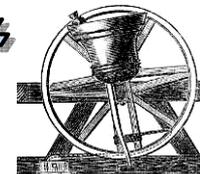




Branching Out

The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter



Monday 20th February 2017

We've had a good positive response to the 'new look' newsletter, so please keep your articles coming in!

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk. The next edition will be on 20th March. (Deadline for copy, 18th)

Congratulations!

Many congratulations go to Headington ringers, James Scott-Brown and Rachel Croft, who have just announced their engagement! Champagne was taken by all the ringers and visitors at the Headington practice on Wednesday 1st February. The date of their wedding is yet to be announced. It goes without saying that we all wish them well! **Paul Lucas**

A Rope Splicing Course

Tony Crabtree from Shrivenham is running this at Cowley Vicarage between 2.00pm and 4.00pm pm on Saturday 25th March.

There are still a few places remaining, so if you would like to attend, please contact me: secretary@oxfordcitybranch.org.uk

You can bring ropes along from your own towers or they can be provided for you to practice on.

We are asking for a nominal fee of £3 to cover tea, cake and Tony's travel expenses.

Lindsay Powell. Oxford City Branch Secretary



A Message from our Ringing Master



On Sunday 11th February, we braved the snow for the Branch Practice and financial meeting at Kidlington.

We rang a variety of Triples and Major; I particularly enjoyed the St Clements Triples. Next month we'll be at St Aldates on Saturday 11th March, so I'd like to ring everything from called changes on 6 to Surprise Minor. There will be something for everyone.

We're also starting to organise some focused practices, probably on the 4th Saturdays of the month. The plan is to start with a practice dedicated to ringing up and down individually and in peal.

Please let me know what else you'd like a specific practice for.

Andrew Freer - Ringing Master

A Trip to the Cotswolds coming up next Saturday – 25th February

10.15am Northleach (8) 18½ cwt; followed by an hour's free time in town. 12.45pm Great Barrington (6) 8 cwt.

Now the work has concluded on the Woodstock and Banbury Road roundabouts, it opens up the potential for exploring ringing west of Oxford again. Northleach (left) is a classic Cotswold market town but without being wholly driven by the tourist trade.

The late 14th century Perpendicular Gothic style church borders the market place at the heart of town. Between towers you can either enjoy brunch at the Black Cat café or explore the town centre.

The Norman church at Great Barrington is on the southern fringe of Barrington Park Estate.

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This is the first 'outing' of the year, so please come along and enjoy this beautiful part of the world! **Hugh Deam**

Last Month's Wolvercote Dumb Bell Practice on Thursday 25th January

At the last Ringing Roadshow at Newbury in 2014, Jonathan Beale from Wolvercote was very impressed with a demonstration of a ringing 'dumb bell' on the Abel Simulators stand.

A few months later, Jonathan contacted David Horrocks from 'Saxilby Simulators' who had designed the dumb bell after the Wolvercote ringers had decided that it would be an invaluable training device for their ringers.



The idea of a dumb bell is that you can pick a method, and then on the screen in front of you there are 5 or 7 other 'virtual' ringers who are ringing with you! It seems strange and quite hard at first to work out how to fit yourself in with the other 'ringers', but after a while, you actually see the virtual ringers as real ones! When you've finished ringing your piece, you can take a look at a diagram showing how you got on, as the technology can then replay your piece to you!

Jonathan provides you with a set of headphones so that you can be shut away from any extraneous surrounding noise from the other ringers practising on the church bells!

Having bought the dumb bell, Jonathan had to decide how it could be set up and used. So he designed and built this amazing wooden frame to house it. The frame is rock steady when in use, but can be taken down in around 10 minutes and stored away in their ringing chamber.

In the picture you can see Jonathan's little 'helper' – his son Christopher, doing the work for him! The dumb bell is used at most of their Thursday practices, and ringers from other towers are welcome to try it out. Their next official practice session is at **St Peters Church, Wolvercote next Thursday 23rd February starting at 7.00pm**. Why not go along and try it out? **Paul Lucas**



Congratulations to Jenny!

Sunday 5th February, was a day for celebrations! Headington ringer, Jenny Stonard rang her first quarter-peal 'inside' to Plain Bob Doubles on the very morning she had taken part in the London 10k 'Winter Run', which she ran in less than an hour.

Well done Jenny on both counts!

We also dedicated the quarter peal to James Scott-Brown and Rachel Croft, who have just announced their engagement. (see above).

Sadly Rachel had to work that day, so was unable to ring with the rest of the band. (Celebration photo taken in the White Hart!)

Paul Lucas



All Saints, Cuddesdon Bells (6) will ring again!

It is well known that the 14cwt six at All Saints have not been rung much in recent years, being a bit of a handful due to the deteriorating condition of their bell frame. But now the people of **Cuddesdon** are keenly waiting to hear their bells again, and the project to remove the bells, recast the 5cwt. treble and restore the frame is imminent. After much hard and energetic fundraising, led by residents Waveney Luke and Keith Hawley, the money needed is just a few thousand short of the £78,000 required – and Whitechapel are poised to start the work as soon as the necessary faculty has been granted. The treble will be recast, and part dedicated to the memory of a popular Cuddesdon resident, Dr. Chris Ware, while retaining the inscription on the present bell to Dr. Edward Smallwell, previous Bishop of Oxford (1788-1799, and Chaplain to George III), and who died at his palace in Cuddesdon. The bells will present a tricky challenge, as they must be lowered diagonally from the belfry, thereby avoiding the church organ!! It is hoped that everything will be in place to see the start of the work in March, and it might well be that the recast treble will be among the very last to emerge from the illustrious Whitechapel Foundry in London.... sadly, due to close soon. It would certainly be a fitting tribute.

