

Sonning Deanery Branch ODG – Reports on 2016 for 2017 AGM

NB This copy is incomplete – More reports are awaited

Branch Secretary's report

In early January, Zoe Lee, a Sonning ringer, gained her Level 1 Learning the Ropes certificate and, like Sue Portsmouth, another Sonning ringer, enjoyed ringing at other towers in the area.

At the branch AGM in February the Deputy Ringing Master, Graham Slade, stood down and Nigel Mellor was elected to the post; all other officers were re-elected. Thirteen new branch members were elected to the ODG. At the AGM, it was agreed that the branch should mount a Mini Ring Pull (a smaller version of the Big Ring Pull recruitment exercise mounted by North Bucks branch). The officers worked on organising sufficient helpers at the Show, planning the initial 'taster session' and ongoing training of recruits, and producing publicity and display materials.

Our Training Officer, Jacquie Hazell, organised branch training sessions on the first Friday of each month at Twyford. The training sessions alternated between Basic (up to Bob Minor) and Advanced (usually Surprise methods).

At the end of March, two of our younger members, Freddie and Kitty Gingell, joined other ODG youngsters for a Youth Ringing Outing with young members of the Ely Diocesan Association, and rang at towers in the Cambridge area.

To mark the Queen's 90th birthday on Thursday 21st April, the following towers rang: Binfield, Easthampstead (quarter), Sonning (quarter), 10 Finchampstead ringers (including their newest beginners), Waltham St. Lawrence (including Holley aged 12 and Kirsty aged 11).

For the St George's Day Rolling Ring, the following towers rang: Easthampstead (quarter), Sonning, Waltham St. Lawrence, Warfield, Wargrave, All Saints Wokingham (quarter).

On the first day of May Sue Portsmouth achieved her first quarter peal at her first attempt by ringing the treble to Plain Bob Doubles.

In the small hours of Tuesday 24th May, Andrew Elliston passed away. Andrew was a very staunch supporter of Sonning, his home tower, other towers in Sonning Deanery

Branch, and indeed towers in neighbouring branches. He did an enormous amount of ringing in the area, helped with training, and was also steeple keeper (maintenance) at Sonning. He will be much missed.

In June Sue Portsmouth of Sonning achieved her Level 3 of the ART Learning the Ropes scheme; her final element to gain the award was covering to a quarter of Plain Bob Doubles on 12th June.

Five towers in the Branch have formed an ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) grouping called the Loddon Hub – ringing teachers in the Hub help each other with training and promote the use of the ART Learning the Ropes training system. The towers are: Sonning, Twyford, Waltham St Lawrence, Wargrave and Hurst.

On the final weekend of June the Branch ran a Mini Ring Pull recruitment exercise at the Hurst Show, using the Charmborough Ring for the whole weekend. Around 24 SDB ringers over the weekend helped with morning and afternoon sessions by demonstrating ringing, helping members of the public to have a go, and answering questions about bells and ringing. We held three taster sessions at Twyford during the 10 weeks following the Show, nine 'students' attended, and one plus two returning ringers are now ringing.

In August Kitty and Freddie Gingell, two young ringers at Wargrave, passed Level 3 of the Learning the Ropes system. In November they passed their Level 4; congratulations to them for their rapid progress under their ringing teacher Vinni Sullivan.

At the joint 8-bell striking competition in October between Reading and Sonning Deanery branches we were well beaten – Reading teams came first, second and third and fourth was the only SDB team, Wokingham All Saints.

The following week was the Branch Outing, organised by Pam Elliston, to five towers in the north of Basingstoke area. In addition to all members of our branch, members of neighbouring ringing areas also were invited.

Rob Needham

Ringling Master's report

Saturday Branch Practices have been held each month and seven Tuesday afternoons at Binfield. Wokingham AS has been holding regular Surprise Major practices throughout the year. An average of 11 people attended the Binfield practices and 11 at the Saturday practices. Morning, afternoon and evening practices were equally well attended. We are grateful to those towers for letting us ring.

Three towers entered the 6-bell Striking Competition at Binfield in April with Sonning, Wokingham AS and Easthampstead coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. Sonning were unable to raise a band for the Guild 6-bell competition so Wokingham AS entered coming fifth.

In June, the Branch hired the Charmborough ring for the Hurst Show as a publicity and recruitment exercise. Many thanks to all who helped.

The joint Sonning Deanery and Reading branches 8-Bell Striking Competition was held at Twyford in October. Four teams entered. The results were: 1st Reading (St Mary's and

St Lawrence's), 2nd Tilehurst, 3rd Reading (a scratch band) and 4th Wokingham All Saints.

