the sale of tickets for quiz and raffle, less all expenses, resulted in a total 'profit' for Branch funds of £322.37.

Rob Needham

Training update – to wait or not to wait

Five people attended a rope splicing course in December, and two attended a maintenance course run by the Guild in November. All found them very helpful.

Branch courses are run in response to members' needs. We don't pick a topic, set a date and see whether anyone applies. We don't have enough members to do that. Instead, we ask members what they would like, and when we get enough to run a course we fix it at a time to suit those who asked for it. That formula has enabled us to run far more course over the years than would have been possible any other way, for example 13 in the last 5 years. The downside is that for less popular courses you might be on the waiting list for a long time because too few people want the same thing.

I decided to 'spring clean' the waiting lists. I asked people whether they were still interested in the course(s) that they originally asked for, and removed any who weren't. We now have a much better picture of who really is waiting for a course.

The more requests we have, the more courses we can run. So keep your requests coming: in person, by phone, by e-mail, or via the form on the website. We currently offer potential courses on: Elementary bob calling, Conducting, Bell handling, See yourself handling on video, Raising and lowering techniques, Raising and lowering in peal, Leading up and down in peal, Listening skills, Bell maintenance, Rope splicing, Ring with a simulator, How to learn a method, Heavy bell handling, Change ringing on handbells, Teaching bell handling, Listening and judging striking. For full details see: www.odg.org.uk/sdb/training/.

You can contact me with any queries about training at: training@sdb.odg.org.uk or on: 0118 978 5520.

New listening & judging striking course

The ability to listen critically to a piece of ringing is a useful skill (whether or not you judge competitions – see related article). We have run many listening courses over the years, where the main focus is on hearing and correcting your own striking, and this can easily be extended to cover the techniques that you use to judge the quality of the ringing as a whole, including some practice at marking some real ringing. If enough people are interested in this, we will run the course. I have set it up on the website, so you can register your interest on-line, or if you prefer just send me a message

Don't think that you aren't good enough to judge striking. You need neither good bell handling nor method ringing skills to train your ears to listen effectively. In fact it may be easier when all you have to think about is listening, without worrying about the other things. It is a distinct skill though, which needs to be developed. So sign up for the course and find out. The date will be arranged to suit those who are interested. You can contact me at: training@sdb.odg.org.uk or 0118 978 5520.

Another perspective on competitions

The Branch Committee meets every November to plan ahead, and discuss anything contentious before taking it to the AGM. A small forum makes that easier, but it has a broad base with a representative from every tower invited. Mostly it handles routine things, but some things are more substantial. In November we discussed the timing and nature of Branch practices (which resulted in the survey of members' views that I hope you have seen) and how we run striking competitions.

As well as encouraging more teams to take part in the competitions, we considered alternative ways to run them. In the past, we have always brought in an external judge who sits hidden away listening to our ringing, and then emerges to tell us the results. Most judges try to give helpful comments about each piece, so it can be instructive as well. But that isn't the only way to judge a competition. Could we do it differently and get more out of it?

The reason we hold competitions isn't just to find a winner. The challenge of entering should help us all to focus that bit harder on our striking, which we hope will filter through into our everyday ringing. We can all improve, and a competition is one spur to try to do so. You can also learn by listening critically to ringing – something that not many of us do very often – and the

most intense listening is when judging a competition. So could we involve our members in the process?

There are several possibilities. We could have a panel of 'experts', but many of them are likely to be competing. We could select a judge (or preferably several to work together) from towers that aren't entering a team. We could record the ringing, and then all judge it afterwards (with someone shuffling the tapes so we didn't know which team is which) but that would double the length of the competition. We could form a panel with one person from each team, with each of them judging every team except their own, but they would all know who was ringing, and it would be complicated trying to compare scores for different teams marked by different people.

