

Banbury Branch Newsletter

November 2016

Banbury Branch Quarter peal Month



August was designated Branch Quarter Peal Month. We weren't particularly aiming for "firsts", although of course these were welcomed where appropriate. It was seen more as an opportunity to make requests - to perhaps ring a method that is not on the usual practice night repertoire, or to ring somewhere other than a home tower, or simply to get to grips with a blue line that is tantalisingly close to being secured in the memory.

A number of ringers came forward with suggestions, the vast majority of which were responded to and suitable arrangements made. Many of the quarters were brought round successfully although, perhaps inevitably, we did not achieve the 100% success that we might have hoped for. By the end of the month we had scored 13 out of 20 quarters planned, at 11 different towers, conducted by 7 different ringers and with 28 branch members taking part. A further 4 members were involved in the unsuccessful attempts.

Our successes were Plain Bob Doubles, August Doubles, 2, 4, 5 and 6 Doubles Methods, two of Plain Bob Minor, Norwich Surprise Minor and Primrose Surprise Minor, Grandsire Triples, Double Norwich Court Bob Major and Rutland Surprise Major. Our failures were St Simons Doubles, two attempts at Stedman Doubles, St Clements Bob Minor, Plain Bob Triples and Stedman Caters. Unfortunately we met short for London Surprise Minor, so that was a non-starter.

There were a number of occasions when we wished this heavy schedule of ringing had been planned for a winter month, when we wouldn't have noticed the lack of ventilation in some of the ringing chambers. But then, who knew that August in North Oxfordshire would turn out to be quite so hot and sunny?

Despite our failures, the prevailing attitude among the ringers was very positive, with general agreement that to aim for something ambitious, at least for some of the ringers, was better than simply going for the safe option. All in all it was a very enjoyable month and a creditable achievement. We look forward to learning what's in store for next year.

Liz Smith

A**R****O****U****N****D****T****H****E****T****O****W****E****R****S**

Banbury

During the summer both practices and Sunday ringing have been spasmodic, depending on the number of ringers available each time. This may have been as well as the carillon hammers have been giving us grief again. However they did behave when we rang for weddings, one of which lasted 2 hours! Clare Salter married at Mollington in August and was elected a member at the Half Yearly meeting. Richard honed up his domestic skills by cleaning the brass plaque under the clock in the ringing chamber. This is dedicated to Barry's great grandfather (Frederick Selwyn) and is now legible again. Robin has returned from his meanderings on inland waterways and visitors came recently from Rugby. In October we were asked to support the Rotary Club 'Purple 4 Polio' initiative by ringing a quarter peal. Nick is to be congratulated on ringing his first quarter in the attempt which was successful. We were each given a bag of crocus corms by way of thanks – something to remember it by in the spring. On October 23rd Jean attended the Choral Evensong of thanksgiving for the completion of phase one of the vestry roof repairs. The ringers had contributed to the funds appeal. Practices should now continue as usual in spite of parking problems but check with Barry if you miss a week. **Jean Davis**

Bloxham

Things are at last looking up. I now have three learners who have just been elected as members of the Guild. They are fourteen year old Misha and his dad, Oleg, and a fourteen year old girl, Maisie. Oleg and Maisie are making excellent progress, and are ringing the treble to Bastow. All three are ringing regularly on Sundays, attending the practices and also the weekly lessons on the simulator. I have never taught anyone who learnt as quickly as Misha. The day after his first lesson he was ringing rounds and call changes! He rang the tenor to Bob Doubles for Bloxham in the Guild 6-bell striking contest only seven months later, when we came 6th. He has just rung the 17½ cwt tenor at Milverton in Somerset to a quarter peal of Grandsire triples for his Grandmother's funeral. He is already ringing touches of Bob Doubles on the two,

and the treble to Bob Triples. What next? With the new ringers, we sometimes manage to ring all eight bells on Sundays which is a great step forward. I am still looking for more learners!

Alan Griffin

Deddington

Church bell ropes appeal

Earlier this year the church Bell Ringers started an appeal to raise funds to replace the ageing bell ropes which are now very worn. Funding for new ropes is independent of church finances. The cost of replacement is somewhere in the region of £1,600. To date we have received generous donations from individuals totalling £698.

On farmers' market day in June we held a Tower Open Morning which attracted 90 visitors and raised a further £165 in the donations bucket. On the same day one of our ringers organised a bric-a-brac stall in the church which yielded a further £221 and £106 was raised the following week at a car boot sale. This gives us a running total so far of £1,190. Our fundraising continues and we hope to reach our target in the near future.