On October 15th, Pam Elliston organised a Branch Outing to the Basingstoke area: Baughurst, Monk Sherborne, Sherborne St John, Bramley and Silchester. Many thanks to Pam.

26 Quarter Peals have been recorded for the Branch during the year, 5 peals and 2 date touches (2016). In the Quarter Peals, 16 "firsts" have been scored. Congratulations to all.

Several towers are receiving help from the Branch to assist in teaching people to ring bells and to develop their band's capabilities. This is a long term commitment and we are grateful to those ringers who now support other towers on a regular basis.

My I express my thanks to everyone who has supported Branch ringing activities throughout the year. If we can do any more to support your tower or your own ringing, you only have to ask and we will see what we can do.

Steve Wells

Training Officer's report

During 2016 six Training Practices took place, in January, February, March, April, May and August. Five practices were held at Twyford, and one at Waltham St Lawrence.

Each practice had two or three 'learners', who 'signed-up' in advance, and quite a few 'helpers'.

One practice was rounds and call changes. Four practices were Cambridge/Yorkshire. One practice was Bristol.

I hope 'learners' have found the practices useful, and we are grateful to the 'helpers' for their support.

I now hand over the role to somebody else

Jacquie Hazell (Training Officer)

Bookstall Holder's report

In October I 'inherited' the Bookstall from the previous bookstall officers, Pam & Andrew Elliston. Because their computer had been hacked earlier in the year and the hard drive wiped, there was no complete and up to date record of the Bookstall. I did a stock-take and valuation of the stock and brought an old version of the bookstall spreadsheet as up-to-date as I could.

The cash balance (float) that I inherited was £27.52 and the total value of stock (at the prices then known) was £303.14. Some of this stock will never get sold; there are a lot of old, out-of-date publications, and others have been superseded by online publications or applications. I estimate that at least £81.50 of stock will never sell.

The bookstall is effectively just an 'at cost' service to members of the branch; the bookstall cannot make a profit. It enables members to browse what books, leaflets, badges and

CDs are available, and it saves members the task of ordering items themselves.

This report covers the year from 2016 AGM to just before the 2017 AGM. The finances of the bookstall operation during the year are as follows:

Inherited cash balance (Oct 2016)	£27.52
Sales during year	£44.43
Purchases during year	£59.94
Expenses	£0.00
Closing cash balance	£15.27

The total value of stock at year-end (at latest prices) is £311.29.

Rob Needham

Accounts

Sonning Deanery Branch Accounts Year To December 31 2016

AGM Balance Sheet

<u>General fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Subs	£1,294.00	
Teas, Striking comp.	£15.50	
Donation Hurst Show	£150.00	
Interest		
Subs to guild		£805.00
Competition Judges		£30.98
Newsletter		£88.00
Postage, stationery etc		£6.60
Hurst Show		£640.81
General fund totals	<u>£1,459.50</u>	<u>£1,571.39</u>
Carry over of 2015 balances	£1,823.68	
General fund balance	<u>£1,711.79</u>	

<u>Bell fund</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Interest	£19.95	
Fundraising	£56.70	
Bell fund 2016 totals	<u>£76.65</u>	<u>£0.00</u>
Carry over of 2015 balances	£3,284.94	
Bell fund balance	<u>£3,361.59</u>	

Total Branch Funds £5,073.38

Signed: S. Davenport


Treasurer

I certify that these accounts are in accordance with the books, statements and vouchers given to me by the Treasurer. No matter has come to my attention that gives me grounds for concern.

Signed: I M Davis FCIS


Examiner

Webmaster/Postmaster's Report

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year. The main changes have been details and/or pictures of events, keeping the diary up to date and adding newsletters.

The site includes full contact details for officers, an on-line diary, contact details for towers (organised by practice night, number of bells and map), details of training courses, full list of all Branch and Guild services, copies of all newsletters since 2005, reference documents, reports and pictures of events, the history of the Branch, and a list of useful ringing links. The website is at: odg.org.uk/sdb/

