

# Banbury Branch Newsletter

November 2014

## Bloxham bells just got better!

For many years Branch ringers and visitors have found Bloxham's heavy eight to be a challenging ring. With long rope draughts, some bells odd struck and the third having a mind of its own they have not been easy to handle.

Tower Captain Alan Griffin reports on 'work in progress'

Bloxham bells were last rehung in 1956 by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Fred Sharpe, who was called in as consultant, always advocated lowering the bells in the tower, to reduce tower movement, so the new bell frame was put in the upstairs ringing chamber. The ringers

therefore had to go downstairs, and we are now the heaviest ground-floor ring in the country!

In 1986 I wrote to Whitechapel and said that our bells were impossible to ring when the temperature was below freezing, because they became very stiff. Whitechapel replied that after the war they were unable to get hold of the "Bellmoline" grease which they previously used, and that the substitute turned out to be unsatisfactory as it congealed in cold weather.

In March 1986, Whitechapel came and re-greased all the bell bearings. They discovered that one of the gudgeons on the 6th was loose and had to take it back to repair it, which increased the cost somewhat!

Recently we have found the "go" of the bells seems to have deteriorated. The third in particular has always been hard work, probably because the rope goes round three pulleys, so we decided to have the bells overhauled by Whites of Appleton.

On 27<sup>th</sup> October Graham Clifton, Harry Gibson and I lifted all the bells, took the sixteen



ball races off and cleaned them with white spirit before re-greasing and refitting them. We removed all the pulleys, and Graham took them to the works to exchange all the old oak pulleys for modern ones with ball bearings. Whites also rebushed the front five clappers.

Graham has worked out that removing one of the third pulleys will make it easier to handle. He is also going to fit a wooden shafted clapper to the fifth to make it easier to ring up right.

When we refit all the clappers and the new pulleys, and modify the third, Bloxham bells should then be a delight to ring!

# AROUND THE TOWERS

## **Banbury**

The summer months have seen less ringing taking place both on Sunday mornings and on practice nights. With people going on holiday at different times, the band has met short on some weeks.

However we have not completely ground to a halt. We entered the Striking Competition in June and went on the outing in July. We rang for 3 weddings and have welcomed 2 visiting bands. We took part in the Town commemoration of WW1 in August. Some of us have spent hours at Bloxham ringing for weddings and funerals. Matthew and Rebecca have now moved to Abingdon and Indya has left to study at Nottingham University. Steven continues to be a regular Sunday Service band member and comes to practices when he can. Lauren has vanished!!! The rest of us just carry on as usual.

**Jean Davis**

## **Bloxham**

We continue to struggle at Bloxham. We have been rather thin on the ground on Sundays of late. At Bloxfest recently I put notices all round the village inviting people to come to the Church and have a go at bellringing, and I set up my dumbbell in the Church. About half a dozen people came.

One of them, a girl, seemed very interested and agreed to come and learn. The following week her best friend also came and started to learn, and also her brother, so I thought things were looking up. All three of them got to the stage of being able to handle a bell by themselves. Then the original girl was selected for training (on Friday evenings!) for the County Badminton team, so she stopped coming, and so did her best friend. I'm hoping the brother will continue. He came to the Tadmerton practice last Friday and seemed to enjoy it. I did start regular practices at Bloxham when they all started learning, but it's very difficult. We don't seem to have enough ringers to run practices at both Tadmerton and Bloxham on the same night.

I have put another advert in the Bloxham Broadsheet (which goes to every house in the village) to try to get more learners. I shall be in the Church next Saturday afternoon from 2.30 to 5.00 p.m. so I hope some people will turn up.

**Alan Griffin**

## **Other Tower News**

### **Adderbury**

On Sunday November 16<sup>th</sup> a quarter peal of Double Norwich was rung to commemorate the 50 years since the then Adderbury band said farewell to Mr Roper. He had been their fellow ringer and mentor for a number of years and a peal was rung when he left the village. Some of the original band rang in the quarter Afterwards a social gathering was held in The Bell. See website for details of the band.

### **Mollington**

Congratulations to Bob and Diana Reeves who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on July 18<sup>th</sup>. They enjoyed a weekend in West Sussex with their family.

### **Steeple Aston**

On Friday November 21<sup>st</sup> a quarter was rung at Steeple Aston to celebrate the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Tony and Jean Clifton the parents of Graham Clifton. It also Marked the fortieth anniversary of his first peal which was on the on the same bell as he conducted the quarter. See the website for more details.

Good luck to Rebecca Taylor and Matthew Franklin who have moved from Banbury to Abingdon and best wishes for their wedding next year.

