



Branching Out

The Oxford City Branch Monthly Newsletter

Monday 18th December 2017

Happy Christmas to all our readers!

This is the last edition of 2017, but please keep your articles coming in for 'Branching Out' in 2018.

Email me with your news and photos to: paulclucas@hotmail.co.uk. The next edition will be out on Monday 22nd January. (Deadline for copy, 20th January)



Dates for your Diary – 2018

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

Saturday 20th January
Monday 12th February
Saturday 24th March

Ringling at Iffley (6) 2.00pm, followed by a Planning Meeting for 2018 at 3.00pm, at 92a Church Way, Iffley.
Morning Outing organized by Hugh (TBC)
Outing to Gloucestershire towers including Pucklechurch, Dyrham, Colerne, Marshfield and Nettleton (TBC)
Morning Practice at Kirtlington (8) 16cwt (TBC)
Colin Taylor's Spring Outing.

Monday 2nd April
Monday 9th April

If anyone else is interested in organizing a trip in 2018, please contact Hugh or Andrew.

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

A Branch Practice at Horspath (6) on 9th December

On a freezing Saturday night, 8 of us assembled at Horspath for the final Branch Practice of the year. The cold church was made bearable because Brian Lowe, the Tower Captain came along and put the heating on in the church about 2 hours before the start of the practice!

We rang everything from Stedman to Cambridge, Beverley and Bourne, and....

Penultimus, at the request of John Pusey! In John's own words:

"**Penultimus**, can be rung on any number of bells from 3 upwards - call this number 'n'. The treble plain hunts up to one place before the back (n-1th place), and while it is making that place, the 3rds place bell does four blows behind. All the other n-1 bells do the same work, which is just plain hunting, and so should be easy to strike.

The plain course therefore lasts n-1 leads, and each lead is 2(n-1) changes long".



I'm sure that all makes perfect sense! Anyway, it was a very enjoyable practice, and of course, we weren't to know that in Oxfordshire, along with the rest of the country, everywhere would be blanketed with snow, after the largest snow storm in seven years! This is what St Giles Church looked like the following day! **Paul Lucas**



A Practice at Black Bourton (6)

After a lot of hard work and dedication, the **Black Bourton** bells are once again ringable. It was no surprise that a large number of ringers from

further afield than usual gathered for the Witney and Woodstock Branch Practice held a Black Bourton on 25th November.

The striking was good and the methods varied from Norwich and Cambridge, to Plain Bob. Those waiting to ring were able to look around the church and one item was of particular interest.

A small green and red tapestry was causing some intrigue. The strange hieroglyphics became a topic of conversation with many of us puzzling as to the meaning.

Neil Ephgrave



It was not until the end of the practice that Black Bourton Tower Captain, David put us out of our torment. "Look for JESUS and you will see JESUS".

News from the Guild 10 bell striking competition and Committee Meeting

Saturday 25th November is a busy day in the Guild calendar. The morning is the 10 bell striking competition and in the afternoon there is the Autumn General Committee Meeting. This year I attended both.



At the competition I had the role of general helper/team photographer/tea maker to the judges and to write up the competition for the Ringing World, and in the afternoon I attended the Committee meeting in my Branch Secretary hat.

Both events were hosted by the North Bucks branch, an area I didn't know well and had never rung in. It certainly brought home to me how big our Guild is in the hour and a half it took us to get to Olney, a lovely 24cwt 10

just north of Milton Keynes. Six branches entered teams, and had to ring 240 Stedman caters. We arrived to a wonderful ringer's breakfast laid on by the Olney ringers, who were extremely welcoming. The judges, Alison and Roy Williams from Worcestershire had



their work cut out. They had been allocated a small room that was distinctly chilly but were supplied with a fan heater. Unfortunately the acoustics were such that they had to turn off the heater and open the windows in order to hear the bells sufficiently well to judge, and it was a particularly cold morning. Inside the main body of the church it was also quite hard to hear the bells. When one team fired out their attempt, none of us was aware of it. It wasn't until much later we found out that a second team had also fired out. Most of us wandered out into the churchyard at various points to be able to appreciate the quality of the ringing properly. With two teams disqualified, the four remaining teams weren't kept waiting too long for the judges deliberations. After feedback on each team the winners were duly announced, and we were all very happy for the winning team Old North Berks. They had not won it before, and their delight was infectious.

I was then invited to ring with some of the other helpers before we moved on to a pub lunch in Great Brickhill, then general ringing on the very nice eight there before the Committee meeting. Key points from the meeting are:

- There has been no increase in the annual subs.
- Safeguarding – Katie Lane is working very hard on behalf of the Guild to reach an arrangement with the Diocese over safeguarding in towers. Please do send back the form to Katie which I forwarded to all towers last month as this will make sure all towers have a voice in the decision process.
- Guild website – this is being re-designed and we were given a preview of the new look. It should be up and running next year and will have a lot more information and resources. More information on this will follow as progress is made. **Lindsay Powell**

Another Youth Event run by Susan and Brian Read

It is an Old North Berks Branch event, but young ringers from other Branches are very welcome.

Those who have not been before should bring a signed Permission Form, obtainable from Susan Read at: read.atesco.net

The paths are tarmac covered so mud shouldn't be a problem.