However we did it, we would need to give those who have never judged a competition before an opportunity to practise – it would be unfair to throw them into the deep end without any training or guidance. The ability to listen critically to a piece of ringing is a useful skill whether you judge competitions or not, so we could run a course like that anyway. All of us could benefit from learning to listen more critically to ringing. I have set up a course for this, and we will run it if enough people are interested – see my other article.

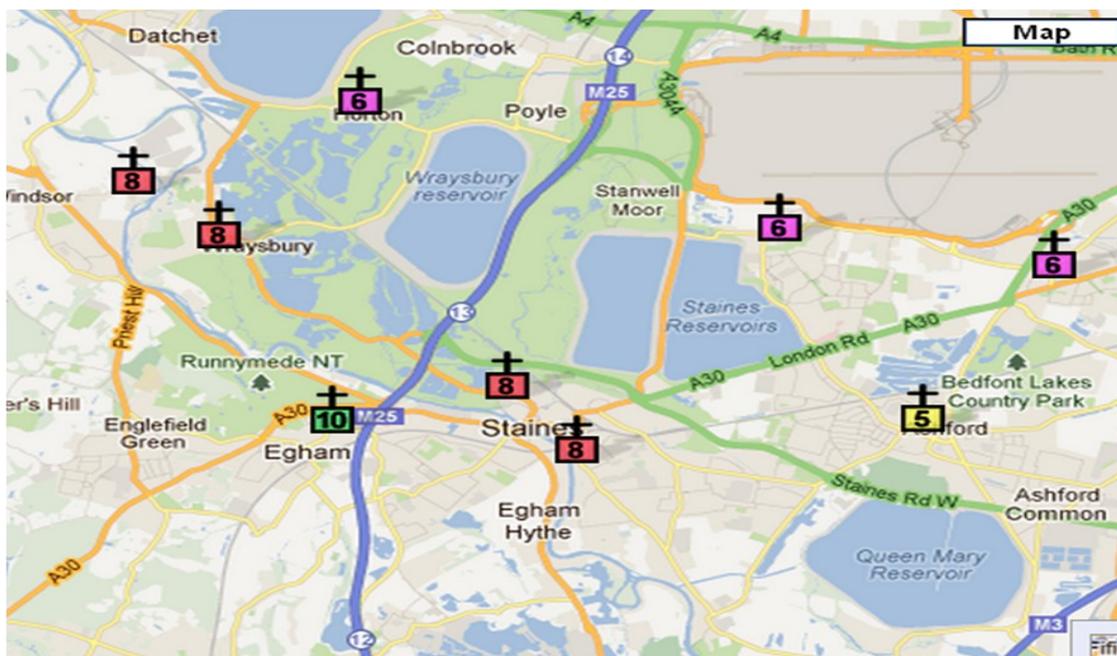
For completeness, in terms of how we could judge competitions, I should mention another option that you might not have thought of – letting a machine generate the scores. We can't do that yet, but it will become possible in the next few years, and some of you may remember when a machine at Finchampstead listened in parallel with the 6-bell competition judge – and placed the teams in the same order!

To discuss any of these ideas, please contact either me or the Ringing Master, John Manley. John is at: brm@sdb.odg.org.uk 01344 420167 and I am at: training@sdb.odg.org.uk or 0118 978 5520.

John Harrison

Forthcoming Events ...2012 Branch Outing - 5 May

This year's Sonning Deanery Branch Outing is currently in gestation. Having struck out to the North in 2011, West in 2008 and 2010 and South in 2009, my cunning plan is to travel to the eastern end of the county centred on Staines and Egham.



The Dove map shows a reasonable selection of 6's, 8's and a 10 to sample and I will be sending out requests for us to visit in the New Year. I anticipate that we will have the first tower around 10am, take in a lunch stop between 12:30 and 2pm and push on to late afternoon.

It would be great to have a good turnout for the outing which is an excellent chance to experience other towers, see some corners of the county that you may not otherwise have reason to go to, and enjoy a social occasion with your ringing compatriots. Hopefully being reasonably near to home, even those who might have other commitments elsewhere could perhaps travel over for a couple of towers at some point during the day.