In the meantime, nine good persons from Cuddesdon and Denton have been learning to ring at Horspath, (Dr. Ware's wife Lynda included), and by the time the bells are back in the tower, they will provide the motive force to get these lovely bells ringing again! It was discovered during the inspection of the current bell frame that it moved considerably; so much so that the treble regularly struck the frame as it rang, probably giving rise to the widely held view that Cuddesdon was 'unringable', whereas 'difficult' would have been closer to the truth! I will keep you all informed as to the progress of this exciting project. **Brian Lowe, Tower Captain, Horspath & Cuddesdon.**



Cassington & Eynsham Practices - Saturday 27th January, and Bicester - Saturday 4th February

It is always something akin to the chance involved in the roll of the dice to book towers during the Autumn for ringing events in the depths of

Winter, but in ringing this is a necessary gamble given how the Christmas season intervenes and organizing outings and the like has to go into hibernation. Clearly a brace of lucky sevens tumbled out as the weather was clement, thus leaving us with merely the variables that manifest themselves on the day. As with the session at Wheatley back on the New Year Holiday Monday, the attendance for the **Cassington (6)** and **Eynsham (6)** and **Bicester (10)** mornings all included ringers from the hosting towers which is the primary



aim of these get-togethers in what would otherwise be practicably speaking the close season for outings. Since the set of bells at Cassington were overhauled late in 2013 the new band has steadily progressed into method ringing combined with good striking. Bicester provided several of those who attended with their first experience of ringing on a set of ten bells, a gained insight which they keenly acknowledged. **Hugh Deam**

Momentous Major at Marvellous Milton (8) – Saturday 18th February

Much frivolity accompanied our journey down the A34 to ring our eagerly anticipated quarter peal at **St Blaise, Milton**. We discussed ringing ambitions and arrived in buoyant mood to enjoy the last visiting ring on the exemplary bells before renovation begins in the church. Happily, our ambitions were realised in a freely flowing 44 minutes following a brief false start.

If Bellboard is to be believed, Toby achieved not only his first quarter peal of Major, but his first on 8 away from cover (and only his 2nd on 8 overall). It was also Hugh's first Major as conductor which he carried off with his usual aplomb and my 50th quarter peal with Hugh. Inscrutable as he often is, I think I managed to surprise Hugh with Twirls – Cadbury's Chocolate Twirls, I hasten to add – to celebrate our Momentous Major at Marvellous Milton!

1280 Plain Bob Major

Treble. Hugh Deam (C); 2. Judy Kirby; 3. Michael Probert; 4. David A Parks;
5. Alison T Merryweather-Clarke; 6. Toby Goss; 7. Neil R Ephgrave;
Tenor. Paul C Lucas.



(Rung with the best wishes of the band to Neil Merryweather-Clarke, husband of 5, on his contemporaneous surgery, rescheduled to accommodate this quarter. 1st on 8 away from cover: 6. 1st of major as C. 50th QP together: 1 & 5). **Alison Merryweather-Clarke**

Confirmed Branch Practices coming up in the next few months

Saturday 11 th March	St Aldates (6)	5.00pm-6.30pm
April	No Branch Practice this month, but there is to be ringing up and down session later in the month at a venue t.b.c.	
Saturday 13 th May	St Thomas, Oxford (10) (t.b.c.)	Including the Half-Yearly Meeting and Striking Competition. 1.00pm-5.00pm
Saturday 10 th June	Headington (8)	5.00pm-6.30pm
Saturday 8 th July	Cowley (6)	5.00pm-6.30pm
Saturday 9 th December	Horspath (6)	5.00pm-6.30pm

(There are more monthly Branch Practices to follow once they are confirmed. Watch this space!)

Dates for your Diary

Full details from Ringing Master, Andrew Freer: andrew.freer@gmail.com or tour organizer, Hugh Deam: deamhugh@gmail.com

Thursday 23 rd February	Method Practice on the Wolvercote Dumb Bell - during their normal practice	7.00pm-9.00pm
	(For more details about the Wolvercote dumb bell, contact Jonathan Beale: janiceandjonathan1@virginmedia.com)	
Saturday 25 th February	Northleach (8) 10.15am. Brunch at The Black Cat, Northleach.	Great Barrington (6) 12.45pm (see details above)
Thursday 9 th March	Advanced 8 Bell Advanced Practice at St Giles (8)	7.30pm-9.00pm
Saturday 11 th March	A Minor Practice at Chalgrove (6) 16cwt.	10.30am-11.30am
Saturday 18 th March	Outing to North Wiltshire	
	<i>Bishopstone (8) 19cwt – 10.00am ; Wanborough (8) 18cwt – 11.00am; Liddington (6) 8cwt – 12.15pm;</i> <i>(Lunch at The Three Trees, Liddington) Chiseldon (6) 13cwt – 3.00pm; Christchurch Swindon (10) – 4.15pm</i>	
Saturday 25 th March	Practices at Childrey (8) 12cwt – 10.00am; Longcot (8) 8cwt – 11.30am.	
	(Lunch at the King & Queen, Longcot); Faringdon (8) 17cwt – 2.30pm	
Saturday 8 th April	A proposed trip to Nottingham to ring at local towers with former Headington ringers, Matt Beardsall and Ed Nicholson.	All ringers are welcome to come along and join us! Full details to be announced in the next edition.

For more details about everything else, please go to the Oxford City Branch website: www.oxfordcitybranch.org.uk
Any articles or photographs for inclusion in 'Branching Out' please email me: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk