

# Banbury Branch Newsletter

November 2017

## Getting to know North Aston



North Aston, possibly one of our less familiar Branch Towers, played host to some of the ringing at the half yearly meeting in October. North Aston Hall, a Jacobean mansion re-fronted in 1850, stands in its own gardens and parkland tucked away behind the main village street. However it is not alone for it stands in very close proximity to the church. Much of that building dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century but the tower was added in the 15<sup>th</sup>; it had to be squeezed slightly into the nave to fit the space available next to an earlier Manor.

Frederick Sharpe, author of *Church Bells of Oxfordshire*, visited the tower in 1929 and found it to contain 4 bells. Two were cast by John Warner in 1866 and two by Henry Bagley in 1741 with a tenor weighing about 7½cwt.

By 1970 these were declared unsafe to ring and in 1979 the bells, their fittings and the 19<sup>th</sup> century oak frame were removed to Taylors in Loughborough. Treble, 2 and 3 became 4, 5 and tenor of a ring of 6 with the old tenor being melted down and added to the mix for casting the 3 lighter bells. Dove now lists the tenor as 6-1-26 in B and the bells hang on two levels, lower in the tower than originally, in cast iron frames.

# TOWER TALK

## **Adderbury**

Our tower renovation project at Adderbury is in the final planning stage and we have been informed that we may have to stop ringing for several months whilst the lime mortar sets. Hopefully we shall be able to complete our WW1 centenary QP programme before that happens. We have had a good few Quarter Peals this year marking the 100th anniversary of Adderbury men killed in WW1. Twenty five have now been completed over the last three years leaving just five to be rung next year.

We are embarking on a recruitment campaign linked to the church Christmas Tree Festival where we should hopefully be able to interest a few recruits, at least that is the plan!

Socially we continue to hold events which recently have included a Putting Competition which raised funds for the tower renovation project and several evening meals, all well supported and of course with excellent cuisine!

Colin has introduced us to a variety of new methods which have enabled Trevor H and Rob to progress such that they can now confidently participate in our QP programme with good results. So if you are looking to ring something different then come to Adderbury on a Tuesday evening! **Trevor Trivett**

## **Banbury**

There is really not a lot to report this time. The Striking Competition was a non starter for us this year although Sue and Barry made up Mollington's team and we all enjoyed the barbeque. Practices did continue fairly regularly from June to August but we shut down for September and most of October as so many people were away. Sunday Service ringing was also curtailed but we hope to maintain it during the Autumn and Winter months. Little did we know that when we bade Robin farewell at Easter it would be a final goodbye and we do miss him in the tower especially on Sunday. Richard and Dina represented us at his funeral in Sussex and a quarter peal in memoriam was rung at Banbury by a branch band. All the quarters rung in memory of Robin can be seen on the peals page of the Branch website. **Jean Davis**

## **Deddington**

The following is an article from the Deddington News June 2017

### **Bell Tower Open Morning**

The church bell tower will be open to visitors on Saturday 24 June, farmers' market day, from 10.00am to noon. Visitors will see the bells, watch them being rung and see the amazing view of the village and the surrounding countryside from the tower roof. Please bear in mind there are over 100 steps up a narrow spiral staircase to the top so sensible footwear must be worn and, due to insurance constraints, children under the age of eight are not allowed.

The tower contains a set of eight bells, six of which are known to be some 225 years old. The original six bells were requisitioned for making weapons by Charles I and not replaced until 1791. The other two date from 1946 and were donated to commemorate the Deddington Home Guard. They are rung on Sundays and at practice times, as well as for weddings and funerals and other notable occasions.

