

Sonning Deanery Branch ODG – Reports on 2021 for 2022 AGM

Branch Secretary's report

At the AGM on 20th February, held online via Zoom, all Branch Officers remained in post with the exception that Rob Needham stood down as the Youth Officer and Alison Clayton stood down as Newsletter Editor. Holley Wakeling was duly elected as Youth Officer, and Rob Needham as Newsletter Editor. No new members were elected this year. After the AGM we held a short social quiz followed by a practice on Ringing Room.

Before tower ringing started up again, All Saints Wokingham were ringing handbells outside for Sunday service. They also rang a number of handbell quarters, including on 11th and 17th April in memoriam of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. A number of towers also rang in memoriam; Arborfield, Easthampstead, Hurst, Sonning, Wargrave, and Wokingham All Saints rang 99 Tolling half-muffled. White Waltham rang Nine Tailors and 99 Tolling. Prior to the funeral on 17th April, half-muffled tolling by Binfield, Easthampstead, Sonning, Twyford, Wargrave, White

Waltham and Wokingham all Saints. A number of towers rang on the eve of the COP26 Conference on 30th October at 6pm, including Sonning and St Paul's Wokingham.

There were no branch practices for most of the year, other than elementary practices on Ringing Room. However, we have recently successfully run both Advance (Surprise) (Hurst) and Elementary (Binfield) practices, and all regular branch practices are now back on the schedule.

Sadly, two branch members passed away this year; Arthur Moss, August 2021 and Mary Spence, December 2021. Both were ringers at Wokingham, All. Saints.

There has been little opportunity for recruitment of new learners, however Sonning recruited one new member, and Binfield and Wokingham All Saints have both recruited three new learners. One from Binfield sadly dropped out, but the other two are progressing well.

Jan Glen

Ringing Master's report

No branch ringing occurred during the first half of the year due to the national lockdown. I did though organise three Elementary Virtual practices that took place in April, May and June which were attended on average by 8 people. Once ringing had fully resumed in July, I stopped organising these virtual practices on the basis that we would resume our normal practices.

To help understand how the pandemic had affected ringing in our branch in August I organised a review of each tower. Most towers reported a loss of ringers and approximately half were unable to ring all their bells. Based on the feedback I received from our tower correspondents I made the following recommendation:

- Resumption of all branch practices (Binfield daytime, Elementary, Surprise, Monthly)
- Branch practices organised at 'Covid friendly' towers
- Consider sponsoring an ART handling training course to increase the number of people in the branch who can teach bell handling
- Develop a branch recruitment campaign for new or returning ringers

These recommendations were reviewed during the November business meeting where it was agreed we would resume branch practices. We also agreed to run our regular practices with a specific focus, e.g. Plain doubles, minor or major methods, as well as continuing with the Elementary and Advanced practices. Our Advanced practices resumed in November and December at Hurst which is a relatively 'Covid' friendly tower.

Ringing resumed in some of our branch churches when restrictions were lifted in May and the first quarter peal rung

was at Waltham St. Lawrence on the 10th June. In total 27 quarter peals were recorded in the branch with the leading churches being All Saints Wokingham and Shottesbrooke, each recording 9 quarter peals.

Nigel Mellor

Quarter peals rung in the Branch during 2021

10 Jun	Waltham St Lawrence	Plain Bob Doubles
27 Jun	Wokingham St Paul	Doubles (2m)
12 Jul	Wokingham All Saints	Cambridge Surprise Minor
18 Aug	Shottesbrooke	Plain Bob Doubles
23 Aug	Shottesbrooke	Plain Bob Doubles
25 Aug	Shottesbrooke	Grandsire Doubles
2 Sep	Sonning	Plain Bob Doubles
4 Sep	Shottesbrooke	Grandsire Doubles
19 Sep	Wokingham All Saints	Yorkshire Surprise Major
26 Sep	Wokingham All Saints	Rutland Surprise Major
26 Sep	Easthampstead	Plain Bob Doubles
6 Oct	Shottesbrooke	Doubles (2m)
9 Oct	Wokingham All Saints	Yorkshire Surprise Major
10 Oct	Wokingham All Saints	Cambridge Surprise Major
30 Oct	Sonning	Plain Bob Doubles
31 Oct	Wokingham St Paul	Grandsire Triples
31 Oct	Wokingham All Saints	Grandsire Triples
3 Nov	Shottesbrooke	Plain Bob Doubles
7 Nov	Sonning	Plain Bob Doubles
7 Nov	Wokingham All Saints	Plain Bob Major
14 Nov	Shottesbrooke	Grandsire Doubles
14 Nov	Wokingham All Saints	Grandsire Triples
14 Nov	Wokingham St Paul	Grandsire Triples
17 Nov	Shottesbrooke	Stedman Doubles
28 Nov	Shottesbrooke	Plain Bob Doubles
28 Nov	Wokingham All Saints	Plain Bob Major
28 Dec	Twyford	Grandsire Doubles

Treasurer's Report

As can be seen from the Balance Sheet the only income received in 2021 was £805.00 for subs. This was for Guild subs. only as the Branch decided at the last AGM not to include the Branch portion.

The only expenditure was for the Branch Newsletter.

Interest on the deposit account has fallen in line with the current rates.

I have been unable to have the accounts examined due to illness of the Examiner and not time to try and find someone else.

Sue Davenport

Accounts for 2021

General Fund	Income	Expenditure
Subs	£805.00	
Branch outing	£0.00	
Teas	£0.00	
Subs to Guild		£805.00
Competition judges		£0.00
Newsletter		£80.00
Postage, stationery, etc		£0.00
Hurst Show		£0.00
General fund totals	£805.00	
Carry over 2020 balances	£3,195.93	
General fund balance	£3,115.93	

Bell fund	Income	Expenditure
Interest	£4.81	
Donation	£0.00	
Tower grants		£100.00
Bell fund 2021 totals	£4.81	£100.00
Carry over 2020 balances	£2,479.55	
Bell fund balance	£2,384.36	

Actual Branch funds	£5,500.29	
----------------------------	------------------	--

Training Officer's report

Since the lock down of 2020 very little training has been planned due to restrictions although towers have stayed connected with Zoom & Ringing Room with most towers re-convening to ring on Sundays and practice from July 2021.

Nigel Mellor, Ringing Master, has recently restarted Branch practices with the Surprise practice at Hurst, the daytime and evening monthly Elementary practices at Binfield. Initially the Surprise practices were well received and the ringers at the recent Elementary practice showed clear enthusiasm for learning.

John Harrison has organised a Steeple Keeper course at Twyford on Saturday 19th February.

Jane is organising focussed handling sessions with elementary ringers who have shown an interest and continues to teach at All Saints with their new ringers.

ART, Association of Ringing Teachers observed through a survey of their Champions network a lack of available teachers, so are encouraging ringers who are competent

teachers to consider apprenticeships or assistant teachers to give people more confidence to go on and become teachers. They have also suggested mentors and support groups to target teaching. ART is very busy with training courses now restrictions have been lifted.

Sonning Branch Officers need to decide how we will move forward with the results of the survey with how and where to target specific training.

Resources:

The Central Council has a comprehensive collection of training resources on their website:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/resources/learning-development/>

The Association Of Ringing Teachers have their Survival and Recovery Toolkit for all ringers, teachers and tower captains.

<http://ringingteachers.org/survival-and-recovery-toolbox>

You will also find their newsletters and Tower Talk Magazine by learners for learners here too.

Jane Mellor

Branch representatives to the Guild

The ODG general Committee meeting took place in March, and the AGM in May – both online. Of course, the actual ringing life of the Guild has been severely curtailed, although some places are now almost back to normal, whereas others continue to be very cautious.

I would say that the most important thing for SDB leaders and members to keep up with are the requirements for Safeguarding. These keep changing in a way that can be most confusing. However, June Wells (ODG Safeguarding Officer) has done her best to inform everyone of the latest

situation – and she is the person to contact if you're not sure of what to do.

Although the CofE has an overall policy, there is a fair amount that is now decided locally (in our case, by the Diocese of Oxford) so it is important to be clear about the ODG and Diocese advice that applies to us.

The Guild subs will remain at £8 (£5 + £3).

The Guild hopes to be able to restart courses and other activities during 2022.

Jacquie Hazell & Sue Davempport.

Youth Officer's report

Sonning Deanery young ringers have made a steady comeback from the pandemic in the last year.

At least 5 ringers who regularly ring in the Sonning Deanery were members of the Bucks and Berks Young Ringers' team at the RWNYC in Worcester in September, with more attending practices and coming along as a 'fan base'. Many thanks to the adult helpers who attended some of the practices in the run up to the Youth Contest, and the churches we rang at from across EBSB and SDB.

In terms of regular youth practices there has been some

enthusiasm among the young ringers but as of yet not enough core ringers to warrant a regular SDB-only practice, and as such we have teamed up with the EBSB young ringers.

Our next big event as the Bucks and Berks young ringers is our annual joint outing with the Surrey Strikers on the 26th Feb, this year wonderfully organised by Peter Jasper, the EBSB youth officer. Any young ringer interested in attending can email me at: youth@sdb.odg.org.uk and I will pass on the details of the event.

Holley Wakeling

Bookstall Holder's report

Unsurprisingly, there is nothing significant to report for 2021 in respect of the Bookstall

The bookstall is simply an 'at cost' service to members of the branch and cannot make a profit. It enables members to browse what books, etc. are available, and it can save members the task of ordering items themselves.

With the advances in on-line purchasing, I do not believe that the bookstall can expand any further, but it does still appear to offer a useful service.

I also have copies of two Whiting Society publications, written by Stuart I. Bamforth, which are available for members to peruse.

- An Introduction to Ringing Multi-Method Doubles – Doubles Series – Book 1
- A Compendium of Plain Doubles Methods – Doubles Series – Book 2

A copy of the Diagrams book in spiral bound A4 format is also available; this is much easier to read than the small

hardback format. I have now sold the copy that was held in the bookstall and am happy to order more if required. As it costs £25, it may be more appropriate as a tower purchase rather than for an individual.

The Little Purple Ringing Book published by *The Ringing World* (listed below) is very interesting and practical, so if anyone would like a copy please let me know.

If anyone has suggestions as to what other publications could usefully be held, I shall be pleased to receive them.

Sue Portsmouth

Opening cash balance	£ 9.97
Sales during year	£ 35.00
Purchases during year	£ (20.00) – 2 x Progress Card packs) £ (15.00) – 2 x Little Purple Ringing Book – A5 version
Expenses	£ 0.00
Closing cash balance	£ 9.97

Safeguarding report

I agreed to qualify the safeguarding updates for the Branch.

I have liaised with June Wells the ODG Safeguarding Officer who has provided the following training requirements having negotiated with the Diocese in December but things had to be 'rubber stamped' by the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel which happened mid January 2022.

Discussions between the CCCBR and the House of Bishops occurred last Autumn which resulted in a sensible change to the training requirements for tower captains. This was agreed with the proviso that the detail be discussed at a local level between ringing associations and Diocese.

Andrew Goldsworthy, our webmaster, has already updated the ODG website with the current update, although the CCCBR website still reads 2019.

Please see the ODG safeguarding documents: <https://odg.org.uk/safeguarding/> which includes:

- Training requirements
- Safeguarding Checklist
- ODG Safeguarding Policy Statement

In summary, the training requirements for ringers are as follows:

- All ringers should complete the online Basic Awareness module (formerly C0)
- Tower Captains need the online Foundation module (formerly C1) also

C2 and C3 have now been combined into Leadership which is a face to face course. Safeguarding Leads, leaders of Guild youth groups and anyone else asked to do so by their parish should book on to one of these courses through the Diocesan website.

Courses need to be renewed every 3 years.

The online modules are available on the C of E training portal. <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>

With regard to the Leadership Course Tower Captains will only be asked to do this if your parish feels that you have a significant impact on safeguarding in the Church community. Please book for these on <https://www.oxford.anglian.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/>

Please liaise with your church's safeguarding Officer for this decision.

Jane Mellor

Webmaster/Postmaster's Report

Website – The website has been kept up to date throughout the year. Little has been added apart from Newsletters. Tower and officer contact details have been updated whenever I was made aware of any changes.

The website includes contact details for officers, an events diary, information and contact details for Branch towers, information on services offered by the Branch including training courses, newsletters, reference documents, reports and pictures of events, history of the Branch and useful links.

When the Guild added a new page to its website listing details of all Guild towers I reconciled several differences between that and our website. That included checking information on Dove (and its source) and contacting tower correspondents to reconcile any discrepancies. Both sites are now more accurate than they were.

I updated the diary page based on rolling forward 'normal activity' from the previous year, but with everything marked as suspended apart from online events. I expected to reactivate entries when ringing opened up but in the event only a couple of in-person practices were held towards the end of the year.

The website is at: odg.org.uk/sdb/

E-mail services – I manage the Branch e-mail lists: Members, Officers, Towers, Wedding volunteers and Quarter peal volunteers. I also support Holley with management of the Young Ringers e-mail list.

As promised last year I went through the members mailing list removing members who had left (and were not known to retain an interest in Branch activity). This reduced the list from nearly 200 to just under 160.

As well as members the list includes non members who regularly ring in the Branch, and former members who have opted to remain in touch.

The Wedding Volunteer list was used once during 2021 but the Quarter Peal Volunteers list has not been used since before the pandemic.

I provide occasional support if needed to the tower lists, which are separately managed by each tower. Currently these are: Arborfield, Twyford, Warfield, and Wokingham All Saints.

The lists trap any spam so I can deal with it before it reaches members. The amount of spam to Branch addresses is relatively low.

For details of e-mail services see: odg.org.uk/sdb/services/email.html

John Harrison