

# Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



April 2018, Spring Issue

## Ringing Remembers—Teaching in Ypres

*'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'*

The number of bell ringers known to have died in the Great War now stands at 1600, and a new ring of bells has been installed at St Georges Memorial Church in Ypres in their memory.

Alan Regan MBE as well as maintaining the CCCBR Roll of Honour, was instrumental in raising the funds (mainly from current ringers) and managing the installation of the new ring. The church, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and completed in 1929, was always intended to house a ring of bells.



The bells, a delightful 6 cwt Taylor eight, arrived in Belgium on lorries from the Great War, and were dedicated in 2017. The intention has always been that a local band would be taught to ring.

I was one of the first group of ART teachers to go to Ypres in February to start the teaching. There were 15 students ranging in age from 20 to 70, some of whom spoke some English and most of whom spoke none, all full of enthusiasm for their new bells and learning how to ring English Style. The students were divided into three groups, each group getting one two hour session a day. The teachers got three two hour sessions a day!

Teaching was intensive and at times challenging. The 11' by 11' ringing chamber, with students, teachers, sometimes interpreters, and most days a delegation from the press or TV, could seem chaotic (see centre photo over-leaf). For the first three days we had no muffles, so the bells themselves added to the noise. The students all made amazing progress with most starting to put both strokes together in their second lesson. Graham Nabb, ART chairman, is working with Jean-Pierre, founder of the Ypres Ringers Guild, during the very first teaching session.

Once they started to 'get it' the students were keen to practice as much as they could. For the teachers it was extremely tiring but hugely rewarding. The lack of common language did make progress rather slower in some cases, but with demonstration and the use of gestures a great deal was achieved.

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### Calendar

#### Saturday 21st April

##### Finchampstead (6)

4pm—6 pm Branch 6-bell Striking Comp

**Monday 23rd April**—St George's Day  
ringing (optional/ various)

#### Saturday 28th April

Branch Mini-Outing and lunch

#### Saturday 21st May

Wokingham St Paul (8) - TBC  
Branch Practice

#### Saturday 16th June

Sandhurst (6)  
7pm—8.30pm Branch Practice

#### Saturday & Sunday 23rd/24th June

Charmborough Mini-Ring at Hurst  
show—**help required**

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices  
(2-4pm at Binfield) on 1st May, 5th June  
& 3rd July (provisionally).

Surprise Major practices (Wednesday  
8pm –9.30pm) at Wokingham All Saints  
on 11th April, 9th May & 15th June  
(provisionally).

Young Ringers Practice (2nd Sunday of  
the month, 2.30 –4pm) 8th Apr, 13th May  
and 10th June, various towers.



After the evening session a visit to the pub was in order, with the students enthusiastically discussing their progress.

Sunday was a day off from the intense teaching schedule. We rang before the morning service, with a quarter of plain bob triples afterwards. Then Alan took 5 of the teachers to some of the cemeteries and memorials. At Railway Dugout (Transport Farm) we found the grave of a Cromer ringer, who had only just been added to the list of ringers known to have died in action. At Tyne Cot we rang the Ypres handbells by the memorial of a ringer from Penn, plain hunt on 8 stretched my handbell ringing to the limit! Whilst at Tyne Cot, we met some visiting ringers from Somerset who recognised Alan, and joined us later to ring for the evening service so we had enough to ring all eight.

After the service we went to the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate. This is a moving and thought provoking experience. While we were still there, David Willis (ex Sonning) sent a message with the name of another ringer, killed in action, that he had just found in an old newspaper. Finding his name on the Menin Gate was a sobering reminder of exactly why we were there.

In the evening teachers and learners gathered for a social get together and chat, before the final two days of intensive teaching and learning. The enthusiasm and progress of the budding Belgian ringers was an absolute joy, and made all the hard work incredibly worthwhile.

