

Banbury Branch Newsletter

November 2015

The Banbury Branch 90th Anniversary



The idea was born while idly reading the peal boards in the ringing chamber of St Mary's, Banbury. Amongst the peals rung to commemorate a variety of events, both local and national, was one rung on 18th June 2005 to mark the 80th anniversary of the founding, on 20th June, of the Banbury Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. It didn't require a mathematician to realise that the 90th anniversary was looming on the horizon, and there was soon wide-spread agreement that it should be marked in some significant way.

The Banbury Branch is the most northerly of the 15 branches that make up the Oxford Diocesan Guild. There are 30 towers in the branch, 24 of which have 5 or more ringable bells. There is one ring of 10, 8 of 8, 10 of 6 and 5 of 5 bells.

It was quickly decided that, during the period 20th June until the end of July, we should aim to ring quarter peals in as many of our towers as possible, involving as many branch ringers as could be persuaded to join in. We got off to a rather slow start but by the end of July we had attempted 23 quarters in 18 different towers, scoring 19 of them - a very creditable achievement. There were 9 different conductors and 46 branch members took part.

Some performances are worthy of particular note. Two ringers rang their first quarter, both at the first attempt. Freddie Taylor of Steeple Aston rang the treble to PB Doubles at his home tower, and Liz Collett of Wardington rang the tenor, also to PB Doubles, at Rousham. There were a number of other first, and some ringers for whom the quarter was the first for very many years. Quarters were rung on some of the more challenging rings in the branch, including Cambridge 5 Minor on the 6 at Wardington (tenor $16\frac{3}{4}$ cwt) and 5 Doubles Methods on the 5 at Duns Tew (tenor $14\frac{1}{2}$ cwt).

Unfortunately among the failed attempts was what should have been a first quarter for Rachel McLoughlin of Wardington: she rang the treble to PB Doubles at Hanwell but after

8 extents there was a mishap (nothing to do with Rachel) and the attempt came to grief. Primrose S Minor failed at North Aston, a mixed method attempt failed at Mollington and Stedman Doubles at Lower Heyford folded up suddenly in the way only Stedman seems able to do!

Our thanks go to the incumbents at the towers for allowing us to ring, to all the branch members who took part, and to Lionel Smith, Deputy Ringing Master, for much of the organisation. We look forward to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Banbury Branch!

Elizabeth Smith



The band that rang at Banbury; front page the Steeple Aston band.
For details of the quarters see the branch website.

Claire Tarrant



Claire Tarrant died on August 22nd. She lived and rang in the Chipping Norton Branch but was a familiar face to many ringers in the Banbury area. She rang regularly at Tuesday night practices at Steeple Aston and joined in many other Branch activities. With Sue Burchell she organised several annual weekend ringing tours for past and present North Oxfordshire ringers.

Born in Rochester Kent Claire moved home many times before finally settling in Charlbury in 1987 with her husband Cliff and her two sons were born there. Always busy she went to work as a lab technician at Chipping Norton School. In July this year she became unwell and was diagnosed with cancer. Claire's funeral

took place on September 8th and she will be sadly missed. For a longer obituary see the branch Website.

Banbury

We continue much as before, ringing when we have a minimum of 5 people there for Sunday service and practice nights. Of our leaners Ellie, Lucy and Fifi can now handle a bell safely to rounds and call changes and have reached their goals for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award skills section; Thomas comes when his studies permit; Mary has revived the ringing she learnt as a 12 year old; Nick has set up home in Banbury not far from the church and is giving ringing a go. Meanwhile Robin sailed into the sunset on his canal boat at Easter but managed to find his way back by the end of August. Richard and Dina celebrated their Golden Wedding by going to the Scilly (Silly?) Isles where Richard tore his Achilles tendon on the first day there. This was a somewhat dramatic way to avoid Banbury ringing but three months later he has been able to re-join the band in one piece.

June 6th saw the striking competition cup return to the tower after several years absence. In October Barry and Richard gave Reading U3A a conducted tour of the tower during their visit to the church. In the same week the youth club came up to see what ringing is all about and we hosted the Branch Half Yearly meeting.

Jean Davis

Other Tower News

Congratulations to Stephen and Brenda Day of Cropredy who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on June 28th. A double celebration had been planned with an attempt at the first peal on the 8 bells. Sadly the peal was unsuccessful but a quarter of Grandsire triples was rung for their anniversary.

The band along with other ringers and friends then helped Stephen and Brenda celebrate the day.



