

Sonning Deanery Branch  
NEWSLETTER  
July 2005

Oxford Diocesan Guild  
of Church Bell Ringers

## **Ringling Masters Ramblings**

Despite being one of the hottest days in the year so far, about 10 people turned out to ring, and eat strawberries, at Binfield in June. A big thank you to Sue for providing the strawberries. As far as the ringing is concerned we rang a variety of things from call changes to Beverley.

This month the meeting is at Twyford on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. As mentioned in last month's letter there will hopefully be an opportunity to ring Ashted Surprise Major and Oxford Bob Triples.

The August practice is at Shottesbrooke on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> at 11.30am followed by a picnic (not provided) in the park and the opportunity to play cricket or rounders. Bring a team from your tower to compete against each other or make scratch team on the day.

Looking ahead to September, there is the branch 8 bell striking competition at All Saints Wokingham on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It would be great to see more teams enter than have done in previous years. There will be more details about this in next month's newsletter.

Shortly the branch officers will be discussing the programme for next year, ringing and non-ringing events. If anyone has any ideas of what they would like to see in the programme, e.g. branch outing skittles evening or anything else that you might like to do then please let one of the branch officers know and we will try and fit it in.

I know some of you are preparing for your summer holidays, as I am, and I hope you have a good time wherever you go.

Rachel Moss

**Janet Abbiss**

The above

## Wokingham All Saint's 2005 Outing

Bolstered by friends from as far away as Farnborough and St Pauls (Wokingham!), the All Saints ringers headed north bright and early on Saturday July 2nd. Destination Central and North Bucks. The weather looked iffy - an important factor with lunch scheduled at a pub that would not accept children inside - but it wasn't raining.

First tower was Steeple Claydon, a village so far from any main road as to require VERY detailed maps (or the ability to catch and follow John Harrison - a seasoned veteran at these sorts of towers). The 6 bells were pretty odd-struck and did not "go" very well; the 5th was as odd-struck as any bell we've come across, the ringer of the 2nd had to face out of the ringing circle due to the position of a new screen (obviously constructed in the wrong place), and the tenor was never 15.25 cwt. Not an auspicious start, and despite that, some ringers wanted to stay to watch the ferret racing scheduled in the local at lunchtime.

Buckingham next (follow John H) - a nice town with a nice ring of 8 in a very large tower. Although supposedly a 27cwt tenor, the bells went easily, and we did them some justice. They even served some of the ringers with tea and coffee in the church whilst we were ringing. When the bells were rehung in the 18th century, they apparently filled the tenor with beer and then drank it before rehung the bell in the tower; shame we didn't think of that when we rehung ours last year!

Bletchley proved further from Buckingham than the outing organiser had estimated, not helped by a road closure at a crucial point; we duly arrived late, but quickly settled into ringing a very nice 8. Bletchley has been subsumed into Milton Keynes - a wired town - and the church proved to be no different, having enough sound and lighting mixer desks to qualify as a regional studio for a small broadcasting company.

Past the Enigma Arms in Bletchley and on to the Crooked Billet at Newton Longville, a pub that is recommended in the 2005 Good Pub Guide, and that serves the most expensive sandwiches in Southern England it seemed. We probably weren't their target market, but it was a pleasant interlude between towers.

Newton Longville bells - another 8 - were poor. Not only were they inaudible in the ringing chamber, they were VERY odd-struck. The ringing chamber had been extensively revamped - shame they didn't put the money into the bells.

Winslow - another 8 - were also poor, although the village was pretty. We could see why the film was about the "Winslow Boy" rather than the "Winslow Bells"!

On the homeward run now, and Dinton proved an interesting ring of 6 - the bells are hung in an anti-colockwise circle (opposite to how 99+% of tower bells are hung). This did not prevent us from producing some reasonable ringing - a nice way to round off the ringing part of the day.

In the evening, we were kindly invited to Jane and Nigel Mellors' house for a BBQ. The weather kept dry, and a good night was had by all. So, an enjoyable day with a mixture of good and "lumpy" bells. Thanks to all who helped.

Jon Tutchter

## **By bus to the Ringing Roadshow**

There seems to be doubt amongst some Branch members that a double-decker bus to the Ringing Roadshow is anything more specific than an idea by your Joint Sec. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT IT IS MUCH MORE DEFINITE THAN AN IDEA. The bus is booked for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September, picking up at Sandhurst, Bracknell, Wokingham and Woodley and then travel to Newbury, arriving at the racecourse about 11am. The bus will leave the racecourse at 4pm, and will drop off in reverse order of pick-up, i.e. first Sandhurst, then Bracknell, Wokingham and Woodley.

There will be stalls galore covering all aspects of bell ringing, as well as demonstrations, many general stalls, refreshments, meals and so on that will be of interest to non-ringers. This will be a really good opportunity to take along people you know who have expressed a general interest in ringing but haven't yet taken up the exercise. It should make an interesting day out for ringers and non-ringers alike. Your tower may already have a Ringing Roadshow poster on display that gives more details.

If I receive sufficient bookings (about 60 people) the cost will be about £6 each. I need to know the number of bookings by the end of July at the latest if there are too few I will have to cancel the bus because it will be too expensive for those who have booked.

Bookings are on a first come first served basis until the bus is full, so if you like the idea please send me your booking (stating number of seats) as soon as possible. You can phone my home number 0118 9267724 or email me at [rob\\_needham@ntlworld.com](mailto:rob_needham@ntlworld.com).

Deposits and details of the pick up points will be arranged nearer the time.

Please can tower contacts draw this article to the attention of their tower's members. Thank you.

Rob Needham, Joint Sec.

## More scaffolding in Wokingham

Just like London buses, if you see one there is sure to be another one not far behind. So it is with Wokingham towers being surrounded by scaffolding. Observant passers by All Saints over the last year or so will have noticed first that the tower was fenced off, and then that a temporary 'porch' with corrugated iron roof was erected outside the West door. Both were temporary measures, and the work now in hand is intended to solve the problem.

The tower is built mainly of pudding-stone, which is like a very coarse form of gritstone. It contains mostly pebbles, some an inch or more across, held together with an iron rich matrix of finer material. The iron is responsible for the dark brown colour. Although the pebbles are extremely durable, the matrix holding them together is prone to weathering. As a result, pebbles detach from the surface and fall off. If you look closely, you can see in some places quite a lot of stone has come off.

~~This has been going on for years, and the people just swe~~

The rendering is the most visible, and controversial, part of the work, but there is more. The turret roof over the top of the tower stairs will be rebuilt. Currently if you know where to look, you can see 360 degrees of daylight between the stonework. The lead on the tower roof also needs replacing, because it is cracked and rotten, and there will also be some repair to the parapet at the North East corner of the nave.

The clock faces have to be removed and then refitted after the rendering is completed. One of them is actually hanging loose at the moment, and the extra friction thus caused might have been the final straw that stopped the clock several months ago. The clock has been on the agenda for several years, but at a low priority. By stopping, it jumped up the queue, and we are working now towards both a major overhaul of the works (Thwaites & Reed 1817) and fitting auto-winding.

In case you are getting lost, this work is all separate from phase 2 of the original tower project initiated by the ringers. Phase 1 of which was rehanging the bells, and phase 2 of which will be internal environmental improvements in the ringing room, but that is temporarily on hold. The church has quite a lot on its plate!

John Harrison

## **Peals and Quarter Peals**

5th June 2005

1260 Grandsire and Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Daniel Chafon
- 2 Nigel Bearne
- 3 Judith Burbidge
- 4 Barbara Wells
- 5 Stephen Wells (c)
- 6 Margaret Bearne

1st on a working bell - 1

1st covering behind - 6

Rung as a birthday compliment to Stan Scott.



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### **Forthcoming Events**

Saturday	16th July	Branch Practice	Twyford	7:30PM
Saturday	20th August	Branch Practice+ Picnic	Shottesbrooke	11.30AM
Saturday	17th September	Branch 8 bell striking competition	All Saints Wokingham	