



Branching Out

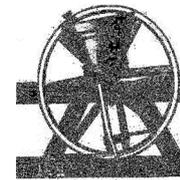
The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter

Monday 26th March 2018

Please keep your articles coming in for 'Branching Out'.

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk.

The next edition will be out on Monday 23rd April. (Deadline for copy, 21st April.)



Bernard Masterman



As many of you will have heard, Bernard Masterman was seriously injured on Saturday 10th March, when he seems to have walked into the path of a vehicle which was reversing, in the grounds of Field House where he lives. He was air-lifted from the Botley Road to the John Radcliffe Hospital, and put on life support. He appeared to have suffered severe brain damage, and remained almost completely unconscious for about a week. Bernard's life support system was disconnected on Tuesday 20th March (ten days after his accident), and his condition was then expected to decline, but only did so to a limited extent. He has given some signs of responses to speech and to touch - but, more recently, and contrary to expectation, stronger signs of actual understanding: on Wednesday, after several promptings, he managed, very slowly, to say "Hullo, Pam" to his sister, and he has spoken in a similar way several more times since then. What this indicates about the extent to which he might eventually recover, it is probably much too early to say. He has now been moved from the intensive care ward to a single room, and it is thought that he will be more comfortable in quieter surroundings.

Bernard and his twin brother Roger (also blind) were taught to ring by Dermot Roaf and Phil Walker at St Giles' in the early 1970's, and Bernard has continued to be listed as a St Giles' ringer ever since then, although from 2012 onwards he has done most of his ringing at Marston and at North Hinksey, because lifts to those towers from Botley were more easily available. He has rung 13 peals, mostly at St Giles, including peals of Pudsey and Bristol, and one of Plain Bob Major as conductor; and quarter peals in most of the standard Surprise Major methods (and I believe also at least one of Grandsire Cinques at Oxford Cathedral), and several on handbells, and he also conducted quite a few, mostly of Grandsire Triples. Just from 2002 onwards when the Bellboard database began, 150 quarter peals are recorded which Bernard rang in, mostly at Marston, including 5 this year. He was also the major contributor to the costs of retuning and rehangings the St Giles' bells in 2011.

Bernard spent a lot of time going out ringing with the late Bob Benstead, and many local ringers will have met them when they turned up at practice nights and meetings all over the local area. In the 1980's when I first knew Bernard, I used to see him walking with his white stick in many different parts of Oxford, and from discussions with him, I concluded that it was the same capacity for visualising and remembering two-dimensional maps and patterns which enabled him both to get about on his own and also to learn and remember ringing methods, which his mother used to mark out for him on plastic sheets so that he could 'read' them in the same way that he read Braille. **John Pusey**

Ringling Master's Report

This month's Branch Practice was at St Aldates (6) on Saturday 17th March. We had plenty of new ringers there and it was good to see the progress you've all been making!

Last month I mentioned handbell ringing being good for seeing where you pass the treble, and I want to discuss that a bit more.

Have you got the hang of ringing plain courses but when ringing touches you lose track of what you're supposed to do next? It's time to start watching for the treble. Because the treble follows a regular pattern hunting (or treble bobbing) past all of the other bells, you can tell where you are in the method by when you pass the treble.

Let's take Plain Bob Doubles as an example. After you lead, count how many bells you pass before you reach the treble. If you pass all 3 other working bells before you meet the treble, then you must be about to dodge 3-4 down. If you pass 2 other bells before the treble it must be long fifths. If you pass one other bell then it's 3-4 up. If you pass the treble immediately then you must be making

seconds. You can count what place you're in when you follow the treble if that's easier (5th, 4th, 3rd or 2nd, respectively). Notice that you pass the treble one place sooner every time. That happens in Grandsire too. Learning methods like this means you can get back on track if you lose your place, and it makes it easier to ring new methods too. For example, everything I said about Plain Bob Doubles above is also true for St Simon's because it's the same as Plain Bob when you're above the treble.

This summer on 30th June, there will be a City Branch outing to the Old North Berks Branch. We'll start at Harwell and work our way back towards Abingdon. Paul has kindly agreed to drive a minibus if there's sufficient interest - please let me know by email. The towers I've arranged are: Harwell 10:00; Milton 11:00; Sutton Courtenay 11:30; Drayton 14:00; Marcham 15:00; Abingdon St Helen's 16:00; Abingdon St Nicolas 17:00. **Andrew Freer**

Branch Secretary's Report

Congratulations to Katie Lane – she has just succeeded in ringing her 1,000th peal (details below). Congratulations also to Rosie Cretney – many of you will have seen her article which made the front page of the Ringing World on 9th March 2018. For those who haven't, this was an article on a maths challenge with bell ringing as the theme and included a competition to design a poster. Hopefully it will have inspired some of the students involved to visit their local towers as well.

