

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



April 2019, Spring Issue



White Waltham church

Chairman's welcome

When did you last think about your performance? We use the loudest musical instruments ever made and our 'auditorium' is bigger than the largest concert hall, but hidden away in the tower with our friends, out of sight of our audience it's easy to forget that we have an audience. And it's easy for us to get so focused on where to make the next dodge or who to follow that we forget we are performing. But our audience can hear us even if we can't see them – whether we are performing for a church service or for some other reason – and even when we practice since we do it in public.

Lent is a time for self reflection, so let us all reflect on our performance. Is it as good as we would wish. Would we be comfortable if our audience were standing in front of us seeing who is ringing what, as well as listening?

Do we really know how good our performance is? It can be hard trying to listen objectively and 'see the wood for the trees' while on the end of a rope juggling other things in one's head. Have you ever had the opportunity to listen to a piece of ringing that you took part in? In the old days we could only do that with tape recorders and microphones (which might not have been up to the job) but now most of us carry around a sophisticated recorder in our pockets.

Even better than listening to a recording, which still leaves you with the task of working out your contribution to the overall result, we now have the tools to analyse a piece of ringing and show how well each ringer did, highlighting any prominent trends. At Wokingham All Saints we have had Cirel for over a year. It sits in the background and displays a summary at the end of each touch that people can look at. Whenever we think it would be helpful we can ask it to show more detailed information, including the blue line showing ideal and actual positions of bells. (.....continued overleaf)

Calendar

Tues 23rd April—Ringing for England

Saturday 27th April

White Waltham (6)

4.30pm—6pm 6 bell striking competition & tea

Saturday 18th May

Wokingham St Paul's (8)- TBC

4.30pm—6pm Branch Practice

Saturday 15th June

Shottesbrooke (6)

4.30pm—6pm Branch Practice

Saturday 20th July

Wargrave (8)

4.30pm—6pm Branch Practice

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices (2-3.30pm at Binfield) on 7th

May, 4th June & 2nd July

(provisionally).

Surprise Major practices (Wednesday 8pm—9.30pm) at Wokingham All Saints on 8th May, 12th June & 10th July (provisionally).

Young Ringers Practice (2nd Sunday of the month, 2.30—4pm) 12th May (Finchampstead), 9th June (Easthampstead) and 14th July (Twyford), (provisionally).

In January we invited a small number of Branch members to a session devoted to striking – ringing simple things and then looking at how we performed and how it could be improved. Everyone found it worthwhile and afterwards each participant provided feedback. You can read what they thought by downloading the report from the events page of the Branch website: odg.org.uk/sdb/events/

We would be happy to organise a similar event for other members. If you are interested either let me know or select the 'Striking practice' option on the website at: odg.org.uk/sdb/training/courses.html.

This newsletter comes out shortly before our 6-bell striking competition on 27 April. This year it's at White Waltham, an easy light ring of bells. It would be good to see as many teams as possible, each putting up their best performance at a friendly event with tea and socialising.

John Harrison, Chairman

You saw it here first...ringing on the BBC!



It's not often you are offered an opportunity to get ringing shown on TV, so you grab it with both hands. One of our ringers has a friend involved in Field Archery. (No, I didn't know of it either – its a kind of blend between archery and orienteering.) It was featured in the sport slot on BBC Breakfast, and when the presenter heard about ringing he was keen to do a piece on that as well.

Some of you may wonder why ringing would appear in the 'sport' slot, but it fits very well with the widely used definition of sport as: 'all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical

fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels'. Of course, ringing is much more than just a sport – notably as a form of music – which is why it is so special. But the more angles we can get covered to help raise public awareness the better.

The presenter, Mike Bushell, is interested in exploring and presenting all forms of sport, and according to Wikipedia (look him up) he holds the world record for trying different sports – over 350 different ones.

