

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



January 2020, Winter Issue

Chair's welcome



I'm writing this at the end of an unusual year that culminated with the recent General Election. The world around us seems to be increasingly uncertain and unpredictable, and we are fortunate to be part of an activity that has provided continuity for us and our predecessors through four centuries of religious, political and social upheaval.

During this time ringing itself has developed. A mediaeval bell hanger would immediately recognise the familiar way bells are hung but he would marvel at the technical improvements in pretty well every aspect – casting, tuning, bellframes, headstocks, bearings, clappers and ropes. Stedman would no doubt be pleased that we are still ringing his method but he would marvel at the complexity of many methods now being rung. He would be pleased that someone solved the problem he set – whether it was possible to compose a peal of Stedman Triples using only bobs – but he might be surprised that it took over 300 years, and amazed that a computer helped.

Most of our ringing societies date from the late 19th century (Sonning Deanery Society from 1880). At the time they gave a huge boost to ringing by bringing ringers together and by promoting change ringing. These are things we tend to take that for granted these days, and some people question the value of ringing societies. In Sonning Deanery we see our role as helping to meet the needs of our members. We have introduced new events in recent years – youth practices and the new elementary practices – and we've run more training courses, and the regular general practices remain quite popular.

(.....continued overleaf)

Calendar

Saturday 18th January

Waltham St Lawrence (6)
4.30pm—6pm Branch Practice

Saturday 1st February: 4pm

Joint 8 Bell Striking Competition
with Reading Branch at Tilehurst

Saturday 15th February

Finchampstead (6)
Branch AGM
3-4pm: ringing; 4pm Service,
4.45pm Tea, 5.15pm Meeting

Saturday 21st March

Arborfield (6)
10.30am—12 noon Branch Practice

New

Monthly Tuesday evening Elementary
practices (8pm—9.30pm at Wokingham
All Saints) on 7th January, 4th February,
3rd March (provisionally).

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices (2-
3.30pm at Binfield) on 21st January, 18th
February, 17th March (provisionally).

Surprise Major practices (Wednesday
8pm –9.30pm) at Wokingham All Saints
on 8th Jan, 12th Feb, 11th March
(provisionally).

Young Ringers Practice (2nd Sunday of
the month, 2.30 –4pm) 12th Jan
(Binfield), 9th Feb (Warfield) and 8th
March (Wokingham St Pauls),
(provisionally).

None of this happens by magic, it relies on the effort of Branch officers. Many of whom serve you for many years but from time to time we need new blood to replace those who stand down. There is a lot of talent among our 150+ members but unlocking it requires individuals to make the decision to commit a little of their time on behalf their fellow ringers. At the AGM on 15 February there will be at least three vacancies to fill, they are:

Secretary deals with communication, record keeping and administration. This is an essential role. It doesn't require great ringing skill so it could be a good first step for you to help with the work of running the Branch.

Deputy ringing master supports the Ringing Master and shares in the organisation and running of Branch ringing. They decide between them exactly who does what.

Training Officer organises (but doesn't necessarily run) training events over and above regular events run by the ringing masters. That includes finding out what's needed and making it happen, ie fixing date, place, tutor, etc.

There are fuller descriptions of all jobs on the website at: odg.org.uk/sdb/documents/other/JobDescriptions.pdf

Please consider whether you could fill one of the vacancies. If one of the other jobs attracts you, then consider standing for that – maybe the existing holder would like a rest, or to be freed up to do something else.

If you think you might be interested, but aren't sure then talk to one of the officers about what's involved. If you don't know who they are, see: odg.org.uk/sdb/officers/

Although we haven't had a Training Officer for two years, we have managed to run 11 training courses (with 38 places taken up by 21 ringers). That's a significant part of the demand for courses identified by the survey we ran two years ago but by no means all of it so there's more to do. But, to ensure we have an up to date picture of current needs we will be running the survey again shortly, so look out for it and fill in your current needs.

Finally, I'm sure you will join me in thanking all those who have helped make ringing in the Branch successful in 2019 and wish you all the best for 2020.

John Harrison, Chairman



Sonning Bellringers help raise funds

On the 8th December Sonning Bellringers took a stall at the church Dickensian Fayre. The photo shows Pauline on duty at our stall.