The Bell Ringers would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their generous support which will enable the bells to continue to 'ring out' and be appreciated by everyone for many years to come. **Colin Cox**
(From the Deddington News)

Steeple Aston

Summer was well and truly celebrated at Steeple. In June a peal was rung to mark the Queen's 90th birthday, and Graham & Dorothy's Ruby wedding anniversary. Our tower BBQ was held in the lovely garden of Helen Taylor at Middle Aston. It is amazing how many members we have on these occasions. It was one of the few warm evenings of the season, and the only cloud was that we remembered it was last year's BBQ when Claire Tarrant was last among us. Plenty of us turned up to the branch BBQ at Cropredy – and some took part in the striking competition coming a commendable 2nd. The tower outing also meant many gathered for another meal – this time at Bucknell - The Trigger Pond' – the excuse for this was that we

Steeple Aston Cont... had just completed our annual ringing outing. On a lovely sunny day we visited Wappenham, Greens Norton, Lillingston Lovell and Stowe. The latter being memorable for the sale (in church) of ice creams! Graham was particularly chuffed as the outing netted him 3 new towers. Back home.... ringing continues almost weekly. A couple of times not enough have turned up by 8 pm and the practice has been abandoned. Most weeks we have a good turnout of visitors who are helping greatly with our 6 learners. Pam and Jack started a few months ago and have not only rung for service but were an essential part of the band who rang for a wedding in October; they were also both elected to the guild the same day. Most of our tower members have reached that stage in life when they have the time and money to do whatever they want and some have reached the stage when aches and pains tell them what to do....hence we seldom have a full complement to ring on Tuesday or Sunday. This makes us particularly happy to see visitors come through the door. Please keep coming. **Dorothy Clifton**

Looking back

Branch Striking Competition

We met outside the tower
At Cropredy in June
Eight hopeful bands of ringers
All set to ring in tune.

Each team in turn took hold.
To show what they could do.
They had to keep it steady
So that their faults were few.

Three bands rang call changes,
The others method pealed
Eventually we finished,
Adjourning to a field.

The barbeque was waiting
And canal boats, one, two, three.
In the orchard it was cosy
As we tucked into our tea.

Zoe's dad was judging.
He was a kindly man.
He said there were no cricket scores;
Lionel had results in hand.

Bloxham came first
And took the cup away
Cropredy got the Davis cup
The home team won the day.

It was a lovely evening,
The weather fine and clear
So we all decided
We'd do it again next year!



Winning Call Change band - Cropredy



Winning method band - Bloxham

Branch Outing to Mid- Northants

It was a team effort to get this arranged. Barry chose the towers, Graham recommended the evening meal venue and Brenda organised the route, lunch time and everything else! It is she who deserves the credit for a thoroughly enjoyable day which even the weather failed to sabotage. Travelling by diverse routes twenty plus Branch ringers and followers arrived at Desborough to start the day. In spite of competition from the spinning group in the Community Centre car park everyone found a space and ringing commenced.

We then drove two miles up the road to Rothwell where Murray Coleman was on hand to dispense coffee and biscuits and share reminiscences (this being where Jean learned to ring).

Rushton was the village for lunch (pub or sandwiches) and ringing afterwards when we were joined by several extra Oxfordshire 'part-timers'.

Next on the itinerary was Barton Seagrave where starting and ending in rounds in the right order was more challenging than methods on this anticlockwise eight. The thunder gave up in disgust and went away when we rang.

The sun had come out by the time we arrived at Burton Latimer. Here the belfry bell shaped clock with swinging clapper pendulum was much admired.

Our final tower was Isham. We enjoyed the bells once we got used to the volume. Throughout the day ringing had ranged from rounds and call changes to surprise methods to suit all abilities and we had visited towers and churches both great and small. At six o'clock some went home to recover while the rest made their way to the Green Man at Brackley Hatch where we wined and dined until ten o'clock amidst much hilarity.

Where to next year?!

Guild 6 bell Striking Competition

We (Bloxham) came 6th out of 9 entrants! (This could be because two of the bands withdrew, and one of them was disqualified for only ringing 120 changes instead of 240!) The organiser said at the end how well Misha had rung on the tenor. He said that Misha had only been ringing for six months, and to be ringing in a striking competition with the best ringers in the Oxford Guild was a great achievement. I was very pleased with the result. Alastair rang the treble extremely well and everyone else kept right all the way through.

Alan Griffin



Overheard in the tower

So this is what ringing is all about!

“Lead after me, then fiddle about with those three and come back to me” – (beginner explaining Bob Doubles).

Here we use the rhythm method! – (in answer to a beginner asking how to improve his striking).

