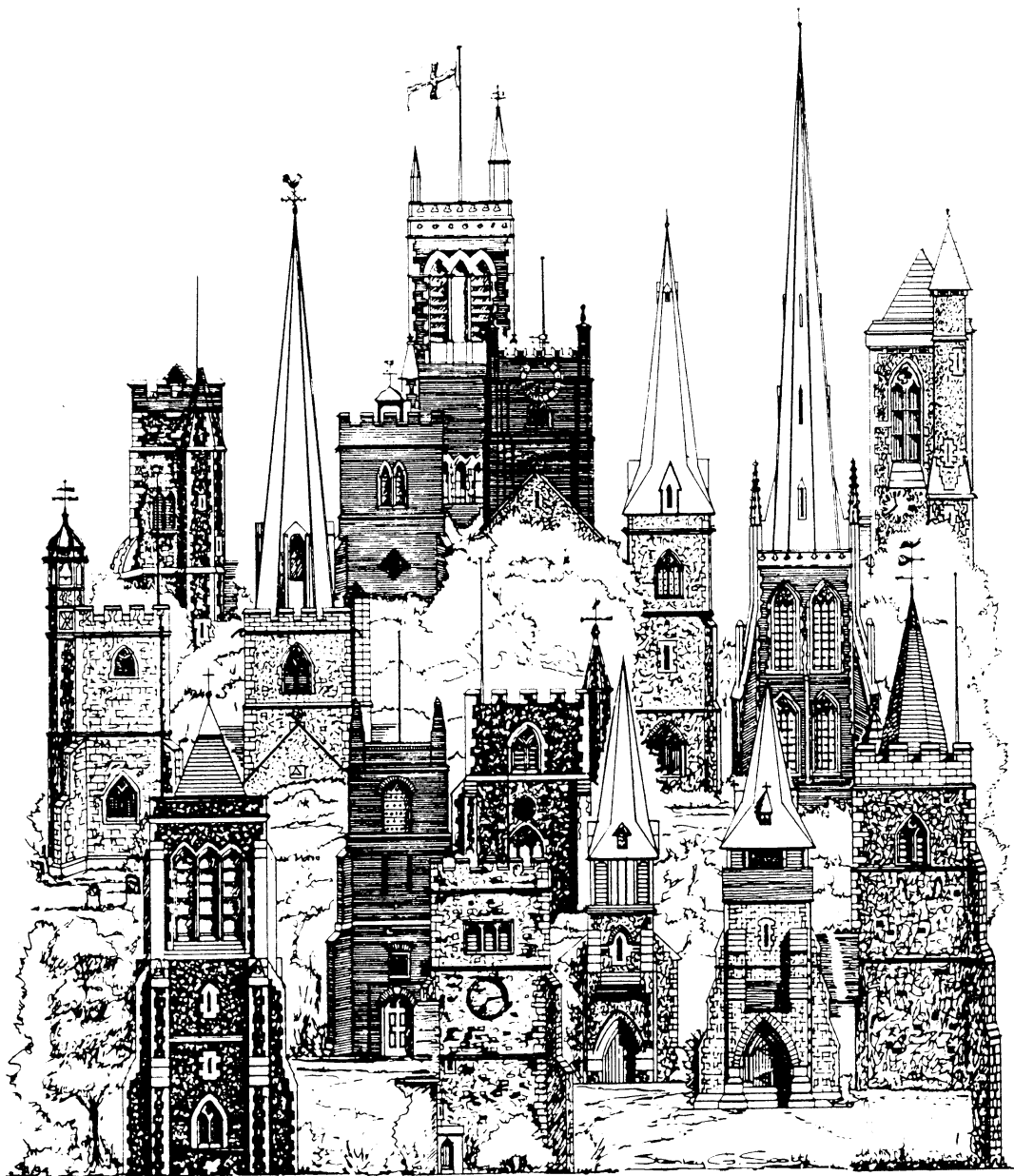


Sonning Deanery Branch

NEWSLETTER

April 2006



Oxford Diocesan Guild
of Church Bell Ringers

Ringling Master's Wotsits

Hello everybody, and Happy Easter!

Many towers have new recruits. This is fantastic! However, I realise that teaching new recruits is difficult, and requires lots of time and patience from learners, teachers and other ringers. If you need any help with anything concerning teaching etc, please ask!

