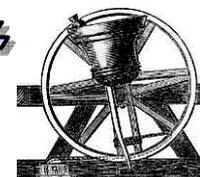




Branching Out

The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter



Monday 17th April 2017

Please keep your articles coming in for our newsletter. Let us know about anything that's happening in your tower.

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk. The next edition will be on 15th May (Deadline for copy, 13th)

A Message from Andrew Freer, our Ringing Master

There's not much to report this month as we haven't had a Branch Practice. However, I had a welcome surprise last Saturday, while out for a walk with my parents, when we chanced across the Grandsire group of the **Radley Course** ringing up at **Horspath**. I was invited in for a touch before we went on our way. I do recommend anyone signing up for a course like this because you get a whole day of practice with strong bands who are determined to help you. Did anyone reading this go on the Radley course? I'm sure Paul would be happy to print any tips you picked up, if so.

Simulators – How do you use yours?

More and more towers have been getting simulators recently, so it seems like a good idea to share some ideas on how to take full advantage of them. We can collect them here, and then Andy Dunn, who is the Webmaster for the Oxford City Branch, has suggested putting the collected ideas on to the website. To start us off, here are some ways I use simulators:

Individual handling practice

Learners who start with tied bells can be surprised by the gap between pulling a stroke and it sounding. The simplest use of the simulator that I know is just to have the bell sound while practising handling.

Listening to your striking

Set Abel to autostart in rounds and have an instructor start ringing. Ask the learners to say which bell the instructor is ringing. By clicking on a rope you can change which simulated bell corresponds to the tied bell and ask again. Have the instructor simulate some consistent striking faults and ask the learners to diagnose the faults.

Your ideas...

How about you? Please send in your tips for using Simulators. **Andrew Freer:** andrew.freer@gmail.com

Tony Crabtree's Highly Successful Rope Splicing Course

Tony Crabtree's rope splicing course took place on the afternoon of Saturday 25th March. We covered some basic splicing and Tony explained to us the main points of wear on a rope, and what remedial action could be taken in towers to avoid ropes wearing out too quickly. This included bringing along a wheel for us to look at.

Sadly, we ran out of time, and are currently trying to find a time when we can reconvene for part two. Let me know if you are interested in attending.

Lindsay Powell – Branch Secretary



The Half Yearly Meeting and Striking Competition details – Saturday 13th May at St Thomas (10)

1.00pm - 2.30pm striking competition. 2.30pm - 3.15pm Half Yearly Meeting
4.00pm – 5.00pm general ringing. 3.15 – 4.00pm tea

If your tower wants to enter a band for the Striking Competition, please can you let me know. So far we have four teams signed up, plus several people who would like to be in 'scratch bands'. Please don't be put off by the idea of a competition! The main aim of the day is for all members of the Branch to ring together and have fun. Once again, we hope to have Tony Crabtree's Stallpit ring this year, as it proved such a hit at last year's Half Yearly Meeting at Old Marston. This will however be weather dependent - although Tony is currently working on a mobile 'roof' to put over it, if the weather is a bit adverse!

After the meeting we will all have the chance to have a general ringing practice on the lovely 10 bells of St Thomas'.

I will have certificates for our new members who were elected at the last Annual General Meeting to hand out. Please can you make sure someone from your tower is there to collect them. It's always nice if the new member is there to collect their certificate in person. Also, if you have any new members you wish to elect at the Half Yearly Meeting, please let me have their names in good time, and make sure there are two people present who know them to propose and second their nomination.

However, I am still looking for more volunteer 'cake bakers' please, and would like to thank those who have already offered to make some! **Lindsay Powell – Branch Secretary**



Branch Practices coming up in the next few months

These practices are for all Branch members who ring from call changes upwards.

If there is something you would like to practise, you can request it on the day, or email our Ringing Master, Andrew Freer in advance.

Please be assured you will all get a warm welcome. We hope to see lots of you at some of the dates below.

Saturday 13 th May	St Thomas, Oxford (10)	Including the Half-Yearly Meeting and the Striking Competition.	1.00pm-5.00pm
Saturday 10 th June	Headington (8)		5.00pm-6.30pm
Saturday 8 th July	Cowley (6)		5.00pm-6.30pm
Saturday 12 th August	Yarnton (6)		5.00pm-6.30pm
Saturday 9 th September	St Mary Magdalen, Oxford (10)		5.00pm-6.30pm (t.b.c.)
Saturday 14 th October	Wheatley (6)		5.00pm-6.30pm (t.b.c.)
Saturday 18 th November	A.G.M. at Wolvercote (6)		Afternoon
Saturday 9 th December	Horspath (6)		5.00pm-6.30pm

Abingdon Bell Ringers win a National Award

Abingdon Society of Bell Ringers has won the prestigious Sarah Beacham Youth Group Award, from the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART).