Another visit from the TV, this time a children's programme, took up quite a bit of time on the last day, with Frederik the secretary of the Ypres Bell Ringers Guild, being interviewed by a 9 year old! Frederik is pictured above right with Monique, who in her fourth lesson was ringing both strokes together unaided with a nice style; quite an achievement as a smattering of school girls French was our only linguistic commonality!

In the final session, Liz Millward the tower captain( a returner), seen here (left image) with some of the teachers, and the Rev Gillian Trinder, St George's Church chaplain, rang rounds on eight, a truly remarkable achievement after just 5 days! Both are English which made instruction much easier, but I am sure by the time I return to Ypres all the students will be ringing rounds. I am really looking forward to meeting all my new friends again, and ringing with them.

***Vinni Sullivan (Wargrave)***

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## Chairman's message

Last time I said we would be running a survey to get a better idea of your training needs ahead of (we hoped) electing someone to take over as training officer. No one came forward at the AGM so we still have no training officer, but we still hope to arrange some training over the coming year.

We ran the survey, and 37 of you responded. That's a disappointing 22% of our 160+ membership. There was a fair spread of interest across the courses listed with the most popular immediate requests being Method learning, Bob calling and Raising & lowering in peal.

We will try to get some courses organised, and contact those who expressed interest. Meanwhile, if you haven't already done so you can still complete the survey, and we will include you in any courses planned. Just go to: [odg.org.uk/sdb/training/](http://odg.org.uk/sdb/training/) and take the survey.

We will shortly be planning our two day presence at the Hurst Show on Saturday/Sunday 23rd -24th June when we will again be demonstrating ringing to the public with the Charmborough Ring. We will be asking for volunteers, both to ring and talk to people about ringing, so please put the date in your diary. Pictures from last time are at, see: [odg.org.uk/sdb/events/2016charmborough.html](http://odg.org.uk/sdb/events/2016charmborough.html)).

We hope to make this year even more successful, and I look forward to your support. In 2016 over two dozen volunteers helped to man the bells and explain ringing to the public. Put the dates in your diary.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Branch events over the coming months.

***John Harrison***

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## Sonning clappers refurbishment

This project started towards the end of 2016 when we invited Whites of Appleton and Taylor's of Loughborough to inspect our bells and quote for the work required. In early 2017 they submitted their quotes for refurbishing and replacing the pivots of all 8 clappers.

Taylor's was a bit more expensive but the survey was more thorough, and they suggested other work was needed such as installing grease nipples in two of the clappers which had none, and drilling out the remains of the old, iron crown staples from the head of two of the bells. Taylor's also suggested that wooden-shafted clappers would help us to raise the seven and tenor bells 'right'.



We decided to take up the Taylor's quote, partly because they offered a big discount if we ringers were prepared to help with the removal and reinstallation of the clappers. As it turned out, the project took so long to happen that we had decided in the interim that we had got too old to do that sort of work!

The project saw no progress for a large part of 2017, because the wooden-shafted clappers required Archdeacon's approval, which was not forthcoming (this was down to lack of action by St Andrew's and not a tardy Archdeacon.) It is ironic that the only work that required Archdeacon's approval may never be done – as at the reinstallation of the refurbished clappers, Taylor's raised doubts as to whether a wooden-shafted clapper on the tenor would help with raising it 'right'.

Before the work was done we had obtained confirmation of financial support from local groups: the Sonning Fire Brigade Trust (£2000), the Sonning Scarecrow Fund (up to £2000), the ODG Bell Fund (£1000) and our Branch (£1000). This covers the total cost of the project of £5328 ex VAT (the VAT can be reclaimed by the PCC).

So Sonning's bells are fully operational again and we can plan the next inspection for the ODG Tower Maintenance Award scheme.

