

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



October 2023, Autumn issue

Chairman's message



In my summer message, while looking forward to ringing without the enforced ups and downs from recent years' events, I wondered what we could learn from our experience of the most recent 'up' – *'Ring For The King'*.

While our minds might have been fresh then with thoughts about how the campaign had been run, it was too soon to judge how effective the recruitment aspect had been, i.e. whether those who came forward in response to all the publicity were interested in ringing as a long term activity, and how many of them would 'stick'.

It's now a year since the launch of RFTK, nine months since peak media frenzy and nearly six months since the event itself, so we should know how big an impact it had (or didn't have) on the recruitment at our own towers. Recruitment affects all of us, not just tower captains and teachers who are directly involved, but the whole band. There's a short term cost as time and resources are directed towards the recruits, and a long term gain when they develop to the point they can make the band stronger. Please let us know your thoughts, whatever your perspective. Contact the Secretary or me, or any of the officers.

In a few weeks time (on 18 November) we will have our annual business meeting, which might sound boring but is the main opportunity for the officers to sit down with representatives from all bands within the Branch to discuss common concerns and what the Branch can do collectively to help. In a small gathering we can discuss things in more depth than at the larger, more formal annual meeting in February. Please find out who will be representing you at the meeting, and let them know what you think the Branch should be doing to improve things – what your needs are and what concerns you. Among the topics identified so far are:

Branch practices – What type of event are needed and which will be supported? For example elementary practices are currently better supported than advanced practices.

Young ringers – How can we engage them more effectively? Some are currently very engaged but others are not, especially those aged 16 – 23.

Recruitment – It's a continual need. How could it be more effective and how can we prepare the ground?

I'm pleased to see keen young ringers making progress, both in their regular ringing and with a number of firsts. I'm particularly pleased that two of them are moving towards teaching and have attended an ART course. There's a lot to be said for starting to teach while you can still remember what it was like to learn. I taught many other youngsters (and one older person) when I was in my teens, but the freedoms we had then would be hard to replicate today so we need some positive encouragement. While on the subject of age, I've seen the view expressed that ringing has become institutionally ageist, only interested in young ringers and ignoring the learning needs of older learners. I don't think that's true – I think the focus on recruiting young ringers is necessary to counter the gross imbalance in the age profile of ringers and to overcome the obstacles that prevent children taking it up. And I would treat a learner as an individual, trying to meet his or her needs, regardless of any age. I would welcome your views – for or against – especially if you think we could do things better. So please get in touch.

John Harrison, chairman@sdb.odg.org.uk

SDB Elementary Ringing Outing

19th August 2023 was the second elementary outing for the Sonning Deanery branch, enabling many people to extend and consolidate their ringing skills and just have a great day. Congratulations to all who have progressed over the last year moving from early elementary to ringing changes.



It was a beautiful Saturday on the 19th August that was to be my first tower outing. Setting off with a detailed itinerary for the day that was to include St Andrews at Clewer, St James Less at



Dorney, All Saints at Maidenhead and St Mary's at White Waltham. Oh and of course that lesser known gathering spot known as the Pineapple Inn at Dorney. As a first "tower grab" for me the most striking was the difference between the bell tower setups and the nuances of the bells that you must get to grips with. Learning at St Nicholas Hurst, where your feet are on terra firma, is quite different to Dorney where it almost seems like your head is in the ringing chamber. I still find the shaking of a tower when the bells are in full swing to be disconcerting.



A full days outing gave the opportunity to progress my ringing knowledge and it is difficult to use the excuse of, "*I can't remember that method*" when it was rung an hour or so earlier at the previous tower. It was great to have so many familiar faces on the day, having met on several other Branch elementary practices, but the opportunity to have a social lunch helps with the group dynamics and bonding. I have to observe that the ringing room was like a can of sardines at times (squashed together, not the smell!!) and it is a great testimony to Jane and our tutors that there were so many ringers wanting to be part on the day.

Thank you Jane for organising and to all those who "whisper in your ear" to help with the practice. Where next?

Peter Needham

Bellringing outings can be just as much fun for non ringers as you never know what you'll find along the way. Dorney village is steeped in history and very picturesque. The Norman 12th Century font was pointed out to us on the way to the bell tower and a rather interesting monument to the Garrard Family can be seen in the church. Sir William Garrard Kt, High Sherriff of Bucks 1598 and his family are buried there. The children who carry skulls died during his lifetime. Thank you to all who came and made an enjoyable day.



Jane Mellor

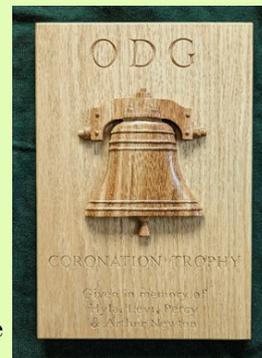
New ODG Trophy

At the General Committee meeting last November Robert Newton, a past ODG Master, suggested that a Raising and Lowering striking competition might be instituted. Robert says:

“... at many towers the raising and lowering are the first and last things that anyone listening outside will hear, setting the tone for what comes between. Interest in ‘Devon style’ call-changes has led to a national competition, which of course includes raising and lowering in peal...”

I am grateful to the Guild for the opportunity to present a trophy in memory of my father, grandfather and two uncles; all were Devonians who rang.... It is appropriate that it's made of wood since all of them worked with wood for a living at some time....

The rules have been deliberately left ‘informal’ to allow any group of members who ring together to take part. They could represent a tower or branch, or could be from different branches....”



By searching on *BellBoard* I have found performances of the frequent ringers from the start of August 2023 until now, listed in alphabetical order of member's surname. My apologies to any members whose performances I have missed.