The stall involved many fun, free-to-enter competitions including Guess the Weight of the (bell-shaped) Cake; Name the Parts of a Bell; The Bell which must not be rung Game (a clever game made by Rob Needham along the lines of 'Operation' - where you attempt to steer a course around a (bell-shaped) loop of wire without making it ring—only those with steady hands triumph!) and Tower Tours. Many people visited the stall and made generous donations.

Over a £1000 was made by the Fayre in aid of the Karun Orphanage & School in Southern India.

Guild Subscriptions reminder

The subscription for 2020 remain at £8.00 split £5.00 to the Guild and £3.00 to the Branch. All subscriptions have to be with the Guild Treasurer by 31st March 2020 to ensure your membership for the year. Can I request that all members/Treasurers ensure their subscriptions are with me by **28th February 2020 at the latest please, sooner if possible!** Many thanks.

Sue Davenport, Branch Treasurer

1000 Pealers

It isn't every day that someone rings their 1,000th peal, though it is becoming more common – in 2019 eleven of the world's 30,000+ ringers did it. The first person to ring 1,000 peals was Rev Francis Edward Robinson, founder and first Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. He was Vicar of Drayton for 30 years but he retired to Wokingham and is buried in All Saints churchyard. There's a pealboard in the tower recording the peal rung on the day of his funeral in 1910, and we have a picture of the crowd of mourners around his grave. For more details see: allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/ASRingers/Robinson/

Robinson rang his 1,000th peal in 1905 but it was another six years before the second person did so, and only twenty had by 1950. In recent decades far more people ring 1,000 peals, with 545 having done so to date.

FE Robinson's lifetime total was 1256 but many ringers exceed that today. Twelve have rung over 5,000 peals, with Colin Turner in the lead at around 7,700 – and many of them are still going strong.

The latest person to ring his 1000th peal was David Maynard, on 14 December. He recently moved to Wokingham with his wife Helen who grew up here, and they ring at All Saints. Other Branch ringers who rang their 1000th peal in recent years are Janet Menhinick of Sandhurst in 2018 (currently over 1,140) and Ken Davenport of Wokingham St Paul in 2013 (currently over 1,540).

David rang his 1000 peals in just over 20 years, whereas FE Robinson took 46 years, and Leonard Stillwell who was the slowest took 70 years. That's partly because far more peals are rung now than in Robinson's day. Typically there are between 4,500 & 5,000 a year whereas there were fewer than 1,500 in 1905. At the other extreme, the fastest first 1,000 peals were rung by Paul Pascoe in just under 9 years, with several others taking not much longer.



David's 1,000 peals were split evenly between tower and handbells, with 500 of each, something which very few others have done. Most people don't realise how many handbell peals are rung since they are usually rung in private houses rather than being public performances, but about 20% of all the peals rung each year are rung in hand. Even so that's only one in five, so to ring 500 of each is quite an achievement.

Most of us are never likely to ring anywhere near 1,000 peals, in fact a lot of ringers never ring peals at all. The same is true in most areas of human activity – sport, music or whatever – where a few participants perform at a high level and most perform at a more modest level (or in the case of spectator sports don't perform at all). But we can still admire and be inspired by the achievements of the minority who do achieve significant feats, even if we can't hope to equal them.

John Harrison, Chairman

Quarter Peals

Waltham St Lawrence
Thursday, 26 September
1260 Reverse Canterbury
Doubles

- 1 Vikki Bulbeck
- 2 Jacqueline Hazell (c)
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Derek R Smith
- 6 Lesley Cross

Arborfield
Thursday, 24 October
1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Michael V Boys
- 2 Nicola Lee
- 3 Darren Smith
- 4 Julian A Bedford
- 5 Vernon B Bedford (C)
- 6 Elisha T Paine

Rung in memory of Laurie Hall, a former tower captain at Arborfield Church, with over 70 years' membership of ODG.

First quarter No. 6
First quarter inside No. 4

Easthampstead
Sunday 1 December
1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Daniel Chafen
- 2 Anna Stowe
- 3 Barbara Wells
- 4 Elliott W Aldridge
- 5 Connor D J Wignall
- 6 Rachel Moss
- 7 Stephen C Wells (C)
- 8 Andrew I Mitchell

First of triples inside 4 & 5.
For Advent Carol Service

Quarter Peals

All Saints, Wokingham

Sunday, 13 October 2019

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Pamela A Elliston
- 2 Debbie McLaren
- 3 Jane A Mellor
- 4 John McLaren
- 5 Jon P Tutchner
- 6 Alan K Barsby (C)
- 7 John A Harrison
- 8 Stephen R Smith

First quarter of Triples - 2,4.
Birth compliment to Nathan Albert Christie Lee, grandson of 8.