*Rob Needham (Sonning)*

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## Remembering Sue Thomas (Sonning) 7/8/44—5/3/18



### Hurst

Friday, 23 March 2018

### 1288 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
- 2 Lavinia Sullivan
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 6 Alison Clayton
- 7 David Sullivan (C)
- 8 Rob Needham

Remembering Sue Thomas, ringer at Sonning, formerly of Hurst, on the day of her funeral



## Learning the Ropes Level 2 Achievements from Wargrave:

Anne-Marie Adams →

← Sally Kunzig





## Quarter Peals

### St Michael & All Angels, Sandhurst 27 December

#### 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Fiona Preece  
2 Lawrence Robins  
3 Margaret Robins  
4 Janet Menhinick (C)  
5 Derek Palmer  
6 Michael Sherren  
For Christmas. 2 - 1st Quarter inside

### Hurst

#### 5 January

#### 1288 Grandsire Triples

1 Pam Elliston  
2 Barbara E Wells  
3 Freddie Gingell  
4 Jacqueline Hazell  
5 Stephen C Wells  
6 Lavinia Sullivan  
7 David Sullivan (C)  
8 Sue Portsmouth

In memoriam Graham Andrew Gordon, aged 90, father of Anthony W Gordon, ringer at Wargrave.

### Twyford

#### 18 January

#### 1280 Kent Treble Bob Major

1 Stephen C Wells  
2 Jacqueline Hazell  
3 Barbara E Wells  
4 Sue Portsmouth  
5 Vikki Bulbeck  
6 Lavinia Sullivan  
7 Anthony W Gordon  
8 David Sullivan (C)

Frist Kent TB Major - 2, 4, 5.

### All Saints, Wokingham

#### 7 February

#### 1250 Cambridge Surprise Major

1 Mary Spence  
2 Jane A Mellor  
3 Simon J Taylor  
4 Stephen R Smith  
5 Jonathan P Goodchild  
6 Christopher P Cole  
7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)  
8 John A Harrison  
First quarter 3.

### Waltham St Lawrence

#### 12 January

#### 1260 St Clements College Bob Minor

1 Pam Elliston  
2 Sue Portsmouth  
3 Lavinia Sullivan  
4 Jacqueline Hazell  
5 Anthony W Gordon  
6 David Sullivan (C)

1st St Clements - 2, 4.  
50th quarter - 2.

### Finchampstead

#### 26 January

#### 1260 St Clements Minor

1 Sue Portsmouth  
2 Vikki Bulbeck  
3 Jacqueline Hazell  
4 Rob Needham  
5 Lavinia Sullivan  
6 David Sullivan (C)

### Waltham St Lawrence

#### Friday, 9 February 2018

#### 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

1 Katherine Croshaw  
2 Martha Hazell  
3 Pam Elliston  
4 Sue Portsmouth  
5 David Sullivan (C)  
6 Lavinia Sullivan

First attempt - 1.

### All Saints, Wokingham

#### 11 February

#### 1280 Spliced Surprise Major

(Rutland, Lincolnshire, Cambridge, Pudsey, Yorkshire, Superlative)

1 Mary Spence  
2 Barbara E Wells  
3 Stephen R Smith  
4 Stephen C Wells  
5 Alan K Barsby  
6 Nigel A L Mellor (C)  
7 John A Harrison  
8 Jon P Tutchter  
For evening service

### Twyford

#### 12 January

#### 1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

1 Sue Portsmouth  
2 Steve Wells  
3 Barbara Wells  
4 Jacqueline Hazell  
5 Richard Bennett  
6 Lavinia Sullivan  
7 Graham Slade  
8 Simon Farrar (C)  
First treble bob major: 1

### Twyford

#### 26 January

#### 1280 Double Norwich Court Bob Major

1 Martha Hazell  
2 Jacqueline Hazell  
3 Nigel Mellor  
4 Pam Elliston  
5 Lavinia Sullivan  
6 Graham Slade  
7 David Sullivan  
8 Simon Farrar (C)

First touch in method: 2.

First "proper" quarter in method: 4.

First quarter in method: 6.

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