

Sonning Deanery Branch Newsletter



March 2015, Spring Issue

Spring is here and the evenings are getting lighter. How about visiting other towers? You will always be made welcome, will get valuable experience and help other towers out as well.

We should always be striving for good striking. April 18th is the 6-Bell striking Competition at Waltham St Lawrence. How about using this forthcoming event as motivation to practice the striking in your tower? The Officers will be pleased to assist you in this training, but a good way to start is to ring rounds facing outwards! Please see if you can enter a band in the competition. Last year a rounds and call change band won! So you don't have to be expert method ringers. The judges make a big effort to come and it would be good to have lots of bands.

On May 4th is the Guild 8-bell Striking Competition. I would like to enter a branch band. Please let me know if you would like to compete.

The first 10-bell practice on Feb 24th was well supported and benefitted everyone, especially the Warfield ringers who appreciated hearing the 10 bells rung, and rung well. We have agreed that future practices will be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month, at least until the Guild 10-bell competition at Warfield in November. Unfortunately it has to be on a Tuesday night because of Warfield church commitments. I realise that this clashes with other Tuesday practices but no night is clear. It would be good if occasionally you could combine your practice with Warfield's and come and ring on 10 bells!

Steve Wells, Ringing Master

News from Shottesbrooke

You may recall us writing in a previous branch newsletter that the clapper in the number 2 bell at Shottesbrooke had worked loose. The repair that was carried out stayed in place and all seemed fine for a while.

Then suddenly we had a shock at practice on Friday 20 February, whilst we were ringing, there was an almighty BANG!! We ceased ringing immediately. Lesley initially thought that the stay on the treble had come away as it did not feel right just as she started to ring and was very careful to set her bell. How relieved was she in discovering that all was ok.

All the ringers then went up to the belfry to investigate. Oh no! To our horror, the clapper had come out of the 2 bell. This now requires a specialist to repair. So we are asking Whitechapel Bell Foundry to come and do an inspection on all the bells and to carry out the repair.

As for the stay on the Treble this was cracked and has since been repaired by Simon and Bob.

So for a while we only have four bells to ring. It will be some time before we regain a full complement of bells and can resume ringing.

Whilst we are having the number 2 bell repaired at Shottesbrooke, practices will be held at White Waltham.

As you can see, it's all excitement at bell ringing!

**Bob Packer and Lesley Graves
Shottesbrooke and White Waltham**

Diary of Events

Saturday 18th April

Waltham St Lawrence (6)

6 Bell striking competition 4-6pm

General ringing afterwards.

Saturday 16th May

Binfield (6)

Branch Practice 10.30am—12 noon

Saturday 20th June

Hurst (8)

4.30pm—6pm Branch Practice

Monthly Tuesday afternoon practices (2-4pm)
at Binfield on 7th Apr, 5th May & 2nd June,
(provisionally).

Monthly Surprise Major practice at All Saints
Wokingham. 2nd Wednesdays: 8th April,
13th May & 11th June.

Celebrations at White Waltham



The 15th January 2015 marked a special birthday. It was the 50th of one of White Waltham's long serving ringers, Simon Graves. A quarter peal was arranged on the day and we rang two methods St Simon's and St Martin's as these are Simon's first two names. We could not find a method called 'Graves'.

The quarter peal went really well. Simon chose the members of the band and would like to thank them for taking part.

On the Saturday following the quarter peal, Simon had a party at the Woodlands Park Village Centre. Lesley organised the cake which, as you can see, has a ringier theme on. We had a singer Anna Nightingale and she gave a wonderful performance to all the guests, and lots of dancing took place. It was great to see all his friends and family there sharing the celebrations with him.



Thursday 15 January 2015

White Waltham

1260 St Simon's and St Martin's Doubles

1. Lesley A Graves
2. Caroline Andrew
3. Sue Sargent
4. Vikki Bulbeck
5. Steve Well (c)
6. Simon M Graves

Lesley Graves, White Waltham

Visiting

Do you visit other practices? Do you benefit when visitors come to your practice? Most ringers would say yes to one or both. To make visiting possible visitors need to know when practices are, and equally important when they are not. There is nothing more off-putting than turning up at a non-existent practice, and wasting a journey and time.

The Branch website lists all regular practices at: odg.org.uk/towers It also gives contact details so anyone, from within the Branch or farther afield, can see what practices are available on a particular day, and if necessary can contact the tower correspondent to check that the practice is on.

It should work but occasionally someone turns up at a non-practice. Maybe he/she assumed it would be as normal and didn't bother to check, or maybe the tower correspondent didn't answer the phone. Could the Branch help with this?

Whatever we provided would rely on tower correspondents notifying when their practices are cancelled so I began by asking them if they thought it would be useful, and what mechanism they would favour for doing it. One correspondent thought that the best way was to send a message via the Branch mailing. (That would land in a lot of in-boxes, and wouldn't be seen by visitors from outside the Branch.) Another thought a special page on the website for 'cancelled practices in the near future' would be useful. (People might be more likely to look at that than to contact the tower direct.) Another suggested having a Branch Facebook page. (Anyone – with a Facebook account – could post direct rather than going via the webmaster, but only Facebook users would see it.) So no clear preference.

More significantly those three were the only responses. Most correspondents didn't reply, so maybe aren't interested, in which case they might not notify cancelled practices either. **I would be interested to hear what other members think.** Have you ever turned up at a non-practice? Do you think cancelled practices should be notified, and if so how? Let me, or any other Branch officer, know your views.