There were 14 people at the last Branch practice at Warfield. We rang lots of called changes, some Grandsire and some Stedman (as well as some Cambridge Major). I was disappointed to hear that several people were thinking of coming along, but didn't because they were worried about ringing on 10. There's really nothing to be scared of! And that goes for any Branch event – the other ringers in the Branch are just like you! If you turn up, I can guarantee that we will ring something for you. Which reminds me, there is a Branch practice on Saturday April 22nd at 6:30pm at White Waltham – please come!

Striking Competition

Personally, I think that a striking competition should be mainly a social event, with a bit of ringing for fun. It's an opportunity to ring some different bells, hear (and be part of!) some good ringing, meet other ringers and have tea together.

This year's six-bell striking competition is at White Waltham on the 22nd April. The draw will be at 4pm. So far, I'm aware of about eight towers which would like to enter the competition. However, none of them definitely have a team! If you would like to be part of a team, but your tower can't manage a full team (even though a tower band can have one member from another tower), please do let me know, and we can make up bands. Remember that you can ring plain courses, called changes or even rounds. White Waltham has very nice bells, so please come and ring them!

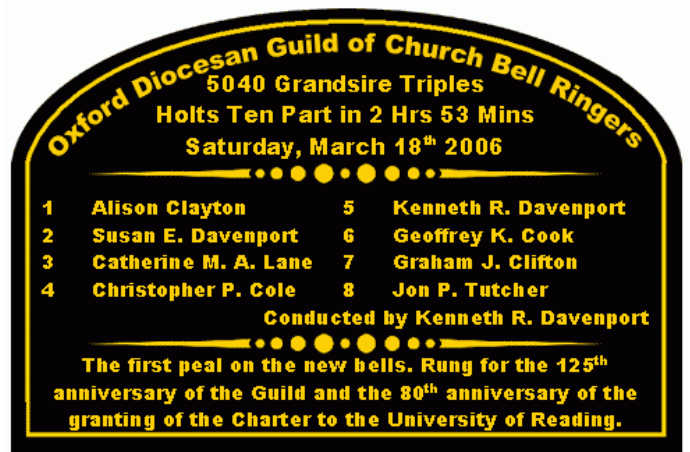
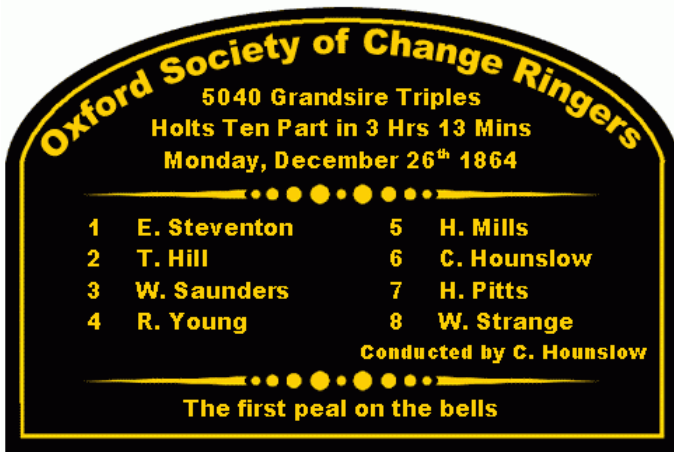
WOKINGHAM ST. PAUL

The new bells (details below) were dedicated on Monday 20th February 2006. Service ringing began on the 25th February with a quarter peal by members of the local band plus other regular Sunday service ringers.

The New Bells

Bell	Dedication	Cwt	qr	lb
Treble	Our Lady	4	2	24
2	St Frideswide	4	3	26
3	St Birinus	5	1	11
4	St Matthias	5	2	24
5	St Alban	6	3	25
6	St John the Baptist	8	2	14
7	St Nicholas	11	0	7
Tenor	St Paul	15	2	7

On Saturday 18th March 2006 the first peal on the new bells was rung. This was Holts Ten Part Grandsire Triples, emulating the first peal on the original bells in December 1864. This peal was also rung as a 125th anniversary peal of the founding of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers. It was intended to call the peal from the same bell position as the original peal but the conductor was unable to count correctly.



