

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



July 2011, Summer Issue



Waltham St Lawrence

Training update

Last year the Branch ran three courses (Bob calling, Raising & lowering in peal, and Rope splicing). So far this year, we have run one course, on Method learning, and I am hoping to organise another Maintenance course. We only run courses that members ask for, so the more people ask, the more courses we will run. We offer courses on over a dozen topics, and there are details on the Branch website, (www.odg.org.uk/sdb). You can request courses via the website, or direct to me at 0118 978 5520 or email training@sdb.odg.org.uk.

Diary of Events

Saturday 20th August

Binfield
7.30pm – 9pm
Branch Practice

Saturday 17th September

Wokingham St Paul
7.30pm—9pm
Branch Practice

Saturday 15th October

Twyford
10am—1pm
8 Bell striking competition
& Branch practice

Upcoming Events

Saturday 22nd October

Branch Outing (Bucks tba)

Saturday 12th November

7.30pm Branch Quiz
St Paul's Wokingham Hall

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices at
All Saints, Wokingham on 6th September,
4th October (provisionally).
NB. No practice in August.

6 Bell Striking Competition—Waltham St Lawrence—Saturday 16th April

Six teams gathered on a beautiful April day for the competition. The judges (Ken Darvill from Beaconsfield & Dr Peter H Mackie from Stoke Poges) were impressed that all teams improved as they went on, even suggesting we would have all been better if we'd rung longer touches although to some of the teams 240 changes felt quite long enough! They also commented that the bells sounded very nice outside.



Thank you to our judges and the Waltham ringers for the use of the bells and for providing the much appreciated tea & biscuits.

- 1) Sonning
38 faults—Plain Bob Doubles
Very pleasant. A bit 'trippy'
- 2) All Saints, Wokingham
43 faults—Cambridge Minor
Suffered some quick leads and slow blows in 5ths place.
- 3) Arborfield
69 faults—Rounds
Improved as it went on
- 4) All Saints, Wokingham
96 faults—Rounds
Improved at it went on. Treble did well.
- 5) Easthampstead
102 faults—Rounds
Improved at it went on. Treble did well.
- 6) Sandhurst
145 faults—Plain Hunt Doubles
Bad start which unsettled the rest of the ringing.

Us and Them (5)

In the last Newsletter, I looked at the implications of recruiting from different age groups. In this one, I consider the motivation to come ringing, and its effect.

Motivation

What sort of motivation do you want to stimulate (or appeal to if it already exists) to persuade people to take up ringing? People can be motivated by many things, and what motivates them will influence their approach to learning, to the way they fit in with the band, to the way they progress, and to their likelihood of dropping out. How you set about your recruiting could influence the sort of motivation in those who respond to your incitation.

Support – As a nation, we tend to side with the underdog, and feel a need to support institutions that are under threat. Some people may take up ringing because they perceive it is dying out, and they want to help stop that, at least in their village. They are more likely to respond to last ditch appeals than to routine recruiting. They are more likely to feel good about being in a group that joins a struggling band than just being another ringer in a moderately healthy band. If you are lucky they might 'catch the bug' after learning to ring, but just as likely they might not, in which case they might not want to put a lot more time and effort into ringing once they have 'done their bit'

and averted disaster, especially if some other noble cause comes along and they divert their attention and effort to saving something else.

Social – Some people are mainly motivated by being part of a group – any group. Ringing is a team activity, and once such people become an accepted part of the team, they may find that just belonging to the group fulfils their needs, without any desire to progress, or even to perform well. In that case, they will be happy just to turn up and meet their friends. A minority of such social ringers will tag along with various group activities, even if they have little interest in them, but only so as not to let down their friends, not because they are motivated by the activities themselves. A majority of social ringers in the band may limit its aspirations.

Heritage – Ringing has a strong heritage, and it can provide a significant part of its appeal. Most people are aware of the superficial aspect – that bells hang in heritage buildings, and that the sound they make is 'timeless' – but anyone with a real feeling for heritage may respond very strongly when they become aware of the cultural heritage of the Exercise, and the history of how ringing, bells and bell hanging have developed. That interest might not be enough to persuade someone to learn to ring, but it might help tip the balance in someone who is unsure. Likewise it won't guarantee the ability to become skilled, but it could

certainly help to form a bond with 'ringing' rather than just the social and physical aspects of what goes on in the local tower, so it might help to provide you with a committed and enthusiastic member.

Novelty – Some people are motivated by doing new things. Ringing is a great draw for such people, because it is unlike almost everything else they will have ever done. That novelty can be a powerful aid to recruitment, but having exploited it, you then need to work hard to replace the initial curiosity with more durable motivations based on performance, and involvement with the band. Otherwise, when the novelty wears off, your recruits may lose interest, and move on to pastures new in search of more novelty.

Performance – Some people are motivated to perform. Whatever they do, they expect to do it well, and they are willing to put in the effort needed to achieve that end.

They are highly desirable recruits, and they bring great promise, but they also bring expectations. They will accept that they begin at the bottom, but after a reasonable period they will expect to reap the reward of performing well. They will expect to be well taught and to be given opportunities to make progress. They will expect the rest of the band to share their enthusiasm for good performance. If you can nurture them, you they should develop rapidly and help to motivate others to do the same. But if your training, your organisation, and the ethos of your band doesn't meet their expectations, then don't expect them to hang around, because you will have failed to meet their needs.

Performance is a fitting note on which to end, since as ringers, we are all performers, and I hope we aspire to be good performers. In the next article I will discuss the aptitude of recruits, i.e. their ability to develop the required performance skills.