On Monday 15th March we welcomed Mike and his cameraman Ian to our practice at All Saints Wokingham. They arrived in late afternoon for Mike to get some hands-on training beforehand, but Mike was delayed and Ian arrived early so we re-jigged the plan. Ian got shots of the outside the tower and the splendid view from the roof – in glorious sunshine – and he also took lots of shots inside, including showing the size of the bells.

The altered plans meant that instead of the intended two hours of initial tuition, Mike only got about an hour. He was an enthusiastic learner – perhaps a bit too enthusiastic – and made pretty well average progress, ringing both strokes after a fashion by the end of the hour.

We then adjourned to The Ship (which in the late 1700s used to sponsor ringing competitions) and after a quick meal returned to the tower to join Ian and the other ringers assembling for the practice, at which we had a record turn out of over 20. Mike was filmed being taken through the teaching process and the rest of the time was spent filming typical exercises with the learners and various examples of normal ringing – from all angles: close up, wide shot, looking down from the clock room, viewed from the nave and looking in to the bells themselves.

A lot of the time was spent interviewing individual ringers, from our youngest recruits to long standing members, since the focus of Mike's programmes is to capture not just 'what' is done, but why the participants do it and what makes them so keen.

BBC Breakfast has a total audience of 12 million. The sport item is shown four times between 6am & 10am, nominally at 6.40, 7.40, 8.40 & 9.40 though it can vary. It's quite a short slot – 3 minutes – so it's less of a documentary and more a stream of vignettes that give an impression of what the sport is like.

The piece on ringing is due to appear on Saturday 13th April, which is before you read this article but after the deadline for submitting it. You should still be able to view it online on the BBC website.

John Harrison, Wokingham All Saints

Christmas in February at Sonning

The St Andrew's bell ringers held their Christmas dinner at the Shoulder of Mutton, Playhatch on Thursday 28 February. We find that Christmas dinners in February are easier to arrange and to attend!



We had a most convivial evening of good food and company; in total there were 20 dining – most were ringers or ex-ringers, with a scattering of non-ringing spouses/partners. Here is a photo of some of the diners.

Towards the end of the meal Rob gave a brief review of the ringing activity in 2018. St Andrew's ringers had taken part in 98 ringing events: the weekly Thursday practice and ringing for the Sunday morning service. The ringer who had attended the most events was Sue Portsmouth with 89 attendances. There were no bells rung at some of the events because of the bell clappers refurbishment in March 2018.

The bells were also used for the Bradfield ringing course and by four groups of visiting ringers. Two of our learners passed their level 1 of the national Learning the Ropes training scheme and are well on their way to level 2. The ringers had a stall at the Dickensian Fayre and supervised trips up the tower.

Rob Needham (Sonning)

Peals & Quarter Peals

St Paul's, Wokingham
26 January in 2hrs 54 mins
5056 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- 1 Catherine M A Lane
- 2 Geoffrey K Cook
- 3 Janet E Menhinick
- 4 Thomas Blomley
- 5 Christopher P Cole
- 6 Alan K Barsby
- 7 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
- 8 Stephen J Crawley

For the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul
First surprise, 4. 500th peal, 7.

Waltham St Lawrence
Tuesday, 1 January
1260 Plain Bob Minor

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
- 2 Kathryn Titford
- 3 Martha Hazell
- 4 Lavinia Sullivan
- 5 Vikki Bulbeck
- 6 David Sullivan (C)

To celebrate the New Year

Hurst
Friday, 4 January
1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Lesley S Cross
- 2 Pam Elliston
- 3 Lavinia Sullivan
- 4 Jacqueline Hazell
- 5 David Sullivan (C)
- 6 Sue Portsmouth

Waltham St Lawrence
Friday, 11 January
1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Lesley S Cross
- 2 Lavinia Sullivan
- 3 Anthony W Gordon
- 4 Rob Needham
- 5 David Sullivan (C)
- 6 Jacqueline Hazell