Easthampstead Mini-Outing

St Michael's, Sandhurst

6 BELLS

In this tower the bells were hard to pull from the balance. They were much bouncier than the ones at Easthampstead and also lighter. We rang a few rounds here and then as soon as we had started we had to go to the next tower.

RATING: GOOD

St James', Finchampstead

6 BELLS

In this tower the bells were bouncy and loose to pull off from the balance and they were the easiest to ring.

RATING: AVERAGE

St Peter's, Yateley

8 BELLS

This tower had easy bells to ring but they were bouncy and hard to pull off. They had a mini bell model that actually worked. Josh and I played with that most of the time we were there.

RATING: VERY GOOD

Tom Kemp

We organised a mini-outing to give our two young learners, Tom and Josh a chance to ring on other bells and this is what Tom thought.

Daniel Chafen

P.S. If I find the photos I might put them in next month's edition.

Tales from the recent ODG General Committee Meeting

The meeting was held at Wingrave on Saturday 11 March.

It was confirmed that, as suggested at the previous meeting, the Finance & General Purposes subcommittee would now set the methods for the Guild 8-bell and 10-bell striking competitions. Brian Newman and Barry Cowper were elected to the vacant places on this subcommittee.

Bobbie May is proposing to dispose of the old display boards, as they are cumbersome and dangerous – likely to trap fingers or fall onto people. She has obtained quotes for new ones which seem reasonable and are less than the £200 budgeted at the previous meeting. The Chairman wanted to know the exact figure before giving consent, but the Treasurer said it was OK to progress with the purchase. Bobbie is unwilling to continue as PR officer, and expressed the opinion that future PR should be entrusted to a subcommittee rather than a single officer. Other officers wishing not to continue were General Secretary Nigel Harrison and Jim Diserens, Guild Steward for the region comprising the Reading, S Oxon and Old North Berks branches.

The Chairman read a letter from the Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire requesting that the Queen's 80th birthday on 21 April be celebrated by the ringing community, with the ringing of peals and quarters. Christ Church in Oxford would be ringing for a special evensong.

This year, the Easthampstead Course will not take place because the cost would have been around £200 per head. In an attempt to fill the gap, an Advanced Training Day is being organised at Shiplake for 30 September, to start at 9.15 and include an evening meal. The Church and college classrooms are to be used for tutorials on Surprise Minor, Surprise Major and above-basic 8-bell ringing. Conference centres and universities had been investigated as possible venues for a residential course but these were too expensive. Boarding schools might be a possibility ... but perhaps after 33 years the Guild has outgrown the concept of a full weekend course. Jim Diserens reminisced about the very first Easthampstead course: subsidised by the council, it cost £6.10.0 and was for leaders.

The Guild Annual Report will be ready for distribution around the end of March.

The peal arranged to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Guild had failed, and another attempt was imminent at St Laurence in Reading. Good progress had been made towards organising and publicising the Festival on 8 July: there would be a Eucharist in the morning, lunch at St Aldate's Parish Centre, and cream teas at St Giles. Individual invitations in envelopes addressed to all Guild members had been created at a cost of £365 + VAT.

An attempt is being made to produce an article on Communication within the Guild for Odd Bob, making recommendations and inviting feedback from members.

Two additions were made to the existing Diary of Events: the Steeple Aston course would be held on Saturday 4 November; the Autumn General Committee Meeting hosted by Banbury branch would be held at Mollington.

Any Other Business largely concerned the Guild logo and its poor quality on the website.

Andrew and Pam Elliston, Branch Reps.

St. Andrew's, Sonning Annual Dinner

Nobody got drunk. nothing was broken, and I can remember enough to write this short article -call that a proper dinner?



We held the St. Andrew's annual dinner at the Green Man at Hurst on Thursday 16th March - Thursday being our usual practice night. The dinner proved to be a good social event; we had 13 members of our band plus 11 supporters. With 24 diners we took over the whole of a room at the pub, which gave a good self-contained feel to the meal (particularly when it was in the stomach!).



The Green Man coped well with us all ordering a la carte, and we all enjoyed our meal as you can see from the empty plates in the photos! Best of all the speeches were kept to a minimum; Rob Needham briefly welcomed the joiners to the band over the last year and that was that.

Rob Needham

OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

SONNING DEANERY BRANCH

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Sonning on Saturday 18 February 2006

Sue Davenport was in the chair and extended a welcome to Jon Chamberlain (Guild Master), Nigel Harrison (Guild Sec.) and Bobbie May (Guild PRO).