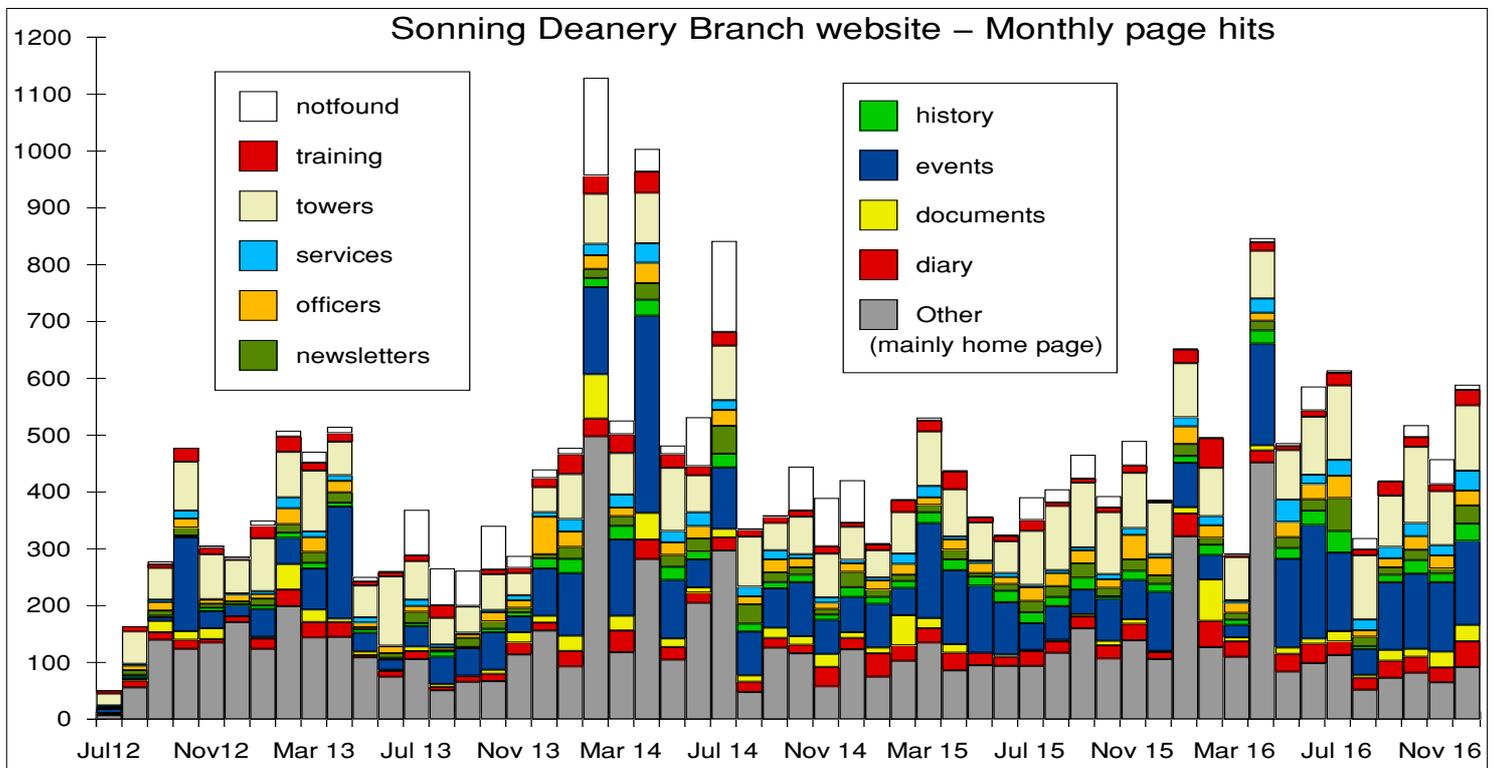
Last year I couldn't present any statistics for usage because the monitoring on the Guild server had not worked since 2014. That has now been restored, along with the missing data logs so we have a complete record since monitoring began in mid 2012. I have therefore done a more thorough analysis than in previous years.

Traffic in 2016 has more than doubled since 2012, to around 6,500 page hits per year (18 hits per day compared with 9 hits per day). That shows the site being used more.

The graph below shows the number of page hits each month, coloured according to topic. Traffic for 'events' (dark blue) and 'towers' (buff) has been consistently high.