Old North Berks Branch of the ODG

Young Ringers walk through Blenheim

Wednesday 3 January 2018

13:30 Bladon, St Martin

(6) 6-1-18, OX20 1RW

14:15 Walk 1.5 miles with quiz

Wear suitable clothes and footwear!

15:00 Woodstock, St Mary Magdalene

(8) 12-3-24, OX20 1UG

Refreshments, ringing

16:30 Depart

Any young ringers who can handle a bell safely by themselves will be welcome. Parents and more experienced ringers are welcome too.

Donations of £5.00 per young ringer will be collected

Please let us know if you are coming.

Please complete a permission form if not previously provided.

Susan and Brian Read

Tel: (01235) 529 779

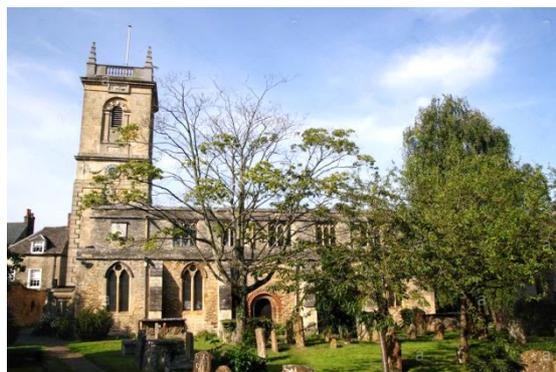
Mob: 07903 011 813 & 07941 580 468

email: read.atesco.net

ONB website www.onb.odg.org.uk.



Bladon (6) 6cwt – where Sir Winston Churchill is buried.



Woodstock (8) 12cwt – next to Blenheim Palace

Katie Lane on Safeguarding

As guild Safeguarding Officer, I have circulated a survey to be completed by all towers, with members, in the guild. Thank you to the City Branch towers that have returned the survey. There remain 9 outstanding from our Branch.

I do not have enough replies from the guild to provide the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee with the evidence that it is not practical, or possible, for us to arrange for a safeguarding office to be in attendance at all times when a child is present, without jeopardising the future recruitment of young ringers and therefore, the future of ringing itself.

Below is an extract from an email from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser which clearly states the Diocesan Policy for all activities on church premises.

So, please, Tower Correspondents, return the survey in order that I can present the bell ringers response to the committee at the next meeting. Thank you.

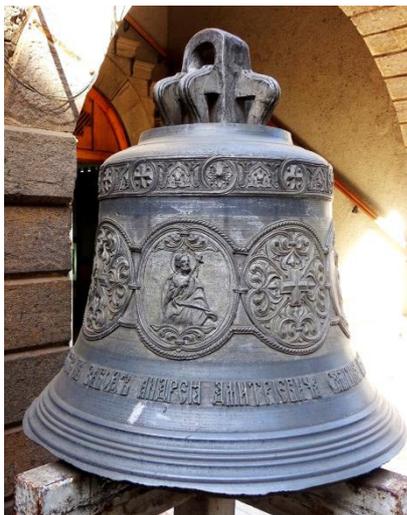
In relation to the issues accountability and responsibility for safeguarding the bottom line is that the Parish is responsible for all activities on Church premises. This includes requiring all activities that take place on Church premises to comply with the Parish Safeguarding Policy which is derived from the Diocesan Policy, unless the organisation has a Safeguarding Policy of their own which has been seen and approved by the Parish. If the organisation will not, or cannot comply with the safeguarding policy children cannot be involved.

The Diocesan Guidelines are clear the Parishes are accountable for ensuring that Children's Officers are appointed and that all mixed-age activities, bell-ringing is cited as one example of such activities, have a Children's Officer present when there are children involved in the activity. So, it is not essential for Children's Officers to be bell-ringers but there must be a Children's Officer present whenever children are present in the Tower. If a member of the ringing team is willing to act as Children's Officer after going through the Safer Recruitment background checks that is very helpful.

The bottom line is that Parishes should not allow mixed-age ringing if there is no Children's Officer present. Identifying who will act as Children's Officer is a matter for discussion between the Parish and the Tower. The Tower Captain must ensure that a Children's Officer is present whenever a child is involved and be prepared to refuse to have children there if a Children's Officer cannot attend.

John Pusey's photos of Ethiopian Bells

Last December and January, John Pusey travelled to Kilifi in Kenya for a ringers' wedding, and then to Ethiopia. Visiting the historic northern cities



of Axum (BC), Lalibela (13th C) and Gonder (17th C) probably needs to be with an organised tour, but even without knowing the language or the script, it was just possible to get along independently in the capital Addis Ababa (not founded until the late 19th C), where there is fine National Museum and two cathedrals. The Ethiopian Church still uses the Julian calendar, and so John was there for the celebrations of Christmas and of the Epiphany, both of which fall about two weeks later than ours. There was a strong Jewish influence dating from the time of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, followed by very early contact with Christianity, which is now dominant, and so there are bells of various kinds to be seen and heard.



If anyone else has any interesting photographs of bells or churches taken while on holiday, then please send them to me.

Happy Christmas !