Twyford
Thursday, 17 January
1250 Superlative S Major

- 1 Vikki Bulbeck
- 2 Pam Elliston
- 3 David Sullivan
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Jacqueline Hazell
- 6 Lavinia Sullivan
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 8 Anthony W Gordon

Waltham St Lawrence
Friday, 8 February
1299 Doubles

- 1 Lesley S Cross
- 2 Lavinia Sullivan
- 3 Jacqueline Hazell
- 4 Anthony W Gordon
- 5 David Sullivan (C)
- 6 Rob Needham

Celebrating the 67th anniversary of the Queen's accession and also St Jacqueline's day

Finchampstead
Friday, 15 February
1320 Norwich S Minor

- 1 Lavinia Sullivan
- 2 Pam Elliston
- 3 Sue Portsmouth
- 4 Jacqueline Hazell
- 5 Anthony W Gordon
- 6 David Sullivan (C)

First in method, 2, 3,4.

Twyford
Thursday, 21 February
1250 Yorkshire S Major

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
- 2 Pam Elliston
- 3 Vikki Bulbeck
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Lavinia Sullivan
- 6 David Sullivan
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
- 8 Anthony W Gordon

First Yorkshire, 3,4.

Handbells

- 47 Brookside
 Thursday, 21 February 2019 (15 C)
1260 Plain Bob Royal
 1-2 Marcia Dieppe
 3-4 Elizabeth J O'Brien
 5-6 Kenneth R Davenport (C)
 7-8 John A Harrison
 9-10 Neil G Curnow

Hurst
Friday, 1 March
1288 St Nicholas Triples

- 1 Lavinia Sullivan
- 2 Jacqueline Hazell
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 John A Harrison
- 6 Anthony W Gordon
- 7 David Sullivan (C)
- 8 Robert A Partridge

For St David's Day

Waltham St Lawrence
Friday, 8 March
1260 St Simon's Doubles

- 1 David Sullivan
- 2 Jacqueline Hazell (C)
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Rob Needham
- 5 Lavinia Sullivan
- 6 Sue Portsmouth

Prior to the funeral of Mick Hitchman, longstanding resident of this village.

Sonning
Thursday, 14 March
1288 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Lavinia Sullivan
 - 2 Geoffrey Harvey
 - 3 Sue Portsmouth
 - 4 Rob Needham
 - 5 Pam Elliston
 - 6 Jacqueline Hazell
 - 7 David Sullivan (C)
 - 8 Vikki Bulbeck
- For Pi Day (3/14).

An 18th Birthday compliment to Kitty Gingell

Twyford
Thursday, 21 March
1280 Rutland S Major

- 1 Anthony W Gordon
- 2 Barbara E Wells
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Jacqueline Hazell
- 6 Stephen C Wells
- 7 Lavinia Sullivan
- 8 David Sullivan (C)

First Yorkshire, 3,4,5.

All Saints, Wokingham
Sunday 24 March
1250 Cambridge S Major

- 1 Stephen R Smith
- 2 Kristin L Fitch
- 3 Jane A Mellor
- 4 Tom Blomley
- 5 John A Harrison
- 6 Steven J Field
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor
- 8 Jon P Tutcher

For evening service.
 First Cambridge inside: 2

Binfield
Friday, 29 March
1299 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
- 2 Lavinia Sullivan
- 3 Freddie Gingell
- 4 Anthony W Gordon
- 5 David Sullivan (C)
- 6 Sue Portsmouth

First doubles in method: 3

All Saints, Wokingham
Sunday 31 March
1250 Yorkshire S Major

- 1 Mary Spence
 - 2 Jane A Mellor
 - 3 Tom Blomley
 - 4 Ian F Taylor
 - 5 Alan K Barsby
 - 6 Steven J Field
 - 7 Nigel A L Mellor
 - 8 John A Harrison
- For evening service on Mothering Sunday and as a compliment to Ian Taylor ringing his first quarter of Yorkshire shortly after his 80th birthday .

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