All Saints, Wokingham

Sunday, 27 October 2019

1280 Lessness S Major

- 1 Mary Spence
 - 2 Helen M Maynard
 - 3 Stephen R Smith
 - 4 Alan K Barsby
 - 5 John A Harrison
 - 6 Steven J Field
 - 7 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
 - 8 David G Maynard
- For evening service. First in method: 3, 4, 6

All Saints, Wokingham

Sunday, 24 November 2019

1250 Johannesburg Surprise Major

- 1 Mary Spence
 - 2 Jane A Mellor
 - 3 Stephen R Smith
 - 4 Neil G Curnow
 - 5 Steven J Field
 - 6 Nigel A L Mellor (C)
 - 7 Anthony W Gordon
 - 8 John A Harrison
- For evening service

All Saints, Wokingham

Wednesday, 1 January 2020

2020 Yorkshire S Major

- 1 Julie B Goodchild
- 2 Geoffrey K Cook
- 3 Edward J W Manley
- 4 Alan K Barsby
- 5 Steven J Field
- 6 Adrian P Nash
- 7 Nigel A L Mellor
- 8 John A Harrison (C)

To welcome the New Year.
30th Date Touch - 8

Waltham St Lawrence

Thursday 10 October 2019

1260 New Bob Doubles

- 1 Rob Needham
 - 2 Vikki Bulbeck
 - 3 Lavinia Sullivan
 - 4 Anthony W Gordon
 - 5 David Sullivan (C)
 - 6 Lesley S Cross
- 1st New Bob for all.

St Marys, Twyford

Thursday 17 October

1260 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
- 2 Vikki Bulbeck
- 3 Pam Elliston
- 4 Sue Portsmouth
- 5 Lavinia Sullivan
- 6 Anthony W Gordon
- 7 David Sullivan (C)
- 8 Lesley S Cross

Finchampstead

Friday 25 October 2019

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Lavinia Sullivan
 - 2 Geoffrey M Harvey
 - 3 Anthony W Gordon
 - 4 Jacqueline Hazell
 - 5 David Sullivan (C)
 - 6 Katie Thomas
- First Quarter at first attempt - 6.
Celebrating the tenor ringer's 16th wedding anniversary.

Hurst

Friday 1 November 2019

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Rachel Leitch-Devlin
- 2 David Sullivan
- 3 Lavinia Sullivan
- 4 Holley F Wakeling (C)
- 5 Anthony W Gordon
- 6 Lesley S Cross

Waltham St Lawrence

Thursday 7 November 2019

1260 St Clements College Bob Minor

- 1 Jacqueline Hazell
 - 2 Vikki Bulbeck
 - 3 Rob Needham
 - 4 Geoffrey M Harvey
 - 5 Lavinia Sullivan
 - 6 David Sullivan (C)
- For remembrance. Rung half-muffled in memory of Lady Smith of Shottesbrooke Park a year after her death, and Emily Collett of West London Aero Club, tragically killed in a flying accident

St Marys, Twyford

Thursday 22 November

1288 Plain Bob Triples

- 1 Pam Elliston
- 2 Martha Hazell
- 3 Matthew Steele
- 4 Anthony W Gordon
- 5 Lavinia Sullivan
- 6 Jacqueline Hazell
- 7 David Sullivan (C)
- 8 Edward Owen

First on 8 and as cover - 8.

Waltham St Lawrence

Friday 29 November 2019

1260 Huntspill Bob Doubles

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

First in method for all.

Sonning

Sunday 1 December

1344 Plain Bob Major

- 1 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 2 Rob Needham
- 3 Joyce Vernon
- 4 Derek Barrett
- 5 Pam Elliston (C)
- 6 Sue Portsmouth
- 7 Lavinia Sullivan
- 8 Anthony W Gordon