I would also like to thank Katie Lane for her hard work as the Guild Safeguarding Officer, for coming up with what looks like a very workable solution to the issue of Safeguarding in towers. I have circulated the paper from Katie on this to all towers, and it is important that all towers now adhere to these rules, which the Diocese has brought in. Judging by the emails I have received, asking me to pass on thanks to Katie, they seem to have been received very well so far. The next issue we have to deal with is the change in the data protection rules. This will impact on anyone who holds or shares other people's data. We do this as a branch and within individual towers. I am currently reading through the available information and hope to write a brief synopsis of what we can and can't do. More on this to follow, and it will need to be an agenda item at the half yearly meeting. **Lindsay Powell**



Dates for your Diary

- Monday 2nd April Kirtlington (8) 16cwt A Morning Practice – open to people of all abilities 10.30am-11.45am
- Monday 9th April Colin Taylor's Outing to North Warwickshire: Shirley (8) 6cwt 1030am; Lapworth (6) 10cwt 12noon; Lunch. Venue (t.b.c.). Packwood (8) 6cwt 2.30pm
- Wednesday 18th April **No practice at Headington that night, because the ringers are having their AGM**
- Saturday 21st April Bicester Branch Outing to South Oxfordshire: Drayton (8); Milton (8); Marcham (6).
Lunch at 'The Cherry Tree', Steventon. Menu: http://www.cherrytreesteventon.co.uk/assets/food_menu_nov_17.pdf
For more details, contact Steve Vickars at: steve.vickars@gmail.com
- Saturday 5th May Dave Jennings' Outing to Essex:
Coggeshall (10) 10.30am; Greenstead Green (6) 11.30am; Halstead (8) 12.30pm; Sible Hedingham (8) 1.30pm;
Lunch at The Honey House, Baythorne End; Ridgwell (6) 3.30pm; Haverhill (6) 5.00pm. Followed by tea.
- Monday 7th May A Morning Practice at North Leigh (6) 9cwt 10.30am-12noon
- If anyone else is interested in organizing a trip in 2018, please contact Hugh or Andrew.*
- 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: pauulclucas@hotmail.co.uk

A list of Branch Practices coming up

- Saturday 14th April: St Giles (8) Branch Practice 10.30am-12.00noon
- May: The Half-Yearly Meeting and Striking Competition have been moved to June as there is a clash with the Guild AGM which has been moved to avoid the Royal Wedding. Coupled with Andrew Freer's wedding, two bank holidays and the Branch Secretary's holiday, June looked the better option.
- Saturday 9th June: Headington (8) Branch Practice 10.30am – 12 noon (on the simulator), followed by tea, and the Striking Competition on open bells from 1.00pm onwards.
- Saturday 30th June: Branch Outing organised by Andrew Freer - all day. Venues (t.b.c.), but probably Old North Berks Branch towers.
- Saturday 14th July: Cowley (6) Branch Practice 5.00pm - 6.30pm
- Saturday 11th August: Yarnton (6) Branch Practice 5.00pm - 6.30pm
- Saturday 8th September: Marston (6) Branch Practice 5.00pm - 6.30pm
- Saturday 13th October: Wolvercote (6) Branch Practice 10.30am - 12 noon
- Saturday 17th November: Wheatley holding the AGM in the afternoon – actual time still to be confirmed
- Saturday 8th December: Iffley (6) Branch Practice 10.30am-12 noon (tbc)

Please remember that all these Branch Practices are open to people of all abilities. You are all welcome!

Lindsay Powell

Two Young Ringers complete their first Quarter Peals

Congratulations go to Fukine Minai and Luke Diesel – both 14 years old – who have achieved their first quarter peals.

Fukine, originally from St Giles, who has now returned to her native Japan, rang the tenor at Horspath to 1260 changes of Grandsire Doubles, and Luke from Headington, rang the tenor to 1260 changes of Reverse Canterbury Doubles



1. Malcolm Fairbairn, 2. Stephen M Everett, 3. Colin P Taylor, 4. Clare Fairbairn (C)
5. Paul C Lucas, 6. Luke E Diesel. First Quarter peal – tenor. **Paul Lucas**

**Horspath. St. Giles, Oxfordshire. Friday 9th March 2018 in 38m
1260 Grandsire Doubles**

1. John G Pusey; 2. Stephen M Everett;
3. Dana Josephson; 4. Paul C Lucas;
5. Andrew R Freer (C); 6. Fukine Minai.
First quarter and bon voyage to Fukine.