## Commemoration of World War 1



Banbury's events on August 4<sup>th</sup> began in the Town Hall with the dedication by Bishop Colin of 2 new stained glass windows. They had been commissioned by the previous mayor Nicholas Turner. One window represents the past with poppies and doves; the other celebrates the birth of Prince George and hope for the future.

Members of the British Red Cross, suitably attired in uniforms of the period, stewarded a display showing the organisation's involvement in WW1 locally. A free book describing the part played by Banbury and its people was available together with a book of appropriate hymns and prayers compiled by the Bible Society. Following refreshments the VIP party then paraded to St. Mary's church to join the congregation for a service starting at 9.00 pm. At the end of this the names of the 340 Banbury people, including one woman, who died in the conflict were read out as Barry Davis tolled the half muffled Tenor bell. For those who wished to stay the service from Westminster was relayed to the church by video link.

**Bloxham, Monday, 4 August 2014 in 52 minutes**

### **1260 Plain Bob Triples**

1 Barrie Salter, 2 Keith Abbott, 3 Sue Burchell, 4 Martin Saunders, 5 Malcolm Hensher, 6 Heather Bletchly, 7 Alan Griffin (C), 8 Roger Stranks.

Rung half-muffled on the Centenary of the start of the First World War.

**Bodicote, Monday, 4 August 2014 in 46 minutes**

### **1260 Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Place Doubles**

1 Alison Saunders, 2 Veronica Warner, 3 Alison Varney, 4 Elizabeth A Smith, 5 Lionel D Smith (C), 6 Martin Saunders.

Rung half muffled to commemorate the centenary of the start of WW1

Cropredy and Steeple Aston also marked the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## Goings on

### **Branch Striking Competition**



June 8<sup>th</sup> 2014 hosted by Mollington

Heavy rain in the morning was followed by warm sunshine in the afternoon and evening. Ringing took place from 5.00 pm. - 7.00 pm. And we were able to stand outside the church and listen to everyone ringing.

8 teams took part. The judges were Andrew and Julie Haseldine from Long Crendon who were sitting round the

back of the church. Several horses in an adjacent field tried to get in on the act by accompanying the ringing with noisy neighs!

After the competition we moved to the village hall for a barbeque with the usual shared salads and puddings provided by each tower represented. Once fed the results were announced. It was a runaway victory for Steeple Aston in the method section while Tadmarton collected the Davis cup for call changes. The raffle was drawn, there were thanks all round and a pleasant evening came to an end.



## Banbury Branch Outing

We set off from Banbury looking forward to a gentle day's ringing in the countryside but as the day progressed we began to wonder if we had signed up to a trip for fitness freaks! The initial agility test came at Ross on Wye where the first riser at the base of the stairs was a huge step up. Having negotiated that the 20cwt. 8 built up our stamina.

Then we moved on to Linton (8cwt. 6). Here the churchyard houses an ancient yew tree and the upstairs ringing chamber floor is made of bricks. The bells were very loud inside so it was a real workout for our ears.

Fortified by lunch we set off for Newent (16cwt. 8) Another earlier visiting band had warmed up the bells for us but neglected to leave them in an orderly circle so here there was a routine of neck swivelling to sort out which rope was which and eyes on stalks would have been useful.



Next to Dymock (17½cwt. 6) which was a leisurely climb but we were breathless from ringing them up. However some good stretching exercises with the short ropes kept us on our toes (literally). There was a WW1 commemoration event in the church and we would have liked to stay longer.

But time was of the essence and we completed our circuit training at Bromsberrow (7cwt. 6) requested by Barry. His great grandfather had learned to ring

there. The bells hang in a wooden steeple. Only floor exercises here as it is a ground floor ring but with the 2<sup>nd</sup> artfully arranged against the wall for the super fit slim to ring.

After a cooling down period in which to say thanks to Brenda Day for organising the outing and to flex our face muscles for a group photograph we set off for home and a spot of

weight training. Barry and Jean had to load the car for Sunday's Postcard Fair in Birmingham; most settled for lifting knives and forks at the Horse and Groom in Milcombe.

## Half Yearly Meeting

32 people attended the meeting at Bloxham. Alan Griffin welcomed us and said work was due to start on 'improvements' to the bells on 28<sup>th</sup> October. Only about 10 ringers took part in the service ringing, obviously the rest were holding themselves back until November!

There was no reticence when it came to tucking into tea. The business meeting afterwards was concluded in less than an hour proving the value of the Reps meetings.

A few ringers returned to the tower for the final ring of the day on the bells which we hope in a few weeks will never be the same again!

The vote of thanks was proposed by Malcolm Hensher to the Revd. Sara Tillet, who gave an admirably short but appropriate sermon, Michael Tinsley who played us out of church with a rousing Dr Who Theme on the organ and Margaret Griffin and her helpers who provided a tea well worthy of the Women's Institute.