Apologies were received from: Chris Brown, David Sullivan, Derek Titford, Elizabeth French, Judith Burbidge.

The Minutes of the previous AGM held on Saturday 19 February 2005 were approved and signed after the following amendment: the name of the new member elected for Easthampstead changed from Andrew Mann to Andrew Moss.

Officers Reports

These are filed in the branch archives where a paper copy is available, and a summary of them is given below.

Treasurer The inspected accounts for 2005 were circulated to the meeting. The negative balance, £1948.34, of income over expenditure was largely due to a £1500 payment towards the All Saints, Wokingham restoration project and a £1500 payment towards the Finchampstead restoration project. The closing bank balance as at 31 December 2005 was £1278.10. The accounts were approved; proposer Daniel Chafen, seconder Andrew Moss.

The Treasurer explained that he will issue receipts for membership fees to those towers that request them.

It was agreed by the meeting that the treasurer should keep track of funds separately for: the 'General' fund and the 'Restoration' fund but that all monies for both funds would be held in one bank account; proposer Steve Wells, seconder Nigel Bearne. The Treasurer will apportion the interest on the account to the two funds pro rata.

At present there is just one cheque signatory. It was agreed that there should be three signatories with any two from three to sign cheques. The three signatories are specified in the proposed rules as Treasurer, Secretary and Chairman.

Secretaries The report was circulated to the meeting. The correspondence secretary corrected the paragraph about the 8-bell striking competition and there were no further matters arising.

Ringling Master The report was read out by the RM, Rachel Moss. Attendance at standard Branch Practices had averaged about 12 members. The RM felt that she had lacked support from the branch and offered her best wishes to those who follow.

Branch Representatives Andrew and Pam Elliston circulated to the meeting a comprehensive report which Andrew read out. Insurance has been extended to cover a greater age range of ringers at no increase in cost. Child Protection policy is in a comprehensive book and on the diocesan web site. Subs to remain at £5.50. Peal fees remain at 35p per ringer. The 2006 Guild Festival is at Oxford on July 8th and it is hoped that members will support it as this year is the 125th anniversary of the ODG.

The ODG Master pointed out that there would be about 8 Oxford towers available for ringing at the Guild Festival, and that the preacher at the service in the cathedral will be the Bishop of Buckingham. He urged all members to attend.

Training Co-ordinator John Harrison gave a verbal report. He ran a Listening course and a Rope Splicing course at the start of the year. In the summer, he ran a series of three courses on Raising and Lowering in Peal, for Shottesbrooke. He intends to send out another call for training needs soon, including e-mail, which he hopes will produce a better response than to the previous call. Most of the needs from that call have been met, apart from a few people where only one or two people wanted a topic, and a course was not viable. He has emailed all members on the distribution

list (about 80 at the time) about support for daytime ringing practices and received 5 positive replies. Extrapolated to the whole branch, he felt that such practices were probably viable.

Louise Marshall asked the minimum number for a course, and commented that even if only one or two people wanted training, they should be accommodated, perhaps by experienced ringers visiting their tower to help with a particular method. John replied that there was no minimum number for a course – it depended on the topic. Most requests were not for help with methods.

Rob Needham, on behalf of Chris Brown, asked about the cancellation of the Easthampstead course; the ODG Master said that the price had increased from about £140 to £200 at short notice just before the booking had to be made for the venue. The ODG PRO, Bobbie May, pointed out that the Easthampstead course was only in abeyance for 2006 and another venue will be sought for 2007. In addition an Advanced Training day will be arranged on the same weekend as Easthampstead (30th Sept).

Bookstall Holder The bookstall was taken to 8 Branch Practices during the year. Sales increased to £56.21 during the year, closing stock value was £281.01. Old stock that is unlikely to move is available at reduced price.

Newsletter Editor. This has been available as a .pdf file sent to those on the members distribution list, in addition to a paper copy to each tower. From now on a copy will be put on the branch Web site by the Webmaster. The Chairman thanked Chris Cole for his hard work in producing a splendid newsletter with added colour.

The reports were accepted en bloc for adoption by the branch; proposer Andrew Moss, seconder Steve Wells.