Vikki Bulbeck, Shottesbrooke & Clewer: 20 Quarter Peals (QP) 1 Peal (P)

Chris Cole, St Paul's Wokingham: 1QP 2P (1 in hand)

Lesley Cross: 9QP 1P

Ken Davenport, St Paul's: 7QP (6 in hand) 2P in hand

John Harrison, All Saints Wokingham: 6QP (2 in hand) 1P

Jacqueline Hazell, Shottesbrooke: 18QP

Martha Hazell, Shottesbrooke: 15QP

David G Maynard, All Saints Wokingham: 1QP 14P (7 in hand)

Nigel Mellor, All Saints Wokingham: 6QP (3 in hand) 8P

Janet Menhinick, 7QP (5 in hand) 3P

Sue Portsmouth, Sonning 1QP + 39QP on Ringing Room (RR)

Charley Smith, Shottesbrooke: 10QP

Simon D Smith, Shottesbrooke: 16QP

Stephen R Smith, All Saints Wokingham: 3QP 1P

Vinni Sullivan, Wargrave 4QP (1 RR)

Below is a small selection of peals or quarters achieved in the Branch between July and October.

The selection is based on young ringers being involved, a ‘first’ for one or more of the ringers, or just that they are interesting or challenging. As you can see below, Shottesbrooke has been a busy tower during the period. *Ed.*

St John the Baptist, Shottesbrooke

Sunday, 16 July 2023 in 42m

1260 Winchendon Place Doubles

- 1 Lesley S Cross
 - 2 Martha C Hazell
 - 3 Jacqueline M Hazell
 - 4 Simon D Smith (C)
 - 5 Vikki E M Bulbeck
 - 6 Charley Smith
- 6: 50th quarter.
For Sunday service, 6th after

St John the Baptist,

Shottesbrooke

Sunday, 13 August 2023 in 43m

1260 Doubles (4m): 420 x

- Maltby Bob; 360 x Chevasse Place;
240 x Callender Bob;
240 x Montgomeryshire Place
- 1 Martha C Hazell
 - 2 Edward C Westlake (C)
 - 3 Jacqueline M Hazell
 - 4 Simon D Smith
 - 5 Vikki E M Bulbeck

St John the Baptist, Shottesbrooke

Wednesday, 30 August 2023 in 42m

1260 Doubles (11m): 120s of

- Reverse Canterbury, St Nicholas, Winchendon, St Remigius, Huntley, Eynesbury, St Osmund, St Martin, St Simon, Plain Bob, rung in that order; then 60 of Grandsire. The 120s called by ringers of 2, 3, 4, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5 in that order; 60 called by ringer of 5.
- 1 Martha C Hazell
 - 2 Jacqueline M Hazell (C)
 - 3 James White (C)
 - 4 Vikki E M Bulbeck (C)
 - 5 Simon D Smith (C)
 - 6 Lesley S Cross

St Paul, Wokingham, Berkshire
 Saturday, 16 September 2023 in 3h
 2
5120 Spliced Surprise Major (8m):
 896 Rutland; 704 each
 Lincolnshire, Yorkshire; 640
 Cambridge; 576 each London,
 Pudsey and Superlative; 448
 Bristol; with 88 changes of method
 and all the work of each method for
 every bell.

- 1 Christopher P Cole
- 2 Helen M Maynard
- 3 Janet E John
- 4 Tom Blomley
- 5 Elizabeth A Evans
- 6 Graham A C John
- 7 David G Maynard (C)
- 8 Daniel J Page

First peal of 8-spliced: 4
 Rung to celebrate Graham and
 Janet's Sapphire Wedding

St John the Baptist, Shottesbrooke
 Thursday, 28 September 2023,
 45m

1260 Plain Bob Minor

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

A Compliment to Derek for his
 70th Birthday on 6th October;
 rung with his son and
 granddaughter.

1: 1st Treble to Minor
 4: 41 years since first ever inside
 QP (19.9.1982, in this tower, also
 Plain Bob Minor).

St Mary, Twyford, Berkshire
 Saturday, 16 September 2023 in
 51m

1620 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Nigel Mellor
 - 2 Becki Shuttleworth
 - 3 Matthew Steele
 - 4 John A Harrison
 - 5 James Moynihan
 - 6 Simon Farrar (C)
- A farewell to Matt Steele, heading
 to university in Bath.
 A get well soon compliment to
 local ringer Karen Ricketts who
 broke her ankle Morris Dancing.

All Saints, Wokingham, Berkshire
 Sunday, 1 October 2023 in 45m

1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Kristin L Fitch
- 2 Becki Shuttleworth
- 3 Jane A Mellor
- 4 Tom Blomley
- 5 John A Harrison
- 6 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 7 James H Moynihan
- 8 David G Maynard

Rung at Harvest Festival.
 First of Surprise inside: 2.

All Saints, Binfield, Berkshire
 Saturday, 23 September 2023 in
 43m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Jan M Glen
 - 2 Nicola M Lee
 - 3 Jennifer S Moynihan
 - 4 Stephen C Wells
 - 5 James H Moynihan (C)
 - 6 Charlotte N Lee
- First as Conductor
 First Covering

Thanks to Jane Mellor for
 organising the quarter.

St Paul, Wokingham, Berkshire
 Sunday, 15 October 2023 in 46m

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Geoffrey K Cook
 - 2 Geoffrey M Harvey
 - 3 Derek Palmer
 - 4 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
 - 5 Alan K Barsby
 - 6 Steven J Field
 - 7 Christopher P Cole
 - 8 Peter J Davenport
- An 80th birthday compliment to
 Derek Palmer

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