Queens 90th Birthday



Several Branch towers celebrated the Queen's official 90th birthday on Sunday June 12th. Steeple Aston rang a peal - see peals and quarter peals page for details. Bodicote rang a quarter of Anniversary Doubles prior to the village tea party in the church hall and at Banbury an attempt at a quarter of Grandsire Triples was sadly unsuccessful. A quarter was also rung on Tuesday June 14th at Hanwell.

Above: the band that rang the peal at Steeple Aston which also celebrated the Ruby Wedding Anniversary of Graham & Dorothy Clifton. The band are stood from left to right in the order they rang (see website for details).

The Branch Dinner

On September 10th the Branch Dinner was held at Somerton Village Hall. Twenty three people attended. (Sadly Graham was judging a ploughing match up north and didn't make it back in time). Members from eight towers were present. Lindsey, with help from Chris Cox, had set the tables out very prettily, we all found somewhere reasonably close to park and the hall was warm and welcoming.

The meal was well prepared and served by outside caterers (recommended by Vicky Clifton). There was time to digest your food between courses, share some entertaining conversation and watch the resident daddy longlegs perform!

It's practice night at Banbury
The band all rise to ring
But one cannot get upright
That is the awful thing.

They want to ring a method
That not everybody can.
It's no good calling 'Look to'
'Cos they are short one man.

He's sitting quietly on the bench
And he could do the job
But something holds him back there,
It must be Velcro Bob!

Cropredy Bells Silenced

The bells of Cropredy will remain silent (except for the clock chimes) until further notice. This is because of the parlous state of the roof of the Church.

Recently the roof had its lead removed for recasting and restoring. When inspected the old timber structure was in such poor condition that it had to be supported by internal scaffolding. The movement caused by the ringing of the bells could, it is feared, cause further damage to the roof and hence the bells may not be rung until the roof is repaired. This is unlikely to be this year but, with a fair wind, early in the new year.

Alternative practice arrangements have been made. Check with Stephen Day for these.

People Pages

In memoriam

The passing of Bill Cowley on September 29th aged 91 marks the end of a generation of ringers in the Branch born just after the First World War. Bill was a regular ringer at Deddington until unable to do so.

He always had a cheerful smile and time for a chat.

Only 5 months earlier Edmund Pearson, another Deddington ringer from the same period, died aged 91.

Edmund E Pearson (1924-2016)



Edmund was the son of Ernest C Pearson a ringer at Deddington. Ernest was born in Suffolk and it is here that both Cecil (Edmund's older brother) and Edmund were born. It is not known when the family moved to this area but Ernest is first listed as a Guild member at Deddington and also Secretary of the Banbury Branch in 1931, a position he held until 1955. Ernest was an established ringer having rung a peal of Stedman Triples at Banbury in 1931 which would indicate that he learnt to ring before moving to their home in Berryhill Road Adderbury.

Edmund was the younger of the two sons, Cecil was born 1922 and Edmund in 1924. As a youngster he sang in the Deddington church choir. In 1938 Cecil started to learn to ring at Deddington and the following year, aged 15, Edmund started to ring and became a member of Deddington Tower. 1939 saw the outbreak of war and it is likely that ringing had to fit in with other activities. The family home being Adderbury meant that Edmund joined the Adderbury Home Guard. In 1940 he went to work for the Northern Aluminium Company (later Alcan) at their re-cycling crashed aircraft site at Adderbury. At 18 he joined the RAF and trained as a Ground Wireless Operator serving at Freetown, Sierra Leone. In 1945 he was posted back to the UK and was based at Chipping Warden. After several UK postings he was de-mobbed in 1947 and returned to work for the Northern Aluminium Company in Banbury.

It is likely that during his later service years when back closer to home he was able to continue bell ringing and develop his skills. Edmund became a very proficient ringer and rang a wide range of peals from Doubles to Caters. He rang in many local quarter peals and peals. His first peal (Grandsire Triples) was rung at Deddington on January 31st 1948. He went on to ring at least 105 peals in methods ranging from Plain Bob to Spliced Surprise Major. His most active peal years were 1950 (12), 1951 (40) and 1952 (16). Edmunds last peal was Plain Bob Triples in 1968 at Deddington. In 1954 Edmund married Betty West and presumably taught her to ring as Betty appears in the list of Deddington ringers from 1954 until 1963.

Cecil also continued to ring after the war and was a member of Deddington tower until 1955. In 1956 he emigrated to Australia. Between 1950 and 1963 he rang 9 peals (5 of these at Melbourne Cathedral).

Edmund represented the Banbury Branch on the Guild Committee from the early 1950s until about 1958 or 1959 and from then until 1965 he was one of six ringers elected to the Oxford Guild's general committee. At Branch level he was also the ringing master from 1956-1963. In the early 1970s Edmund gave up ringing. Nobody is quite sure why but it may have been pressure of work as he moved up the management levels at Alcan where he worked until he retired. Whatever the reason the Branch lost a very capable ringer. He passed away at the Horton Hospital on April 30th 2016 at the age of 91.