First major as conductor. For Advent Carol Service

Chairman	John Harrison	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 978 5520	chairman@sdb.odg.org.uk
Ringing Master	Nigel Mellor	All Saints, Wokingham	0118 979 2037	brm@sdb.odg.org.uk
Deputy Ringing Master	Steve Wells	Easthampstead	01344 452202	dbrm@sdb.odg.org.uk
Treasurer	Sue Davenport	St Paul's, Wokingham	0118 978 6554	treasurer@sdb.odg.org.uk
Secretary	Sue Portsmouth	Sonning	0118 926 7724	secretary@sdb.odg.org.uk
Youth Officer	Rob Needham	Sonning		youth@sdb.odg.org.uk
Branch Reps	Sue Davenport & Jacquie Hazell	As above & Waltham St Lawrence	As above	committee@sdb.odg.org.uk
Bookstall	Sue Portsmouth	Sonning	07840 330392	bookstall@sdb.odg.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Alison Clayton	Sonning	0118 926 6767	editor@sdb.odg.org.uk
Webmaster	John Harrison	All Saints, Wokingham	As above	webmaster@sdb.odg.org.uk
Training Officer	Vacant			

Quarter Peals..continued

Hurst

Friday 6 December 2019
1288 St Nicholas Bob Triples
Composed by David Sullivan
1 Jacqueline Hazell
2 Jon P Tutcher
3 Lavinia Sullivan
4 Kenneth J Davenport
5 Nigel A L Mellor
6 Anthony W Gordon
7 David Sullivan (C)
8 Sue Portsmouth
For the patronal festival.

Sonning

Thursday 12 December
1280 Plain Bob Major
1 Rob Needham
2 Geoffrey M Harvey
3 Sue Portsmouth
4 Alison Clayton
5 Pam Elliston
6 Lavinia Sullivan
7 Anthony W Gordon
8 David Sullivan (C)
Before Bluecoat School carol service and in memory of David Willis, who used to ring at this tower.

Waltham St Lawrence

Friday 13 December 2019
1260 St Vedast Bob Doubles
1 Rob Needham
2 Jacqueline Hazell
3 Lavinia Sullivan
4 Anthony W Gordon
5 David Sullivan (C)
6 Lesley S Cross
1st in method for all.
In memory of David Willis, former ringer at Sonning.

St Marys, Twyford

Thursday 19 December
1288 Plain Bob Triples
1 Jacqueline Hazell
2 Pam Elliston
3 Freddie Gingell
4 Sue Portsmouth
5 Lavinia Sullivan
6 Anthony W Gordon
7 David Sullivan (C)
8 Lesley S Cross

St Marys, Twyford

Saturday 21 December
1260 Grandsire Doubles
1 Lavinia Sullivan
2 Matthew Steele
3 Holley F Wakeling
4 David Sullivan
5 Simon Farrar (C)
6 Graham Slade
First in method: 2.

Shottesbrooke

Saturday 21 December
1260 Plain Bob Minor
1 Kathryn Titford
2 Vikki E M Bulbeck
3 Matthew D P Bulbeck
4 Derek R Smith
5 Lavinia Sullivan
6 David Sullivan (C)
To celebrate Matthew's 22nd birthday and his first quarter peal inside.

Shottesbrooke

Monday 23 December
1296 Cambridge S Minor
1 Carol A M Cairns
2 Martha Hazell
3 Jacqueline Hazell
4 Vikki E M Bulbeck
5 Lavinia Sullivan
6 Maggie Ross (C)
For Vikki's Birthday today. For Christmas at Shottesbrooke.
Carol's first treble-bobbing for many years.

Wargrave

Thursday 26 December
1250 Cambridge S Major
1 Freddie Gingell
2 Kitty Gingell
3 Rebecca Gingell
4 Pam Elliston
5 J Chapman Knott (C)
6 Lavinia Sullivan
7 David Sullivan
8 Anthony W Gordon
First Cambridge Major - 2.

Wokingham St Paul

Friday 27 December
1260 Grandsire Triples
1 David Sullivan
2 Sue Davenport
3 Pam Elliston
4 Sue Portsmouth
5 Matthew Steele
6 Holley F Wakeling
7 Kenneth J Davenport (C)
8 Lavinia Sullivan
First Grandsire Triples - 5, 6.

Shottesbrooke

Monday 30 December
1260 Mixed Doubles (420 St Nicholas, 360 Winchendon Place, 240 St Simons & 240 St Martins)
1 Martha Hazell
2 Vikki E M Bulbeck
3 Jacqueline Hazell
4 Simon Smith (C)
5 Derek R Smith
6 Lesley S Cross
To mark the passing of the old year at Shottesbrooke.
Vikki's 75th Quarter Peal this year.