Election of New Members

Member	Tower	Proposer
Grahame Campion	Waltham St. Lawrence	Derek Titford
Gerald Murray	Waltham St. Lawrence	Derek Titford
Julie Brookfield	Warfield	Simon Feather
Layla Brookfield	Warfield	Simon Feather
John Connell	St. Pauls	Ken Davenport
Emily Mellor	All Saints	John Harrison
Mhairi Miller	All Saints	John Harrison

Ratification of New Member

Imogen Marchant	Arborfield	Judith Atkinson
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Seconded *en bloc* by Hilary Pollock.

Election of Officers

The following were re-elected:

Office	Name	Proposed By	Seconded By
Treasurer	Eric Bowes	Pam Elliston	Pauline Needham
Joint Secretary (correspondence)	Rob Needham	Andrew Moss	Louise Marshall
Guild Representatives (2)	Pam Elliston	Rob Needham	Chris Cole
	Andrew Elliston	Rob Needham	Chris Cole
Bookstall Holder	Ken Davenport	Rachel Moss	Judith Atkinson
Training Co-ordinator	John Harrison	Chris Cole	Hilary Pollock
Independent Assessor	Steve Wells	Ken Davenport	Margaret Bearne

The following changes in office were elected:

Chairman	Rachel Moss	Daniel Chafen	Ken Davenport
Vice Chairman; not appointed for 2006			
Ringing Master	Louise Marshall	Andrew Moss	Hilary Pollock
Deputy Ringing Master	Lesley Graves	Louise Marshall	Rachel Moss
Joint Secretary (minutes)	Hilary Pollock	Pam Elliston	Louise Marshall
Newsletter Editor	Daniel Chafen	Pam Elliston	Steve Wells

The following new officer was co-opted by the meeting:

Webmaster

Aidan Hopkins Louise Marshall Rob Needham

Branch Practices

Rob Needham issued a schedule of Branch Practices and other events (Issue 4, 18/2/2006) and asked those towers that had not already done so to confirm their dates as soon as possible. Rachel Moss confirmed that the branch 8-bell striking competition could be held at Easthampstead provided it started at 5pm not 4pm. This was accepted by the meeting. Mary Elliott confirmed the BP at Hurst on Jan 20th 2007, 10am to 12 noon.

The final of the ODG 6-bell competition cannot be held on October 7th at Finchampstead and Binfield has been asked whether it could host it and provide a tea. Sue Davenport offered to follow this up with Mike Deering (the Binfield tower contact had already been emailed about it by Rob Needham).

Sonning sold Quiz sheets to several of the members present, and said that more would be made available to towers. This was part of another fund-raising initiative by Sonning ringers.

Striking Competitions

Ken Davenport, Guild Steward, presented certificates for the branch 6-bell and 8-bell striking competitions. This year's 6-bell competition will be held at White Waltham on 22nd April, starting at 4pm. The 8-bell competition will be held at Easthampstead on 16th September, starting at 5pm.

Fund raising

The Chairman thanked Sonning tower for organising two successful fund raising events during 2005, the Quiz Night and the Autumn Draw.

Revised branch rules

The secretary circulated copies of the proposed revised branch rules. John Harrison explained the background and reasoning behind the changes and the meeting accepted the rules after some discussion. The rules are framed in a general way to minimise the changes required by changes to day-to-day operational decisions.

The meeting agreed the addenda to the rules as follows:

The officers currently to be elected over and above what the rules require – Minutes secretary, Branch representatives, Bookstall holder, Webmaster

The officers to be signatories to the Branch bank account – Treasurer, Chairman, Secretary

The amount above which cheques shall require two signatures – £0 (zero)

The normal date of AGM and committee meeting – 3rd Saturday in Feb and Nov. respectively

Any Other Business

Branch web site and email distribution lists – some of the members present criticised the branch web site and claimed they could not access the newsletter from the branch web site. Other members said they had no difficulty with the web site or accessing the newsletter. It was pointed out that the Webmaster was not present to answer questions, and that any problems should be brought to his attention outside the AGM.

Queen's 80th birthday – the ODG Master, Jon Chamberlain urged as many towers as possible to ring their bells to mark the Queen's 80th birthday and to let the local press know what they are doing.

Training video – One of the branch towers has the branch copy of Steve Coleman's "*Teach a Complete Beginner in a Morning From Scratch*" video. Please could the tower return it to Rob Needham, or to Louise Marshall the new Ringing Master.

