

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



July 2015, Summer Issue



St John's, Shottesbrooke

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 18th July

Shottesbrooke (6)
7.30pm —9pm Branch Practice

Saturday 15th August

Wokingham All Saints (8)
10.30am—12 noon Branch Practice

Saturday 19th September

Finchampstead (6)
4.30pm—6pm—12 Branch Practice

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices

(2-4pm at Binfield) on 7th July, 4th August, & 1st September (provisionally).

Surprise Major practices (Wednesday 8pm —9.30pm) at Wokingham All Saints on 8th July, 12th August & 9th September (provisionally).

Training Courses

Wednesday 15th July 7.30pm —9pm
Raising & lowering in peal

Saturday 22nd August—TBA
Contact Jacquie Hazell (details on back page) for more details/ availability.

Branch Outing

Saturday 17th October - put the date in your diary! More details to follow.

Lessons learned whilst bell ringing in Australia

In March I spent two weeks in Australia, some of which was work related, and some of which was holiday. Whilst I was there I was lucky enough to be able to ring in Canberra and also at the Catholic Cathedral (St Mary's) in Sydney.

Whilst the country is spectacular, and the ringing welcome was excellent, the main lesson learned arose from an incident which happened at St Mary's as I was travelling from Canberra to Sydney. On that Thursday evening, St Mary's practice night, a visiting ringer (from an adjacent tower in Sydney) had a heart attack in the ringing chamber. The access to the chamber, as in many cathedrals, is via a 150 step spiral stair case, followed by a walk across a horizontal walkway and then a few final steps into the ringing chamber.

There is a happy outcome, in that the collapsed ringer has survived the ordeal – and was said to be well in hospital when I visited St Mary's on the following Sunday. The survival of this ringer was down to the local band being able to perform CPR, or heart massage, whilst awaiting the arrival of the emergency services that used a defibrillator to re-start his heart. There was then the tricky business of how to extricate the casualty from the tower.



There were several options identified, given that taking him down the spiral staircase wasn't an option due to the need to keep the stretcher level. These were lowering the casualty (on a stretcher) over the side of the central tower, or having the casualty helicoptered off the roof of the tower.

These two were rejected as a) the over the side option was obstructed by much scaffolding and, in any case, there wasn't a clear route to

ground level due to the construction of the building and b) the route to the top of the tower also involved going up steep ladders and, again, the stretcher couldn't have been kept level.

So the only viable option was to remove the trapdoor in the floor of the ringing chamber, through which the bells had been lifted into the tower, and to lower the casualty, with an accompanying paramedic, through the trapdoor to the floor some 25m below. Fortunately all went well and the casualty was safely evacuated from the cathedral and on his way to hospital.

There are some lessons here that it may be timely to remind all towers about (even those with a ground floor ring and little difficulty with access). Firstly all towers should know how to communicate with the emergency services. That might sound as easy as dialling 999, but it is worth considering what to do should either no-one have a mobile (unlikely these days I'll admit) or should there be no mobile reception. Do you know where there is a real telephone near to the tower?

Secondly all towers should consider how the emergency services should gain access to the church. By which road are they likely to arrive, and how will they know how to gain access to the church? Someone should be nominated to go out to meet the emergency services and guide them in to the required area.

In the Sydney scenario the casualty was kept alive by ringers performing first aid and, in this case, CPR. Do you have qualified first aiders at or near the tower? Do you know the location of the nearest defibrillator? Some telephone boxes have been fitted with Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) and the use of these "automatic" devices, in conjunction with CPR, could very easily save a life.

If you are in a tower where access to the ringing chamber is likely to be difficult, especially when considering evacuating a casualty on a stretcher which must be kept horizontal, have you identified possible egress routes? Does use of these routes require tools? For example - to open the trap door? If so, are these tools readily available in the tower? If a casualty has to be lowered, as in Sydney, is there a suitable anchoring point in the tower to which ropes can be attached? Once the trapdoor is opened (and how recently was this done – has the trapdoor become stuck after all these years?) is the floor beneath clear enough to allow safe lowering of the casualty?

If there is no trap door – can windows be removed? What other options might there be to safely lower a horizontal stretcher which may be 2m long. Half a metre wide and weigh upwards of 150kg (don't forget that a paramedic may have to be evacuated at the same time as the casualty).

Perhaps it is time that towers had a written set of instructions covering these steps to be taken in such an emergency, and this document should, of course, be kept in the tower so that it is readily available should the worst happen.