**Colin Cox**

## **Steeple Aston**

There is certainly a more youthful look to our gatherings of late – mainly due to two teenagers learning to ring but also to our many, and most welcome, visitors. Some of our visitors come so regularly that we automatically include them in our social events like the BBQ and outing. We would include them in our Striking Competition team but the ringing master might notice! The Branch Striking Competition was an evening of great success for us as we won the method and call changes sections. Admittedly Jack had to have a little assistance pulling his bell off, but from then on he was on his own (as part of the team, if you see what I mean). Adderbury put on a splendid BBQ and inspired us to do even better! Lawrence and

Nick were in charge on the warmest, sunniest evening of the year and about 35 people gathered in Nick's garden for a tasty and filling meal. We only have about 12 members.... amazing where they come from when food is on offer. Throughout the year Graham has been pushing Jack to excel as a 'Young Ringer' and set him to arrange the tower outing to mid Gloucestershire. Hannah is also being urged to catch up and bravely came on the outing and everyone had a go at all three towers. Jack's planning was exemplary (judges of YR comp please note). Unfortunately he did not quite have his mother under control and she left her handbag in tower number two..... she got more sympathy from the older ringers who all recalled similar lapses in years past. The towers were Swindon Village, difficult bells and heavy rain, then on to Badgeworth and finally to Churchdown (which oddly is a church 'up' on top of a hill.



Jack with the Call Change Cup

Graham rehung these recently and they were a joy to ring. Being a tower which rings on its stomach, we had taken cake with us. A breakdown in Graham's liaising meant no cup of tea materialised, but a lot of cake was eaten.... then we set off home to join in with the Branch Dinner at The Gate Hangs High. Jack has rung 2 quarter peals (see details elsewhere). Hannah's progress was halted by her going to America to see the eclipse but since her return she is making good progress, indeed the break seemed to do her good. She has even started ringing for service (well the ting tang) so soon we can propose her for membership. The church quiz is arranged for 18th November – we, the ringers, usually win. If anyone would like to come and take part and help the Rector in his attempt to dethrone us, please get in touch (£8 each inc. food) Come as a team or on your own (and get put In a team) Malcom Hensher is question master.

**Dorothy Clifton**

## From the Archives

### Victorian Deddington

'According to legend the churchwardens of Deddington once sold their own church bells in order to buy drink. Not so – the vicar, incumbent from 1848 – 1864, pledged the ROPES for drink at the Unicorn Inn and the bells were not allowed to be rung until the debt was paid. Hence the legend Drunken Deddington where the vicar pawned the bells'!!

**Ruth Johnson Deddington Newsletter 2002**

### Bats in the Belfry

Someone was concerned enough to contact English Nature, regarding the effect on bats of the work on the Church Tower. Their Inspector visited the site and was able to confirm what was already known - there are no bats in the church. The Anglican Church is aware of its responsibility to the environment and the Vicar and Churchwardens have to confirm to the Diocesan Advisory Committee, among other things, that they have consulted English Nature if there is any chance of disturbance to bats as a result of work on the Church structure before being granted the Faculty (permission) to carry out work. An interesting point in English Nature's pamphlet is that bats seldom roost in belfries because they are too cold, dusty and noisy!!

**From Duns Tew Village Newsletter April 1996**

### And more up to date

On Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup> this year a couple from Chesterfield were spending their Anniversary in Banbury staying in a local bed and breakfast house. Having enjoyed a curry in the Shish Mahal they decided to go for a walk afterwards. Coming along the Horsefair they heard the bells being rung down after the practice and the clock strike 9. They came to speak to us as we left. 'We did enjoy listening to you, the ringing made our day',

# People



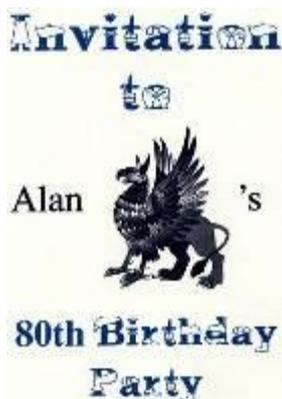
## **Robin Green 08-04-1950--07-08-2017**

In August Robin Green died during his canal trip and was found by his son on the boat in Wolverhampton. Robin came to this area from Sussex about 10 years ago, living on his boat at Fenny Compton, but choosing to make Banbury his home tower ringing there regularly. On retirement he took his boat along the canal from Easter until August and successfully completed two trips. This year in spite of having had a mild heart attack in the early spring, he set off again. Sadly he didn't make it back.

Robin was born in Brighton and moved to Henfield with his parents at an early age. He travelled to school in Hove by train which led to a lifelong interest in railways. He learned to ring in the 1980s in an around Brighton. His move to

Banburyshire came in 2007 when his marriage broke down, although he made regular visits to Sussex to see family and friends. He was enjoying retirement and found many matters to interest him, having strong opinions on almost everything.