John Harrison, Branch Chairman: chairman@sdb.org.uk

A film star in our tower

Last year Jennie King, a member of Waltham St Lawrence tower, entered a competition to find Shaun the Sheep's biggest fan. If you're not familiar with Shaun, he's a character who originally featured in the Wallace and Gromit adventure *A Close Shave*. Following his role in that, Shaun was given his own TV series and his popularity grew and grew.

Thanks to a lifelong passion for Shaun and his comic adventures, and a scrapbook bursting at the seams with stories and photos of Shaun accompanying her to milestone events and places through her life, Jennie was chosen as the competition's winner. The prize: a starring role in the *Shaun the Sheep Movie*.

Jennie sent some photos of herself, making sure she was pictured in her favourite pair of boots, to the model maker. Fast forward a few months and a model of Jennie arrived in the post just before Christmas. Filming of the movie was complete and the model was Jennie's to keep.

Jennie's 'mini-me' has a vital role in the film's plot. At one point, her model's face fills the screen, which was quite a surprise for Jennie when she first saw that!

After winning a second competition Jennie received tickets to the European premiere at the Vue cinema on Leicester Square, dress code: 'down on the farm'! There she met executive producer, Nick Park, amongst other famous faces.

Since then Jennie's been interviewed live on Radio Berkshire by Mike Read about her starring role in the film and has featured in an article in the Radio Times.

Sadly bell ringing doesn't feature in the film but we're pleased to say that stardom hasn't gone to Jennie's head and she still comes and rings with us each week! Since learning to ring a few years ago, Jennie is one of our growing band of young ringers following the Association of Ringing Teachers' Learning the Ropes scheme who are going from strength to strength.

The *Shaun the Sheep Movie* can still be seen at selected cinemas so catch it while it's still on and see if you can spot our local film star.



First peals

Firsts of anything are often landmarks that we remember – first day at school, first bike, first date, first job and many more. Ringing also has notable firsts – first lesson, first ringing for service, first ring at another tower, first quarter peal and first peal. When you pass a landmark you feel a sense of achievement, and ahead of you a new vista opens up with another landmark ahead. It might be a long way off, but you can see it and over time it moves closer.



The landmarks in ringing are not evenly spaced. It is generally weeks or months between the first lesson and ringing for service and probably similar before ringing at other towers. But the time to reach the performance landmarks can vary much more, possibly because of limited opportunity, and not everyone reaches them. More ringers ring quarters than peals – hardly surprising since around 13,000 are rung each year compared with about 5,000 peals. And of course a peal is a lot longer.

Mast bands provide opportunities to ring quarter peals but relatively few provide peal opportunities, so once you have progressed to ringing quarter peals it often isn't clear how to achieve the next landmark of ringing a peal. Because it seems remote it is easy to give up and assume that you never will ring one, even though you have the latent ability to do so. That is a pity because the peal has been the 'gold standard' performance for the last 300 years (with substantially complete records of all that have been rung during that time). In contrast quarter peals – a fairly recent invention that only became really popular in the mid 20th century – have much less cachet.

(continued overleaf)

News & Quarter Peals

2015 is a special year for anyone able to ring a first peal because it is 300 years since the landmark of the first recorded peal at Norwich on 2 May 1715. There will be widespread ringing in the anniversary weekend (has your tower made its plans yet?) and the Norwich ringers are planning to mark the event by creating a teaching and heritage centre, but significantly for anyone who hasn't yet rung their first peal, the aim is to help at least 300 ringers to do so. That is nearly double the number who do so in a typical year, but it should be possible with a bit of effort.

You might have read in *The Ringing World* that a group of experienced peal ringers has offered to help any participant in this year's Ringing World National Youth Contest who wants to ring a peal to do so. I am sure there are many experienced ringers within the Branch who would be equally helpful to our members who feel they are able to attempt a peal but do not have a ready made band to ring with. So if you would like to attempt your first peal but find the prospect a bit daunting, this special year might be a good time to take advantage of the support and enthusiasm available.

For more information, see: cccbr.org.uk/FirstPeal2015 (including how to get a T-shirt with the FirstPeal2015 logo)

John Harrison, Chairman

Joyce Crockford & David Goodwin (from Arborfield) are getting married on Saturday 9th May, 2.30pm at Brookside Church, Gypsy Lane, Earley, RG6 7HG .

The Charnborough mini ring is going to be there so if anyone wants to have a go after the service they will be very welcome.

Joyce & David



Sunday 15 February 2015

Sonning

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 Derek J Barrett
- 2 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 3 Joyce Vernon
- 4 Alan K Barsby (C)
- 5 Rob Needham
- 6 Lavinia M Sullivan
- 7 Andrew Elliston
- 8 Keith Vernon

For evensong

Sunday 22 February 2015

Sonning

1260 Grandsire Triples

- 1 David Sullivan
- 2 Rob Needham
- 3 Joyce Vernon
- 4 Lavinia M Sullivan
- 5 Alan K Barsby
- 6 Robert Partridge (C)
- 7 Andrew Elliston
- 8 Keith Vernon

For evensong and to mark the 72nd birthday of Rob Needham.

Sunday 29 March 2015

Sonning

1280 Bob Major

- 1 Geoffrey M Harvey
- 2 Rob Needham
- 3 Peter Kemm
- 4 Jon P Tutcher
- 5 Andrew Elliston
- 6 Lavinia M Sullivan
- 7 John A Harrison
- 8 David C Willis (C)

For Palm Sunday.

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