There is another lesson from the Sydney case – which is that the application of CPR certainly saved this chap's life. It is likely that he acquired one or more broken ribs as a result of the CPR, which does need to be very physical (search on line for "BHF Vinnie" for an excellent and amusing instructional video) for information on how to perform CPR, but surely better a couple of broken ribs, and much chest bruising, but still be alive.

I hope that none of you ever have to deal with such an emergency in the tower (or anywhere else for that matter) but this story shows us that being prepared could well be the way to save a life.

Simon Milford, Sonning

Helping ringers get more out of ringing

Most people, in ringing as in other aspects of life, benefit from being 'taken under the wing' of someone more experienced. This is often called mentoring, an idea that dates from Ancient Greece, appears as master-apprentice in mediaeval guilds, as guru-disciple in many religions, and is fashionable in modern management.

Mentoring is not teaching – transmitting of a package of information from teacher to pupil – but a partnership where one person shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to help foster the development of another ... a wise and trusted counsellor ... an influential senior sponsor or supporter. John C. Crosby summed it up as:

Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen and a push in the right direction

To see how it relates to ringing, consider the experience of a typical recruit who has a period of one-to-one tuition while learning to handle and then attends normal practices with little further coaching on skills such as bell control, listening or ropesight and only rudimentary guidance on method learning. 'Standing behind' is common, but it is mainly limited to advice about method mistakes during a touch.

A few ringers are 'self starters' who instinctively look for new information and better ways to do things, but many just accept what they are given and do what they are told. Once the initial momentum fades they drift, but with suitable encouragement and guidance they could do more and get more out of ringing.

The progression from handling a bell safely to being a competent performer takes time and is easier (and more rapid) if accompanied by an extended period of coaching to perfect ringing skills and avoid slipping into habits that will limit future capability. Likewise, encouragement to develop a flexible approach to method learning can lead to greater confidence, a richer repertoire and more enjoyment.

Mentoring more ringers could help them to get more out of ringing (and probably reduce the risk of losing some) but those who would benefit don't usually ask because they don't know what to ask. That's where the 'nudge' from a mentor can help by actively engaging – making suggestions or asking questions.

Some bands have the resources to mentor their developing members but not all do, so it is sensible to look outside the tower – to the Branch – whose role is to supplement what bands can provide for themselves. So how do you make the connection?

One way would be to attend Branch practices where there are experienced people willing to advise and help, but anyone in a band where Branch practice attendance isn't the norm might not think of doing so, and in any case might lack the confidence to make the first move. That obstacle can be overcome if the tower captain or other senior member of a band suggests going to a practice (or better still offers to go with them). Another way would be for the band to discuss the mentoring that it can provide internally and for the tower captain then to discuss how the Branch could supplement it.

Another valuable way for ringers to consolidate their performance skills is to ring for an extended period at a reasonable standard – for example in a quarter peal or peal – rather than just ringing short touches. That opportunity can't be provided by all bands from their own resources but it could be provided by drawing on the wider resources of the Branch. A ringer who has never rung a quarter might not consider that, so again the prompt (and support in preparation) may need to come from the tower captain or mentor. Anyone who has already rung a quarter peal and who would like to consider ringing a peal is encouraged to do so this year, as part of the FirstPeal2015 initiative that I wrote about in the last newsletter. So ...

Tower captains – Could any of your ringers benefit from mentoring? Please ask if you think you need help.

Ringers – Could you get more out of your ringing with more opportunities, help or advice. If so, just ask.

John Harrison (Chairman)

'Mini'-ringing to celebrate Joyce & David's recent wedding



Quarter Peals

Tuesday 19 May 2015
Wokingham St Paul's
1264 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Mary Spence
- 2 Susan E Davenport
- 3 Dave Creasy
- 4 Stephen R Smith
- 5 Alan K Barsby
- 6 Nigel A L Mellor
- 7 Jon P Tutcher
- 8 Kenneth R Davenport (C)

For the Archeacon's visitation

Tuesday 2 June 2015
Waltham St Lawrence
1320 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Martha Hazell
- 2 Jacqueline Hazell (C)
- 3 Kate Titford
- 4 Rob Needham
- 5 Derek Smith
- 6 Derek Titford

To celebrate the 62nd Anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Sunday 7 June 2015
Sonning
1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Pam Elliston
- 2 Joyce Vernon
- 3 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 4 Peter Kemm
- 5 Andrew Elliston
- 6 Lavinia M Sullivan
- 7 Stephen R Smith (C)
- 8 Keith Vernon

For Evensong and to celebrate the Golden Wedding (on 05/06/15) of Joyce & Keith Vernon.

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