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In the Summer many members of the branch received this card in Alans own inimitable style. Although not all were able to attended a good time was had by those who did. Apparently he wore his birthday badge for 3 days!!!

Never one to miss a ringing opportunity. His celebrations included a quarter peal of Plain Bob Major at Bloxham with Alan ringing the tenor.



The Band from front left: Lionel Smith, Alan Griffin, Alison Varney, Bob Reeves, Liz Smith, Martin Saunders, Sue Burchell and Rosemary Hemmings

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Lionel Smith also celebrated his birthday, his 75<sup>th</sup>, by conducting a quarter peal at Rousham on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Congratulations to Richard Bentley who has just achieved 60 years membership of the Guild

# Events

## **Banbury Branch Striking Competition 2017**

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June the Banbury Branch held their annual Sunday Service Striking Competition at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Adderbury.

Our judges were Susan Read and Sarah Barnes assisted by Isaac O'Shea and David Thomas.

One of Adderbury's retired ringers who lives opposite the church kindly allowed us to use her house for the judges who sat comfortably in an upstairs bedroom with the window open.

Ten teams entered, three ringing call changes and seven ringing methods.

The standard of ringing was good and the learners and young ringers handled the bells very well.

After the competition we had an excellent BBQ organised by the Adderbury ringers with salads and sweets provided by all the towers present.



Graham Clifton receives the cup for the winning method team.

The results were:

### **Call changes**

1<sup>st</sup> - Steeple Aston, 2<sup>nd</sup> - Wardington, 3<sup>rd</sup> - Bodicote

### **Methods**

1<sup>st</sup> - Steeple Aston, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Adderbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> joint – Bodicote and Cropredy, 5<sup>th</sup> – Adderbury, 6<sup>th</sup> – Mollington, 7<sup>th</sup> – Bloxham.

**Lindsey Smith**

## **Branch Outing**

On July 8<sup>th</sup> two dozen ringers went on the Branch Outing, or for those without SAT NAV or who had forgotten their maps, Brenda's magical mystery tour. Five towers were visited in an area north of Stratford upon Avon. All were six bell rings as the eight we had booked could not accommodate us at the last minute. The best, and only ground floor ring, was at the first tower Beaudesert – easy going and tuneful. The other four were more challenging especially as Warwickshire ringers seem to be on the short side if the long ropes were anything to go by. The towers were Henley in Arden, Wootton Wawen, Coughton where the fete was also in full swing, and Aston Cantlow. Methods rung ranged from rounds and call changes to Surprise Minor and we saw some very interesting church architecture. The outing concluded for those who were able to stay to the end with a meal at the White Horse Inn at Wroxton. Well done Brenda.

## **Branch Half Yearly Meeting**

This took place on Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup> with ringing at North Aston and Steeple Aston prior to the business discussions over tea and cakes. Twenty two members and two little Lees attended. Minutes of the AGM were signed and striking competition, new members and long service certificates were presented. Heather announced that she would be stepping down as Secretary at the next AGM and Barry and Jean said that this would be their last newsletter. For other items arising see the Information Board

# Information Board

- Guild Courses. The branch will sponsor two people to attend Mark Regan's talk.
- In future towers used for main meetings will receive donations of £2.50 per rope from Branch Funds.
- The proceeds of both raffles in 2018 will go to Adderbury for their tower restoration work.
- The Striking Competition rules will be revised at the AGM.
- A committee has been appointed to make arrangements for the Guild AGM next year.

## **Dates for 2017**

- December 9<sup>th</sup> Branch Carol Service - Bodicote 6.00pm.
- December 26<sup>th</sup> – Ringing Deddington 10.30am-12 noon.

## **Dates for 2018**

- January 1<sup>st</sup> New Year's Day Ringing Banbury 10.30 – 12.00 noon.
- March 10<sup>th</sup> Social Evening – Tadmarton.
- May 19th Guild AGM- Bodicote.
- June 9<sup>th</sup> Striking Competition – Rousham (TBC).
- September 8<sup>th</sup> Branch Dinner.