Barry Davis

Wedding Congratulations to Clare Salter and Dan Weston on August 6th at Mollington.

And Dorothy and Graham Clifton's 40th Wedding Anniversary in June.

Commiserations to Sue Burchell who broke her ankle on the first day of her holiday but is now well on the way to recovery.

Wedding money

Jack our newest ringer (aged 12) at Steeple Aston rang for his first wedding the other day. After the wedding he was paid £15 along with the other ringers.

This reminded me of ringing for my first wedding at Great Tew when I must have been a similar age. I think I was paid 5 shillings (25 pence).

I was very pleased then to be paid so much for something I enjoyed doing. I wonder if this is about the right rate of inflation from 25p to £15 in nearly 50 years?

I also recall ringing for a funeral at Somerton. I had just started work when my boss asked if I would go and ring for Mr Brown's funeral during the working day. I was paid £5 which was about half a week's wage.

Harry Adams a past ringer at Steeple Aston told me of his first wedding ringing at Rousham. He was still at school so the five old men shared the money out between them, telling him he would not be paid because he was a boy!

Do others remember ringing for their first wedding and being paid?

Graham Clifton

Looking Forward

Half Yearly Meeting

The 15th October saw the first of a new style Half Yearly meeting take place. Ringing at Rousham from 2.30 – 3.30 was followed by a further practice at Lower Heyford from 3.30 – 4.45. We then enjoyed tea and cakes as the business meeting was conducted and it was all done and dusted by 6.00pm

Nineteen members and the little Lees, Simon and Adam, attended. A visitor from Eastbourne joined us for the ringing. A similar number sent their apologies. All the paperwork had been circulated beforehand so it was really just a case of dealing with matters arising and presenting certificates on the day. The Treasurer was on hand to deal with subscriptions and Colin, in his role of Guild Steward, had ringing books for sale afterwards.

It was agreed that the format worked well.

Steeple Aston Course

On Saturday 22nd October the Guild held their Annual Training Day based around the village of Steeple Aston. There were four different tutor groups, one concentrating on Plain Hunt, two studying Plain Bob Doubles and one looking at Grandsire Doubles, with a total of 18 students hoping to improve their ringing skills, including 3 from our branch. A number of other Branch ringers were involved in tutoring, or assisting at the practical sessions which took place at 12 towers in the area, 7 of which were in our Branch.

Chatting to many of the students at the end-of-day meal it seemed clear that most felt they had greatly benefited from the concentrated learning sessions, and had gained a new understanding of the theory of method ringing and made real strides in putting that theory into practise. Let's hope they are all able to go back to their home towers and build on their new-found skills. **Liz Smith**

Branch Ringing

Attendance at our branch ringing meetings over the past few months has been very encouraging. Seven or 8 towers have regularly been represented, with numbers in excess of 20 on at least 2 occasions. At **Branch Practices** ringing is aimed at all levels from rounds and call changes to surprise, whilst at our **Special Practices** the aim is to ring more advanced methods ranging from Stedman and St Clements to Surprise. Please continue to support our ringing meetings and encourage others from your tower to come along. In addition to the ringing meetings we continue to arrange quarters at various towers around the Branch with varying degrees of success. (See the Branch website for the successful ones). Some of these are for special occasions but many are as a result of requests from members who just want to make progress with a method. I am always willing to receive requests. So if you have a burning desire to ring a particular method, or if you know of a special occasion where a quarter would be appropriate, then do let me know and I will do my best to make the necessary arrangements.

Lionel Smith

Information Board

- Alan Griffin will ask for clarification from the Guild for the process of electing new members.
- The 6 monthly ringing programme will continue.
- Proceeds of both 2017 raffles will go to the ODG Bell Fund.
- 8 new members were elected at the Half Yearly Meeting.

Dates

2016

- 26th November Guild 10 bell Striking Competition at Banbury
- 10th December Carol Service at Hanwell
(the villagers will be joining us) Ringing at 5.30pm.
- 26th December Boxing Day - Branch ringing at Deddington at 10.30am

2017

- 2nd January New Year ringing -Banbury 10.30am
- 9th February Reps meeting at Bodicote 7.30pm
- 18/25th March Social Evening at Tadmarton (TBC)
- 22nd April AGM at Wardington
- 3/10th June Striking Competition at Adderbury (TBC)
- 8th July Outing to either Warks, Glos or Wilts (TBC)
- 16th September Branch Dinner

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