They were presented with the £400 prize at the ART conference in Basingstoke on Saturday 11th March.

The Abingdon Society of Bell Ringers is the group which ring the tower bells of St Helen and St Nicolas churches every week. Over the last six years the ringers have been encouraging young people to join them, holding special weekly practices and courses during some of the school holidays. They also organise social activities and outings for all the young ringers in the area.

As a result there is now a thriving group of young ringers in and around Abingdon. Of the young ringers in last year's National Youth Contest representing the Oxford Diocesan Guild, half were from Abingdon – and they came joint second. Other young ringers from Abingdon have gone on to leading roles elsewhere. David Thomas (19) who recently started at Liverpool



University, has become not only an eminent ringer at Liverpool Cathedral, but is Master of the Liverpool Universities Society of Change Ringers. Similarly, a few years ago Catriona Shearer became Master of Cambridge University Guild of Change Ringers and now co-ordinates young ringer events in the Ely Diocese. As well as providing a graded scheme for learning to ring, the Association of Ringing Teachers has developed resources for training and accrediting teachers of ringing. Abingdon now has two qualified and several partly qualified ringing teachers.

The Abingdon ringers plan to put the prize towards a 'dumb bell'. This will allow ringers to practise ringing on their own with a computer and hone their timing skills – useful as the weekly Friday practices are so well attended. **Susan Read**

Update on the Cuddesdon Bells

And finally.... after 447 years....!

The six bells at **All Saints, Cuddesdon**, are due to be rehung in a repaired bell frame later this year, and £68,000 has been raised thus far to cover the cost of this exciting plan, so that they will ring out again after many years of silence – a remarkable achievement....



But what is also even more remarkable is the fact that the treble bell, (that is to say, the lightest at 5cwt.) was due to be recast as a part of the project... but nobody could foresee when this was envisaged that it was destined to be among the very, very last of the bells cast at the world famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry.... on Wednesday 22nd March, 2017.... the last day casting took place!

Founded in 1570, Whitechapel is the oldest manufacturing company in the country, and has

been casting bells there for 447 years ! Sadly, the Foundry premises have now been sold, and as yet we do not know where subsequent bells will be cast – so All Saints, Cuddesdon's new treble bell will be among the very last, and proud descendant of such famous bells as.... Big Ben in London and the Liberty Bell in New York ! **Brian Lowe**



The Michaelmas Course on Saturday 30th September

This course is run annually by the Guild, and covers methods which are a little more advanced than those covered by the Radley and Steeple Aston courses.

Please note for the first time this year, there is a group covering conducting as well.

There is a poster at the end of this newsletter with details of how to apply. Lindsay Powell

Charlotte's First Minor Quarter Peal

Congratulations to Charlotte Furneaux (far left) of Cowley for ringing the treble to her first quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor at Marston on Sunday 2nd April. Charlotte is working really hard at progressing her ringing, and it was really rewarding to be involved in helping her to reach this milestone.

Lindsay Powell

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- Treble. Charlotte Furneaux
- 2. Douglas Wilkes
- 3. Lindsay Powell
- 4. Steve Davies
- 5. Maarit Kivilo
- Tenor. Hugh Deam (c)



A Trip to the Vale of the White Horse

The Vale of the White Horse was at its picturesque best for our outing to three of its eight-bell towers, **Childrey, Longcot and Faringdon**.



A prodigious turnout meant that we were able to ring Triples and Major exclusively throughout the day and great credit is due to Donna Bennett for not only booking the towers and the pub, but for also ensuring the splendid level of attendance.

It was seventeen years since we last had an outing to these towers, just prior to **Childrey** bells being augmented to an eight. Lunch was taken at The King and Queen in **Longcot** which is a pub with decided ambience even if its narrative is primarily more recent rather than historic.