John Harrison

St Andrew's, Sonning Ringing Outing - 30th May

On the late Bank Holiday Monday, 15 of us set off for a ringing outing to the Gerrards Cross area of Buckinghamshire. As well as Sonning ringers there were supporters from other towers in the branch, from Reading branch, and even one from an adjoining Guild. The plan was to have a relaxed outing so we rang at three towers during the day and also visited the Quaker Meeting House at Jordans.



The first tower was at Bray. As luck would have it we allowed far too much time to get to the tower (the roads were quiet on a Bank Holiday morning) which gave us time to look round the attractive, historical and well-kept village. The warden of the almshouses called Jesus Hospitall (hospital as in hospitality), which were founded by William Goddard in 1609, kindly gave us an impromptu look round the garden and chapel. We also walked past the lovely 15th century building the Hinds Head pub, where the meal prices were on the high side for us, and past Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck where the price was out of reach!

The church of St. Michael, Bray has 8 bells, the tenor at 24 cwt. being noticeably heavier than ours at Sonning. In spite of their weight all the bells were easy to handle and they sounded lovely. We had quite a mix of ringing ability, from a learner of three weeks standing to tower captains with decades of ringing experience, but hopefully everyone got some ringing to suit them.

We then drove to the tower of St. Giles at Stoke Poges, a much lighter ring of 8 bells (13.5 cwt), and again pleasant to ring. The access to the ringing room is interesting and definitely not for the infirm or those with no 'head for heights'. After going into an 'entrance hall' and out into the open air on the other side, to reach the ringing room one mounts a very steep and long external metal staircase fixed to a wall of the tower! After ringing we looked at the large memorial (shown in the photo) to the poet Grey who wrote the famous Grey's Elergy Written in a Country Churchyard.

Next was lunch at a carvery on the road to Gerrards Cross, and then on to our 'culture stop' – a visit to the Quaker Meeting House at Jordans near Penn. We were shown round by a lovely old lady who explained Quakers' philosophy and gave us accounts of the history of Jordans and her forebears as we sat around her in the meeting room. We finished with a quick look at the grave of William Penn, an influential English Quaker and founder of the colony of Pennsylvania in 1682.

The last tower was St. Paul, Wooburn, a well-kept church with some interesting decoration inside. The bells were another pleasant 8 with a tenor of 18.6 cwt. (sorry about the decimalisation of an old weight!). Our ringing session there seemed to be over too soon, but there were several lovely old buildings to admire round the back of the church.

The next Ringing Outing that Sonning will organise is the Branch Outing on Saturday 22nd October; make a note in your diary.

Rob Needham

Quarter Peals

29th April 2011 Finchampstead 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Samantha Ede
- 2 Mary Ede
- 3 Derek Barratt
- 4 Pearl Larkins
- 5 Hugh Dempster (C)
- 6 Judith Witting *

* 1st Quarter

To celebrate the wedding of HRH
Prince William & Catherine Middleton

29th April 2011 Sonning 1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Joyce Vernon
- 2 Jack Page
- 3 Jenny Page
- 4 Pam Elliston (C)
- 5 Rob Needham
- 6 Andrew Elliston
- 7 Alan K Barsby
- 8 Keith Vernon

To celebrate the wedding of HRH
Prince William & Catherine Middleton

7th May 2011 Arborfield 1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Helen Averill
- 2 Judith Atkinson
- 3 Joyce Crockford
- 4 Edward J W Manley (C)
- 5 Michael Boys
- 6 Paul Tyrrell

* Rung in memory of John Clark-
Maxwell, a long-standing and much
missed supporter of ringing at this
tower

22nd May 2011 Sonning 1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Rob Needham
- 2 Joyce Vernon
- 3 Ally Newman
- 4 Alison Clayton
- 5 Pam Elliston (C)
- 6 Peter Kemm
- 7 Andrew Elliston
- 8 Keith Vernon

31st May 2011 St Paul's, Wokingham 1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Philippa Mitchell
- 2 Susan E Davenport
- 3 Elizabeth J Davenport
- 4 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 5 Alan K Barsby
- 6 Christopher P Cole

Birthday compliment to Mary Elliott
and Emma Barsby

14th June 2011 St Paul's, Wokingham 1260 Mixed Minor (720 Cambridge Surprise: 540 Plain Bob)

- 1 Susan E Davenport
- 2 Elizabeth J Davenport
- 3 Philippa Mitchell
- 4 Alan K Barsby
- 5 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 6 Christopher P Cole

24th Wedding anniversary compli-
ment to Alan & Helen Barsby and
Chris & Sarah Cole

Pagoda Sale

The Branch organised a Bric-a-Brac sale under the pagoda in the Woodley shopping centre on Friday 17th June. It was organised by the Sonning ringers, in aid of the ODG Bell Fund. Items for sale were kindly donated by most of the St. Andrew's ringers and by others in the branch. A particular thank you to Alan Barsby (and his dog Skye) whose home tower is not even in the ODG. He contributed a massive amount of items to sell and gave up a whole day of his time to help us.



In spite of the varied weather and a brief flood, we managed to raise about £380 on the day, and with some sales made beforehand the total raised for the ODG Bell Fund came to £464.05.

There were still quite a lot of saleable items left at the end of the day, so we plan to book the Pagoda for another date. Thank you to everyone who donated items for sale and please keep on saving items for our next pagoda sale.

Rob Needham & Pam Elliston

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