**Headington. St. Andrew, Oxfordshire.
Sunday, 11th March 2018 in 42m
1260 Reverse Canterbury Pleasure
Place Doubles**



All Saints, Cuddesdon Bells update

The project to rehang five of the bells, recast a new treble, strengthen the bell frame and install new gear continues apace! The fact that the beam which supported the intermediate clock floor was found to be unsafe has meant that the remedial work has interrupted the bell programme, so that a new total completion date stands at a point in early May. The beam is being replaced at the time of writing, and a new boarding floor installed above the ringing chamber beneath the clock. On completion, Whites of Appleton will begin strengthening the existing frame from 16th. April, and then the bells and newly manufactured fittings will leave Whites on the intended date of April 20th., when all will be delivered to the Church for display over Trinity Sunday weekend, after which hoisting the bells and rehangings will begin from the 24th.

Thus it seems that completion is scheduled for early May, and then the new ringing band and their helpers will eventually get to grips with the ropes at last! It has all been a tad frustrating for everybody concerned with the delays encountered, but as we all know from experience, making changes to church fittings such as bells and associated fittings can uncover unforeseen costs and time-consuming delays! We are all keenly anticipating the sound of those lovely bells to ring out again from "God's Holy Hill" !!

Brian Lowe, Acting Tower Captain, Cuddesdon.

Congratulations to Katie Lane on her 1,000th Peal!

Oxford Diocesan Guild, St Peter, Burnham, Buckinghamshire on Friday, 16 March 2018 in 2h. 50m
5056 Dereham Surprise Major (Composed by C Middleton & R Baldwin)

1. David A Cornwall; 2. Catherine M A Lane; 3. Roger Baldwin (C); 4. Janet E Menhinick;
5. Christopher M Tuckett; 6. Simon L Edwards; 7. J Alan Ainsworth; 8. Kenneth R Davenport

Well done to Katie, from us all!

Paul Lucas



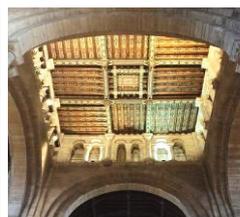
John Hearn's Outing to Hampshire on Saturday 17th March

Although the weather was hardly Spring-like there was only a brief flurry of snow during the day and this didn't deflect from the ringing on a

selection of bells which were as excellent as they were eclectic. Back in 2002 I had the good fortune to organize an outing that included **Romsey Abbey**, and sixteen years later the bells are still a privilege to ring. The two other eight bell towers we rang at (**Sherfield English** and **East Tytherley**) were considerably lighter but also highly conducive to assured ringing. Contrast was provided by the 3cwt ten housed in the Clock House in **Awbridge**. Cast at the Loughborough foundry these bells were installed in 2008 and are the best private set of bells that I have come across. Good ringing is rewarded with the

chance to choose from one of the numerous sweets in jars on a three level shelving display. The non-judgemental pet ginger cat is situated on its high stool to keep an eye on your ringing and accept prodigious amounts

of stroking!
The six bells at **All Saints church in Houghton** are even lighter, the tenor weighing in at 2cwt, but are reassuringly easy to ring.



Thanks are in order to John Hearn for arranging the outing and picking such a good set of bells and an excellent lunch venue, The Hatchet Inn at Sherfield English. *Hugh Deam*

David Parke's Outing to South Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire

The Spring outing to six towers in South Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire was very well attended, with several new faces coming along.

Seldom will you get a selection of towers which are uniformly august, and indeed it's probably for the greater good if you don't - so on that basis this was an outing that could probably be described as being good for the ringing soul. The two eight bell towers of **Colerne** and **Marshfield** were particularly memorable, as was the lunch we enjoyed at the '**Fox and Hounds**' pub in Colerne. There are precious few eateries where one can get a square meal for just £5.00

these days, but here we got mega meals, and pots of tea or coffee for an extra £1.00. We concluded the day with the stand out six bell tower at **Pucklechurch**. One of our party, Sally Wale, from Islip grew up in this area and so it was particularly gratifying to construct an itinerary of towers here which she had never actually rung at before.

Thanks are due to David Parks for making the arrangements with the towers and scouting out such a fantastic lunch venue, plus a grateful mention for

all six tower key-holders who were uniformly on hand to let us in, something which has sadly not been the case at several towers we have visited in the past twelve months.

Hugh Deam