The previous day Elizabeth Holmes the daughter of Chris and Charlotte from Adderbury was married in Adderbury church. The bells were rung by a band of mainly past and present Adderbury ringers. Afterwards they were invited to join the guests for a glass of wine. This was served in the churchyard and was accompanied by a jazz band and Morris dancing.

On Saturday 20th June a quarter peal was rung at Adderbury to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. The method was Wellington Little Bob Major and despite a false start, as everyone got use to the method, the quarter was successful. After the ringing the band was treated to a celebratory drink of Waterloo Ale. This had been specially sent by the vicar the Revd. Stephen Fletcher. He was unable to join the band as he was with his two sons taking part in the celebrations at Waterloo.



The quarter peal band sampling Waterloo Ale



It takes all sorts

Every week I buy a copy of The Big Issue from Bianca a local vendor. A few weeks ago this item appeared in the magazine. We thought you might enjoy it too.

Ian McMillan

Poet

Campanology

You wouldn't think this to look at me but I can pull a sally and hold a tenor on a slider and not smash the headstock as well as most people. Well, better, because most people aren't bellringers or to give us our Sunday name, campanologists.

As a teenager I was a leading light in the Darfield Bellringers, practising Thursdays, playing for weddings Saturdays and ringing at church towers all over my part of Yorkshire on Sundays. Our church bells in Darfield (a peal of six, don't you know) had been silent for years because of coal-mining subsidence but when the National Coal Board agreed to pay for repair, the Darfield Bellringers were born.

That moment when you grip the rope (the coloured bit is called the sally) is scary; the bell hangs upside down in the chamber, rung into that position by a more experienced member. Your job is to pull the rope smoothly so the bell goes all the way round and rests gently against the intricate web of wood above, slider meeting headstock.

Of course you pull too hard; of course you fly around the ringing chamber like a chubby puppet on a rope. Of course you pretend it didn't hurt to impress the female ringers.

When I wander around Yorkshire, I look for bell towers and estimate how many bells they have in them. Sometimes I'm tempted to have a go. But my flying days are over.

From

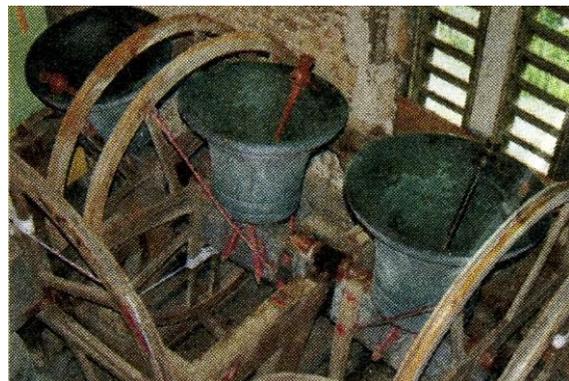
Neither Nowt Nor Summat

by

Ian McMillan is out June 25 (£14.99)

Bianca sells near Mothercare on Banbury High Street

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Branch Outing - do you remember? July 4th

Vale of the White Horse

Alan's taxi service

Longcot

Enough room for one band at a time

Open spaces for people to park

Fox and Hounds lunchtime pub

Tower and spire in differing styles

Huge pillars supporting central tower

Early arrival, time to look round

Wantage

Hexagonal tower

Inside it's cool

Titanic memorial

Enjoy the sunshine, count up the cones

Heaviest bells rung at the start of the day

Overflowing churchyard

Room at the inn - Sturdy's Castle

Shellingford

Eight bells in four towers

Butterflies in the long grass, Brenda in charge

Rounds and Call Changes

Awkward place to stand to ring the seventh

No key at Stanford, churchwarden to the rescue

Childrey

Hunger satisfied on route for home

Over the hill and far away for a picnic

Uffington

Tiny ringing chamber tucked away

Interesting monuments

Noisy noisy first tower

Ground floor rings at two churches

News and Views

The Branch Striking Competition

The Branch Striking Competition was held on June 6th at Horley. Those taking part were able to enjoy the late afternoon and evening sunshine while they listened to the 9 teams which had entered. The ringing on the newly augmented 6 was followed by a barbeque in the village hall and then the announcement of the results. The call change section was won by Wardington with Tadmarton as runners up. Banbury won the method sections with Cropredy a close second and Steeple Aston third. Thanks go to Alison Tite and her helpers for a splendid barbeque and the use of their bells; also to our judges and the branch Ringing Master.



The call change cup awarded



The barbeque in full swing

The bad news



An email received by Banbury Tower Captain

'Hello having just returned from a long weekend staying at the Mercure Whateley hotel in Banbury I would like to comment on the Church Bells that rang out every 15 minutes until 3am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and then started again at 6am.