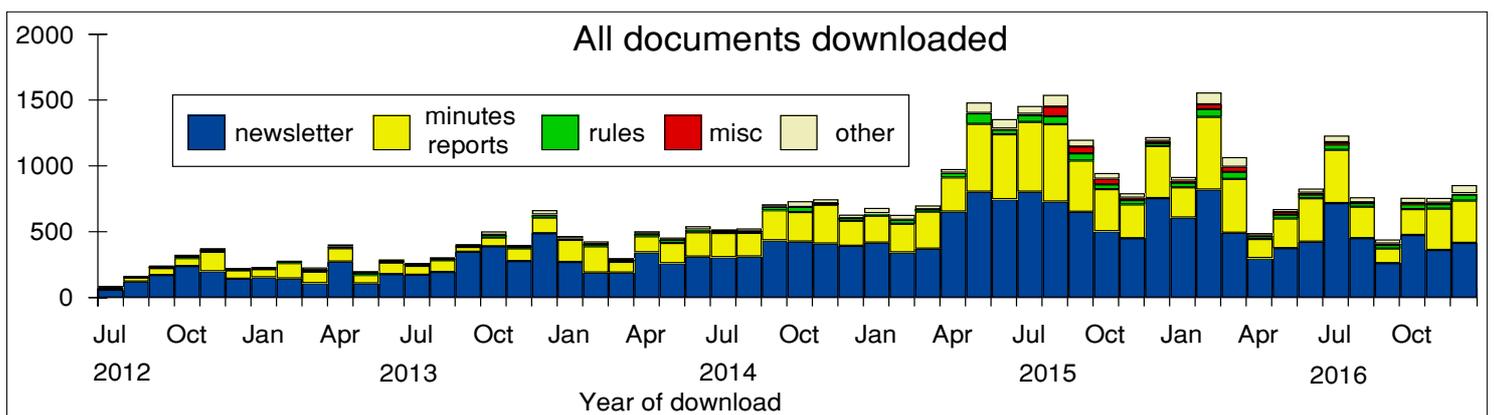
The white bars represent hits on the 'not found' page. That may mean someone mistypes the address but I suspect there may be faulty links on other websites, possibly to pages that existed before the major redesign in 2010.

The large number of hits on 'other' are mostly on the home page.