More details will be issued nearer the time, but please make a note in your diaries and keep it free for the SDB Annual Branch Outing.

Graham Slade

Peals & Quarter Peals (tower and in hand)

2 October 2011

White Waltham

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Thomas J Andrew *
 - 2 Lesley A Graves
 - 3 Naomi G Andrew
 - 4 Derek R Smith
 - 5 Caroline S Andrew (C)
 - 6 Roger C Martin
- * First quarter at first attempt.
First together 1,3,5.

13 November 2011

St. Paul's, Wokingham

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Elizabeth J Davenport
- 2 Susan E Davenport
- 3 Geoffrey K Cook
- 4 Andrew Elliston
- 5 Christopher P Cole
- 6 Alan K Barsby
- 7 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 8 Peter J Davenport

Rung half muffled for Remembrance Sunday

Peal

10 December 2011 in 2 hrs. 53 mins (15)

St Paul's, Wokingham

5056 Gainsborough Surprise Major

Composed: H Law James

- 1 Jon P Tutcher
- 2 Catherine M A Lane
- 3 John A Harrison
- 4 Richard H Johnston
- 5 Alan K Barsby
- 6 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 7 David Sullivan
- 8 Christopher P Cole

Rung for the Feast of St. Nicholas.
Circled tower 1.

23 October 2011

Sonning

1260 Doubles (60 Stedman, 1200

Plain Bob)

- 1 Pam Elliston
 - 2 Joyce Vernon
 - 3 Rob Needham
 - 4 Alan K Barsby
 - 5 Andrew Elliston
 - 6 Keith Vernon
- All the ringers conducted different parts of the quarter.

5 November 2011

Easthampstead

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Edward W Martin
 - 2 Barbara E Wells
 - 3 Ann G Martin (C)
 - 4 E John W Manley
 - 5 Paul S Fox
 - 6 Claudia Sommer*
- Birthday compliment to ringer of 4.

Handbells

Easthampstead (3 Furzemoors)

4 August

1280 Plain Bob Major

- 1-2 Anthony Perry
- 3-4 Ann Martin
- 5-6 Graham N Scott
- 7-8 Stephen C Wells

For the wedding of Nicholas Wells to Emma Curtis on Saturday July 30th.

Saturday 24 September 2011

1250 Yorkshire S. Major

- 1-2 Ant Perry
- 3-4 Ann G. Martin
- 5-6 Grahame Scott
- 7-8 Eddie Martin (C)

With best wishes to Steve Wells for a speedy recovery

16 October 2011

Easthampstead

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Alan R Baldock (C)
- 2 Judith M Bowler
- 3 E John W Manley
- 4 Christine M Baldock
- 5 Matthew P S Rose
- 6 Barbara E Wells
- 7 Antony J Allen
- 8 Paul S Fox

Rung, by grandparents, godparents and friends, immediately following the Baptism of Creed and Madison, children of Andrew and Rachel, ringers at Easthampstead, and grandchildren of Alan and Christine. Steve Wells and Sue Reilly wish to be associated with this quarter peal.

12 November 2011

White Waltham

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Thomas J Andrew
- 2 Lesley A Graves
- 3 Jacqueline M Hazell
- 4 Andrew Elliston
- 5 Caroline S Andrew (C)
- 6 Derek G Brayne

For Quarter Peal Week; For the 90th Anniversary of The Royal British Legion. In remembrance of all those who died in the two World Wars. Also all other conflicts.

Two ringer members of Royal British Legion, Women's Section

Finchampstead (5 Garrett Road)

Friday 11 November 2011

1260 Plain Bob Royal

- 1-2 Elizabeth J Davenport (1st on 10)
- 3-4 Christopher P Cole
- 5-6 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 7-8 John Harrison
- 9-10 Neil G Curnow

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