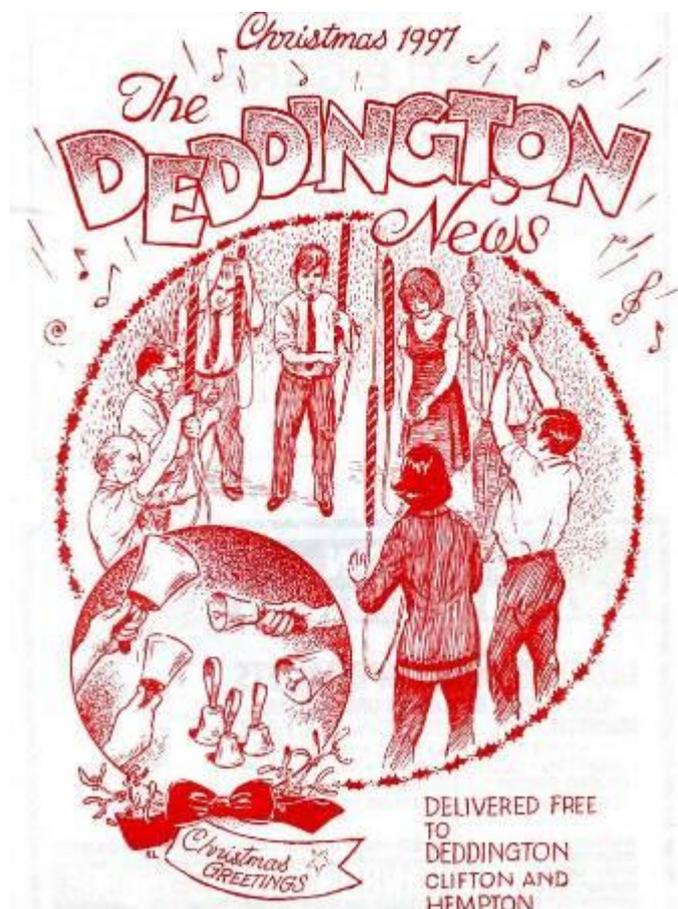
## From the Archives

With Christmas not far away we go back just a few years to 1997 and put the spotlight on Deddington.

A long way back in 1863 the vicar of Deddington, Rev. Cotton Risley, recorded in his diary

"26<sup>th</sup> December - The Ringers came. I gave them nothing - a drinking set, with the Sexton at their head."

Not much cheer there then!



## What Else?



The Branch band which took part in the Guild 10 bell Striking Competition at Long Crendon on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Grumpy old men

*"I didn't know what to do with that tenor I had to dangle it all over the place."*

*They always put the worst ringer on the tenor." (While catching hold of the 10<sup>th</sup> at Banbury)*

*They had some copies of the 1987 Ringing World Calendar for sale at the Roadshow. I worked out that it would be correct for 2015 so I bought one!"*

### Wordplay 5

Use bellringing terms to complete these well known phrases.

At the ---- of my mind

On the ---- front

Didn't put a foot-----

Pig in the -----

----- a cloud

As ----- as a barrel

As ----- as lead

Truth will ---

Kick ---- the traces

# Information Board

## Points from the Half Yearly Meeting

- Membership and Striking Competition Certificates were presented.
- Surprise Practice list to be revised to run from January - January with one a month.
- Recruitment of young ringers was discussed. Possibility of organising a Branch initiative to take place in a major local event e.g. Bloxham Steam Rally with a mini ring was raised but would need more consideration.
- Raffle proceeds for 2014-2015 to go to Dogs for the disabled and Berks, Bucks, Oxon Air Ambulance.
- A second base to be added to the Striking Competition cup to accommodate future winner's names and to retain its history.
- It was agreed that Branch funds will underwrite any outing losses if necessary.

## Dates for your diary

### 2014

- December 13<sup>th</sup> Carol Service at Cropredy 6.30pm.
- December 26<sup>th</sup> Boxing Day ringing Deddington 10.30am

### 2015

- January 1<sup>st</sup> New Year Day ringing Banbury 10.30am.
- February 7<sup>th</sup> Social and Quiz Deddington.
- March 14<sup>th</sup> Branch Dinner and Guild Committee Meeting Steeple Aston
- April 18<sup>th</sup> AGM Adderbury
- June Striking Competition
- July Outing to South Oxfordshire date tbc

*The editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter either with articles or photographs. If you would like to contribute to the next edition with a puzzle, picture, wordsearch, article etc. then please send your contributions to Barry and Jean Davis at 61 Springfield Avenue, Banbury, Oxon or alternatively  
E-mail [bjdbellringer@btinternet.com](mailto:bjdbellringer@btinternet.com)*

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