Page hits from mid 2012 to end 2016

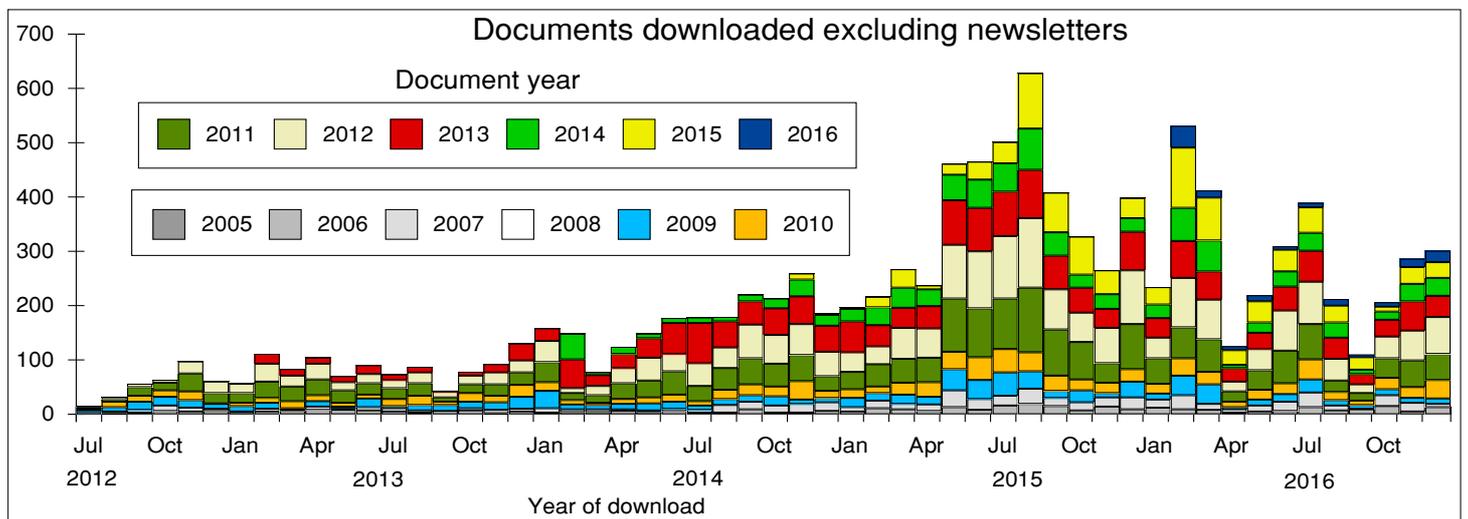
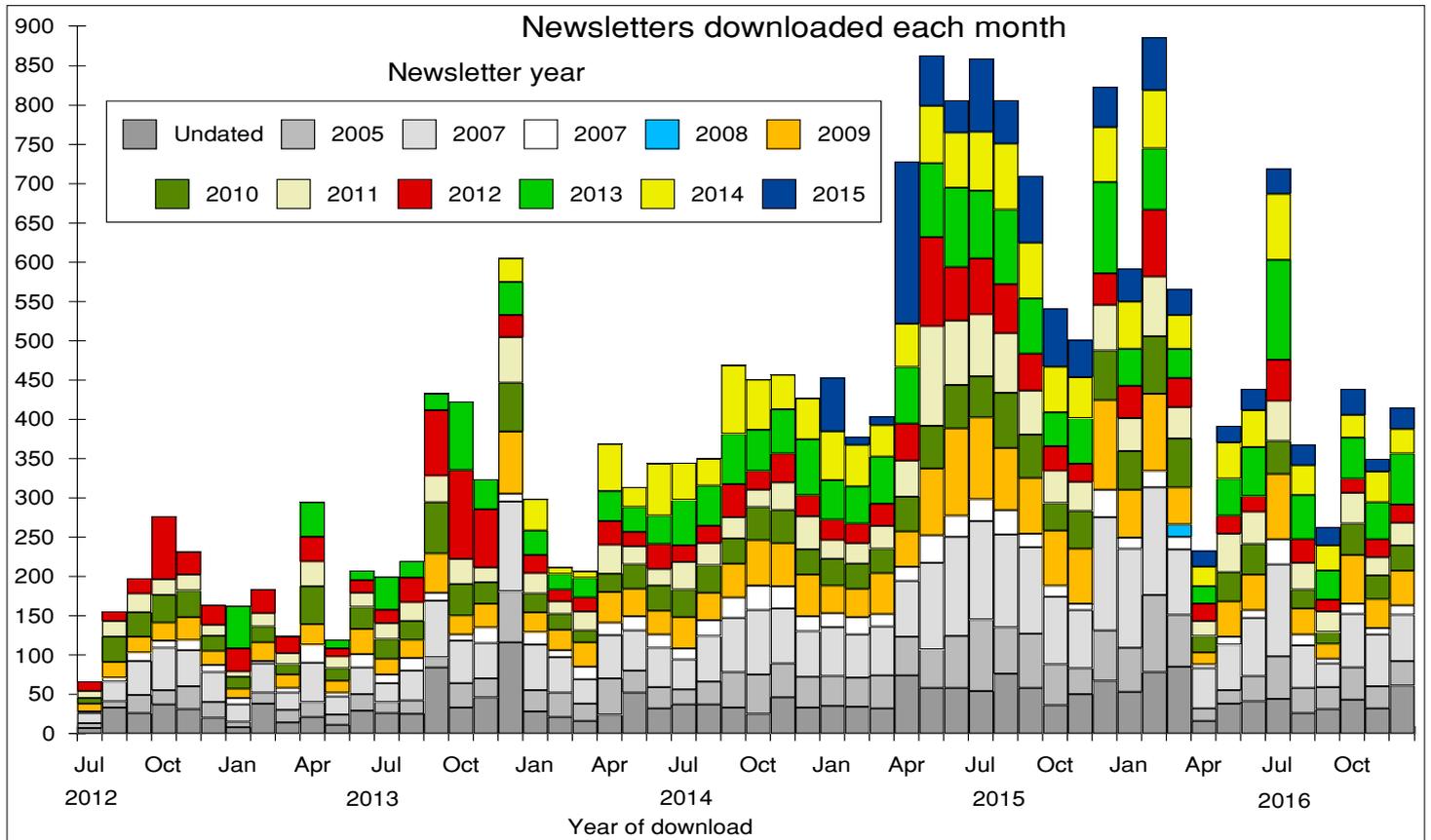
This year for the first time I have analysed documents downloaded as well as page hits.



In 2016 there were over 10,000 document downloads, more than half of them newsletters. But they weren't limited to documents from the current year – many from previous years were also downloaded.

There were just under 600 downloads of 2016 newsletters in 2016 – about what you would expect if most members downloaded all four. But the rest (90%) of newsletters were from previous years – back to 2005. Other documents are not all dated, but of those that are, many from previous years were also downloaded.

Some of the downloads may be by people other than our members but it isn't possible to say how many.



E-mail lists – I manage four Branch e-mail lists (Members, Officers, Towers & Wedding volunteers) and I provide support if needed to the separately managed the tower lists – currently Twyford, Warfield and Wokingham All Saints. (Easthampstead has a list unused since 2011.)

The members list has 166 addresses (152, 141, 136 in last three years). This is similar to the number of members, though the list includes a few nonmembers. I try to keep the addresses up to date and complete, but rely on information provided.

John Harrison