As a visitor to the town I cannot believe that this noise pollution is allowed to take place and I will certainly not be returning to Banbury or recommending it to anyone I know.'

As the ringers are not prone to practising in the middle of the night Barry was able to set the matter straight.

'I am sorry the clock chimes kept you awake. This is not the responsibility of St Mary's Bellringers as the clock and chimes are an automatic mechanism. They are the responsibility of the Town Council who service and maintain them. I have, therefore, forwarded your email on to the Town Council.'

In an age when complaints about bells are all too common it was nice to then receive



The good news

Tracy and Gilbert would like to let everyone know that we had a truly wonderful wedding day on the 15th... the choir sang beautifully and the church bells rang with great joy and happiness to match how we felt on the day. (St Mary's Church Pew Sheet)

And

Please pass on the thanks of our group to all who were involved with making us so welcome at your church this afternoon.

The bell ringers, Jeff West, Hugh and Rosemary, the bookstall and refreshment helpers - it was such an interesting and informative afternoon.

Those of us privileged to go up the tower were treated to a gloriously simplified explanation and model of how a bell is rung, something most of us had never realised. Thank you.

The coach journey home was ringing with satisfaction and enjoyment of our day in Banbury.

Philip Cook (on behalf of the Reading U3A 'Town Study' group)

If any other towers have good news to share then please let us know.

The Branch Half Yearly Meeting

The half yearly meeting took place on Saturday October 17th at Banbury. There was ringing from 2.30 until 4.00pm. After the service, taken by the Rev. Sue Burchell, with Michael Tinsley playing the organ, tea and the business meeting followed in St Mary's Centre. 25 people attended including the Guild Secretary James Champion; about the same number sent apologies. The main item for discussion came from the Guild Master as to how Branches could co-operate more with each other. A number of suggestions were put forward to be taken to the Guild general committee meeting on 28th November. Certificates were presented for the Striking Competition, to new members and to two ringers who had achieved their first quarter peals during the branch celebrations. A grant of £250 was agreed towards Wardington tower's remedial work on the bells.

The things ringers say!

I know I was following you about (post mortem on method that fired out).

My knot won't work (unsuccessful attempt to tie up tail end).

It's all that bonging about at the back that confused me (treble ringer going wrong).

I'll just strum along at the back (tenor ringer one Sunday morning).

It's good with those two little ones out of the way (ringing Cloisters in which 2 and 3 plain hunt to 3rds place).

We won't count that one, we'll start now (quarter peal attempt when first course wasn't quite right).

Girls' Eye View



Our experience at bell ringing

The first time ringing it felt like we would never be able to ring a bell on our own.

But after many trials and errors (and a few letting goes) we can finally ring (kind of) in time.

Now we are ringing with everyone else in rounds and called changes. We are slowly getting better.

We attend practice every Wednesday at St. Mary's Banbury.

It's a good stress reliever and lets us take a time away from our school work.

We hope to carry on to learn new things and get better at bell ringing.

We have socialised very well with everyone else because everyone is very welcoming and friendly towards us.

We began bell ringing for our Duke of Edinburgh award. We decided to pick this skill because we wanted to try something new and bell ringing looked like a fun and interesting activity to participate in.

St. Mary's church has provided this wonderful opportunity for us to learn new skills and meet new people.

Ellie, Fifi and Lucy

At the half yearly meeting they proved that they can bake cakes and wash up too!!! Ed

Word Play 6 - Use bellringing terms to complete these well known phrases.

---- sweet ----

as ----- as a feather

----- forth

as ----- as lightning

step -- to the mark

---- coach

a ----- off my mind

it's an ill wind that ----- nobody any good

---- and above the ---- of duty

the times they are a -----

Information Board

Points from the Half

Dates for your diary

2015

- November 28th Guild 10 Bell Striking Competition.
- December 12th Advent Carol Service Mollington.
- December 26th Boxing Day ringing Deddington

2016

- January 1st New Year Day ringing Banbury 10.30 am - 12.00.
- February 4th Reps meeting
- March 12th Social and Quiz Tadmarton
- April 16th AGM Bodicote
- June 4th Striking Competition Adderbury
- June ? Queen's 90th Birthday ringing
- July 2nd Branch Outing
- September 10th Dinner Somerton

If you would like to contribute to the next edition with a puzzle, picture, word search, 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

Don't forget the website. If you want your own copy of this newsletter then download from - www.banbury-bells.org.uk