New members – Hilary Pollock asked how towers attract new members. The meeting mentioned putting a recruitment piece in the church newsletter, offering to talk to local clubs about ringing, and having an open day with people visiting the ringing chamber and perhaps the top of the tower. Steve Wells warned towers to look carefully at the diocese Health and Safety documents before organising an open day. Sue Davenport said that a St. Paul's open day to see the new bells was planned.

Rob Needham provided each tower with about 10 copies of a free, full-colour recruitment leaflet produced by the Central Council; these can be left in the church with a contact address and/or telephone number stuck on the back of each leaflet.

Pauline Needham drew members attention to one way that Sonning ringers raise their profile by taking part in the Sonning village 'scarecrow' competition that will take place over the end of May bank holiday.

Thanks

Rachel Moss gave a vote of thanks to the following:

St. Andrew's church for the service, and the Sonning choir who supported the service

St. Andrew's band who provided the ringing and the splendid refreshments

The work done by the officers who have stood down

Sue Davenport for 6 years as chairman of the branch.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Next AGM will be at Wargrave on Feb 17 2007 at 3.00pm.

Peals

Saturday, March 18th 2006

St Paul's, Wokingham

5040 Grandsire Triples (2 Hrs 53 Mins)

1. Alison Clayton
2. Susan E. Davenport
3. Catherine M. A. Lane
4. Christopher P. Cole
5. Kenneth R. Davenport (C)
6. Geoffrey K. Cook
7. Graham J. Clifton
8. Jon P. Tutchner

First peal on the new bells. Rung for the 125th anniversary of the guild and the 80th anniversary of the granting of the Charter to the University of Reading.

Quarter Peals

Sunday, February 26th 2006

St Paul's, Wokingham

1260 Grandsire Triples (46 Mins)

1. Dave Creasy
2. Susan E. Davenport
3. Geoffrey K. Cook
4. Kenneth R. Davenport (C)
5. Chris J. Brown
6. Michael Dane
7. Christopher P. Cole
8. Peter Davenport

Monday, 6 March 2006

All Saints, Wokingham

1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major

1. Katie Tutcher
2. Jane Mellor
3. Stephen Smith
4. Graham Slade
5. Richard Woodward
6. Christopher Brown
7. Nigel Mellor
8. John Harrison (C)

First quarter on the new bells.

12th March 2006

St. Andrew's, Sonning, Berkshire

1260 Reverse Canterbury Triples

1. Ken G Baker
2. Pam Elliston
3. Brian Snell
4. Joyce Vernon
5. Rob Needham
6. Andrew Elliston
7. Michael Dane (C)
8. Keith Vernon

19th March 2006

All Saints, Wokingham

1260 Plain Bob Minor

1. Mary Spence
2. Barbara Smith
3. Katie Tutcher
4. Stephen Smith
5. Jon Tutcher
6. John Harrison (C)

For evensong

26th March 2006

St. Andrew's, Sonning

1260 St. Nicholas Bob Triples

1. Andrew Elliston
2. Brian Snell
3. Rob Needham
4. Joyce Vernon
5. Pam Elliston
6. Ken G Baker
7. Michael Dane (C)
8. Keith Vernon

31st March 2006

Twyford

1260 Grandsire Triples

1. Peter Munday
2. Sue Davenport
3. Joyce Vernon
4. Pam Elliston
5. Lavinia Sullivan
6. David Sullivan
7. Michael Dane (C)
8. Keith Vernon

Rung for the Mothering Service

In celebration of the life of Elsie Smith, for many years a ringer at Twyford and at Wargrave.



Chairman	Rachel Moss	25 Brownrigg Crescent, Bracknell, RG12 2PY	01344 459978 chairman@sdb.odg.org.uk
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Webmaster	Aidan Hopkins	14 Harpesford Avenue Virginia Water, GU25 4RD	01344 206173 webmaster@sdb.odg.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

Saturday	22nd April	6-bell Striking Competition followed by Branch Practice	White Waltham	4:00 – 6:30pm 6:30 – 8:00pm
Tuesday	2nd May	Branch daytime practice	Wokingham All Saints	2:00—3:30pm
Saturday	20th may	Branch practice	Sandhurst St Michael	7:30—9:00pm