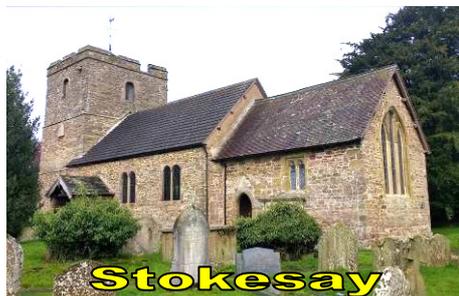
Whilst enjoying the excellent food in this well frequented pub it was hard to believe that this is a pub which was one of the early casualties in the wave of pub closures during the past decade or so. Such was the promptness of service there was time in hand for a frame of bar billiards to be played between Paul and Neil (and an audience to gather) before heading off to **Faringdon** for some Single Oxford Triples among other methods.

Hugh Deam

Outing to Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys – Saturday 1st April



In all honesty it is not something that I have ever kept record of, but I would say that it is a safe bet to conclude that I have never been on an outing where all the locations possess, or once possessed, castles. **Stokesay** and **Ludlow** still notably boast castles of stunning diversity yet equal interest, both historically and aesthetically. Ludlow



is the epitome of a market town, with a street market held most days of the week, and 500 listed buildings within its boundaries. The spiral staircase up to the ringing chamber contains some 150 steps, but the ten bells here are worth the exertion. What most of the other locations during the day lacked in enduring castles they

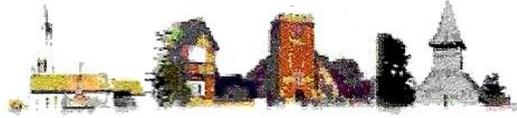
made up for with excellent bells. Richards Castle church is something of a grandiose Victorian anachronism with one 41cwt bell (the largest in the Diocese) that has a rope thicker than the norm and two sallies to ring it by. It was wonderful to travel with Anne and Rupert from Eynsham tower who have come on several City Branch outings in recent years. Andrew Goldthorpe from Witney took a good video of the bells ringing at Ludlow. Our thanks are due to John Hearn for organizing such an ambitious itinerary. **Hugh Deam**

Dates for your Diary

Full details from Ringing Master, Andrew Freer: andrew.freer@gmail.com or tour organizer, Hugh Deam: deamhugh@gmail.com

Wednesday 19 th April	There is no ringing practice this week at Headington, because the ringers are holding their AGM.	
Thursday 20 th April	Advanced Practice at St Giles (8) Stedman Triples to Surprise Major	7.30pm-9.00pm
Saturday 22 nd April	Trip to Nottingham to ring at local towers with former Headington ringers, Matt Beardsall and Ed Nicholson. Attenborough (8) 11cwt (Matt's home tower) - 10.00am-10.45am; St Peter's, Nottingham (12) 22cwt - 11.30am-12.30pm; Lunch in Nottingham; All Saints, Nottingham – University Tower (10) 16cwt - 2.00pm-3.00pm; Beeston (10) 17cwt -3.45pm-4.45pm.	
Sunday 23 rd April	A Concert by the St Denys Handbell Ringers at Challow Church (near Wantage). Tickets £5. Children free. For more details, contact Lucy Laird: lucy@laird71.fsnet.co.uk	Starting at 3.00pm
Monday 24 th April	Trip to Berkshire. Mortimer (6) 7cwt – 10.00am; Brunch at Beech Hill Church – 12.15pm; Heckfield (5) – 15cwt; Lunch at The New Inn, Heckfield; Eversley (6) 5cwt – 2.30pm. Names for lunch to Hugh: deamhugh@gmail.com	
Sunday 30 th April	Advanced Simulator Practice at Headington (8) Stedman Triples to Surprise Major	3.30pm-5.00pm

For more details about everything else, please go to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk
Any articles or photographs for inclusion in 'Branching Out' please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk



Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

Michaelmas Training Day

Saturday, September 30th 2017

10.00 – 18.00

Cost £15

The aim of the day is to provide the opportunity for students to learn more advanced methods than those offered on the Radley and Steeple Aston courses. This year we are also offering a conducting option.

The day will start with tutorials in the first tower followed by practical ringing in other nearby towers.

Groups will be formed to cover the following:

- Stedman Triples
- Basic Surprise Minor and Major (to include Cambridge and up to Yorkshire and Lincolnshire)
- Advanced Surprise Major (to include up to London, Bristol and Spliced)
- **New for 2017**
- Conducting (from Plain Bob Minor to Surprise Major)

Applicants for the conducting course should be able to call 120 of Plain Bob Doubles and must be able to ring reliably any method that they wish to conduct.

Further details and application forms can be obtained by sending an SAE to Ann Osborne. 10 St. Michaels Road. Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4RP or E-mail annosborne.1@btinternet.com by 15th August 2017